the Federal Employees Health Benefits Program.

There are a number of insurance plans that Federal employees can choose from, offered by a number of different insurance companies. Currently, 178 of the Federal employees health benefit programs offer abortion coverage; 167 of them do not. Two-thirds of private sector health plans offer abortion services. Seventy percent of HMO's offer abortion coverage. If Congress strikes this committee amendment, Federal employees are being denied a benefit which is part of the majority of benefits packages available to non-Government employees.

Federal employees pay a portion of the cost of their benefits. A Federal employee who chooses the Blue Cross/Blue Shield Federal benefits package pays $44.04 per month directly out of pocket. The balance of the premium is an earned benefit. It is compensation. Let me repeat that for those who may not understand—it is not a gift from the Federal Government to its employees; it is earned by those employees, including the women employees. Given that fact, to single out one procedure that her health care policy will not cover, even though she can choose a health plan that does not provide this procedure, is ridiculous.

The reality of this issue is that most women who choose to have an abortion do not use their insurance coverage to pay for it. Most women want to keep the matter private. But even if most women do not use these benefits, there is a matter of principle here. We should remove the intrusion of politicians and politics from employee compensation issues. The Congress should not be discriminating against women. The Congress should not be playing politics with women's lives. The women of Illinois sent me to the Senate to make sure that Congress stopped playing ''Father Knows Best.''

FEDERAL EMPLOYEES BENEFIT PROGRAM

Mr. KERRY. Failing in their efforts to make abortion illegal, opponents of abortion are trying to make it more deadly. The AMA has shown that funding restrictions that deter or delay women from seeking early abortions increase the likelihood that they will bear unwanted children, continue health-threatening pregnancies to term, or undergo abortion procedures that endanger their lives.

Abortion coverage is offered by over two-thirds of private health insurance plans, and just over half of the Federal Employee Health Benefits Plans [FEHBPs]. Approximately 1.2 million women of reproductive age rely on the FEHBP for their medical care. Because Congress has some measure of authority over the health benefits of this large pool of women, it is no surprise that abortion opponents target on it in their campaign to eliminate reproductive freedom.

A ban on abortion coverage under FEHBP is inconsistent with the treatment of all other health services, which are included or excluded by health plans based on decisions made by the plans themselves, not by Congress. It is, in this respect, an intrusion in to the operations of the free market about which some of the most ardent supporters of this amendment sermonize so often. Barring abortion coverage for women and families working for the Federal Government denies these individuals a benefit they would most likely be able to obtain if they worked for a private employer.

Let us not be confused by this debate into thinking that this ban would save money. In fact, it is an expensive ban, both financially—because the health risks associated with out-of-plan abortions and ordinary, let alone complicated, births are not slight—and socially. These dogged, exhaustive efforts to chip away at a woman's constitutional right to choose lead to anxiety about the security of all our precious, constitutionally guaranteed freedoms. This is an unnecessary, unfair attempt to attack a fundamental, legal right that applies only to women. I urge my colleagues to join me in defeating this ban, because it is ill-advised, expensive, inappropriate, and wrong.

Mr. BINGAMAN. Mr. President, I do not want to take much of the Senate's time this morning, but I would like to make a couple of points in support of the committee amendment to strike certain provisions of the House-passed bill.

If we must have this debate, I believe it is appropriate that we have it today, Saturday. Having the debate on the weekend will give more of the 1.2 million women who work for the Federal Government the opportunity to hear this discussion.

As women listen to this debate, I hope they are as disappointed and disgusted with it as I am. This debate strikes me as the height of arrogance.

We are here today, in our great benevolence, to decide which fundamental rights and what health benefits will be available to the 1.2 million women who work for the Federal Government.

Mr. President, there should not even be a debatable question here. Whether my colleagues on the other side like it or not, the Supreme Court has spoken: Women in this country have the fundamental right to choose.

The law, the right, and the privilege are clear. Whether or not to exercise that right is a personal decision. It is a decision to be made by a woman and her doctor, not by a group of 90 or so men in the U.S. Senate.

