Everyone knew the farm bill was going to be up. It was laid down last week. Yet they are objecting to having some meaningful debate. No one wants to cut off amendments, but at least we can have some amendments laid down, have time agreements, and debate them.

Second, on the stimulus package, I think the Senator from Nevada is right. I think they are protesting too much on the other side. I smell a little bit of a rat someplace because I have been hearing from my Governor in Iowa, and I have heard from other people and other Governors from around the United States about what bad shape their economies are in right now and how their legislatures will be meeting in January.

Their budget situations look very dire. They are cutting expenses; they are cutting education; they are cutting other programs around the States. They have looked at the proposed Republican stimulus bill with all of the tax cuts, and they have now begun to figure out what that is going to mean in the States and how the State budgets are going to be impacted by these proposed tax cuts the Republicans have proposed in the stimulus package.

A lot of States are saying: Don't give us so much of this ''help'' because the tax cuts you are putting in there are going to help a lot of the large corporations, a lot of the wealthiest in our country, but at the same time it is going to take money out of our States at a time during the recession when our States can ill afford it.

There is some feedback. Of course, our friends on the other side of the aisle are a little bit in a bind. They promised their big-wig supporters—the big companies and the big corporations—all these tax cuts they were going to get for them, and even though they want to deliver, they cannot because they are going to hurt a lot of the Republican Governors and Democratic Governors, too, in the State budgets. Maybe our friends are caught in a little bit of a bind, promising too much to the large corporations and the wealthy of this country, and then finding out what the impact is going to be on our States.

What they have come up with is not a stimulus package. It is simply a tax relief package for the biggest and wealthiest in our country. That is not stimulus at all.

If they want to sit down, negotiate, talk about it, and work out agreements, that is the spirit of this place and that is what we ought to be doing. To say it is their way or no way, and we say we want to work it out, and they say we are being obstructionist—the American people understand that. They understand we are not being obstructionists.

Talk about obstructionism, try this one on for size. We are now engaged in a conference with the House on the reauthorization of the elementary and secondary education bill. For years, people on both sides of the aisle—I will not point to one side or the other—people on both sides of the aisle have been saying we need to meet our Federal commitment to special education.

The agreement the Federal Government made 26 years ago was that the Federal Government would pick up at least 40 percent of the average per pupil cost of educating kids with disabilities. Twenty-six years ago, the Federal Government said that. Today our commitment is at about 15 percent. This is the single biggest issue in every school district in America—the funding for special education.

The Senate adopted an amendment offered by me and by Senator HAGEL from Nebraska that would put us on the pathway of fully funding special education over 6 years by taking it off the appropriations side and putting it on the mandatory side. We are now in conference negotiations.

The National Governors' Association, headed by a Republican Governor from Michigan, signed a letter, supported by every Governor in the United States, saying they supported the Senate's position of full funding special education.

The National School Boards Association, the National PTA, the National Education Association, the National Conference of State Legislatures—38 State legislatures have already passed resolutions supporting this full funding. The only reason we do not have 50 is because some of them were not meeting this year after we adopted it. Wait until January. All the legislatures are saying it is time the Federal Government stepped up and did its part in special education.

Here is the catch: The White House, the administration, has said no, they will not agree with the Senate position on funding for special education.

So we had our vote on it. The House voted against it. We voted for it. Okay. What is to be done then? Usually in a conference, negotiations are started and compromise is attempted.

So we offered to the House a compromise, and the House said forget it, they are not going to compromise. They do not want to fund special education one more nickel than what they have done in the bill. It is not coming from the House side. It is coming down from the other end of Pennsylvania Avenue. It is coming from the White House. It is the White House that is stonewalling.

So talk about obstructionism, that is obstructionism when the White House refuses to negotiate or reach any kind of compromise with the Senate on full funding for special education. So I think before the Vice President and others start throwing around words about obstructionism, they ought to pick up the mirror and look at themselves, especially when it comes to funding for special education.

So I thank the Senator from Nevada for pointing out the fact we have not been obstructing anything on this side, and for pointing out this so-called stimulus package is nothing more than the old ''trickle down.'' If those at the top are given to it, some of it may trickle down on the rest of us. We have tried that before and it has never worked; it will not work this time either.

