

If everything else failed to fail, adding an amendment to a bill to be taken to conference by Chairman MCCAIN was the iron-clad guarantee it would be rejected. And in fact, that is exactly what Senator MCCAIN stated on the floor of the Senate. He stated emphatically, and quite predictably, that if the ethanol or energy amendment passed, he would drop it in conference.

So the Democrat leader's amendment was designed in so many ways to fail, and thus, to block his own amendment. And guess who gets the blame? Republicans.

Farmers lose. All energy consumers lose. But if the block and blame game works and Republicans lose, too, then it is all worth it, because Congressional Democrats win.

The block and blame game.

An interesting exchange occurred between Chairman MCCAIN and Senator DORGAN during the debate of this amendment. Senator MCCAIN said, "I am sure there may be a headline in South Dakota that says: Senator DASCHLE fights for ethanol."

Senator DORGAN responded, "Senator DASCHLE has not offered an amendment for the purpose of a headline in South Dakota."

Guess what. As soon as his amendment failed, Senator DASCHLE did issue a press release. And not only that, the press release attacked Republicans.

The release, according to the Congressional Quarterly, was headlined, and "Washington Republicans abandon ethanol."

The block and blame game: hurts the farmers, hurts Americans, but helps the Democrats.

I would like to share a statement issued by the National Corn Growers following the vote:

Yesterday, during consideration of legislation dealing with internet sales taxes, Senator DASCHLE offered an amendment to create a Renewable Fuels Standard (RFS). Senator DOMENICI offered S. 2095 as a second degree amendment to the Daschle amendment. S. 2095 contains the RFS as well as other energy provisions. NCGA will support all efforts to pass an energy bill that contains an RFS and addresses the serious problem our nation faces regarding energy. We again call upon Congress to set aside partisan bickering and to pass an energy bill.

I agree wholeheartedly with the National Corn Growers Association. We have serious problems facing our nation, and we have several very important bills aimed at addressing these problems that are falling victim to the block and blame game.

I wish that what I was told by a Democratic lobbyist, about the strategy to block everything this year . . . I wish that it were not true. I hope that the Democratic leaders will have a change of heart and a change of campaign strategy that allows vital pieces of legislation to be signed by the President this year, and then let the election be fought over who has the best ideas or who will do better if they take control of Congress or the White House.

SECTION 8 HOUSING ASSISTANCE

Mr. DODD. Mr. President, I am pleased to join Senators SCHUMER, KENNEDY, REED, and others as an original co-sponsor of this important legislation, which would clarify the intent of a provision in the fiscal year 2004 appropriations law regarding the Section 8 housing voucher program.

The Department of Housing and Urban Development, HUD, has claimed that language in the FY2004 appropriations law requires it to distribute voucher funding in a manner that leaves no alternative but to reduce assistance by \$191 million nationwide. Subsequently, it issued a notice on April 22, 2004 that put in place a new system for funding Section 8 vouchers that differed greatly from its usual practice. In the past, HUD would reimburse housing authorities for the cost of providing housing to low-income individuals based on their real, current costs. Under the April 22 guidelines, however, the reimbursements will be gauged to August 1, 2003, plus a small adjustment for inflation. In addition, the change will be retroactive to January 1, 2004, which will create even further confusion for those public housing authorities whose vouchers are already issued and whose budget are already finalized.

I strongly believe that that HUD's interpretation of the FY2004 appropriations law is both unduly restrictive and is in sharp contradiction to the intent of Congress to fully fund Section 8 program. Despite HUD's protestations that Congress forced its hand to make these cuts, Congress in fact added funding to the Section 8 program in FY2004 so that HUD could fully fund all vouchers currently in use. Congress appropriated \$17.6 billion in FY2004 to renew expiring Section 8 contracts, or \$1.4 billion above the amount requested by the administration. Although the FY2004 appropriations law did make some modest changes in how voucher funding is disbursed, nothing in the law mandated that HUD take the unprecedented step of cutting housing assistance for senior citizens, the disabled, and working families and individuals with the greatest housing needs.

It therefore makes little sense that HUD would insist on reading the FY2004 appropriations law in such a way as to produce more homelessness across the nation. My own State of Connecticut will be especially hurt if HUD's April 22 notice is not changed to reflect the program commitments of housing authorities. Many public housing authorities in Connecticut are anticipating that the HUD proposal will result in a significant reduction in funds needed to honor existing contracts as well as effectively administer the voucher program. The current average Housing Assistance Payment for many agencies has typically increased beyond the August 1, 2003 "benchmark" plus the Annual Adjustment Factor. In most cases, this result is not due to increases in local rental rates but re-

flects the rise in unemployment among Section 8 participants and thus an increase in the public housing authority's share of the rent.

The impact of the April 22, 2004 rule on Connecticut will be particularly severe given that that it has the sixth most expensive rental housing market in the nation and very few vacancies to meet the needs of low-income individuals. Coupled with the administration's proposed FY2005 budget cuts and block granting of the Section 8 program, which could adversely affect over 4,000 existing voucher holders in Connecticut, it is difficult to understand why HUD would be trying to balance its budget on the backs of low-income Americans.

The Department of Housing and Urban Development's April 22, 2004 notice is therefore just another salvo in the administration's war on the Section 8 program. Section 8 provides more than just rent assistance for low and moderate wage individuals in high cost housing markets. It also helps to sustain the employee base in urban markets, keeps wages for jobs in the service and manufacturing sectors competitive, enables corporations to remain and expand in their communities, and reduces the strain on vehicular transportation systems.

In an economy that is creating few jobs and producing scant affordable housing, HUD should be pursuing policies to ensure that no family in America loses its housing assistance. HUD's April 22 notice should therefore be changed, so I urge my colleagues to support this urgent legislation.

MANUEL RODRIGUEZ GOMEZ, MD

Mr. COLEMAN. Mr. President, I rise today to honor Manuel Rodriguez Gomez, MD, Emeritus Professor of Pediatric Neurology at Mayo Medical School in Rochester, Minnesota, for his lifetime of education and as one of the first physicians in the United States to champion tuberous sclerosis complex, TSC. Dr. Gomez is considered by many to be the "father" of tuberous sclerosis complex research because of his many contributions to the field of TSC research and passionate patient care. Through his work to describe TSC over the lifespan of an individual with the disorder and the extraordinary resources provided by the Mayo Clinic, Dr. Gomez published extensively on his growing knowledge of the multiple organ involvement in TSC. He passionately encouraged his colleagues to not only provide medical care for individuals with TSC, but to also share their knowledge through conferences, publications and the three editions of the book, "Tuberous Sclerosis Complex." This book is considered by his peers to be the premier medical textbook for care of TSC patients. For his dedication to the many individuals he treated throughout his medical practice and his guidance of the Tuberous Sclerosis Alliance, Dr. Gomez made the world a