

been, as I described him in the caucus, indefatigable in his efforts to move this through. He and I and the Senator from New Jersey, Mr. TORRICELLI, and the Senator from Iowa, Mr. GRASSLEY, and the Senator from Utah, Mr. HATCH, have all worked to clear amendments or to set rollcalls on those we cannot clear.

I have urged Members to have short time agreements, and they have agreed to that. I think we have gone from some 300 or more potential amendments down to only a dozen or so, if that, that are remaining.

When you are dealing with a piece of legislation as complex as this, as important as this, when we are only 2 to 3 weeks before the end of this session—when we are only 2 to 3 weeks before the end of this session—I was hoping somebody would jump up and disagree on that “2 to 3 weeks” bit—or possibly a few days before the end of this session, it shows how well we have done.

But as I said earlier, before he came on the floor, I commend the Senator from Nevada, who has worked so hard to bring down those numbers on the amendments.

Frankly, I would like to see us wrap this up. I would like to go to Vermont.

Mr. REID. Will the Senator yield?

Mr. LEAHY. Yes, of course.

Mr. REID. I just talked to someone coming out of the conference. They said: What about this bankruptcy bill? I said: It is up to the majority whether or not we have a bankruptcy bill this year. We have worked very hard these past few days on these amendments. We need time on the floor to begin to offer some of these amendments.

As the Senator knows, we have maybe 8 or 9 amendments total out of 320, and we could have a bill. And the contentious amendments—on one that is causing us not to move forward, the Senator from New York, Mr. SCHUMER, has agreed to a half hour. That is all he wants. I just cannot imagine, if this bill is as important as I think it is and, as I have heard, the majority believes it is, why we cannot get a bill.

Does the Senator from Vermont understand why we are not moving forward?

Mr. LEAHY. I am at a loss to understand why we cannot.

I say to my friend from Nevada, yesterday morning—and I normally speak at about an octave higher than this; I am coming out of a bout of bronchitis—I came back to be here at 10 o'clock because we were going to be on the bill. Instead, we had morning business, I believe, until about 4 o'clock in the afternoon. That is 6 hours. That is what it would have taken to finish the bill, especially after the work of the Senator from Nevada, and others, in clearing out so many of the Republican and Democratic amendments to get them accepted or voted on.

I understand we are waiting for the other body to get the appropriations bill over here. I would think between now and normal suppertime today we

could finish this bill, if people want to. We are willing to move on our side. We are willing to have our amendments come up.

I see the distinguished Senator from California on the floor. She has waited some time. She has been here several days waiting with an amendment. She has indicated she is willing to go ahead with a relatively short period of time. The Senator from New York, Mr. SCHUMER, has said the same. We are ready to go, and I wish we would.

As I stated earlier, I would have liked very much to get this done. I would actually like very much to finish all the items we have. I wish we could have finished a couple weeks ago. I want to go to Vermont. I want to be with my family. It was snowing there yesterday, as I am sure it was in parts of the State of the distinguished Presiding Officer. I see the distinguished Senator from Maine on the floor. I expect it did in her State.

Mr. REID. It was 81 degrees in Las Vegas yesterday.

Mr. LEAHY. Eighty-one degrees in Las Vegas. How about snow in the mountains?

Mr. REID. Oh, there was snow in the mountains.

Mr. LEAHY. The Senator from Nevada has the good fortune as I do: We both represent two magnificent and beautiful States. He has the ability, however, in his State to go far greater ranges in climate, in temperature, over a distance of 100 miles or so than just about anywhere else in the country. We sometimes do those ranges in temperature and climate in one afternoon in Vermont, but we are not always happy about it.

I would like to see us get moving and get out of here. I see the distinguished Senator from California, who has asked me to yield to her. I am prepared to do that, but I also note that we will not start on any matter until the distinguished floor leader on the other side is on the floor. So I am at a bit of a quandary. I wanted to yield to the distinguished Senator from California with her amendment, but the distinguished floor leader on the Republican side is not here.

So I ask that the Senator from California withhold a bit. I see the Senator from—I may be a traffic cop here. I see my good friend and neighbor from New England, the Senator from Maine.

I ask, could she indicate to me just about how much time she may need?

Ms. COLLINS. It was my understanding that there was an agreement that at 2:15—and we are a little late in getting here—Senator SCHUMER and I were going to be able to introduce a bill as in morning business. We would need approximately 15 minutes, I would guess.

Mr. LEAHY. Then I ask, Mr. President, unanimous consent that after the distinguished Senator from Maine and the distinguished Senator from New York have been heard, it would then be in order to go to the distinguished Sen-

ator from California, Mrs. FEINSTEIN, so she could go forward with her amendment.

