

One thing I found out a long time ago, whatever the American Farm Bureau says I do not follow anymore because my farm bureau at home is autonomous and they do not support anything of the American Farm Bureau until their board approves it or they approve it at their convention. So regardless of what the American Farm Bureau might say, I wait until my Kentucky Farm Bureau endorses that.

But just the idea of representing all of the American Farm Bureau, the head of that organization writing letters on both sides, bouncing back and forth, no wonder we are confused when last year they were opposed to it. That helped it not come out of the committee, I am sure, over there. And then they were for it. And then they want us to be for something they were against at their instructions.

So I think the time for debate and consideration of this bill is more important than I have ever seen it since I have been here. There are radical, radical changes in this bill that in the years to come—and not too many short years—if the freedom to farm bill is passed, the American people will be up in arms when you decouple.

If you do not understand what decoupling is, that is separating the payments, or the income from the commodity from the deficiency payments or the payments to the farmer so the farmer will continue to get the payments every year for 7 years up to \$120,000 a year if you are in four different categories, which you can be and you can still raise your crop and still get big prices.

I think when you are doing that—and the farmers have always said they were against a welfare program, just absolutely, teetotally against a welfare program, and they are absolutely, teetotally for a balanced budget amendment, and to do something like that for them and for them to come up here and say this is something we want, I am not sure the leadership is speaking the grassroots attitude of the farmers, particularly of my State.

Now, you can come up here and say we want the money, we want you to pay us, but then decouple that to take away the safety net, take away the price stability of the marketplace, it is just something that is too radical to do immediately. Phased in, maybe. Phased out, maybe. But we need to think through this one. And I think 2 years from now, if we are paying farmers big prices and letting them get big prices for their product, somewhere the American taxpayer who is sending them the money when they are making big money, or making good profit on their crops, says that will not last very long. I think we ought to realize that and do it now and do it right rather than have to come back and be fussed at a year or two from now for doing something that the American taxpayers will not accept.

Mr. CONRAD. I thank the Senator from Kentucky.

Mr. FORD. Mr. President, I yield the floor.

Mr. CONRAD addressed the Chair.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from North Dakota.

Mr. CONRAD. I will conclude. I know my colleague, the Senator from Iowa, is waiting patiently.

GETTING A GOOD FARM BILL

Mr. CONRAD. I conclude by saying I hope very much that we can finish the farm bill matter by Tuesday of next week. I would have hoped we could have gotten it done today. It was not possible. But it is better to wait a few days and get it right than pass a farm bill that greased the skids from under farm producers and eliminate a program for the future.

That is precisely what this Chamber was faced with today, a plan to eliminate a farm program over time, a plan that would have guaranteed the elimination of farm programs because I believe there would have been a scandal when people discovered farmers were getting large Government payments even when they were having high income as a result of high prices that we are experiencing currently. The key is to have protection for farmers in low price years. That is when they need protection.

I think it is critically important we reach an agreement that provides a safety net in low price years and that also recognizes many farmers are hard-pressed by cash-flow this year because of the requirement to pay back advance deficiencies from last year.

I am hopeful we can achieve an agreement between the two sides that bridges those differences and achieves a settlement that is fair for American farmers, fair for the American taxpayers and that achieves a result that ensures we can pass farm legislation for the future.

I likened earlier today the proposal we had to the Reverend Jim Jones when he handed out the Kool-Aid that was laced with poison. It tasted good going down. When people drank it, they were dead.

Mr. President, there is no reason for us to take that kind of action. It is worth it to take a few extra days to get it right.

I thank the Chair. I thank my colleague from the State of Iowa.

Mr. GRASSLEY addressed the Chair.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Iowa.

PASSAGE OF A FARM BILL

Mr. GRASSLEY. In the last hour and 15 minutes I believe, both before the floor leaders talked and since, we have heard people on both sides of the aisle speak about not having a farm bill, why we do not have a farm bill, even who is to blame for not having a farm bill. The fact is we do not have one, and it looks as if we are not going to have one.

We heard earlier during debate how awful it was—we heard this from the other side—that we were not going to be able to pass a farm bill. You have heard many times this evening that the President vetoed a farm bill, a 7-year farm bill in December. The President vetoed it after it passed Congress.

You heard this side of the aisle blamed because we have not passed a farm bill when this afternoon we had 53 votes for the Freedom to Farm Act. A majority of this body supported the Freedom to Farm Act.

Now, it is one thing to say it is too bad we do not have one, we ought to have one, we ought to stay here and work to get one, but it seems to me it takes a lot of gall from the other side of the aisle to blame this side of the aisle that we do not have a farm bill when we either did pass one and the President vetoed it or we demonstrated today that we had the votes to pass another one.

It just does not add up. It just does not make sense. I do not think the American people are going to buy that argument. They can add. They know what a majority vote is. They know what it means when a President vetoes a bill. They know what it means when the President threatened this week to veto a bill that came out of the House Agriculture Committee by a bipartisan vote, the substance of which was the backbone for the legislation that we had 53 votes for here today. The President did not even wait until it got to his desk, a bipartisan bill. The President threatened to veto it.

It happens that there was a Lugar-Leahy alternative that could have been before this body. What is the Lugar-Leahy bill? It is the freedom to farm bill with a list of about 10 things that the Democrats wanted us to include in the bill, that we included. It was their language, their points. We included them. We never even got to a vote on that today. The President had already sent a letter up here—it has been put in the RECORD by the floor leader—that he was threatening to veto that. And we are being admonished by the other side of the aisle that we should have a bipartisan bill because we have always had farm bills developed in a bipartisan manner?

The Lugar-Leahy bill had added to it just exactly what the other side of the aisle wanted. Well, there may be people on the other side of the aisle who do not like what was in Lugar-Leahy, but they cannot say it was not bipartisan. It seems to me they cannot blame this side of the aisle because we do not have a farm bill, and particularly when the President said he was going to veto it before we ever got to it.

Then we are told that what was bad about the freedom to farm bill that was in the Balanced Budget Act was that it was going to cut \$13 billion, three or four times what the President wanted cut, from farm programs in an attempt to balance the budget. But the bill that got 53 votes today only cut \$4 billion,