and to making sure that we honor them by fulfilling our commitments to them.

I see one of the many veterans of World War II serving still in the Senate, and I will yield to my friend and neighbor, the distinguished senior Senator from New York.

Mr. MOYNIHAN. Mr. President, I had not intended to speak in this debate. This is the fourth time this amendment has come to the floor since I have been present. But the speeches, statements, the addresses by the Senator from Nebraska and the Senator from Virginia compel me simply to bear witness to them. There are 10 Members in the Senate today, 10 remaining persons, who were in uniform in World War II.

I was in the Navy—not heroically; and I was called up again briefly in Korea. I was part of that generation in which service to the Nation was so deeply honored, and lived with horror to see the disrespect shown those who answered the country's service in Vietnam, as they were asked to do. They were commanded to do so and they had taken an oath to obey.

What a thrilling thing it is to see, two such exemplars, men of heroism, achievement and spotless honor, come to this floor and speak as they have done. We take one oath which binds us today. Those who have been in the military have taken earlier oaths. Our oath is to uphold and defend the Constitution of the United States against all enemies, foreign and domestic—not ''foreign or,'' not just ''foreign.'' This was added over the course of the 19th century.

Surely, there would be no one, however unintentionally—and I say this as a member of the American Legion—who would propose that to debase the First Amendment to the Constitution meets the criteria of upholding and defending it.

Those two men have defended their nation in battle—one in the Navy, one in the Marines. I speak as one who was involved. I was in 20 years, altogether, before being discharged. I have to grant, I was not aware that I was discharged, but it turned up later in the file somewhere.

Our oath is solemn, and it is binding, and they—Senators ROBB and KERREY—stand there as witness to what it requires of us. If we cannot do this on this floor, what can we expect Americans to do on battlefields, in the skies, under the seas, and on the land in the years ahead?

Please, I say to all Senators, heed them and walk away from this trivializing of our most sacred trust. Defeat this amendment.

I thank the Chair.

Mr. DASCHLE. Will the majority leader allow me to make one brief comment before he propounds his unanimous-consent request?

Mr. LOTT. Yes.

Mr. DASCHLE. Mr. President, I came to the floor to thank the distinguished senior Senator from New York, but also my two colleagues, Senators ROBB and KERREY, for their extraordinary statements on the Senate floor. I hope the American people have had the opportunity to hear, and I hope the opportunity to read what they have said is made to schoolkids and others who have given a great deal of thought to our Constitution and the reason our Founding Fathers wrote as they did.

Their eloquence and their power and their extraordinary persuasiveness ought to be tonic for us all late in the day on an afternoon which has seen a good debate. I am hopeful people have had the opportunity to hear this contribution, above and beyond all of those made so far in this debate.

I yield the floor.

VETERANS BENEFITS

Mr. WELLSTONE. Mr. President, I wish to make one other point, which is not a constitutional argument, but it does have a lot to do with veterans. I say that we have spent some time on this, and we should; it is not an unimportant matter. But I also hope we will spend time on the floor of the Senate talking about a range of other very important issues that affect veterans. I am amazed that every time I meet with veterans in Minnesota, or in other parts of the country, I hear about the ways in which veterans fall between the cracks. We have a budget this year that is better than a flatline budget, but Senator KENNEDY is out here—a health care Senator—and he knows that better than anybody in the Senate.

The fact is, we have an aging veteran population like we have an aging population in general, and that is all for the good because people are living longer. We don't have any real way right now of helping those veterans the way we should. We passed the millennium bill, but the question is, Will the appropriations be there? We ought to be talking about the health care needs of veterans as well. We ought to be talking about how we are going to make sure those veterans can stay at home and live at home with dignity, with home-based health care.

I was at a medical center in Minneapolis, which is a real flagship hospital. It is not uncommon, when you go visit with veterans, you will see spouses who are there with their husbands, or maybe out in the waiting room or the lobby relaxing. You can talk to them for 3 minutes and realize they are scared to death about their husband going home. Maybe they had a knee or a hip operation, or maybe they have cancer. The spouses are mainly women. They don't know how they are going to take care of their husbands.

There isn't even any support for respite care. When are we going to talk about that issue? When are we going to talk about the number of veterans who are homeless? When are we going to talk about the number of them who are Vietnam vets, because they are struggling with posttraumatic syndrome and because they are struggling with substance abuse and they don't get the treatment? When are we going to be talking about this overall budget for veterans' health care, which is not a national-line budget?

There is an increase from the President this year—I am glad for that—but it doesn't really take into account all of the gaps and all of the investment we need to make. When are we going to do that?

