nobody else is flying a jet, and I want to haul people to a major hub.''

They create their airline and fly to a major hub and they drop somebody off. And guess what. That somebody in most cases is going beyond that hub.

Let me give an example, of Bismarck going to Denver, which is a major hub. For 35 years, we had jet service with Frontier Airlines and then Continental, from Bismarck, ND, to Denver, a major hub. Now we do not. So a new company comes in and says, ''I will connect Bismarck to Denver, a major hub.'' But about 70 percent of the people leaving Bismarck are not going to just Denver, they are going beyond, to Los Angeles, San Francisco, Phoenix—you name it.

So this airline carrier starts up and hauls the Bismarck passengers to Denver and opens the door of the airplane, and they disembark on a sunny Denver day and discover they cannot go anywhere else, because if they walk over to United or another carrier, they don't have the opportunity to get a joint fare ticket. They charge them an arm and a leg. In fact, they even have trouble getting their baggage moved from one airline to another, because the big airlines do not want competition. They have their hub, they don't want anybody messing with it, and they certainly do not want these upstart regional airlines springing up, hauling people into their hub.

So what you have is a circumstance where there is deregulation of the airlines, and the major carriers have merged. There has been all this romance going on; they decided they like each other a lot. Pretty soon they are going to get married. They merge up, two airlines become one, and now we have five or six large airlines in this country because they like each other so much, and they have retreated into these regional monopolies because they don't want to compete with each other. They create their own hub and they create their own spokes and they say to those who want to start up, ''We are sorry but we are not interested.''

Having said all that, and that is a mouthful, and having said I admire the majors—most of them are good carriers and they have good management and they do what they do in their interest—there is their interest and then there is a parallel and sometimes not parallel public interest. In some cases it is not a parallel public interest, as the case where we have areas that used to be served and are now not served but could be served by a new carrier if only the majors would cooperate with those new carriers.

In order to encourage new startup regional jet service, I am proposing a 10 percent investment tax credit for regional jet purchases. That is, those startup companies that want to begin regional jet service to fly these new regional jets between certain cities and hubs that are not now served with regional jet service, we would say to them that we will help with a 10 percent investment tax credit on the purchase or lease of those regional jets. We will help because we want to provide incentives for the establishment of regional jet service once again in our country.

My legislation would require that they serve those markets for a minimum of 5 years. We have defined exactly what those underserved markets are. It is targeted, it makes good sense, and will stimulate investment in an activity that this country very much needs and an activity that the so-called free market now does not accommodate, because the free market is clogged. There is kind of an airline cholesterol here that clogs up the arteries, and they say, ''This is the way we work, these are our hubs, these are our spokes, and you cannot mess with them.''

My legislation simply says we would like to encourage areas that no longer have jet service but could support it. We would like to encourage companies that decide they want to come in and serve there to be able to purchase the regional jets and be able to initiate that kind of service.

My legislation has a second provision which reduces the airline ticket tax for certain qualified flights in rural America. This proposal also has a revenue offset so it would not be a net loser for the Federal budget.

Having described all that, the second amendment I am going to offer also addresses this in a different way. My hope is we could work to get that accepted. We have been working hard with a number of Members of the Senate to see if we cannot get that accepted.

I just want to make two more points.

We are not in a situation in rural areas of this country where we can just sit back and say what is going to happen to us is going to happen to us and there is nothing we can do about it. There are some, I suppose, who sit around and wring their hands and gnash their teeth and fret and sweat and say, ''I really cannot alter things very much, this is the way it is.''

The way it is is not satisfactory to the people of my State. It is not satisfactory to have only one jet carrier serving our entire State. Our State's transportation services and airline service, especially jet airline service, is an essential transportation service. It ought not be held hostage by labor problems or other problems of one jet carrier. We must have competition. If all of those in this Chamber who mean what they say when they talk about competition will weigh in here and say, ''Let's stand for competition, let's stand for the free market, let's try to help new starts, let's breed opportunities for broader based economic ownership and more competition in the airline industry,'' then I think we will have done something important and useful and good for States like mine and for many other rural States in this country.

Mr. President, as I indicated when I started, I will offer my second amendment later this afternoon, which I hope will be accepted, because the amendment I have just described and offered has a blue slip attached to it in the sense it would be objected to, because a revenue measure must begin in the Ways and Means Committee of the House of Representatives—and I used to serve in the House and used to serve on the Ways and Means Committee, and we were fierce in our determination to make certain that committee always had original jurisdiction on those issues. I am willing to say I understand that. But I wanted my colleagues to be able to review this amendment in the RECORD, because if and when there is a piece of legislation dealing with tax issues later this year, it is my intention to see that this becomes part of that discussion.

With that, I ask unanimous consent my amendment be withdrawn.

