in terms of financial assistance, especially when NSF funding overall is increasing and also since the co-founding, which is scheduled to increase in this budget year, should be matched by a similar increase in the base EPSCoR program.

I know that the report prepared last fall by the Senate Labor and Human Resources Committee endorsed by EPSCoR program, and we on the Senate Commerce, Science, and Transportation Committee are equally supportive.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Under the previous order, S. 1046 is deemed read a third time, the Labor Committee is discharged from further consideration of H.R. 1273 and the Senate will now proceed to its consideration. Under the previous order, all after the enacting clause is stricken, the text of S. 1046, as amended, is inserted in lieu thereof, and the bill is deemed read a third time.

The bill (H.R. 1273), as amended, was deemed read a third time.

Mr. JEFFORDS. Mr. President, I ask for the yeas and nays.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Is there a sufficient second?

There is a sufficient second.

The yeas and nays were ordered.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The question is, Shall the bill pass? On this question, the yeas and nays have been ordered, and the clerk will call the role.

The legislative clerk called the roll.

Mr. NICKLES. I announce that the Senator from Oklahoma (Mr. INHOFE) is necessarily absent.

The result was announced—yeas 99, nays 0, as follows:

[Rollcall Vote No. 127 Leg.]

YEAS—99

Abraham	Faircloth	Lott
Akaka	Feingold	Lugar
Allard	Feinstein	Mack
Ashcroft	Ford	McCain
Baucus	Frist	McConnell
Bennett	Glenn	Mikulski
Biden	Gorton	Moseley-Braun
Bingaman	Graham	Moynihan
Bond	Gramm	Murkowski
Boxer	Grams	Murray
Breaux	Grassley	Nickles
Brownback	Gregg	Reed
Bryan	Hagel	Reid
Bumpers	Harkin	Robb
Burns	Hatch	Roberts
Byrd	Helms	Rockefeller
Campbell	Hollings	Roth
Chafee	Hutchinson	Santorum
Cleland	Hutchison	Sarbanes
Coats	Inouye	Sessions
Cochran	Jeffords	Shelby
Collins	Johnson	Smith (NH)
Conrad	Kempthorne	Smith (OR)
Coverdell	Kennedy	Snowe
Craig	Kerrey	Specter
D'Amato	Kerry	Stevens
Daschle	Kohl	Thomas
DeWine	Kyl	Thompson
Dodd	Landrieu	Thurmond
Domenici	Lautenberg	Torricelli
Dorgan	Leahy	Warner
Durbin	Levin	Wellstone
Enzi	Lieberman	Wyden

NOT VOTING—1

Inhofe

The bill (H.R. 1273), as amended, was passed.

Mr. JEFFORDS. Mr. President, I move to reconsider the vote by which the bill was passed, and I move to lay that motion on the table.

The motion to lay on the table was agreed to.

Mrs. BOXER addressed the Chair.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from California.

Mrs. BOXER. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that I may speak as in morning business for 3 minutes.

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

PATIENTS' BILL OF RIGHTS

Mrs. BOXER. Mr. President, earlier this morning, some of us were on the floor urging the Senate to bring up the Patients' Bill of Rights, a very important bill that would essentially protect patients from decisions made by accountants and bureaucrats in insurance companies and have their health care decisions made by physicians.

I was talking with the Senator from North Dakota who has been presenting a number of cases that proves our point as to why this legislation is needed, and he shared with me a most extraordinary case coming out of California. I am going to tell the Senate about this case, because we cannot close our eyes to what is happening.

I share with you the case of Joyce Ching from Agoura, CA. Joyce Ching lived with her husband David and 5-year-old son Justin. In 1992, when David switched jobs, he was offered an array of plans, but Joyce convinced him to join an HMO because she wanted the entire family to go to the same place to get their care.

In the summer of 1994, Joyce got sick. She began to suffer from severe abdominal pain and from rectal bleeding. The pain was so excruciating that some days she couldn't even get out of bed to be with her son. She visited her HMO doctor and was refused referral to a specialist.

I am not a physician, but I know enough people who have had problems, and when you have rectal bleeding, that is a sign that something is amiss. Yet, this HMO did not refer her to a specialist. Do you know what her doctor in the HMO told her? That her symptoms would be alleviated by a change in diet.

She changed her diet, and the symptoms were not alleviated. Fearing that her illness could hamper her chances of having a second child, she continued to complain to the physician that her pain was getting worse, and the doctor said, ''Give your diet time,'' and still would not refer her to a specialist.

Finally, after nearly 3 months and countless visits, she was referred to a gastroenterologist, but it was too late. Joyce, 34 years old, was diagnosed in the final stages of colon cancer.

What is so shocking about this case is that her doctor never really listened to her concerns and never sent her to a specialist. When you find out why, it will send chills up and down your spine. There was a deal in that HMO. They looked at Joyce's profile and they decided: A healthy woman in her thirties, we can't spend more than $28 a month on Joyce.

I will conclude with this, Mr. President. The HMO's accountants decided that Joyce should cost the HMO $28 a month, and they told the doctor, ''If she costs you any more than that, your clinic will have to pay out of its own pocket.'' So there was a deal made to give incentives to that clinic not to treat this woman, and she is gone. She is gone forever from the lives of her husband and her beautiful son, and she died at 34.

I have to say, when we stand up here day after day with these cases, it is not to hear the sound of our own voices, because there are thousands and thousands of stories like this, and people want action. They want decisions made by physicians. They want patients and physicians to be honest with each other. They don't want incentive payments to doctors so that they will not be treated. This is a tragedy that you cannot even measure, Mr. President. I call on the leadership to allow us to bring up the Patients' Bill of Rights. I yield the floor.

RECESS UNTIL 2:15 P.M.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Under the previous order, the Senate will stand in recess until 2:15 p.m.

Thereupon, at 12:47 p.m., the Senate recessed until 2:15 p.m.; whereupon, the Senate reassembled when called to order by the Presiding Officer (Mr. COATS).

AGRICULTURAL RESEARCH, EXTENSION, AND EDUCATION REFORM ACT OF 1998—CONFERENCE REPORT

The Senate continued with the consideration of the conference report.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Under the previous order, the hour of 2:15 having arrived, the Senator from Texas is recognized to move to recommit the conference report accompanying S. 1150.

Mr. ROBERTS addressed the Chair.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Kansas.

Mr. ROBERTS. I suggest the absence of a quorum.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will call the roll.

The legislative clerk proceeded to call the roll.

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

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

PRIVILEGE OF THE FLOOR

Mr. WELLSTONE. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that Mikki Holmes, an intern, be allowed on the floor for the duration of this debate.

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

Mr. WELLSTONE. I suggest the absence of a quorum.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will call the roll.

The legislative clerk proceeded to call the roll.

Mr. GRAMM. 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 Senator is recognized under the previous order.

MOTION TO RECOMMIT

Mr. GRAMM. Mr. President, I send a motion to the desk and ask for its immediate consideration. I will have it read.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will report the motion.

The legislative clerk read as follows:

The Senator from Texas [Mr. GRAMM] moves to recommit the conference report on S. 1150, the Agricultural Research, Extension, and Education Reform Act of 1998 to the committee on conference with instructions to the managers on the part of the Senate to insist that the expansion of Food Stamp eligibility in Title V, Subtitle A, section 503 shall only apply to refugees and asylees who were lawfully residing in the United States on August 22, 1996.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Texas.

Mr. GRAMM. Mr. President, it is clear to me, from the debate we had earlier, that it is going to be somewhat difficult to get people to debate this issue. However, let me try by being frank and yet fair to everybody. I would like to outline what happened to this bill in conference, and why I believe it is important that this motion pass.

First of all, let me remind my colleagues that the Senate adopted a bill to promote ag research. It is a bill that I would assume 100 Members of the Senate support.

My State is a very substantial beneficiary of ag research. The institution which I love more than anything, other than my family, Texas A&M, is a major ag research institution. Needless to say, no one should be surprised that I am in favor of ag research. In addition, I am a supporter of research in general.

In 1965, we were spending 5.7 cents out of every dollar we spent in the budget on general research. That is now down to 1.9 percent of the budget on research, because rather than investing money in new technology, new products, and new science for the next generation, we are being driven by politics to invest in the next election by spending money on programs that have big constituencies in the next election rather than beneficiaries in the next generation. Again, I support agriculture research. The Senate bill went to conference on a unanimous vote, and the House passed a bill that was an ag research bill. However, the nature of the bill changed in conference, and it changed dramatically. Many other provisions were added to the conference report that were never voted on in the Senate and never voted on in the House.

The major provision that I want to address in this motion to recommit with instruction is the provision having to do with food stamps. My colleagues will remember that while we had a contentious debate on welfare reform, when it came time to call the roll on August 22, 1996, we passed a comprehensive welfare reform bill on an overwhelming bipartisan vote. Part of that welfare reform process was setting much higher standards on food stamps and eliminating the attractiveness of welfare in general, and food stamps in particular. We were trying to change the law to eliminate a situation where, over the last 25 years, we had seen a change in the welfare law. People were actually being attracted to America not with their sleeves rolled up, but with their hands held out seeking benefits paid for by someone else's labor.

This bill, unfortunately, takes a major step backward. This bill re-institutes $818 million worth of food stamps that were eliminated in the welfare reform bill. I remind my colleagues that the Senate did not vote on the food stamp provisions in this bill. In addition, the bill, as it was voted on in the House, did not contain these food stamp provisions. Yet, in conference, as part of the age-old logrolling process of putting a bill together to be a grab bag for everybody, a provision was added that provided $818 million worth of food stamps for immigrants. The President was a major supporter of this provision. In fact, yesterday, our distinguished ranking member, Senator HARKIN, called this provision a major step toward fulfilling a promise that was made by our President.

Well, our President was not for welfare reform when it was debated and basically was shamed into signing it. What he said at the time was that he intended to go back and undue major parts of it. This provision, in fact, fulfills part of that commitment.

This motion is drafted very, very narrowly. It simply says to not touch the welfare benefits added back for people that were already here on August 22, 1996. Go ahead and take those provisions, but don't set out a provision in law that is giving new food stamps to people who might choose to come in the future.

There is a provision in this bill that would give 7 years of eligibility for food stamps to people who come and who declare themselves refugees in the future. Under the provision in the bill, whether they come next year or 20 years from now, they can come and declare themselves refugees and qualify for 7 years of food stamps. Mr. President, I think that is providing the wrong incentive for people to come to America.

Let me also say that I am a strong supporter of legal immigration. I don't want to tear down the Statue of Liberty. I don't want to build a wall around America. There is still room for hard-working, dedicated people with big dreams to come to America. But I want the dream to be of working and succeeding, not getting on welfare and food stamps.

What my amendment simply says is that the one provision of this bill that is prospective whereby providing food stamps into the future for seven years would be stricken. However, the refugees and asylees who are already here on August 22, 1996, would be able to receive food stamps for seven years.

Our colleagues are going to say that the world is coming to an end if we go back to conference and that somehow this bill will die. Everybody in the Senate and everybody in the House knows that ag research is not going to die. Everybody in the House and everybody in the Senate knows that crop insurance is not going to die.

If we send the bill back to conference, we have an opportunity to begin to correct problems with the bill. Both the Speaker and the majority leader of the House have said, in one forum or another, that they are not in favor of this bill being considered in the House. By sending it back to conference, we have an opportunity to begin the system of inducing moderation into the bill, which I believe can speed up the day we obtain funding for agriculture research and crop insurance.

Let me say again that I support agriculture research, and crop insurance. I don't think we should have to pay tribute every time we put together a program to try to promote job creation and economic growth in America. I don't think that every time we have an agricultural bill that tries to move us toward a more competitive agricultural system, we should have to pay tribute to people who always want an add-on such as the food stamp provisions in this bill. The provision adding food stamps was little more than a tribute for allowing this bill to move forward.

We can pass this bill without the food stamp provisions, but I am suggesting that we deal with one narrow part of the bill. I urge my colleagues to support this provision, because in this provision we don't take any benefits away from the restoration contained in the bill for immigrants who were here when we passed the welfare bill in 1996. Certain legal immigrants who were here when the welfare bill passed will have benefits restored by this provision. This motion, if defeated, would send the signal that we want to create new benefits in the future that would allow you to come to America and can obtain food stamps.

That, I think, is the wrong signal. It is not a signal I want to send. It is a signal that I think is destructive for those of us who believe in legal immigration.

So I urge my colleagues to support this motion to recommit with instructions. I remind my colleagues that the conference has not been discharged. We can go back to conference this afternoon, and this provision can be voted

on. If it is adopted in conference, it can come back to the Senate, and it would probably pass unanimously. If it is rejected in conference, we at least know there has been a vote in conference.

The point is, this bill is not going to die if we adopt this motion. I want people to look at this provision and vote on it on its merits. If they will do that, I will be satisfied.

I reserve the remainder of my time.

Mr. LUGAR addressed the Chair.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Indiana.

Mr. LUGAR. Mr. President, I yield 3 minutes to the Senator from Minnesota.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Minnesota is recognized for 3 minutes.

Mr. WELLSTONE. Mr. President, I will try to do this in 3 minutes. First of all, I say to my colleague from Texas, what he is now willing to do is hold up, delay, and potentially kill, crop insurance, which is extremely important to farmers in Minnesota and across the country, and research on alternative uses for agriculture products, crop disease, and research on scab disease in northwest Minnesota.

