

But, again, the key point is we have a threshold which is the same threshold we have had with PUHCA which goes back to the 1920s or 1930s. If Senators think we do not need it anymore because there are no mergers or acquisitions, quite to the contrary; we ought not be giving up on the consumer protection. At the very minimum, we should have the language that requires that the proposed mergers promote the public interest. Then we get FERC approval. At the very minimum, we ought to do that. Let's make sure they promote competition, make sure they are good for consumers, make sure they add to economic efficiency.

Right now in this legislation, I am sad to say, we do not have that standard. We are going to make a huge mistake if we do not have a stronger consumer protection standard and a stronger competition standard. That is what this amendment is about.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Maine.

Ms. COLLINS. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent I be permitted to proceed as in morning business for up to 5 minutes.

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

The Senator from Maine is recognized.

Ms. COLLINS. I thank the Chair.

(The remarks of Ms. COLLINS pertaining to the introduction of S. 2085 are located in today's RECORD under "Statements on Introduced Bills and Joint Resolutions.")

#### EQUAL PROTECTION OF VOTING RIGHTS ACT OF 2001

Mr. REID. Mr. President, on behalf of the majority leader, under the authority granted to the majority leader on March 22, and with the concurrence of the Republican leader, I now ask unanimous consent the Senate resume consideration of Calendar No. 239, S. 565, the election reform bill.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Is there objection? Without objection, it is so ordered.

The clerk will report the bill by title.

The assistant legislative clerk read as follows:

A bill (S. 565) to establish the Commission on Voting Rights and Procedures to study and make recommendations regarding election technology, voting, and election administration, to establish a grant program under which the Office of Justice Programs and the Civil Rights Division of the Department of Justice shall provide assistance to States and localities in improving election technology and the administration of Federal elections, to require States to meet uniform and nondiscriminatory election technology and administration requirements for the 2004 Federal elections, and for other purposes.

Pending:

Clinton amendment No. 2906, to establish a residual ballot performance benchmark.

Dodd (for SCHUMER) modified amendment No. 2914, to permit the use of a signature or personal mark for the purpose of verifying the identity of voters who register by mail.

Dodd (for KENNEDY) amendment No. 2916, to clarify the application of the safe harbor provisions.

Hatch amendment No. 2935, to establish the Advisor Committee on Electronic Voting and the Electoral Process, and to instruct the Attorney General to study the adequacy of existing electoral fraud statutes and penalties.

Hatch amendment No. 2936, to make the provisions of the Voting Rights Act of 1965 permanent.

Smith of New Hampshire amendment No. 2933, to prohibit the broadcast of certain false and untimely information on Federal elections.

Mr. REID. I ask unanimous consent the previous agreement with respect to S. 565 be modified to provide that all amendments remaining in order to the bill, first and any second-degree, must be offered and debated during today's session; and that any votes ordered to occur with respect to these amendments be stacked to occur at a time to be determined by the two leaders, in the sequence in which the amendments were offered; that prior to each vote there be 2 minutes of closing debate with the time equally divided and controlled in the usual form without further intervening action or debate.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Is there objection?

Without objection, it is so ordered.

Mr. REID. On behalf of the majority leader, let me say, while the minority leader is here, the two managers of this bill, Senator DODD and Senator MCCONNELL, are to be applauded. What they have done is extraordinary. They should know that. This is tremendous for the country. It has been done on a bipartisan basis. These two Senators are to be congratulated.

There will be no more rollcall votes tonight. I have been advised by the majority leader to announce that.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Republican leader.

Mr. LOTT. If the Senator from Nevada will yield, just for a comment—and also to agree with him. I want to say to the Senator from Connecticut, Mr. DODD, and Senator MCCONNELL, they have been persistent. It would have been very easy to just let this reform effort slide off the end of the table, like so much else has, unfortunately, in the Senate. But they continued to work together. They continued to try to find substantive agreements and also a procedural process to get this done on sort of a second-track process. So I am pleased we have this unanimous consent agreement, and I commend them both. I think we are going to wind up with a product that the Senate can be proud to support.

Let me just ask Senator REID if he will yield to clarify how we proceed. Under the agreement, there were a number of amendments that were identified with time limits. All those amendments will be considered tonight under this unanimous consent agreement, and then tomorrow, at a time we will agree to and announce later, all votes, if any—either on final passage or the amendments—would be stacked?

So that would occur in the morning and Senators need to know, if they are interested in these amendments, they will need to come to the Chamber in the next couple of hours to deal with them. Is that correct? Is that your understanding?

Mr. REID. That is right, I say to the leader.

Mr. LOTT. Mr. President, if I could be recognized before we begin, now, under leader time?

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Republican leader.

#### NATIONAL ENERGY POLICY

Mr. LOTT. Mr. President, I wish to talk a little bit about the energy bill, and then the managers of the election reform will be ready to go and we will take up that important legislation.

Mr. President, we need a national energy policy. I think the Congress knows that. I think the American people support that. I know the President of the United States supports that.

Right now we see the difficulties with which we are having to deal around the world: The instability in Venezuela with regard to oil supply from that country, our concerns about the Middle East, the threats from Saddam Hussein. We need our own national energy policy. We need our own energy supplies. We need to encourage conservation, alternative fuels. We need the whole package. And we need to do it now.

This is a critical time. This is a matter of our economy, it is a matter of the creation of more jobs, and it is national security. So we need to do this.

I have not come to the Chamber and really pushed on this legislation. Because of the way it was brought to the floor, which is not through the Energy and Natural Resources Committee, I thought we were going to have to do a lot of writing of the bill in the Senate. That is what has been happening. That is what has occurred. That is why it took so much time. But we have spent 2 weeks on it now. This is the third week. It is obvious to me we are going over to next week. But I think it is time for the leadership on both sides of the aisle to begin to press for this legislation to be completed.

It would be a mistake for the leaders of either party to allow this legislation to collapse after this amount of time, and on this important an issue. It is going to be very easy for Members on both sides of the aisle to say: I don't like it because of this reason; I don't want it for that reason; I don't like this particular provision.

I don't care for the electricity section, but I just voted not to strike it because I think we made some improvements. We ought to go to conference and see if we can improve it even more.

I think it is time that we bring up the ANWR amendment. Let's have a debate. I am all for it. I think we need it. I think it is a source of supply that