

and Idalis, and many other beloved family members and friends.

I would like the family of SGT Michael C. Cable to know this Senate recognizes that Sergeant Cable was doing his job, and we are filled with gratitude. Without the men and women brave enough to wear our country's uniform and do the jobs our country asks them to do, I fear for what would become of our Nation.

I know my colleagues join me in honoring Sergeant Cable for his life of service and for his tragic sacrifice, and I extend my deepest condolences to Michael's family for their loss 1 year ago today.

Mr. President, I yield the floor.

RESERVATION OF LEADER TIME

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. Under the previous order, the leadership time is reserved.

MORNING BUSINESS

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. Under the previous order, the Senate will be in a period of morning business until 10:30 a.m. Senators are permitted to speak therein for up to 10 minutes each, with time equally divided between the two leaders or their designees, with the Republicans controlling the first half.

The Senator from South Dakota.

MIDTERM ELECTIONS

Mr. THUNE. Mr. President, yesterday the Democrats in the Senate held a news conference in which they rolled out their agenda, which has been described differently by different news organizations. The headline from the Washington Examiner said: "Majority threatened, Democrats take up populace agenda to distract from ObamaCare." The Wall Street Journal headline said: "Senate Democrats try to change subject from ObamaCare." The New York Times in reporting on that story, their headline was: "Democrats, as Part of Midterm Strategy to Schedule Votes on Pocketbook Issues." So that was a little more, perhaps, flattening headline.

In the story in the New York Times, it goes on to say:

The proposals have little chance of passing. But Democrats concede that making new laws is not really the point. Rather, they are trying to force Republicans to vote against them.

Later on in the story, the New York Times goes on to say:

Part of the goal is to energize the Democratic base, which will be crucial to turnout in the more conservative states where the party needs to win this year.

So everybody kind of gets the joke that this is really about the midterm elections. The agenda the Democrats are now rolling out is designed to try to create a distraction away from their economic record and from ObamaCare.

It is interesting to me because the Democrats have been the majority in

the Senate now for 8 years. So you would think by now this sort of an agenda would have been inactive. In fact, for a few years they had a filibuster-proof majority in the Senate. They had 60 votes and could do literally anything they wanted. Most of these items now are being rolled out because it is, as I said, an election year, and they are saying: These are things that we can do for the American people.

Well, I think the American people are saying enough already. You have done enough to us. Please don't do any more.

The agenda is being described as a fair shot for everyone. Well, I think the American people, perhaps, don't see it as a shot for them as they do a shot at them.

If you look at the last several years as any indication of that, it hasn't worked very well. The agenda that has been advanced by the Democrats here in the Senate and by the President of the United States has left us with a sluggish economy, chronic high unemployment, massive amounts of debt, the lowest labor participation rate, literally, that we have seen in 35 years. In fact, last year the economy grew at 0.9 percent. So you have this sluggish economy sputtering along, and the American people are asking: Where are the jobs? Where is the take-home pay?

Since the President took office, household income in this country has gone down—not up—by \$3,700 per family. If you look at all the policies put in place by the Democratic majority, there isn't really anything that you could point to that helps create jobs mainly because it is heavy handed, top-down management from Washington, DC.

The American people need policies that will unleash the American free enterprise system and unleash the entrepreneurs and small businesses that would allow them to grow this economy and expand this economy. That is better for everyone. Every middle-class American in this country wants a better quality of life, a better standard of life for their children and grandchildren than what they have experienced. This may be the first generation of Americans where this is not true. Why? Because policies in Washington, DC, make it more difficult, more expensive, to create jobs.

You can go down the list. If you look at ObamaCare, according to the Congressional Budget Office, ObamaCare is going to result in 2.5 million fewer full-time workers. According to the CBO, there will be 2.5 million fewer full-time workers over the next decade and \$1 trillion in lower wages. Fewer jobs and lower take-home pay is what we are seeing as a result of the policies that have been put in place by the Democratic majority in the Senate and by the President of the United States.