Mr. President, women who work for the Federal Government pay nearly 30 percent of their health care premiums. This is more than most workers in the private sector pay, when an employer agrees to provide health care coverage. In neither cases, the private or public sector, is health insurance coverage a fringe benefit. Health care coverage is part of an employee's compensation for service rendered to the employer; and for the past 2 years, Federal employees, like most workers in the private sector, have had the option of choosing a health plan that covers the full range of reproductive health services, including abortion.

Are we going to reverse this policy today? Are we going to issue a Draconian mandate, for purely political reasons, that applies only to women who work for the Postal Service, the Justice Department, the National Park Service, the Department of Labor, and the other branches of the Federal Government? For these women, are we in the Congress going to decide that reproductive health services includes every other health service except abortion? Are we saying to these women ''Sure, come work for the Federal Government. Devote yourself to public service—but don't forget to check your constitutional rights at the door.''

That is what this debate is about. It is an attempt by anti-choice Members of the Congress, who have failed to make abortion illegal, to make the fundamental right to choose more difficult, more expensive, and more dangerous.

Mr. President, this is just the first step. Today it is the hard working women in the Federal Government. Next, it will be Medicaid recipients and American Indian women who depend on the Indian Health Service for their health care. Then it will be family planning services, which millions of women and girls depend upon. And on and on and on, until the goal of the radical right is realized and abortion is made illegal.

This is the road we are on. Each Member of this body should understand this, and every woman in America should understand this.

Whose marching orders will we follow? Will we follow the extreme political agenda of the radical right, or will we follow the Constitution, as affirmed by the Supreme Court more than 20 years ago in Roe versus Wade? The Members of the House have already made their decision. They opted for the radical right. I sincerely hope my colleagues in the Senate have the wisdom to choose the other course.

We should uphold the Constitution. We should respect the fundamental right of every woman to reproductive choice, regardless of where she is employed, or whether she is employed. We should get out of this ridiculous business of micromanaging the lives and choices of hard-working Americans. And we should reject this blatant attempt to discriminate against women who work for the Federal Government and rob them of their fundamental right to choose.

Ms. MIKULSKI. Mr. President, we are now coming to the end of this debate. I know we have only a few minutes. This is where good and honorable people can differ.

I ask the Senator from Oklahoma, on his idea of modifying his rape and incest amendment, if he would also add the language medically necessary?

Mr. NICKLES. No, I do not think that is defined well. I think we know what rape and incest mean. Medically necessary is ambiguous. I would not agree.

Ms. MIKULSKI. Later this afternoon I will offer that amendment and we will be able to expound on what medically necessary means.

In conclusion, I believe Federal employees should have the same right to determine what is necessary or appropriate for their health as private sector employees do.

Restrictions ignore the reality of women's lives. Half of all pregnancies are unplanned, contraceptive failure, and also there are medically appropriate and medically necessary circumstances beyond rape and incest that necessitate the performance of an abortion.

This is not about what is decided for coverage under the Federal employees. It is not about what is decided but who decides. The principle of self-determination, freedom, reproductive, and otherwise, personal responsibility, the prohibitions on Federal health insurance benefits violates all these principles.

I urge my colleagues to defeat the amendment that is pending. I believe that the issue, the fundamental issue pending before us, is discrimination against women. Restrictions on primary health care services, especially where those restrictions apply only to services required by a particular group—in this case, women—does constitute discrimination. Striking the committee amendment would perpetuate discrimination against women employees and their dependents.

Let us be clear about what funding restrictions for Federal health insurance means. It means women who work for the Federal Government or receive health insurance benefits from the Federal Government will be denied the same coverage for abortion as they would receive if they worked in the private sector, that private sector that receives tax subsidies, which is really a form of taxpayers' money, to provide that private sector insurance.

It means that women receiving the health insurance coverage through the Federal Government will be denied their basic constitutional protection for obtaining an abortion under the health insurance program in which they pay for their services. It would mean that women who receive their health care coverage through the Federal Government will continue to get second-class health care.