Ms. COLLINS. Reserving the right to object, I believe that—Mr. President, I suggest the absence of a quorum.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will call the roll.

The legislative assistant proceeded to call the roll.

Mr. LEAHY. 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. LEAHY. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent the Senator from Maine and the Senator from New York be recognized, and then the Senator from Wisconsin, Mr. KOHL, and the Senator from North Carolina, Mr. EDWARDS, be recognized for 5 minutes each after the Senator from Maine and the Senator from New York, and then the floor go to the Senator from California—now that I see the Senator from Iowa on the floor—so she could then go back to the bankruptcy bill.

Mr. REID. Reserving the right to object, it would be 25 minutes: 15 minutes and 5 for each of the two Senators as in morning business.

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

The Senator from Maine.

(The remarks of Ms. COLLINS and Mr. SCHUMER pertaining to the introduction of the legislation are printed in today's RECORD under "Statements on Introduced Bills and Joint Resolutions.")

MAKING FURTHER CONTINUING APPROPRIATIONS

Ms. COLLINS. Mr. President, it is my understanding that, under the previous order, the Senator from North Carolina will speak for 5 minutes.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Wisconsin has 5 minutes, and the Senator from North Carolina has 5 minutes.

Ms. COLLINS. Will the Senator withhold for a unanimous consent request?

Mr. EDWARDS. Yes.

Ms. COLLINS. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent the Senate proceed to the consideration of H.J. Res. 80, the continuing resolution, and that Senators KOHL and EDWARDS be recognized for up to 5 minutes each, and at the conclusion of their remarks, the resolution be read the third time, passed, and the motion to reconsider be laid upon the table.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Is there objection?

Without objection, it is so ordered.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from North Carolina is recognized.

Mr. EDWARDS. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that, in addition to the 5 minutes, I be granted an additional 3 minutes.

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

The Senator from North Carolina is recognized for 8 minutes.

Mr. EDWARDS. Mr. President, I have spoken before on the floor about the devastation created by Hurricane Floyd in my State of North Carolina. Let me update and speak briefly on that subject, particularly since we are in the process of a continuing resolution right now.

Everybody knows, because they have seen the pictures on television, what happened to my families in North Carolina as a result of Hurricane Floyd. We have two huge issues that have to be addressed before this Congress adjourns. One is housing. We have people in eastern North Carolina who don't have homes and have no prospect of having homes any time in the foreseeable future. We have to address this housing situation in North Carolina before we adjourn.

Second is our farmers. Our farmers were already in desperate straits long before Hurricane Floyd came through, and they have been totally devastated as a result of Hurricane Floyd. We have to address the needs of our farmers in eastern North Carolina before we leave Washington and before the Congress adjourns.

Let me say, first, that we have, in the last 24 hours, made progress on both fronts. First, on the issue of housing, we have, at least in principle, reached agreement that FEMA will have an additional \$215 million of authority—money already appropriated—for housing buyouts. Based on the information we presently have, that should get us well into next year in the process of participating in the housing buyouts and helping all of our folks who desperately need help. That is good progress, a move in the right direction. There is more work that needs to be done. But at least in terms of getting us through the winter, I think we have probably done what we need to do in terms of housing.

On the issue of our farmers and agriculture, there is at least in principle an agreement for approximately \$554 million of additional agricultural relief.

My concern has been and continues to be whether that money, No. 1, will go to North Carolina and North Carolina's farmers; and, No. 2, whether it addresses the very specific needs that our farmers have.

We are now in the process of working with everyone involved in these budget negotiations to ensure that both of those problems are addressed:

No. 1, to make sure that a substantial chunk of that money goes to North Carolina, and that additional money, to the extent it is needed for very specific purposes, can be appropriated and allocated to North Carolina's farmers to deal with the devastation created by Hurricane Floyd;

No. 2, to make sure at least a portion of the money that has already been appropriated goes to address the very specific needs our farmers have.

It is absolutely critical that before the Senate adjourns and before this Congress adjourns and leaves Washington these two problems be addressed.

I said it before; I will say it again. Our government serves no purpose if we are not available to meet the needs of our citizens who have been devastated by disasters—in this case, Hurricane Floyd. These are people who have worked their entire lives—in the case of our farmers, they have farmed the land for generations. They have paid their taxes. They have been good citizens. They have always lived up to their end of the bargain.

What they say to us now is: What is their government—because this is their government—going to do to deal with their needs in this time of greatest need in the wake of Hurricane Floyd and disasters created by Hurricane Floyd?

We have a responsibility to these people. We need to make sure their needs at least have been addressed through the winter. When we come back in the spring—we will be back in the spring, I assure my colleagues—we will be talking to our colleagues again about what additional needs we have because we will have additional long-term needs. This problem is not going to be solved in a month. It is not going to be solved in 3 months. This will take a period of years. When Congress comes back in the spring, there will be many additional needs that will have to be addressed.

