of states' rights, equal protection, and religious liberty. Justice O'Connor is known as a restrained jurist, a strong supporter of federalism, and a cautious interpreter of the Constitution.

She has been described not only as committed and intense, but also as warm and down-to-earth, and a loving mother and grandmother.

Last Wednesday, September 22nd was the 18th anniversary of their confirmation as Justice of the United States Supreme Court, and last Saturday was the 18th anniversary of the day she took the oath of office. To honor her service to this nation and to the law, Senator MCCAIN and I have introduced a bill to name the new Phoenix courthouse in her honor as the ''Sandra Day O'Connor United States Courthouse.''

Obviously Justice O'Connor, being extremely modest, has repeatedly declined my overtures to have the courthouse named after her. However, in the face of my continued campaign and my obvious determination to see that she is given the recognition she has earned—and because the timeline of the courthouse's construction and dedication next spring require immediate action on the Senate's schedule—the Justice finally relented and allowed me to go forward with this legislation.

Justice O'Connor's place in history is set: she has been a trailblazer for women in the law—rising to the top in every area in which she has worked. Justice O'Connor is one of the most important jurists in our nation's history, It is fitting that a beautiful, yet very functional new Federal courthouse in Phoenix, Arizona, be dedicated in her honor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Mr. ENZI). Under the previous order, the Chair recognizes the Senator from Kansas for 15 minutes.

UNANIMOUS-CONSENT AGREEMENT—H.R. 2605

Mr. ROBERTS. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that following Senator BRYAN's remarks, the Senate then proceed to consideration of the conference report to accompany H.R. 2605, the energy and water appropriations bill. I further ask consent that reading of the report be waived and there then be 1 hour of debate equally divided between the chairman and ranking member.

I finally ask consent that at 2:15 today the Senate proceed to a vote on the adoption of the conference report, with no intervening action or debate.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Is there objection?

Without objection, it is so ordered.

USDA'S APPROACH TO EMERGENCY FARM LEGISLATION

Mr. ROBERTS. Mr. President, I rise today to read a statement I am sending to Secretary of Agriculture Dan Glickman regarding USDA's approach to emergency farm legislation. The letter goes like this:

''Dear Mr. Secretary''—Dear Dan, we are personal friends—

We all agree that we need to get the emergency agriculture bill out of conference, passed and get the assistance to our farmers as fast as possible. In this regard, I am concerned with recent comments you have made regarding how these payments should be funded and made available to farmers. Instead of using the current Agriculture Marketing Transition Act—[and the acronym for that is AMTA—instead of using that] payment system that farmers and their lenders were promised and banked on several months ago, you and others within the Administration have recommended alternative payment plans.

In your September 15 testimony before the House Agriculture Committee, you said:

''There is an immediate need to provide cash assistance to mitigate low prices, falling incomes, and in some areas, falling land values.''

But then you said:

''Congress should enact a new program to target assistance to farmers of 1999 crops suffering from low prices. The Administration believes the income assistance must address the shortcomings of the farm bill by providing counter-cyclical assistance. The income assistance should compensate for today's low prices and therefore they should be paid according to this year's actual production of the major field crops, including oilseeds.''

[Mr. Secretary—] Dan, I know the Administration, the Farmer's Union and some Democrats in the Congress want to change the farm bill in the emergency legislation. And I know some of the budget [folks, I call them] ''wonks'' in the Office of Management and Budget—[I do not mean to perjure their intent, what they do, but they are] sending mixed signals and I know the politics of the issue. [There has been a lot of that.] Nevertheless, I urge you to reconsider for the following reasons:

First: The very farmers who need the assistance [and who would receive the assistance] oppose this plan.

The commodity organizations representing producers of soybeans, wheat, corn, cotton, grain sorghum, sunflowers, canola and rice and the American Farm Bureau—the very farmers you stressed in your statement—strongly disagree with your philosophy and proposal. In a letter to the chairman of the Senate Appropriations Committee, Senator Ted Stevens, they said and I quote:

''We strongly disagree with that [and I am saying] (your) philosophy. The current economic distress is party a result of the unfulfilled promises of expanded export markets, reduced regulations and tax reform that were part of the promises made during deliberation of the 1996 farm bill. The costs of these unfulfilled promises fall upon those people who were participating in farm programs at that time.

[They go on to say, and I am quoting:

''The current AMTA payment process is in place and can deliver payments quickly. The administration costs of developing an alternative method of payments would be very high and eat into funds that should go to farmers. Given the 7½ months it took the Department to issue weather disaster aid last year, we are unwilling to risk that producers might have to wait that long for development and implementation of a new farm program and disaster aid formula. Time is also critical for suppliers of goods and services to producers. They need payments for supplies now to stay in business, not just promises that something will happen in the future.

''Supplemental AMTA payments provide income to producers of corn, wheat, cotton, rice, barley and grain sorghum.''

Again, these are the very organizations, the commodity groups that represent the producers, that would receive the assistance. They go on to say:

''Soybean producers will receive separate payments under the Senate language. Crop cash receipts for these producers in 1999 will be down over 20 percent from the 1995–97 yearly average. Producers who have smaller than normal crops due to weather problems will receive normal payment levels. This is better than using the loan deficiency payment program which are directly tied to this year's production.''

Finally they say:

''We urge you to retain the $5.5 billion in supplemental AMTA payments as the method of distribution for farm economy aid in the agriculture appropriations conference agreement. Any alternative would certainly take additional time to provide assistance to producers—time which we cannot afford.''

My second reason for opposing these alternative plans:

Changing the payment plan will mean farmers will not receive their payments until next year.

The term you used, Mr. Secretary, in your statement regarding the emergency payments was ''immediate.'' The difference between using the AMTA payment system—

That is the current one—

and the several alternative methods you have suggested is: Three weeks or 3 months. Or this year or next.

Last week, Farm Service Agency official Parks Shackelford said: ''All the king's horses and all the king's men could not get the payments made as quickly as Congress desires.''

Well, Dan, last year the USDA was able to distribute payments through the AMTA system in less than 3 weeks after passage of the legislation by Congress. They began on November 3, the date of the election, by the way, and farmers received their payments before Thanksgiving.

Last year, in delivering disaster assistance, through a formula developed by the Department, it took 7½ months to receive these payments.

I say to the Secretary with no disrespect:

Dan, you are the ''king'' and you have the horses, just do it.

Third: No specific or formal plan has been presented and in terms of the actual farming practices, the criticism, in my view, just doesn't add up.

Staff on both the authorizing and the appropriations committees tell me no formal plan for an alternative distribution plan has been developed or submitted. What has been developed and submitted, however, is repeated criticism of current policy.

That has been ongoing for sometime, not only at the Department, not only by one major farm organization, but certainly on the floor of the Senate and the House, for that matter.

However, these comments show either naivete from people who do not understand the current legislation or worse, that the Department is breaking the law.

In recent weeks, the USDA and Office of Management and Budget officials have criticized plans to distribute income assistance through the AMTA system.

Their first complaint was, ''Payments actually go to people who planted no crops.''

I respectfully ask are producers who lost their crops due to hail, disease, drought, or flooding in better financial condition than