

individuals affirm your citizenship. You can do this by mail. You don't even have to show up in person. So it is not as if we have onerous requirements today to participate in the program.

Even with the very generous provisions we have, it is my understanding from a GAO study in 2007 that we think most of the people who are eligible are signing up and we are not getting a lot of ineligible people signing up. In other words, people are not gaming the system, and that is a good thing. But why make it easier to game the system, especially to play into the hands of those who are here illegally, who use a Social Security number for work purposes and now could use it for this purpose, signing up for SCHIP.

We will have amendments that deal with each of these subjects. The bottom line is, we should get back to dealing with this subject in a way in which both Democrats and Republicans can have input into the bill and actually solve some of the problems. I know some of my Democratic colleagues were interested in this eligibility issue because they don't want a lot of people getting benefits who aren't entitled. It will only hurt those who are entitled. We need to have strong eligibility requirements.

We don't want to begin to expand this program to people who are not citizens of the United States and who have a contract with the United States when they come here as our guests, either on a temporary basis or on a green card. They understand their obligations when they come here. One of their responsibilities is not to begin to receive benefits of this kind from the taxpaying American citizen.

For these four reasons, I hope that when this legislation comes before us, we are able to not only amend the bill, work to amend the bill, but will actually have amendments adopted and that we can improve the legislation so that we can all be proud to support it at the end of the day. If not, an awful lot of Republicans, including myself, will not be able to support the legislation.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Florida is recognized.

GEITHNER NOMINATION

Mr. NELSON of Florida. Madam President, we all know because of what we have seen in our various States that our people are hurting; they are losing their homes; they are losing their jobs; they are falling behind in their mortgages; They are losing their businesses; and they are losing their life savings.

Now, we clearly have the mandate that, if it is humanly possible, we need to turn this economy around. So the people of this country are expecting to see us take some real action—real action—on trying to turn this economy around. We, in this position, representing our States, are very privileged to have the public's trust and the responsibility that comes with that

trust. Part of that responsibility means when there is a problem, we have to shine light on the problem and find out what it is.

Take, for example, what we have seen recently on the Wall Street greed, when you have a former Merrill Lynch executive spending almost a million and a half dollars on his office renovations while his company was forcing layoffs as well as having huge losses and while the company that was acquired—his company—was asking for billions of dollars, and receiving it, from the public moneys. Well, there is obviously a problem.

A number of us have filed legislation that is going to try to get at this issue. Even with this being put in the law, a new law saying none of this bailout money can be used for office renovations and political contributions or to go off on all these extravagant conferences or for corporate aircraft or for entertainment and holiday parties or for executive bonuses—all of these things that have come forth when the light of day is shone on them, having so enraged our people and our constituents—well, even if we get this into the law—and I hope we will be able to pass this legislation a number of us have filed—it is still going to take the administration riding herd on this issue every day, and that means primarily the Secretary of the Treasury.

We are going to be voting on the confirmation of the Secretary of the Treasury at 6 o'clock today. It is this Senator's intention to vote for Timothy Geithner. But what is it going to take to get Wall Street's attention and to restore the American family's quality of life? It is going to take real accountability. That means the next Secretary of the Treasury is going to have to ride herd and, when he appoints an accountability board, to make sure that board is meeting—like the last Secretary of the Treasury did not. They did not meet once to see how that first tranche of \$350 billion of the bailout money was being spent—not once.

So I come from the sunshine State. We believe in letting the sun shine in. This means not getting ahead of ourselves when Wall Street comes crying that one of their unregulated financial schemes threatens to destroy our way of life, and then turns around and throws some party on some Caribbean island. It means putting in place regulations with the right carrots and sticks so we are not gambling with our country's future.

So as we are about to confirm the next Secretary of the Treasury, there is not a more important mandate than for him to crack the whip and make sure this Federal money, this public money, this taxpayer money, is being spent as it was intended, and holding people accountable, and reporting the results. If we do not get the accountability and the transparency, if we do not get what we expect from the banks that willingly accept this money, then we should demand the public's money back.

I have spoken personally to the nominee, and he has said—and I want to quote him—"I completely get it." So I am assuming he is going to be confirmed today. I will vote for him. I expect swift action to back up these words. The American people expect swift action by all of us to bring Wall Street and this economy back in line. We do not have any time to waste. There is simply too much at stake.

Madam President, I suggest the absence of a quorum.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will call the roll.

The legislative clerk proceeded to call the roll.

Mr. DURBIN. Madam President, I ask unanimous consent that the order for the quorum call be rescinded.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection, it is so ordered.

Mr. DURBIN. Madam President, I ask unanimous consent to speak as in morning business.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection, it is so ordered.

ISSUES FACING AMERICA

Mr. DURBIN. Madam President, this is the first full week of our new administration, and many of us sense things have changed for the better, and we are hopeful. We can't assume anything because there is a lot of hard work ahead, and we are going to have to try everything we can to resolve some of the major issues that face our country that we can address in the Senate.

We were successful last week, in passing with 61 votes—bipartisan roll-call—the Lilly Ledbetter legislation. This was a bill which tried to cure a problem created by a Supreme Court decision that was questioned about whether women should be entitled to equal pay for equal work. Lilly Ledbetter, after 15 or 16 years working at a tire company in Alabama, discovered that within her job classification men were being paid more than she as a woman. She did not discover this until she was about to retire. So she filed a lawsuit and the Supreme Court across the street reached a conclusion which no other court had reached and said Ms. Ledbetter could not recover because she didn't report the first discriminatory paycheck paid to her in—I think it was 180 days. Her answer, which most people who work in the private sector would say, is, How am I supposed to know what the fellow next to me is getting in his paycheck? They don't publish these things. So when she did discover it and filed it, they said she was too late.

So we changed the law so, if there is discrimination, a person will have their day in court. They will have a fair hearing. The reasonable attempts to discover the information are enough. The Supreme Court standard was unreasonable. So that is the first thing we will pass, sending that to our new President, President Obama. It is a bill which we considered before under