Yesterday there was another announcement about yet another delay of ObamaCare—which will be, I think, the

30th delay that we have seen so far with regard to that legislation. In speaking about that delay, the majority leader of the Senate said yesterday that he thought the delay was necessary because people weren't educated enough about how to use the Internet. Only in Washington, DC—only in Washington, DC—do you see politicians blaming the American people for their failures because that is essentially what the ObamaCare legislation is. By and large I think most people would conclude it just isn't working. It didn't add up in the first place, and it is not working.

It is creating fewer jobs, higher premiums, higher deductibles, lower take-home pay for the American people, fewer choices for doctors and hospitals, and the idea that it is the fault of the American people because they are not educated enough to use the Internet—my dad is 94 years old. He lives in my hometown of Myrtle, SD, a town of about 500 people. He uses the Internet every single day.

I don't think the problem is the Internet or that people in this country aren't educated enough to use the Internet. I think it has a lot more to do with the fact that incompetence here in Washington, DC, led to a failed rollout that confused millions of Americans. That is not the responsibility of, nor should we blame, the American people for that. That is government trying to do big things and not doing them well. The government doesn't do complicated things very well.

So when you hear of the new agenda coming out from the Democratic majority in the Senate, that we are going to do this for the American people; we are going to do that for the American people and talk about a minimum wage increase—again, you have a Congressional Budget Office saying that raising the minimum wage by 40 percent, which is what is being proposed, would, in fact, cost the economy up to a million jobs and also would raise prices.

It is going to raise prices on the people that will be hurt the most by price increases—lower-income Americans. Instead of putting policies in place that cost the American economy jobs, we ought to be looking at things that actually create jobs.

We have a proposal called the Keystone Pipeline which the President's own State Department has said would create 42,000 jobs. So those are real jobs, shovel-ready jobs that would be available today. Instead we want to put policies in place that are actually going to cost the economy jobs. If you're an American citizen out there and you hear Washington, DC, is going to do more for you, yet again, you have got to be saying: Whoa, you know, hold the phone. We have seen enough of that already. We have seen this picture before, and we have seen what results when the government tries to do big and complicated things. It just doesn't work very well.

The Web site rollout is a perfect example of that, as is the 2,700-page

ObamaCare legislation followed by about 25,000 pages of regulations, which people in this country have to try and discern and figure out.

I would submit that there are things that will create jobs. We know the Keystone Pipeline will create jobs. Passing trade promotion authority and allowing our trade negotiators to create more market opportunities for small businesses and farmers and ranchers and entrepreneurs in this country and around the world will create jobs. Passing trade promotion authority and getting the Trans-Pacific Partnership and the European trade agreement enacted they say will expose American businesses to 1 billion new consumers worldwide. Those are the types of things that do create jobs, and we know that.

Instead of having an election year agenda that is transparently stated to be that, why don't we actually talk about things that will create jobs and will improve the overall standard of living for people in this country?

I would make one other observation, and that is another thing coming out of the administration right now, which will be incredibly harmful to the economy and make it very difficult for lower income and middle-class Americans to make ends meet, are policies coming out of the EPA that are going to drive the cost of energy. Energy is an important input. It is a huge factor in places such as South Dakota where we have a cold-weather climate and an agricultural-based economy. We travel long distances to get places. When you talk about raising the cost of energy in a State such as South Dakota, you are significantly increasing the cost of doing business in a way that will make it more difficult and more expensive to create the jobs we need, get people back to work, and get the economy growing at a faster rate. These things are harmful to job growth.

I talked to a bunch of small businesses in my State last week and asked them about some of these policies. I asked them: What are the biggest obstacles right now to your success and what are things that could be done that would actually be helpful?

Of course, ObamaCare is something that immediately comes up, but also the whole issue of the minimum wage. The smallest business owner I talked to I believe had 30 employees and the largest had maybe a little over 200 employees. They said, look, this is a job killer. What that means is we are not going to be able to hire as many people. It adds significant higher operating costs every year to our businesses and makes it more difficult to create the jobs for the people who actually need those jobs, most of whom, in a lot of these places, are going to be young people who are trying to get that first job and make their way up the economic ladder.