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

The amendment (No. 3628) was withdrawn.

Mr. DORGAN. Mr. President, 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. DORGAN. 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. DORGAN. I ask unanimous consent to speak for 10 minutes as in morning business.

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

THE FAMILY FARM CRISIS

Mr. DORGAN. Mr. President, we are going to conference, I think, this afternoon or tomorrow on the agriculture appropriations bill. I want to make some comments so that those in this Chamber who believe what some are proposing to go to conference with is adequate will understand it is not adequate at all.

We have a farm crisis in our country that is as significant a crisis as we have had since perhaps the 1930s. As you know, farm prices have collapsed. The price of wheat has dropped nearly 60 percent. We have farmers facing a serious, serious problem, many of whom will not be able to continue farming next year.

That means that yard light someplace out in the country is going out, that family farm is losing their money, their farm, their hope, their dreams. This Congress has the capability to do something about it or it has the capability to ignore it.

We have had two votes here in the Senate to increase price supports to give family farmers some hope. Twice we have been turned back. We are going to have a third vote. I am not sure when that is going to happen. As soon as we have the opportunity to

offer the emergency plan sent down by the President on Monday of this week, we are going to have another vote. We have only lost by a handful of votes.

The future of a lot of farm families will depend on that next vote. Some have offered an alternative plan in recent days. I am told they intend to put that in the agriculture appropriations conference in the next day or so. I would say to them, it is not going to work. It is not enough. It is offering a 4-foot rope to somebody drowning in 10 feet of water. ''Well, thanks for the rope, but it doesn't help.''

This Congress has to decide that it is going to help family farmers when prices collapse. If it does not build a bridge over price valleys, we will not have family farmers left.

I have a letter from a young boy named Wyatt that I mentioned the other day on the floor of the Senate. Wyatt is 15-years old, a sophomore at Stanley High School in Stanley, ND. He comes from a family farm. Wyatt said, after a long description of the problems his family is having, ''My dad is a family farmer. And my dad can feed 180 people, but he can't feed his family.'' It just breaks your heart to get letters like Wyatt's, and so many others, who write to us talking about what happens to them when prices collapse.

Our farmers in North Dakota lost 98 percent of their net farm income in 1 year. Washed away was 98 percent of their income—gone. Just have any neighborhood, any block, any community, any group of people think to themselves, ''Where would I be if I lost 98 percent of my income?'' I know where I would be. I bet I know where you would be. That is what farmers are facing right now in my State and all up and down the farm belt.

People seem to think, ''You know, things will be just fine. Food comes from the store. Butter comes from a carton. Milk comes from a bottle.'' Things will not be just fine if this country loses its family farms and America's farmers to big agrifactories from California to Maine. I will tell you what will happen to food costs.

The way you get good, wholesome, safe food—the best in the world, at the best possible price—is to have a network of family farmers farming this country and putting food on our tables, at a price that gives them a decent opportunity to earn a living.

We have had this kind of economic circumstance in our country recently where I guess the farm belt is viewed as one giant economic cow. Nobody is willing to feed it, but everybody wants to milk it from every single direction. Well, the cow is about out of milk. The question for this Congress is: Are you going to step up, when you pass a farm bill that says, ''Let's have farmers operate in the free market,'' but then in every direction the farmer turns, there is no free market?

Want to market some cows? Guess what? Eighty-five percent of the cattle slaughtered in this country is done by four firms—four. They will tell a family farmer what they are going to pay them. If they do not like it, tough luck.

Want to ship your wheat on a train? Well, there is one train that comes through our State to haul that wheat. They will tell the farmer what they are going to charge them. If the farmer does not like it, tough luck.

Let me give you a little example about what farmers face on transportation. Ship a carload of wheat from Bismarck, ND, to Minneapolis; the railroad says that is $2,300—that is what it is going to cost you to ship that wheat to Minneapolis. Ship the same wheat from Minneapolis to Chicago—about the same distance—the railroad says that is $1,000. So you ask the railroad, ''Why do you double-charge North Dakota farmers?'' The answer is because there is competition between Minneapolis and Chicago and there is none in North Dakota. So the railroad says, ''We're able to double-charge farmers in North Dakota.''

So send a cow to market; you face a monopoly. Take your grain to the railroad; you face a monopoly and get double-charged. Send a hog to market; the same thing. Send your grain to a flour mill; the same thing. And 50, 60, 70 percent of the milling, the slaughter, the transportation—all controlled by a couple big corporations that then tell family farmers, ''Yeah, you worked hard, you plowed this soil in the spring, you planted the seed, you nurtured it, you put some chemicals on it to keep the bugs away and the weeds out, put some nitrogen in to make it grow, and then you harvested it—and, by the way, when you are done, we're going to pay you half of what it's worth and half of what it cost you to produce. And if you don't like it, tough luck.'' Well, that does not work for this country. That is not the way this country's economy should be allowed to work. It is not a free market.

