

even five months is far too long. The Senate should expedite passage and implementation of the Green Lane bill for enhancing port security.

[From the Oregonian, Sept. 12, 2006]

#### TIME TO LAND TIGHTENED PORT SECURITY

A bill that addresses the vulnerability of U.S. shipping fetches up in the Senate, but still needs to be brought to shore.

The most impressive thing about the port security legislation that the Senate begins debating today isn't the bill's boldness or its thoroughness. It's the five years it took the bill to get to this point.

Talk about a slow boat from China.

Five years after what was supposed to be a new reality, after constant warnings about the vulnerability of U.S. ports that inspect only about 6 percent of incoming cargo containers, the bill raises some new barriers against a seagoing Sept. 11. Ports "were extremely vulnerable," says Sen. PATTY MURRAY, D-Wash., who has been pushing the bill, "on the fact that five years after 9/11 they've failed to address homeland security issues."

This bill may not entirely address those issues, but at least it finally raises them.

It requires the Department of Homeland Security to set minimum container security regulations, sets up an Office of Cargo Security Policy to coordinate federal and local port policy, and makes some federal money available.

Maybe most usefully, it sets up a "Green Lane" program to swiftly move cargoes already inspected at their point of departure. Most containers will still remain uninspected, but sending already-checked containers through will, in MURRAY's phrase, "reduce the size of the haystack where we're trying to find the needle."

Even after last week's carefully negotiated deal among three Senate committees, the bill faces serious hazards to navigation. The Senate has rejected the House's way of financing the programs, without completely agreeing on its own. Sen. JOHN McCAIN, R-Ariz., wants to attach to it a major rail security program, an excellent idea by itself that could send port security off the tracks.

In a Congress with minimal accomplishments and a swiftly dwindling number of days to manage any, a bill with real prospects can be a magnet to any idea that any legislator wants to slip across, even if the weight of the additions ends up sinking the bill.

Our strong feelings about getting serious about maritime security may be basic strategic thinking, or may be mostly slack-jawed astonishment at how long this process has taken. It might even be the touchy sensitivity coming from living in a city that not only includes a major port, but is named after it.

There are legitimate points to debate about this bill, and the Senate has two days to debate them.

Let's just hope Congress isn't still debating them next year, which would make it six years after action should have happened.

[From the Washington Post, Sept. 12, 2006]

#### SAFE PORTS

The brief session of Congress that just convened is distinguished in part for what is absent from its agenda—immigration and lobbying reform, for example. A notable exception, though, is a serious bill that has just emerged from the Senate Commerce, Finance and Homeland Security committees: the Port Security Improvement Act of 2006.

The bill contains several common-sense proposals. It requires the Department of Homeland Security to develop a strategy to rapidly resume trade after an incident at one

of the nation's ports, in order to limit economic slowdown. It codifies a number of good programs in law, including the Container Security Initiative, which, if it operates properly, will target suspect cargo for inspection in foreign ports before it gets close to the United States. And it establishes deadlines for Homeland Security to complete critical infrastructure projects—including installing radiation portal monitors in the nation's 22 biggest ports by the end of next year.

Two things distinguish this moderate legislation from the irresponsible rhetoric on port security that has marred debates on the subject for years. First, it does not call for 100 percent of containers arriving at U.S. ports to be individually inspected for all dangerous materials. The "inspect all containers" mantra is a red herring that exploits Americans' fears about what might slip through in order to score political points, ignoring the fact that there are much more cost- and time-effective ways of keeping dangerous cargo out of the country.

To her credit, Sen. Susan Collins (R-Maine), one of the bill's key sponsors, recognizes that the time and money it would take to inspect all 11 million containers that come into the country every year would be prohibitive with the technology available today, and she has committed to vote against it if such a provision is added. Instead, the bill calls for a pilot program in which the feasibility of individually inspecting all containers leaving three overseas ports will be gauged, which should test promising next-generation technologies without significantly slowing the pace of trade to the United States.

Second, while providing five years of steady funding for port security projects, the bill does not dedicate money for port security in perpetuity. The initial costs of making essential improvements such as buying radiation detectors, putting up fencing around ports and coordinating inspection procedures with ports overseas will require a fair amount of steady start-up cash. But a half-decade of grants for improving port security ought to be enough. After that, port security should have to compete for federal money with other worthy projects.

With those sensible checks in place, the Senate should pass this bill.

Mrs. MURRAY. Again, I thank the Senate for working with us to put a funding stream in this bill and to make this a real Maritime Cargo Security Act.

Thank you, Mr. President. I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Maine.

Ms. COLLINS. Mr. President, I rise to commend the Senator from Washington State for her dogged pursuit of a funding source for this bill. I agree with her that it is so important we have dedicated funding so the promise of this bill can become the reality.

Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that I be added as a cosponsor to Senator MURRAY's amendment No. 4929.

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

Ms. COLLINS. Again, I thank the Senator for her efforts. It has been a real pleasure to work with her on this important bill.

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

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will call the roll.

The legislative clerk proceeded to call the roll.

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

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

Mr. FRIST. Mr. President, we began consideration of the very important port security bill on Thursday of last week, and earlier in the week we addressed the Department of Defense appropriations bill. We generally agreed as a body that we would address the security issues first and foremost over the course of these 3 to 4 weeks, and this is the second step in that process. We made reasonable progress on the bill, but at this point it is not certain when we will finish the bill, and the fact is, we have really a little over 2½ weeks left. We have a lot to do, and therefore we need to keep business moving along.

We have been talking about a filing deadline and an amendment list, but we have been unable to reach agreement on either of those.

#### CLOTURE MOTION

Mr. FRIST. Mr. President, I will file a cloture motion tonight to ensure that we do get a vote this week. We will continue to consult with the managers on both sides, and if we can reach a reasonable agreement to bring the bill to a finish on Thursday, then I believe we should vitiate this particular vote. But since it is still uncertain and we do have a lot of business to do, at this time I send a cloture motion to the desk.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The cloture motion having been presented under rule XXII, the Chair directs the clerk to read the motion.

The legislative clerk read as follows:

#### CLOTURE MOTION

We the undersigned Senators, in accordance with the provisions of rule XXII of the Standing Rules of the Senate, do hereby move to bring to a close debate on Calendar No. 432, H.R. 4954, a bill to improve maritime and cargo security through enhanced layered defenses, and for other purposes.

Bill Frist, Susan M. Collins, David Vitter, Jon Kyl, James Inhofe, Tom Coburn, Jim DeMint, Richard Burr, Wayne Allard, Ted Stevens, Craig Thomas, Richard C. Shelby, R.F. Bennett, Mike Crapo, Sam Brownback, Rick Santorum, Larry E. Craig.

Mr. FRIST. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the mandatory quorum under rule XXII be waived.

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

#### MORNING BUSINESS

Mr. FRIST. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the Senate now proceed to a period of morning business, with Senators permitted to speak for up to 10 minutes each.

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