

more money. That puts pressure on interest rates, and that helps retard our economic progress and our growth.

The notion that the Bush plan has materially aided and assisted our recovery or softened the recession is very dubious.

What is also unfortunate is that in the last few weeks, as we have debated a possible stimulus package, there have been several proposals, one of which would be broadening the rebate we enacted last spring to include those Americans who did not pay income taxes but paid a great deal of taxes in terms of payroll taxes and other forms of wage taxation. I don't know how many times I have been in the Chamber and heard Republicans assail that approach as being inappropriate, ineffective, and inefficient.

What is curious is that the one aspect of last spring's tax plan that helped the rebates through the income tax system is being not only trumpeted as a Bush proposal but that exact or closely similar approach extended to payroll taxes is being derided and criticized by Republicans in the Senate as being something unworthy of the Senate.

I disagree. Frankly, last year if we had adopted a proposal to cut taxes that was targeted to lower income Americans, that was broad to include not just rebates for income taxes but rebates for payroll taxes, we would have seen a much less severe recession than we are seeing right now.

In effect, what we have today is the Council of Economic Advisers not providing good economic analysis but providing political spin on the tax plan we passed last year. I hope when we go back and reconsider the stimulus package, we will understand what stimulates the economy and not what is appealing to the political winds of the moment.

Again, we are in the grips of a recession. There are multiple causes. The President's tax proposal as originally proposed certainly did very little, if anything at all, to help soften the recession. I hope that will become more and more apparent.

I yield the floor.

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

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will call the roll.

The senior assistant bill clerk proceeded to call the roll.

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 President, I ask unanimous consent that the order for the quorum call be rescinded.

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

USTR DECISION REGARDING THE CANADIAN WHEAT BOARD

Mr. BURNS. Mr. President, I rise today in joining the Secretary of Agriculture in applauding the decision that was reached by our U.S. Trade Representative this morning on the 301 investigation into the Canadian Wheat

Board and on durum wheat. I think Minnesota is a producer of durum, as we are in the Dakotas and in Montana. In her statement—and I associate with her words this morning—we support the immediate actions outlined in this decision, which will help us to move forward, removing the longstanding barrier in U.S.-Canadian relations. We are committed to working with the USTR in our country and, of course, with the WTO, and those trade negotiations should produce discipline which will lead to fundamental reform.

As you well know, that has been a bone of contention among grain producers in this country and, of course, with this Government and its relationship with Canada.

This morning, I heard a statement from a colleague who quoted a news article from a western producer in Canada, and by a secondhand source, that claimed the Secretary of Agriculture urged her Canadian counterpart to lobby Congress regarding the farm bill. I find that very unusual. In fact, I asked the Secretary this morning about that. I picked up the phone and called the Secretary and she denied making any such statement in its entirety. She did call the Minister of Agriculture in Canada, and he apologized for misstatements of his staff. Of course, I find that everybody is entitled to their opinion and everybody is entitled also to the facts. I would find it very unusual if another country got involved in the internal affairs of another. They usually do not do that, although we are now, it seems, at the end of the debate of the farm bill. That is not going to weigh in as it goes into conference. It is important legislation.

If there was ever a time for solidarity in agriculture, it is now. I say that to agriculturalists around the world because it seems as if we have gotten into this mindset that it is a right to have what we produce, when basically we have to figure out a way to make a living at it, one. Two, we don't like to see hungry people either, but quit putting up rules and regulations and deal with the market forces that would allow us to produce food and fiber in this country.

It seems in this community and in the agricultural community, if we want to take a shot at somebody, instead of using a straight line, we use a circle for firing squads. That usually isn't a very good situation. This morning, I again join the Secretary of Agriculture in this 301 finding. Now we will move on and try to deal with the situation with the Canadian Wheat Board. Living on the Canadian border is always a source of irritation whenever we have to move livestock and grain back and forth across the Canadian border. Of course, with the culture as it is in our State, and as it is in Alberta and Saskatchewan, our values are alike. Most of our problems are from east of the 100th meridian in understanding the situations we have to deal with in our production of food and fiber.

So I hope we can work this out and get away from misstatements or misguided statements and come together in the agricultural community and work together because I think the time has come that we are going to need some solidarity, especially from producers. I don't see processors having a hard time or purveyors having a hard time or any distributors of the food product having a hard time. But I know there are hard times when it comes to the production of food and fiber because we can't get a handle on our cost of production. We have to continue to think about that as Americans and think about the security that we have. Ours is about the only country in the world where you can have fresh lettuce in grocery stores in the wintertime in Minnesota.

It is a wonderful system in this country. You don't know how great it is until you travel around the world. Nonetheless, there are some misgivings about what it costs and the work that it takes to get the beans to the table.

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.

Mr. REID. I ask unanimous consent the order for the quorum call be dispensed with.

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

THE INNOCENCE PROTECTION ACT AND ANOTHER DEATH ROW MILESTONE

Mr. LEAHY. Mr. President, I rise to discuss two disturbing and shameful milestones for our Nation, one that we reached this past December and one that is fast approaching. The milestone we have reached: 100 people in the United States have now been exonerated through the use of DNA testing. The milestone that approaches: The 100th exoneration of a death row inmate.

We can no longer ignore the fact that innocent people can, and do, get convicted in our country, and in some cases they are sentenced to death. We need to focus on these cases. We need to learn from them. And we need to do something about them. This is not a matter of whether you are for or against the death penalty, it is a matter of common conscience for our Nation.

So let me turn, first, to milestone No. 1, the 100th DNA exoneration.

In December 2001, a man named Larry Mayes became the 100th person in the United States to be exonerated by postconviction DNA testing. Mayes served 21 years in Indiana's prisons for a rape and a robbery—21 years for a rape and a robbery—but a rape and a robbery he did not commit. For 21 years an innocent man sat behind bars.

How was he exonerated? Was it by brilliant lawyers? Was it by the justice system recognizing a mistake? No. It