Yes, we do need to do something about unemployment compensation. The biggest stimulus we could have right now is getting health care for our children and health care for people who do not have health care coverage right now. That is the biggest stimulus we could give to our economy and help people at the same time.

I am going to wrap up my statement, and then I am going to talk about the farm bill, another stimulus.

We are in dire straits. Rural America is hurting. We need a farm bill. When farmers know a bill is coming, they are borrowing money; they are buying new equipment; they are doing the things that stimulate the kind of growth and the kind of manufacturing we need in this country. So I sure hope we will not hear any more of this blame game, trying to blame someone for being obstructionist when all we are trying to do is work in a bipartisan fashion, as we should be doing, to reach the best decisions for the American people. So when they say ''obstructionism,'' they say it is our way or the highway. To me, that is obstructionism.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Mrs. BOXER). The Senator from New Mexico.

Mr. DOMENICI. Parliamentary inquiry: Am I entitled to speak for a given time or must I seek consent of the Senate?

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senate is on the farm bill, and the Senator may speak as long as he wishes on the farm bill.

Mr. DOMENICI. I ask unanimous consent that I speak for only 9 minutes instead of as long as I wish, but that it not be on the farm bill.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection, it is so ordered. The Senator is recognized for 9 minutes.

WHERE IS THE DEMOCRATIC STIMULUS PACKAGE?

Mr. DOMENICI. Madam President, fellow Senators, especially to my good friend, HARRY REID, I will not take time this afternoon to attempt in some feeble way to rebut the statement with reference to the partisanship of the last month or so with reference to various items, including the stimulus package. Suffice it to say, the granddaddy of all partisanship occurred on the stimulus package that was reported out of the Finance Committee of the Senate because on that particular one, the conferees were instructed by the Democratic majority—and I remind everyone that majority is by one vote—they told that committee to report out a Democratic package every single Democrat Senator would support. That meant there were no Republicans because they had something

to offer, too. But rather they took a Democratic package, produced it, and then the big partisan debate started with reference to an attempt to get a stimulus package.

Where is that Democratic stimulus package? I do not have it. I wish I did. I would love to read it to the American people so they could conclude whether it is going to make jobs for people, whether that is going to excite this economy. It is still pending at the desk. It is still pending because those who produced it do not want to let the Senate vote on it because they are afraid there will be two negotiations: One when we argue in this Chamber and one when they go to conference.

Whatever their reasons, the hangup is there is a bill at the desk that was produced by a partisan majority that contains only things they want and nothing the Republicans wanted. I submit we can throw those kinds of characteristics away and ask some experts whether that bill will create new jobs.

Among the various proposals, it is the least productive of new jobs of all the proposals around. So with another effort on the part of the Democratic leadership, we are led by my very good friend, HARRY REID, to bring this back and in some way blame the Republicans, who do not even control the Senate, for this big delay.

Then what happened to the House? The House produced their own economic stimulus. Every time our friends on the other side talk about the Republicans, everybody should know that was the House Republicans who produced the bill they are speaking of, not those of us who are trying to put a package together in the Senate. The House did their own thing. They got a majority vote, and that is the way they did it.

That is not going to end up being the law. We have to get together and resolve the issue in favor of the American people, instead of in favor of who wins this bickering and this arguing.

So that is where we are.

Instead of there being a vote in the Senate on the stimulus package, a deal was cooked up for which we would never vote in the Senate: just go to conference with the House and have an argument with them and decide between the Democratic proposal that was adopted without any input from the Senate Republicans, whether that or a House-passed bill is going to be the law of the land, or which part will come out of it in terms of compromise.

Why did the House chairman call off the meetings? I never justify the House's activities, but the House chairman's reason was very simple: the majority leader had said publicly there would not be a stimulus package unless two-thirds of the Democratic Senators supported the provisions of that stimulus package. The chairman of the House read that and said, since that is their desire—and I do not go to committee meetings negotiating with an unknown two-thirds Members who are not even present—why do we not go home, take a 5-day recess, and think it over. That is where we are.