But at a bare minimum, we need to ensure this Congress does not adjourn and people do not go home until we have made sure we have at least addressed the housing needs which will get us through the winter—I think we have made real progress in that direction—and, second, that we have gotten our farmers back up on their feet so they can be back in business in the spring in order for them to continue their farming operation. Those two problems have to be addressed before we leave.

Let me make clear what I have made clear before, which is my people are in trouble. They are hurting. They need help. Senator HELMS and I have worked together very diligently to try to get them the help they need in this time of crisis.

I want to make it clear once again that I intend to use whatever tool is available to me to ensure that my people get the help they need and the help they deserve.

This Congress and this Senate cannot go home and cannot leave Washington until we ensure that our people in North Carolina have a home to go to.

Thank you, Mr. President.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Wisconsin.

Mr. KOHL. Mr. President, I rise to explain briefly why I have held all legislation—including appropriations bills. It revolves around the issue of dairy pricing policies and dairy com-

pacts. One is a national milk pricing system. I will explain that first and explain my concerns about what is happening.

There is a national milk pricing policy which has been in effect for about 60 years. It was set up in a way that said the further away you live from Wisconsin, if you are a dairy farmer, the more you get for your milk. The government set that policy up to encourage the formation of a national dairy industry because transportation—particularly refrigeration—was not available at that time. They said the further you live from Wisconsin, the more you get for your milk. That was 60 years ago. That kind of policy no longer makes any sense.

In lieu of and in consideration of that, the Secretary of Agriculture and the USDA have come up with a new pricing system which does not eliminate the differential. It simply reduces it. Ninety-seven percent of the farmers in our country voted for it. It was set to be implemented on October 1st.

Now we find out that the Republicans are apparently intending to go back to the old pricing system. That is a disaster for our country. It certainly is a disaster for Midwestern farmers, and it doesn't reflect the reality of our present-day system.

Again, farmers in the Midwest and from Wisconsin are not asking for any advantage. They simply want to have the same opportunities for marketing their product in a competitive way as dairy farmers all over the country. It seems to me that is a reasonable request.

That is why we are so distressed at the impending outcome of what is going on in the House and will be here before the Senate very shortly.

The other one is the Northeast Dairy Compact. The Northeast Dairy Compact seeks to set arbitrarily, without consideration for market activities, a price for their dairy farmers to sell their milk to processors. That price is generally higher than market prices. It makes it very difficult, if not impossible, for anybody else in other parts of the country to market their milk or their milk products in the Northeast Dairy Compact States—the New England States—because when the prices are arbitrarily decided, the processors are then obviously likely to buy their milk from the local farmer rather than to buy it from somebody in another State.

In effect, it excludes the opportunity to market your product—in this case milk—in the New England States. That is not only a disaster for us in the Midwest; it clearly is terrible national economic policy.

If it is allowed again to be renewed at this time—it expired in October—we would be endorsing a national policy which for the first time in the history of our country excludes products from being sold without interference in all 50 States. We have never done that before. The genius and the success of the

American system is based on our ability—no matter where we live in this country—to manufacture and sell products and services anywhere else in this country without restrictions.

The Northeast Dairy Compact says, no; we are not going to do that anymore.

If we allow the Northeast to do that, then for what reason would we not allow other sections of the country to set up their own milk cartels, and for that matter, cartels on other products? If we allow it for the Northeast Dairy Compact, then I say unequivocally there is no justification for not allowing it elsewhere, not only on milk but on other products.

I ask my fellow Senators: Is this the way to run a country economically? Would any of us think we would endorse that kind of policy where States and regions can decide for themselves not to allow other products into those States or regions?

It doesn't make any sense. It is not the way we built the country.

We should not renew, therefore, the Northeast Dairy Compact at this time.

It was born 3 years ago in a back-room deal. There was no vote on the floor of the Senate. It was presented as part of a very large farm package. It was voted on in an affirmative way, but not by itself because it was part of a farm package 3 years ago. It is intended to be renewed again this year as part of a back-room deal without debate on the floor. It was debated twice all by itself. It lost on a straight up-and-down vote 3 or 4 years ago. The Northeast Dairy Compact lost on a cloture vote just several months ago.

I am very concerned about both things: The milk marketing pricing system, and the Northeast Dairy Compact. I am concerned enough to have a hold on all other legislation.

I hope very much that my fellow Senators can see the wisdom of my decision and support me in this effort not only to do what is right for Middle-Western dairy farmers but to do what is right for the people who live and work all over this country.

I thank the Chair. I yield the floor.