So let's assume a farmer would be able to find a benevolent railroad—that is, of course, an oxymoron. Let's assume the farmer was able to market up through a cattle market that was not controlled by monopolies. Let's assume all of that worked—it does not—but let's assume it all did. The only thing left that farmer would face is a series of other countries, like Europe. The farmer then finds half of his grain, or her grain, goes overseas to a foreign market where they compete with other governments that subsidize the sale of their grain into northern African markets and other places to the tune of 10 times the United States.

People here say to farmers, ''Well, go compete in the free market.'' Yes, the farmer should compete against the big grain companies, against the big chemical companies, against the big railroads, against the big packing plants, and against European countries, and against the Canadians. And if all of that were settled—if all of that were settled—those farmers would still be told, ''Just compete in the free market. And here's one more piece of the free market. We've signed you up for some competition with a trade agreement that we've negotiated with Canada.'' And my colleagues have heard me speak about this many times. That trade agreement says to the Canadians, ''You just flood us with your grain and your cattle and your hogs. You just run them over, just bring them right on down. And we can't get our grain up, but you just keep bringing your grain down here, undercut our price.'' That is the kind of trade agreement we negotiated. We send incompetent negotiators to negotiate bad agreements, and then we do not even enforce them.

We had farmers gather at the Canadian border the other day. The Canadians are good neighbors of ours, have been for a long while, but the trade agreement with Canada is unfair and taking money right out of the pockets of our farmers. And we have trade officials who do not seem to want to do much about it.

So every direction you turn, we have these problems that press in on our family farmers. We face the prospect of up to 20 percent of our family farmers in North Dakota not being able to plant in the next spring or the spring thereafter. You fly over my State and look out at night from a small plane, look out that window and look at those yard lights that shine down on a family trying to make a living out on the land; and then see them turn off, one by one, because public policy says to them, ''You don't matter anymore. This country doesn't need you anymore.'' Ask yourself whether this country is going to be a better or a weaker country when family farmers are gone.

They are talking about bringing the endangered species bill to the floor of the Senate soon. I am thinking of enlisting family farmers. I know it will list birds and butterflies, frogs, and flowers. I am the first one to say I like birds, I like butterflies, and sign me up for frogs and flowers, as well. I think they are good for our environment and good to have around.

However, another endangered species in this country is Wyatt. He is a young boy that comes from a family that will lose their farm, and there won't be another family like Wyatt's out there. There is only one family like Wyatt's. Does it matter if Wyatt and his folks and tens of thousands of others are told, ''You are too small an operator, you don't matter.''

I think this country will make a huge mistake. The reason I wanted to speak for a moment now is we are fixing—I think tomorrow—to take a pathetic little plan that has been offered that will maybe pole-vault some farmers between now and December, just over the next election, but won't do nearly enough to get those family farmers into the field next spring and give them some hope that they can get a harvest next fall. It is a pathetic little plan. It will be offered, perhaps, in

the agriculture appropriations conference tomorrow, and then people will wash their hands and say, ''We sure took care of that.''

No, they won't have taken care of anything. All they will have done is nudged enough resources out of the scarce pot of money to get them from here to December, to be able to say to farmers here is a little, but it is not enough. We understand you won't make it.

There are some of us in this Chamber who are not willing to stand for that and are not willing to let that be the last word on the fight for the family farmers' future in the 105th Congress. I don't mean to sound challenging—yes, I do, now that I think about it. Of course I do. It is unforgivable in my judgment when we have people coming to the floor of the Senate and the House and there are hundreds of millions of dollars here and billions of dollars there and they have appetites for everything and everything is important, for us to go home and decide it is not important to save family farmers. I do want to challenge that.

In my judgment, that is a goofy set of priorities for this country. Thomas Jefferson said 200 years ago that those who live on that land and produce that food are the best Americans, the first Americans. He wasn't necessarily saying that nobody else is any good, I am sure. Thomas Jefferson believed in everyone's worth and he believed in broad-based economic ownership. Part of what makes this country so strong is the opportunities for people around the country to engage in broad-based ownership of America's economy and resources. No one represents that more than families living on the farm trying to make a decent living.

I hope in the next 2 weeks we will have the opportunity to convince the leadership of this Congress that family farmers matter and the submission on Monday by President Clinton of an emergency plan to respond to this farm crisis is the right step for this Congress to take. If Congress does not stand for family farmers, if it fails to take the step the President has requested, if it decides that this doesn't matter somehow, then we will have made a very fatal error.

