The legislative clerk proceeded to call the roll.

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 President, I ask unanimous consent that the order for the quorum call be rescinded.

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

Mr. BAUCUS. Mr. President, I ask to speak for 2 minutes out of order.

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

INTERMODAL SURFACE TRANSPORTATION EFFICIENCY ACT OF 1997

Mr. BAUCUS. Mr. President, I would just like to say a few words about where we are on the highway bill. It is due to internal political discussion and confrontation that we have not been able to move on the highway bill. There has been a bipartisan effort to try to get an agreement on campaign finance reform. We are still at loggerheads.

Mr. President, it is imperative that we in the Senate find some way to get a highway bill passed. It has been a month now since the authorization expired. It expired on September 30. We in the Senate are derelict by not passing highway legislation.

I say that because there are many States that are going to run out of money very soon. My State of Montana will run out the first part of February. It takes a long time to let contracts, to bid on contracts, to get the pipeline lined up so dollars are out to the States for jobs. I have been in favor of the 6-year bill. It only makes sense that we have some continuity in our highway program.

This is not some abstract theory, Mr. President. This is jobs. This is local people, cities and counties and States, that very much depend upon this multibillion-dollar program. So I urge us to find some pragmatic, practical way to get some form of a highway bill passed. I hope it is 6 months. It may not be 6 months. I hope it is 6 years. It may not be 6 years. But we have to pass something so when we go home over the holidays we will at least have built a bridge so next year we take up a full 6-year bill and find a way to get that passed.

I urge my colleagues to find some way to solve this impasse now so we as a practical matter do our duty to get highway legislation passed.

Mr. DASCHLE addressed the Chair.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Democratic leader is recognized.

Mr. DASCHLE. Mr. President, I will use my leader time to comment on the remarks just made by the senior Senator from Montana. I share his view.

Obviously, this is a very significant concern for all of our States and for a lot of Governors and those who are making decisions in their departments of transportation.

There are really two approaches. The first approach is for us to reach an agreement to allow campaign finance reform to be set for a certain date early next year. I think there are good-faith negotiations continuing, and I am hopeful they will produce the desired result.

But that is the first option. Then we can take up the 6-year bill and complete our work, as I know many of our colleagues, including this Senator, would like to do.

The second option is the one that the Senator from Montana alluded to. We can do what the House has already done. We can take up a 6-month bill. We can improve upon the 6-month bill that the House has proposed. I think we could use our allocation, our numbers and be in a much better position to go to conference. But certainly no one should object to moving a 6-month bill if we can't get agreement on a longer bill.

So either way, Mr. President, we have an option. We can take up the 6-year bill—hopefully, that is still possible—only if we can get campaign finance reform. Who knows what will happen in conference even with a 6-year bill. But at least the Senate will have acted. Short of that, there is absolutely no reason why we cannot take up a 6-month bill. We could do it on a unanimous-consent basis if we wished, and I hope we could do that as a second option should we not resolve the first.

However, I do believe we must act. We must resolve this matter prior to the end of this session. I am confident that, working together, we can find a way to do that.

I yield the floor.

Mr. CHAFEE addressed the Chair.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Rhode Island is recognized.

Mr. CHAFEE. Mr. President, I would ask that I might proceed for 4 minutes as in morning business.

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

Mr. CHAFEE. Mr. President, I point out we have been on this highway bill, the surface transportation legislation, for nearly 3 weeks. This was, I believe, the fourth cloture vote so that we could move on and deal with the bill.

We could not get cloture. The other side didn't want us to have cloture. So that's why we are in this jam. This legislation before us is a 6-year bill. It came out of the committee unanimously. There may be variations and amendments. That is fine. We ought to have a chance to bring them up and vote on them.

But we could not do that, Mr. President. I think that is very regrettable. Now people are backing off and saying let's possibly have a 6-month bill. I think that is a disaster; nobody can do any long-range planning with a 6-month piece of legislation.

So I think it is very unfortunate the way this has worked out. I am not sure what the next order of business is or what the next step in connection with this highway legislation will be, but I feel very badly that we did not get cloture so we could go ahead and deal with a good bill, bring up the amendments and vote on them one way or another. But we were unable to do that, and I regret it.