He is willing to do this because he thinks there is some terrible wrong in this bill. I think it is a right. I think we are doing something that lives up to the very best in America. I say to my colleague and to people in the country, my colleague from Texas wants to hold this bill up because he finds it to be an offensive proposition that we should say that for legal immigrants we will make sure there is some assistance for those people who are elderly, disabled, and for small children.

The Physicians for Human Rights released a report this past week finding an alarming amount of hunger and malnutrition among these legal immigrants. Food stuff use is on the rise. In the United States of America today at the peak of our economic performance we have people who are hungry and in jeopardy. What we ought to do here is restore some assistance for these legal immigrants. These asylees and refugees are people who have fled oppression in countries like Indonesia, China, you name it. They come to our country in the hope that we would be willing to extend a helping hand.

My colleague from Texas talks about that as if it is a bad thing to do. I thought that is what we were about—people who fled persecution, people who were legal immigrants. Many of them were parents. My dad fled persecution from Russia. For the U.S. Senate to say, ''Look, we want to correct the harshness. We want to make sure there is some assistance for you to make sure you don't go hungry if you are elderly, if you are disabled, if you are a small child, if you fled persecution from a country.'' That is the right thing to do. Certainly we ought not to be holding up the agriculture research bill, which is so important to agriculture in our country and so important to farmers in Minnesota.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Who yields time?

Mr. ROBERTS addressed the Chair.

Mr. LUGAR. Let me inquire of the distinguished Senator from Kansas. Does the Senator require time at this moment?

Mr. ROBERTS. I tell my distinguished chairman, if he could yield to me maybe 5 minutes.

Mr. LUGAR. I yield 5 minutes to the distinguished Senator from Kansas.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Kansas is recognized.

Mr. ROBERTS. Mr. President, I suppose that some of what I am going to say is repetitive in that most of this was discussed during the general debate. But I feel compelled to speak again because of the strong personal interest in this in behalf of myself and many of my colleagues who served on the House Agriculture Committee, and for that matter the Senate Agriculture Committee back in 1996.

There has been a real success story in regards to the Food Stamp Program and reforms that have been initiated. In 1996, with all due respect to that program and others who supported it, it was a program out of control. It couldn't even be audited. The inspector general came in, an inspector general from New York—a tough cop, by the way, named Roger Viadero, who has done an outstanding job, basically said that the Food Stamp Program could not even be audited due to the fraud, abuse, and organized crime involvement. As a matter of fact, he had a tape that we showed during the Committee hearings which ended up on 60 Minutes. And we know all the stories about the Food Stamp Program, about the waiting in line, people with food stamps exchanging them for cash and then buying things that obviously did not represent a nutritious market basket of food.

They got a new inspector general. We exposed the fraud and abuse on 60 Minutes and saved $3 billion to $5 billion in regard to the fraud and abuse. Then we instituted major reforms. I am talking about the Senate Agriculture Committee and the House Agriculture Committee—$24 billion, as the distinguished chairman has pointed out. I just do not think that is a success story that can be equaled.

As a matter of fact, as to the person in charge of the Food Stamp Program there were many allegations made in regard to the performance of duty. She resigned. It is in better hands. Then we gave these reforms to the States. The States have come back with administrative savings. That is where the $1.7 billion comes in that has been referred to in terms of entitlement. And that money, I think, should be used for agriculture research, and I believe it also should be used for crop insurance and risk management. And, yes, there is some limited assistance in regard to food stamps.

But let me refer to the comments made by the distinguished Senator from Texas whose concern I share. I certainly don't want any social welfare program, food stamps or otherwise, to be a beacon for people to come to this country when they wouldn't otherwise.

But we are talking about refugees, and a refugee is defined as follows: A person who is fleeing because of persecution, or well-founded fear of persecution, on account of race, religion, nationality, membership in a particular social group or political opinion, and who is of special humanitarian concern to the United States.

I don't think people choose to be a refugee. That is just not the case. People are not fleeing their country to come to the U.S. with a beacon held out there saying ''I am coming because of food stamps.'' And we have a cap on the number of refugees. It will be 75,000 admissions for the fiscal year as of 1999. Who are these people? The European numbers are used largely for Soviet religious minorities and Bosnians. East Asian numbers are for former Vietnamese, reeducation, camp detainees, and Laotians. I could keep on going down here. Basically, refugee admissions have fallen significantly from over 100,000 per year during fiscal year 1989. Now they are down to 75,000, and they are headed further downward.

Here is the difference. The agriculture research bill's food stamp provisions mirror the SSI provisions of last year's Balanced Both Houses have approved that.

Let's go back to the original food stamp reform that was passed in 1996 that I just talked about. These welfare reforms eliminated the benefits for anywhere from 800,000 to 950,000 noncitizens. This bill extends those benefits back to the children, the elderly, and the disabled who were in the country before August 22. That is the day of enactment of the bill. And, yes, it does also extend the benefits to refugees and asylees who may have entered after the August 22, 1996, debate. That means the total of the benefits will be restored to 250,000 people, not 900,000. I do not think this represents a step back from the far-reaching food stamp reforms that were passed back in 1996.

I think if you take a hard look at these people, I don't think the Food Stamp Program represents a beacon in regard to any kind of a reason that they would come to the United States. I have already read the definition.

I thank the distinguished chairman for yielding me this time.

Mr. LUGAR. Mr. President, I yield 5 minutes to the distinguished Senator from North Dakota.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from North Dakota.

Mr. CONRAD. I thank the Presiding Officer, and I thank especially the chairman of our committee.

Mr. President, I rise to speak on behalf of the research bill that we have before us. It has the title of ''agricultural research.'' I think that is really somewhat misleading because this bill has a lot more in it than agricultural

research, although agricultural research is critically important. Some who are not in agriculture may wonder: ''Why is it so important?'' Let me just give them an example from my home State of North Dakota, one of the most agricultural States in the Nation, traditionally one of the largest wheat producers, one of the largest barley producers, one of the largest sunflower and sugar beet-producing States in the Nation, and the State that produces the vast majority of the durum wheat that goes to make pasta which is enjoyed by all of America.

Last year, we lost a third of the crop in North Dakota to a disease. That disease is called scab. Scab is a fungus. In North Dakota we have had 5 years of extremely wet conditions. People may recall that last year we had an extraordinary set of disasters in North Dakota. That is just the continuation of a very severe weather pattern. Because of those overly wet conditions this fungus is growing in the crops of North Dakota; this scab. It destroyed a third of the crop last year. That is stunning. That is a loss of $1.1 billion just in my little State of North Dakota in 1 year.

In this bill there is a provision to provide $26 million over 5 years on scab research so we can attack this problem. That is a reason that this bill is important. That is not the only reason.

There are many other important agricultural research priorities to keep America on the cutting edge and on the leading edge of production agriculture. It is very important for our people to understand that our chief competitors are spending far more supporting their producers than we are spending supporting ours. In Europe they are spending about $47 billion a year to support their producers. We are spending about $5 billion.

So we are asking our farmers to go out and compete against their farmers with their farmers having a substantial competitive edge.

It is critically important that we not take everything away that our farmers are using to try to stay ahead of the competition.

In addition, in this bill is the money to shore up the crop insurance system, also critically important to those areas that are experiencing losses as a result of these unusual weather patterns we are experiencing. Here on the east coast we have had, I think it is now, 13 days of rain. We have already had 50 percent more rain at this time of the year than is normal. And that is affecting crops as well, because just like overly dry conditions have an adverse effect, so do overly wet conditions. That is what we are seeing, a very odd weather pattern across America this year. The crop insurance system needs to be strengthened and preserved. The funds to do it are in this bill.

Now, our colleague from Texas comes along and he tells all of us, ''I want to send this bill back to committee. I want to get some changes made. It won't really endanger the legislation at all.''

That is not true. Those of us who are on the Budget Committee understand what is at stake here. We understand that there is a budget resolution that has already passed this Chamber and is over in the other Chamber, and it takes a big chunk of the savings that are from the Agriculture Committee and uses them for another purpose. If this bill does not get passed and get passed quickly, we may lose these funds from agriculture altogether, and that would be a tragedy.

I thank the Chair and yield the floor.

Mr. REED. Mr. President, I rise today to express my support for the Conference Report on S. 1150, the Agricultural, Research, Extension, and Education Reform Act of 1998. Certainly, there are a number of important issues addressed in this bill, but none more critical than the provisions that would restore food stamp benefits to many elderly, children, and disabled legal immigrants.

While I am pleased that over 70 Senators joined the effort to bring this Conference Report to the floor, I am disappointed that action on such an important and bipartisan bill has been needlessly delayed. My colleagues have demonstrated overwhelming support for this Conference Report.

Like many of my colleagues, I was deeply concerned about provisions of the 1996 welfare reform law which denied benefits to legal immigrants, particularly children, the disabled, and the elderly. The welfare reform law was necessary to help people move from dependency to work, but it was not perfect. That is why we worked to restore Supplemental Security Income and Medicaid to legal immigrants in last year's balanced budget agreement.

With the Agricultural Research Conference Report, we take another important step to address the needs of our most vulnerable legal immigrants. Some states, including my home state of Rhode Island, have provided temporary benefits to fill the void created by the welfare reform law, but a permanent and uniform federal solution is needed for this group of immigrants.

Under the Conference Report, food stamp benefits would be restored to those legal immigrants who were in the United States when the welfare reform law went into effect on August 22, 1996, if they met certain conditions such as: (1) they are or become disabled; (2) they are children; or (3) they were over 65 years old at the time the welfare reform law was enacted. In addition, the Conference Report restores food stamp eligibility to Hmong immigrants. While this Conference Report does not restore benefits to all legal immigrants, it is a positive and essential first step.

Mr. President, our nation has prospered from the tremendous contributions of immigrants who have strengthened our economy and brought vitality to our communities. Today, we have the opportunity to restore benefits to children, elderly, and disabled legal immigrants—many of whom have worked and paid U.S. taxes. I urge my colleagues to oppose the motion to recommit and support the Conference Report on S. 1150.

Mr. LEVIN. Mr. President, I am pleased to support the conference report to accompany S. 1150, the Agricultural Research, Extension, and Education Reform Act of 1998. This legislation contains very important provisions that will help improve the delivery of safe, healthy, and value-added agricultural products to the American and world marketplace, and keep rural America strong.

The conference report contains a provision very similar to one in S. 1597, a measure I introduced as a companion to a bill introduced in the House by Congresswoman STABENOW. This provision directs the Department of Agriculture to assemble FEMA-like Crisis Management Teams to respond to emergencies, like threats to human health from food-borne pathogens. And, USDA must work with other agencies to ensure coordinated information and actions in the event of such a crisis. This is a very important and non-regulatory way for the Federal government to identify, correct, and prevent future food supply contamination.

S. 1150 contains a host of other important provisions, not the least of which is a funding mechanism to ensure that these new authorizations are paid for. USDA will be the site of a new Food Safety Research Information Office that will centralize and make public research and scientific data on food safety issues. Wheat scab, which has been a multi-billion problem in Michigan and in other barley and wheat producing states in the North Central region, will be the subject of a new research initiative. The crop insurance system will be made solvent. Precision agriculture, which uses high technology to reduce inputs like fertilizer and pesticides, will get new emphasis. And, USDA will conduct focused research to help diversify the crops that make up our main food supply, so that it will be less vulnerable to disruptions due to weather, pests or disease.

Mr. President, this is an important bill and I hope my colleagues will not vote to recommit the conference report. That would send the wrong message to a major sector of our economy and call into question Congress' commitment to a safe and abundant food supply.

Mr. LUGAR. Mr. President, I yield myself 7 minutes.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Indiana is recognized for 7 minutes.

Mr. LUGAR. Mr. President, the report with regard to the conferees on agriculture reform is supported by 17 out of the 18 members of our committee. I make that point because the 17 have written to our leader asking him for this debate. They are grateful for that opportunity. The 18th was predictably our colleague and a very valued

member of the committee, the Senator from Texas, Mr. GRAMM, who objects to the conference report and has offered this recommittal motion as a way, in my judgment, of defeating the conference report.

Let me just offer a word of clarification. As the chairman of the conference and one of the conferees, along with Senator COCHRAN and Senator COVERDELL on the Republican side, we supported the conference report after meeting with House colleagues who had very considerable enthusiasms of their own. This is not the first time that the Senate and House have met in a conference and have had to wrestle with issues that were distinctly different in the bills and have come to a compromise which, in my judgment, is a sound one, which was supported immediately by all the conferees in the House and the Senate in both parties and by 74 United States Senators who have written to the majority leader supporting this conference report. They do so because it is extremely timely. There are farmers in the field now dependent upon the crop insurance provisions.

If we are not successful today, of course, we will return to the conference, but I have already turned to the conferees and they are unanimous that we should proceed with the same bill and we will be back in the Chamber delayed by days or weeks as the case may be. The Senate may then pass the conference report. Perhaps the distinguished Senator from Texas is correct that this is going to pass by a very large majority. But is it any more certain that this same conference report will pass days and weeks hence, if we can get floor time, than today? I doubt it.

