but it will do nothing to reward irresponsible spenders or penalize companies that operate in good faith. This is essential legislation at a time when the stakes could not be any higher.

We must move quickly to halt unfair and abusive practices that threaten our financial security. America has had enough, and it is time that the members of this Senate stand with our fellow citizens to say that we, too, have had enough.

I urge my colleagues to join with me in passing the Credit CARD Act. We will be voting shortly. Let's pass this bill.

I suggest the absence of a quorum.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will call the roll.

The assistant legislative clerk proceeded to call the roll.

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 President, I ask unanimous consent that the order for the quorum call be rescinded.

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

Mr. BROWN. I ask unanimous consent to speak for no more than 5 minutes as in morning business.

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

FAMILY SMOKING PREVENTION AND TOBACCO CONTROL ACT

Mr. BROWN. Mr. President, 15 years ago I sat on the Energy and Commerce Committee in the House of Representatives and listened to seven tobacco executives. It was a famous photograph of these seven tobacco executives who raised their right hands and swore to tell the whole truth and nothing but the truth. They were there to defend their practices and swear under oath that cigarettes and nicotine were not addictive. The president of Philip Morris said, ''I believe nicotine is not addictive.'' The chairman and CEO of R.J. Reynolds Tobacco Company said, ''Cigarettes and nicotine clearly do not meet the classic definition of addiction.'' The president of U.S. Tobacco, the chairman and CEO of Liggett Group, and the chairman and CEO of Brown & Williamson Tobacco Corporation all said, ''I believe that nicotine is not addictive.'' I listened as the president and CEO of American Tobacco said, ''I, too, believe nicotine is not addictive.''

During that hearing, we heard repeatedly that 400,000 Americans die of tobacco-related illnesses; 400,000 Americans every year, more than a thousand people a day, die of tobacco-related illnesses. It occurred to me—as these CEOs raised their right hands, all seven of them in a row, and said tobacco is not addictive, cigarettes aren't addictive—it occurred to me why they were saying that. Simply, if 400,000 of their customers are dying every year, more than 1,000 a day, they need at least 400,000 new customers every year, at least 1,000 a day. So if they are going to get those 400,000 customers, my guess is they are not going to convince the Senator from Illinois—the junior Senator or the senior Senator from Illinois—they are not going to convince me, they are not going to convince most of us who are in our forties, fifties, and sixties to start smoking. They are more likely to aim at the pages who are sitting here who are 15, 16, 17 years old. They are more likely to go after children.

In fact, the Cancer Action Network, the American Cancer Society, did an ad today: 98,000 kids have smoked their first cigarette in the last month. That is why the cigarette companies, the tobacco companies have introduced products such as Camel Orbs, Sticks, and Strips that are aimed at children. That is why they did the Camel No. 9, a very attractive package, trying to get women to smoke; Joe Camel; billboards—until we outlawed them—right by high school campuses and high school buildings.

The fact is, 400,000 Americans die every year from tobacco-related illnesses. Tobacco companies need 400,000 new customers just to break even, just to stay in business. They aim at our children. They go after children who are 12, 13, 14, 15, 16, 17 years old. That is why, under Chairman KENNEDY's leadership with Chairman DODD, today the Health, Education, Labor, and Pensions Committee will begin its deliberations on finally changing the way we regulate tobacco, giving the authority to the Food and Drug Administration. It is the right way to go. By this time on Thursday, I hope, certainly by Friday, we should have legislation voted out of that committee, ready to take action. It is about time this body stood up to the tobacco interests and did what is right for our children.

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

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

The assistant legislative clerk proceeded to call the roll.

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

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Mrs. GILLIBRAND). Without objection, it is so ordered.

Ms. LANDRIEU. Madam President, I ask unanimous consent to speak for up to 5 minutes as in morning business.

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

Ms. LANDRIEU. Thank you, Madam President.

SMALL BUSINESS WEEK

Ms. LANDRIEU. Madam President, I know we are trying to finalize the debate on the underlying credit card improvement bill and support for consumers with personal credit cards. But I thought I would take a moment to come to the floor to speak to the fact that this week is Small Business Week in America. All over our country we are celebrating the entrepreneurial spirit of the over 26 million small businesses in America that serve as a backbone of our economy.

Just yesterday, I was with Administrator Karen Mills of the Small Business Administration, as she opened Small Business Week at one of the local hotels here, where there are hundreds of small business owners receiving awards from all our States for the extraordinary work they have done in opening, starting, and building their businesses, at even these challenging times. In a few minutes, I will be joining her for lunch, as we hand out awards to some of the most innovative small businesses in the world today, not just in America but in the world. It is exciting that many of these small business owners are with us in Washington this week.

So I have come to the floor to speak about our business owners, some of the challenges they are facing, and to acknowledge there will be a resolution we are asking to be cleared this week in honor of these millions of firms.

I say to the Presiding Officer, as you know, Main Street firms pump almost $1 trillion into our economy every year, creating two-thirds of all new jobs, and account for more than half America's workforce. Sometimes when people see corporations and businesses and they read the headlines about General Motors, GE, or other large companies—Exxon, Shell come to mind—those are good examples of national and international companies, but they are not necessarily examples of where all the jobs are, contrary to common belief.

The jobs are hard to see sometimes because they are in small places; in neighborhoods and on main streets and farm roads and on farm-to-market roads throughout our country; they are with small entrepreneurs employing themselves and maybe two or three other people or themselves and maybe 10 or 15 other people. They are building the backbone of the American free enterprise system.

These are the family businesses throughout the country whose thread still weaves the American dream—the dream of working for yourself, being your own boss, setting your own hours, never working less than you would probably at a large company, always working more but being quite rewarding, with a business you can pass down to your children and grandchildren who earn their way in the business. This is what keeps the spirit of America going forward.

These are the businesses we honor this week. They are the technological startups that produce cutting-edge, clean energy sources, lifesaving medical advances, and provide safer equipment for our troops, protecting our way of life. They are the construction companies that build new schools and better homes and businesses that fix our roads and our bridges.