China know that economic and political reform are closely linked as well. That is why many of China's military hardliners oppose China's entry into the World Trade Organization.

Perhaps it is this inevitable linking between economic reform and political freedom that has inspired the Dalai Lama, no stranger to China's religious repression, to say:

> I have always stressed that China should not be isolated. China must be brought into the mainstream of the world community. . . .

To those who doubt that economic reform has occurred in China, or that it is significant, I ask them to consider how much has changed in the last half century. You will remember that in 1952, China's Communist government mounted a wide-ranging crusade to undermine private entrepreneurs, businesspeople were commonly condemned as ''counterrevolutionaries,'' and many were assessed large fines and forced out of business.

In fact, by 1956, China required all private firms to be jointly owned and, in fact, run by the government. In practice, this meant that we had state control of all private enterprise in China. It wasn't until the early 1980s that private enterprise began to reemerge in China. More significantly, it wasn't until 1988 that the private economy even had a defined legal status in China.

Today, 12 years later, China is a different country. Today, young Chinese engineers who studied and worked in California's Silicon Valley are going back to China, lured by entrepreneurial opportunities that didn't even exist a few years ago.

The number of individuals employed by the private sector in China has soared by over 31 percent in the last 3 years. That is bad news for China's state-owned enterprises. That happens to also be bad news for China's People's Liberation Army, which depends on many state-run businesses for revenue and have opposed these reforms that are going on within China, including this agreement before the Senate.

But this development is good news for the cause of freedom. As the number of individuals employed in the private sector rises, the state will have less and less direct control over how people think and how people react to political change.

Massachusetts Institute of Technology professor Edward Steinfeld is one of our country's keenest scholars on what goes on in China. This is what he had to say about the meaning of China's World Trade Organization concessions on China's direction as a country:

> The concessions of 1999 represented a thorough reversal of course. Instead of reform serving to sustain the core, the core itself would be destroyed to save reform, along with the growth, prosperity, and stability reform has brought to China.
>
> In the new view, instead of using market forces to save state socialism, state socialism itself would have to be sacrificed to preserve the market economy.

I agree with Professor Steinfeld. China's membership in the World Trade Organization will require it to reform a very large portion of its economy, and not only to comply with WTO rules, but to be able to compete internationally.

With a ''yes'' vote on the motion to proceed and a ''yes'' vote on approving permanent normal trading status for China, we can help change the world. China constitutes one-fifth of the world's population. We can be on the right side of history. We ought to be on the right side of history. I urge a vote for this motion to proceed and a vote of yes on final passage.

I yield the floor.

Mr. REID. Mr. President, I suggest the absence of a quorum.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will call the roll.

The legislative clerk proceeded to call the roll.

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

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Mr. BROWNBACK). Without objection, it is so ordered.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Democratic leader.

Mr. DASCHLE. Mr. President, I would like to use an amount of my leader time prior to the time we go to the energy and water bill to speak on an unrelated matter.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Democratic leader is recognized.

FIREFIGHTING HELP IN SOUTH DAKOTA

Mr. DASCHLE. Mr. President, I haven't had the opportunity yet today to welcome all of our colleagues back and to express my hope that we use this next period as productively and as successfully as we can.

As have most of my colleagues, I had the opportunity to spend a good deal of time at home in South Dakota for the last 3 weeks.

I especially want to commend the Forest Service for the extraordinary job they have done in fighting historically the most consequential fire we have had in the State now, with 85,000 acres of timberland burned. I am grateful for the response we have had from people all over the country. I especially thank the Forest Service, the Governor of the State of South Dakota, William Janklow, for the remarkable job he has done, the National Guard for their response, and the volunteer fire departments from all over the State of South Dakota and surrounding region.

We are grateful for their extraordinary response, and we are grateful as well for the effort that has been made to contain the fire which is now 85-percent contained.

I thank the volunteer ambulance personnel whom I met from all over the State. We are experiencing what many of our colleagues are experiencing with volunteer ambulance service. Many of them are on the verge of going out of business because of reimbursement schedules for Medicare and Medicaid. Without those, especially in rural areas, we are in a very serious set of circumstances involving the health and in many cases the lives of people who live in rural areas today.

I thank those in schools all over South Dakota who opened their doors and their offices to me in Kadoka, White River, Lemmon, and most of our Indian reservations in Belle Fourche. I thank them.

I thank those who especially were willing to meet with me on hospital reimbursement and appreciate very much their willingness to talk about how serious the circumstances were with regard to Medicare reimbursement for hospitals and clinics throughout our State.

I must say, at virtually every one of our stops we had occasion to talk about the unfinished agenda here in the Senate. I want to talk just briefly about that prior to the time we turn to another important piece of legislation, the energy and water bill.

