

bill occur at 2 p.m. today, with rule XII, paragraph 4, being waived.

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

#### MORNING BUSINESS

Mr. REID. Madam President, if the manager of the bill has nothing further, I ask unanimous consent that the Senate be in a period of morning business until 2 p.m. with Senators permitted to speak therein for a period of up to 10 minutes each.

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

#### THERE IS A NEED FOR IMPROVED AIRLINE SECURITY

Mr. NELSON of Florida. Madam President, as we are locked in this deadlock with the House of Representatives over the question of airport passenger screening security, basically the deadlock is the Senate has passed a bill 100-0 that would provide for federalizing the screening process of passengers; that is, attaches to the Justice Department that these would be Federal employees who have specific training in law enforcement so we can heighten the feeling of confidence of the American flying public that they will be safe when they get in an airliner to take their travel.

Why is this important? It is obvious the airline industry is one of the important economic components of our national economic engine, and as long as people are scared to get into a plane and fly, then we are not going to rev up that economic engine and get it functioning on all cylinders as is so necessary.

There are parts of this country that are certainly more affected than others by the diminution of airline travel. Clearly, the city of New York, the State of the Presiding Officer, is drastically affected; clearly, cities in my State, such as Miami, or Orlando, the No. 1 tourist destination in the world. I have talked to the owners of hotels—not the business hotels; the business hotels are doing OK, not good but OK—and the tourist-oriented hotels now have an occupancy rate in the range of 40 to 45 percent.

I talked to the owner of one hotel with 800 rooms; they shut down 600 rooms. It does not take a rocket scientist to recognize with that diminished revenue they will not be able to pay mortgage payments, taxes. They have already laid off a significant portion of their staff.

We understand what happens as the ripples run through the economy. What do we do? We want to give a feeling of confidence, of safety, to the American flying public. What better way to do that than for the public to know, when they go through that passenger screening process, in fact, if there are people trying to do dastardly things to them by sneaking through implements of destruction, they will get caught.

The fact is, recently they have not been caught. We heard this rather astounding story a couple of days ago about in the Chicago area a person had two knives, got on the plane, and had in their carryon luggage other implements of destruction. This is several weeks now, after September 11.

We read the story last week about the fellow sitting on the airplane, in flight, horrified to suddenly realize someone had given him a pistol as a present, and he forgot it was in his carry-on luggage. He had the presence of mind to call over the flight attendant in the midst of the flight to say what happened. The fact is, airline passenger security had failed again.

Does this engender confidence in the American flying public? Of course, it doesn't. We are undercutting the very thing we need to be doing for those desperately needing the airlines back in robust business again—the hotel operators, the service personnel, the gift stores in the hotels, the restaurants, the tourist destinations, and the multiplicity of industries and businesses, both large and small, that spawn from this wonderful, robust transportation network we have had in the skies.

Why am I saying this? It took 4 weeks in the Senate to pass this bill because people in this Chamber were filibustering it because they wanted that passenger security screening operation to continue as it is, privately contracted out. That is not going to cut it. Yet we were held up 4 weeks. By the time it got around to the final passage, there was no Senator who was going to vote against it. It was 100-0 in this Chamber. Now we are at loggerheads with the House of Representatives, which by a very narrow margin of one or two votes passed a highly partisan bill that says it is still going to be contracted out. They say: Don't worry; we will federally oversee the contracting. But if the whole Nation's economy hinges on getting the public to believe it is safe to get back into an airliner and fly, are we not wasting precious minutes every day we are at loggerheads with the House of Representatives? We have a 100-0 vote here; they have virtually a split vote of 215 each. Why not look at what is best for the country?

How many more newspaper stories do we have to read, as we have in the last couple of days, about the stun guns, the knives, and the box cutters getting through security. How much more do we have to read before it convinces us and convinces the body at the other end of this United States Capitol that it is time to put aside their philosophical positions, their partisan positions, and pass something into law so we can restore the confidence of the American people.

I share these thoughts after considering this very important intelligence legislation, all of which is very necessary to the security of this country, as is the airline security bill important to the security of this country, both

economically and as we take on the terrorists.

I yield the floor.

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

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Mr. EDWARDS). The clerk will call the roll.

The senior assistant bill clerk proceeded to call the roll.

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

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

#### UNANIMOUS CONSENT AGREEMENT

Mr. REID. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the previous order entered setting the vote at 2 p.m. be modified to allow the vote to occur at 1:55 p.m.

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

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

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will call the roll.

The legislative clerk proceeded to call the roll.

Mr. MURKOWSKI. 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. MURKOWSKI. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that I may be allowed to speak as in morning business for about 20 minutes.

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

#### ENERGY POLICY

Mr. MURKOWSKI. Mr. President, I do not think there is any question about the condition of this country. We are clearly a nation at war. As we look at the instability, the uncertainty of regions of the world, regions where many of the nations that want to destroy Israel and the U.S. reside, the reality is these particular areas of the world are ones on which we are growing more dependent all the time.

It is no secret to the occupant of the chair that we are now 57 percent dependent on imported oil. However, during the 1970s, we were about 34 percent dependent on oil. Some remember the inconvenience of the gas lines around the block. This was at a time of conflict in the Mideast, the Yom Kippur War. Americans were outraged. They were indignant. How could it possibly happen in our Nation that we should be so inconvenienced?

So there we were, in the 1970s, 33 percent dependent; today we 57 percent dependent, and the Department of Energy indicates by the year 2010 we are going to be somewhere in the area of 66 percent dependent.

We are, in my opinion, held hostage by the same interests that seek to destroy and uproot Israel. Through our energy policies of dependence, we have