businesses. I would like to see, and I know the majority leader would like to see, and the vast majority of the Senate would like to see this bill approved so we can move on with other matters that will come before the Senate.

RESERVATION OF LEADER TIME

The PRESIDENT pro tempore. Under the previous order, leadership time is reserved.

MORNING BUSINESS

The PRESIDENT pro tempore. Under the previous order, there will now be a period for the transaction of morning business until 11 a.m., with the majority leader in control of the first half of the time, and the Democratic leader or his designee in control of the remaining time.

Does the minority leader seek recognition?

Mr. DASCHLE. I do, Mr. President.

The PRESIDENT pro tempore. The minority leader is recognized.

DISTURBING PATTERN OF CONDUCT

Mr. DASCHLE. Mr. President, I want to talk this morning about a disturbing pattern of conduct by the people around President Bush. They seem to be willing to do anything for political purposes, regardless of the facts and of what is right.

I don't have the time this morning to talk in detail about all the incidents that come to mind. Larry Lindsay, for instance, seems to have been fired as the President's Economic Adviser because he spoke honestly about the costs of the Iraq war. General Shinseki seems to have become a target when he spoke honestly about the number of troops that would be needed in Iraq.

There are many others, who are less well known, who have also faced consequences for speaking out. U.S. Park Police Chief Teresa Chambers was suspended from her job when she disclosed budget problems that our Nation's parks are less safe, and Professor Elizabeth Blackburn was replaced on the Council on Bioethics because of her scientific views on stem-cell research.

Each of these examples deserves examination, but they are not my focus today. Instead, I want to talk briefly about four other incidents that are deeply troubling.

When former Treasury Secretary Paul O'Neill stepped forward to criticize the Bush administration's Iraq policy, he was immediately ridiculed by the people around the President and his credibility was attacked. Even worse, the administration launched a government investigation to see if Secretary O'Neill improperly disclosed classified documents. He was, of course, exonerated, but the message was clear: If you speak freely, there will be consequences.

Ambassador Joseph Wilson also learned that lesson. Ambassador Wilson, who by all accounts served bravely under President Bush in the early 1990s, felt a responsibility to speak out on President Bush's false State of the Union statement on Niger and uranium. When he did, the people around the President quickly retaliated. Within weeks of debunking the President's claim, Ambassador Wilson's wife was the target of a despicable act.

Her identity as a deep-cover CIA agent was revealed to Bob Novak, a syndicated columnist, and was printed in newspapers around the country. That was the first time in our history, I believe, that the identity and safety of a CIA agent was disclosed for purely political purposes. It was an unconscionable and intolerable act.

Around the same time Bush administration officials were endangering Ambassador Wilson's wife, they appear to have been threatening another Federal employee for trying to do his job. In recent weeks Richard Foster, an actuary for the Department of Health and Human Services, has revealed that he was told he would be fired if he told Congress and the American people the real costs of last year's Medicare bill.

Mr. Foster, in an e-mail he wrote on June 26 of last year, said the whole episode had been ''pretty nightmarish.'' He wrote: ''I'm no longer in grave danger of being fired, but there remains a strong likelihood that I will have to resign in protest of the withholding of important technical information from key policymakers for political purposes.''

Think about those words. He would lose his job if he did his job. If he provided the information the Congress and the American people deserved and were entitled to, he would lose his job. When did this become the standard for our government? When did we become a government of intimidation?

And now, in today's newspapers, we see the latest example of how the people around the President react when faced with facts they want to avoid.

The White House's former lead counterterrorism adviser, Richard Clarke, is under fierce attack for questioning the White House's record on combating terrorism. Mr. Clarke has served in four White Houses, beginning with Ronald Reagan's administration, and earned an impeccable record for his work.

Now the White House seeks to destroy his reputation. The people around the President aren't answering his allegations; instead, they are trying to use the same tactics they used with Paul O'Neill. They are trying to ridicule Mr. Clarke and destroy his credibility, and create any diversion possible to focus attention away from his serious allegations.

The purpose of government isn't to make the President look good. It isn't to produce propaganda or misleading information. It is, instead, to do its best for the American people and to be accountable to the American people.

The people around the President don't seem to believe that. They have crossed a line—perhaps several lines—that no government ought to cross.

We shouldn't fire or demean people for telling the truth. We shouldn't reveal the names of law enforcement officials for political gain. And we shouldn't try to destroy people who are out to make our country safer.

