

opposition to the regime, halt the development of nuclear weapons, and support the Iranian people's drive for freedom.

VOTE EXPLANATION

Mr. KERRY. Mr. President, I am necessarily absent for the vote today on the FDA Food Safety Modernization Act, S. 510. If I were able to attend, I would have supported the motion to proceed to the bill.

NEED FOR BIPARTISAN RESOLUTION OF TAX ISSUES

Mr. BROWN of Massachusetts. Mr. President, I rise today to discuss the need for Congress to resolve an issue of importance to millions of Americans: specifically, the need for a bipartisan agreement on taxes.

As the end of the year approaches, Americans face an extraordinary level of uncertainty regarding a number of tax issues: the 2001/2003 tax cuts, including the tax rates on dividends and capital gains, the alternative minimum tax, the estate tax, and last but not least, the extension of many expiring tax provisions affecting individuals, businesses, nonprofit organizations and even members of the U.S. Armed Forces. During this lameduck session, Congress and the White House have an opportunity to work together to develop a package that addresses all of these.

In my view, we should not be raising taxes on any business or individual during a fragile economic recovery. The private sector—this country's job creation engine—continues to struggle, lacking the required stability and confidence needed to expand and hire new workers. Individuals, in turn, have been significantly impacted, further inhibiting economic growth. Uncertainty is a major factor, and one way to reduce uncertainty is to lock down our tax policy for the next few years, giving taxpayers a clear sense of what to expect as we enter 2011.

On the tax extenders, I bring to the Senate's attention a letter just sent to Congress today from over 1,200 organizations located around the country. These are businesses, nonprofit organizations, and organizations representing our men and women in uniform. It points out the crucial nature of the expiring provisions, and asks Congress to extend them before the end of the year. This is a remarkable letter. We often hear from the business community about the importance of tax extenders for job creation, but here we have not only the business community speaking up, but also affordable housing organizations, community development organizations, and the National Education Association and the National Science Teachers Association. The letter is signed by the Alliance to Save Energy and numerous renewable energy organizations. It includes the Association of the United States Navy and the Re-

serve Officer Association. It includes agricultural organizations and technology councils.

In short, this is a statement from a breadth of organizations which do not often work together. I think we have to take this kind of letter very seriously and consider its message carefully. And its message is that these provisions are very important to millions of Americans, and that our failure to extend them could have a significant dampening effect on the economy. And I also want to be clear about something: this should be a "clean" extension of these policies—we shouldn't be raising taxes on other businesses at the same time and thereby blunting the impact of this important action for the economy.

One of the best known of the extenders is the R&D tax credit. It actually expired at the end of 2009, so America's innovative companies—many of them with operations in Massachusetts—have been wondering all year if Congress is going to reinstate the most visible public policy that encourages new ideas and technologies in this country. This is an area where our commitment should not be in doubt.

There are incentives for the production of domestic alternative energy sources and energy efficient products such as hybrid vehicles, energy efficient appliances, homes, and windows. Without these incentives, many producers will not be able to make these products. In fact, many have already discontinued operations in the absence of credits which expired at the end of 2009. The deductions for donations of funds, property, food, and equipment to charities is also hanging in the balance of this package.

There is the deduction for State and local sales taxes. Think about individuals losing the ability to deduct State and local taxes from their Federal taxes. There is the deduction for teacher classroom expenses. Teachers spending their own money for their classrooms is more common than we like to think about, and the least we can do is allow them to deduct those expenses from their tax bill. There is the credit for employers who continue to pay employees while on active duty in the U.S. Armed Forces. This is an important support mechanism for our men and women in uniform, and we should ensure that it remains in place. These are just a few of the tax provisions which have expired or will soon expire. I invite my colleagues to review the Joint Tax Committee's list of the expiring provisions. It is crucial for Congress to act this year to extend as many of them as possible.

Ultimately, I believe we need to reform our Tax Code to lower tax rates and broaden the base. I know Senators BAUCUS and GRASSLEY have already begun that process with a Finance Committee hearing on tax reform earlier this year, and I salute them for starting that conversation. We look forward to working on such a package of reforms on a bipartisan basis in the

112th Congress, but for now, extending the expiring provisions should be a top priority for the remainder of this Congress.

Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent to have printed in the RECORD the November 16 letter from over 1,200 organizations from around the country to which I referred.

There being no objection, the material was ordered to be printed in the RECORD, as follows:

NOVEMBER 16, 2010.

TO THE MEMBERS OF THE U.S. CONGRESS: The undersigned represent millions of individuals, businesses, organizations and members of the U.S. Armed Forces. We urge Congress to pass legislation in the lame duck session to extend critical tax provisions that, while temporary in nature, are critical to our economy. It is of the utmost importance to all of us, and to the health of the U.S. economy, that this extension be enacted before the end of the year and apply seamlessly, at least through 2011.

Expiration of many of these provisions has already caused job losses, and the uncertainty around their extension will lead to further dislocations just as the fragile economic recovery is beginning. We all look forward to working with you on this issue in the coming weeks.

Sincerely,

(Signed by over 1,200 organizations)

NATIONAL SURVIVORS OF SUICIDE DAY

Mr. JOHNSON. Mr. President, each November we set aside a day of healing for those who have lost someone to suicide. I rise today to again recognize Saturday, November 20 as National Survivors of Suicide Day. In 1999, a Senate resolution created this annual event through the efforts of Senator HARRY REID who lost his father to suicide. This year, on November 20, over 270 conferences will take place in the U.S. and around the world to allow survivors of suicide the opportunity to connect with others who have experienced the tragedy of suicide loss and to allow for healing interactions.

The importance of this day is amplified by the shocking statistics on suicide—suicide is the 11th leading cause of death in the United States. Nationwide, approximately 90 lives are lost to suicide each day and over 34,000 die by suicide each year. Suicide is truly an epidemic that devastates thousands of families in the United States each year.

In my State of South Dakota, one suicide occurs every 3 to 4 days and 107 lives are lost each year. These statistics place South Dakota among a group of Western States that consistently has a higher rate of suicide than the rest of the country. Suicide is the fourth leading cause of death among all South Dakotans and is the second leading cause of death of South Dakotans between the ages of 15–34. Suicide among American Indians in South Dakota is of particular concern—the suicide rate for American Indians ages 15–34 is more than three times higher than the national average and the suicide rate for