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Senate

The Senate met at 9:30 a.m. and was called to order by the Honorable BENJAMIN L. CARDIN, a Senator from the State of Maryland.

PRAYER

The Chaplain, Dr. Barry C. Black, offered the following prayer:

Let us pray.

O God, lover of humanity, give us today Your pardon and peace. Pardon the sins of our lips; the untrue, uncleaned, and unkind words we have spoken. Pardon the sins of our minds; the ignoring of truth, the refusal to face facts, the dishonest thinking that destroys integrity. Pardon the sins of our hearts; the pride that makes us esteem ourselves as better than others, the wrong desires, and the false loves that draw us from You. Forgive us, O God.

Place Your peace within us that we may no longer be torn by anxiety and indecision. As the Members of this body receive Your peace, help them to live in unity with each other. May the certainty that You love them take all fear away. Lord, uphold them with Your grace, both now and always. Amen.

PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

The Honorable BENJAMIN L. CARDIN led the Pledge of Allegiance, as follows:

I pledge allegiance to the Flag of the United States of America, and to the Republic for which it stands, one nation under God, indivisible, with liberty and justice for all.

APPOINTMENT OF ACTING PRESIDENT PRO TEMPORE

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will please read a communication to the Senate from the President pro tempore (Mr. BYRD).

The legislative clerk read the following letter:

U.S. SENATE,
PRESIDENT PRO TEMPORE,
Washington, DC, November 14, 2007.

To the Senate:

Under the provisions of rule I, paragraph 3, of the Standing Rules of the Senate, I hereby appoint the Honorable BENJAMIN L. CARDIN, a Senator from the State of Maryland, to perform the duties of the Chair.

ROBERT C. BYRD,
President pro tempore.

Mr. CARDIN thereupon assumed the chair as Acting President pro tempore.

RECOGNITION OF THE MAJORITY LEADER

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. The majority leader is recognized.

MEASURES PLACED ON THE CALENDAR—S. 2334, S. 2340, S. 2346, S. 2348, and H.R. 3996

Mr. REID. Mr. President, I understand there are five bills at the desk due for their second reading.

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. The clerk will read the titles of the bills, en bloc.

The legislative clerk read as follows:

A bill (S. 2334) to withhold 10 percent of the Federal funding apportioned for highway construction and maintenance from States that issue driver's licenses to individuals without verifying the legal status of such individuals.

A bill (S. 2340) making emergency supplemental appropriations for the Department of Defense for the fiscal year ending September 30, 2008, and for other purposes.

A bill (S. 2346) to temporarily increase the portfolio caps applicable to Freddie Mac and Fannie Mae, to provide the necessary financing to curb foreclosures by facilitating the refinancing of at-risk subprime borrowers into safe, affordable loans, and for other purposes.

A bill (S. 2348) to ensure control over the United States border and to strengthen enforcement of the immigration laws.

A bill (H.R. 3996) to amend the Internal Revenue Code of 1986 to extend certain expiring provisions, and for other purposes.

Mr. REID. Mr. President, I object to any further proceedings with regard to these bills en bloc.

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. Objection is heard. The bills will be placed on the calendar.

SCHEDULE

Mr. REID. Mr. President, this morning, the Senate will be in a period of morning business for 1 hour, with the time divided and controlled between the two parties—the majority controlling the first half and the Republicans controlling the final portion.

Following this, the Senate will resume consideration of the farm bill. At 2 p.m. today, Secretary Rice and Secretary Gates will brief Members about the current situations in the Middle East. Both of them will be here in S–407 at 2 p.m.

THE FARM BILL

Mr. President, the farm bill is an important piece of legislation for this country. That is why we do it every 5 years. It is an immense bill and includes many different things dealing with the agriculture of this country. It is similar in its importance to the highway bill that we do every 5 years. The farm bill is one that affects virtually every State.

We hear a lot on this Senate Floor and around the country, as we should, about the fact that we import about 65 percent of all the oil we use in this country, but it is not that way with agricultural products. We do so much in exporting food. It is one of the businesses in America that has a positive balance in trade.

I was happy yesterday morning when I was told by the minority we were going to be able to get a list of amendments and work through this bill. It is true we got a list of amendments, but it is as unreasonable as anything could be unreasonable—270 amendments, and a large number of them nonrelevant. Democrats, after having received these,

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came up with some amendments, but most of ours are, as well, nonrelevant amendments, meaning we wanted to match the Republicans. We are able to go forward with a handful of amendments, by that I mean five or six amendments, but that is all we need.

To show how unrealistic their list is, one only needs to look at the list. Every Senator has a right to propose amendments. Historically, however, with the farm bill, the average number of nonrelevant amendments per bill? One, in recent years. My research indicates something a little different than I mentioned yesterday. In the last three bills, no amendments, nonrelevant; two amendments; one amendment. So an average of one nonrelevant amendment per bill.