There are lots of things we could talk about that do address the problem rather than just addressing the symp-

toms, and we want to vote on an extension. We are going to vote on an extension of unemployment insurance, which will be the thirteenth time we have done that. When you go through an economic downturn, obviously there is a need to help people who have lost jobs and been displaced in the economy. But when are we going to start focusing on the problem rather than the symptom?

The problem is we have almost 4 million Americans who have been unemployed for more than 6 months. We ought to be looking at what we can do to create jobs for the people who don't have jobs in our economy. I have introduced an amendment to the unemployment insurance legislation, which I don't think is going to get voted on, that has some simple solutions.

One of those things is to waive the employer mandate for any employer who hires somebody who has been unemployed for more than 6 months. So if you are a long-term unemployed person and an employer hires that person, you get a waiver from the employer mandate which could save an employer several thousand dollars a year. It also calls for a 6-month payroll tax holiday for employers, which if you have a \$40,000-a-year employee on your payroll, you would save about \$2,400. You could save \$4,000, \$5,000, or \$6,000 a year in the cost of hiring someone with those two suggestions. Another suggestion is to allow people to have access to low-interest loans—up to \$10,000—to relocate to places where there is lower unemployment.

My State of South Dakota is looking for workers. When I travel through my communities, we can't find workers. One of the biggest obstacles for people to get to jobs is to relocate. If we gave them a low-interest loan that would allow them to move to places where there is low unemployment and where there are jobs, it would make a lot of sense.

Finally, it adopts the SKILLS Act that has passed the House of Representatives, which consolidates 35 Federal programs into 9 programs so you don't have all of this duplication and overlap in all of these Federal programs for worker training and shifts that resource out to the States where States can design programs that actually prepare and equip the people in their States for the jobs that are available.

Those are the types of solutions we ought to be talking about rather than top-down, heavyhanded, government-driven solutions that make it more difficult to create jobs and is equivalent to throwing a big wet blanket on the American economy at the time we can least afford it.

My State of South Dakota is a good example. We have balanced our budget every year since 1889. We have zero personal income tax, zero corporate income tax, and we have a very well-trained, hard-working, educated workforce. We have a good climate for doing

business with a light regulatory touch. We have a low unemployment rate and a vibrant economy mainly because we understand that it isn't the government that creates jobs.

When the Senate Democrats and the President come out with the election-year, poll-tested agenda, which is clearly driven simply to try to generate votes in the midterm elections rather than actually solve the problems—and it says that in the stories. The stories are very transparent about what they are trying to do. We ought to be focused on things that actually create jobs, such as passing the Keystone Pipeline, passing trade promotion authority, and looking at real solutions that do more than just treat symptoms, and actually get at the problems.

The problem is we have too many people in this economy who have been unemployed for a long period of time. We need to get them back to work and get the economy growing faster than 1.9 percent a year. If we get growth back up to 3 or 4 percent a year, it will dramatically change the future for middle-class families in this country, and that is what we ought to be focused on.

I yield the floor.

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. The Senator from Washington.

Mrs. MURRAY. I thank the Chair.

(The remarks of Mrs. MURRAY pertaining to the introduction of S. 2164 are printed in today's RECORD under "Statements on Introduced Bills and Joint Resolutions.")

Mrs. MURRAY. Thank you, Mr. President.

I yield the floor.

CONCLUSION OF MORNING BUSINESS

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. Morning business is closed.

PROVIDING FOR THE COSTS OF LOAN GUARANTEES FOR UKRAINE

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. Under the previous order, the Senate will proceed to the consideration of H.R. 4152, which the clerk will report.

The legislative clerk read as follows:

A bill (H.R. 4152) to provide for the costs of loan guarantees for Ukraine.

Pending:

Reid (for Menendez/Corker) amendment No. 2867, to provide a complete substitute.

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. Under the previous order, the time until 12 noon will be equally divided and controlled between the two leaders or their assigned designees.

The Senator from Washington.

Mrs. MURRAY. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the time under quorum calls be equally divided between the majority and the minority.

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