

system. But also, for the good of the auto industry in the United States, for the good of those workers, let's not doom them to failure. Let's demand, whatever we do, that they go into a period of fundamental restructuring—the type of fundamental restructuring that is necessary, for instance, in a bankruptcy. It does not have to be done in the context of an actual bankruptcy. Many people say that would kill auto sales; that it is not practical, they cannot survive that.

I do not particularly agree with that argument, but that same fundamental restructuring can be done in other ways without that bankruptcy title looming over the companies' heads. That is what they need to survive. That is what those workers need to keep their jobs. Let's not pass this auto industry bailout and deny them the possibility of a survivable and brighter future.

These remarks apply equally to not only the Democratic leader's proposal, under which the \$25 billion would come directly out of the TARP program, but my remarks and my concerns are fundamental. They apply equally to President Bush's proposal, which is essentially the same, simply taking the money out of a different pot, simply using the \$25 billion of low-interest loans we have already authorized, against my objections, to do the same thing.

Again, my concerns are not superficial—use this pot of money and not that pot—my concerns are much more fundamental. They go to the center of the future of our economy. But they also go to the core of what is needed for the U.S. auto industry to remain competitive, to become more competitive, and to save those American jobs.

I yield the floor, and I suggest the absence of a quorum.

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. The clerk will call the roll.

The legislative clerk proceeded to call the roll.

Ms. MIKULSKI. I ask unanimous consent that the order for the quorum call be rescinded.

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. Without objection, it is so ordered.

#### COMMUNICATION FROM THE HONORABLE BARACK OBAMA

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. The Chair lays a communication before the Senate.

The legislative clerk read as follows:

U.S. SENATE,

Washington, DC, November 18, 2008.

Hon. RICHARD CHENEY,  
Vice President of the United States of America,  
President of the U.S. Senate, U.S. Capitol,  
Washington, DC.

DEAR VICE PRESIDENT CHENEY, PRESIDENT OF THE U.S. SENATE: This letter is to inform you that I resigned from the United States Senate, effective November 16, 2008, in order to prepare for my duties as President of the United States.

Sincerely,

BARACK OBAMA,  
U.S. Senator.

#### ORDER FOR RECESS

Ms. MIKULSKI. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the Senate recess today from 2:30 until 4 to allow Senators to attend today's briefing with Secretary Gates, Secretary Rice, and the Vice Chairman of the Joint Chiefs.

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. Without objection, it is so ordered.

#### WORKING TOGETHER

Ms. MIKULSKI. Mr. President, that was quite a letter. I must say, to be here for this historic moment, my heart is racing. We heard the letter from the President-elect resigning from the Senate. This is, indeed, a moment of passage in the Senate and for the country. By Senator Obama's resignation from the duty and responsibility the people of Illinois gave him, it is one more step for him to pick up the responsibilities of the Presidency of the United States. I will cherish this moment because it will be a historic moment, from "We need change" and "Yes, we can" on the long campaign trail to election night, to a charismatic speech calling us to act like an American community, not only a country of which we are proud, a nation we hold dear, but an American community. That is the Obama message which I hope will be the Obama effect. As our President-elect lays down these duties and takes up others, we need to realize and respond to his call and a new American mandate. Because on November 4, we who hold Federal office received a new American mandate to change the tone, to change the direction, to change the priorities, and to be able to move on and get our economy rolling and bring our troops back home and restore our national honor in the world.

Sign me up. Sign me up as an enthusiastic member of this effort. I accept that mandate. I accept it. I call upon all my colleagues to do the same, to embrace the message Senator Obama has set, not only in terms of a dynamic, robust agenda but how we will work with each other. I thought it was grand that he sat down with our colleague from Arizona, Senator MCCAIN, to talk about how they could work together, how they could find that common ground, how we could find that sensible center between what we want to do and what we can afford to do. That is the tone Obama set with MCCAIN. Let's set it now with REID and MCCONNELL. Let's try to find common ground, that sensible center, pragmatic, affordable solutions we can do now. We have a window. We have a time. As President-elect Obama said: This is our time. Our time doesn't begin January 20. Our time doesn't begin January 6. This is our time now to lay the groundwork for the transition of power, to work together. I ask us now, as we look at the stimulus

package, as we look at solutions for our manufacturing area, how to extend the safety net for those people who are already hurting: Let's do that.

Right now, once again, back to business as usual, entangled in a parliamentary quagmire, digging in our heels, based on rigid ideology. That is not what the people said on November 4. They said they wanted change, and they want it now. Let it begin with us, civilized debate, the clash of ideas to find that sensible center. By the way, that phrase is not mine. That phrase is Colin Powell's, a great American.

There it is, right there is the center. I am ready to walk over to it. Come on over, I say to the other side.

#### STIMULUS PACKAGE

Ms. MIKULSKI. Mr. President, today I am standing here asking for help on the stimulus package. I know that part of the stimulus package is to extend unemployment insurance. I absolutely support that. But what I also wish to do is not only extend unemployment insurance for those who are hurting. I am with the parts of the stimulus package that will extend employment, where we will do what we need to do to create the safety net, but we need to have a launching pad to keep jobs in this country. I wish to vote to extend unemployment help, but I wish to also vote to extend employment help. Hello. Let's find that sensible center.

I am for saving and creating jobs, and I am also saying: Congress must act now. In the next 48 to 72 hours, we have our own rendezvous. If we do not act, we will create an economic framework that means the recession will be longer and deeper. The cost of doing nothing is more than we can afford to pay.

I support the safety net in the economic recovery package—help with unemployment, energy assistance, help on Medicaid for the children and the elderly. Medicaid is a children's and elderly program, for children who need health care and elderly who need to be in nursing homes.

I also support the part of the stimulus that creates jobs. I salute our leadership team for coming up with the framework to create jobs by making important investments in physical infrastructure—desperately needed. We need to make public investments that generate private sector jobs. Note what Senator Barb is saying: I am not for make work. I am not for a WPA. I am for public investments that create private sector jobs. By doing it in building and rebuilding America's infrastructure, we will be safer, and we will have a stronger economy—repairing bridges, building highways, mass transit that we need to move people and improve the environment, also to build water and sewer treatment plants to fix aging sewer systems. In my hometown of Baltimore, our mayor is under an EPA court order to rebuild the Baltimore sewer system. I am for that. My great-grandfather, who came to this country