

One of the items which drew the attention of the President was a provision in the House bill that placed a limitation on the Food and Drug Administration's funding for any testing, development, or approval of the drug RU-486, a chemical used to induce an abortion. Leaving for a moment the argument that science is better left to scientists than politicians, the inclusion of the abortion debate in the agriculture appropriations bill was a most unfortunate attempt to drag this bill down with one of the most divisive and politically charged issues of our time. I am very pleased to report that the Senate conferees made it crystal clear that the Senate was not going to allow the issue of abortion to infect the agriculture appropriations bill with the same paralysis that has inflicted other subcommittees. If the Senate had not held firm, a very bad precedent would have been set and all agriculture appropriations bills in the future would become the venue for, and be held hostage by, an issue best reserved for other forums.

The other item of Presidential disapproval is tied to the levels of assistance for farmers and ranchers who are facing the most pressing financial times in recent years, maybe ever. It is on this point that I had to part with my friend Senator COCHRAN and express an opinion that our measure falls short of meeting current needs.

The conference report includes provisions put forward by the majority party that strives to bring relief to farmers and ranchers who are suffering from lost crops and low prices. However, my concern is with the manner in which the assistance is to be provided. In order to help farmers suffering from low prices, the conference report would simply allow for additional "Freedom to Farm" payments to go to all producers who hold a Agricultural Market Transition Act contract. The fallacy with this approach is that it does not target the additional funds to people who are suffering from either crop failure or fallen prices. Instead, it makes funds available to landlords who may have received cash rent for their lands, suffered no loss at all, and in many instances never even faced a risk of loss in the first place.

We have to recognize that many, though not all, farmers across America are suffering. Most are suffering from losses this year, but some from losses over several years. Some farmers have a crop to harvest, but low prices preclude any chance of a profit. The purpose of the Democratic alternative for disaster assistance is to make sure the relief payments go to those in need.

I have heard from farmers in my State who have lost everything this year. They tell me that this year is worse than the crop failures of 1980, which was the worst year since the Great Depression. The Democratic alternative provides more relief, 100 percent more in fact, for farmers in my State and I feel we should not turn our

backs on the one segment of the national economy that has not been surging into double digit profits on Wall Street. The President has indicated he will veto this bill if additional farm relief is not added. Congress needs to act swiftly to amend the shortfall in this bill and send to the President a package that truly meets the needs of farmers and ranchers.

Mr. President, this brings me to the close of my last annual agriculture appropriations bill on the floor of the Senate. I want to once more thank my distinguished colleague, Senator COCHRAN, for his years of friendship on and off this subcommittee. I also want to thank all other members for their cooperation over the years.

Mr. President, I say in closing that this is a very complex matter, this matter of disaster relief. The only disagreement on this side and the other side of the aisle is over the disaster provisions. As I say, they are both fairly complicated, and I am hoping that if the President vetoes the bill, as he has promised to do, we will be able to work out something—maybe not everything the President wanted, maybe more than others wanted—and that we will be able to reach a compromise that will actually take care of farmers.

My fear is that, this being what I consider probably the worst year in the history for agriculture since the Great Depression, that the proposal in the bill is not adequate to save an awful lot of farmers who deserve saving. So I am hoping if the President does veto the bill, we can come back and hammer out an agreement that will save a lot more farmers.

I yield the remainder of my time. Mr. COCHRAN. Mr. President, have the yeas and nays been ordered on the conference report?

The PRESIDING OFFICER. They have not been ordered.

Mr. COCHRAN. 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. All time has expired. The question is on agreeing to the conference report accompanying H.R. 4101. The yeas and nays have been ordered. The clerk will call the roll.

The bill clerk called the roll. Mr. FORD. I announce that the Senator from Ohio (Mr. GLENN) and the Senator from New York (Mr. MOYNIHAN) are necessarily absent.

I further announce that, if present and voting, the Senator from New York (Mr. MOYNIHAN) would vote "aye."

The result was announced—yeas 55, nays 43, as follows:

[Rollcall Vote No. 298 Leg.]

YEAS—55

Abraham	Boxer	Coats
Allard	Breaux	Cochran
Ashcroft	Brownback	Collins
Bennett	Campbell	Coverdell
Bond	Chafee	Craig

D'Amato	Hutchinson	Roberts
DeWine	Hutchison	Roth
Domenici	Inhofe	Sessions
Enzi	Jeffords	Shelby
Faircloth	Kempthorne	Smith (NH)
Feinstein	Landrieu	Smith (OR)
Frist	Leahy	Snowe
Gorton	Lott	Specter
Gramm	Lugar	Stevens
Grams	Mack	Thompson
Grassley	McCain	Thurmond
Hagel	McConnell	Warner
Hatch	Murkowski	
Helms	Nickles	

NAYS—43

Akaka	Ford	Mikulski
Baucus	Graham	Moseley-Braun
Biden	Gregg	Murray
Bingaman	Harkin	Reed
Bryan	Hollings	Reid
Bumpers	Inouye	Robb
Burns	Johnson	Rockefeller
Byrd	Kennedy	Santorum
Cleland	Kerrey	Sarbanes
Conrad	Kerry	Thomas
Daschle	Kohl	Torrice
Dodd	Kyl	Wellstone
Dorgan	Lautenberg	Wyden
Durbin	Levin	
Feingold	Lieberman	

NOT VOTING—2

Glenn Moynihan

The conference report was agreed to.

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

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

The motion to lay on the table was agreed to.

Mr. LOTT addressed the Chair.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The majority leader is recognized.

MORNING BUSINESS

Mr. LOTT. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that there now be a period for morning business until 4:15 p.m. today, with Senators permitted to speak therein for up to 5 minutes each.

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

DISTINGUISHED FLYING CROSS

Mr. THURMOND. Mr. President, I rise today to recognize former Navy and Marine Corps members who received the Distinguished Flying Cross in accordance with section 532 of the National Defense Authorization Act for Fiscal Year 1999, which waived time limitations for award of this decoration for specified persons. These awards were recommended by the Secretary of the Navy based upon requests from Members of Congress. These procedures were established by section 526 of the National Defense Authorization Act for Fiscal Year 1996 to resolve a dilemma under which deserving individuals were denied the recognition they deserved solely due to the passage of time. I am proud to have established a procedure that enables these distinguished veterans to receive the honors they earned. We are very proud of their dedicated service to our Nation.

Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that a list of all who were awarded the Distinguished Flying Cross be printed in the RECORD.