Now, the reason why conferees will not change the conference report is that the distinguished Senator from Texas has asked for a very narrow change that does not make a lot of sense. Let me review, Mr. President, respectfully, why I make that comment.

Before welfare reform, all legal aliens were eligible for food stamps, for SSI, the Social Security income payments, and for Medicaid. Before welfare reform, all of these persons were eligible. With the passage of welfare reform, most legal aliens became ineligible until such time as they became citizens.

But, Mr. President, follow carefully if you will. Refugees and asylees continued under welfare reform to be eligible for SSI, for food stamps, and for Medicaid. No new entitlement here. Welfare reform simply continued their eligibility from the pre-welfare reform days.

Now, the balanced budget amendment restored Social Security to some of the legal aliens; namely, to children, elderly, the disabled who were in this country on August 22, 1996, when we passed welfare reform. And it made asylees and refugees who already had benefits, who retained those, eligible now for 7 years of Social Security income and Medicaid.

Mr. President, you might ask, while we were at it we all passed this bill, the balanced budget amendment with enthusiasm. Why did we not change the food stamp provision from 5 years, which the refugees and asylees had, to 7 years to conform with what we were doing on income and the rest? Well, we did not because the Finance Committee had jurisdiction over that particular money. The Agriculture Committee has jurisdiction over food stamps. We were not in the picture. We are today. The intent of the motion of the Senator from Texas is in essence over the idea that the 5 years the refugees and asylees already had should not go to 7 years, and we should go back to conference to apparently knock back the 7 to 5. It is something which most Members find incomprehensible.

The distinguished Senator has a larger point, I believe, in his motion. He believes that however you phrase the food stamp situation, it is a beacon of hope for persons to come to our country, as he says, for years, for decades. Well, perhaps, but the asylees and the refugees are not swarming across our borders. They are people one by one who must present themselves and say and affirm: I am a potential victim of persecution, well-founded, and they have to prove that. If they do not prove it, they do not get in. And frequently people who had not gotten in went back and were killed. There are consequences to those decisions.

The people presenting themselves are Evangelical Christians; they are Jews from the former Soviet Union; they are Cubans who have tried to escape Castro; they are people who have fled from Somalia and from racial persecution in Bosnia recently. These are tough cases, and we recognized that in the welfare reform bill. We said keep them with a safety net because they do not have sponsors. They come with the shirts on their backs. And we have done so because we are a humane people. What sort of people are we to think about denying persons who have come in these circumstances to our shores? This is not a neon sign advertisement. It is simply a fact of the kind of country we are.

To send all of this back to conference over the fact that 5 years of eligibility these people now have should be changed to 7 seems to me to be an item the Senate should reject and do so decisively.

Finally, let me just simply say that LARRY CRAIG, the distinguished Senator from Idaho, has said:

> This is more than just a reauthorization bill. Legislation before the Senate today is an investment in the future and represents our commitment to America's farm families. By providing the technical assistance and extension activities that help expand farm income, improve resource management, and develop new crop varieties, federally funded agricultural research assures that our Nation will continue to lead the world in farm production and help bolster the stability of our rural areas.

I concur with that. This is not a question of an entitlement. It is the question of our commitment in the farm bill.

We committed to America's farmers, for a 7-year period of time, a proposition—freedom to farm, the idea to manage your own land and plant for the future. And American farmers have responded to that. They have planted over 10 million more acres. They have raised their income. They have raised exports for America. But we said there will be a safety net in this transition from the old days of supply management. It includes payments to farmers that decrease over the next 5 years. It includes the CRP, the Conservation Reserve Program, that tries to protect the environment for a 5-year period of time. We believe it needs to include farm research during this same period of the next 5 years, and crop insurance with those guarantees. The argument is, it could be done year by year, but this is not of great assurance to our farmers.

So, for all these reasons, I ask the Gramm amendment be defeated and we move on, then, to prompt passage of the conference report. I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Texas.

Mr. GRAMM. Mr. President, let me explain why the amendment does make sense. And let me do it by going back to our welfare reform bill. I would like to remind my colleagues, not that public popularity is the be-all and end-all—it can often be misleading in the short term—but I am sure many of my colleagues are aware that when asked what action by Congress in the last 4 years they most approved of, the American people, in a set of polls taken last month, said ''welfare reform.'' What we did in welfare reform is, we set higher standards for welfare and we defined work as the norm, and we defined welfare programs as temporary programs to help people help themselves.

When we wrote the welfare reform bill in 1996, and I was active in it and was a conferee, this provision with regard to refugees was a hard-fought provision. Prior to the 1996 bill, there was no limit on the amount of time that a refugee could get food stamps. Many people, including myself, wanted to set a strict limit on it, again with the idea that we were talking about transitional help, but we wanted people to come to America, as millions have come—and millions of Americans have come as refugees; millions of Americans have come as refugees since World War II.

We know that many of these refugees are really economic refugees but they claim to be political refugees, and often it is very difficult to tell the difference because countries that have bad political systems normally have bad economic systems.

So, after a real battle in conference, endless days of negotiations, we settled

on a 5-year limit. Now, in this bill, in a bill that, when it was considered in the Senate where it was amendable, there was no food stamp provision, there was no debate on this issue. When it was considered in the House, there was no provision expanding food stamps, no debate, no ability to amend it. Now we have a conference agreement that adds $818 million back in food stamps that were denied as part of welfare reform. This bill is a major step toward overturning the welfare reform bill.

I have singled out this provision because I think it is critically important. Whenever proponents of the provision in the bill debate it, they always like to talk about children, disabled, and elderly—and don't we all?—because, obviously, that is where we can focus our concern. But the provision that I am trying to deal with here has nothing to do with children, disabled, elderly, who were in the country on the day we passed the welfare reform bill. The provision that I am trying to deal with is the prospective provision which simply tries to draw a line and says that we passed a welfare reform bill, we negotiated this out, and here we are, 2 years after it went into effect, raising the number of years that you can be on food stamps under the new welfare bill as an immigrant by an additional 2 years.

Why are we doing it? To quote one of the proponents, ''It provides seamless protections so people can come, get food stamps, become citizens, and continue to get food stamps.''

I want people to come to America to go to work. I want our assistance program not to be a way of life. We debated this issue 3 years ago, and those who believe that welfare should not be a way of life won on an overwhelming vote. Yet, over and over and over again, in little parts and parcels, we are undoing one of the major legislative activities that we have undertaken in this decade. This bill is such an activity.

So, I am not for the food stamp provision, but I am not asking my colleagues to strike it out. I am asking my colleagues to ask the conference to reconvene and to remove the prospective provision which says that anyone coming in the future can qualify as a refugee and get 7 years of food stamps. I believe that we are, through this provision, taking a step to go back to the days, which we have recently put behind us, where we were asking people to come to America, not with their sleeves rolled up ready to go to work, but with their hand held out ready to go on welfare.

This is a little issue. We are not talking about big amounts of money, but we are talking about a big principle: What do you want the beacon drawing people to America to be? Do you want the beacon to be welfare and food stamps? Or do you want the beacon to be the opportunity to live and work in the greatest country in the history of the world?

So, to some people this may look like a small issue. We are not talking about much money, because this bill is a 5-year bill. Obviously, there are very few people—since you can get food stamps now for 5 years, extending it to 7 will affect only a few people in the last year of the bill. But the principle is a big principle, and the principle is, ''what kind of America do you want, and what kind of American do you want?'' I want people from all over the world, from all kinds of backgrounds, who share one thing—a dream of having the opportunity to come to America and work and build their dream and the American dream. That is what I am for. That is what this provision is about.

I would like now, Mr. President, to yield 5 minutes to the Senator from North Carolina.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Presiding Officer will inform Senators that the Senator from Texas has 12 minutes 10 seconds remaining on his time. The Senator from Indiana has 8 minutes.

The Senator from North Carolina is recognized.

Mr. FAIRCLOTH. Mr. President, I have few superlatives that I can claim as a Member of the Senate, but one of them is that I have spent 52 years in active agriculture, farming, and in all phases of it. I would be hard pressed to find the crop or the livestock interest that I have not, at one time or another, been involved in.

North Carolina is home to some of the most productive and largest farms in the Nation and the finest agricultural research universities, by far, in the Nation. I don't think that I play second fiddle to any Senator in support for reauthorization of the agricultural extension bill. It is critical to the farmers of this country and to the universities and the ag research universities. But the bill also makes important reforms to the Crop Insurance Program that will benefit farmers and taxpayers. Planting season is here, and we need to get it settled, and I am ready and anxious to do it.

However, despite what I have just said, let me add, I don't play second fiddle to any Senator in my support of real welfare reform. Workfare, not welfare, was the platform I ran on for the Senate in 1992. The 1996 welfare reform bill, although watered down, was a real accomplishment for the 104th Congress. I preferred the first two bills that were vetoed by the President, but the third was still a good bill. That is why I am so disturbed that we are gutting the welfare reform and doing it in an agricultural research bill.

This bill restores food stamps for 250,000 immigrants. We sit here and say very nicely, ''But it doesn't amount to much; it is only 2 years on to 5, so let the 2 years go.'' Will next year be at 10? In the following session of Congress, do we go to infinity? That is the reason we have a $5.5 trillion debt today, because 2 years wasn't very much, but 3 would be fine, and we kept going.

In effect, it says,

> Welcome to America. Come on, you don't have to be productive. You know when you leave where you are and come to this country that you are going to be eligible for food stamps for 7 years, and by the time you get settled in, we will change the law where you will be eligible and you won't ever have to work because we will feed you.

We already restored SI payments. Now we are throwing food stamps for another $80 million.

We also said that the welfare reform bill ended welfare as we know it. Unfortunately, this agricultural research bill is welfare reform as we did it. These changes to the welfare reform law come at the insistence of President Clinton. He vetoed the first two welfare reform bills, and he has succeeded in rewriting the one that he signed. If he was going to start trying to rewrite it before the ink dried on it, he never should have signed it.

I want the agricultural research bill without the food stamp provision to pass. Nobody is more in support of agricultural research and the whole agricultural bill than I am. It is critical to North Carolina, but the food stamp provision is a another step toward reversal of the welfare reform bill.

Mr. President, the Statue of Liberty holds a torch of freedom, not a book of food stamps and a lifetime right to not to have to work. That is the flag we are waving to people coming into this country: ''Sit down, relax, you are home free.'' The Senator from Texas is doing the right thing, and I am proud to support him. I thank the Chair.

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Mr. KEMPTHORNE). Who yields time?

Mr. LUGAR. Mr. President, I yield 3 minutes to the distinguished Senator from Missouri.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Missouri is recognized for 3 minutes.

Mr. BOND. Mr. President, I rise in strong support of the conference report and urge my colleagues to oppose the motion to recommit. For those in agriculture, it is critical that we move this in a prompt and expedited fashion and avoid any additional delay. The time for passage is now.

I congratulate Chairman LUGAR, Senator HARKIN and their staffs who have labored for months to bring this legislation before us. Simply put, agriculture needs this now. Included in it are urgent reforms and funding necessary to avoid a crisis which would undermine the viability of crop insurance—a safety net that farmers in my State and across the country cannot do without. This legislation is fully offset and paid for and is supported by a united agriculture industry. After months of careful and deliberate negotiations, a bipartisan agreement with the administration has been developed. It was an agreement with the administration and it takes into account the need to get the President's signature on it. I believe the work of the conferees should be applauded and endorsed with our support today.

I am particularly interested in the research title. We expect to see the world's population double in the next 30 years. The demand for food is expected to triple in the next 50 years. The world's population wants more food, cheaper food, more nutritious food, safer food, food that is easier to prepare and they want it produced on less land with fewer chemicals and in a more environmentally sensitive manner.

Those individuals who produce food and fiber for this world today—encumbered with what otherwise would be conflicting mandates—have never faced a greater challenge. Technology is the answer.

Remarkably, plant technology in this half-century has helped make it possible for the farmer, who in 1940 fed 19 people, to feed 129 people today.

Nobel prize-winning chemist Robert F. Curl of Rice University proclaimed that: ''* * * it is clear that the 21st will be the century of biology.'' The March 27 article in Science Magazine entitled: ''A Third Technological Revolution,''—after the Industrial and Computer-based revolutions—contends that: ''Ultimately, the world will obtain most of its food, fuel, fiber, chemicals and some of its pharmaceuticals from genetically altered vegetation and trees.''

The possibilities are breathtaking and the U.S. is poised to lead the third technological revolution as we unlock the secrets plant-by-plant and now, genome-by-genome.

Simply put, this research is about meeting the world's growing nutritional needs, protecting U.S. jobs and preserving the environment.

The legislation before us looks ahead to the challenges of the 21st century by providing additional funding on what all of us back home say is a priority; research. It provides $600 million for the Initiative for Future Agriculture and Food Systems. This will augment our federal commitment to undertake cutting-edge research in priority areas such as genome studies, biotechnology, food safety, precision agriculture and new use development.

I cite as an example, the University of Missouri has just tested a new hybrid corn which when fed to swine reduces phosphorous in manure by a whopping 37 percent. The Monsanto Company, in my State, is using biotechnology to produce cotton plants with genes that produce colors to reduce the need for chemical dyeing. From the corn plant, they have produced a human-like antibody that holds promise for allowing cancer patients to tolerate more frequent doses of a tumor-shrinking drug. The possibilities are breathtaking and the U.S. is leading the charge.