Congress should not micromanage the Federal employees benefit programs, and the Congress of the United States should not put itself between a woman and her physician on what is determined to be medically necessary or medically appropriate.

I urge the defeat of the amendment.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Maryland has 1 minute remaining, and the Senator from Oklahoma has 1 minute.

Mr. NICKLES. Mr. President, I apologize. I had every intention of trying to yield back time. The debate became a little hotter and that was not to happen.

Let me clarify where we are. I heard my colleague from Maryland. She urged defeat of the amendment. We are voting on a committee amendment that struck the House language. I hope people will vote ''no'' because I want to preserve the House language. I want to preserve the House language that says no funds will be used for Federal employees to buy health insurance unless necessary to protect the life of the mother.

I also planned on amending that language and putting in a rape and incest exception. I would do it now but am prohibited from doing that. I understand that.

I want to protect the lives of unborn children. Senator SMITH from New Hampshire said before we had this prohibition, the Federal Government paid for 17,000 abortions. Then we placed a restriction in 1983. The language we are trying to insert now, or keep alive the House language, is the exact same language that this Government had for 10 years between 1984 and 1993. It saved thousands of lives. Somebody said, well, it saved money. My interest is not the money so much as I want to save lives. I do not want taxpayers to have to subsidize abortion as a fringe benefit.

Take a poll of people, ask any poll, Do you think taxpayers' funds should be used to subsidize abortion, and the answer is no. Overwhelmingly no. Not close, Mr. President, 70 to 80 percent.

I heard my colleague say, get the Government out of this area. I want the Government to quit financing abortions. That is the reason we have this amendment.

I urge my colleague to vote no on the committee amendment.

Ms. MIKULSKI. The Senator from Oklahoma then does not intend to table?

Mr. NICKLES. That is correct.

Ms. MIKULSKI. This is a straight up-or-down vote.

Mr. NICKLES. Mr. President, I ask for the yeas and nays on the committee amendment.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Is there a sufficient second? There is a sufficient second.

The yeas and nays were ordered.

Ms. MIKULSKI. For this portion of the debate on this amendment, we have concluded it. I thank all of my colleagues who spoke, the Democratic women of the Senate, I thank the good men of the Senate who support a woman's right to choose, and I thank our Republican colleagues, because I think we have demonstrated that our position is a bipartisan position and a right position.

Mr. KENNEDY. Would the Senator yield and explain the vote that we are about to have. There is some confusion.

Ms. MIKULSKI. A vote ''aye'' would be to retain the position of the Senator from Maryland and to retain the committee amendment that was offered by Senator SHELBY and is current law.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The question is on agreeing to the committee amendment which appears on page 76, lines 10 through 17. The yeas and nays have been ordered. The clerk will call the roll.

The legislative clerk called the roll.

Mr. EXON, when his name was called, Present.

Mr. LOTT. I announce that the Senator from New Hampshire [Mr. GREGG], the Senator from Indiana [Mr. LUGAR], the Senator from Alaska [Mr. MURKOWSKI], and the Senator from Alaska [Mr. STEVENS], are necessarily absent.

Mr. FORD. I announce that the Senator from Arkansas [Mr. BUMPERS], and the Senator from Arkansas [Mr. PRYOR], are necessarily absent.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Are there any other Senators in the Chamber desiring to vote?

The result was announced—yeas 52, nays 41, as follows:

[Rollcall Vote No. 369 Leg.]