Here we have amendments they want to offer on this bill dealing with immigration, again, even though we debated for weeks on immigration. This bill is not an immigration bill. And, of course, the old faithful death tax. People come and say, well, farmers have problems, they are losing their family farms. In California, Senator FEINSTEIN heard about that, and so she asked the farm bureau to give her a list of those who had lost their farms because of the estate tax. None. Zero. This is an urban myth or maybe even a rural myth. But, of course, a number of Senators wanted to try that again—Republican Senators.

The issue of the day is the driver's license. A significant number of Senators want to offer amendments dealing with driver's licenses. And fishing loans, the Rio Grande River—I don't know what that is about—the Gulf of Mexico, the death tax, and the AMT. We are going to do AMT before we leave here. We don't need to do it on the farm bill. Fire sprinkler systems, National Finance Center, the *Exxon Valdez* litigation, land transfer, AMT tax. I can't give you the exact number, but there are at least six or seven amendments on the AMT tax. Is AMT important? Of course, it is. We are going to do AMT before this year ends. Everyone knows that.

In short, the Republicans aren't serious about doing the farm bill. This farm bill is headed down for one reason: the Republicans. They obviously don't want a farm bill. If we went along with this list, it would make it impossible to conduct a fair and reasonable debate—impossible.

So what I am going to do this afternoon is file cloture on the Dorgan-Grassley amendment, a bipartisan amendment, the one that is pending, and then on the bill. That will make a determination. All these organizations that say this farm bill is important—and I have had many of them write letters and contact me and say this is so important, we need to do this, the last farm bill is not as good as this one, it is a great farm bill—we will find out if the Republicans are going to kill this bill. It appears they are going to. They are not serious about passing a farm bill this year. If they come up with a list of amendments we can deal with, I am happy to do that. But I am not going to do this. It is not good for the Senate and it is not good for the country.

I repeat: The average number of nonrelevant amendments on farm bills: One per bill. We have here enough nonrelevant amendments to fill a little notebook. So that is where we are. It is unfortunate. The committee has worked very hard. They passed the bill out of the committee by voice vote. All Senators obviously agreed this was a good bill. SAXBY CHAMBLISS, the ranking member, and TOM HARKIN, the chairman of the committee, think it is a good bill—Democrat and Republican.

We are in the situation where Republicans are saying: Well, I want to offer my amendment on fire systems, the *Exxon Valdez* litigation, the AMT, and, of course, the old faithful, immigration. So that is where we are. It is unfortunate that is where we are, but this bill is headed down.

I indicated what I am going to do. Unless the Republicans come up with something more realistic, this bill is going to have cloture filed on Dorgan-Grassley, cloture on the bill, and that is where we will be on the bill this afternoon sometime.

RECOGNITION OF THE MINORITY LEADER

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. The Republican leader is recognized.

THE FARM BILL

Mr. MCCONNELL. Mr. President, the comments I am about to make could well have been made by my friend on the other side of the aisle as recently as last year, when his party was in the minority.

Of course, we all know we will indeed pass the farm bill. The only issue is: When and how. We actually made good progress yesterday on both sides, defining the realm of possible amendments that might be filed to the bill. The amendments list on our side is actually about 120, and the Democratic list is 140—approximately 265 amendments on the list.

Before my good friend on the other side protests too much about this number, let me remind Senators that 246 amendments were filed to the 2002 farm bill, 339 amendments were filed to the 1996 farm bill, averaging about 300 amendments per bill. In fact, when Republicans were attempting to move the 1996 farm bill through the Senate, the current committee chairman, Senator HARKIN himself, filed 35 amendments. So if all 100 Senators emulated the Senator from Iowa, 3,500 amendments would be the normal for farm bill consideration.

Thus, the current list of 265 amendments is not insurmountable, and, actually, not at all unusual at the beginning of the process of passing a farm bill. This is a complex bill that only gets reauthorized every 5 years. This time it is 1,600 pages long and includes the first farm bill tax title since 1933, adding an extra degree of difficulty.

However, Republicans are ready and willing to begin working in earnest to address these amendments. What always happens is that most of the amendments go away and we gradually work down the list. But this is a massive bill. The notion—if I can lift it here—that we are going to basically call up a bill of this magnitude, file cloture, and basically have no amendments strikes me as, shall I say, odd at least. What we always do is try to work out an orderly way to go forward. The issue of getting a fixed amendment list, which we were prepared to enter into last night, is the way it usually begins.

I am a little perplexed as to whether the majority actually wants this bill to pass and is trying to simply blame the minority for trying to bring it down. We all know, and I am sure anybody who has followed the Senate at all knows, we are going to pass a farm bill, no question about that. The farm bill is not going to be killed. The issue is whether we are going to have any kind of reasonable process for going forward, and I think getting an amendment list is the first step. I was hoping we could do that, but, apparently, that is not the case, and I regret that we are where we are.