Mr. KERRY addressed the Chair.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Massachusetts is recognized.

Mr. KERRY. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that I be permitted to proceed as if in morning business.

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

Mr. KERRY. Mr. President, I would like to respond briefly to the Senator from Rhode Island and make it as clear as I think it can be made clear that this is about one issue. It is not about ISTEA. It is not about the transportation needs of the country. It is about campaign finance reform.

That is all this is about. We have been pressing for months to be able to get the ability to debate and have a full-fledged legislative effort on campaign finance reform. We have been denied the right to have one vote on the substance of real campaign finance reform, not one vote.

The reason we are in this predicament is exclusively the resistance on the part of the Republicans to permit us to have a date certain and the ability to be able to legislate on campaign finance reform.

That is all this is about. There are as many Members on the Democratic side of the aisle who want to vote for ISTEA as there are on the Republican side. ISTEA will ultimately pass the Senate, and it will pass overwhelmingly. This is about whether or not we are going to face one of the most important issues the people in this country want to face, that a group of people are resisting and will not allow the democratic process to work. It is that simple. I hope no one will confuse it in the days ahead. This could be resolved in a matter of hours by reasonably permitting those of us who seek campaign finance reform to know that we can return after the recess and be able to vote in February or March and have the Senate properly discuss the issue of campaign finance reform.

This is an issue that, on the Republican side, Senator MCCAIN has said and on our side the leadership has said and a number of us have said, is not going to go away.

If there is any lesson we have learned in the Senate, it is that when there is the kind of issue that has a sufficient number of votes for the underlying bill, they do not go away. We have seen that on the minimum wage. We have seen it on a host of other issues through history here. I am confident that we can come together around some reasonable approach to campaign finance reform.

We have acknowledged to Senator MCCONNELL and others that this is an issue which will take 60 votes. We know that. We are not suggesting that this can be resolved other than by coming together with some kind of consensus that will resolve the capacity of either side to filibuster. We know that.

But until we get to the business of legislating, of actually proposing amendments and working with that kind of energy, we are never going to know if we can reach that kind of consensus, and that is what this fight is about.

So I hope no one confuses it as somehow surrogate or secret opposition to ISTEA. It is not. It is about the unwillingness of the Republicans at this point in time to set a date certain for campaign finance reform and to permit us to come back and do the business of the Senate. I yield the floor.

Mr. WELLSTONE addressed the Chair.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Minnesota is recognized.

Mr. WELLSTONE. Might I ask colleagues whether or not there would be an opportunity to speak 5 minutes in morning business? Is that all right with my colleagues?

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Is there objection? The Chair hears none, and it is so ordered. The Chair recognizes the Senator from Minnesota for 5 minutes.

UNITED STATES-CHINA SUPPORT

Mr. WELLSTONE. Mr. President, I rise to address the direction of our country's relationship with China. Right now, the Clinton administration is busy with the state visit of Chinese President Jiang Zemin. A state visit is the highest, most formal diplomatic event hosted by the United States. The champagne will flow, and flattering toasts will be made.

I disagree with this red carpet treatment, Mr. President. There is no question that United States-Chinese relations are crucial and important for both countries. It is wrong, however, for the United States to host a state visit for President Jiang Zemin until we see significant progress made on human rights in China. Instead of a ceremonial visit, we should be holding a working visit with the Chinese leadership, focusing on the critical issues that exist between our two nation, like human rights, weapons proliferation, and trade.

China continues to wage a war against individual freedoms and human rights. Hundreds, and perhaps thousands, of dissidents and advocates of political reform were detained just last year. They included human rights and pro-democracy activists, and members of religious groups. Many have been sentenced to long prison terms where they have been beaten, tortured, and denied medical care.

Scores of Roman Catholics and Protestants were arrested. A crackdown in Tibet was carried out during the ''Strike Hard'' campaign. Authorities ordered the closure of monasteries in Tibet and banned the Dalai Lama's image. At one monastery which was closed, over 90 monks and novices were detained or disappeared.

Harry Wu, a man of extraordinary courage and character, has documented China's extensive forced labor system. His research has identified more than 1,100 labor camps across China, many of which produce products for export to dozens of countries around the world, including the United States.