Let anybody who would like lay blame for that 5-day delay, but it is not all singularly the problem of the chairman of the House committee when, if it is true, the leader of the other side has indicated there is no use going to conference and negotiating because there is an ominous presence that has to be looked to to make sure two-thirds of the Democratic Senators support it.

That is pretty different than most conferences. I do not blame him too much for wondering what kind of conference they were going to have. It has since been denied that it was said or that it meant that. What we ought to do is actually forget about all of that.

Before I move to the stimulus package, I must take a couple of minutes to speak with reference to the farm bill. Tomorrow, we will have plenty of time, I hope, to talk about the farm bill in more depth.

Mr. DORGAN. Will the Senator from New Mexico yield on a point?

Mr. DOMENICI. On a point?

Mr. DORGAN. Yes. The Senator from New Mexico said something I am not sure is accurate, and I wonder if I might ask a question about that.

Mr. DOMENICI. I would like to finish. I do not have much time.

Mr. DORGAN. I am glad to extend the time.

Mr. DOMENICI. I can handle anybody's question, but I want to finish my thoughts and then I will yield to the Senator.

With reference to the farm bill, I do not come to this Chamber too often on a farm bill, but I will be on this one because, first of all, it is an abomination for milk production in America and for our children who drink a lot of milk and for those in America who are encouraged to drink a lot of milk. This is a bill calculated to increase the price of milk dramatically so as to spread around a new tax so all of those producing milk can get a fair share of the new tax; not so we will produce competition and there will be a big incentive to produce good, solid, healthy milk at lower prices but, rather, to make sure those areas of the country that are not producing milk in a competitive manner will get made whole at the expense of the very competitive States such as mine and Idaho and others, that are producing substantially new ways to be competitive, safe, sound, and produce rather cheap milk for the American children and American people. We will have plenty to say about that.

The bill they are talking about in agriculture, obviously, will never become law. It has some good arguing points for five or six States that would like to convince others.

Having said that, I get back to stimulus. The news is not great with reference to the economy. It is very hard to figure out what is going on in the economy because the numbers, the statistics, the assessments are mixed. Clearly, they are not so mixed that we should call off the stimulus package. We have to do one. We ought to decide now that we don't have a lot of time and we ought to do a very simple bill.

I say to Senator REID, what I will do today is introduce a very simple economic stimulus package. The Senator might recall, in the Chamber a couple of weeks ago I shared a proposal with you with reference to an economic stimulus, that we have a 1-month holiday from the Social Security tax for both the employer and the employee. I think we ought to have that as a cornerstone. Both sets of leaders in both Houses ought to agree that is the best stimulus around of any we have seen, and then just do two other things—and all the rest we will wait and do next year—do two other things and call it a stimulus package. Indeed, it would be.

First, the tax holiday will put $8 billion into the economy and 160 million working men and women in America get to keep the withholding. Their employers will do the same. They will not have to remit theirs. That ought to be the cornerstone. Do it for January, February. But do it. It will stimulate the economy and give it a good kick upwards. A lot of Democrats support that. It is when you put the rest of the package together we get to arguing. I submit it is so important we get rid of the other things that cause Members to argue and do those another day, another time, another way. They are not stimulus anyway.

We ought to do two things. Beyond the holiday, we ought to expand the safety net for working Americans; that is, expand it and extend unemployment payments. Some Democratic Senators and some Republicans have said we ought to do that. We ought to agree to that. An additional 13 weeks of unemployment benefits, if passed, and expand that to part-time workers—they ought to be in this alternative—that costs $9 billion.

Last, we ought to go ahead and do the enhanced extending of cap expenditures but reduce it to 20 percent instead of 30 percent, so we would have 20 percent appreciation in 3 years.

An extension of expansion of the unemployment compensation and the stimulus package, the stimulus core, and the payroll tax holiday. I wish we could do that. I wish we could decide. There is not enough time to argue. Let's do something truly stimulative to get America going again and let that do two other things the Americans need: One for the unemployment needs and one for business needs with reference to appreciation.

I put my statement in explaining the situation of the economy, explaining the three provisions, and sending a bill along with it, in case anybody wants to see what it should look like. I send a bill with it, and that includes only the three provisions: The holiday; the 20 percent depreciation instead of 30 percent for 3 years for the capital account,

which is very much needed by small and large businesses; and last, a drastic and much needed expansion of the unemployment code of this country. The three provisions make up about a $79 billion package. If we can pass that this week—everybody knows what they are—that will be truly something very positive.