Let me say one thing to those who represent agriculture states. Almost 70 percent of the USDA budget is not for research or export promotion or conservation or for subsidies to farmers—it is for food and nutrition programs, primarily the food stamp program. For those who have watched over the years as a greater and greater percentage of USDA funds have gone to welfare, often at the expense of programs that assist farmers and conservation, this legislation moves $1 billion back to agriculture.

While I understand that some here today would like to see less money for food stamps for legal immigrants, others would like to see more. I recall that the Administration proposed in their budget that all this administrative savings go for legal immigrants and have threatened to veto crop insurance and research if it didn't also include funding for food stamps for legal immigrants.

The food stamp provisions of this act are an essential step to providing much needed assistance to certain legal immigrants. Attempts to undo this carefully-crafted bipartisan compromise will result in delay and ultimately undermine the entire bill.

The bipartisan leaders have worked hard to craft a bill that the President will accept. There should be no further delay and I urge my colleagues to reject the motion to recommit and move swiftly to final adoption of the conference report.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Who yields time?

Mr. DOMENICI addressed the Chair.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from New Mexico.

Mr. DOMENICI. I don't have any time, but I ask if somebody will give me a couple minutes.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Who yields time to the Senator from New Mexico?

Mr. GRAMM. How much time do we have on both sides?

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Texas has 6 minutes, 47 seconds; the Senator from Indiana has 4 minutes, 43 seconds.

Mr. DOMENICI. Do we have a time certain to vote, or when the time expires?

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The vote will occur when all debate time has expired.

Mr. GRAMM. I ask unanimous consent that the Senator might have 5 minutes.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Is there objection?

Mr. HARKIN. Mr. President, reserving the right to object, and I won't object, but I hope if we are going to go down this path that the other side be afforded equal opportunity to have additional time, if so requested. I don't request it, but in case somebody does request it.

Mr. DOMENICI. Mr. President, I say to the Senator from Indiana, what does he think about this? Does he want 5 minutes himself if I get 5?

Mr. LUGAR. Yes, Mr. President. Can we amend the request that there be an additional 5 minutes for me to speak?

Mr. GRAMM. Mr. President, the Senator is not going to speak on behalf of my amendment; he just wants to speak on the bill itself.

Mr. DOMENICI. Will the Senator give me 2 minutes, and that will be enough.

Mr. GRAMM. Let me repeat my request. Since the Senator is not going to engage in the debate before us, but has relevant comments about the bill before us, and we hope, obviously another motion, infinite number of motions are in order, but we hope this will settle the order, I make a unanimous consent request that the Senator have 5 minutes.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Is there objection?

Mr. LUGAR. Reserving the right to object, I renew my request that Senator DOMENICI have 5 additional minutes and I have 5 additional minutes.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Is there objection?

Mr. GRAMM. I would like 5 additional minutes, then, as well.

Mr. LUGAR. I object.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Objection is heard. Who yields time?

Mr. GRAMM. Mr. President, I suggest the absence of a quorum.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will call the roll.

The assistant legislative clerk proceeded to call the roll.

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

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

Mr. GRAMM. Mr. President, I yield the Senator from Alabama 3 minutes.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Alabama is recognized for 3 minutes.

Mr. SESSIONS. Mr. President, I am very, very reluctant to rise in opposition to this conference report as it is presently constituted, and in support of the motion to return this legislation to the conference committee. I believe, however, that returning this legislation to the conference committee is the proper and appropriate thing to do. Having said that, I feel that there are some marvelous provisions contained within this bill. For example, agricultural research is very important, and this legislation will strengthen and improve the work being done to advance this field. Similarly, crop insurance will be made sound under this legislation. Both are matters of critical importance to me.

I do not believe that sending the legislation back to the conference committee to fix this bill's entitlement expansion in the Food Stamp Program will kill this bill or extraordinarily delay it or in any way jeopardize the fundamental reforms that are contained in it. Sending the bill back to conference simply reflects routine business practices in this Senate.

Under this legislation's expansion of the food stamp entitlement, 250,000 new people will be added to the food stamp rolls. In my last campaign, I talked about the fact that the President had committed to undermining the welfare reform bill that was passed several years ago. These provisions have proven that statement to be true. This bill

expands from 5 to 7 years the amount of time noncitizens can draw food stamps. It is an expansion of that policy, and it is the kind of expansion I think is not justified. Will we next year come back for 10 years? Will it be 15 years? What will be the next revision?

There will always be pressure for us to expand and expand and expand. I think we have to show some integrity and some fortitude on this issue. And so, with great reluctance, I have to say to the distinguished chairman of the committee and the members of that committee that I cannot vote for this bill. I cannot vote for it because I told the people of Alabama I was not coming up here and voting for the undermining of the welfare bill that was passed last time. I cannot justify this expansion of the Food Stamp Program. So if we cannot send it back, I will be forced to vote no. I will hate to have to do that. I think supporting this motion to recommit the bill is the best way to address this issue.

I thank the Senator from Texas for his leadership and courage in raising this important issue, because we have to get to a point in this country where we can contain our spending tendencies, and if we do not, we will never maintain a balanced budget.

Thank you, Mr. President.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Who yields time?

Mr. LUGAR. Mr. President, I yield 2 minutes to the ranking member.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Iowa is recognized for 2 minutes.

Mr. HARKIN. I thank my colleague and compliment him on his leadership on this bill and all aspects of the bill, on research on crop insurance and food stamps.

I listened with some amusement to my friend and colleague from Texas talking about this issue, saying that it is principle, that he is doing this on principle. I know we passed the Balanced Budget Act last year in the Senate. That extended from 5 to 7 years Medicaid and SSI to the same refugees and asylees we are talking about. I do not recall the Senator from Texas then offering an amendment to strike it out of the Balanced Budget Act.

Mr. GRAMM. I voted no, I would like the Senator to be aware of that.

Mr. HARKIN. I believe the RECORD will show the Senator from Texas voted when the Balanced Budget Act passed the Senate.

Mr. GRAMM. I did. And I voted no.

Mr. HARKIN. I believe the Senator voted aye when the Balanced Budget Act passed the Senate—maybe not on the conference report but when it passed the Senate. And that provision was in the Senate bill to extend it to 7 years.

Secondly, the Senator from Texas may be philosophically opposed to food stamps. That is fine. That is his position—that may be his position. That is another debate for another time. We settled that in welfare reform, and we settled it in the Balanced Budget Act last year.

All we are doing now is making food stamps compatible with Medicaid and SSI. So I hope the Senator would not hold our farmers hostage, because that is what is happening. We know full well, if this goes back to conference, it is dead. We have hundreds of thousands of farmers who need crop insurance this summer. Over 106,000 winter wheat policies right now will be up on September 30. Farmers all over the plains States will not be able to renew their policies. Many farmers use their crop insurance policies as collateral in order to secure an operating loan. So if we do not have that, thousands of farmers will not have access to the credit they need to get the crop in. That is why we need to pass this bill.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Who yields time?

Mr. LUGAR addressed the Chair.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Indiana.

Mr. LUGAR. How much time do I have remaining?

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Indiana has 2 minutes 40 seconds.

Mr. LUGAR. I yield myself that time.

Mr. President, let me make as clear as I can the parliamentary situation. We have tried, in the Ag Committee since last fall, to pass a sound research bill. We succeeded last fall. The House did not act finally until the end of the session and did not appoint conferees until a short time ago.

It has been a very difficult conference—not the first time such a thing has occurred. Conferences in the Congress have occurred frequently. Compromises are made.

Mr. President, to suggest glibly that we can go back to conference if the motion made by the Senator from Texas passes, simply excise what he wishes, and return to the Senate with a bill, is inaccurate. I have tested the conferees, and they will not change. The Senator from Texas may not change. Furthermore, if changes are made, the Secretary of Agriculture has written to the committee that he will recommend the President veto the bill. Now we can all estimate, Is the President bluffing? Is the Secretary accurate? Will somebody weaken on the House side—maybe many people—and suddenly see the light? Conceivably, Mr. President. And I pledge I will try. Patiently, for 6 months, I have tried, and if need be, I will continue to do that.

My prediction is, there will be a considerable delay with regard to crop insurance, probably a year or 2 delay in terms of research, and in due course I have no idea what will happen on the food stamp issue.

But, Mr. President, let me simply say, we have a remarkable possibility for achievement here today that I hope will not be defeated on a very narrow point. I understand the objections of our colleagues, but I understand an overwhelming majority, 74 Senators, expressed themselves in writing that this is their will. I hope we will have an opportunity to manifest it in passage of the report.

I yield back our remaining time.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Texas has 3 minutes 23 seconds remaining.

Mr. GRAMM. Mr. President, I yield 2 minutes to the Senator from New Mexico.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from New Mexico is recognized for 2 minutes.

Mr. DOMENICI. I thank Senator GRAMM.

I did not really think my few words would be this controversial, but I want to share with the Senate a concern. It is not just about this bill. But it seems to me that every day or so we are talking about an approach here in the U.S. Senate which essentially wipes out last year's budget agreement. The cornerstone to last year's budget agreement was the caps we placed on discretionary spending, both defense and domestic. That means, written in the law are numbers that we said we will not violate; that we will not exceed this level of spending.

Everybody who is getting anything from Government would like to turn those discretionary programs into mandatory programs, so they are not subject to the caps. Everybody would like to have a guarantee that their program is going to get funded. That is what we call an entitlement or a mandatory program. We are talking about that in this bill. We are talking about that in the tobacco bill in a very big way.

What is happening now is that we are absolutely breaking the agreement we made, which was so solemn, about getting our budget under control. Every time the budget bites and it squeals a little because a decision is tough, we find a way to avoid it and spend the money in another way. It is money nonetheless, and it is adding to the size of Government nonetheless.

Frankly, I do not agree with Senator GRAMM's position on this bill in terms of the food stamps provisions. But I, frankly, do not believe we ought to shut our eyes to a tendency that could become a very big stream. We are forgetting about appropriated accounts and caps, understandings and agreements, and finding brand new ways to fund programs that will be on automatic pilot.

I submit to you, from the taxpayers' standpoint, there is absolutely no difference. If you are using a dollar of taxpayers' money to break the caps that we agreed upon or if you are spending a dollar for a new entitlement program, it is the same effect.

I hate to make this statement on this bill because I am not necessarily saying the bill should go down to defeat. But I want to warn the Senate—and I am going to warn the Senate on every bill that circumvents the caps—that this is not the way we got to balance.

This is not what we promised the American people and the marketplace in terms of where we were going as a Congress, and I plan to call that to everyone's attention on a regular basis.

I yield the floor and thank the Senator for time.

Mr. GRAMM. How much time do I have?

The PRESIDING OFFICER. There is 1 minute remaining.

Mr. GRAMM. Mr. President, I think Senator LUGAR put his finger on the situation when he said that the President would veto the agriculture research bill and crop insurance if the bill didn't contain $818 million worth of new food stamps adding 250,000 people to the food stamp rolls. I believe that is piracy. I do not believe the President would veto this bill. Further, I am confident that we would override his veto, and I think it is imperative that we start standing up and defending the major actions we take, and welfare is one of those actions.

This bill is going to effectively raise the level of spending in the Federal Government by $1.86 billion, because we are going to pay for four entitlement programs in this bill, and we are going to free up $1.86 billion to be spent on discretionary spending. I intend to oppose the bill. I hope my colleagues will vote for this motion.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. All time having expired, the question occurs on the motion to recommit the conference report to the committee on conference with instructions offered by the Senator from Texas, Mr. GRAMM.

Mr. GRAMM. Mr. President, I ask for the yeas and nays.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Is there a sufficient second?

There is a sufficient second.

The yeas and nays were ordered.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will call the roll.

The assistant legislative clerk called the roll.

The result was announced—yeas 23, nays 77, as follows:

[Rollcall Vote No. 128 Leg.]

YEAS—23

Abraham	Hollings	Sessions
Allard	Hutchinson	Shelby
Ashcroft	Hutchison	Smith (NH)
Enzi	Inhofe	Snowe
Faircloth	Kyl	Thomas
Gramm	Lott	Thompson
Gregg	McCain	Thurmond
Helms	Nickles	

NAYS—77

Akaka	Coats	Frist
Baucus	Cochran	Glenn
Bennett	Collins	Gorton
Biden	Conrad	Graham
Bingaman	Coverdell	Grams
Bond	Craig	Grassley
Boxer	D'Amato	Hagel
Breaux	Daschle	Harkin
Brownback	DeWine	Hatch
Bryan	Dodd	Inouye
Bumpers	Domenici	Jeffords
Burns	Dorgan	Johnson
Byrd	Durbin	Kempthorne
Campbell	Feingold	Kennedy
Chafee	Feinstein	Kerrey
Cleland	Ford	Kerry
Kohl	Moseley-Braun	Santorum
Landrieu	Moynihan	Sarbanes
Lautenberg	Murkowski	Smith (OR)
Leahy	Murray	Specter
Levin	Reed	Stevens
Lieberman	Reid	Torricelli
Lugar	Robb	Warner
Mack	Roberts	Wellstone
McConnell	Rockefeller	Wyden
Mikulski	Roth	

The motion was rejected.

Mr. LUGAR. Mr. President, I move to reconsider the vote.