I did not come to the floor to not speak to this amendment. I have spoken with as much as I can muster as to why I oppose it. But I also want to say—I want this to be part of my formal remarks because I don't think it is off the Record—colleagues, that I hope we will talk about the whole set of other issues that are very important, not only to veterans but to the American people.

I can assure you that I have worked with veterans to put together their independent budget. That is a whole coalition of veterans organizations. It is really shocking how many veterans fall between the cracks. We have a lot of work to do. We are talking about people's lives. It is no way to say thanks to veterans when we don't come through with the health care we promised them.

I want to make it clear that I hope we will soon focus on these issues as well. I hope the veterans community will—I know the veterans community will—focus on these issues as well. I spend an awful lot of time with veterans. I have a lot of meetings with veterans and with county veteran service officers. These issues come up over and over again.

THE FREEDOM TO FARM ACT

Mr. WELLSTONE. Mr. President, as much as I hate to recognize this, this is the fourth anniversary of the passage by the House and the Senate of the ''freedom to fail'' bill.

On this date in 1996, both houses of Congress approved a new farm bill, described then as ''the most sweeping change in agriculture since the Depression. It would get rid of government subsidies to farmers over the next seven years.''

The bill has made sweeping changes in agriculture—it has produced one of the worst economic crises that rural American has ever experienced. Thanks to the Freedom to Farm, or as I call it the Freedom to Fail Act, tens of thousands of farm families are in jeopardy of losing their livelihoods and life savings.

The Freedom to Farm bill is not saving tax payers money, in fact we have spent $19 billion more in the first 4 years of the 1996 farm bill than was supposed to be spent through the 7 year life of the law.

However, what has resulted is the precipitous loss of family farmers because this legislation has not provided

small and moderate sized farmers with a safety net. Instead payment loopholes have been inserted in legislation that has allowed the largest argibusiness corporations to receive the lions share of government support. This is unacceptable.

In my State of Minnesota, family farm income has decreased 43 percent since 1996 and more than 25 percent of the remaining farms may not cover expenses for 2000. Every month more and more family farmers are being forced to give up their life's work, their homes, and their communities.

The primary problem is price. The average price paid to producers for their crops has plummeted. Farmers suffer from a negative cash flow. In Minnesota it costs $2.50 to grow a bushel of corn. Today the price of a bushel of corn in Minnesota sells at around $1.75 at the local elevator.

The forecast for prices is gloom. USDA projections for commodity prices are expected to remain low.

USDA estimates that farm income will decline 17 percent this year if Congress does not act.

Wheat prices have dropped $3 in the past 2 years. In May, 1996, wheat was selling $5.75 per bushel. Today, wheat is at $2.78 per bushel. This is well below the cost of production. Farmers need at least $4 a bushel to break even.

Soybean prices will probably average under $5 a bushel. Livestock and dairy prices are also being impacted. Hog farmers still face market prices below their costs of production for the third straight year.

Family farmers have struggled to survive as the devastating results of the 1996 Farm bill, exacerbated by the lack of a reliable farm safety net.

In addition, merger after merger in the agriculture sector leaves producers wondering if they will be able to survive amidst the new giants of agribusiness.

As a direct result, rural bankers, implement dealers, and other small businesses that rely on farm families as their customers have been squeezed as cash flows have dropped. Rural families with shrunken incomes have less money to pay for quality health care coverage and adequate child care for their children. There is an affordable housing crunch as urgent as in our urban areas. And finally, in our rural communities there is a lack of good jobs at decent wages.

The crisis is real. You can see it in the numbers. You can see it in the eyes of the scores of farmers who are forced to sell off the substance of their history and their livelihood.

Many compare the current farm crisis to the 1980's. We all know there was a massive shake out of family farmers at that time. It changed the face of rural America. Many communities were devastated and have not recovered. I assume many use the comparison to remind us that the distressed farm economy in the '80's somehow survived, and so farmers will survive this one too. But the crisis we now face is much graver than in the 80's, and I fear that family farmers and rural America will not survive.

The tough farm economy may resemble the agricultural crisis of the 1980's, but there is a notable difference, and that difference is namely the passage of the Freedom to Farm Act. The Act ignored the fact that family farming is a business both uniquely important and uniquely affected by nonmarket forces.

The Freedom to Farm has become Freedom to Fail.

The 1996 Freedom to Farm bill was suppose to wean rural America from subsidies by introducing a market-driven agriculture. The bill gave farmers flexibility to plant what they wanted, and it was to make farmers able to adapt to a slump in a particular commodity by switching to a more profitable crop. But the switch in crops doesn't make a difference if they are all drastically low.

We are now witnessing many farmers planting soybeans. Why is that so many farmers are planting soybeans? It isn't because the market demands soybeans. It is because the Freedom to Fail bill capped the loan rate on soybeans higher than other commodities, and so farmers are planting soybeans to get a better rate than from corn or wheat. This is not market driven agriculture.

