

(The bill will be printed in a future edition of the RECORD.)

Mrs. MURRAY. I move to reconsider the vote.

Ms. COLLINS. I move to lay that motion on the table.

The motion to lay on the table was agreed to.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Kansas.

MORNING BUSINESS

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

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

Mr. BROWNBACk. I ask unanimous consent the following Senators be recognized to speak: myself, for 10 minutes; Senator LINCOLN, for 10 minutes; Senator DODD, for 15 minutes; and Senator STABENOW, for 10 minutes.

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

SAFE PORT ACT

Mr. BROWNBACk. Mr. President, I congratulate my colleague from Maine on an excellent accomplishment, a huge vote on an important piece of legislation. It is critical. A number of colleagues, the Senator from Wyoming and others on both sides of the aisle, did so much good work on this legislation.

DARFUR

Mr. BROWNBACk. Mr. President, I will not take my colleagues' time for long, but I draw attention to a situation that has further developed—or devolved and deteriorated—and that is the situation in Darfur. It is a situation this Senate has spoken to often. We have spoken on resolutions, on amendments; we have added funds.

What we have feared is now upon us. We are now seeing in the IDP camps, the individuals that are displaced internally, diseases such as asthma, malaria, cholera and dysentery. We have had 12 humanitarian workers killed in the last 2 months. That is driving a number of the humanitarian groups out of the region. The NGO, the non-government organizations, currently now serve only 60 percent of the people they were serving. The Government of Sudan has reportedly resumed aerial bombings taking place in the northern and southern parts of Darfur.

The situation is growing worse. We don't know how many people have died already, but it is set to escalate rapidly. NGOs are fleeing because people are getting killed. The people are concentrated in the camps. They are now not getting food and clean water.

Now we have cholera, more misery, malaria and the numbers of people getting killed escalating dramatically. It

is going to escalate further and more dramatically if we do not act.

We have the government in Khartoum saying they want the African Union troops out.

We do not have a big enough force there now. They are scheduled to leave the end of September. We have a United Nations group that is forming to go in, and the government in Khartoum, Sudan, is saying, We are not going to let them in.

We have African Union troops preparing to leave. We have the U.N. troops not yet prepared to come in or being allowed in. And we have chaos. There are a lot of people dying in this region. It is escalating. It is time we step up and push again.

This Senate has been excellent on this issue. The administration has been very good. I cite particularly Assistant Secretary Zoellick who spent a lot of time working on this issue, trying to bring people together, getting a peace agreement signed a couple of months ago. It was an important peace agreement.

The problem that has taken place now, after the peace agreement was signed, the African Union troops were starting to organize to pull out, the government of President al-Bashir in the Sudan decided: This is our time to take over because the rest of the world is looking at Lebanon, they are dealing with Hezbollah, the United States is focused on its election cycle. This is the time for us to move.

This is a very difficult, dire situation for people on the ground. I met with a number of the aid organizations today. Their people are getting killed, so they are pulling back, as I cited.

When this situation first started developing about 3 years ago, the very situation we are most concerned about is a lot of people getting into the displaced camps, not having access to clean water, disease spreading in the camps, spreading because of the concentration of individuals and the lack of sanitation and clean water, and we really get a mess. That is now where we are.

Mrs. BOXER. Will the Senator yield?

Mr. BROWNBACk. Yes.

Mrs. BOXER. I thank Senator BROWNBACk for raising this issue. We are in a do-or-die moment. We have been there before. I am reading that certain experts are saying in 2 weeks there could be another Rwanda.

I am very glad the Senator is speaking out. I was very glad this Senate did act, as we know, on a measure last week, actually voting to send \$20 million to the African nations to carry on, as my friend points out. If they do not do it, there is a void. What will fill the void will be disease, rapes, killings and, I hate to say it, continued genocide.

I am glad the Senator raised this. The hours are running short. We did vote. It is important we use our bully pulpit in whatever way we can. I personally will be going to the United Nations on Monday literally to knock on

doors. I am setting up some appointments. We have to do everything we can to prevent this worsening situation from getting to the point where it is unsalvageable.

