

that amendment, and he has had that opportunity. But he doesn't choose to do that. He wants to be guaranteed he will win. There are no guarantees you can win.

There is a guarantee, because of his objection, that hundreds of thousands of unemployed Americans will lose. Come Sunday night, they will have their checks cut off. To be told people have a beating heart and care about unemployed people and to cut off their unemployment checks just doesn't track. I don't think it is any comfort to these families to believe you care, but you are going to cut off their checks anyway. What point are we making—how hard we can be, how tough we can be? At what expense? The most vulnerable families in America are going to suffer because of this political decision by one Senator. I think that is unfortunate. I am sorry he has objected.

I promised I would not renew the request this morning, but we will be back. We will try to get this done. I say those families, hang in there. After the politicians are finished with speeches and debates, America will not give up on you. It is going to be tough for a while, while we work out this political difference, but, unfortunately, that reflects the Senate and where it is today.

I yield the floor.

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. The Senator from Kentucky.

Mr. BUNNING. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the Senate proceed to the immediate consideration of H.R. 4691; that the amendment at the desk, which offers a full offset, be agreed to, the bill, as amended, be read a third time and passed, and the motion to reconsider be laid on the table.

Mr. DURBIN. I object.

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. Objection is heard.

Mr. BUNNING. We have tried to work this out with the majority, particularly after the pay-go vote last week. When 100 Senators are for a bill and we can't find \$10 billion to pay for it, there is something the matter, seriously the matter with this body. I said that last night. I don't wish to repeat myself. I have offered several ways to pay for it. If everybody in this Chamber—and there are no Senators except me here right now, but there are 100 Members of this body—believes, as the Senator from Illinois does, that this is essential and we should pass it, then we should pay for it. There are going to be other bills brought to the floor that are not going to be paid for, and I am going to object every time they do it. I don't much agree with the Chairman of the Federal Reserve, but it was striking yesterday when he said if the present level of debt and the present administration's budget is passed, the debt of the United States will be unsustainable. "Unsustainable" to me means there is a chance of one of the rating agencies downgrading the rating on our debt. We cannot allow that to

happen. I have too many young grandchildren who want America to be the same America I grew up in. I am worried to death that will not be the case.

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.

Mr. REID. 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.

#### EXECUTIVE SESSION

#### NOMINATION OF BARBARA MILANO KEENAN TO BE UNITED STATES CIRCUIT JUDGE FOR THE FOURTH CIRCUIT

Mr. REID. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the Senate proceed to executive session to consider Calendar No. 527, the nomination of Barbara Milano Keenan, of Virginia, to be U.S. circuit judge for the Fourth Circuit.

The assistant legislative clerk read the nomination of Barbara Milano Keenan, of Virginia, to be United States Circuit Judge for the Fourth Circuit.

#### CLOTURE MOTION

Mr. REID. I have a cloture motion at the desk.

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. The cloture motion having been presented under rule XXII, the Chair directs the clerk to read the motion.

The assistant legislative clerk read as follows:

#### CLOTURE MOTION

We, the undersigned Senators, in accordance with the provisions of rule XXII of the Standing Rules of the Senate, hereby move to bring to a close debate on the nomination of Barbara Milano Keenan, of Virginia, to be a United States Circuit Judge for the Fourth Circuit.

Harry Reid, Herb Kohl, Sheldon Whitehouse, Richard J. Durbin, Benjamin L. Cardin, Patty Murray, Mark Begich, Kirsten E. Gillibrand, Mark R. Warner, Russell D. Feingold, Al Franken, Roland W. Burris, Dianne Feinstein, Patrick J. Leahy, Barbara Boxer, Charles E. Schumer, Edward E. Kaufman.

Mr. REID. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that on Tuesday, March 2, after a period of morning business, the Senate proceed to executive session to resume consideration of the Keenan nomination; that the time until 12:15 p.m. be for debate only on a vote on the motion to invoke cloture on the nomination, with the time equally divided and controlled between Senators Leahy and Sessions or their designees; that at 12:15 p.m., the Senate proceed to vote on the motion to invoke cloture with the mandatory quorum waived.

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

#### LEGISLATIVE SESSION

Mr. REID. I now ask unanimous consent that the Senate resume legislative session.

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

#### UNEMPLOYMENT COMPENSATION

Mr. REID. Mr. President, we talk a lot in the Senate about procedure. Our debates sometimes relate only to procedure, and often that is appropriate. As we know, sometimes these procedural rules we have in the Senate are complex. But the issue before us today is not something that is arcane, very ritualistic, or very complex. It is very simple. It is clear that it is going to be a lot more noticeable by people Monday morning because it is going to affect the lives of thousands of Americans and their livelihoods.

The issue before us is this: Our country is in a state of economic turmoil. Lots of people are out of work. Lots of people have been out of work for a long time. They are trying to make ends meet drawing unemployment compensation, which is something we have had in effect in this country for a long time. By Monday morning, tens of thousands of Nevadans and more than a million Americans who rely on unemployment insurance and health benefits will simply lose them.

We have traditionally, during times of stress, automatically given unemployment benefits, and we should do that. These people are getting poorer every day. They are out of work for long periods of time. Unemployment is rampant in every single State in the country, some worse than others. So many of those unemployed have lost their jobs through no fault of their own.

Those opposed to helping people who are down and out, at a time of their greatest need, should not have to talk about process. If you can't afford to feed your kids, process doesn't mean a thing. If you can't make your car payment, it doesn't mean one thing to talk about process. If you can't make your house payment, if you can't go to the drugstore and buy a prescription that needs to be filled, process doesn't matter.

If we do not act, these benefits will expire, but the need to buy groceries, medicine, make a car payment or house payment does not expire. Those benefits will expire but the need to heat their homes—it is wintertime—or put gas in their cars doesn't expire. They do not care about the procedure or process. Those benefits will expire. I repeat, the need to take their medicine does not or the need to take care of an aging parent or to take care of their children does not expire. They don't care a thing about process.

The catch here is that these benefits do not need to expire. We have the ability right now to extend them for just a