

forgotten the collapse of the Silver Bridge at Point Pleasant, WV, in 1967. It killed 46 people.

Let us look out of the windows and observe the rains that are pounding our area. Listen to the radio, or watch the television set—I don't do much of that; but I do watch the weather—and watch what they are saying about the weather all over this country, about the storm, about what is happening in States back to the west and to the north. The snow, the ice, the ravages of winter will further pock-mark and erode our highways and bridges. We can't afford delays in stepping up to our responsibilities for public safety very much longer.

Mr. President, I have asked the journal clerk how much time the Senate wasted yesterday in quorum calls and in recesses. On yesterday—one day alone—we spent 59 minutes, almost an hour, in quorum calls, and 2 hours and 18 minutes in recesses. That is 3 hours 17 minutes—with a quick calculation—3 hours 17 minutes spent in quorum calls and recesses here in the Senate yesterday. We could have been working on the highway bill.

Strategy games in Washington may be fine for those who do not depend on safe, modern highways to protect their livelihoods and their lives. But, hand-sitting will not serve us well when the public realizes what is going on.

I implore the leadership to move this bill as soon as possible. The clock is ticking, Mr. President, and time is running out.

I thank the Chair. I thank all Senators. I yield the floor.

MEASURE PLACED ON
CALENDAR—S. 1601

Mr. LOTT. I understand the cloning bill is at the desk awaiting second reading by the clerk.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The majority leader is correct. The clerk will report the bill.

The assistant legislative clerk read as follows:

A bill (S. 1601) to amend Title 18 United States Code to prohibit the use of somatic cell nuclear transfer technology for the purposes of human cloning.

Mr. LOTT. Mr. President, I object to further consideration of this bill at this time.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The bill will be placed on the calendar.

EXECUTIVE SESSION

NOMINATION OF DAVID SATCHER, OF TENNESSEE, TO BE AN ASSISTANT SECRETARY OF HEALTH AND HUMAN SERVICES, MEDICAL DIRECTOR OF THE PUBLIC HEALTH SERVICE, AND SURGEON GENERAL OF THE PUBLIC HEALTH SERVICE

Mr. LOTT. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the Senate now

proceed to executive session to consider the nomination of David Satcher, and that it be in order to consider both the position of Surgeon General and the Assistant Secretary of HHS en bloc.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Is there objection?

Mr. ASHCROFT. Mr. President, reserving the right to object, and I do not intend to object, I am troubled by moving to this measure because I have sought information from this administration, from the Centers for Disease Control, and that information has not been forthcoming.

I thank the majority leader for his willingness to assist me in this respect. He has been very gracious and helpful to me in seeking to get the information that I have requested. I will continue to propound that request, and I have agreed that it would be appropriate to proceed with the measure at this time.

I want to thank the majority leader. While I do not intend to object, I do want to say that I think it would be inappropriate to conclude the debate on this matter in any respect, by a vote or otherwise, absent the kind of cooperation that I think the Senate deserves, when the President has brought a nominee to the Senate and individual Members of the Senate have asked for information.

With that in mind, I thank you for this opportunity to express myself on this. I do not object.

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

Mr. LOTT. Mr. President, let me note that I appreciate the cooperation of the Senator from Missouri, and I certainly agree with him. When a U.S. Senator requests information from an agency or a department like the Centers for Disease Control about a nominee—I have looked over the list. This is certainly not an unreasonable request. It is one that should be able to be complied with very easily. That request has to be honored. I do have a call into the Secretary of Health and Human Services, Secretary Shalala, and will urge her to act expeditiously this afternoon to get that information to Senator ASHCROFT. If that information is not forthcoming, then I certainly understand that there would be no way that this debate could be brought to a conclusion or a vote until all information that is requested by any Senator would be made available to this body.

I thank Senator ASHCROFT for not objecting at this time so we can proceed with the debate and make sure that all relevant information is available to the Senate.

I yield the floor.

Mr. JEFFORDS addressed the Chair. The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Vermont is recognized.

Mr. JEFFORDS. Mr. President, I rise in support of nomination of Dr. David Satcher to serve our nation as Surgeon General and as Assistant Secretary for Health. Dr. Satcher is a well-respected physician and medical researcher who

has devoted his career to serving the Nation's public health.

I want to note at the outset that it is relatively unusual for one person to be nominated to fill two such significant positions at the same time. When I reviewed the history of these positions, however, I learned that there is a historical precedent. From 1977 to 1981, Dr. Julius B. Richmond served ably in both positions. I believe that by combining these responsibilities we will better serve the needs of the nation.

Dr. Satcher has demonstrated the kind of commitment to serving our Nation's public health that will be required to faithfully fulfill these responsibilities. At a time when many physicians and policy makers failed to appreciate urban health care needs, he began his career serving low-income and other disadvantaged patients in neighborhood health centers and urban hospitals. In 1982 he became President of Meharry Medical College in Nashville, Tennessee. Meharry Medical College has trained more African American physicians than any other medical school in the country.

In 1993, Dr. Satcher became the Director of the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention where he has served with distinction the past four years. Under his leadership, CDC has placed greater emphasis upon the prevention of disease. He has worked to increase childhood immunization rates from 55% to 78%.

As a result, the incidence of vaccine-preventable childhood diseases has been reduced to its lowest level ever and three vaccine preventable diseases have been entirely eliminated.

In addition, participation in CDC's comprehensive breast and cervical cancer screening program has expanded from 18 to 50 states. As a result of this initiative, more than 1.2 million women have received screening, over 2900 women with breast cancer have been identified and referred for treatment and over 21,000 women with an early treatable stage of cervical cancer have been identified and referred for treatment.

Dr. Satcher also used his leadership to dramatically upgrade CDC's ability to detect and respond to new infectious diseases and foodborne illnesses. As a result, CDC played a lead role in responding to the outbreak of Salmonella in Oregon that was caused by contaminated food, and was responsible for the efforts to contain the multi-state outbreak of Cyclospora resulting from consumption of contaminated raspberries that threatened the health of thousands of children. Dr. Satcher's efforts lay the groundwork for the development of a new early warning system for infectious disease and foodborne illness that promises to save thousands of American lives each year.

Dr. Satcher will need to draw heavily upon all of this commitment and experience to master the challenging duties for which he has been nominated. The Surgeon General occupies the "bully