I think the people around the President have crossed into dangerous territory. We are seeing abuses of power that cannot be tolerated.

The President needs to put a stop to it, right now. We need to get to the truth, and the President needs to help us do that.

The PRESIDENT pro tempore. The Senator from Pennsylvania is recognized.

THE CARE ACT

Mr. SANTORUM. Mr. President, I rise to offer a unanimous consent request having to do with the CARE Act. I noted that a week ago the Senator from South Dakota, the Democratic leader, sent a letter suggesting we should move forward on this legislation. I wanted to take him up on his suggestion. I believe, as he says in his letter, it is important for us to take a piece of legislation that passed with over 90 votes, has passed the House of Representatives, and give it the opportunity to be negotiated between the House and the Senate so we can get it to the President's desk in a timely fashion.

I want to put in the RECORD about a dozen articles, letters, and press releases from a variety of groups—everything from the United Jewish Communities, to the Catholic Health Association, to the Farm Bureau, to the National Conference of State Legislatures, all of which are asking to either put this legislation on the bill we have before us or, more preferably, get this bill to conference where we can work out the differences.

I ask unanimous consent that this information be printed in the RECORD.

There being no objection, the material was ordered to be printed in the RECORD, as follows:

UNITED JEWISH COMMUNITIES,
Washington, DC.

CHARITABLE GIVING AND SOCIAL SERVICES BLOCK GRANTS

2004 PRIORITY: ENACT CHARITABLE GIVING TAX INCENTIVES AND RESTORE FUNDING FOR THE SOCIAL SERVICES BLOCK GRANT

For decades, many Jewish organizations have partnered with government to provide a wide range of social services for people in need. In 2004, UJC has made it a priority to support restoration of funding for Social Services Block Grants and tax incentives for charitable giving as a way to ensure and expand critical nonprofit services.

In 2003, both the Senate and the House of Representatives overwhelmingly passed legislation that would create new charitable giving tax incentives—specifically, IRA charitable rollovers and tax deductions for non-itemizers. Current tax law requires that

IRAs be fully taxed before they can be transferred to a charity, substantially reducing both the amounts transferred and the size of the contributor's tax deduction. The proposed IRA rollover provision—in what is generally referred to as the CARE legislation—would permit tax-free donation of IRAs to charities. The non-itemizer provision would allow individuals who do not itemize deductions on their tax returns to receive a deduction for charitable gifts.

The Senate-passed CARE bill would also restore funding to the Social Services Block Grant (SSBG); the House bill did not include the SSBG funding increase. The SSBG provides Federal grants to the States on a formula basis, which are then allocated to local agencies. SSBG programming is delivered through countless agencies that provide adult day care, kosher Meals on Wheels and other nutrition programs, employment training for the homeless, immigrants and refugees, and counseling. SSBG is currently funded at $1.7 billion—a cut of more than $1.1 billion since 1995. The budget cuts have forced social services providers, including Federation agencies, to discontinue services and reduce benefits for families in need. The current shortfalls in State budgets will make SSBG funding even more crucial over the next few years.

The CARE legislation's new incentives for charitable giving, as well as restoration of SSBG to its 1995 level of $2.8 billion are vital to meeting the needs of the most vulnerable members of our communities. UJC is working hard to ensure passage of a CARE bill that would enable Federations and other charitable non-profits to access new sources of planned giving and restore vital SSBG funding.

MARCH 11, 2004.

U.S. SENATE,
Washington, DC.

DEAR SENATOR: We urge you to support an amendment by Senators Santorum and Lieberman to attach the Charity Aid, Recovery and Empowerment Act of 2003 (CARE Act) to S. 1637, the Jumpstart Our Business Strength (JOBS) Act. While we have not taken a position on S. 1637, we see this as an opportunity to pass the CARE Act.

The CARE Act, which the Senate has already approved by an overwhelming 95–5 vote, will provide crucial assistance to charities and the people they serve by restoring $1.3 billion in funding to the Social Services Block Grant (SSBG) program; allowing non-itemizers to claim charitable deductions on their taxes to spur additional private giving; creating a Compassion Capital Fund to provide technical assistance and capacity building for faith-based and community groups; and authorizing $33 million to establish group maternity homes for young mothers.

Restoring SSBG funding is especially crucial given the state of the economy and the severe fiscal crises facing the states. States use SSBG funding to assist community groups and religious agencies that serve working families, abused and abandoned children, persons with disabilities, and the frail elderly.

