

country. But the U.S. tariff on ethanol operates as an offset to an excise tax credit that applies to both domestically produced and imported ethanol. So by lifting the tariff, we would in effect be giving the benefits of a U.S. tax credit to subsidized Brazilian ethanol.

Providing yet more duty-free treatment for Brazilian ethanol would send the wrong signal to those Americans who are devoting their careers to help America become more energy independent. The U.S. ethanol industry is working every day to lessen our dependence on foreign oil. This is a virtue that President Bush has touted again and again.

Just last week the President restated his goal to replace oil from around the world by expanding the use of U.S. ethanol.

The President stated:

The federal government has got a role to play to encourage new industries that will help this nation diversify away from oil. And so we're strongly committed to corn-based ethanol produced in America.

The President clearly understands the need to assist our domestic ethanol industry so that they can get a foothold and succeed. Why would the United States want to send a signal that we're backing away from our efforts to seek energy independence by promoting renewable fuels in the United States?

We're already dependent on foreign oil. Surely, President Bush doesn't intend for our nation to go down the path of eventually becoming dependent on foreign ethanol also. Providing yet more duty-free treatment would be a step in the wrong direction. I don't think our country should take any action that would harm the farmers and investors in rural America that have worked so hard to develop this industry. The efforts to reduce our dependence on foreign oil have only just begun.

Providing more duty-free treatment for ethanol won't increase supplies or reduce prices at the pump. It's a bad solution in search of a problem. It's a bad idea for our energy independence and our national security.

(At the request of Mr. REID, the following statement was ordered to be printed in the RECORD.)

LIMITING THE TERM OF THE PUBLIC TRUSTEES OF SOCIAL SECURITY AND MEDICARE

• Mr. BAUCUS. Mr. President, I rise to comment on legislation that Chairman GRASSLEY and I introduced yesterday that would limit public trustees for Social Security and Medicare to a single four-year term of service. The bill, S. 2752, will also codify that the President should consult with Congress on the nominations of public trustees for these important programs. This legislation was prompted by recent events.

Upon learning last November that the White House intended to renominate John L. Palmer and Thomas R.

Saving as public trustees, Chairman GRASSLEY and I both responded immediately that the White House should find two new individuals to nominate as public trustees. Both individuals had already served one term as Social Security and Medicare public trustees, and their terms ended in March 2005. Dr. Palmer and Dr. Saving served admirably as public trustees during their term and the Chairman and I thank them for their service, but I did not want to see an important tradition abandoned. Never in the history of the public trustees have individuals served more than one term, and that's for good reason. Fresh thinking and new ideas are critical to the proper assessment and administration of the Social Security and Medicare programs. If the executive branch will not voluntarily follow this vital precedent, this principle must be written into law.

There was a second problem last year. The White House is supposed to consult with the chairman and ranking member of the Finance Committee before sending the nominations to the Senate. Unfortunately, no such consultation occurred last year prior to the nominations being forwarded to the Senate. Therefore, the bill adds language to the Social Security Act requiring the President to consult with the chairman and ranking member of the Committee on Finance before considering individuals to be nominated as public trustees.

Ignoring our views, on April 19 of this year, the White House announced the recess appointments of Mr. Palmer and Mr. Saving as public trustees of the Social Security and Medicare programs. I immediately objected to this action by the White House because I believe the role of the public trustees is too important to be diminished by the recess appointment process. It was this extreme action on the part of the White House—in combination with the other two problems I mentioned previously—that prompted the chairman and me to introduce this bill today.

I think some good has come out of this unfortunate episode regarding the public trustees. Hopefully, everyone has a better understanding of the role of the public trustees. The Greenspan Commission recommended creating the positions of two public trustees to help ensure that the reports on the Social Security and Medicare trust funds were objective and not solely the work of administration officials. The Greenspan Commission envisioned experts from outside the executive branch who are confirmed by the Senate. They are unlike most other Presidential appointments because they do not represent the administration, they represent the public. Because of that unique distinction, it is inappropriate to recess appoint the public trustees. Individuals who are nominated to be public trustees should be selected by a process of consultation between the White House and Members of Congress. Once confirmed by the Senate, they should only

serve one term. To do otherwise undermines the public trustees' role as an objective check on the production of the trust fund reports.

Since this legislation should not spark any controversy, I hope both Chambers will quickly consider and pass this bill and send it to the President for his signature.●

MESSAGES FROM THE PRESIDENT

Messages from the President of the United States were communicated to the Senate by Ms. Evans, one of his secretaries.

EXECUTIVE MESSAGES REFERRED

As in executive session the Presiding Officer laid before the Senate messages from the President of the United States submitting sundry nominations which were referred to the Committee on Health, Education, Labor, and Pensions.

(The nominations received today are printed at the end of the Senate proceedings.)

REPORTS OF COMMITTEES

The following reports of committees were submitted:

By Ms. COLLINS, from the Committee on Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs, with an amendment in the nature of a substitute:

S. 2459. A bill to improve cargo security, and for other purposes.

INTRODUCTION OF BILLS AND JOINT RESOLUTIONS

The following bills and joint resolutions were introduced, read the first and second times by unanimous consent, and referred as indicated:

By Mr. SANTORUM (for himself and Mr. SPECTER):

S. 2754. A bill to derive human pluripotent stem cell lines using techniques that do not knowingly harm embryos; to the Committee on Health, Education, Labor, and Pensions.

By Mr. THOMAS:

S. 2755. A bill to enhance the energy production, refining, infrastructure, conservation and efficiency capabilities of the United States, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Finance.

By Ms. COLLINS:

S. 2756. A bill to authorize the President to utilize Federal equipment, supplies, facilities, personnel, and other non-monetary resources to assist utility companies that contribute to recovery efforts from the effects of a major disaster; to the Committee on Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs.

ADDITIONAL COSPONSORS

S. 22

At the request of Mr. ENSIGN, the name of the Senator from South Dakota (Mr. THUNE) was added as a co-sponsor of S. 22, a bill to improve patient access to health care services and provide improved medical care by reducing the excessive burden the liability system places on the health care delivery system.