

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senate is conducting morning business.

Mr. BURNS. I ask unanimous consent that I may proceed as in morning business for 10 minutes.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator has that right.

DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE DECISION

Mr. BURNS. Mr. President, I rise today to join some of my friends on both sides of the aisle to talk about and to do something about taking action regarding the Department of Agriculture's decision to open the border to Canadian beef on March 7.

I have been vocal about this for some time. We have been negotiating with the powers that be in trying to improve this controversial regulation.

First, I congratulate and appreciate Secretary Johanns of the Department of Agriculture for his candid responses on this issue and for his timely decision to limit beef to cattle slaughtered at under 30 months. That action took care of most of the concerns I had with reopening the border since the outbreak of BSE in May of 2003.

We have all been trying to find answers to this situation, but my producers still have some serious concerns about Canada's compliance with the feed ban and the firewalls that have been put in place up there. There has been a team representing the U.S. Department of Agriculture in Canada looking at this situation. The feed ban compliance appears to be the best way to reduce outbreaks of BSE, so it is a critical component of our negotiations and it is a critical component of what actions we take from here on.

Compliance with that feed ban must be consistent, but they also must be long term. Because BSE, or mad cow, can lay dormant in a cow for such a long period of time, feed ban violations from years ago can still be a problem today. Thus, the 30-month rule. Products from animals or live animals older than 30 months was taken from the rule. We had to work very hard to do that, and I know it took great leadership on the part of the Secretary of Agriculture to change that part of the rule.

Now the technical team we had in Canada is back in the United States. Unfortunately, we will not get their report for another week. Congress will be on break. So very few of us will be able to get hold of that report, analyze it, and make a judgment on how we should handle a rule that goes into effect on March 7. It leaves us very little time. Thus, the resolution that will come before this Congress puts a hold on the rule and gives Congress some time to operate. We just cannot afford to allow this situation to move any further with the information that we have now. If the USDA will not delay the implementation of this rule and allow Congress to consider its findings, then I am left with no other choice but to support the disapproval resolution.

Again, I thank the Secretary for doing what he did. That took care of a lot of the concerns about the rule. The decision is critical for our cattlemen, and the Secretary showed tremendous leadership in taking that action so quickly.

It is also important to the entire cattle industry and it is important to consumers to have confidence in one of the safest products they find in their grocery store. We know the border will be open at some point, but what we do and the steps we take are very important, both to our friends in Canada and to our consumers and producers in the United States.

If this rule should go into effect and we have another situation, I am afraid of the erosion that could take place in my industry. So I urge my colleagues to support this resolution, not as a means of cutting off trade with Canada indefinitely but as a way of ensuring that Congress has the time and takes the time, all the time it needs, to consider the provisions of this rule. It is important for producer and consumer alike for this industry we call the great beef industry.

I yield the floor and I suggest the absence of a quorum.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will call the roll.

The assistant legislative clerk proceeded to call the roll.

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

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

The majority leader is recognized.

COMMENDING THE HONORABLE HOWARD HENRY BAKER, JR.

Mr. FRIST. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the Senate now proceed to the consideration of S. Res. 58, which was submitted earlier today.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will report the resolution by title.

The assistant legislative clerk read as follows:

A resolution (S. Res. 58) commending the Honorable Howard Henry Baker, Jr., formerly a Senator of Tennessee, for a lifetime of distinguished service.

There being no objection, the Senate proceeded to consider the resolution.

Mr. FITZGERALD. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the resolution be agreed to, the preamble be agreed to, and the motion to reconsider be laid upon the table.

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

The resolution (S. Res. 58) was agreed to.

The preamble was agreed to.

The resolution, with its preamble, reads as follows:

S. RES. 58

Whereas Howard Henry Baker, Jr., son of Howard Henry Baker and Dora Ladd Baker, was heir to a distinguished political tradi-

tion, his father serving as a Member of Congress from 1951 until his death in 1964, his stepmother Irene Baker succeeding Howard Baker, Sr. in the House of Representatives, and his grandmother Lillie Ladd Mauser having served as Sheriff of Roane County, Tennessee;

Whereas Howard Baker, Jr. served with distinction as an officer in the United States Navy in the closing months of World War II;

Whereas Howard Baker, Jr. earned a law degree from the University of Tennessee Law School in Knoxville where, during his final year (1948-1949), he served as student body president;

Whereas after graduation from law school Howard Baker, Jr. joined the law firm founded by his grandfather in Huntsville, Tennessee, where he won distinction as a trial and corporate attorney, as a businessman, and as an active member of his community;

Whereas during his father's first term in Congress, Howard Baker, Jr. met and married Joy Dirksen, daughter of Everett McKinley Dirksen, a Senator of Illinois, in December 1951, which marriage produced a son, Darek, in 1953, and a daughter, Cynthia, in 1956;

Whereas Howard Baker, Jr. was elected to the Senate in 1966, becoming the first popularly elected Republican Senator in the history of the State of Tennessee;

Whereas during three terms in the Senate, Howard Baker, Jr. played a key role in a range of legislative initiatives, from fair housing to equal voting rights, the Clean Air and Clean Water Acts, revenue sharing, the Senate investigation of the Watergate scandal, the ratification of the Panama Canal treaties, the enactment of the economic policies of President Ronald Reagan, national energy policy, televising the Senate, and more;

Whereas Howard Baker, Jr. served as both Republican Leader of the Senate (1977-1981) and Majority Leader of the Senate (1981-1985);

Whereas Howard Baker, Jr. was a candidate for the Presidency in 1980;

Whereas Howard Baker, Jr. served as White House Chief of Staff during the Presidency of Ronald Reagan;

Whereas Howard Baker, Jr. served as a member of the President's Foreign Intelligence Advisory Board during the Presidencies of Ronald Reagan and George H.W. Bush;

Whereas following the death of Joy Dirksen Baker, Howard Baker, Jr. married Nancy Landon Kassebaum, a former Senator of Kansas;

Whereas Howard Baker, Jr. served with distinction as Ambassador of the United States to Japan during the Presidency of George W. Bush and during the 150th anniversary of the establishment of diplomatic relations between the United States and Japan;

Whereas Howard Baker, Jr. was awarded the Medal of Freedom, the Nation's highest civilian award; and

Whereas Howard Baker, Jr. set a standard of civility, courage, constructive compromise, good will, and wisdom that serves as an example for all who follow him in public service; Now, therefore, be it

Resolved, That the Senate commends its former colleague, the Honorable Howard Henry Baker, Jr., for a lifetime of distinguished service to the country and confers upon him the thanks of a grateful Nation.

Mr. FRIST. Mr. President, it gives me a great honor to comment on the resolution commending Howard Baker that we just addressed. I first met Howard Baker when I was considering the run for the U.S. Senate in 1994. It is