

crooks and the con artists and stops them and recovers money for the taxpayers.

We cannot fund that. I just wish somebody could justify that to me. I do not understand it. I guess we are going to be considering a new continuing resolution tomorrow.

I want to take this opportunity today to let my colleagues know that I intend to insist that that continuing resolution provide adequate funding for the Office of Inspector General in the Department of Health and Human Services to fight Medicare fraud, waste, and abuse. If we do not, then it is the crooks and the scam artists who will be smiling as they rip off the taxpayers even further.

I just want to point that out, Mr. President. If there is a continuing resolution and they are going to fund some portions of the Government to go on, this is one portion of the Government that this Senator is not going to let sit there and not be adequately funded. People are talking about cutting Medicare and making our beneficiaries pay more for their monthly premiums to make up for Medicare shortfalls in the future. I say, wait a minute, if the General Accounting Office is saying that up to 10 percent of Medicare money is lost to waste, fraud, and abuse, that is \$18 billion a year each year for 7 years. We already have more money than we need right there to make up for the Medicare shortfall that we face.

So this is an important matter and I intend to pursue it. I hope Senators will do so on both sides of the aisle—I do not say this is a partisan issue. I just hope we pay some attention to this issue and make sure the Office of Inspector General is fully funded.

THE 1996 FARM PROGRAM

Mr. HARKIN. Mr. President, I know my colleague from Oklahoma is seeking the floor. I am going to take a few minutes on a different topic. I want to mention how greatly concerned I am that Congress appears to be set to go into recess for a month while the details of the 1996 farm program remain unresolved.

Farmers have been waiting for a long time to know what the program will be for this year. They need to be able to make plans to line up seed, fertilizer, chemicals, and credit. As we all know, and as I know the occupant of the Chair knows from representing his State and the farmers in his State, farming is a very capital-intensive business. Farmers need to know what type of Federal policy they are operating under so they know what they need in terms of capital in order to arrange the credit for this year's expenses.

Second, the farm bill is not just for farmers, it is for everyone. It is for our consumers as well as our farmers. It is for exports. It is for the whole infrastructure of processing, making and distributing our food products in this country. The fact that we do not have a farm bill has broad ramifications.

We should have had a full farm bill debate last year. I know of no one on my side of the aisle who either filibustered or in any way indicated that he or she would filibuster a farm bill. We had some committee meetings last year under the able leadership of the Senator from Indiana, Senator LUGAR. I will be very up front about it. Those on my side of the aisle, the Democrats, proffered a farm bill proposal. We debated it, we voted on it, and we lost. I understand that, but at least we had the opportunity to debate it and vote on it.

Then the majority party, the Republicans, offered their farm bill in committee. We debated it and we voted on it. They won. I have no problems with that. That is the way it ought to be. But then I expected the bill to be brought to the floor of the Senate so that other Senators who have equal interest in agriculture and agriculture policy could have their day to offer amendments, debate the bill, and then pass it. Maybe some of those amendments would have been adopted, maybe some would not have been, but that is the way the Senate should operate.

To this day, we still have not had an agriculture bill on the Senate floor for debate, amendments, and passage. What happened was—I do not cast any broad nets or use any broad brush, but some people in the majority party decided that they would sit down behind closed doors, write a bill, and put it into the massive budget reconciliation bill. Again, there was no realistic opportunity to debate, offer amendments, or to reach compromise and do what is right for rural America and our Nation.

Now I understand someone in the other body is saying that if there is going to be a continuing resolution, he wants to put his version of the farm bill on it. That proposal is basically the same as was put in the budget bill. Well, that is not the version I like. Maybe that is the version that might eventually get through. I do not know for certain, but I do not think so. I do not think it would have the votes to pass. But at least it ought to be debated, and we ought to have a full and fair opportunity to discuss it, vote on it, and amend it. That proposal should not be rushed through as part of a continuing resolution.

Farm policy is too important to be ramrodded through here without adequate time to debate it and amend it. We do not need much time. If we had a day or two to debate a farm bill, I think we could pass it. It probably would not be exactly what I want, but at least we would have our day to debate it, offer some amendments, and maybe we could reach some compromises.

All I can say about that so-called Freedom to Farm Act that the chairman on the other side wants to attach to the continuing resolution is that they ran that up and down the flagpole a number of times last year. It does not have the votes to get through. It can-

not pass either the House or the Senate on its own merits.

So on that so-called Freedom to Farm Act, we ought to just say the last rites, move on and try to find some compromises we can work from, and let us do it in a bipartisan fashion.

I have worked on a number of farm bills in the past. At times they have generated a lot of emotional and intellectual debate on farm policy. They have been good debates, some of them pretty tough, but in the end, we fashioned a bipartisan compromise, and we moved on. That is the way we ought to do it again this year.

So, Mr. President, there are steps we can take. It is getting very late in the year to try to fashion some entirely new program. I had hoped that we would have had a new program for this year, but we do not. More and more, it seems the only feasible thing to do appears to be extending the present farm bill for 1 year, and making some immediate changes that we can all agree on—planting flexibility, for example. Both sides agree it is needed. We agreed on that in committee. That is no problem. We can reach agreement on how to deal with the repayment of the 1995 advance deficiency payments. I think both sides agree on working that out. We could do that. So we could resolve those important issues, and at least farmers would know what to expect this year, and they could get on with their business.

If I had my druthers, I would rather we did not have an extension of the 1990 farm bill, but it is too late to do anything markedly different now. So that seems the most likely outcome we are faced with now, to extend the 1990 bill, make a few needed changes that we agree upon and then move on.

Mr. President, I thank you and yield the floor.

THE PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Oklahoma is recognized.

MAJOR CONCERNS

WAR ON DRUGS IN AMERICA

Mr. INHOFE. Mr. President, I listened with interest when the Senator from Utah was talking about some of the drug problems that are facing this Nation and that concern all of us deeply. He made a comment that we are all pleased that Barry McCaffrey, if he is confirmed, will be taking over as drug czar to actually do something about it. It is long overdue.

I sat in the other Chamber and listened to the President during his State of the Union Message 2 days ago. He expressed this great concern about the drug problem in America. Yet he has done nothing for the first 3 years about the drug problem.

We did, I guess, have a drug czar, but the number of personnel who were supposed to be participating in the program to address the drug problem in America was cut by 75 percent, from 100 down to 25 people. The amount of money that was spent on the drug problem was actually cut in half.