

matter, but we want a time for the vote.

Is this your request?

Mr. MCCAIN. It is my request.

Mr. REID. I thought it was a different matter; sorry. I withdraw my objection.

Mr. SESSIONS. Mr. President, I object.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The objection is heard.

Mr. MCCAIN. Mr. President, before the Senator from Alabama leaves the floor, the Senator from Alabama should understand what he is doing.

This bill came out 2 weeks ago. This bill came out 2 weeks ago and there are relevant amendments that are in order. The Senator from Alabama is going to bear responsibility for our failure to act.

Mr. President, I quote to the Senator from Alabama what the Secretary of Transportation says:

More importantly, however, is expeditious action on comprehensive legislation that will strengthen NHTSA's ability to address life-threatening motor vehicle safety defects.

I tell the Senator from Alabama, if we don't act expeditiously, we will not address life-threatening motor vehicle safety defects.

The Senator from Alabama can have all the amendments he wants that are relevant, and he can have all the time he wants that is relevant. By blocking the bill, the Senator from Alabama assumes great responsibility, great responsibility. I hope he has a chance to talk to the relatives of those who have already been killed, and those who are going to be killed if this legislation is killed.

Again, I ask unanimous consent that the majority leader, in consultation with the Democrat leader, establish a date certain and a time certain for consideration of S. 3059, and only relevant amendments to the bill be in order.

For the benefit of my colleagues, that doesn't mean there is any time limit or any limits on amendments. An objection to this can only be viewed as obstructionism. I say again, expeditious action on comprehensive legislation will strengthen NHTSA's ability to address life-threatening motor vehicle safety defects.

I intend to come back to the floor in about 15 minutes and propound this unanimous consent agreement again, if there is an objection.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Is there objection?

Mr. SESSIONS. I object.

Will the Senator from Arizona yield?

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Nevada.

Mr. SESSIONS. I want to respond.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Nevada has the floor.

Mr. REID. How long does the Senator from Alabama desire to speak?

Mr. SESSIONS. Five minutes.

Mr. REID. The Senator from Montana has been on the floor for a long time and he wants 10 minutes; the Senator from Connecticut desires 10 min-

utes. I ask permission from the Senator from Montana to allow the Senator from Alabama to speak for 5 minutes, and I ask unanimous consent the speaking order be: the Senator from Alabama for 5 minutes; the Senator from Montana, 15 minutes; the Senator from Connecticut for 10 minutes, in that order; and following my having this consent granted, I ask that the Senators from Minnesota and from Kansas be allowed to speak for 1 minute.

Mr. BROWNBACK. At most to proffer a unanimous consent. Could we do that first?

I understand Senator DOMENICI seeks 20 minutes.

Mr. REID. I ask unanimous consent Senator DOMENICI speak for 20 minutes.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Is there an objection?

Mr. MCCAIN. Reserving the right to object, I will want to have 10 minutes following Senator DOMENICI for the purpose of propounding another unanimous consent request.

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

The Senator from Kansas.

Mr. BROWNBACK. This is a unanimous consent agreed to and worked out ad nauseam on both sides.

UNANIMOUS CONSENT REQUEST— H.R. 3244

Mr. BROWNBACK. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that at 9:30 a.m. on Wednesday the Senate proceed to the conference report to accompany H.R. 3244, the trafficking victims conference report and the conference report which has just passed the House, and be considered as having been read and considered under the following agreement for debate only: 2 hours equally divided between Senators BROWNBACK and WELLSTONE, or their designees; 3 hours under the control of the ranking member of the Judiciary committee; 1 hour under the control of Senator BIDEN; and 1 hour under the control of Senator HATCH.

I further ask consent that following the conclusion or yielding back of time, Senator THOMPSON be recognized to make a point of order against the conference report that the conference text, section 2001, regarding Aimee's law is not in the jurisdiction of the Foreign Relations committee and following the ruling by the Chair, Senator THOMPSON would appeal the Chair's ruling and that appeal be limited to the following: 1 hour under the control of Senator THOMPSON.

I further ask consent that following the use or yielding back of time, the vote relative to the appeal occur immediately on Wednesday, and if the Chair is not overturned, no other action occur and the Senate proceed to vote on adoption of the conference report, immediately, without any intervening action or debate.

