

into Canada. Why? Because the exact same prescription drug sold in the United States, made by the same company, is sold in Canada for half the cost as in the United States. Why? Why are the prices lower? Because the Canadian Government is bargaining with the same American drug companies. They tell them: You cannot sell your drugs in the Canadian health care system unless you keep the prices under control. And the drug companies said: So be it, that is what we will do. Mexico is the same. Europe is the same.

If one looks at all these groups around the world, they come to realize that only Medicare recipients in America are paying the very highest prices for drugs. Everybody else gets a bargain.

Do my colleagues know who else gets a bargain when it comes to drugs? Your dog and your cat. Exactly the same drug sold for human usage is sold at a fraction of the cost to veterinarians—10 percent of the cost. I am a lot more concerned about a grandmother than I am about a great dane.

I would like to see us have a pricing policy that gives seniors a break instead of looking to overseas leaders and people in other countries who come up with a way to keep the prices of drugs under control.

What I have described in the last few minutes is a contour of a debate that should take place on the floor of the Senate. Those Senators who disagree with me ought to have a chance to stand up and explain their position. Senator ROBB of Virginia, who believes, as I do, that we need a prescription drug benefit, should be allowed to make his position known. We ought to debate it and vote on it. The Republican majority says no. When it comes to changes in the Tax Code, take it or leave it; marriage tax penalty or else.

The final point I will make, as I see my colleagues come to the floor to join me in speaking—Senator AKAKA from Hawaii will be speaking this morning—is the fact that the amendment by Senator SCHUMER of New York goes to the issue of expenses of college education. As I said earlier, the President is right. I believe we should give families trying to put kids through college a helping hand.

Senator SCHUMER, who occupies the desk to my left, wants to offer that amendment. He wants the Senate to go on record for or against the proposition that we ought to be giving a tax deduction for college education expenses. Quite honestly, that is a good idea for America to prepare the next generation to compete in the global economy so that working families have a chance to send their kids to the best schools, get the best education, and realize the American dream.

Is this worth a debate on the floor of the Senate? Is this worth a few minutes of our time? As I look across this empty Chamber, I ask: What is it Senators could be doing that is more important than considering the college

education expenses of our family members? It is worth the time, and it is worth the debate. I believe the Republican majority is wrong when they say we cannot and should not debate these amendments because we are too darn busy. I do not buy it. We are not too busy to focus on the problems about which American families really care.

I hope this cloture vote at noon is a vote that repudiates the Republican position and opens up this debate so we can deal with prescription drugs, so we can deal with reducing the national debt and strengthening Social Security and Medicare, and so we can provide a deduction for college education expenses. I hope we will have that opportunity this afternoon and for the remainder of the week. I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Hawaii.

Mr. AKAKA. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent to speak in morning business for 10 minutes.

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

Mr. AKAKA. I thank the Chair.

(The remarks of Mr. AKAKA pertaining to the introduction of S. 2478 are located in today's RECORD under "Statements on Introduced Bills and Joint Resolutions.")

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Mr. AL-LARD). The Senator's time has expired.

Mr. AKAKA. I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Under the previous order, the Senator from Wyoming, Mr. THOMAS, is recognized to speak for up to 15 minutes.

Ms. LANDRIEU. Mr. President, since I just want to make brief remarks, will the Senator indulge me so I can introduce a bill if I take about 2 minutes?

Mr. THOMAS. One and a half?

Ms. LANDRIEU. All right. One and a half.

Mr. THOMAS. Yes, that will be fine.

Ms. LANDRIEU. I thank the Senator.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Louisiana.

(The remarks of Ms. LANDRIEU pertaining to the introduction of S. 2479 are located in today's RECORD under "Statements on Introduced Bills and Joint Resolutions.")

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator's time has expired.

Ms. LANDRIEU. If I could have 30 more seconds.

TAKE OUR DAUGHTERS TO WORK DAY

Ms. LANDRIEU. Mr. President, today is a special day in America: Take Our Daughters To Work Day. The Senator from Wyoming and the Presiding Officer will recognize that there are many young girls, of all ages, working their way around the Capitol.

I have some special girls with me today: Jordan Willard, Katherine Elkins, Cara Klein, Jessica Harkness, Samantha Seiter, Kelsey Cook, Sadie Landrieu, Rachell Solley, Chelsea Niven, Caroline Hudson, and Frederica Wicker.

I welcome all of these girls to the Capitol today and express my best wishes to the millions of girls participating in Take Our Daughters To Work Day.

I yield back my time.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Wyoming.

MARRIAGE PENALTY

Mr. THOMAS. Mr. President, I am sure we welcome everyone for "Take Your Daughter to Work Day" here in Washington.

I will take a few minutes to talk about the marriage penalty tax bill that is before us. Speaking of daughters, this provision of the tax code makes it difficult for young families who have daughters to be treated fairly.

Before addressing the specifics of the bill before us, I must say that I am a little disappointed in the lack of cooperation this year on the floor. Each time we address an issue with a solution that is generally acceptable to most people, we find ourselves faced with all kinds of amendments, many of which have nothing to do with the subject we are seeking to address, designed entirely to create political wedge issues rather than solutions. I suppose that is customary, perhaps, in a Presidential election year, but it is too bad. It is too bad that each time we begin to talk about an issue that should be addressed by this Congress, and indeed is generally agreed to by most Members of the Senate, we find it being used to bring up issues that are not relevant, not a part of what is being discussed, but simply are used to delay, used as leverage, used to make an issue. I hope we can get by this resistance.

One of the items we will be addressing early next week is an education bill, a broad education bill, elementary and secondary education, one that most everyone in the country wants to see moved forward. Education is probably one of the principals issue with which all of us are concerned. Yet I predict that we will find next week all kinds of irrelevant amendments will be added to seek to confuse and delay the passage of legislation.

I hope that is not the case. I hope it is not the case with what I think is a very important issue, the marriage penalty. All of us are concerned about our tax system, concerned about how complex the tax code is. Certainly right after April 15, we are all very aware of how excessively complicated this system has become, designed to affect behavior as much as it is to collect revenue.

One of the things we ought to consider, as we seek to simplify taxes, is fairness. That is the situation we face today with regard to the marriage penalty. The Federal Government penalizes couples simply for being married. Two people earning this amount of money jointly, unmarried, become married and pay more taxes on the