YEAS—52

Akaka	Feinstein	Moseley-Braun
Baucus	Glenn	Moynihan
Bingaman	Graham	Murray
Boxer	Harkin	Nunn
Bradley	Hollings	Packwood
Brown	Hutchison	Pell
Bryan	Inouye	Robb
Byrd	Jeffords	Rockefeller
Campbell	Kassebaum	Roth
Chafee	Kennedy	Sarbanes
Cochran	Kerrey	Simon
Cohen	Kerry	Simpson
Conrad	Kohl	Snowe
Daschle	Lautenberg	Specter
Dodd	Leahy	Thompson
Domenici	Levin	Wellstone
Dorgan	Lieberman	
Feingold	Mikulski	

NAYS—41

Abraham	Ford	Lott
Ashcroft	Frist	Mack
Bennett	Gorton	McCain
Biden	Gramm	McConnell
Bond	Grams	Nickles
Breaux	Grassley	Pressler
Burns	Hatch	Reid
Coats	Hatfield	Santorum
Coverdell	Heflin	Shelby
Craig	Helms	Smith
D'Amato	Inhofe	Thomas
DeWine	Johnston	Thurmond
Dole	Kempthorne	Warner
Faircloth	Kyl	

ANSWERED ''PRESENT''—1

Exon

NOT VOTING—6

Bumpers	Lugar	Pryor
Gregg	Murkowski	Stevens

So the committee amendment on page 76, lines 10 through 17 was agreed to.

Ms. MIKULSKI. Mr. President, I move to reconsider the vote.

Mrs. BOXER. I move to lay that motion on the table.

The motion to lay on the table was agreed to.

Mr. NICKLES addressed the Chair.

COMMITTEE AMENDMENT ON PAGE 2, BEGINNING ON LINE 14

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The pending question is now the first committee amendment which appears on page 2, line 14 of the bill.

Mr. NICKLES addressed the Chair.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Oklahoma.

AMENDMENT NO. 2153, TO COMMITTEE AMENDMENT ON PAGE 2, LINE 14

(Purpose: Prohibit taxpayer funding for abortions covered by the Federal Employee Health Benefit Program)

Mr. NICKLES. Mr. President, I send an amendment to the desk and ask for its immediate consideration.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will report the amendment.

The legislative clerk read as follows:

The Senator from Oklahoma [Mr. NICKLES] proposes an amendment numbered 2153.

Mr. NICKLES. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that reading of the amendment be dispensed with.

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

The amendment is as follows:

At the end of the Committee amendment on Page 2, Line 14, add the following:

SEC. . No funds appropriated by this Act shall be available to pay for an abortion, or the administrative expenses in connection with any health plan under the Federal employees health benefit program which provides any benefits or coverage for abortions.

SEC. . The provision of section shall not apply where the life of the mother would be endangered if the fetus were carried to term, or that the pregnancy is the result of an act of rape or incest.

Mr. NICKLES addressed the Chair.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Oklahoma.

Mr. NICKLES. Mr. President, may we have order?

Mr. KERREY. Mr. President, regular order.

What is the pending business?

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Nickles amendment, which the clerk has reported.

Mr. KERREY. Is not the committee amendment the pending business?

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The committee amendment is pending, and the Senator from Oklahoma has offered an amendment.

Mr. NICKLES addressed the Chair.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Oklahoma has offered a second-degree amendment.

The Senator from Oklahoma.

Ms. MIKULSKI. Mr. President, the Senate is not in order.

I would like to hear the Senator from Oklahoma. We talk a lot about courtesy. If Senators will take their seats so we can hear what the Senator from Oklahoma says.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senate will be in order.

Mr. NICKLES. Mr. President, during the debate, I mentioned my interest and desire to include language that would be like the language that we voted on 2 years ago that would really be like the so-called Hyde language, which says no money shall be used for abortion except that necessary to save the life of the mother or in cases of rape and incest.

That is the language I have now submitted. That is the language I wanted to get into the bill last night and earlier today and was unsuccessful.

I know my colleague from Maryland has a different idea. She would like to have her amendment. I just mention that we have debated this for a long time. I am happy to vote up or down on my amendment and happy to vote up or down on the amendment of the Senator from Maryland. I do not know that we need any time. I think every person in this body knows exactly how they are going to vote on my amendment. They may or may not know how they will vote on the amendment of the Senator from Maryland. But it is not my intention or desire, I tell my friend from Nebraska, to delay this bill any longer. I was willing to agree to an hour time agreement on the first amendment. I am happy to enter into a very short time agreement on this amendment, on the amendment of the Senator from Maryland. If the Senator from Maryland has two amendments, that is the Senator's right and prerogative. And I am happy to enter into time agreements and see where the votes are.