Mr. LEAHY. Reserving the right to object, sometimes it is work to manu-

facture a time for a vote. I note, so there is not any confusion, and notwithstanding the fact that the conference report was sent over without people seeing it, I am perfectly happy to have the vote on this today. I am perfectly happy to go to a vote today on each of the aspects, so there will not be any question on that, and I understand that notwithstanding the fact that we can't get any other work done around here, the Republican leadership, which is their right, is going to take a few days off again, but I want to at least have this debate on the day we vote.

I commend the Senator from Kansas and the Senator from Minnesota for their work in getting us to this point. I do not object.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Alabama is recognized.

Mr. SESSIONS. I know the Senator from Arizona cares deeply about his legislation. He cares deeply about every legislative piece he pushes. I have some important legislation pending, too, and I haven't had time to debate them.

The Paul Coverdell Criminal Laboratory for Forensic bill will probably save more lives than this bill. However, I think his request is not unreasonable. I do believe the bill has problems. As a person who prosecuted for over 15 years, I do not believe in a continual blurring of the lines between what is criminal liability and civil liability.

We are talking about making crimes out of defective building of an automobile. I think we have to be careful about that. It has not gone through the Judiciary Committee. I have not had a chance to see it and I was very concerned about it. I indicated my concern to others.

As I have been briefed on this just 5 minutes ago, by my staff—they provided a memorandum which I have not had a chance to even read—I was prepared to go forward with the Senator's request and not object. However, I find that several people expected that I would be objecting who also wanted to object, and I felt I was obligated, due to that miscommunication, to file an objection.

Two hours from now I will not object if no one else does. I am prepared to debate these problems and see if we can cure these problems, but I do not feel it would be a collegial thing for me to do, when apparently it was thought that I would object, so that is why I object.

Mr. MCCAIN. Will the Senator yield to me just for a comment?

Mr. SESSIONS. I will.

Mr. MCCAIN. I thank the Senator from Alabama. I will be back in 2 hours. I want to assure him I understand those concerns, particularly on criminal sanctions. No one knows the situation better than the Senator from Alabama, who was a former attorney general of his State, who has more knowledge on those issues than I do. I want to work with the Senator from Alabama on that. That is why relevant

amendments will be in order. I just hope the Senator from Alabama will allow this to move forward when we propound it again.

Again, I understand very well the concerns he has. That is why the unanimous consent agreement calls for simply relevant amendments, with no time limit. I think the stark political reality around here, as the Senator from Alabama knows, is that we are not coming back in until Wednesday. If the Senator from Alabama and others who object just have numerous amendments, there is no way we are going to be able to get a bill passed and then into conference with the House and move forward. So I thank the Senator from Alabama for his consideration. I understand his concerns. I look forward very much to working with him.

I yield and I thank my colleague from Montana for his indulgence.

THE PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Montana is recognized.

COMMENDATION OF MONTANA WILDFIRE FIREFIGHTERS

Mr. BAUCUS. Mr. President, I rise today to talk about a matter that has impacted every inhabitant of the state of Montana: The wildfires of the past 2 months. The recent rain and snow have finally brought the fires in Montana under control, but many of the largest fires are still smoldering.

The Helena Independent Record Recently described the summer of 2000 as a:

Fire season marked by miracles and loss, heroism and heartache, smoky skies and blackened backyards, of evacuations, waiting, planning and prayer.

This photo showing two elk trying to escape the flames was taken on August 6th in the Bitterroot Valley by Forest Service firefighter John McColgan. On this particular day several forest fires converged near Sula, burning over 100,000 acres and destroying 10 homes. And this fire was just one of dozens burning across Montana.

Mr. President, it is not an exaggeration to say that these fires impacted every inhabitant of Montana. Even people in our cities, miles from the front lines, lived with a constant reminder of the conflagration burning about them.

As you can see in this photo of Helena, cities all across the region spent weeks under a cloud of smoke.

Clearly, it was one of the worst fire seasons we've seen in the last 100 years.