We support these provisions in the CARE Act because they are among the very few active legislative initiatives that will help low-income families and the most vulnerable members of our society. If enacted, they will strengthen the partnership between government and religious and other community groups to meet the basic human needs of all in our country, a partnership that is demanded by the moral scandal of so much poverty in the richest nation on earth.

We urge you to vote ''yes'' on the amendment to add the CARE Act to S. 1637.

Sincerely,

THEODORE Cardinal MCCARRICK,
Archbishop of Washington, Chairman, Domestic Policy Committee, United States Conference of Catholic Bishops.

THOMAS A. DESTEFANO,
President, Catholic Charities USA.

Rev. MICHAEL D. PLACE, STD,
President and Chief Executive Officer, Catholic Health Association of the United States.

ALLIANCE FOR IDA TAX CREDITS,
Washington, DC, March 11, 2004.

Hon. ROY BLUNT,
Majority Whip, House of Representatives, Capitol Building, Washington, DC.

Hon. RICK SANTORUM,
Chairman, Republican Conference, U.S. Senate, Hart Senate Office Building, Washington, DC.

DEAR REPRESENTATIVE BLUNT AND SENATOR SANTORUM: The Alliance for Individual Development Account (IDA) Tax Credits—a consortium of philanthropic organizations, businesses, industry associations, and organizations of elected officials created to champion tax credit legislation for IDAs—is strongly committed to enacting needed tax incentives to help working, low-income families save, build assets and move into the financial mainstream. The Alliance has been a consistent supporter of the Savings for Working Families Act, which is Title V of S. 476, the CARE Act of 2003, as it will provide tax credits to create 300,000 IDAs across the country. We also strongly support upcoming efforts to finally begin conference deliberations of S. 476, and H.R. 7, the Charitable Giving Act of 2003, and encourage these conference discussions to include the IDA provisions of S. 476 as part of any final agreement regarding S. 476 and H.R. 7.

IDAs are endorsed by President Bush and have received considerable bipartisan support in the House led by Representatives Joe Pitts and Charles Stenholm and in the Senate by Senators Rick Santorum and Joe Lieberman, as these policymakers recognize the importance of rewarding work, savings, and self-reliance by low-income families and individuals. Passage of Title V of S. 476 presents an opportunity to enact sound asset-building tax policy for a segment of our society that traditionally does not benefit from existing wealth building, tax-based incentives.

IDAs are targeted, matched savings accounts held by financial institutions and credit unions, which help low- and moderate-income families and individuals buy their first home, start a small business, or expand post-secondary education. No federal resources are provided until people work, save their own hard-earned dollars, fulfill financial education requirements, and meet their savings goals. In addition, IDA accountholders have to meet strict program standards and safeguards to ensure that IDAs are a hand-up, and not a handout.

The upcoming conference deliberations on S. 476 and H.R. 7 provides both the House of Representatives and the Senate with an historic opportunity to show its support for helping working, low-income families who want to build a better future and achieve their piece of the American Dream. Including the Savings for Working Families Act in the final conference agreement on the CARE Act/Charitable Giving Act will provide the necessary matching dollars to make IDAs a reality for hundreds of thousands of working-poor individuals and families and will help those who want to help themselves.

Thank you in advance of your support for IDAs. If you have any questions or need any additional information on how IDAs work, please call Sandi Smith at the Corporation for Enterprise Development at 202–408–9788.

America's Community Bankers
Association for Enterprise Opportunity
Center for Social Development
Consumer Federation of America
Corporation for Enterprise Development
Credit Union National Association
Economic Security 2000
Education, Training and Enterprise Center
Entergy
Enterprise Corporation of the Delta
Financial Services Roundtable
First Nations Development Institute
Foundation for the Mid South
H&R Block
Ibero American Chamber of Commerce
Institute for Responsible Fatherhood
Levi Strauss & Co.
National Association of Homebuilders
National Bankers Association
National Black Chamber of Commerce
National Center for Neighborhood Enterprise
National Conference of State Legislatures
National Congress for Community Economic Development
National Federation of Community Development Credit Unions
National Housing Conference
National Organization of African Americans in Housing
New America Foundation
Progressive Policy Institute
RESULTS
Shorebank Corporation
The Empowerment Network
The Enterprise Foundation
US Pan Asian American Chamber of Commerce
United Way of America
Wal-Mart

NATIONAL CONFERENCE OF STATE LEGISLATURES,
Washington, DC, March 9, 2004.