Mr. FEINGOLD. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent I be allowed to speak for 10 minutes on the subject of the dairy issue.

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

Mr. FEINGOLD. Mr. President, I thank my senior colleague, Senator KOHL, for his efforts to fight for Wisconsin dairy farmers. We have worked long and hard together on this. We are determined to see this through.

For 60 years, dairy farmers across America have been steadily driven out of business and disadvantaged by the current Federal dairy policy. It is hard to believe this, but in 1950 Wisconsin had over 143,000 dairy farms; after nearly 50 years of the current dairy policy, Wisconsin is left with only 23,000 dairy farms. Let me repeat that: from 143,000 to 23,000 during this time period.

Why would anyone seek to revive a dairy policy that has destroyed over 110,000 dairy farms in a single State? That is more than five out of six farms in the last half century. This devastation has not been limited to Wisconsin. Since 1950, America has lost over 3 million dairy farms, and this trend is accelerating. Since 1958, America has lost over half of its dairy producers.

Day after day, season after season, we are losing dairy farms at an alarming rate. While the operations disappear, we are seeing the emergence of larger dairy farms. The trend toward large dairy operations is mirrored in States throughout the Nation. The economic losses associated with the reduction of small farms goes well beyond the impact of individual farm families who have been forced off the land. It is much broader than that.

The loss of these farms has devastated rural communities where small, family-owned dairy farms are the key to economic stability.

As Senator KOHL has alluded to during the consideration of the 1996 farm bill, Congress did seek to make changes in the unjust Federal pricing system by phasing out the milk price support program and to finally reduce the inequities between the regions.

Unfortunately, that is not what happened at all. It didn't work. Because of the back-door politicking during the eleventh hour of the conference committee, America's dairy farmers were stuck with the devastatingly harmful Northeast Dairy Compact. Although it is painful and difficult for everyone, we in the Upper Midwest cannot stand for that or any change that further disadvantages our dairy farms—the ones who are left, not the tens of thousands who are gone but the less than 25,000 who remain. We are determined to keep them in business.

The Northeast Dairy Compact accentuates the current system's inequities by authorizing six Northeastern States to establish a minimum price for fluid milk, higher even than those established under the Federal milk marketing order, which are already pretty high and, frankly, much higher than our folks get. The compact not only allows the six States to set artificially high prices for producers but permits them to block the entry of lower-priced milk from competing States. Further distorting the market are subsidies given to processors in these six States to export their higher-priced milk to noncompact States.

Despite what some argue, the Northeast Dairy Compact has not even helped small Northeastern farmers. Since the Northeast first implemented the compact in 1997, small dairy farms in the Northeast, which are supposed to have been helped, have gone out of business at a rate of 41 percent higher than they had in the previous 2 years. It is not even working for the limited purposes it was supposed to serve.

Compacts often amount to a transfer of wealth to large farms by affording

large farms a per farm subsidy that is actually 20 times greater than the meager subsidy given to small farmers.

As my senior colleague has indicated, we need to support the moderate reforms of the USDA and reject the harmful dairy rider and let our dairy farmers get a fair price for their milk. I know as we go through the coming days this may mean substantial delays. We all want to go home to our States as early as possible. However, Senator KOHL and I are determined to do our best to fight for the remaining Wisconsin dairy farmers. Some of those steps may be necessary in order to achieve that goal.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Under the previous order, the joint resolution is considered read the third time and passed, and the motion to reconsider is laid upon the table.

The joint resolution (H.J. Res. 80) was considered read the third time and passed.

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

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will call the roll.

The legislative assistant 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.

BANKRUPTCY REFORM ACT OF 1999—Continued

AMENDMENT NO. 2756

(Purpose: To discourage indiscriminate extensions of credit and resulting consumer insolvency, and for other purposes)

Mrs. FEINSTEIN. Mr. President, I ask to call up amendment No. 2756.

Mr. GRASSLEY. Reserving the right to object, is there a unanimous consent agreement before the Senate?

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Mr. CRAPO). There is a unanimous consent agreement permitting the Senator from California to offer an amendment at this time.

Mr. GRASSLEY. I withdraw my reservation.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will report the amendment.

The legislative assistant read as follows:

The Senator from California [Mrs. FEINSTEIN], for herself and Mr. JEFFORDS, proposes an amendment numbered 2756.

Mrs. FEINSTEIN. I ask unanimous consent reading of the amendment be dispensed with.

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

The amendment is as follows:

At the appropriate place, insert the following:

SEC. ____ ENCOURAGING CREDITWORTHINESS.

(a) SENSE OF THE CONGRESS.—It is the sense of the Congress that—

(1) certain lenders may sometimes offer credit to consumers indiscriminately, without taking steps to ensure that consumers