

through hundreds of pages of directions. That is not simple language. I think that is a tool the small businesses need.

Senator DOMENICI, as a result of small business hearings we had in New Mexico, had a good idea, one that we need to try out, which is included in this bill. It would give small businesses an opportunity to participate in making the regulations in the first place. Let them be heard. Bring them in and let them have a crack at it. Let them have an opportunity to say how the goals of the legislation—that is, what the regulations are supposed to do to help achieve the goals of legislation—how those goals can better be achieved as they affect small business. That is also included in it.

And then we have a final provision that also came from the hearings that we held around the country, from Georgia to Alaska, Tennessee, and Missouri. We have had hearings in Minnesota, all around the country, and we have heard a lot of small businesses say that it is not just the regulations; sometimes it is the regulators themselves. Sometimes the regulators themselves come in and act like they have been sent by the king rather than by a popularly elected Government. They act like they represent a monarch, and they tread on the rights of the people who do not have the resources to fight them.

So we would set up an ombudsman, who would be available for a small business or a farmer, or other small operators, to raise an objection as to how an inspector operates. I asked the small businesses before, "Why do you not object if OSHA sends in an inspector who is overreaching, who does not listen to your side of the story, who says it is his way or the highway? Why do you not just object to the agency?" They say, "If we object to the agency, that same guy is going to come here next month, and instead of fining us \$4,000 for not having a label on some dish-washing soap, he could increase the fine, or it could get even worse."

So we set up a means where an affected small business or entity that gets stepped on by these enforcers could register a complaint. We set up regional regulatory fairness boards to hear these complaints. I think it will help the agencies themselves to root out a bad apple, or to bring in an inspector, examiner, or representative who is out of hand and say, "We have had complaints about you. You are not helping the citizens we are supposed to serve and represent to comply with the laws and with the regulations. You need to shape up the way you are acting."

Well, that ombudsman provision, the regulatory fairness provision, is also included in S. 942.

Finally, equal access for justice. We want to make it easier if you are a small business and the Federal Government comes in and says, "We need a million dollars in penalties," and you

say, "That would put me out of business. It is not a willful violation, and I did not cause serious harm. It is the first time I have done it." That is totally out of whack. If they proceed against you and get a \$10,000 fine, then you ought to be able to get your attorney's fees from the agency that tried to run over you. It makes them accountable. It makes sure that the agency comes in with demands that are not out of reason. That, too, is in S. 942.

Unfortunately, at this point, there is an objection on the other side. I know that we have very strong support, particularly from the members of the Small Business Committee, on both Republican and Democratic side. We would like to move this bill. We have time set up on the floor. This is valuable time that we are wasting that we are not moving forward on this bill. This is the time that we could be doing something that would respond to the concerns that the small businesses of America have about how the Federal Government acts.

Unfortunately, as long as there is that objection, it will take us some time to bring it up. We will bring it up. I know everybody seemed to be ready for it. The people who were involved in crafting it were ready to come to the floor.

I say by way of explanation to our other colleagues that I truly regret we cannot pass this measure. It is one I know had total bipartisan support in the committee. I think it will have strong bipartisan support on the floor. The President has already indicated his support for the basic principle of judicial enforcement of regulatory flexibility.

Mr. President, I only say we are still ready to do business if the Members on the other side change their mind. It is too bad we have valuable time set aside on the floor and we are not able to move.

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

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will call the roll.

The bill clerk proceeded to call the roll.

Mr. DASCHLE. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the order of the quorum call be rescinded.

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

#### THE SMALL BUSINESS REGULATORY FLEXIBILITY ACT

Mr. DASCHLE. Mr. President, I understand that someone from the majority will be coming to the floor to offer a unanimous-consent request that has to do with a number of matters pertaining to our schedule for next week. While he is on his way, let me simply explain the dilemma that requires our objection to moving at this time to the Small Business Regulatory Flexibility Act.

We have no objection to the substance of this particular bill, with the

understanding that some technical details remain to be resolved. I am quite confident that if all we had to do was to consider the bill, after only a short period of time for debate and adoption of a managers' amendment to clarify some technical questions with the bill, we would then be in a position to vote. I would suspect unanimously, for that particular legislation.

The dilemma is that the bill will very likely be used as the vehicle for another very big debate, unlimited debate, over the whole issue of comprehensive regulatory reform. That issue has been before the Senate for weeks already during this Congress. Several attempts to invoke cloture were made and failed. We could thus find ourselves in much the same set of circumstances again next week were comprehensive regulatory reform legislation offered as an amendment to this bill.

My concern is that the Senate has many important and timely issues facing it. We have a debt limit extension bill, the continuing resolution, the Whitewater resolution and a number of other issues pending. I would be very concerned if this body found itself mired once more in an impasse over comprehensive regulatory reform, with no real hope of coming to some consensus, some compromise.

We are getting closer. I think at some point there may be an opportunity to bring a bill to the floor. But we are not there yet. I think that rejoining this debate at this time on this bill would most likely undermine what possibilities there are for regulatory reform.

So bringing regulatory reform to the floor under those circumstances would not be what I view to be a very constructive exercise. But it is not my objection this afternoon that will cause the bill not to be scheduled. There are objections within our caucus, and I respect those objections. They are being made for legitimate reasons.

So we will continue to try to resolve these outstanding difficulties and come to some resolution at some point in the future. But until the broader issues relating to this particular bill are resolved, we would not be in a position to go to the bill.

Mr. President, I yield the floor and note the absence of a quorum.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will call the roll.

The assistant legislative clerk proceeded to call the roll.

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

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

#### THE FULBRIGHT SCHOLARSHIPS STAMP

Mr. PRYOR. Mr. President, on February 28, the Postal Service recognized 50 years of Fulbright scholarships by issuing a commemorative stamp in