Internet-based system required under section 2 and to expand the system as required by section 3.

(2) MAINTENANCE.—Once the system is established and operational, reserved amounts shall be used for maintenance and improvement of the system.

(d) RETURN OF FUNDS.—Funds reserved under subsection (a) and unobligated at the end of the fiscal year shall be returned to the agency from which the funds were reserved, to remain available until expended.

SEC. 5. FEDERAL CROP INSURANCE CORPORATION AND RISK MANAGEMENT AGENCY.

(a) IN GENERAL.—Not later than December 1, 2000, the Federal Crop Insurance Corporation and the Risk Management Agency shall submit to the Committee on Agriculture of the House of Representatives and the Committee on Agriculture, Nutrition, and Forestry of the Senate a plan, that is consistent with this Act, to allow agricultural producers to—

(1) obtain, over the Internet, from approved insurance providers all forms and other information concerning the program under the jurisdiction of the Corporation and Agency in which the agricultural producer is a participant; and

(2) file electronically all paperwork required for participation in the program.

(b) ADMINISTRATION.—The plan shall—

(1) conform to sections 2(c) and 3(b); and

(2) prescribe—

(A) the location and type of data to be made available to agricultural producers;

(B) the location where agricultural producers can electronically file their paperwork; and

(C) the responsibilities of the applicable parties, including agricultural producers, the Risk Management Agency, the Federal Crop Insurance Corporation, approved insurance providers, crop insurance agents, and brokers.

(c) IMPLEMENTATION.—Not later than December 1, 2001, the Federal Crop Insurance Corporation and the Risk Management Agency shall complete implementation of the plan submitted under subsection (a).

SEC. 6. CONFIDENTIALITY.

In carrying out this Act, the Secretary—

(1) may not make available any information over the Internet that would otherwise not be available for release under section 552 or 552a of title 5, United States Code; and

(2) shall ensure, to the maximum extent practicable, that the confidentiality of persons is maintained.

NOTICE OF HEARINGS

COMMITTEE ON INDIAN AFFAIRS

Mr. CAMPBELL. Mr. President, I would like to announce that the Committee on Indian Affairs will meet during the session of the Senate on Wednesday, May 24, 2000, at 9:30 a.m. to conduct a hearing on S. 611, the Indian Federal Recognition Administrative Procedures Act of 1999. The hearing will be held in room 485, Russell Senate Building.

Note: This hearing was originally scheduled for 9:30 a.m., May 17.

Those wishing additional information may contact committee staff at 202/224–2251.

THE CONFIRMATION OF JUDGES

Mr. LEAHY. Mr. President, I know the distinguished leader has been working on trying to find a way to confirm some more judges. I hope we do.

I remind the Senate, and the American public, that there is a mistaken belief that in a Presidential election year we stop confirming judges. That is not so.

As one who has been here for 25 years, I note that there is an informal procedure called the Thurmond rule, named after our beloved President pro tempore, the Senator from South Carolina, STROM THURMOND. This rule basically says that as we get close to the Presidential election time—July, August, and into the fall—we slow down and nearly stop the confirmation of judges to lifetime appointments to see how the Presidential election comes out, because the next President will be able to nominate judges.

But having said that, I point out what happened in the last year of President Bush's term. Democrats controlled the Senate, and we confirmed 66 judges—66 judges nominated by President Bush—more than have been confirmed in any year of President Clinton's term in which there has been a Republican majority, even when he was not facing reelection. In 1996 they confirmed only 17 judges all year.

With a Democratic Senate in the last year of President Reagan's term, we did not have this kind of a slowdown and stoppage. Democrats confirmed more than 40 judges.

I hope we will look, first and foremost, not at some kind of partisan game but at what is best for the judiciary.

We are seen throughout the world as having the most independent federal judiciary anywhere. Look at what happens in other parts of the world where the President or Prime Minister or leader of a country can tell the judiciary exactly what to do, and they do it. Look at what happened in Peru. President Fujimori got the Supreme Court to allow him to run unconstitutionally for a third term.

Look at a number of other countries around the world where dictators, and those who seize power, get the courts to bend to their will. That is not done here in the United States. Our Federal judiciary truly is independent. We should protect their independence by not making judges a partisan pawn in a political program. We should make sure they remain independent.

Democrats have given an enormous amount of flexibility to Republican Presidents. I hope—it may be a vain hope—that a Democratic President would get at least a goodly percentage of that same kind of flexibility from a Republican-controlled Senate. If we were to confirm all 16 of the judges on the Senate Executive Calendar today, we still would only have confirmed 23 judges so far this year. That is about half the total from 1988 and only one-third of the 66 judges confirmed in 1992.

We will not accomplish anything tonight on this. But I urge—as I did last night when I was speaking to the Capitol Historical Society, speaking of the history of the Judiciary Committee, when I praised a number of Republican chairmen of that committee, from the past and present, and Democratic chairmen—and if I might, just for a moment, reflect on my 25 years here—we should lower our decibel level, especially in this area. I urge that the distinguished Republican leader and the distinguished Democratic leader, both of whom are dear friends of mine—and I have enjoyed the friendship and serving with them—might try once again. And the distinguished chairman of the committee, the senior Senator from Utah, Mr. HATCH, and I will do that, too, because whatever momentary political advantage either party might have, it does not begin to equate with our responsibility to the independence of the finest judiciary in the world. We should make that try.

It will not happen tonight, but over the weekend maybe calmer heads will prevail. I see my good friend from Kansas on the floor. He and I have joined on legislation. We are certainly not seen as political and philosophical allies, but we have reached across the aisle on significant legislation; one of the most significant is the collegiate gambling legislation. The distinguished Presiding Officer, the Senator from Alabama, and I have also joined together and voted together oftentimes in the Judiciary Committee. We know that, eventually, if something is going to work it has to have the support of Democrats and Republicans. I mention this because I hope that maybe the temperatures will lower. Let us realize that we have more things to unite us than to divide us and we can work together. I thank my two colleagues for their forbearance and letting me take these few minutes.

I yield the floor.

Mr. BROWNBACK. Mr. President, I thank the Senator from Vermont for his thoughtful comments on the need to work together, which I think is critically important. As I understood it, the distinguished Democratic leader and the majority leader were getting pretty close to getting something done and then it fell apart at the end. So I am hopeful that maybe come tomorrow, or the first of next week, those can move forward. I agree that we ought to work together in a calmness for the betterment of the country. I think we can get that done. This has been a tough week, and I have enjoyed working with my colleague.

REMOVAL OF INJUNCTION OF SECRECY—TREATY DOCUMENT NO. 106–24

Mr. BROWNBACK. Mr. President, as in executive session, I ask unanimous consent that the Injunction of Secrecy be removed from the following treaty transmitted to the Senate on May 18, 2000, by the President, that being the Extradition Treaty with South Africa, Treaty Document No. 106–24. I further