But let me reassure everyone, I don't think there is anybody in the country who knows we aren't going to pass a farm bill, and nobody is going to kill the farm bill. But we are going to insist on a reasonable procedure for going forward.

I yield the floor.

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. The majority leader is recognized.

Mr. REID. Mr. President, there is no ability to pass a farm bill under the present situation. If people think the farm bill is going to be just passed because the distinguished Republican leader says one is going to pass, they are mistaken. We have a lot to do. We have 3 weeks after we come back after Thanksgiving and that is it for this year. Next year is going to be a very difficult year.

We have to figure out some way, next year, to work our way through the Presidential election and all the other elections that are taking place around the country. There is no guarantee—and that is an understatement—we will have a farm bill.

The one question no one answers is, What do we do with nonrelevant amendments? The history is one per bill. Here we have immigration, AMT six different times, we have fire safety, *Exxon Valdez* litigation, and on and on with nonrelevant amendments.

This is not the beginning of the process. The process started 10 days ago, and we have been stalled for 10 days—

10 days with nothing being done. We can talk about maybe the Democrats don't want it done. We have been here willing and able to work through these amendments, but Republicans have been unwilling to work with us in any meaningful way.

I would also say, a reasonable process? I am willing to work through a reasonable process, but we cannot put the Senate through having multiple votes on immigration issues or on nonrelated tax issues. We need to work on a farm bill. I repeat, if the Republicans want to come up with some type of a reasonable way to go forward, fine. Otherwise, they can vote to kill this bill, and they will vote to do it.

We will vote on the bipartisan Dorgan-Grassley amendment on cloture, which, in the past, has received overwhelming support in the Senate; it has been done. The amendment has been offered before. And a vote on cloture on the bill. If the bill goes down, there may be an opportunity we will bring it back again, but I do not know when. It certainly is not going to be in January. We have a lot of other people who are interested in doing things in January.

The Republicans have had their chance to be reasonable on the farm bill. I have tried my best to be patient, to be reasonable, to be thoughtful on a way to proceed on this bill. What did we get last night? I have said: Right now, Democrats—we can come up with five amendments, all relevant. That leaves them with the nonrelevant amendments. We will give them the average—or if they want two, we will consider that. But we are not going to deal with 247 amendments. We want five; we don't want nonrelevant amendments as has been done in the past. I don't know how we could be more reasonable than that—five.

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. The Republican leader is recognized.

Mr. MCCONNELL. We could have done way more than five amendments over the past week if the majority leader had not filled up the tree and prevented amendments from being offered. The last time the tree was filled on a farm bill was two decades ago, on October 31, 1985. In 1985, the majority leader filled the tree after a week of floor consideration; not after the very first day, but after a week—a week.

Here, amendments were prevented by a parliamentary device of the majority leader, which he is certainly entitled to use, to prevent an amendment process from going forward. Now we have this 1,600-page bill with no amendments allowed, and the majority leader says we ought to invoke cloture on the bill and pass it.

Look, we know the farm bill is going to pass. With all due respect to my good friend the majority leader, I know he is bluffing. He is going to pass a farm bill. I am reasonably confident the farm bill is going to pass after the minority gets an opportunity to offer some amendments.

I am also totally confident that the fact that the amendment list has a lot of amendments on it at the beginning does not mean they are all going to be offered or all going to be voted on. That is just the way the legislative process starts on a very large, complicated bill that we only pass once every 5 years.

I suppose we are at a stalemate. Obviously, we will continue to talk, and hopefully we can work out some way to go forward. But I am very doubtful that the minority is going to be interested in going forward in a situation where they basically have no opportunities to affect a 1,600-page bill that we only pass every 5 years.

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. The majority leader.

Mr. REID. Mr. President, if this were a jury, they wouldn't be out very long and they would return a verdict on behalf of the majority. To think someone would be gullible enough to believe the Republicans have not had an opportunity to offer amendments is simply without basis in fact. We have said all we have to do is get rid of the Dorgan amendment. There is plenty of opportunity to offer any amendment they want to offer in relation to this bill—anything they want to offer that is relevant and germane.

This is all a game, a game that is being played for reasons to destroy this farm bill, and they are doing a pretty good job. A week ago last Monday we started on this legislation, and we have accomplished nothing because the Republicans have refused to do so on the basis that they have been unable to offer amendments, which is untrue.

This is a situation in which we find ourselves. I think Democrats and Republicans are satisfied that the right thing is being done, where they don't have to march down here again on an unrelated matter and vote on immigration. We spent a month on immigration matters. Everyone knows AMT is going to be resolved. It has passed the House; we are going to do it here. This is a game that is being played.

