

nothing was more important than the years of coverage of the greatest golf tournament on the face of the Earth—the Masters. None other than Bobby Jones, none other than Jack Nicklaus, none other than Arnold Palmer, none other than Tiger Woods acknowledged that the gifted writing of Furman Bisher about that treasured tournament helped to elevate it to where it is today, the preeminent event in golf around the world.

A lot of people contribute a lot to their profession. We in Georgia are proud of so many who have given so much to our State. Today I want to pay tribute to a man who for 59 dedicated years covered sports in Georgia and made it possible for many great things to happen, a man who was gifted, a man was talented and a man who, even today, shares his wisdom and his commitment to sports as he approaches his 91st birthday.

On a personal note, as a young boy and a sports fan in the late 1940s and 1950s, I used to rush to the mailbox to get our Atlanta Journal and our Atlanta Constitution and I didn't go to the funny papers, I didn't go to the comics, I didn't go to the crossword puzzle. I went to Furman Bisher. Furman was a great writer and to me an inspiration for sports in Atlanta, GA. I wish him and his family the very best in their retirement.

I yield the remainder of my time.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Michigan is recognized.

UNEMPLOYMENT COMPENSATION

Ms. STABENOW. Mr. President, I rise this afternoon to discuss our efforts to extend unemployment benefits to over 15 million people who are looking for work today. That is only the number of people we know are out there based on the unemployment statistics, not those who have tried for a long time and been unsuccessful and are currently neither in the workforce nor are working two or three or four part-time jobs trying to hold things together for themselves and their families. We do know this. Over 15 million people today who are trying to support their families in this very tough economic time need our help immediately to stay afloat.

Two nights ago I asked for agreement to move to the unemployment insurance bill. Our leader had asked for agreement to do that before. This has already passed the House and is awaiting Senate action. Unfortunately, Republican colleagues objected. They have objected several times and continue to object to our bringing forward an effort to help families who, through no fault of their own, find themselves in an extraordinarily difficult situation, relying on unemployment in order to be able to keep their families afloat.

Unemployment is not a partisan issue. Right now, 14 States and the District of Columbia, blue States and red

States, have unemployment rates over 10 percent: Illinois, Georgia, Alabama, Florida, North Carolina, Ohio, Tennessee, Kentucky, South Carolina, California, Oregon, Rhode Island, Nevada and, of course, my great State of Michigan, where we are now seeing over a 15.3-percent unemployment rate, the highest in the country.

Our people are hurting and they have been hurting for a long time. I was very proud of our President as he came into office for understanding that and joining with us in a recovery package to make sure we were extending unemployment at the beginning of the year. But unfortunately the recession continues and people are still hurting. Democrats are unemployed and Republicans are unemployed. The people getting unemployment insurance are looking for work, they are pounding the pavement and they are putting in applications every day. This is not their fault.

The economic situation in this country is not their fault. The bank failures are not their fault. The foreclosure crisis is not their fault. But they are the ones paying the price every single day. Every single day, every single time the other side objects to bringing up this bill, people across the country are hurting. They are exhausting their unemployment insurance and are being left with no way to pay the mortgage, to take the kids to the doctor, to pay their heating bills, to be able to hold it together, waiting for this economy to turn around and jobs to be available, jobs they so desperately want.

It is getting cold outside. Winter is coming and families across the country are turning on their heaters for the first time in months. They need us to extend unemployment insurance so they can keep the heat on for their kids. Pulling the rug out from under these hard-working men and women doesn't just hurt them and their families, it hurts every community and it hurts our economy in America. When they can afford to pay their bills, that money goes back into the economy, as we know. We know that for every \$1 spent on unemployment benefits, \$2.15 goes back into the economy. That is exactly what we need at this point—immediate stimulus.

This is an incredibly difficult time for families, certainly in my State and all across the country. Blocking this legislation, saying no to everything, delaying everything—that is not going to pull us out of this recession and it is not going to help American families.

The time to act is now, right now. I urge my colleagues to stop blocking an important effort to help working men and women in this country, people who have followed the rules all their lives, have done nothing but find themselves at this place and this time, with the economy where it is, as we rebuild it—and we are and we will. We need to support them so they can do the right thing for their families and keep a roof over their heads and food on the table

and the lights on and the heat on and know that their country has got their back.

That is what this is about. We need to pass the extension of unemployment insurance now. I hope we will.

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

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

Mr. BROWN. I ask unanimous consent to speak up to 10 minutes as in morning business.

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

HEALTH CARE REFORM

Mr. BROWN. Mr. President, last night I joined Senator UDALL from New Mexico and Senator WHITEHOUSE and the Presiding Officer, Senator BURRIS, and some others. Senator DURBIN, the other Illinois Senator, was there too for part of the evening, talking about the public option and why it is so important to keep the insurance industry honest, to help constrain costs and to compete directly with private insurance so that people, as they join those who are uninsured, who want to get insurance, can choose. They can choose Cigna, they can choose Aetna, they can choose WellPoint, they can choose United. In my State they can choose Medical Mutual, or they can choose a public option, so they would have that choice and it provides more choice to people. It is not a government takeover in any way. It simply provides more choice for those people who are insured.

I come to the floor, day after day, sharing letters I received from people in Ohio, from Cincinnati and Dayton, from Athens and Saint Clairsville, from Toledo and Lima. People who generally write most of these letters are people who were satisfied with their health insurance. They thought they had pretty good health insurance.

They find out, when they get sick, that their health insurance isn't what they thought it was. They end up battling every week with their insurance company trying to get something paid for. They find out maybe their insurance coverage got cut off—insurance companies call it rescission, their official bureaucratic word—as so many people lose their health insurance when it has gotten too expensive. These are people who were satisfied with their insurance and then found out it is not so great after all.

I wish to share some of the letters I have received from Ohio. This is from Tony from Rocky River. He writes:

I'm the Executive Director of a provider of residential and group homes for people with developmental disabilities. We employ 250