This is our cathedral, Saint Helena's Cathedral. You can see big smoke columns rising. The fact is, this is dramatically an understatement. I have asked my office to see if there are other photos which more accurately describe the situation in my State, and this is all we could come up with at the time. But this town, Helena, I might say, was so covered with smoke that my house—up just about 500, 600 feet from here—as I was looking across the back alley through the kitchen win-

dow, I could not even see across the alley. The whole city was just covered all the way down to ground level with smoke. That was the rule. That was the rule for all Montana cities, with the exception maybe of some of the eastern Montana cities. Most of them had just dense smoke impact for a long time. Clearly one of the worst fire seasons we have seen in over 100 years.

But, Mr. President, I didn't come to the floor to talk about how bad the fires were—that's already apparent. Nor did I come down here to talk about forest management policy and what we could have done to lessen the harmful impact of these fires—there will be plenty of time to address both topics in the weeks and months to come.

Mr. President, I am here today to commend the efforts of the thousands of people who pulled together to do battle with one of Mother Nature's most unforgiving forces.

From New Zealand's finest, most experienced firefighters to the Montana volunteers who ran Red Cross evacuee camps, the fires brought together some of the most courageous and hard-working individuals I have ever encountered.

Someone once told me that the true character of any community will reveal itself in the face of a natural disaster. I am proud of how Montanans and all of those who came to help rose to this challenge and persevered.

Of all the statistics—almost a million acres burned, over 300 structures lost, over \$200 million spent in battling fires—the one statistic I am most proud of is the number of human casualties—zero. That's right, in Montana not one life was lost during this disaster and no one was seriously injured.

I can't tell you how proud I am that safety remained the highest priority: of all of the firefighters who were in harm's way, the pilots who flew risky missions dumping water or retardant chemicals over the fiery landscape, and the thousands of people who were evacuated—no one was seriously injured. To me, that's one heck of a statistic.

That's why today, Mr. President, I want to extend a heartfelt "thank you," and I know I speak for every Montanan.

I want to thank firefighters from across the country, and around the world. Volunteer firefighters who left their regular jobs. The employees who let them go. Students who postponed attending classes. The families left at home and the co-workers who put in overtime to cover for those who traveled to the west.

I might say in this photo, in the center is James Lee Witt, flanked by two members of the Montana delegation, myself on the left, and Senator BURNS on the right. We are talking to a volunteer firefighter.

These are people who, when the fire comes, often are in an area next to a community—there are homes back in the woods and the volunteer fighters immediately rush out. They are the

first ones there. They are there without any pay. It is their community and they are fighting their hearts out. They are bleeding, almost literally—doing all they can to prevent that structure from burning, to do all they can to force the fire back. They are not paid. It is without compensation. The Forest Service and smokejumpers are; there are others who are not paid. The others are not. They are the first there and often the last to leave. They are just into it because it is their community.

I called James Lee Witt, pictured in the center of this photo. He very quickly got some regulations changed so volunteer firefighters could be reimbursed. Recently now they are receiving payment for the services they rendered. But the point is, people came from all over. Employers let volunteers leave work—it was lost work, but still the main job had to be done fighting these fires. Students postponed attending classes at the University of Montana, or other classes, families left at home, coworkers who put in overtime to cover those who traveled to the West.

The Red Cross and its hundreds of volunteers who were there when folks needed to see a friendly face. The various state agencies that worked diligently and expeditiously to implement emergency plans. The federal agencies that came forward to help put the fires out and begin to rebuild these communities.

Specifically, I'd like to commend FEMA, the Federal Emergency Management Agency for their efforts. On several occasions, they quickly released federal funds or waived personnel requirements. Cutting red tape so we could get the assistance we needed right away.

I especially thank FEMA Director James Lee Witt who spent countless hours working with me and other folks in Montana. When these fires started to blow in Montana, James Lee Witt said he was really booked up with other plans, but he dramatically changed his schedule so he could come to Montana. That made a huge difference in getting agencies to work together, and it cut so much of this red-tape. FEMA is still working on recovery efforts, and we very much appreciate all they have done and continue to do.

I also thank with the same enthusiasm the adjutant general of the Montana National Guard, Gene Prendergast, and all his troops. Gene really stepped up. This guy really cares. He mobilized his troops, who care just as much. He was also influential in working with Federal, State, and local agencies to coordinate plans and requests for Federal assistance. We owe Gene Prendergast a huge debt of gratitude.

At the high point of the fires, there were well over 12,000 people fighting blazes in western Montana. That includes Forest Service firefighters and