

## AMENDMENT NO. 253

(Purpose: To prevent fraud in small business contracting)

(The amendment is printed in the RECORD of March 28, 2011, under "Text of Amendments.")

Ms. LANDRIEU. Mr. President, I thank Senator CARDIN for his patience and Senator SNOWE as we have worked up through the last hour or two on their two proposals. Both have to do with perfecting our contracting programs. While not specific to the SBIR Program and STTR Program, they are very relevant to the work we do on the Small Business Committee.

I appreciate all the Members who allowed these two amendments to go forward. They are pending and hopefully tomorrow we can get some agreement on some additional votes. We have had a very busy day today on the underlying bill, the SBIR bill. We voted on seven amendments. We had heated discussions on issues that are not related to this bill but are very important to this body.

I thank the Senators for working in good faith as we try to move through the many amendments that have been filed, most of which are not germane to the issue at hand but are important to be discussed on the floor of the Senate and in Congress.

I thank particularly Senator CARDIN. I notice he is on the floor. He may want to say a word now about his amendment briefly. I commit to the Senator that we will discuss his amendment and Senator SNOWE's amendment as soon as we can tomorrow.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Maryland.

Mr. CARDIN. Mr. President, I thank Senator LANDRIEU for her extraordinary work and patience. She gives us credit. We give her credit for patience in the manner this legislation has been considered.

This bill is very important not just to the small business community but to our economy. We are talking about providing the wherewithal for innovation in America. Small businesses will produce the largest amount of innovation in this country and the largest job growth. This bill gives them some degree of predictability on getting the types of resources so they can innovate.

I do applaud the Senator. I am proud to be part of the committee. This has been a very bipartisan bill. I thank her. I thank her for accommodating the amendment that she was helpful in getting passed initially, along with Senator SNOWE, that increases the size of surety bonds from \$2 million to \$5 million, which makes a difference for a small construction company getting government procurement. It is critically important. It has worked much more successfully than we thought when we first put the increase into effect. We actually had a lot more contracts than we thought when we originally suggested this.

I am pleased to tell the chairman that it has no scores as far as cost. There is no taxpayer cost involved. This is a win-win situation to help small businesses get construction work, adding to our economy and job growth.

I look forward to talking about this amendment tomorrow. Hopefully, we will be able to get a vote. I again thank the Senator for her attention.

Mr. President, I yield the floor.

Ms. LANDRIEU. Mr. President, I wish to speak for 2 minutes in general wrapup. There may be other Senators coming to the floor. I am hopeful we can lock in a time to vote on Cardin amendment No. 240 and the Snowe amendment No. 253. There are other amendments, a few amendments that are pending. Many others have been filed. The Senators are working together to see what kind of accommodations we can make.

Again I remind everyone, while we are working hard behind the scenes in many rooms and meetings today to try to keep our government open and operating while reducing spending where we can in an effective and a smart and constructive way, I remind our Senators how important this bill is because it will be reauthorizing a program that actually creates jobs in America by the small businesses that are represented on all of our Main Streets in our States and our communities.

This is the Federal Government's largest program for research and development. We do not believe that only big business, only international corporations have the best technology, the best approaches, or the best methods. We actually believe there are small businesses, some quite tiny, just one scientist and an assistant who can come up with cutting-edge technology, an engineer or an assistant, or a doctor and an assistant, who can come up with cutting-edge technologies that can cure a disease of the time or create a new mechanical system or technology system that helps not only our Federal agencies to cut spending, operate more efficiently, but can be commercialized in a way that creates manufacturing jobs and service jobs in America.

There are many ways to get to a balanced budget. We have heard a lot about cutting spending. Yes, we need to do that. But we also need to create jobs which generate income to close that budget gap. If we can get a more robust economy underway, this program most certainly is one of the ones.

I am proud of the new economic data that has come out. We are not where we need to be. Unemployment is still too high, but it is coming down. We are not creating enough jobs, but we are creating more and more every month. In large measure, it is because of some of the work our Committee on Small Business has done, both in the stimulus package and in our last small business bill opening up lending, getting credit lines started in partnership with com-

munity banks. Part of it is smart programs such as this. There are some government programs that do not work. This is not one of them.

I thank our Members for being patient. We now have the Cardin-Snowe amendments pending. We will hopefully lock in a time to vote on those and a few others we are considering as well.

Tomorrow, hopefully, we will start at an early hour and will continue to work on this important bill.

## MORNING BUSINESS

Ms. LANDRIEU. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the Senate proceed to a period for the transaction of morning business, with Senators permitted to speak therein for up to 10 minutes each.

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

Ms. LANDRIEU. Mr. President, I yield the floor.

## INTERCHANGE FEE REFORM

Mr. DURBIN. Mr. President, I continue to receive letters weighing in on the issue of interchange fee reform. I ask unanimous consent to have printed in the RECORD letters or statements from the following organizations: the Rainbow PUSH Coalition, the Main Street Alliance, Consumer Federation of America, and the National Black Church Initiative.

There being no objection, the material was ordered to be printed in the RECORD, as follows:

APRIL 1, 2011.

DEAR SENATOR: The Rainbow PUSH Coalition expresses its views on the Durbin swipe fee reform amendment now being debated in the Congress. Rainbow PUSH is a strong advocate of the Dodd-Frank financial reform legislation which provides critical consumer protections and safeguards against predatory lending.

The Durbin swipe fee reform amendment should be implemented as scheduled. It will usher in needed reform to bring competition, transparency and choice to the interchange system, and provide incentives for the retail sector to pass on interchange savings to lower the price of products for consumers. Numerous consumer rights organizations, civil rights groups, universities, unions, and other constituencies have weighed in to support swipe fee reform.

We respect the concerns that some groups have raised about the provision, but are unconvinced that a delay in its implementation as proposed by Sen. Tester and the American Banking Association (representing the financial services industry) will be beneficial to consumers and students, and small businesses. It appears that their interest is to maintain a deregulated environment to continue the virtual monopoly status of the credit card transaction process, and to protect their massive profits derived from debit interchange fees.

Deregulation, greed and lack of congressional oversight led to the most severe economic collapse since the great depression. But Wall Street got billions in public funds because they were deemed too big to fail—they've been bailed out and are once again recording record profits and issuing millions