UNATTENDED LEGISLATION

Mr. DASCHLE. Mr. President, there is great concern about unattended legislation, legislation having to do with health care, education, meaningful gun safety, and minimum wage. There is no legitimate reason we could not have accomplished something on each of the issues I have mentioned and many more.

There is no legitimate reason this Congress couldn't have passed a real Patients' Bill of Rights long before this.

There is no good reason we couldn't have added a voluntary Medicare prescription drug benefit.

There is no reason we couldn't have agreed by now to strengthen our children's schools. We have had many opportunities. There are those who say that passing bills is hard work.

If you want to see real hard work, go to Murdo, South Dakota some day. Talk to Cathy Cheney and the five other members of her volunteer ambulance squad.

They are on call 24 hours a day, seven days a week. When a call comes in—even if it's in the middle of the night—they drop whatever they're doing, leave their jobs and families, and go. Most times, they are not back for at least 3 hours.

When they're not answering calls, they're studying for certification tests. And they don't get paid a dime for any of it. That is hard work, Mr. President. And it is not just South Dakotans who face challenges like this.

Go to any community in any state in America, and you'll find people who are working hard—some of them are working two and three jobs—to make a decent life for themselves and their families, and to give something back to their communities.

You will find older people who worked hard for 40 and 50 years, who are retired now. They are not asking us to do the impossible.

They are not asking us to make unreasonable concessions. All they are asking is that we make a good-faith effort to solve the problems these families are dealing with today and who face the challenging months and years when they must examine, address, and answer problems in their own lives.

When the 106th Congress began, many of us had great hopes about what we could accomplish.

We had had budget surpluses 2 years in a row and were on our way to a third year—something that hadn't happened in 50 years. The economy was setting record after record.

After years of having to downsize our dreams because of the deficit, Americans were finally in a position to start hoping again, and tackling some of the big challenges facing working families.

Nearly 2 years later, almost none of those hopes has been met.

As we near the end of this Congress, it appears increasingly likely that they will not be met. One reason for that is, frankly, our less than ambitious legislative schedule. If we adjourn, as planned, on October 6, the Senate will have been in session for a total of just 115 days this year. That is 115 out of 365.

By any objective measure, that is not exactly breaking a sweat. In fact, it is the lightest Senate schedule since 1956. It is only 2 days more than the infamous do-nothing Congress of 1948. But the calendar is not the only reason we have achieved so little.

A more significant, and troubling, reason for this Congress' inaction has been the absolute refusal by Republican leaders in both houses to pass the people's agenda.

For 2 years, majority leaders in both houses have used their numerical advantage, and every parliamentary trick they could find, to prevent us from passing a real Patients' Bill of Rights.

Despite the fact that there is an overwhelming majority in the Congress and an overwhelming majority of the American people who want campaign finance reform, Republican leaders in both Houses have prevented us from passing the McCain-Feingold bill.

Despite pleas from the victims of the Columbine tragedy and more than a million moms who came to Washington to petition Congress, Republican leaders have repeatedly refused to pass reasonable gun safety measures.

They oppose our plan for affordable prescription drug coverage. They oppose our plan to strengthen our children's schools by making classes smaller and schools safer and setting higher standards.

For 2 years, they even opposed raising the minimum wage by $1 over 2 years. Now some of our Republican colleagues in the other body say they might be willing to do this but only if we include tens of billions of dollars worth of tax cuts for the wealthiest in the country. Why can't we just do the right thing? Why can't we just raise the minimum wage $1 an hour over 2 years without having to spend tens of billions of dollars on new tax breaks for people who need them the least?

Instead of working to pass a people's agenda, our Republican colleagues have spent most of the last 2 years pursuing one goal: Cutting taxes the wrong way, creating huge new tax breaks at the expense of everything and everyone else.

This week we will lose more time and more opportunities because they insist on trying to override the President's vetoes on their so-called marriage penalty and estate tax bills. Never mind that 60 percent of the cost of their marriage penalty has nothing to do with fixing the marriage penalty. Never mind their estate tax bill benefits only the wealthiest 2 percent of estates. Never mind that neither bill will help middle-class families. In fact, they will hurt ordinary Americans by eating up the expected surplus, money we need for other things.

Our friends on the other side of the aisle clearly think their tax cuts are good politics. They just hope the American people accept their spin and don't check the facts.

Despite the history of this Congress, my colleagues and I have not given up hope for its future. Five weeks is not a lot of time, but it is enough time. Even given the time we must spend on appropriations bills and the China trade legislation, there is still enough time for this Congress to solve some of the problems real people talk about and worry about outside of Washington.