DEAR SENATOR: On behalf of the National Conference of State Legislatures (NCSL), we urge you to adopt Amendment 2670 to the S. 1637—Jumpstart Our Business Strength (JOBS) Act. This amendment, offered by Senators Santorum and Lieberman, would add the language of S. 476 (the CARE Act) which passed the Senate 95–5 on April 9, 2003 into the underlying bill. The CARE Act will enhance the role of faith-based and community based organizations in the delivery of social services and provide much needed technical guidance and assistance to states without compromising the states' role in the implementation of social services to people in need. The CARE Act reflects a thoughtful and harmonized approach to the inclusion of faith-based organizations in providing services at the state level.

It is laudable that the CARE Act increases funding for the Social Services Block Grant (SSBG). The SSBG is an essential source of funds for community and home-based services to the most vulnerable segments of our society including the disabled, elderly and children. We cannot expand the role of faith-based and community programs without increasing the funds available for these programs. We support the Individual Development Account provisions, as such accounts are an important tool to promote self-sufficiency that will complement state efforts to reform welfare. We are especially pleased to see that the CARE Act provides funding to states for seed money and for technical assistance to the states to support administering the provisions of the bill. NCSL greatly appreciates Senators' Santorum and

Lieberman commitment to this legislation and their willingness to work with NCSL to resolve our outstanding issues.

We support the CARE Act and urge you to vote for Amendment 2670 during floor considerations of the JOBS Act. For further information about NCSL's position, please contact Sheri Steisel, Federal Affairs Counsel and Director, Human Services Committee or Tamra Spielvogel, Policy Associate, State-Federal Relations in NCSL's Washington, DC Office at 202/624–5400.

Sincerely,

MARTIN R. STEPHENS,
Speaker of the House, Utah,
President, NCSL.

AMERICA'S SECOND HARVEST,
March 10, 2004.

Hon. TOM DASCHLE,
U.S. Senate, Hart Senate Office Building, Washington, DC.

DEAR SENATOR DASCHLE: I'm writing to you today because times are desperate for the food banks in South Dakota. We need your help in the passage of important legislation pending before the Senate. In tens of thousands of local food pantries, soup kitchens and emergency shelters the lines of needy Americans requesting short-term food assistance are increasing. These increasing lines of needy families include the faces of the working poor, the recently unemployed and children. As these lines grow, I continue to hear from our member food banks what sounds like a broken record: ''there's more requests for food, and it's hard to keep pace.''

Last year, you joined 94 other Senators in the common call that we need the CARE Act now more than ever. Now, America's emergency food providers are asking you to continue your strong commitment to America's hungry by supporting an amendment to the JOBS Act, S. 1637, which would allow the provisions of the Senate-passed Charity, Aid, Recovery and Empowerment Act of 2003 (the CARE Act, S. 476/H.R. 7) to move forward.

As you know, the CARE Act includes a strong food donation tax incentive provision that we estimate will create more than 878 million new meals over the next 10 years, much of that food coming from farmers, ranchers, and small businesses. The need for this tax law change is urgent. Today, the USDA estimates that nearly 96 billion pounds of food in the United States is wasted, dumped, plowed over or destroyed. If even one percent of that food was donated, rather than dumped, we would be able to feed hundreds of thousands more needy Americans. Simply put, we have a strong moral obligation to stop the waste, and get this food on the tables of the people who desperately need it.

Passage of Senate Amendment 2670 is critical for the emergency food providers in DC and the America's Second Harvest nationwide network of food banks and food rescue organizations working so hard to encourage food donations within the food industry. The provisions in the Santorum-Lieberman amendment are very important to companies trying to decide how to dispose of their surplus food.

We're hoping we can continue to count on you to make sure this amendment is adopted and the CARE Act becomes law. Thank you for consideration.

Sincerely,

ROBERT FORNEY,
President and CEO,
America's Second Harvest.

AMERICAN FARM BUREAU FEDERATION,
Washington, DC.

STATEMENT BY BOB STALLMAN, PRESIDENT, AMERICAN FARM BUREAU FEDERATION, REGARDING THE CARE ACT

WASHINGTON, D.C., March 11, 2004.—''Congress can provide important hunger-relief assistance by enacting the CARE Act of 2003. The legislation has been adopted by both chambers, endorsed by President Bush, and is awaiting conference.