I am happy to answer questions. If I made an error, I am happy to correct that.

Mr. DORGAN. On the point the Senator from New Mexico made about the economic stimulus or recovery plan that came out of the Senate Finance Committee, the Senator from New Mexico indicated that was at the desk—or I guess first he asked where is it; and then, it is at the desk, why isn't it pending?

Isn't it the case the bill at the desk is a House bill which was passed by the House on a clearly partisan 216 to 214 vote. In fact the bill out of the Senate Finance Committee is not at the desk, but a point of order was made against it. I believe the Senator from New Mexico supported the point of order that took the Senate Finance Committee bill off the floor, and it is not pending. I want to correct that because I think the implication of the Senator was, well, that bill is at the desk, why isn't it here? Is it not the case it was pending and a vote was held on a point of order? And I believe the Senator from New Mexico supported the point of order and therefore it is not pending.

Mr. DOMENICI. Mr. President, that may be the case. If it is the case, I yield to the facts.

Still, the situation is that at an appointed time shortly after that event, or surrounding that event, when it was declared to be violative of the Budget Act, it is quite clear the majority leader does not want to negotiate here with Republicans and in the House with Republicans and Democrats, again. So he prefers to go right to conference. He doesn't seem to be terribly concerned about what happened to the Democratic bill because he doesn't want to work anything out in the Senate because he says that means he will have to negotiate twice.

I believe we don't have to negotiate twice. We ought to look at these three points. I can see in both bodies a very large majority for these three points. That is ample for Members to go home at Christmas and say, we have a good stimulus. It can be bipartisan because there are at least 12 Senators, a mix of both sides, who support the holiday. The only reason there are not more is that they are waiting for their own provision that they supported to go away because they don't want to be for two things. But if the leadership would say we should do a simple package, one that is profoundly stimulative, we can forget about all this arguing and forget about which week what happened.

But I will go back and say, if we said that the Democrat bill was subject to a point of order, that is the way everything has been going here, everything is subject to a point of order.

The truth is, it started off very nonpartisan because the Finance Committee decided they would put together a bill to garner enough Democratic votes to report it out of committee. I am not arguing that we have the right to do that. I have done that on budget before. But you cannot then say it is the Republicans who don't want a tax bill when you started this process, when you started this process by saying, we want one but only if it is our way.

It is time we all forget about that. My speech is not intended to bring it all up again, just to clarify the record, and then to say forget about it and let us do something. This week we could get a stimulus done that would be about like the one I sent to the desk, we could get the rest of our work done, and we could go home.

I yield the floor.

Mr. DORGAN. Mr. President, this is very curious. My friend from New Mexico, when I asked the question about whether the bill is pending or at the desk, as was his implication, said that may or may not be the case. It either is or is not the case.

The answer is, it is not the case. I don't want people to come to the floor and say the stimulus program that came from the Senate Finance Committee is somewhere around here and the majority leader doesn't wish to bring it back to the floor. It was on the floor, we had a vote on it, and in fact every Member on the other side of the aisle voted to take it off the floor.

I think when the Senator says that may or may not be the case, this is a matter of fact. I don't want people to leave the implication that somehow there is a bill sitting at the desk, ready to come to the floor, but Senator DASCHLE chooses not to bring it to the floor. In fact, the bill at the desk is the House bill. That bill came from the House Ways and Means Committee. It was a partisan bill, written by Chairman THOMAS and the Republicans on the Ways and Means Committee—the very process the Senator from New Mexico criticizes. That was passed by the House of Representatives 216 to 214. That is what is now at the desk. It came to the floor of the Senate, and we had a debate.

It is also the case that every bill, including the House bill, the Senate Republican bill, and the bill the Senate Finance Committee passed, had a point of order that could be lodged against it.

The only point of order that was lodged was against the bill that Senator DASCHLE tried to bring to the floor of the Senate. So it is, in my judgment, a curious thing for those who voted to take the bill off the floor of the Senate and have us cease its consideration with a point of order, to now wonder aloud—repeatedly, in the last couple of weeks—where is the bill?