In 1948, Republicans held their Presidential nominating convention in Philadelphia. At that convention they endorsed a platform filled with all kinds of measures a Republican Congress had spent the previous 2 years blocking. Back then there was no September session of Congress. It went from the convention to the campaign trail. President Truman was so amazed by what he heard in Philadelphia, he ordered Congress back for a special session. He told Members: There is still time before the election. If you really believe what you say, pass your platform and I will sign it.

Last month, our Republican friends held another nominating convention in Philadelphia, the first time they have been back since 1948. Once again, they claim to support all kinds of things Republicans in this Congress have spent the last 2 years fighting. We have a request for our friends across the aisle, right now, tonight. There are still 5 weeks left in this Congress. Let's use this time to do the things you said in Philadelphia you support. Let's pass a responsible budget that pays down the debt, protects Social Security and Medicare, and invests in America's future. Let's cut taxes for working families. Let's strengthen our children's schools and protect our children from gun violence. Let's raise the minimum wage $1 an hour over 2 years. Let's finally pass a prescription drug benefit and a real Patients' Bill of Rights.

We were pleased by what we heard in Philadelphia about prescription drugs and a Patients' Bill of Rights. We are more pleased with the commercial running in Rhode Island. That commercial, paid for by the Republican Senate Committee, praised Senator CHAFEE for.

> . . . voting against his own party and for a real Patients' Bill of Rights . . . and a prescription-drug benefit that gives seniors the drugs they need at a price they can afford.

Both of those plans referred to in that ad are our plans. We intend to give our colleagues a chance to make that record match the rhetoric before this Congress ends. We will start by offering the bipartisan Norwood-Dingell Patients' Bill of Rights the first chance we get. There is no reason the American people should have to wait until next Congress for a real Patients' Bill of Rights. It is time to stop stalling. It is time for an up-or-down vote in this Senate on the Dingell-Norwood Patients' Bill of Rights bill. We also intend to give our colleagues the chance to support a voluntary affordable prescription drug benefit. If they really believe in these things, they will have the opportunity to work with this side to pass them. Let's schedule the vote. We will support them, and the President will sign them.

We spend far too much time in this Congress talking about things that don't matter for working families and avoiding the problems that do matter. The progress we had hoped to make at the beginning of this Congress is still within our reach. Let's not waste another day. Let's work hard in these next 5 weeks on the issues I have mentioned, into the night and through the weekends if we have to. Let's not give up until we have honestly said we have done what the American people sent us here to do.

I yield the floor.

Mr. DOMENICI. I ask unanimous consent for 3 minutes to comment on the comments of Senator DASCHLE after a few brief remarks.

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

Mr. DOMENICI. Mr. President, clearly I appreciate the distinguished minority leader's cooperation in getting this bill up. I appreciate the tone of his comments in that he desires apparently to get this bill and other bills passed. I hope that is true. I say to the Senate, I will do my best to try to finish this bill tomorrow night. I don't know of a lot of real difficult amendments. There are some important amendments for regions of the country and otherwise. Clearly, I have seen no amendments thus far that attack the substance of this bill which I will explain shortly.

Mr. President, what is not said by the minority leader, in an effort to analyze the entire Presidential election and

what is going on here in the Congress as of this moment, first, on tax reform measures that the Republicans have proposed, call them what you may. Of course, the distinguished Senator, minority leader, chooses to call them so-called marriage penalty reform.

Between 35 and 45 million American couples are affected by that bill. Affected how? Their taxes will go down for no other reason than we will eliminate a penalty currently imposed just because they are married. Whether we have some other people covered in it or not, let me suggest we know what it will cost in 5 years. We know what it will cost in 10 years to the Treasury if we give back a little bit of money to the married couples in America who are getting taxed extra just because they are married.

What else did we pass? We passed a 10-year phase-in of the death tax. Surely those on the other side know that by definition the only people who pay a death tax—that is, a tax on death—are people who have accumulated some assets. So they could all be called rich. Essentially, the current law of America says if, after your mother and father have worked their whole lives and have acquired four drugstores and own a house and have invested in a piece of property, if that ends up being $10 million—I am speaking to Americans who might have worked 40 years—right now the Government can take as much as 65 percent of it upon their death.

That is the question. Is that right? Does America want that? Or should we ask our President to sign a bill that phases that out over 10 years?

I happen to have looked at numbers to see how they relate one to another in this budget process. My estimates are as follows: Both of those taxes combined cannot be risky to America.

Why can't they be? Because they amount to somewhere between 10 percent and 12 percent of the surplus—10 percent to 12 percent of the surplus, the non-Social Security surplus which is $3.4 trillion.