I thank the Senator for his efforts.

Mr. BROWNBACk. I thank my colleague for her interest. I wish her Godspeed in New York with the U.N.

My colleague in Connecticut will address this same topic. It is very important to speak. We need to pass the Darfur Accountability Act. It has passed here and in the House. We need to resolve the issues.

It is important that the President, in his meetings at the U.N. for General Assembly meetings, raise this issue. It is important to press the Sudanese Government to stop the aerial bombings—they can do that first and foremost—and that the African Union forces stay until a U.N. force is put in place, we pressure the Sudanese Government to accept a U.N. force, or, if not, put in targeted sanctions toward Sudanese officials preventing traveling, dealing with their own personal accounts.

There are a series of recommendations of a number of Senators addressed in a letter to the President. It is a bipartisan effort. It is a genocide already. It is one that is set to become a far worse situation.

We really need to act.

I yield to the floor to the set of speakers listed.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Arkansas.

Mrs. LINCOLN. Mr. President, I join my colleague from California in thanking Senator BROWNBACk for bringing this issue forward. He has been a tremendous supporter of taking action. He brings to light, tonight, the fact we have to act and we have to act expeditiously.

As the situation deteriorates, unfortunately, it moves closer toward a situation that we can do nothing about. I appreciate all of the Senator's efforts in what he is doing for the people of Darfur.

RURAL AMERICA MONTH

Mrs. LINCOLN. Mr. President, I was so pleased this week as the daughter of a seventh generation Arkansas farm family from rural eastern Arkansas, and it is with a tremendous amount of pride I come to the Senate today to applaud the passage of Senate Resolution 561 which designates September of 2006 as Rural America Month. I was pleased to introduce this resolution last week with Senator REID, Senator FRIST, and many of my colleagues.

Rural America means a tremendous amount to this Nation. It is the place where our values oftentimes begin and grow. We send people from rural America not just to the big cities of America, but all across the globe to exhibit those American values that grow and begin in rural America.

My values and my world view are directly tied to how I was raised in a

small town in Helena, AR, on the Mississippi River. My upbringing gave me a deep and abiding love for the rural way of life. In rural America, you learn that in order to have good neighbors, you have to be a good neighbor. Importantly, you learn by the example set for members of the community.

Growing up, I lived within walking distance from both sets of my grandparents. I learned what it meant to be a caregiver. At the age of 14 I learned from my grandparents. I learned values, I learned stories of World War I and the experiences they had during the Depression and so many other things that I captured from a real perspective—not from a textbook.

My mother would prepare dinner for our family every night, but very often she and my aunt would go back and forth and prepare a little bit extra every other night. It was my duty and my cousin's duty to take that dinner up to my grandparents and spend time with them, valuable time, where we would make them feel better, to share part of our day and they could share a story with us. I didn't realize at that age what caregiving was all about. I do now.

Being a good neighbor is something that comes easily for rural Americans. It is taught early in life. I am proud to have had the opportunity to learn that lesson by example. I see it as a model that can be applied outside the family, outside the neighborhood and to so many relationships that we, as people of a global community, have around the world, when we listen to the comments of Senator BROWNBACK and Senator BOXER talking about our neighbors across the globe and what that means to us, what our responsibility is as a global neighbor to those people in such need of protection, of sustenance of life, of education, and the ability to build for themselves a life of independence.

My love for the rural way of life I grew up in, the values it taught me, is what drives me to want to strengthen and support rural communities all over our country. With the passage of this resolution this week, the Senate has formally acknowledged the invaluable contribution that rural America makes to our country.

The experiences in my life have shown me firsthand that the more than 55 million people residing in rural America are the embodiment of the values that make our country great: community, service, hard work, family, responsibility.

Rural America provides significant contributions to our Nation, such as the safest, most abundant and affordable food supply in the world, as well as the renewable sources of energy with the potential to significantly reduce our country's dangerous dependency on foreign oil, not to mention what we could do for our environment.

Americans residing in rural areas have also made a considerable contribution to our country's freedom.

Rural Americans comprise a sizable percentage of our reserve, military force abroad and the highest concentration of military veterans live in rural communities.