Mr. KERREY. As I understand, the action that we just took was that the subcommittee in our legislation said we struck the general provisions that were offered by the House.

Mr. NICKLES. That is correct.

Mr. KERREY. The House offered a restriction on the use of health insurance saying health insurance could not be used to pay for abortions except if the life of the mother was in danger.

Mr. NICKLES. The Senator is correct.

Mr. KERREY. The action we took struck those general provisions. You are now saying you want to amend and require that it only be in the case of the life of the mother being in danger and rape and incest?

Mr. NICKLES. The Senator is correct.

Mr. KERREY. You would not agree to allow ''medically necessary and appropriate'' be added?

Mr. NICKLES. That is not in my language. The Senator is correct.

Mr. KERREY. You support ''rape and incest,'' but not ''medically necessary and appropriate.''

As I understand it, the Senator from Maryland wants to offer an amendment.

Ms. MIKULSKI. I say to the Senator from Nebraska and to the Senator from Oklahoma, should the amendment of the Senator from Oklahoma prevail, then I have two amendments that I will offer. One will deal with allowing abortions that are medically necessary and medically appropriate; leave the decision to the clinician. If that should be defeated, I will offer another amendment limiting it to medically appropriate.

I will say to the Senator from Oklahoma, there are many Senators who wish to speak. And there are many Senators who voluntarily reduced their time that they spoke on the last restriction to 5 minutes. There were Senators who wanted to speak extensively. One was the Senator from Pennsylvania on the other side of the aisle who actually went to the leader time because I could not accommodate him.

So at this point I cannot agree to a time agreement. If the two leaders have a different view and would like to discuss that with us, I would be happy to enter into a quorum call. But right now, I have colleagues that will want to talk about the yet one more restriction.

Mr. NICKLES. Mr. President, I appreciate the statement of my colleague from Maryland. I will just say we had 3 hours of debate on this issue. People know how they are going to vote. This is Hyde language. We have voted on this. Most of us voted on this several times. And I am happy to stay here as long as necessary. Just like I mentioned to my friend and colleague from Maryland that she has a right to offer her amendment, I have a right to offer my amendment. If it takes 10 minutes, that is fine. If it takes longer, that is fine, too.

I just hope we can vote. We have almost all of our colleagues here. We had a good vote, large attendance, on the last vote for a Saturday at 1. I do not know what the attendance is going to be on a Saturday at 3.

I think this is an important amendment since we are dealing with an issue that does affect the lives of a lot of unborn children and it does affect health insurance policies. So I think it is an important vote. I hope that we will vote on it very quickly.

My amendment is self-explanatory. It says no funds should be used to pay for abortions for Federal employees unless it is necessary to save the life of the mother or in cases of rape or incest. The Senator from North Dakota made a very passionate speech and mentioned—I remember when his wife was abducted. That was horrifying. But he also indicated that he would vote with us if we had the rape and incest amendment. Several of our colleagues have stated that.

I stated that I was going to give them that opportunity. I do not know why it would take very long for us to debate that. But I am happy to debate it as long as necessary. I urge we vote on it as quickly as possible. I also urge that we also vote very quickly on the other additional amendments of the Senator from Maryland.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. I would like to remind the Senators to address each other in the third person and to make addresses through the Chair.

Mr. KERREY addressed the Chair.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Nebraska.

Mr. KERREY. I spent so much time—I am trying to think what the third person is. That is the ''he'' ''they'' stuff?

Mr. President, when the majority leader asked if we were ready—and we had a meeting earlier this week with the Senator from Alabama, the chairman of the subcommittee, and the question was, are you all ready to go? I am not sure he said, ''you all.'' I guess I am in the Alabama talk. He said, ''Are you guys ready to go with this bill?'' We said the only controversial thing we have got is the abortion language having to do with health insurance. If we can get a time agreement, we would be prepared to go to this bill.

