

Americans are cared for and are not left in the lurch worried that their very lives might be in danger.

I hope all of us on this day, the first Asthma Awareness Day, will do our part to educate the American people about the serious health impact, particularly upon our children, that asthma is having, and the dramatic increase that we have seen in asthma in this country, and that the FDA in their, I think, well-motivated goal of removing these chemicals from our environment will do so in a way that the health and safety of the American people is protected.

I yield the floor.

Mr. WELLSTONE addressed the Chair.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Minnesota is recognized.

Mr. WELLSTONE. Madam President, I ask unanimous consent for 5 minutes to speak as if in morning business.

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

Mr. WELLSTONE. Madam President, I thank my colleagues for their graciousness, and I especially thank Senator GRAMM of Texas. I appreciate it.

FARM CRISIS

Mr. WELLSTONE. Madam President, my colleagues from North Dakota, Senator CONRAD and Senator DORGAN, said it well moments ago when they were speaking about the Wall Street Journal piece that came out yesterday, Tuesday, May 5 regarding what has to be described as a farm crisis. In this piece, former Secretary of Agriculture Bob Bergland is quoted. Jim Tunheim, a State legislator from northwest Minnesota, is also quoted.

I want to talk about what is happening in my State of Minnesota because I believe it will be incumbent upon all of us here in the Senate and in the House of Representatives as well to take some action.

I was at a gathering in Crookston, MN some weeks ago. As I walked into the school, there was a sign posted outside that said, "Farm Crisis Meeting". It brought back awful memories of the mid-1980s when I went to probably hundreds of farm crisis meetings. What I saw then all across Minnesota were foreclosures; people being driven off their farms where they not only lived but where they worked as well. I saw a lot of broken dreams and a lot of broken lives and a lot of broken families. This is now happening again.

This very fine piece in the Wall Street Journal talks about this farm crisis in very personal terms.

I want to say to colleagues that I know of no other way to say it. Some 2 years ago, when we passed what was called the Freedom to Farm bill, I called it then the Freedom to Fail bill. And I think that is exactly what is happening. All of the discussion about the market presupposes that we have Adam Smith's invisible hand in agriculture. But what we have instead is a

food industry where the conglomerates have muscled their way to the dinner table exercising raw economic power over farmers, consumers, taxpayers, and family farmers. Wheat farmers, corn growers and other farmers—vis-à-vis these large companies that they deal with don't have very much clout at all.

This was a good bill for some of the big grain companies. There are only a few. But it was not a good bill for family farmers.

Now, in northwest Minnesota, a combination of dealing with scab disease, wet weather over the last several years, and, most important of all, this Freedom to Farm bill, which has driven prices down, which doesn't give the farmers a loan rate to have some leverage in the market, which doesn't give them a safety net, is driving farmers off the land.

We need to take some action. The Secretary of Agriculture supports lifting the cap on the loan rate. And we can legislatively try to raise that loan rate so that we can give farmers a price in the marketplace.

I just want to say to my colleagues, I told you so. That is the way I will put it. I told you so. And northwest Minnesota is just a harbinger of what is going to happen across this country. Prices are low. Farmers are being driven off the land. There is a tremendous amount of economic pain. And it is not just the farmers. It is the communities where they live, where they go to church or to synagogue, where they buy their products, where they send their kids to school.

We have a serious crisis in northwest Minnesota. I am hearing from farmers in other parts of my State as well. I think rural America is going to go through some economic convulsions as a result, in part, of this legislation that we passed. We have to give farmers a fair price in the marketplace. We secured them some loan funding in the disaster appropriations bill we passed last week, which gives them at least some loan assistance for spring operations. But it doesn't make that much difference long-term. It can keep them going for awhile, but if they don't get a decent price in the marketplace, they don't have a prayer.

That is what this piece in the Wall Street Journal is about. That is why I come to the floor of the Senate. I look forward to working with my colleagues, Democrats and Republicans alike, who come from farm States. We have to do something. We are here to try to do well for people. We have to do better for family farmers in Minnesota and across our country.

I thank my colleague from Texas again for his graciousness, and I yield the floor.

INTERNAL REVENUE SERVICE RESTRUCTURING AND REFORM ACT OF 1998

The Senate resumed consideration of the bill.

UNANIMOUS CONSENT AGREEMENT

Mr. ROTH. Madam President, I ask unanimous consent that the following list of amendments that I send to the desk be the only remaining first-degree amendments in order to H.R. 2676, and that they be subject to relevant second-degree amendments.

I further ask unanimous consent that following the final vote on the bill, the Senate insist on its amendment, request a conference with the House on the disagreeing votes, and the Chair be authorized to appoint conferees on the part of the Senate.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Is there objection?

Mr. BAUCUS. I checked with the minority side. It is my understanding this has been agreed to by both sides, and his request is consistent with the understanding on this side as well.

Mr. ROTH. That is correct.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. If there is no objection, without objection, it is so ordered.

The list of amendments follow:

REPUBLICAN AMENDMENTS TO IRS REFORM

- Roth—Effective Dates.
- Roth—Relevant.
- DeWine—Tech. Correction to Sec. 1059 of the Code.
- DeWine—Tax Payer Compliance.
- Collins—Reporting Requirements for Universities.
- Thompson—Relevant.
- Sessions—IRS Oversight Board.
- B. Smith—Upward Reviews of Employees.
- Stevens—Modify tools of trade exemption.
- Craig—Taxpayer notification.
- Craig—Taxpayer notification.
- Craig—Taxpayer notification.
- Ashcroft—electronic verification.
- Coverdell—Random Audits.
- Coverdell—Tax Clinics.
- Coverdell—Tax Clinics.
- Coverdell—Employees.
- Coverdell—Mathematical and Clerical Errors.
- Domenici—Spanish IRS Help Line.
- Domenici—Live Person Help Line Option.
- Domenici—Suspend Interest in Penalties.
- Gramm—Lawsuit Waivers.
- Gramm—Burden of Proof.
- Gramm—Relevant.
- Enzi—Charitable Contribution Technical Corrections.
- Burns—Income Averaging for Farmers.
- Bond—Electronic Filing.
- Mack—Tip Reporting.
- Mack—Treasury Secy.
- Grams—Disasters.
- Lott—Relevant.
- Faircloth—Relevant.

DEMOCRATIC AMENDMENTS TO IRS RESTRUCTURING

Moynihan—Delay effective dates of certain provisions to allow IRS to address Y2K problems, per Rossotti request.

Kerrey—Require annual meeting between Finance and Oversight Board chair.

Kerrey—Authorize Treasury Secretary to waive signature requirement for electronic filing.

Kerrey—Require study of willful tax non-compliance by Joint Tax, Treasury, and IRS Commissioner.

Kerrey—Require IRS to review certain stats on success rate of Criminal Investigation Div.

Kerrey—Require report on fair debt collection provisions.

Kerrey—Encourage private/public sector cooperation, not competition, on electronic filing.