If enacted, the law would create incentives to allow all farmers and ranchers to deduct the costs and value of food donated to hunger-relief charities, regardless of how their farming business is organized. This will enable us to get more food to hungry people who can't afford to feed their families. The CARE Act would increase the amount of food provided to needy people by an estimated 878 million new meals over the next 10 years.

Passage of the CARE Act could not come at a better time. The American Farm Bureau Federation and America's Second Harvest just completed a successful year of activity with a program called ''Harvest for All.'' Throughout the year, farmers across the nation donated food, funds and people power with the goal of creating a hunger-free America. Both organizations, in partnership with Syngenta, are working together to ensure that every American can enjoy the bounty produced on American farms and ranches. Those efforts will be greatly enhanced by enactment of the CARE Act.''

MARCH OF DIMES,
Washington, DC, March 4, 2004.

Hon. THOMAS DASCHLE,
Democratic Leader, U.S. Senate,
Washington, DC.

DEAR DEMOCRATIC LEADER DASCHLE: On behalf of more than 3 million volunteers and 1400 staff members of the March of Dimes, I am writing to urge you to vote for Senate Amendment 2670 to S. 1637, the Foreign Sales Corporation/Extraterritorial Income (FSC/ETI) bill. This amendment provides much needed tax incentives to encourage charitable giving.

As you know, many of America's charities are facing heightened financial challenges due to the soft economy and increasing reliance on services offered through community based programs. Tax incentives to encourage increased charitable giving are needed now more than ever. The March of Dimes strongly supports the following two provisions that we believe will stimulate additional charitable donations and create greater equity in the tax code:

Creation of a charitable tax deduction for individuals and couples who do not itemize on their tax returns; and

An IRA Charitable Rollover provision that would allow donors who are at least 59½ to rollover amounts from a traditional or Roth IRA to create a life income gift and donors who are at least 70½ to be eligible to rollover amounts as direct gifts.

If enacted, these provisions would benefit the March of Dimes and other charities that rely on small donations, by creating incentives for current donors and encouraging others to become donors. The donations stimulated by these changes in the tax code would provide increased resources for expanding the Foundation's investment in cutting-edge research, widening the distribution of education materials aimed at preventing birth defects and infant mortality, and increasing support of community-based programs to improve birth outcomes.

March of Dimes volunteers and staff in every state as well as the District of Columbia and Puerto Rico stand ready to work with you to secure enactment of this important amendment. Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,

MARINA L. WEISS, Ph.D.,
Senior Vice President, Public Policy and Government Affairs.

AMERICA'S BLOOD CENTERS,
Washington, DC, March 18, 2004.

Senator THOMAS A. DASCHLE,
Hart Senate Office Building,
Washington, DC.

DEAR SENATOR DASCHLE: We are writing to ask that you allow the Charity, Aid, Recovery, and Empowerment Act of 2003 (CARE Act—S. 476) and the Charitable Giving Act of 2003 (H.R. 7) to go to a conference committee. Members of America's Blood Centers, such as United Blood Services of South Dakota and Siouxland Community Blood Bank, which together support the blood needs of all South Dakota patients, strongly endorse this legislation and specifically support a provision contained in both bills that corrects an inequality by extending to not-for-profit independent community blood centers certain exemptions from the Federal excise tax.

In spite of their importance in maintaining America's volunteer donor blood supply, community-based blood centers do not enjoy the same status as the Red Cross blood centers under the Federal tax code. Even though the Red Cross is exempt from paying Federal excise taxes for its blood-related activities and functions, America's independent, community-based, not-for-profit blood centers are not. These taxes directly impact the ability of blood centers to provide mobile blood collections, conduct telerecruiting of donors, and engage in other similar activities. The tax exemption will significantly help our centers and other community-based blood centers by allowing us to allocate more of our funding to what we do best—collecting blood for the millions of Americans who rely upon us.

The differences between the House and Senate versions of the charitable giving bills are small. Now is the time to take the steps needed to turn this legislation into law. America's Blood Centers strongly urge you to support a successful conference and quick passage of this legislation to level the playing field among blood collection organizations and demonstrate your strong support for the importance of independent, community-based, not-for-profit blood centers. Please contact ABC's CEO Jim MacPherson (jmacpherson@americasblood.org); 202–654–2902 if you have any questions. We appreciate your attention to this concern and thank you in advance for your responsiveness.

Sincerely,

LOUIS KATZ, M.D.,
President.