Last night we had an agreement. And this thing was humming along pretty comfortably. It looked like this would be the only vote, and we might be able to stack the remaining votes on Monday morning. Now it appears that it is coming unraveled. I just say it does not appear to me to be holding together much any longer. We had an agreement last night. It has broken apart.

The Senator from Oklahoma wants to offer another amendment. The Senator from Maryland will offer at least one additional amendment. We are stuck with the prospect now of being here all day long, voting on amendment after amendment after amendment. And, you know, just for the lay of the land, again, we are going to go into conference with the House. I do not know what is going to come back out of conference. It is not going to be language entirely struck. We are going to have to negotiate with the House to get some kind of language. It would not surprise me if we did not come up with language that is what neither the Senator from Oklahoma and the Senator from Maryland want. I do not know. Then, the President—they already promised to veto the darn thing, not on this but because we are cutting too much out of IRS. I do not know.

I say to the majority leader, in the third person here, I do not know whether or not it is advisable for us to continue on this bill. Maybe we ought to come back to the Senator and say, ''Gee, we were wrong. We thought we had an agreement. We thought we had made a good-faith effort to work with Members on a variety of other controversial amendments and have worked out an awful lot of differences.''

But it seems to me we are at a point where unless Members are enthusiastic about hanging around here all day long, voting on something that is apt to be vetoed by the President anyway, I do not know how much prospect we have for getting an agreement on this Treasury, Postal appropriations bill.

Mr. DOLE addressed the Chair.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The majority leader.

Mr. DOLE. Well, I just hope that the Senator from Nebraska will not give up too easily. I know the process is very difficult. We found that out about midnight last night on the Defense Department authorization bill. We thought we were humming along pretty well. We got down to about half a dozen amendments. Suddenly there were 61 amendments. I do not know. We only had one amendment.

I know the Senator is prepared to accept a number of amendments. Is that true?

Mr. SHELBY. Yes.

Mr. DOLE. A couple of outstanding amendments that are controversial?

Mr. SHELBY. That is right.

Mr. DOLE. It seems to me, you might be on to something here. We might even finish a bill over here. There is not much precedent for doing anything in the Senate, but there is always hope we might finish something. We have got a lot of stuff in the bone yard now that keeps piling up out there. Sooner or later we have to finish it. If we do not do it today, then we will be doing it a week from today or sometime.

So if we can reach a time agreement, that would certainly help the managers. I do not want to discourage the managers.

We can go on to the Interior appropriations bill or we can start the welfare bill today. But I would rather complete this bill before we go to the Interior bill.

And there is still some hope we can come back to the Defense authorization bill that we almost completed yesterday and would like to complete today. But I hope that the managers might try to shop around for time agreements, and if not, maybe set aside this particular controversy and go ahead and do the rest of the bill and see if we can negotiate in the meantime. If we are going to have what amounts to a filibuster all day long, then I think probably we would just go on to something else.

Mr. SHELBY. Would the majority leader yield?

Mr. DOLE. Yes.

Mr. SHELBY. I wonder if the majority leader could get with the Democratic leader and some of the main participants and see if we can come up with a time agreement because we basically know how we are going to vote on this issue, as the Senator from Oklahoma said. But if we can have a time agreement on several amendments, we could move this bill this afternoon.

Mr. NICKLES. Will the majority leader yield?

Mr. DOLE. Yes.

Mr. NICKLES. I think the Senator from Alabama is right. I think everybody in this body knows how they are going to vote on the Hyde language, the rape and incest. And I am willing to vote right now, or 5 minutes equally divided. I know the Senator from Maryland stated that if we prevail—and we might; it is very close; I will tell everyone right now it is within a vote or two—if we prevail, she wants to offer a second-degree amendment. She has that right. I think she should have that right. And we do not have to decide now. I will be happy to grant the Senator from Maryland a time agreement if she wants it or not have a time agreement if she wants. But the best thing is to see how this thing would move forward by having a vote on the pending amendment. And then we go from there.