I said before this is not exactly a ''Where's Waldo'' exercise, a game that most fathers have played with their children. We know where the bill is. It was here. It is now gone—not because of something we did. We wanted that economic stimulus and recovery bill to be passed by the Senate and to go to conference. It is gone because it was taken off the floor on a point of order—a point of order which, incidentally, we did not raise against anything else. The point of order would exist against the House-passed bill and against the Senate Republican bill.

Because of that, the decision was made to try to find a way to create a negotiation between the House and the Senate—and hopefully with the cooperation of the President—to see if we could construct some kind of stimulus package.

Is that an optimum way to do it or the best way to do it? I don't think so. The best way to have done this, in my judgment, would have been to consider the bill that came out of the Senate Finance Committee and in regular order offer amendments to it, have votes on it, and then go to a conference. That would have been my preference.

I must say to my friend from New Mexico that I have great admiration for his legislative skills. He is a great speaker and good thinker, and I think the suggestion he has with respect to the payroll tax is, in fact, stimulative. The point is he has some suggestions that have some stimulus capability to them. But to go out and then go through 5 or 6 minutes of the same sort of thing we heard on the talk shows all weekend about Senator DASCHLE and say that is not what it is all about, let's forget what I just said—you know, somehow that doesn't make much sense to me.

Mr. DOMENICI. Will the Senator yield?

Mr. DORGAN. In the end, the question before the American people about how you fix and provide lift to the American economy is not about Republicans or Democrats. It also is not about conservatives or liberals, and it is not about the House or the Senate. It is about right and wrong. There is a right way to do this and a wrong way to do it. Most of us are not certain what is right or wrong. But consult with the best economists in America, just consult with the best economists you can find in this country, and ask them: Which set of policies do you think give us the best chance for this economy to recover? You know that the answer is not this.

The Senator will say that is what the House did: That is exactly what we are negotiating at this point because Chairman THOMAS brings this to the negotiating table. What ''this''? Let me read—I will be happy to yield in a moment. Let me read from the Wall Street Journal—no liberal bastion, I might say.

When President Bush and Congress sat down to another round of tax-cutting this fall in the hopes of stimulating the economy, business groups were welcomed to the table.

Now, many of the country's biggest corporations are reaching for an oversized portion.

The companies could end up grabbing refund checks worth hundreds of millions of dollars each, thanks to one of the many business breaks in the tax-cut package fashioned by House Republican leaders that could come to a House vote this week. Democrats' objections are to be expected, but even some Senate Republicans and Bush officials have distanced themselves.

As you know, the Secretary of the Treasury called this ''show business.'' Those are the words to describe what the House of Representatives did.

I don't come here to decide that one side is all right or one side is all wrong. But I am a little chagrined about what is happening here, about people talking about what the majority leader has or hasn't done, what the majority leader could or could not do. The majority leader did the responsible thing. He brought a stimulus bill to the floor of the Senate for debate. It wasn't his action that took it from pending consideration. It was a point of order made by the other side, Republicans, that actually took it off the Senate floor.

I will, without losing my right to the floor, be happy to yield to the Senator from New Mexico for a question.

Mr. DOMENICI. Mr. President, I do not have a question. If I may just have a minute to make a statement, the Senator can then take as much time as he would like to rebut me.

Mr. DORGAN. Mr. President, of course I will allow the Senator from New Mexico to make a minute statement. The purpose of discourse on the floor is to ask questions and respond to questions. But if the Senator would like to have a minute—without my yielding the floor—I would be happy to do that.

Mr. DOMENICI. I just want to make one statement as to the issue of whether or not the American people were going to ever get a stimulus. They could look up here and say Congress passed a bill that people outside of government, who know about our economy, say will help us, the American consumers. That started down the partisan path when the Finance Committee of the Senate was told it was to produce a Democratic bill. They did. They got every Democrat to vote for it and no Republicans.

All I am suggesting is, that started us down a path that was full of partisan thorns. Instead of us going down a nice, easy street to get Americans what they deserve, we started down a partisan path that got us here today.

The House may be as partisan as can be. Their bill may be everything the distinguished Senator is going to say about it. But it may not, also. But it may be. That is his assessment of their bill.