Mr. SANTORUM. Mr. President, this is a bill that has been a bipartisan bill. The Senator from South Dakota has mentioned on numerous occasions, and again in this letter, that the concern is—and in the newspaper article—that things have been put in conference that were not either the scope of the conference or slipped in without the minority's knowledge of what was going to happen.

I just ask the Senator from South Dakota and all those who are objecting to this bill going to conference to look at the history of this legislation.

The history of this legislation has been bipartisan. Senator JOE LIEBERMAN and I have worked to put this bill together. It has priorities on the Democratic side. It has priorities

on the Republican side. We have worked to take out everything that could be controversial.

At a press conference we had the other day, Senator LIEBERMAN said this bill is simply all good. There is not anything bad or controversial. There is not any kind of strong opposition to this bill on either side of the aisle. If there was strong opposition on either side of the aisle, it would not be in this bill. We have a bill that provides money to those who are serving those in need in our society. We have a bill on which the track record through the Finance Committee and through the Senate floor has shown we have worked together.

Senator GRASSLEY and Senator BAUCUS have worked together in committee to pass a bill unanimously out of that committee, on a bipartisan basis. When it came to the floor, there were concerns. We were able to take care of those concerns and pass a bill. I believe it was 95 to 5.

As we were going through the passage, we had some concerns as to some things the House might be interested in putting in this bill, some faith-based provisions some Members on the Democratic side had concerns about. We received a letter from the House saying they had no intention of doing that. In a sense, we were able to preconference some of the concerns to make sure we were trying to pass something good and helpful to those agencies and individuals wanting to help people in need in our society. At a time when many in this Chamber are clamoring about those who are falling through the cracks, this is an opportunity for us to get literally billions of dollars, some of it Government money but most of it contributed by individuals, to groups which get favorable tax treatment for doing so.

We set up individual development accounts, which has been a high priority of Senator LIEBERMAN, Senator FEINSTEIN, myself, and others on both sides of the aisle. We have a laundry list of very positive things this legislation does, and we have a history of bipartisan cooperation.

With some of the other legislation that may have been brought forward, I understand why the Senator from South Dakota may say, well, I do not want to take the chance, let's say, of the FSC bill, for example, or something going to conference; we do not know what is going to go on there and there may have been controversies around it.

There has been no controversy around this bill. Other bills have passed and gone to conference we did not have great controversy about, we had a broad consensus about, and they were allowed to be worked out. For some reason, this was the first one grabbed and it has been held on to now for quite some time.

One final thing. Senator FRIST, the leader, and I have given a commitment the Democrats will be fully involved in this conference; there will be no backdoor meetings because, candidly, Senator LIEBERMAN and I have worked hand in glove on this. We continue to work hand in glove, as have Senator BAUCUS and Senator GRASSLEY.

We will continue to work with our colleagues on the other side of the aisle because we believe it is so important to get done. I believe basically the four corners of the bill are fairly well established. It is now working on how we do it.

Another thing that shows bipartisan cooperation is we have actually been working on a bipartisan basis on offsets. I know the Democratic leader has been rather insistent about having the tax provisions offset. We have been working, again in a bipartisan manner, on the Finance Committee. I know Senator LIEBERMAN and myself have been trying to find offsets to get this bill in a position to get strong bipartisan support. I would make the point there may be instances in which the Democratic leader can justifiably say there has not been a cooperative venture in getting a bill through the Senate and we are hesitant about taking a bill to conference because of that. That has not been the case on this bill.

The Senator has the commitment from the leader and myself that it will not be the case in conference, and I am hopeful that word and the track record of this bill will have some influence over the Democratic leader's decision to allow this bill to move forward in the process so we can get a good negotiation going with the House of Representatives to get this done.

UNANIMOUS CONSENT REQUEST—H.R. 7

I ask unanimous consent that the Senate proceed to the immediate consideration of H.R. 7, the charitable giving bill. I further ask unanimous consent that all after the enacting clause be stricken, that the Snowe amendment and the Grassley-Baucus amendment which are at the desk be agreed to en bloc; that the substitute amendment which is the text of S. 476, the Senate-passed version of the charitable giving bill, as amended by the Snowe and Grassley-Baucus amendments, be agreed to; that the bill, as amended, be read a third time and passed, the motion to reconsider be laid upon the table; further, that the Senate insist upon its amendments and request a conference with the House; and lastly, that the Chair be authorized to appoint conferees with a ratio of 3 to 2, and that any statements relating to the bill be printed in the RECORD.