Mr. HARKIN. I move to lay that motion on the table.

The motion to lay on the table was agreed to.

Mr. LUGAR addressed the Chair.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Indiana.

Mr. LUGAR. Mr. President, I have requests from other Senators wanting to speak on other subjects. I would ask the Chair, is it possible we could move to disposition of the business before us?

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Is there further debate on the conference report?

Is there further debate on the conference report?

Mr. KOHL. Yes.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Wisconsin is recognized.

Mr. KOHL. Mr. President, I rise today in strong support of the Agriculture Research conference report. A great deal of thanks and appreciation is due to Senators LUGAR and HARKIN for their hard work and efforts to reform and prioritize USDA's agriculture research, extension and education activities.

This conference report is extremely important to the agricultural community. It invests $1.7 billion in agricultural research to develop the new technology that will be used by farms in the next five to ten years, to solve the projected shortfall in crop insurance funding, and to support the Fund for Rural America.

The nation's Land-Grant Universities work with the USDA on issues ranging from the international competitiveness of our family farms, to new food borne illness problems, to ground water contamination. We need to support their efforts with a robust research budget in line with other agencies' research budgets. This bill puts us on the track to do that, and I support it.

I am also pleased to speak in strong support of the provisions of this bill restoring food stamps to legal immigrants.

Mr. President, I supported the 1996 welfare reform law. The time had clearly come for radical change. We rightly concluded that nothing erodes the human spirit more readily than dependence on handouts, and we instituted reforms based upon the principles of personal responsibility and hard work.

But in some cases, a helping hand is truly necessary, and sometimes so much help is needed that only the Federal government is capable of providing it. This is clearly the case with respect to certain classes of legal immigrants. The welfare law provisions restricting legal immigrant access to food stamps went too far.

Legal immigrants pay taxes and serve in our armed forces. They are not granted all the privileges of U.S. citizenship, but are expected to fulfill most of the responsibilities of citizenship. The ban on food stamps for elderly, disabled and other needy legal immigrants from food stamps was harsh and unfair.

While myself and others argued that point during debate on the welfare bill in 1996, the majority of us have learned it since then. In any case, we should all feel confident that we are doing the right thing today by voting for this bill.

Mr. President, my support for the food stamps restoration is particularly heart-felt due to my concern for the Hmong and other legal immigrants from Laos and their families. As my colleagues may know, the Hmong fought along side our American men and women in the Vietnam War. They risked their lives on behalf of all that we hold dear in this country—freedom from oppression, democracy and the pursuit of happiness—and fled to the United States following the War out of fear of persecution. To them, we truly owe a debt of gratitude.

There are 250,000 Hmong and Lao people living in the United States, approximately 40,000 of whom live in Wisconsin. Of those 40,000, roughly 7000 lost eligibility for food stamps under the welfare law. And 75 percent of those individuals who have lost food stamps in Wisconsin live in households with children.

The Hmong and highland people have enriched our country and enriched Wisconsin. They have worked hard to support their families and give back to their communities. Simply put, we are thankful for all they did and thankful for the contributions they continue to make.

Last year, we took steps to restore SSI benefits to the Hmong and other worthy immigrants, and today we are right to take this step with respect to food stamps.

I urge my colleagues to support the conference report.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Is there further debate on the conference report?

The Senator from South Dakota.

Mr. JOHNSON. Mr. President, I rise today to discuss the importance of passing the Conference Report on the Agricultural Research Bill, S. 1150.

This bill has the overwhelming support of over 70 Senators, yet we have continued to struggle here in the Senate to get this critically important legislation passed.

In recent years, American agriculture has greatly changed. Because of the 1996 Farm Bill, our producers rely greatly on the crop insurance program to protect them from production risk. The reforms in agricultural research programs included in S. 1150

provide a roadmap for the future of agriculture. As importantly, it includes a funding stream to fund important new investments in agricultural research and rural development by creating and funding The Initiative for Future Agriculture and Food Systems and by extending the Fund for Rural America.

And yes, to the chagrin of some, this legislation reinstates food stamp benefits for our most vulnerable legal immigrants. I would hasten to point out that these provisions are modeled on sections of last year's Balanced Budget Act that restored eligibility for Supplemental Security Income and Medicaid to some legal immigrants.

I applaud the Chairman of the Senate Agriculture Committee and Senator HARKIN for their leadership in crafting the balanced compromise inherent in this legislation. Attempts to derail this compromise put at risk the important investments in agriculture and the sound research and crop insurance reforms included in the bill.

Living in a state like South Dakota, I know first hand, and as most of you saw during last year's disaster, what continual flooding can do to our precious farm land. Again, this year, eight counties in northeastern South Dakota are again experiencing severe flooding conditions.

Without a strong safety net, crop insurance remains as the only safety net for producers to protect them from the vagaries of nature. This bill provides nearly $500 million for partial funding for this important risk management tool.

I have been informed by several crop insurance agents in South Dakota that the Agricultural Research Bill must be passed soon or many producers face the possible cancellation of their policies. Keep in mind, these policies, are in many cases, the only protection producers have from disasters which are not of their acts of mismanagement but as acts of nature.

The bill covers all facets of federally funded agricultural research, including: the Agriculture Research Service of USDA; the Cooperative Extension Service; Land Grant Universities such as South Dakota State University and competitive research and extension programs open to other entities.

S. 1150 includes comprehensive research provisions for our nation's land grant universities. For example, South Dakota State University (SDSU) and other small state schools are protected in this bill by allowing a great deal of flexibility in how SDSU will meet new requirements that direct a percentage of all research and extension funds toward multi-state, disciplinary, and integrated research and extension activities. For example, if SDSU is working on a project that may need expertise from the University of South Dakota, they will be able to include that toward meeting the multi-state research component.

I am also pleased that the conferees have agreed to authorize a competitive research program for tribal colleges, otherwise known as the 1994 institutions.

Unlike the significant research programs that have existed for decades for 1862 and 1890 land-grant institutions, the 1994 institutions currently do not have authorization for an agriculture research program, and thus are not full partners in the land-grant system.

This legislation mitigates this inequity by establishing a modest, competitive research program for the 1994 institutions. Funded research would address high priority concerns of local tribal, national, and multi-state significance and would be conducted through cooperative agreement with 1862 and 1890 land-grant institutions.

Although it is true that some tribal colleges are not yet ready to conduct research, many of them have the capability. Some current research includes:

(1) Water quality research: Conducted through contracts with Indian Tribes, which are required to meet certain standards under the federal Clean Water Act.

(2) Wildlife research: Conducted by a handful of tribal colleges to evaluate and find solutions for the adverse impact of pesticides on local wild bird and deer populations, and to research problems associated with amphibians and irrigation project lines.

(3) Native plant research: Conducted because new development on and near tribal lands is taking a serious toll on wetland areas. This impacts the niche environment of native plants, which are traditionally used for medicinal and other purposes. This is an example of the kind of research that most larger institutions would not focus on because it will not lead to large-scale production agriculture. Without the research currently being conducted at Salish Kootenai College in Pablo, Montana, the nation risks losing some of our native plants.

(4) Range cattle research: Currently underway at several tribal colleges, to address problems of range cattle traversing streams and impacting water quality (and possibly impacting native trout and other fish populations). In addition, one tribal college is conducting research and development on a new strain of more rigorous cattle.

This is just a sampling of the kind of research currently ongoing at the tribal colleges. The primary focus of this research is on the use of niche products to develop and expand reservation economies; the preservation and cultivation of land; and the strengthening of families and communities.

The tribal colleges have not asked for millions and millions of dollars to conduct costly basic research. Rather, they ask for research authority to protect and improve the earth on which they live and to ensure the viability of the plants and animals with which they co-exist.

Another provision of this legislation addresses an inequity in the 1994 land-grant extension program. Under the reauthorization, 1994 institutions would be permitted to enter into cooperative agreements with any 1862 or 1890 institution in the United States, rather than being limited to agreements with only the 1862 in their state.

This provision is important to the effort to create productive, cost-efficient extension programs in Indian Country. Under current law, to participate in extension programs, 1994 institutions are required to enter into cooperative agreements with the 1862 institution in their state, and funding for the program goes to the 1862 institutions rather than the 1994 institutions.

In the case of Sitting Bull College, which straddles the border of North and South Dakota, and Din College, which has campuses in Arizona and New Mexico, this restrictive language could seriously hamper efforts to create the most productive extension program possible for the relevant service area.

This clarification simply makes good business sense. Why should a 1994 or an 1862 institution be prohibited, for fiscal or bureaucratic reasons, from partnering with an institution that has the expertise and resources that are most beneficial to the students and communities the institution serves?

To correct this problem, the legislation states that 1994 institutions may enter into cooperative agreements with any 1862 or 1890 institution in the United States, rather than being limited to an agreement with only the 1862 in their state. Further, the bill directs the Secretary of Agriculture to fund the 1994 institutions directly, rather than passing the funding through mainstream institutions.

Again, Mr. President, passage of the Agricultural Research Bill is crucial to the future of American agriculture. Our Nation's farmers and ranchers work hard each and every day. Not only do they produce an abundant supply of food, they produce it at the most inexpensive price to consumers in the entire world.

With the support of over 70 Senators, this bill has enough support to pass with wide-ranging support. This bill enjoys the support of constituencies—both urban and rural, both—nutritional advocates and crop insurers. It would be a great travesty to allow this bill to fall victim to the philosophical ideologies of a very few.

If we do not act on this immediately, it will show our lack of leadership to help some of our most valuable as well as our most vulnerable members of our society.

I urge my colleagues to pass this bill.

Mr. LEAHY. Mr. President, I appreciate the efforts of the chairman of the Agriculture, Nutrition and Forestry Committee, Senator LUGAR and the Ranking Member, Senator HARKIN, on the research conference report.

I want to highlight that over 70 Senators—including myself—signed a letter to the majority leader urging him to give us an opportunity to vote on

this conference report as soon as possible.

The conference agreements we worked out represent a very good package with four major components: crop insurance funding, agricultural research funding, rural development initiatives and food stamp assistance for legal immigrants.

I know that farmers who need crop insurance are very worried—and with good reason—that crop insurance policies will be canceled if this report does not pass.

I know that the agricultural research community, with its Land Grant University system, very strongly supports this research funding so that America can be more competitive in world markets.

In addition to benefiting farmers and the agricultural research community, the report benefits all rural residents thorough its rural development programs.

Sometimes it is forgotten that most rural Americans are not farmers—this effort benefits both farmers and other rural Americans.

I also want to speak briefly on the food stamp changes. The food stamp changes simply restore benefits for certain level immigrants. The changes are modeled on last year's Balanced Budget Act that restored eligibility for SSI and Medicaid to some legal immigrants.

For example, the conference report would apply the provisions in the Balance Budget Act—that extended benefits from 5 years, to 7 years, for refugees and asylum seekers for SSI and Medicaid—to the food stamp program.

The 1996 welfare law made an exception for these types of refugees because they typically come to this country with very little after escaping persecution abroad. They often have no sponsors.

In the past many of them fought along with U.S. troops against our common enemies. Some may have escaped from enemy prisoner of war camps.

That 5-year limit proved unrealistic because of long backlogs at the INS. In a number of INS offices, these backlogs exceeded two years. If the eligibility of these refugees ended after five years in the country, they could be left without recourse while their applications to naturalize were in the INS ''pipeline.''

The extension of eligibility for SSI and Medicaid to allow them to receive benefits during their first seven years in this country was not controversial last year: it was included in all major Republican and Democratic proposals for legal immigrants.

It should not be controversial this year.

It should be noted that this provision does not assure that these refugees will receive benefits for two more years—they still have to be otherwise eligible for food stamps.

Refugees and asylum seekers still would have to meet the same criteria that all other people have to meet to qualify for benefits.

By conforming food stamp rules to those already adopted for Medicaid last summer, the Agricultural Research Conference Report would avoid imposing multiple inconsistent eligibility rules on state and local agencies that administer both programs.

I urge my colleagues to support Senator LUGAR and Senator HARKIN in their efforts to get the agricultural research conference report passed as quickly as possible. America's rural areas, its farmers and the research community are eagerly awaiting passage of this report.

Mr. HAGEL. Mr. President, I rise today in support of the Conference Agreement on S. 1150, the Agricultural Research, Extension, and Education Reform Act of 1998. This measure will solidify the financial foundation for crop insurance and agriculture research well into the next century. Agriculture research and crop insurance are vital to America's farming and ranching livelihood.

Research, crop insurance, regulatory relief, and expanded markets play a vital role in moving federal farm policy away from government intrusion and toward a free market through the Federal Agriculture Improvement and Reform Act of 1996. Farmers and ranchers now have greater flexibility in their crop and livestock production efforts. Crop insurance and research efforts are both tools that will help farm producers become more competitive as they move toward a greater reliance on the free market and less upon the federal treasury.

No country in the world can match America's efficiency in agricultural production. Not only is this a result of American ingenuity and hard work, it's also the result of our investment in cutting edge research. Our research efforts have led to more efficient production, better products, new uses for our products—all of which have led to new markets where we can sell our products. S. 1150 provides 600 million dollars for the Initiative for Future Agriculture and Food Systems.

