

from a juvenile home in April. He had been placed there in connection with juvenile drug and stolen vehicle charges. I will bet you that if you and I take the time to try to get this person's record, we will find a record as long as your arm and that person ought not to have been anywhere near that neighborhood to be able to fire a gun.

I will bet you that the record would justify, by any standard of any reasonable person, that this young man ought to have been in jail. But he was out on the streets with a gun. I don't have the record, but this is a guy who walked away from a halfway house or a juvenile home in April. Now it is almost the end of June.

Mr. LEAHY. If the Senator will yield further, since he has already read that, if he will look at some of the numbers of unclosed cases, or the number of times when leads are not followed up, the number of complaints I have received in my office, and people making complaints to police departments that have never been followed up, witnesses never sought—we spend an awful lot more in law enforcement in this city than they do in the whole States of North Dakota and Vermont. There are a lot more people, a lot more officers available. I know many of them do excellent work, and they put their lives on the line, and some lose their lives. But I also know there are a lot of areas in this city where drug selling is out in the open and a matter of public knowledge, and where illegal possession of weapons is a matter of open knowledge, and nothing happens until the spotlight of one of these terrible tragedies occurs.

So I appreciate the Senator's comments.

Mr. DORGAN. Let me make one final point. There is one other part of this, the case I have described, the Leo Gonzales Wright case.

I have always thought that in this country, in our criminal system, we ought to have two standards, one for violent offenders and one for non-violent offenders. In every State, violent offenders should never get time off for good behavior. Your prison cell ought to be your address until the day your sentence ends, period, no time off. Leo Gonzales Wright earned nearly 5 years of time off for good behavior despite 33 violations in prison for assault, weapons, and drugs—5 years off for good behavior. He should not have been on the streets.

I have a bill that is simple. I have never been able to get it passed. It says this: If any jurisdiction in this country lets a violent offender out of prison early and that person commits a violent crime during the time they would have been serving a sentence, then the government—the city, county, or State that let him out—is responsible to the victim or the victim's family and doesn't have immunity from a lawsuit. This bill would force them make a calculation before sending a violent offender back to the street as to, what

might this cost us in terms of what that offender might do to a potential victim? I would like to see Congress pass that at some point. I am going to continue to try.

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. COVERDELL. 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. COVERDELL. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent to speak in morning business for 5 minutes.

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

AGRICULTURE APPROPRIATIONS

Mr. COVERDELL. Mr. President, there is no community in America that is suffering more difficulty today than rural America in agribusiness. My State is a very large agriculture-based State, and ever since I have been in the Senate, we have been struggling with drought, flood, low commodity prices—you name it. It has been very unsettling to families that have been in agribusiness for over a hundred years, that are facing very difficult personal decisions about their ability to stay in business.

Now, to be candid, by now we should have passed S. 1233, a \$60.7 billion budget authority for agriculture, rural development, and nutrition programs. The bill contains provisions for food stamps, child nutrition, payments to the Federal Crop Insurance Program, Commodity Credit Corporation, and discretionary spending for agricultural purposes. It is the people's business because agriculture is the cornerstone of our national security, our quality of life, and our economy. In our State, agriculture is one-third of the economy, and across the Nation it approaches 30 percent.

We are stalled for political purposes. We ought to be doing the Nation's business. We ought to be proceeding with this agriculture bill. This is not the time to have a debate between two very different views about how to deal with the Patients' Bill of Rights. I am stunned that those on the other side of the aisle would choose agriculture—which, as I said, is so terribly stressed—and use that as a vehicle to try to create a political debate in the Senate. I have letters from our school of agriculture, I have documentation of the massive losses that have occurred in agriculture in our State, and we look to this legislation to be a part of the relief, a part of stabilizing agriculture in our State.

Last year alone, we lost \$700 million in agriculture interests in the State of Georgia. I will tell you what this reminds me of. It is an uncaring kind of way of dealing with this legislation. It

reminds me of the way the administration handled disaster relief. In the omnibus bill of 1998, we gave the Department of Agriculture \$3 billion for disaster payments, and October went by, and November went by, December, January, February, March, April, May, and June; and finally, 9 months later, we got disaster payments into the hands of people who have long since passed financing requirements and planning decisions and the like. And here we are once again trying to deal with this critical bill, and we have basically a political filibuster underway that can do nothing but add to more anxiety and worry in this very important economic sector of our country dealing with thousands upon thousands of families every day.

We ought to be on with the business of getting this agricultural appropriations bill handled. We will find the right time to handle these other issues. But right now, it is time for the people's business, and it happens to be a group of people who are in deep trouble in America.

I yield the floor.

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.

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

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

AGRICULTURE, RURAL DEVELOPMENT, FOOD AND DRUG ADMINISTRATION—Resumed

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Under the previous order, the clerk will report the bill.

The legislative clerk read as follows:

A bill (S. 1233) making appropriations for Agriculture, Rural Development, Food and Drug Administration, and Related Agencies programs for the fiscal year ending September 30, 2000, and for other purposes.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from California.

AMENDMENT NO. 737

(Purpose: To prohibit arbitrary limitations or conditions for the provision of services and to ensure that medical decisions are not made without the best available evidence or information)

Mrs. FEINSTEIN. Mr. President, I send an amendment to the desk.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will report.

The assistant legislative clerk read as follows:

The Senator from California (Mrs. FEINSTEIN) proposes an amendment numbered 737.

Mrs. FEINSTEIN. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that reading of the amendment be dispensed with.

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

(The text of the amendment is printed in today's RECORD under "Amendments Submitted.")