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Mr. SMITH). Is there objection?

Mr. DASCHLE. Mr. President, reserving the right to object, I will respond to the Senator from Pennsylvania by saying there are two issues. One is process and the other is substance. I think there is ample opportunity for us to agree on substance. The distinguished Senator from Pennsylvania and I have talked on a few occasions in recent weeks about this matter and it comes down to two questions: the social services block grant and the importance we place on fully funding it, and the need for offsets to the tax provisions in this legislation.

We agree there should be tax provisions. We agree there should be an SSBG provision. What we have not agreed to is how we resolve ways in which to fully fund them and to offset the costs involved with the tax provisions of the bill. That is a substantive question.

Then there is a procedural question. The Senator from Pennsylvania continues to insist the only way to resolve the procedural issue is by forcing this bill to conference. As I have said to him on several occasions, we are very reluctant without the concurrence of the House leadership that there will be the kind of bipartisan participation we need to resolve these issues in a fair way. He has given his assurance, but he has also indicated to me privately he cannot commit for the House, and I understand that. I would not expect him to.

We have done a lot of work between the House and the Senate in the last two Congresses in the way I have proposed we resolve these issues. We send the bill over to the House. The House deals with the amendments. We preconference or we negotiate the amendment and either through conference or a final ratification of the bill the legislation is sent to the President.

We have actually resolved our differences with the House without a conference on 51 occasions during the 107th Congress, and already this year we have resolved our differences with the House on 19 occasions on a whole array of bills: the veterans benefits bill, the Healthy Forest Act last year, the Syrian Accountability Act, the military tax bill. All of these issues have been preconferenced and resolved in a way that has allowed us to work through our differences, with the assurance we would have the kind of involvement and participation I expect and all of our colleagues expect with regard to the conferencing or the working out of the differences between the two versions. I ask unanimous consent that we simply remove references to the conference in the request made by the distinguished Senator from Pennsylvania so we can do what we have done on 19 occasions so far in this Congress: Send the bill to the House, let us resolve our differences through negotiation, and send the bill to the President, as we all want.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Does the Senator from Pennsylvania so modify his request?

Mr. SANTORUM. No, Mr. President, I do not. I ask that my unanimous consent be acted upon.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Is there objection?

Mr. DASCHLE. With the objection raised by the Senator from Pennsylvania, I, too, would have to object.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The objection is heard. The Senator from Pennsylvania.

Mr. SANTORUM. Mr. President, I am very disappointed we cannot get agreement. As the Senator from South Dakota said, there are two major issues. They are not particularly complex issues, but they are ones in which I think it is important for us to be in a position to be able to drive to a resolution. There has been no talk about extraneous matters being brought in. This is simply the four corners of this bill trying to be worked out. The way we have done it historically in this Congress and previous Congresses is to sit down with both bodies in a conference and work it out. I am very disappointed we do not have the opportunity to get that done for this very important bill.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from South Dakota.

Mr. DASCHLE. I want to make sure the record is clear. We have not actually resolved our differences in the House on a majority of occasions through conference. We have actually done the opposite. We have done what I have suggested we do with this bill. On 51 occasions in the 107th Congress and on 19 occasions so far in the 108th Congress, we have not gone to conference. We have resolved these matters by sending the bill to the House and worked on legislation either in preconference or through negotiation. I am fully prepared to do that again in this case and look forward to working not only with the Senator from Pennsylvania but others who want to see this legislation passed as I do.

I yield the floor.

ORDER OF PROCEDURE

Mr. STEVENS. Mr. President, parliamentary inquiry: What is the status of time now under morning business?

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The majority leader or his designee controls the next 19 minutes 40 seconds. The minority leader has 30 minutes 24 seconds, and he would have the remainder of that time until 11 o'clock.

Mr. STEVENS. Is the time equally divided between now and 11 o'clock?

The PRESIDING OFFICER. It is not now. The majority leader has used some time already. They have remaining 19 minutes.

Mr. STEVENS. The minority used no time?

The PRESIDING OFFICER. That is what the clock reads.

Mr. STEVENS. Very well.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The minority has used 30 seconds.

Mr. REID. Mr. President, if the Senator will yield, the time Senator DASCHLE used was under leader's time. We have some speakers on our side. We know you have speakers on your side. I think it is pretty clear, based on the conversation on the floor last evening and today between Senator MCCONNELL and this Senator, that not much is going to happen on the bill today.