If the Senator wants to have additional amendments, she can do so. On those amendments I will be happy to enter into a time agreement if she would like—or not like, that is certainly acceptable with this Senator as well.

Mr. KERREY. What I would suggest is we go into a quorum call for 5 minutes, and we get the Senator from Oklahoma and the Senator from Maryland together to see if we cannot work out a time agreement where we could have these two amendments.

I alert colleagues that the idea here is to try to limit the number of votes that we have.

We can have debates all the rest of the day and night. We would like to stack votes. We would like to get a UC and stack votes on Monday, if the majority leader is agreeable to that.

Mr. DOLE. There are 94 Senators here. I do not know why we want to stack votes on Monday. We gave notice that there will be a Saturday session. There are four absent on our side, two absent on the other side. We are disadvantaged. They knew we were going to have a session. We do not have them very often. This is the first one we have had all year. We are trying to get into a recess mode.

I hope we will not push anything off to Monday. Before long, it will be a week from Monday and we will still be here, and a lot of people will not be happy with the majority leader.

Mr. KERREY. I appreciate that very much, but what we are left with, I do not know what the total number is—-seven or eight we could not agree to. We worked on a lot of them. We worked with the Senator from New York, the Senator from Arkansas and several other Senators. We are working with the Senator from Georgia right now. We are trying to accept amendments where we can.

But where we cannot do it, we are left with seven or eight votes. We are going to have a Saturday session, a full Saturday session, because all Members who have amendments are going to want to come, getting back to the third person here, Mr. President, are going to want to come to the floor and present their amendments and debate their amendments. I was trying not to avoid a Saturday session but trying to come up with a reasonable way to deal with the votes.

Ms. MIKULSKI addressed the Chair.

Mr. DOLE. I suggest the absence of a quorum.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will call the roll.

The bill clerk proceeded to call the roll.

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

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

TRIBUTE TO CAL ANDERSON

Mrs. MURRAY. Mr. President, this morning I was shocked and saddened to hear of the sudden and tragic death of a very good friend and long-time colleague of mine, State Senator Cal Anderson.

Cal passed away last night of a disease that is touching far too many lives. Cal announced that he had been stricken with HIV/AIDS just a short time ago. Cal faced AIDS as he faced every legislative battle we fought together: With courage, with integrity, and with honor. Even though Cal was seriously ill these past months, he continued to do his job for his constituents the best he could, fighting hard for the things he believed in. He worked hard to the end, representing his constituents to the best of his ability.

I worked very closely with Cal during my time in the Washington State Senate. He has been known throughout our State as an outstanding legislator. He worked hard, he stayed true to his beliefs, and he had a unique ability to find solutions. I worked with him on an open government committee on which we took steps to make the legislative process more accessible. Cal made sure our bill was not only workable but a big improvement in peoples' ability to participate in government.

Cal was a Vietnam combat veteran. He won two Bronze Stars and two Army commendations for meritorious service. He was courageous and he was honest. He served his country, as well as his constituents.

Perhaps most importantly, Cal was a passionate advocate for human rights and dignity. Just last month, a home in Seattle was dedicated in his name. The Cal Anderson House is a 24-unit facility that will provide housing, counseling, and other services to low-income families with HIV/AIDS.

A month ago, I visited Cal in his hospital room. As usual, he spoke not about himself but what I needed to do. Cal told me, if nothing else, I needed to do as much as I could as a U.S. Senator to ensure that people with serious diseases did not have to fight with their insurance companies for health care at the same time they had to fight the disease for their lives. Cal said he, himself, had excellent coverage as an elected official, but those around him suffered through insensitive insurance companies. He felt that dignity was and is being taken away from seriously ill Americans, and that did not reflect the America he knew and loved.

So, today, I rise to simply say goodbye to Cal, to thank him for his years of service to his country and his State, and to say: Cal, your battle is over, but our battle continues, to defeat AIDS so that it will stop taking lives from far too many young Americans.