The Senator from Kentucky stood on this floor month after month this year in very tough circumstances when we were debating the tobacco bill. He said he understood the public policy issues of tobacco, but he said I want the Congress to understand the public policy issues of family farmers out there raising tobacco, as well. Their interests need to be heard. I know he did that and I watched the passion with which he did that. He feels very strongly about the interests of those family farmers. I feel as strongly about his farmers as I do about mine and all of the farmers up and down that farm belt.

I just want to say to those who think they will shortcut this issue and they will ram some pathetic plan home tomorrow, take a deep breath, because you are in for a heck of a fight in the coming weeks if you think that is how you will solve the problem.

I yield the floor.

Mr. FORD. Mr. President, let me compliment and thank my friend from North Dakota. No one has worked harder or spoken more eloquently in support of the small family farm than the Senator from North Dakota. How well I understand what he is going through.

We heard on this floor yesterday afternoon that we are getting ready to spend money for ''emergencies,'' but we ought to give a tax break. What is an emergency? Farmers, the Senator said. We should have known there would be a drought or there would be too much water. We ought to have put money in the budget for it.

''Emergency'' is something that is on occasion. We cannot anticipate an emergency. We can't do that. But a tax break is in perpetuity. It goes on forever. Emergency is one time.

So we try to cover up by accelerating the payments under Freedom to Farm. I voted against the North American Free Trade Agreement, one of seven in this body. It is awfully hard to get a Senator with something on his mind, with a philosophy that never looks in the future. The future is now at hand on that vote on the North American Free Trade Agreement when we are being flooded not only with farm products but wool and everything else relating to our people trying to make suits, pants and so forth in the textile business. It is driving our people out of this country.

The Senator is absolutely correct, we need that safety net for our farmers.

I have sat on too many front porches of farm families. I have been in the kitchen with the farmer and his wife and family. I understand what they are going through. They can't compete.

One of the finest men I know was in my office yesterday taking a load of hogs to the slaughter house. He got $3,500 for hogs that a year ago would have brought $7,000. What did he get? Nothing. We don't have any compassion for him; we don't have any reason to try to help him keep that farm. He put everything into that load of hogs. What does he get back? He couldn't even pay for the feed.

So we say ''compete.'' Competition is like dialing a new bank at home. The tape says if you want so and so, push 1; if you want so and so, push 2; if you want so and so, push 3. You keep on pushing the phone and finally people throw the phone out the door. They want to talk to a human being, but we call another State to talk about local loan problems or financial problems.

We are getting into an intolerable situation. I hope the Senator never lets his vote die as it relates to the family farm. I compliment the Senator for what he is trying to do.

I understand we have been debating the aviation bill, but he has an amendment that talks sense. The commodity we have so little of here is common sense. Common sense, I think, if it prevails, the Senator might win a couple of amendments in the not-too-distant future.

I yield the floor.

Mr. WYDEN. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent to speak for up to 10 minutes as in morning business.

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

LETHAL DRUG ABUSE PREVENTION ACT

Mr. WYDEN. Mr. President, today I informed the minority leader that I will object to any unanimous consent requests to proceed to S. 2151 or any similar legislation containing provisions that would override Oregon's assisted suicide law. Should S. 2151, the Lethal Drug Abuse Prevention Act come to the floor, I intend to insist that this body clearly hear the arguments against this legislation before voting on it, even if I must filibuster to assure that this occurs.

Let me state, as I have done before on this floor, that I have personal reservations about the assisted suicide concept. I voted twice against assisted suicide in my home State, and I joined our colleagues in voting against Federal funding of assisted suicide.

I personally believe that nowhere near enough has been done to promote hospice care, pain management, comfort care, and other approaches to deal with the end of life.

The people of my State entered into an honest, direct, and exhausting discussion on the issue of assisted suicide—not once, but twice—through our public referenda process. I am not going to let that vote be set aside without an extended debate on the floor of the U.S. Senate.

S. 2151 attempts to override the popular will of the citizens of my State who have made a judgment about what is acceptable medical practice. Medical practice is a matter that has been traditionally left to the States to regulate. However, in overriding the will of the Oregon voters, S. 2151 strikes at the people across this country who are terminally ill and the millions of individuals who suffer in great pain daily.

Almost all of our States have laws in effect, or about to go into effect, with respect to physician-assisted suicide. All of our States have laws that regulate medical practice, including the use of controlled substances. The underlying message of S. 2151 is that the U.S. Congress knows better than voters in Coos Bay, Bend, and La Grande, OR. Does this Congress, meeting here in Washington, DC, believe it is better equipped than the citizens of my State to make moral decisions about acceptable medical practice in Oregon?

This Senator is not going to sit by while there is an abbreviated debate that cuts off the rights of Oregonians. I want the Senate to understand that today.