The global demand for our agricultural goods will continue to grow as the world's population increases and as more nations achieve higher standards of living, resulting in a demand for better diets. Research allows American agriculture to meet the world's demand for food and fiber. Under S. 1150, research dollars will go toward new and alternative uses of agricultural commodities and products, agricultural biotechnology, agricultural genome research, natural resource management, precision agriculture, food safety, and food technology and human nutrition. These dollars will help our agriculture research facilities, such as the University of Nebraska, to continue to lead the world in crop and livestock production sciences.

Expanded markets and increased trade are a clear byproduct of agricultural research. Research will lead American agriculture into the next century and keep American farmers and ranchers at the forefront of global food and fiber production. Research, global food production, global trade and farming profits are all connected.

Crop insurance is also vital to the long-term health of American agriculture. Farming and ranching involves risk. That's a fact of life in American agriculture. Crop insurance provides a very important management tool for our agricultural producers to withstand fluctuations in the market and changes in weather and production conditions.

For example, in recent years, severe weather conditions have forced some Nebraska farmers to face the loss of their crops and livestock. Protecting farmers and the agri-businesses that depend on them from suffering major losses is what crop insurance alternatives do for America's producers. Comprehensive crop insurance plans will minimize losses for many agricultural producers so that the economic damage from diminished crop yields is not overwhelming for our rural towns and communities. This conference report provides 500 million dollars to partially fund crop insurance delivery expenses.

Research and crop insurance are interconnected with agricultural production and basic farm and ranch income. Research keeps American agriculture on the leading edge of production technology. Crop insurance minimizes the many risks involved with producing food and fiber for the world's growing population.

I strongly support S. 1150 and urge my colleagues to support its adoption.

Mr. KERREY. Mr. President, I rise today to voice my support for the Agriculture Research Reauthorization bill.

This bill reaffirms our commitment to American agriculture in a number of ways. It reauthorizes existing research programs at our land grant universities and goes one step further in creating a new, competitive research initiative to study some of the most cutting edge agricultural issues of the day: food safety, agricultural biotechnology, precision agriculture and the competitiveness of small and medium sized farms.

As well, it maintains our commitment to the federal crop insurance program, perhaps the most successful public-private partnership our government has to boast of.

And just as importantly, it restores our commitment to legal immigrants who are elderly, disabled, or children. Restoring food stamp benefits to these groups of people is simply the right thing to do.

But while I commend the conferees for their work in satisfying many parties with their work on this bill, I rise to say it does not go far enough.

We have perhaps no more important research need than that of agricultural research. It represents 2% of the total federal research budget. Yet, between

today and thirty years from now, we are going to add 5 billion people to the planet. And all those people are going to need to be fed. And they are likely to be fed on less acres, not more.

The caloric requirement to feed those additional 5 billion people will be more than the caloric consumption for the past 10,000 years. It is a huge increase in consumption requirements. And our research is the key to solving that problem. There is a tremendous amount at stake here for those who worry about peace and prosperity.

We take this agricultural research for granted. Indeed, we take all of agriculture too much for granted. But agricultural research has added so much value to our productive capacities, as well as to the quality of our lives, that it is ridiculous to be struggling to pay for it as we are right now.

At the same time, we are going to double the funding for the National Institute of Health, and double the funding for the National Science Foundation. I support both of those things. But it won't do us any good at all to live longer through NIH investments if we short agricultural research and we aren't able to feed ourselves. And that's precisely what will happen if we don't come up with some satisfactory way to guarantee a long-term funding of ag research at higher levels than we have provided in the past.

Mr. SMITH of Oregon. Mr. President, I rise today to speak in support of the Agricultural Research, Extension, and Education Reform Act of 1998. The conference report before us reauthorizes various agriculture research programs at land-grant colleges and universities through 2002. In addition, it provides for $600 million over five years for a new competitive grants program for research in key areas such as agricultural genome, food safety, nutrition, new and alternative uses of agricultural commodities and products, biotechnology, natural resource management, and farm efficiency. This bill also contains important provisions which authorize funding for crop insurance, rural development, and to restore food stamps to certain legal immigrants.

The critics of S. 1150 most often question the costs of the various provisions included in the conference report. However, it is important to note that our investment in agricultural research provides a tremendous return to our economy, generating economic growth and tax revenue through increased agricultural productivity. This return is estimated to be between 35% and 50% nationwide—and even greater in Oregon. Additionally, in terms of constant dollars, federal spending on agriculture research has declined over the last ten years while other non-defense research spending in such areas as health, space exploration, and the environment has increased. As an added assurance that these funds will be spent in the most efficient way possible, the conference report contains provisions which increase the accountability of these research projects, making them subject to competition, requiring more stakeholder input, peer and merit review, and greater collaboration amongst the research institutions involved. Further, the benefits of other important provisions contained in this bill, such as funding for crop insurance, rural development, and restoration of food stamps to certain legal immigrants, far outweigh the arguments against this legislation. I am especially pleased with the food stamp provision which allows the resources of private charitable groups, such as the Oregon Food Bank, to reach a wider spectrum of our communities. What better way to use these funds than to enhance our food production, feed our nation's hungry, and protect America's farmland?

Currently, some of the most important work in the area of agriculture research is being done in my state, where more than 140,000 jobs are tied to farm production, In just one example, research at Oregon State University facilities on wheat strains and diseases has resulted in an estimated $8 million in increased wheat productivity per year. Results of their studies are shared with other states like Idaho, Montana, Utah, Kansas, and Colorado, presented at national and international symposiums, published in scientific journals, and communicated through industry newsletters. Again, this is just one of the many valuable research projects undertaken in my state by OSU through this partnership of federal and state funds.

Agriculture in my state is diverse—reflecting the varied geography, soil, an climate types of Oregon's beautiful mountains, valleys, coastline, deserts, and forests. There really is no such thing as an average farmer in my state. He or she may be a large scale wheat grower, a small orchardist, a producer of high quality nursery plants, or a family farmer maintaining cranberry bogs. Despite the varied backgrounds of Oregon's farmers, all of them, and I think this would apply to farmers across the country as well, are working hard to maintain America's leadership in agricultural production despite unrelenting pressure from all sides—pressure to continue to produse the world's safest food supply while competing with imports that may be heavily subsidized, produced with pesticides illegal in the U.S., or even, as was widely reported in the media just yesterday, not even meeting our food safety standards.

For the small family farmer, who still exists in my state, this pressure is compounded by the struggle to maintain the way of life which fed our grandparents and their parents before them. Everyday they defend their farm, perhaps part of their family for generations, for encroaching development, inheritance taxes, and complicated and ever increasing governmental regulations. Breakthroughs brought about as a direct result of the research dollars we will be voting on today may mean that family farmers in Southern Oregon may be able to squeeze enough productivity out of their land to hold onto their farms for a few more seasons. Or it may mean that a grass seed farmer in the Willamette Valley can export more grass straw to Japan due to a quality assurance program. Or it may mean a farmer in the Columbia Basin can use fewer pesticides on pea plants due to new, more pest resistant strains or new growing techniques. For them, the components of this bill represent the American research and technological know-how that has kept them ahead of the curve—and hopefully, with your support today, will continue to do so into the future.

Let's give our farmers the tools they need to continue to produce a safe and bountiful food supply for our families. The conference report before us reaffirms the traditionally strong Congressional support for American agricultural leadership. This legislation enjoys overwhelming bipartisan support and I urge my colleagues to join me in casting a vote in favor of S. 1150.

Mr. KENNEDY. Mr. President, at long last, we are about to pass the Agricultural Research, Extension and Education Reform Act conference report. I support all its provisions, but I want to speak briefly about one of the most important—the restoration of food stamps for legal immigrants whose benefits were unfairly eliminated by the harsh 1996 welfare law. Although the amount in this conference report is less than half of the $2 billion proposed in the President's budget, it is at least a down-payment toward restoring food stamps to the nation's neediest legal immigrants.

The food stamp program was cut by $25 billion over 5 years in the 1996 law. That reduction was clearly unfair. According to the Department of Agriculture, at least 935,000 low-income legal immigrants lost their federal food stamps as a result of the 1996 welfare law. Nearly two-thirds are families with children. Two years later, we are finally remedying a significant part of this injustice.

This bill restores food stamps only to the most needy legal immigrants—refugees, the disabled, and some poor children. It helps only 250,000 out of the 935,000 immigrants cut off from the food stamp rolls. No one should think our work is done with the passage of this bill.

The effect of the food stamp terminations is not limited to immigrants. Their children born here are American citizens, but they too are facing sharp reductions in their food stamps. These children remain eligible for food stamps themselves, but the removal of their parents from the program means that, as a practical matter, the food stamp benefits for their families have been cut by 50 to 70 percent in many cases. 600,000 poor children who are American citizens live in families

where food stamp benefits have been unfairly lost. These children will not be helped by this bill.

Many elderly immigrants will also receive no assistance from this bill. We cannot forget about their plight. We can and must do more in the future. It is unconscionable that their benefits continue to be denied.

So I regard this legislation as an important step, but only a first step.

Mr. SPECTER. Mr. President, I am pleased to support the Agricultural Research, Extension, and Education Reform Act of 1998. This legislation provides funding for the federal crop insurance program, important agricultural research programs and the restoration of food stamp benefits to approximately 250,000 legal immigrants.

I have long been a strong supporter of federal nutrition programs that help to combat hunger. On November 24, 1997, Senator HARKIN and I sent a letter to Secretary of Agriculture Dan Glickman and Director of the Office of Management and Budget Franklin Raines, which was signed by forty-five of our Senate colleagues. Our letter urged the Administration to provide funding for food stamp benefits for some of the most vulnerable members of our society: legal immigrants who are children, elderly, or disabled.

As the Agricultural Research bill was sent to conference, I joined with four of my colleagues in a March 23, 1998 letter urging the conferees to provide relief to poor legal immigrants and refugees who previously were eligible but had lost federal food stamps under the 1996 welfare law. I am pleased that the final conference report restores these benefits. I also joined seventy of my colleagues in an April 24, 1998 letter urging that the conference report be brought to the floor for a vote as soon as possible.

Besides providing food stamp benefits to vulnerable legal immigrants, this bill also provides critical funding for the federal crop insurance program, which will allow affordable crop insurance to be offered to our nation's farmers. Agriculture is Pennsylvania's number one industry, and it is vital that we provide insurance to our farmers who work so hard to provide our country and the world with a stable food supply. The legislation will also provide $600 million over the next five years in funding for agricultural research programs, which are critical to our country's efforts to produce enough food for an ever-increasing world population.

The Agricultural Research, Extension, and Education Reform Act is an important piece of legislation, for legal immigrants, our nation's agricultural community, and the nation as a whole. I am therefore pleased to support this legislation.

Mr. BAUCUS. Mr. President, I rise today to join my colleagues in support of the Agricultural Research, Extension, and Education Reform Act of 1998. At long last, this important piece of legislation is before the Senate for consideration and passage of the Conference Report.

This Act is the result of more than a year of hard work and can boast broad bipartisan support. By providing $1.7 billion in agricultural research and extension activities at institutions of higher learning across the nation, this Act commits the U.S. government to supporting a strong future for agriculture in Montana and across the nation.

I would like to recognize four areas that affect Montana:

The Montana State University Agriculture Extension Service. We have one of the finest examples of an ag extension service in the country, centered at Montana State University in Bozeman, Montana. The College of Agriculture, led by Dean Tom McCoy, has produced numerous innovative projects worthy of recognition. Research at Montana State University has led to more pest-resistant, higher yielding varieties of barley and wheat. MSU scientists have improved the value of barley as a feedstock for cattle. And they are using the remarkable power of biotechnology to develop the answers to the ag challenges of the next century. The agriculture research bill provides the funding necessary for our scientists to carry out, continue and build upon their mission to serve our agriculture industry.

This bill will also continue funding for the good work demonstrated by our country extension agents. Their efforts on behalf of Montana's agricultural industry go above and beyond to provide resources that help our producers meet their bottom line, improve their yield, and enhance their competitiveness in the world marketplace.

Crop Insurance. Today, while we debate the passage of this bill, several counties in Montana are under severe drought and fire alert. Farmers have waited helplessly for rain while their crops wither and die. This is surely a make it or break it year due to low prices, a dry winter, and unfair grain dumping from our foreign competitors. The mere threat of crop insurers canceling policies is an obstacle that many producers simply cannot overcome. For that reason, I am pleased that this Act contains provisions to strengthen crop insurance—just when our producers need it most. Clearly, we must take the final step and pass this conference report.

Food Animal Residue Avoidance Database. I would like to thank Chairman LUGAR for including my bill, the Food Animal Residue Avoidance Database, more commonly known as FARAD, in this Act. I am pleased that the Conference report authorizes the Secretary of Agriculture to make three-year grants to colleges and universities to operate the FARAD program. FARAD is critical in our food-safety regime. Its database provides invaluable information about dangerous residues that affect our food supply. The FARAD program successfully links producers, veterinarians and the general public to an informational resource network that enables us to produce the safest food in the world.

Agricultural Research Service. I am most proud of the work conducted at the Agricultural Research Service stations in Sidney, Montana and Fort Keogh at Miles City. I strongly believe that their efforts are of tremendous importance to our food industry as well as our agricultural trade. The future of agriculture is in their very capable hands. They enjoy strong support from the agricultural community because they are a part of that community. Whenever I am in these towns, I stop by and visit these facilities because the people that work there, and the community that supports them, are very proud of the great work that they do for our ag industry. This bill will continue the critical work at these locations.