We do not have a bill we are going to discuss because they produced a purely Democratic bill that did not have any Republican support. If in fact we did what he said, it was subject to a point of order and we voted it down so it would not be the pending business. Those are still the facts. I regret that it doesn't set too well with the other side when somebody comes down here for 8 or 9 minutes—and that is all the time we have been here—and interrupts their conversation, which has been going on day after day, that kind of blames all this on the Republicans. I do not choose to blame it on the Democrats. I choose to say let's get a stimulus package and let's have some leadership, to say it is too late to get everything we want and it is too late to argue. Let's just get a stimulus package by going to conference with some leadership saying let's do a simple but good thing.

I offer a suggestion today as to what that could be. I am just as vulnerable to being prejudiced in favor of the holiday portion of it as others are for business or labor provisions that they want in this. But I think we should get off the partisan path, get onto another one. And, frankly, the Agriculture bill can be debated, the remaining appropriations bill, and a nice, simple stimulus package could be put together if indeed we just chose to move to another path.

I yield the floor and thank the Senator for yielding to me.

Mr. DORGAN. Mr. President, if I may continue, I find this really interesting. I believe this past spring the Budget Committee sent out a wholly partisan document supported only by the Republicans after they refused to meet with the Democrat members of the committee.

I don't think we are interested in a lot of finger pointing. I think the American people are interested in a question of who is going to offer proposals that constructively help this American economy.

I am going to say some things about the House bill because the House bill is what comes to the conference. It is not a question of may or may not be good. The House bill is atrocious. Does anybody in this country think that, with an economy that is very weak, with an economy with a substantial overcapacity, the way to resolve the problems of this economy and provide lift and opportunity in this economy is to give Ford a $1 billion tax rebate check, or IBM, a $1.4 billion tax rebate check for corporate alternative minimum taxes paid going back to 1988? They won't do that for individuals who paid an alternative minimum tax but just for corporations at a time when there is overcapacity.

Is there anyone who can find an economist who thinks this is going to help the American economy? It is not.

How about the hundreds of thousands of people who have lost their jobs?

Every economist will concede that one way to stimulate this economy is to help those people who have lost their jobs with extended unemployment benefits. A fair number have no benefits at all and we should provide something to help them during these tough times. Every economist says that will help this economy because every one of those dollars will be spent almost immediately. That is the way you help this economy.

There are other ways as well: A combination of tax breaks, yes—for business and others—rebates to be helpful to some people who didn't get tax breaks earlier this year; and, extend unemployment benefits. There are other things we can do.

But what was done in the House of Representatives—you talk about the sounds of the hogs in the corn crib just grunting and shoving around doing what they can to cobble together a bill with left-over policies they didn't get done in any other tax bills is exactly what happened here. This has nothing to do with stimulus.

That is not why I came to the floor. I am just curious. My colleague came to the floor to spend about 5 to 6 minutes talking about what the Democrats have done to make all of this partisan and political, and then said: But it is not my intention to cast blame or to talk about the Democrats—after the first 5 minutes talking about the Democrats and Senator DASCHLE.

Let me make this point about this issue. We brought this stimulus bill to the floor of the Senate. It is not here now because a point of order was lodged against it, and every Member of the minority party in the Senate voted to sustain that point of order. That is why it is not here. The next time somebody asks the question, write it down. Take a 2-by-5 card and write it down for those who voted to sustain a point of order. Write a little note that says: I voted to take the stimulus bill off the floor of the Senate so it couldn't any longer be considered so you will know that. You don't have to repeatedly ask these questions.

We have this negotiation going on. It is supposed to go on. The chairman of the Ways and Means Committee went to California this weekend instead of meeting over the weekend as previously decided. I do not know about all of that.

But at the end of the day, the American people deserve to have a package of proposals from this Congress that really gives a lift to this economy. This economy is in trouble. We have a responsibility to help. It is not going to help by people coming here and pointing this way or that way. As I said, there is not a Republican or Democratic way to stimulate the economy, but there is the right way and the wrong way. We have received some pretty good advice on which is which.

My judgment is that in the coming days we can put together a proposal that will be helpful to this country. That is our obligation.