The Freedom to Farm bill is not saving tax payers money, as I've said we have spent $19 billion in the first 4 years of the bill than was supposed to be spent through the 6-year life of the law. However, what has resulted is the precipitous loss of family farmers because this legislation has not provided small and moderate sized farmers with an adequate safety net.

Instead payment loopholes have been inserted in legislation that has allowed the largest agribusiness corporations to receive the majority of government support. This unacceptable.

In order to ensure that family farmers remain a part of this country's landscape, need a new farm bill now. We simply cannot wait until reauthorization in 2002 for Congress to act.

Congress must act now to address the impact of plummeting farm incomes and the ripple effect it is having throughout rural communities and their economic base. Farmers are not going to survive if the only help they get from Washington are inadequate, unreliable, long delayed emergency aid bills that are distributed unfairly.

We need policies that equip family farmers to withstand the low prices and weather disasters that are fueling the current farm crisis, so their livelihood is not dependent on the whims of Congress.

This crisis is a crisis of price. Farmers want and deserve a fair price. Farmers do not want a handout. Yet, the 1996 Freedom to Farm bill stripped farmers of their marketing tools, and they have been left empty handed.

People cannot—they will not—be able to survive right now unless there is some income stabilization, unless there is some safety net, unless there is some way they can have some leverage to get a decent price in the marketplace. That is the missing piece of Freedom to Farm or Freedom to Fail. Flexibility is good. But that has not worked, and I see it every day in every community that I am in.

I'm not talking about AMTA payments, which is severance pay for our Nation's farmer heritage. Our Nation's family farmers want—they desperately need some leverage in the marketplace to get a fair price.

We need to lift the loan rate. The Freedom to Fail Act capped marketing loans at artificial levels so low that they fail to offer meaningful income support. The loan rates have left farmers vulnerable to the severe economic and weather related events of the past 3 years, resulting in devastating income losses.

Family farmers deserve a targeted, countercyclical loan rate that provides a meaningful level of income support when the market price falls below the loan rate, and a loan rate with a CUP rather than a CAP so it doesn't merely track prices when they fall. Lifting the loan rate would provide relief to farmers who need it and increase stability over the long term.

We also need to institute farmer owned reserve systems to give farmers the leverage they need in the marketplace. And conservation incentives to reward farmers who carry out conservation measures on their land.

And finally, unless we address the current trend of consolidation and vertical integration in corporate agriculture, nothing else we do to maintain the family size farms will succeed.

The farm share of profit in the food system has been declining for over 20 years. From 1994 to 1998, consumer prices have increased 3 percent while the prices paid to farmers for their products has plunged 36 percent. Likewise, the impact of price disparity is reinforced by reports of record profits among agribusinesses at the same time producers are suffering an economic depression.

In the past decade and a half, an explosion of mergers, acquisitions, and anti-competitive practices has raised concentration in American agriculture to record levels.

The top four pork packers have increased their market share from 36 percent to 57 percent. In fact, the world's largest pork producer and processor is getting bigger. Smithfield Foods is buying the Farmland Industries plant in Dubuque, Iowa. This deal should be complete by mid-May.

The top four beef packers have expanded their market share from 32 percent to 80 percent.

The top four flour millers have increased their market share from 40 percent to 62 percent.

The market share of the top four soybean crushers has jumped from 54 percent to 80 percent.

The top four turkey processors now control 42 percent of production.

Forty-nine percent of all chicken broilers are now slaughtered by the four largest firms. The top four firms control 67 percent of ethanol production.

The top four sheep, poultry, wet corn, and dry corn processors now control 73 percent, 55 percent, 74 percent, and 57 percent of the market, respectively.

The four largest grain buyers control nearly 40 percent of elevator facilities.

By conventional measures, none of these markets are really competitive. According to the economic literature, markets are no longer competitive if the top four firms control over 40 percent. In all the markets I just listed, the market share of the top four firms is 40 percent or more. So there really is no effective competition in these processing markets.

But now, with this explosion of mergers, acquisitions, joint ventures, marketing agreements, and anticompetitive behavior by the largest firms, these and other commodity markets are becoming more and more concentrated by the day.

Last week, the Senate passed a resolution 99–1, expressing our feelings on the 1996 Farm bill. It read,

> Congress is committed to giving this crisis in agriculture . . . its full attention by reforming rural policies to alleviate the farm price crisis, [and] ensuring competitive markets . . .

We are committed to having the debate about what kind of changes we could make that would provide some real help for family farmers, that would enable family farmers to get a decent price, that would provide some income for families, what kind of steps we could take that will put some free enterprise back into the food industry and deal with all the concentration of power.

