

us appreciate their work and honor their memory, and it should make us proud to live in a country where such things are possible.

As time does the work Japanese guns could never do, the code talkers are slowly leaving us. Only 80 of the original 400 remain with us. Too soon, these men will live only in our memories. Let's keep those memories strong, lest we lose the inspiration they can offer.

To Willie Begay, Thomas Claw, and John Brown, Jr., we honor your lives and mourn your passing. To all of the code talkers, alive and beyond, we celebrate your service. Whenever stories of courage and patriotism are told, we will think of you.

Thank you, Mr. President. I note the absence of a quorum.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will call the roll.

The assistant legislative clerk proceeded to call the roll.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Illinois.

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 President, I ask unanimous consent that the order for the quorum call be rescinded.

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

Mr. BURRIS. Mr. President, I wish to speak on two different issues in morning business.

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

COMMUNITY REHABILITATION

Mr. BURRIS. Mr. President, I rise today to applaud Senator LINCOLN and Senator SNOWE for their leadership and commitment in introducing S. 1222. This legislation would revise and extend existing empowerment zone, renewal community, and enterprise community rules. It seeks to make these programs more effective and ensure that the incentives work as intended. I am proud to be a cosponsor of this important measure.

Congress created empowerment zones, renewal communities, and enterprise communities to spur economic growth and create job opportunities. Cities such as East St. Louis and Chicago, IL, have received tax incentives worth \$5.3 billion. These incentives encourage businesses to open or expand and to hire local residents. They include employment credits, low-interest loans, reduced taxation on capital gains, and other incentives.

Unfortunately, some of the programs have not operated as intended. A few major hurdles have prevented full utilization of the tax benefits available. These incentives desperately need to be refined and extended. That is exactly what this legislation would do, and that is why it is so important for the Senate to act without delay.

Empowerment zones such as the one in East St. Louis, IL, focus on grassroots, sustainable progress. They create a bond between businesses, employees, and surrounding communities. Despite receiving only one-fourth of an-

anticipated Federal funding, they have found aspiring entrepreneurs to expand and develop local businesses, using a creative array of tax incentives and loans.

This legislation is an important step toward reversing the blight faced by our inner cities without gentrifying these areas or shutting out the community members who need our help the most. Senator LINCOLN and Senator SNOWE deserve our utmost support in their fight to rehabilitate these communities. I am proud to cosponsor this legislation, and I urge my colleagues to join with me in this effort.

ECONOMIC RECOVERY

Mr. BURRIS. Mr. President, as I address this Chamber today, our country remains in the grips of the worst economic disaster since the Great Depression. We have all felt its devastating effects. In the last half century, it has never been harder for working Americans to make ends meet. But finally we are beginning to see indications that the worst may be behind us. The economy is still shedding jobs but at a slower rate. Business is starting to pick up again for some—not all but for some. The American Recovery and Reinvestment Act has started to take hold, and at long last some people are beginning to feel more hopeful.

But as the tide rises for some communities, others continue to slip further and further behind. In a troubling new report, the unemployment rate among African Americans has risen to 14.9 percent—up 6 points since 2007. Everyone is hurting, but this is an alarming sign that some groups are still hurting more than others. While one in five White teens is without a job, two in five African-American teens are unemployed, along with one in three Hispanic teens. The overall share of African Americans with jobs has reached its lowest point since 1986.

As we begin to emerge from the worst of this economic crisis, we must not forget that there is still a long way to go for many Americans. In our rush to get this economy back on track, we need to make sure we don't leave certain communities behind. This means increasing the amount of capital available to employers, helping put Americans back to work, and protecting small businesses.

As a former banker who worked hard to secure loans for small businesses, I have a deep understanding of the role these companies play in creating jobs and helping the economy to grow.

I know how crucial it is to provide immediate relief, as well as lasting support. That is why I applaud President Obama's recent call to speed up the disbursement of stimulus funds. This would save or create roughly 600,000 jobs in the next 3 months alone.

This will not be an easy task, but it is necessary to strengthen America's small business, put people back to work, and restore economic security.

But as we rush to provide aid to the American people, we need to make sure the stimulus funds are targeted effectively. That is why oversight is critical.

As billions of dollars flow from the Federal Government to the State treasuries, transparency will help keep State and Federal officials accountable for every dollar spent in the name of economic recovery.

If done right, this will ensure that everyone can share in the promise and prosperity of a revitalized economy. That is why I introduced S. 1064, a bill that will set aside small amounts of stimulus money to pay for regulation and oversight.

These costs are currently unfunded, leaving the American people with only vague assurances that their money will be used effectively.

Mr. President, this is simply not good enough. We need to protect the interests of the American taxpayers and ensure that every dollar can be tracked.

I ask my colleagues to join with me in the fight for accountability. I thank my good friends, Chairman LIEBERMAN, Ranking Member COLLINS, and Senator MCCASKILL for signing on to cosponsor this bill.

As the economy begins to improve for some Americans, let's make sure millions of others are not left behind.

We need to lift the least fortunate among us and ensure every American has an equal chance to benefit from our continued economic recovery.

As one of our former distinguished Vice Presidents, Hubert Humphrey, famously said:

The moral test of government is how that government treats those who are in the dawn of life, the children; those who are in the twilight of life, the elderly; and those who are in the shadows of life, the sick, the needy, and the handicapped.

It is time to renew our commitment to the communities that are hurting the most, and as we work to increase transparency and speed up the responsible use of the stimulus funds, we need to make sure no one is left behind.

Mr. President, again, we need to make sure no one is left behind.

I yield the floor and 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. JOHANNIS. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the order for the quorum call be rescinded.

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

HEALTH CARE REFORM

Mr. JOHANNIS. Mr. President, as the rhetoric over health care reform starts to heat up—and, of course, it has—I find myself trying to determine exactly what we are trying to accomplish with this debate. Are we attempting to put together what I think is the right