I would also like to recognize that this bill supports many other worthy projects, including the National Food Genome Strategy, an assistive technology program for farmers with disabilities, the important Fund for Rural America, Precision Agricultural research, and research of wheat and barley diseases caused by scab.

This Act is worthy of our immediate action. I urge my colleagues to pass the Agricultural Research, Extension, and Education Reform Act of 1998 and recommend that President Clinton sign it without hesitation.

Ms. SNOWE. Mr. President, I rise today in support of the Agricultural Research Conference Report. The bill, S. 1150 reauthorizes our agricultural research programs and provides $600 million in funding on a competitive grant basis for new and alternative uses of agricultural commodities and products, natural resources management, farm efficiency and profitability, agriculture biotechnology, and food safety, technology and nutrition.

This is good news for our scientists and the agriculture community in Maine. They know their chances of receiving more competitive research funding are excellent because they know they can compete head to head with agriculture researchers from all around the country. This bill gives them that opportunity.

As the Chairman of the Committee is aware, I do have some concerns with provisions in this conference report that were not part of either the House or Senate passed bills. In addition to the food stamp provisions, which have been widely discussed on the floor today, I am concerned with addition of the research title of the Northern Forest Stewardship Act that was included in conference. I voted to recommit the report to the conference committee in hopes that these two provisions, which are unrelated to the important agricultural research, would be removed from the report. Since the vote to recommit failed, I will vote for the report, and

will continue to work with Chairman LUGAR to address my concerns.

I have been working with the Chairman and Subcommittee Chairman SANTORUM to obtain a field hearing in Maine on the Northern Forest Stewardship Act (NFSA) before any action was taken by the full Senate. I requested this hearing because many people in Maine are both interested and concerned with the potential impact of this bill on the economies of their rural communities.

I was dismayed, therefore, when I learned that the research title from the NFSA bill was included in the Agriculture Research conference report. Also the language inserted in the report does not include the provision which requires that a governor's request is required before federal assistance can be made available to the state. This language is fundamental because it involves an elected state official in the process, ensuring that the state controls its land use decisions. I will be working to restore the role of the states in making the request for federal assistance, and I thank the Chairman of the Agriculture Committee for his offer of assistance in this matter.

Historically, our state has been defined by our agriculture—from the natural resources of its extensive forests, to the potatoes crops of Aroostook County and to the Wild blueberries of the Down East area of Maine. The Wild lowbush blueberry is unique to Maine, and one of only three berries native to the U.S. that are utilized commercially.

Virtually all of the commercial U.S. lowbush blueberries are produced in our state, with 99 percent of the blueberries being processed and used as a nutritious ingredient in many food products throughout the country. The industry is concentrated in the Down East region of Maine, which is an economically depressed region that relies heavily on natural resource based jobs, such as those in the Wild blueberry industry.

An increase in competitive research grants funding will help to continue a series of research projects that target critical aspects of lowbush blueberry culture and processing challenges, and transferring research solutions to the growers and processors. Much of the research completed to date provides techniques for a sustainable approach to production with environmental benefits.

Research objectives include implementation of a research program that is designed to ensure a consistently productive, high quality, low input crop that is successfully marketed in the U.S. and worldwide, with ongoing projects for such as pesticide reduction/efficacy, pollination alternatives, effects and reduction of low temperature injury, micro nutrient fertility requirements, and fruit quality improvements.

The bill also funds the federal crop insurance program that will give a healthy measure of peace of mind to Maine's wild blueberry industry, who, until recently, could not participate in the program. This report will allow the wild blueberry industry to renew their contracts for crop insurance, giving them protection against an economically devastating total crop loss caused by circumstances beyond their control.

Research for the potato industry is being conducted on new chemical-resistant strains of late blight, now detected in virtually every major potato growing state, and the last blight fungus is quickly developing into the most serious threat to potato production in the United States. History reminds of us the great potato famine in Ireland in the last century caused by late blight, and today's research helps us to never again realize such an devastating experience.

In Maine, late blight has already resulted in millions of dollars in crop losses since 1993, which is not only a concern for our largest agriculture industry, but for potato states throughout the eastern U.S. since Maine is the primary source of seed potatoes for these states.

Comprehensive late blight Integrated Pest Management research programs through current grants and future competitive research grants offered in the bill before us today will continue to prevent a full-scale epidemic from occurring in our region. Needless to say, this is one initiative in which a modest federal investment will help prevent a very costly crop disaster.

The Hatch Act and the McIntire-Stennis Act are the cornerstones of the cooperative/federal/state research effort that has made the U.S. agriculture and forestry industries the world's leaders. Under these programs, and under broad federal guidelines, states can continue to further identify their local research priorities.

Additional competitive research grants for the McIntire-Stennis Program will provide continued funding to 62 universities nationwide, including the University of Maine, that conduct research, teaching, and extension programs in forestry and related natural resource areas. The research focuses on the biology of forest organisms, forest ecosystem health, management of forests for wood, and forest product development. Each dollar of McIntire-Stennis funding is now matched with five dollars from nonfederal sources for these university programs.

Wood utilization research contributes to research at six land-grant Regional Research Centers, including Maine. The work conducted at these universities specializes in the efficient use of wood resources, developing new structural applications for wood, exploiting wood chemical extractives for safer and less expensive alternatives to current pesticides, preservatives, and adhesives, and exploring the pharmacological properties of trees. Wood utilization research is particularly important to forest-based economies in rural areas. In Maine, the annual total contribution in forest products manufacturing is over $5 billion.

Mr. President, our agricultural communities, some of the best stewards of our land, produce the safest, the most nutritious and reasonably priced food products in the entire world. Furthering the competitive grants research system through the Agricultural Research bill before us will go a long way towards the continued improvement of our nation's bountiful harvests and the continued health and productivity of our nation's forests.

Mr. GRAMS. Mr. President, I rise in support of the Conference Report to accompany S. 1150, the Agricultural, Research, Extension, and Education Act of 1998. For the purposes of this debate, I will focus on only the research and federal crop insurance provisions contained in this conference report. These are two of the primary issues important to farmers and those involved in agriculture.

Among the important research provisions provided for in this conference report is funding for Fusarium Head Blight, or Scab, research. This disease has had a devastating impact on producers in Minnesota and North Dakota and has caused severe economic losses over the past five years. The conference report now before us is an important step in continuing the public/private partnership that has evolved as we attempt to find a scab-resistant variety of wheat.

Also contained within this report is funding for genome research. This is important in mapping specific traits of corn and other commodities. Isolating those traits which are resistant to drought and other natural enemies could maximize yields and enhance producer efficiency. The flexibility it provides to research is reason enough to pass this legislation in a timely manner.

However, some of my colleagues have expressed concern over the federal crop insurance provisions contained in this conference agreement. While I certainly understand their point, it is important that we look at the ''big picture.'' Currently, there is a budget shortfall in the program which jeopardizes the ability of farmers and agriculture lenders to make management decisions for the upcoming year. I have spoken with hundreds of individuals involved in agriculture who have urged me to support this funding fix, and I am confident they will be just as forthcoming as we explore options to provide producers with greater risk-management tools. It is important to remember that the conference report does not contain any major program reforms. It allows for five years of mandatory funding while market-orientated reforms are phased-in. Once the crop insurance budget issue is resolved, we can begin the process of achieving substantive reform of the federal crop insurance program.

Mr. President, we must design alternatives that encourage innovation and

competition among insurers with an eye towards moving crop insurance in the direction of privately developed policies. I have already begun this process with agriculture leaders in Minnesota. I look forward to working with Senator LUGAR and my colleagues in crafting a program which benefits all taxpayers, while providing farmers the opportunity to craft a risk-management policy that fits their operation.

I urge my colleagues to join me in supporting this important legislation and I look forward to its immediate passage.

Mr. CRAIG. Mr. President, I rise today in support of the Agricultural Research, Extension, and Education Reform Act of 1998. As a member of the Senate Committee on Agriculture, Nutrition, and Forestry, I have worked with Chairman LUGAR and the Committee for two years to see this Act crafted and passed. I am pleased that the Leader has allowed it to come to the floor and encourage my colleagues to support its adoption.

Mr. President, the bill reforms and reauthorizes discretionary agricultural research programs that play an important role in keeping our nation's farmers competitive in the ever expanding world market. These programs and extension activities have experienced dramatic returns—in the form of better land management, environmentally sound farm practices, increased crop yield, improved crop varieties, and countless other ways—and represent a sound investment in the future. The bill's reforms will ensure more collaboration and efficiency in federally funded research and provide for greater accountability to the American taxpayers.

The bill also provides $600 million over the next five years in mandatory funding to the Initiative for Future Agriculture and Food Systems. This new mandatory spending will provide $120 million per year on a competitive grant basis for six high priority mission areas: agricultural genome research; food safety, food technology, and human nutrition; new and alternative uses of agricultural commodities and products; agricultural biotechnology; natural resource management, including precision agriculture; and farm efficiency and profitability.

In addition, the bill addresses the immediate concerns facing all those who rely on federal crop insurance, provides for the Fund for Rural America, and funds food stamps for the elderly, disabled, and children of the nation's poorest immigrants.

Mr. President, more than just a reauthorization bill, the legislation before the Senate today is an investment in the future and represents our commitment to America's farm families. By providing the technical research and extension activities that help expand farm income, improve resource management, and develop new crop varieties, federally funded agricultural research assures that our nation will continue to lead the world in farm production and help bolster the stability of our rural areas.

I encourage all my colleagues to support its adoption.

Mr. DASCHLE. Mr. President, I want to express my strong support for the Conference Report on S. 1150, the Agricultural Research, Extension, and Education Reform Act of 1998, and to thank Senator LUGAR and Senator HARKIN for the tremendous effort they have devoted to this important legislation.

Immediate passage of the conference report is critical for agriculture research funding, crop insurance, and nutrition funding for legal immigrants. The legislation represents desperately needed investment in agricultural research, essential to the continuing production of safe, plentiful, diverse, and affordable food and fiber. Furthermore, failure to pass this legislation will result in massive reductions in crop insurance delivery around the country, especially in high risk areas such as the Northern Great Plains.

Not only will terminated policies expose farmers to tremendous risk of crop loss due to events beyond their control, such as weather, but without crop insurance, producers will not be able to take out operating loans essential to planting crops. This will hit young, beginning farmers hardest, which is terrible for agriculture—losing these young producers truly threatens the future of the industry.

When the last farm bill was passed, farmers nationwide were promised increased access to risk management tools. This promise was made in exchange for the elimination of a wide range of commodity and disaster programs that had, until then, provided producers some protection against the potentially devastating shocks that occur in agriculture.

Last year, the Dakotas were devastated by extended below freezing temperatures, winter storms that dumped record levels of snow, and spring flooding worse than anyone living had ever seen. Even with the benefit of crop insurance we lost hundreds of producers and farms that had been in families for over 100 years. I cannot imagine what would be left of the agriculture industry in South Dakota today had we not at least had the benefit of crop insurance last year.

The northeast region of South Dakota is currently experiencing severe flooding that is not likely to subside for some time. This is in an area that has been characterized by good farm land for as long as anyone can remember. No one could have anticipated that the farms in these counties and so many of the roads that connect them would be under water today. A strong and affordable crop insurance program will be critical to producers in this area who are struggling to stay in business. Without it, there would be an exodus from this part of my state, which would destroy the economy of the entire region. It is in all of our interest to provide our nation's agriculture producers with the means to insulate their businesses and the local economies of which they are an essential part against conditions like those we experienced statewide last year, and that our northeast corner is fighting now.

I also want to stress the tremendous importance of the research reauthorization in this conference report. We owe much of the credit for this country's agricultural success to our network of land grant institutions, state agriculture experiment stations, USDA's Agricultural Research Service, and hundreds of county extension offices. These entities work together in a wide range of ways to produce cutting-edge research and then convert it into improved practices and technology meaningful to producers. This report places increased emphasis on collaboration among institutions and disciplines, and encourages pursuit of goals benefiting more than one region or state.

The land grant university in my state, South Dakota State University, currently has a highly regarded record of strong interdisciplinary and multistate cooperative work. I am extremely proud of the fine research and extension SDSU produces, and I am pleased that this legislation will foster their efforts. It helps level the playing field for small schools competing for limited research funds, and it is sensitive to the relative importance of formula funds for institutions in agrarian states with low populations.

I am pleased that this legislation preserves existing programs that target emerging and critical issues such as the Fund for Rural America. The Fund for Rural America was designed to provide immediate, flexible, and applied research and support to people in rural areas who are adjusting to rapid changes in the agricultural sector since the last farm bill.

The Fund also promotes value-added processing, which is vital to successful rural economic development. Our rural communities must capture more of the revenue their locally produced commodities ultimately generate. Value-added processing keeps that revenue local, which will be critical to the future of those communities.

In conclusion, I cannot overemphasize the importance of this legislation and its prompt passage. If we are to maintain our place in the world as a leader in agriculture production and technology, we absolutely must invest in agriculture research today. If we are to have a vital and diverse agriculture sector in the future, we also must ensure producers have access to reliable and affordable risk management tools like the federal crop insurance program.