Other Senators may have different ideas. I just want us to address this crisis. I don't want us to turn our gaze away from our family farmers. And I say to my colleagues, on this anniversary of the Freedom of Fail Bill, we need a new farm bill—and I will come to the floor, every opportunity I have to speak about the economic convulsion this legislation has caused in our rural communities.

I say to all of my colleagues who talked about how we were going to get the Government off the farm, we were going to lower the loan rate, and do this through deregulation and exports, that we have an honest to goodness depression in agriculture. We have the best people in the world working 20 hours a day who are being spit out of the economy. We have record low income, record low prices, broken dreams and lives, and broken families.

We had close to 3,000 farmers who came here last week. It was riveting. It was pouring rain, but they were down on The Mall. We had 500 farmers from Minnesota. Most all of them came by bus. They don't have money to come by jet. Many of them are older. They came with their children and grandchildren. They did not come here for the fun of it. They came here because the reality is, this will be their last bus trip. They are not going to be able to come to Washington to talk about agriculture. They are not going to be farming any longer. These family farmers are not going to be farming any longer unless we deal with the price crisis.

Right now, the price of what they get is way below the cost of production. Only if you have huge amounts of capital can you go on. People eating at the dinner table are doing fine. The IVVs, and the Con-Agras and big grain companies are doing fine. But our dairy and crop farmers and livestock producers are going under.

This is, unfortunately, again the anniversary, and we have to write a new farm bill.

That is my cry as a Senator from Minnesota from the heartland of America.

COMMITMENT TO THE CAPITOL HILL POLICE

Mr. WELLSTONE. Mr. President, I had a chance before the last break to talk about a commitment we made to Capitol Hill police.

We lost two fine officers. They were slain. We went to their service. We made it clear that we thanked them for the ways in which they protect the public, for the ways in which they protect us. We said we never want this to happen again.

We have posts where there is 1 officer with 20 and 30 and 40 people streaming in. We made the commitment that we were going to have at least two officers at every post.

I know there are Senators, such as Senator BENNETT, who are in key positions and who care deeply about this. Senator REID was a Capitol Hill policeman. There are others as well.

We have to get this appropriations bill right. We need to hire more officers. We need to make sure the money is there for overtime so we don't have one officer at each post.

This can't go on and on because if we don't do this, there will come a day when, unfortunately, someone will show up—someone who may be insane, someone who will take a life, or lives. One officer at a post and not two officers at a post is an untenable security situation.

My plea to colleagues is, we need to get this right for the public and for the Capitol Hill police. We made this commitment. I think Democrats and Republicans alike care about this.

I thank my colleagues.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Mr. L. CHAFEE). The Senator from Massachusetts.

VETERANS BENEFITS

Mr. KENNEDY. Mr. President, I thank my friend, the good Senator from Minnesota, for an excellent presentation and for reminding us about the needs of our veterans, particularly those who are having some service-connected disability. The problems he has talked about that have affected his region are duplicated in my region of the country as well.

I received a call just 2 days ago from a very good friend, a person who worked here in the Senate, about his uncle who is 86 years old and who was at Pearl Harbor. He was one of those wounded at Pearl Harbor, survived, and went on. He was wounded in the Second World War and is now destitute and trying to get into a service home just outside of Boston. The waiting line there is 2½ years.

I remember very well speaking to those who came back from the war. At that time, they all believed they were fortunate to make it back, and they weren't asking very much of this country. We responded in a way in which all of us have been enormously appreciative with the GI bill. Many of these men and women took 4 or 5 years out of their lives to serve their country and risked life and death. We provided the GI bill to them so they could get an education. They got an education and went on to contribute to their country. As the Senator knows, for every $1 invested in that education program, $8 was returned to the Treasury.

But there was not a member of the Armed Forces in any of the services who didn't believe in committing this Nation to taking care of those who served this country, who suffered and were wounded in the line of battle. They believed they should live in peace, respect, and dignity during their golden years. They are not, and it is a national disgrace.

We tried to join with others in this body. And I tell my good friend I will work with him closely, not on those relevant committees, but I think we have been here long enough to know we can make some difference in this area. I look forward to working with him. This is a problem that faces us in New England.

I see my colleague from Rhode Island chairing the Senate this afternoon. I am sure he and his colleague, Senator REID, have these kinds of cases as well. It is a matter of priority. We will join with him at a later time.

Mr. WELLSTONE. Mr. President, I thank my colleague.

NATIONAL RIGHT TO WORK ACT, S. 764

Mr. SESSIONS. Mr. President, I recently reviewed a video tape of some of the violence that occurred during the labor dispute between Overnite Trucking and the Teamsters. I am shocked and disturbed by the violent attacks that have been carried out against