The same people who say that is risky have on the table at least five new programs that will spend more of the surplus than those two tax cuts. Are those programs therefore risky, because they spend more of the Federal surplus than these two tax reform measures? No. But neither are the tax cuts, just because they are tax reform measures. They are not risky just because they give people back some of their money. To those on the other side and the Vice President, who is running for President, they must be risky because they give back to the American people some real tax reform money.

If we want to go on to debate whether the Vice President even has a plan to give Americans back any of their tax money, we can do that at any time. I am not on the tax writing committee, but I will volunteer. I will be here. And I can tell you right up front, very little of what the President proposes goes to taxpayers for tax relief. Almost all of it goes to Americans whom the Vice President chooses to give back money, by way of just giving them a check that matches or exceeds their own money, in a huge way. The largest transfer of wealth that we probably have ever seen is tucked away in what the Vice President calls tax cuts for the American people.

Read the Washington Post editorial of 4 days ago. While they are quick to criticize Republicans, they have a very good paragraph in the middle of their editorial saying: Mr. Vice President, Democrats, why do you insist on telling the taxpayers, including middle income taxpayers, how they should spend the tax dollars you want to give them back? The Washington Post says: If you want to give them a tax cut give them a tax cut. They don't do that. They create some new targeted programs. If you want to use them, you have to use it for college tuition. If you want to use it, you have to use it for this, that, or the other.

Question: Don't some Americans have more concern about how to use it and where to use it, and would do that right, rather than to have the Government do that for you while making the Tax Code more complicated and claiming they are giving you tax relief?

Frankly, I could answer many more of the questions but I will just do the issues raised by the minority leader, and I will only address one.

The President of the United States has never attempted to seriously do a bipartisan Medicare prescription bill—never. He has sent us his own, but never has negotiated with Republicans. The one time we had a bipartisan committee, since you required a supermajority, he pulled his support so it would not have a supermajority—yet it had a majority, bipartisan, for a major reform and prescription drug bill. So one of the reasons most of the things not getting done are not getting done is because they have become so partisan that the other side of the aisle says, ''Our way or no way.'' The President says, ''My way or no way.'' The Vice President says, ''I am running for President and here is what I propose. It will be that way or no way.''

That is what the American people will find out, I hope, as we debate these issues in an effort in the next 5 weeks to resolve many of them. And I hope we do.

ENERGY AND WATER DEVELOPMENT APPROPRIATIONS ACT, 2001

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Under the previous order, the clerk will report the bill.

The bill clerk read the title as follows:

A bill (H.R. 4733) making appropriations for energy and water development for the fiscal year ending September 30, 2001, and for other purposes.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from New Mexico.

Mr. DOMENICI. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent—and this has been approved by the other side—that the committee amendment to H.R. 4733 be adopted and that the bill as amended be considered as original text for the purpose of further amendments, provided that no points of order are waived by this request.

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

Mr. DOMENICI. Mr. President, the Committee on Appropriations favorably reported H.R. 4733 by a vote of 28 to 0 on Tuesday, July 18.

Senator REID and I have worked very hard this year to put together a fair bill under extremely difficult circumstances. As reported by the committee, the recommendation would provide $22.470 billion in new budget authority for fiscal year 2001. That total is broken out between a defense allocation that is pretty good, and a non-defense allocation that is extremely limited.

The Defense BA allocation is $13.484 billion. That is $400 million over the President's request and $1.384 billion over last year. The committee requested the additional money to address some very serious needs in the nuclear weapons complex, defense environmental clean-up, and in ongoing international nonproliferation programs.

However, the BA allocation on the non-defense side of the bill is much more difficult—it provides $8.986 billion, which is $603 million below the President's request and $73 million below the current year level.

In order to accommodate some serious shortfalls in the President's request, and some very legitimate requests from Members, we have had to cut a significant amount more than the $603 million we are short from the request.

The allocation has also forced the committee to make very difficult choices, and we have tried to do that on as fair a basis as possible. We have followed certain criteria. In the water accounts for example:

No. 1, we have tried to focus available funding, to the greatest extent possible, to ongoing studies and construction projects.

No. 2, we have included no new construction starts or new initiatives in fiscal year 2001, and only a very limited number of new studies or planning projects.

No. 3, we have not included unauthorized projects or water and sewer infrastructure projects contained in the Water Resources Development Act of 1999.

No. 4, numerous projects budgeted at or near the Corps' capability have been reduced in order to pick-up funds for congressional priorities and to restore funding not requested by the administration for flood control and inland navigation projects.

No. 5, given these constraints, we have been limited to accommodating