

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

AMENDMENT NO. 2719

Mr. BAUCUS. Mr. President, I ask Senator HARKIN be allowed to call up his amendment at this time.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection, it is so ordered. The amendment is once again pending.

The Senator from Iowa.

Mr. HARKIN. Parliamentary inquiry: I want to make sure what the business is before the Senate.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Amendment No. 2719.

Mr. HARKIN. That is the amendment which this Senator offered yesterday; is that correct?

The PRESIDING OFFICER. It was offered by Senator REID on behalf of the Senator from Iowa.

Mr. REID. Mr. President, if the Senator will withhold just for one brief comment, the minority did not have a manager here. This has been cleared. The unanimous consent we just got has been cleared with Senator GRASSLEY. I had also talked to those—I thought—on the other side who knew what we were doing.

If the Senator will withhold proceeding until we make sure someone, a manager on the other side, is here because we don't want to take advantage of them because we got a unanimous consent agreement when no one was on the floor. If the Senator will withhold, the staff has gone to seek someone on the other side.

Mr. HARKIN. I withhold.

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

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will call the roll.

The assistant legislative clerk proceeded to call the roll.

Mrs. CARNAHAN. 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 President, I ask unanimous consent that the order for the quorum call be rescinded.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 REQUEST— S. 1630

Mrs. CARNAHAN. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the Senate proceed to the immediate consideration of Calendar No. 218, S. 1630; that the bill be read three times and passed, and the motion to reconsider be laid upon the table with no intervening action.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Is there objection?

Mr. CRAIG. Mr. President, on behalf of the Republican leader, I object.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Objection is heard.

Mrs. CARNAHAN. Mr. President, I am disappointed to hear objection to passing a bipartisan bill to help family farmers. We spent a great deal of time last year trying to pass a farm bill. I supported that effort. I support reviving that effort again this year.

The legislation that I am trying to pass today is also aimed at helping ail-

ing family farmers. The bill would extend chapter 12 of the bankruptcy code for 6 additional months. Chapter 12 offers expedited bankruptcy procedures for family farmers in an effort to accommodate their special needs. It was first enacted in 1986. It has been extended several times since then—most recently earlier this year.

The provisions of chapter 12 allow family farmers to reorganize their debts as opposed to liquidating their assets. These provisions can be invaluable to farmers struggling to stay in business during difficult times. Unfortunately, chapter 12 expired on October 1 last year.

My bill seeks to extend these provisions for six additional months and to reinstate them retroactively to the date when they expired. Retroactivity will ensure that there are no gaps in availability of these procedures. I hope this will be the last extension that is necessary.

The larger bankruptcy reform bill that is currently pending before a House-Senate conference committee includes a permanent extension of chapter 12. Nevertheless, American family farmers should not have to wait for us to complete our work on the bankruptcy reform bill. The very least we can do to assist farmers now is to reenact these noncontroversial procedures. That is why I am so puzzled by this anonymous objection.

Legislation extending these provisions passed the House of Representatives by a vote of 408 to 2 last year and subsequently passed the Senate by unanimous consent. The Judiciary Committee unanimously reported the bill I am seeking to pass today on a voice vote. Furthermore, the bill has several bipartisan cosponsors, including my colleague from Missouri, Senator KIT BOND; the chairman of the Judiciary Committee, Senator LEAHY; and the lead sponsor of the Senate bankruptcy reform bill, Senator GRASSLEY.

I urge any Senator who has any concern about this bill to speak with me. I will be more than happy to work to address any issues my colleagues may have in an effort to secure expedited passage of this bill.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Iowa.

HOPE FOR CHILDREN ACT— Continued

AMENDMENT NO. 2719

Mr. HARKIN. Mr. President, as I understand it, the pending business before the floor is amendment No. 2719, offered yesterday by Senator REID on this Senator's behalf. I rise to speak for a few minutes on that amendment.

I thank the Senator from Montana for giving me the courtesy of going first because of the time schedule I have this afternoon.

Senator BAUCUS and Senator DASCHLE have provided great leader-

ship on this important issue of the stimulus. There is one part of the amendment that is before us that is vitally important to all of our States as we are facing this downturn in the economy. That part of the amendment deals with the Federal share for Medicaid recipients in the States. It is called FMAP, the Federal Match for Medicaid Program.

Under the provision in the underlying Daschle amendment, and under the leadership of Senator BAUCUS, they did provide for three things. They provided a 1.5-percent increase to every State in their 2002 Federal match for Medicaid. That would provide about \$3.5 billion in additional Federal Medicaid payments to the States.

I have a chart which shows what that would mean for every State and what my amendment would mean for every State. I ask unanimous consent that this chart be printed in the RECORD at the conclusion of my statement.

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

(See exhibit 1.)

Mr. HARKIN. Senator BAUCUS and Senator DASCHLE, by their amendment, put in a 1.5-percent increase to all States.

The second part was, because of unemployment measures previously calculated, some States were scheduled to go down in 2002 in their Federal match. The amendment before us under Senator BAUCUS holds those States harmless. That is about 29 States that would have lost money this year. And under the Baucus amendment, they are held harmless.

The third part is that States with high unemployment would receive an additional 1.5 percent in their 2002 Federal match. This would provide assistance to about 16 States that have very high rates of unemployment. This policy proposal is extremely important for the States.

The pending amendment I have offered would only change one part of that. It would take the 1.5-percent increase for all States and increase it to 3 percent. In other words, it would add 1.5 percent to the Federal match for all States. I believe that is important because when the committee developed this bill and the stimulus package, the National Association of State Budget Officers had predicted a \$15 billion shortfall for the States for 2002. That was last fall. By the end of the year, the National Association of State Budget Officers had updated their prediction for the shortfalls in our State budgets to \$38 billion—in other words, double. I have heard from my Governor—and I know others have heard from their Governors and their legislatures—about the cuts they are going to have to make in their State budgets.

The problem is, one of the places where they have to cut, because that is the biggest pot for most States, is Medicaid. If a State cuts \$1 out of their budget on Medicaid, they may lose \$2 or \$3 or \$4 of Federal money. I don't