The overwhelming bipartisan support for the agriculture conference report is a tribute to the commitment Senator LUGAR and Senator HARKIN have made

to assuring passage of this critical legislation. I urge my colleagues to approve the report in its current form.

Mr. MCCAIN. Mr. President, I intend to vote for this conference agreement.

For the most part, the bill provides funding to address legitimate needs of farmers and the agriculture industry for crop insurance, research, and extension and education programs. I applaud the conferees for including provisions throughout the bill which establish competitive, merit-based, or peer-reviewed selection procedures for awarding grants and contracts and allocating funds for various programs.

The bill also requires most recipients of funds to contribute matching amounts from non-federal sources. It also broadens the scope of many established programs to require a national, regional, or multi-state focus or benefit.

While the bill contains language regarding the establishment or continuation of several specific programs, it does not require the Secretary of Agriculture to comply with the direction in the bill, in most cases. For example, the bill authorizes, but does not require, the Secretary of Agriculture to acquire and operate the National Swine Research Center in Ames, Iowa—an institution which has received earmarked funds in appropriations bills for as long as I can remember. I would hope that the Secretary would exercise the discretion provided in this bill and resist the temptation to expand the federal bureaucracy to include this wholly unnecessary swine research facility.

Let me also take a moment to express my support for the provisions in Title V of the bill that make food stamps available to certain categories of legal immigrants who may fall on hard times. These provisions simply restore eligibility for food stamps to certain categories of immigrants who were eligible for assistance prior to August 22, 1996, when sweeping welfare reform legislation was enacted. Only refugees and asylees, disabled and elderly immigrants, children of legal immigrants, certain Indians, and certain Hmong and Highland Laotians, all of whom had to be lawfully residing in the United States on August 22, 1996, are again eligible for food stamps.

In these times of economic prosperity, Americans can certainly afford to be compassionate to our most vulnerable immigrants. Last year, the Congress restored to these same categories of immigrants eligibility for Supplemental Security Income and Medicaid. Finally, it should be noted that the cost of providing assistance to an estimated 250,000 individuals is offset in its entirety by reductions in the administrative expenses of the food stamp program and other programs.

Again, I thank the conferees for including these many excellent provisions in this bill.

However, as usual, there are a number of glaring exceptions to the otherwise good-government approach taken by the conferees.

Mr. President, most disturbing among the objectionable provisions in this bill is Section 401, which establishes a new entitlement program, called the Initiative for Future Agricultural and Food Systems, which is funded at $120 million per year for five years. Although the grants under this new program will be competitively awarded and recipients must provide matching funds, I am concerned that the conferees would find it advisable to establish a brand new mandatory spending program without regard to its effect on other high-priority agriculture programs.

Clearly, this new entitlement is intended to bypass the spending caps that limit how much is spent on agriculture program grants in the annual appropriations process. It violates the spirit and intent of the budget process that has resulted, finally, in a projected federal budget surplus for this year.

Mr. President, I intend to take a very careful look at the appropriations bill for agriculture programs this year. If, as in previous years, another $100 million or more is allocated for the same programs that are to be funded under this new entitlement program, I will be offering an amendment to remove that duplicative funding from the appropriations bill. I hope to have my colleagues' support to prevent this effort to circumvent the budget prioritization process and essentially double the funding for these types of programs.

Other objectionable provisions in the bill establish new bureaucracies and boards to coordinate activities which should be within the capabilities of the existing Department of Agriculture bureaucracy. One such provision establishes a Thomas Jefferson Initiative for Crop Diversification, a program coordinated by a nonprofit center to coordinate cooperative research by public and private entities on new and nontraditional crops. Another is the provision authorizing a grant program for precision agriculture programs and establishing precision agriculture partnerships. Other provisions include the establishment of an Office of Pest Management Policy and a Food Safety Research Information Office, and a mandate to continue the operation of the Food Animal Residue Avoidance Database program.

Funding for these new programs is subject to future appropriations and participants are required to provide non-federal matching funds. However, the parameters and criteria specified in the bill will require new regulations and bureaucracies for implementation. These efforts have both monetary costs and potentially negative effects on other agriculture priorities.

Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that a list of objectionable provisions in the bill be printed in the RECORD.

There being no objection, the material was ordered to be printed in the RECORD, as follows:

OBJECTIONAL SPENDING PROVISIONS IN S. 1150, AGRICULTURAL RESEARCH, EXTENSION, AND EDUCATION REFORM ACT OF 1998

Section 241 requires the Secretary of Agriculture to establish an Agricultural Genome Initiative to study the genetic makeup of crops.

Section 242 directs the Secretary of Agriculture to study the control, management, and eradication of imported fire ants, and establishes high priority for 26 specific research and extension programs, including potato blight, ethanol, deer tick ecology, grain sorghum ergot, prickly pear, wood, wild pampas, sheep scrapie, and tomato spotted wilt.

Section 245 directs the Secretary of Agriculture to cede responsibility for awarding grants to develop an agriculture telecommunications network to a consortium called A*DEC, which is made up of private universities and land grant colleges and unspecified international members, with language specifying that grants are to be awarded competitively regardless of the grant seeker's membership in A*DEC.

Section 252 requires $60 million each year for five years to be transferred to the Fund for Rural America.

Section 401 establishes a new entitlement program, the Initiative for Future Agriculture and Food Systems, to provide agriculture research grants at a level of $120 million annually for five years.

Section 405 directs the Secretary of Agriculture to establish the Thomas Jefferson Initiative for Crop Diversification, to coordinate public and private research and promotion of new and non-traditional agricultural products.

Section 604 directs the Secretary of Agriculture to continue the operation of the Food Animal Residue Avoidance Database Program through a program of grants to colleges and universities.

Section 614 directs the Secretary of Agriculture to establish an Office of Pest Management Policy to coordinate pest research and use of management tools.

Section 615 orders the Secretary of Agriculture to establish a Food Safety Research Information Office at the National Agricultural Library, with the direction that the office sponsor a national conference on food safety research priorities within 120 days of enactment of the bill and every year thereafter for four years.

Mr. MCCAIN. Because of the inclusion of these low priority, unnecessary, and wasteful programs, I voted in favor of Senator GRAMM's motion to recommit the bill to conference so that these provisions could be addressed again and, hopefully, deleted from the bill or revised to prevent the waste of taxpayer dollars.

Unfortunately, the motion to recommit was defeated by a wide margin. However, since I believe the many positive aspects of this bill outweigh these onerous provisions, I intend to support the conference agreement.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Is there further debate on the conference report?

The Senator from Iowa.

Mr. HARKIN. Mr. President, let me just wrap up by again thanking Senators for the overwhelming vote that we just had. I think that vote will send

a clear signal to the House to move very rapidly on the bill. We will get it down to the President and hopefully get this important conference report signed in very short order.

I can just tell you, there will be a giant sigh of relief among the agriculture community from coast to coast and border to border as soon as this bill gets signed, because then we can get on to the business of getting our crop insurance policies renewed around the country and we can get on with the business of revamping, revising, and strengthening agricultural research throughout America. But the most important and most vital aspect of the bill in the immediate future is the Crop Insurance Program. Farmers will be assured right away that they will be able to continue their protection against disaster losses.

Mr. President, let me again compliment and thank my chairman, Senator LUGAR, first for his leadership on the ag research provisions of the bill. He has said many times that, entering the new century, we need to have a new approach, and new ways of doing our research in agriculture. He is absolutely right. I was happy and proud to support him in those efforts. It took quite a while to get the bill worked through the hearing processes, through negotiations in conference, getting all the issues worked out on research, but it was done, and we had good, bipartisan support.

I believe the chairman has fashioned an Ag research bill that is really going to help us move ahead in the next century in producing new kinds of crops, new products from and uses for crops, in biotechnology, in improving agricultural productivity and natural resource protection. So I believe we will see a whole new focus and revitalization of our agricultural research. It is long overdue, but this bill will move us in that direction.

I thank the chairman also for his leadership on crop insurance, in making sure that we addressed this need to provide that critical element of a safety net for farmers, because, as we all know, they need this crop insurance, both to cover disasters over which they have no control and also to make sure they have the collateral they need for obtaining financing for their farming operations. Farmers rely on crop insurance, and agricultural lenders rely on it.

So, this provision is going to be very, very meaningful to make sure that farmers, and we here in Congress, do not have to be worrying every single year how we will find funding to continue crop insurance—and whether in fact farmers will have crop insurance. That is going to be a great relief to our farming community all over America.

Finally, on the food stamp provisions, again, I thank the chairman for his great leadership in making sure we produced a sound bill and held together our coalition encompassing agricultural and nutrition matters.

I also thank all the staff who worked very hard for a long time, for well over a year now, to get us to this point: Randy Green, our staff director; and Dave Johnson, chief counsel; Ms. Terri Nintemann on the majority side; on the minority side, Dan Smith, Mark Halverson, Phil Schwab and Richard Bender. There are a number of other staff. These are our leaders. They did a great job of pulling this bill together, keeping us on course and making sure we got to conference and got it all wrapped up. We are very blessed with a very good and very capable staff. I thank them for all the long hours and hard work they put in.

Mr. President, I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Indiana.

Mr. LUGAR. Mr. President, the ranking member, Senator HARKIN, was characteristically gracious and generous, and I appreciate his comments. I want to tell him how much I have appreciated working with him and with all of our colleagues on what I believe is a monumental advance for not only American agriculture, but for feeding the world in the next 50 years, as well as the assurance of our farmers immediately in crop insurance and humane measures with regard to nutrition programs.

I simply mention, Mr. President, that Dave Johnson and Terri Nintemann have been mentioned. Of course, our distinguished Randy Green, who does so much on the majority side in likewise guiding all of the committee staff efforts. But I also will mention Marcia Asquith, Beth Johnson, Andy Morton, Michael Knipe, Bob Sturm, Debbie Schwertner, Carol Dubard, Kate Wallem, Kathryn Boots, Chris Salisbury, Danny Spellacy, Terri Snow, Whitney Mueller, and Jennifer Cutshall, because this has been a 2-year effort on the part of all of these individuals and they have contributed highly.

I have consulted with the distinguished majority leader, TRENT LOTT, and with the distinguished ranking member, TOM HARKIN, and it will be our request that there be a final rollcall vote. I alert colleagues that that will be coming, hopefully soon.

I appreciate very much the leader working with us to make this time possible and this opportunity to debate. I mention specifically the importance of the contribution of Senator GRAMM, who is a member of our committee, who argued well a point of view that did not prevail but, at the same time, sharpened the focus of all of us on those things we believe are important in this legislation.

Finally, I mention Senator DOMENICI, who had only a very small speech but an important one with regard to caps and entitlements in the budget and overall considerations. We are mindful of what he had to say and grateful for his support ultimately of our effort.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Mr. GORTON). Is there further debate?

Mr. LUGAR. I ask for the yeas and nays on the conference report.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Is there a sufficient second?

There is a sufficient second.

The yeas and nays were ordered.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Is there further debate on the conference report? If not, the question is on agreeing to the conference report. The yeas and nays have been ordered. The clerk will call the roll.

The assistant legislative clerk called the roll.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Are there any other Senators in the Chamber desiring to vote?

The result was announced—yeas 92, nays 8, as follows:

[Rollcall Vote No. 129 Leg.]

YEAS—92

Abraham	Durbin	Lott
Akaka	Enzi	Lugar
Allard	Faircloth	Mack
Ashcroft	Feingold	McCain
Baucus	Feinstein	McConnell
Bennett	Ford	Mikulski
Biden	Frist	Moseley-Braun
Bingaman	Glenn	Moynihan
Bond	Gorton	Murkowski
Boxer	Graham	Murray
Breaux	Grams	Reed
Brownback	Grassley	Reid
Bryan	Hagel	Robb
Bumpers	Harkin	Roberts
Burns	Hatch	Rockefeller
Byrd	Hollings	Roth
Campbell	Hutchinson	Santorum
Chafee	Hutchison	Sarbanes
Cleland	Inouye	Shelby
Coats	Jeffords	Smith (OR)
Cochran	Johnson	Snowe
Collins	Kempthorne	Specter
Conrad	Kennedy	Stevens
Coverdell	Kerrey	Thomas
Craig	Kerry	Thompson
D'Amato	Kohl	Thurmond
Daschle	Landrieu	Torricelli
DeWine	Lautenberg	Warner
Dodd	Leahy	Wellstone
Domenici	Levin	Wyden
Dorgan	Lieberman	

NAYS—8

Gramm	Inhofe	Sessions
Gregg	Kyl	Smith (NH)
Helms	Nickles	

The conference report was agreed to.

Mr. HARKIN addressed the Chair.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Iowa.

Mr. HARKIN. Mr. President, again I thank all Senators for their strong vote in support of this legislation. Hopefully now we can get it to the President, and get his signature, and again reassure farmers all over the country that they will be able to renew their crop insurance programs for next year.

INDIA'S NUCLEAR TESTS

Mr. HARKIN. Mr. President, I understand that the Senate is not on any legislation right now. I would like to take just a few minutes of the Senate's time to talk about the disturbing events that happened in South Asia yesterday.

Mr. President, to paraphrase a speech that President Roosevelt gave 57 years ago in the House Chamber, yesterday is a day that will live in infamy, for the Nation of India. At a time when world