I ask if the Senator from Alaska wishes to have morning business in addition to what is now left? We would be happy to agree to that. We have three Senators on our side who wish to speak in morning business.

Mr. STEVENS. Mr. President, I ask that the floor management check with the leader, to see if there is any objection to restoring the concept there be 1 hour equally divided.

Mr. REID. I am confident that if there is some problem at a subsequent time we will be happy to take that time away, because I am confident it would not be. So I ask there be—let's make it 11:15, an extra 2 minutes, and the time be equally divided?

Mr. STEVENS. I support that and ask unanimous consent that be the case.

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

Mr. REID. If the Senator would just yield for one other unanimous consent request, on our side we have three speakers. We have Senators SCHUMER, DORGAN, and CARPER on our side—I am sorry, Senators SCHUMER, WYDEN, DORGAN—and Senator CARPER also wishes to speak. I ask the time be equally divided among those four Senators on our side, in the order I have just announced.

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

Mr. STEVENS. Mr. President, it is my understanding the first half of this 1-hour period is under the control of the majority; is that correct?

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator is correct.

The Senator from Alaska.

ENERGY

Mr. STEVENS. Mr. President, the Energy Committee has introduced a revised energy bill. Swift passage of this bill is vital. We should not underestimate the widespread and important consequences that this comprehensive energy legislation will have for the future of our Nation.

American citizens and businesses rely on our ability to stabilize energy prices and provide them with the energy resources they need. Now, in the post-9/11 world, our energy development and production has taken on an additional level of importance. Our national security is dependent upon our ability to decrease our reliance on foreign energy sources, particularly from unstable or unfriendly regimes.

The comprehensive energy policy embodied by this new bill is also critical for ensuring our economic growth. High energy prices impact our economy in many ways, and our ability to stabilize energy prices will have far-reaching consequences for our overall economic health and growth.

The United States is recovering from a recession, but this recovery is threatened by sustained high energy prices which will increase real interest rates, the rate of inflation, and reduce gross domestic product growth.

This first chart shows that situation. I call it to the attention of the Senate. As crude oil prices go up, there are changes in our gross domestic product. We have seen these effects firsthand already. High energy prices, which rose 4.7 percent in January and another 1.7 percent in February, greatly contributed to an increase in consumer prices. The Department of Labor recently announced that those prices jumped .3 percent in February and another .5 percent in March. Consumers are paying more for food, goods, and energy bills. High energy prices are essentially acting as a consumer tax, leaving Americans with less disposable income for travel, home buying, restaurants, retail establishments, and daily living.

Record high gasoline prices only intensify this problem. Gasoline prices rose 8.1 percent in January and an additional 2.5 percent in March. Last week the average price at the gas pump reached $1.72 per gallon, with California leading at an average of $2.10 at the pump. These prices are an additional constraint on the consumer spending power. For every 1 cent increase at the pump, we see $1 billion lost in consumer spending capability.

The rise in fuel prices also greatly impacts our aviation and trucking industry. Our airline industry has lost over $25 billion in the last 3 years. Sustained high jet fuel costs of $1 per gallon, which is double that of 1998–1999, continues to hamper the health of our critical transportation industry. High energy prices also prevent job creation for the transportation sector. The Air Transport Association estimates for every $1 increase in the price of fuel, they could fund 5,300 airline jobs. The increase in these prices is staggering.

Every homeowner in America feels the pressure of high energy prices. Home heating costs for the 2002–2003 season were up 12 percent for natural gas, 7 percent for propane, and 2 percent for electricity. This winter alone, natural gas prices were 60 percent higher than last year—60 percent higher than last year. Estimates show that consumers may pay more than $200 billion this year in energy costs. This is an enormous and unnecessary burden on our economy.

Overall, it is estimated that since 2000 consumers paid $111 billion more than they did in the previous 3 years for natural gas alone. This increase cost industrial consumers $57 billion, commercial customers $21 billion, and residential consumers $33 billion.

This second chart shows that situation. We have had job losses throughout the country because of this change in energy prices. Look at that: In California alone, 250,000 jobs. It has had an amazing impact. High energy prices have had a devastating impact on American jobs. Since 2000, when the energy crisis began, we have lost 2.9 million jobs related to the cost of energy. Sustained high energy prices have the potential to lower our gross domestic product, which could cost the U.S. an