I yield the floor, and I suggest the absence of a quorum.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will call the roll.

The bill clerk proceeded to call the roll.

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

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

TREASURY, POSTAL SERVICE, AND GENERAL GOVERNMENT APPROPRIATIONS ACT, 1996

The Senate continued with the consideration of the bill.

UNANIMOUS-CONSENT AGREEMENT—AMENDMENT NO. 2153

Mr. SHELBY. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that a vote occur on or in relation to the Nickles amendment No. 2153 at 2:30 p.m. today, and that the time between now and the vote be equally divided in the usual form, and that no amendments be in order during the pendency of the Nickles amendment.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Is there objection?

Without objection, it is so ordered.

Mr. NICKLES. Mr. President, for the information of our colleagues, what we have just agreed to is that we will have a vote on or in relation to the Nickles amendment soon, which several of our colleagues have requested, which deals with prohibiting funds for the use of abortion in Federal employees' health care plans unless it is necessary to save the life of a mother, and in the case of rape or incest.

I hope we can vote much sooner. We have an hour and 10 minutes, equally divided. This Senator will be happy to yield back a significant amount of time. A lot of people would like to do something else on Saturday afternoon. It happens to be a very important vote. I think everybody knows how they are going to vote.

I ask my colleagues to speak briefly, and maybe we can yield back time and actually vote prior to 2:30.

I yield the floor.

Ms. MIKULSKI. Does the Senator from Oklahoma wish to comment on his amendment or on why he felt it met a compelling human need?

Mr. NICKLES. To respond, I have spoken more on the floor than I ever cared to on this particular Saturday. I think it is very well known what this amendment is. It is Hyde language. It says we are not going to use Federal funds to subsidize abortions for Federal employees unless it is necessary to save the life of the mother, or in the case of rape and incest. It is pretty self-explanatory.

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Mr. GRAMS). Under the previous agreement, the time is controlled by the Senator from Oklahoma and the Senator from Nebraska.

Mr. KERREY. I ask unanimous consent that the time on our side be controlled by the Senator from Maryland.

Ms. MIKULSKI. Mr. President, I yield myself such time as I may consume.

Now, where we are on the Nickles amendment is that, essentially, this is yet another version of a restriction. We just defeated an amendment that was a restriction, and each side articulated that position, I think, in a very clear way.

I do not want any restrictions on Federal employees health benefits. Therefore, I oppose the Nickles amendment.

Under the legislation pending, the committee amendment, if someone is a victim of rape, they can have an abortion. If someone is a victim of the most horrendous assault on a person, incest, they can have an abortion. This is not about allowing rape or incest; this amendment limits it only to the life of the mother, rape, and incest.

So, we will be clear, this is not about being a knight in shining armor that says we will provide at least some flexibility in harsh, punitive, restrictive, and repressive legislation. No. The legislation that is pending before the Senate through the committee amendment has no restrictions on Federal health employee benefits. That is the current law.

Now, the issue is not what is decided. The issue is, who decides? I believe the U.S. Congress should not interject itself into the physician's office. I believe the Congress should stay out of that and focus on what it is supposed to be doing, which is broad policy objectives for the Nation. It is not to intervene, interject, detour, derail, or micromanage what goes on in a physician's office when a Federal employee or a dependent in a Federal employee's family seeks medical help. That is why we oppose it.

We did not want restrictions. We believe in doctors' autonomy, in doctors' judgment. That is why we say the issue is not what is decided, but who decides.

Now, we also believe that there is a war going on against American women; that there is a war going on in the home; that there is a war going on through the terrible violence of domestic violence. We believe there is a war against women in terms of street crime, particularly rape. We believe there is a war against women going on in the workplace through sexual harassment. That there is even a war against women going on in the U.S. Senate, and we cannot even get a public hearing on this.

We also believe that there should be no cutting of health care. What we see is that there is a war against women. It is not only about abortion and Federal employees; we are also cutting medically necessary services in other areas of health care.