Additionally, police officers, volunteer firefighters, EMTs or National Guardsmen, and members of our rural communities come together in times of national emergencies to keep our country safe. I am certainly reminded of the proud, strong, courageous firefighters, Guardsmen, ambulance drivers, and so many more that responded from Arkansas to New York during September 11 and to Louisiana during Katrina and the entire gulf coast.

I am proud of my heritage in rural America. I am pleased the Senate has acknowledged we owe rural America a considerable debt of gratitude. Rural America is critical to this Nation.

I look forward to working with my colleagues to address the challenges and the obstacles that rural America faces so all in rural America can enjoy every blessing and opportunity that our Nation has to offer.

I commend my colleagues for joining me in this special effort. I want to especially commend our leader, minority leader HARRY REID, who grew up in Searchlight, NV, who knows and understands the mentality, the values, and really has a tremendous passion for those people in rural America. I am proud to have joined he and Senator FRIST and others in bringing this resolution forward.

TRIBUTE TO ANN RICHARDS

Mrs. LINCOLN. Mr. President, I also come to the floor today to pay tribute to one of the most important and unique individuals in the history of American politics, Governor Ann Richards.

As a female politician from the South, Ann Richards was a person who I considered to be a role model. She was a great American patriot who had overcome tremendous obstacles to become a valued public servant while blazing a trail for aspiring female politicians, with wit, style, and grace like no one else could produce.

I consider it my good fortune to have come to know her over the years as a friend. While I am deeply saddened by her passing, it is so difficult not to smile whenever I think of Ann. She was remarkably gifted at using her keen sense of humor to say exactly what was on her mind and to get her point across in an effective and quotable way, proving she was truly one of a kind.

Ann Richards became the first woman elected to statewide office in Texas in more than 50 years—winning a seat as treasurer in 1982. In 1990, she became the first female to be elected Governor of the State of Texas.

As Governor, she took pride in the fact that she appointed more women and minorities to State positions than any of her predecessors. During her tenure, the Texas economy enjoyed

growth, despite the trend of the slumping U.S. economy.

Additionally, her audits of the State bureaucracy saved Texans \$6 billion, and her reform of the State prison system resulted in fewer violent offenders being released.

Perhaps her most remarkable achievement was maintaining the respect and admiration of Texans in the midst of not being reelected to office. The poll numbers of her popularity remained above 60 percent at that time.

Ann has been noted as saying that she did not want her tombstone to read, "She kept a really clean house," but, instead, preferred to be remembered by it reading, "She opened government to everyone."

Ann Richards will certainly be remembered as doing much more than keeping a clean house. She opened a door for me as a female politician in the South, and I know I speak for so many when I say that she continues to have my respect and my admiration.

She will certainly be dearly missed by this Senator and so many, many more across this Nation.

Thank you, Mr. President.

Mr. President, I yield to my colleague from Connecticut.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Connecticut.

Mr. DODD. Mr. President, first of all, let me thank our colleague from Arkansas for her eloquent comments both about rural America as well as on our wonderful friend, Ann Richards. I want to add my voice of condolence to her family and friends, not only in Texas but across this great country of ours, because she had friends that reached all across this land of ours—in fact, beyond the shores of the United States in her work after she left public life, working in the private sector as a great representative of a number of interests, including some that were offshore.

She was a remarkable person, and Senator BLANCHE LINCOLN has captured her very, very well. There are so many things I remember about her. She was a strong-willed woman. She had definite and clear views, and she was not shy about expressing them to you. But she probably had one of the best senses of humor of anyone I ever met in American politics. She could make you laugh. She could take a situation and bring up an anecdote or a story to make her point that would bring the house down.

Regardless of your point of view, Ann Richards had a gift to communicate with the American public like few other people I have ever met in public life. And it was a gift because she did so many good things with her talents.

Both as the State Treasurer of Texas and as Governor of that State, I got to know her very well, when I was the general chairman of the Democratic National Committee. She was a tremendous source of help to me in those years of 1995 and 1996 when I was campaigning and supporting Democrats across the country.