Because he criticized his government, Harry Wu was also imprisoned in these camps. For 19 years in 12 different forced labor camps across China, Harry was forced to mine coal, manufacture chemicals, and build roads. He survived beatings, torture, and starvation. He witnessed the death of many of his fellow prisoners from brutality, disease, starvation, and suicide.

According to Amnesty International, throughout China, mass summary executions continue to be carried out. At least 6,000 death sentences and 3,500 executions were officially recorded last year. The real figures are believed to be much higher.

Our own State Department reported that in 1996: ''All public dissent against the party and government was effectively silenced by intimidation, exile, the imposition of prison terms, administration detention, or house arrest. No dissidents were known to be active at year's end.''

Mr. President, that is a chilling, deeply disturbing statement. It cuts to the core values of our Nation. And it was made by our own Government, and this administration. Yet, this week, the administration will welcome President Jiang with pomp and circumstance. These actions indicate that, where China is concerned, what we have is not a policy of constructive engagement, but one of unconditional engagement.

Let us put some names and human faces to the statistics and generalities we have all heard with regards to China.

In May 1996, Wang Hui was detained. She was the wife of a jailed labor activist. While detained, she was denied water and other liquids. She tried to kill herself by hanging. According to Human Rights Watch, after being cut down by police, she was punished with severe beating.

Ngawang Choephel is a Fulbright Scholar from Middlebury College. He studied music, and returned to his homeland to document the ancient music and culture of Tibet. It is disappearing under the heel of the Chinese Government. As a result of his work, he was convicted in February, and sentenced to 18 years imprisonment for espionage. His crime—sending videotapes of ethnic Tibetan music and dancing out of China.

Last year, Wang Dan was sentenced to 11 years in prison on charges of conspiring to subvert the Chinese Government. Prior to sentencing, Wang had already been held 17 months in incommunicado detention. His crime: He was a leader of the Tiananmen movement.

Two years ago, Beijing sentenced Wei Jingsheng to 14 more years of incarceration for the crime of peacefully advocating democracy and political reform. Wei had been arrested and sentenced after he wrote wall posters on the Democracy Wall outside Beijing. They argued for true democracy and denounced Deng Xiaoping.

I have read Mr. Wei's work and his letter from prison. I can't tell you how impressed and moved I was by them. As a political scientist, I seldom, if ever, have read such an eloquent and intelligent espousal of democracy and human rights. Making the letters all the more remarkable is the fact that they were written while Wei was in prison or labor camps, mostly in solitary confinement. He has been jailed for all but 6 months of the last 18 years.

Wei Jingshen is not only China's most prominent dissident and prisoner of conscience, but ranks with the greatest fighters for democracy and human rights of this century. He brings to mind Martin Luther King, Nelson Mandela, and, of course, Alexander Solzhenitsyn. I was honored to join many of my colleagues in nominating Wei for the Nobel Peace Prize.

Last week, Mr. Wei's sister came to the United States to tell the administration that he is dying in jail, and that this summit may be his last chance of emerging from detention alive. It is urgent that the Chinese Government release Wei and that he be given the medical care that he desperately needs, but has been denied.

By agreeing to this state visit without any significant concessions on human rights, like the release of Wei Jingsheng, the Clinton administration squandered its strongest source of leverage with Beijing.

This is not to say that all dialog between the United States and China or that working level visits are wrong. Instead, I believe that the symbolism of a state level visit is inappropriate given our strong disagreement with China over its human rights record. That is why I cosponsored a resolution with Senators FEINGOLD and HELMS to urge the President to downgrade this event from a state visit to working visit.

The Chinese have said they do not welcome American advice on what they view as a ''purely internal affair.'' Welcome or not, President Clinton must insist that China's leaders take specific actions on human rights.

Indeed, I believe strongly that the administration has a moral duty to press a range of issues with the Chinese Government that it may not welcome, but that are of enormous important to the Chinese people, and the United States.

Specifically, I call on President Clinton to demand:

The immediate and unconditional release of Wei Jingsheng, Wang Dan, and other prisoners of conscience held in jails in China and Tibet.

Improvement in the conditions under which political, religious, and labor dissidents are detained in China and Tibet. This includes providing prisoners with adequate medical care and