I repeat, if this were a jury—and it is not, and I understand that; at least the jury is not going to be in until next November—we would find a quick return of a verdict because what we have agreed to do is what has been done in many instances on every farm bill. We do not deal with nonrelevant amendments, and we are not going to on this one unless there is some agreement reached, as I have indicated.

I repeat, this afternoon we are going to go ahead and file cloture on this amendment that has been pending for 10 days and file cloture on the bill. If the Republicans don't want a farm bill, they have an opportunity to vote not to proceed on the legislation.

Mr. MCCONNELL. Mr. President, on the issue of nonrelevant amendments in the last several decades, the majority leader has indicated the farm bill has not had nonrelevant amendments. According to my information, the Democrats have filed seemingly nonrelevant amendments during consideration of the last several farm bills on such things as the Social Security trust fund—offered on a farm bill; bankruptcy—offered on a farm bill; and convicted fugitives in Cuba—offered on a farm bill. So I hope no one seriously believed that nonrelevant amendments have not been offered by the other side on farm bills over the last couple of decades.

This is the kind of sparring that frequently goes on at the beginning of a big, complicated bill. We all know how it will end. It will end, in the end, with a reasonable number of amendments on both sides being voted on and the passage of the farm bill. The timing of that, obviously, will be up to the majority leader, who does have a difficult challenge. Floor time is always at a premium in the Senate. We understand that. But at some point, we will pass the farm bill, in the near future, after we have negotiated a process that is fair to both sides.

I yield the floor.

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. The majority leader is recognized.

Mr. REID. Mr. President, the Republican leader still refuses to answer the question before this body. The question is very direct. Why nonrelevant amendments? People can file them; we just have never voted on them in farm bills. It is very clear we have not voted on them.

We had a bill in 2001–2002, one in 1996, and one in 1990. In 1990, there were two nonrelevant amendments that were considered, that is it; in 1996, no nonrelevant amendments; in 2001–2002, two nonrelevant amendments—as I have indicated, an average of one in the last three bills.

We cannot be in a position here where the first amendment offered is one that is going to deal with immigration again, border fences, how long the fence is. How many times do we have to vote on how long the fence should be between the United States and Mexico, without even addressing the fence in northern America? As I indicated, the new immigration legislation of choice to bash people is now the driver's license—that is here. I don't think we need to get into that. What we need to get into is amendments that deal with this farm bill.

Some may say this is sparring. I do not agree with that. I think we are about the business of this country. We have a lot to do. The issue before this body now is this farm bill. I am very disappointed that it appears quite likely there will be no farm bill.

Mr. MCCONNELL. Mr. President, this has been an interesting colloquy, but the parliamentary situation we are in is that unless the majority leader gives his consent, no amendments on my side will be allowed. That is an unacceptable way to go forward on a 1,600-page bill that we pass every 5 years. We will continue to talk. We all know there

will be a farm bill. The only issue is when and how, and that is something we will have to negotiate here in the Senate, as we always do.

I yield the floor.

Mr. REID. Mr. President, last word, maybe; otherwise, I get the last word later.

Mr. President, the Republicans offer an amendment. I offered the first amendment on behalf of DORGAN and GRASSLEY. It is a bipartisan amendment. If they have an amendment they want to offer, let them offer it. I will be happy to stand out of the way. But they are offering all these excuses why they can't do it, and that is too bad.

RESERVATION OF LEADER TIME

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

MORNING BUSINESS

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. Under the previous order, the Senate will proceed to a period of morning business for 60 minutes, with Senators permitted to speak up to 10 minutes, with the time equally divided or controlled by the two leaders or their designees and with the majority controlling the first half and the Republicans controlling the final half.

Who yields time?

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

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. The clerk will call the roll.

The legislative clerk proceeded to call the roll.

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

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. Without objection, it is so ordered.

FOOD AND ENERGY SECURITY ACT

Mrs. LINCOLN. Mr. President, I rise today and come to the floor to encourage my colleagues to move expeditiously to pass the Food and Energy Security Act of 2007.

Sometimes we get caught in our bubble in Washington and we forget, we forget there is a whole world outside in this great land of ours: working families, folks who are working hard each and every day to provide for their families, to ensure their safety, to take care of their children, to be a part of their community, and to help their neighbors.

On October 25 our Senate Agriculture Committee passed this legislation unanimously, not one single dissenting vote. And that is because there were a lot of Members who understood the importance of this bill. They came together and worked to come up with a bill in which everyone had a vested interest.

It passed unanimously for good reason. It does a tremendous amount not only for our farm families but for antihunger advocates, for environmentalists, those working to spur economic development in rural areas, and it takes tremendous strides to rid our Nation of its dependence on foreign oil.

All of those are positive, progressive things that happen in this bill, brought together, again, by a group in the Senate Agriculture Committee who wanted to make progress, who wanted to put together a bill everybody could be proud of, that everybody could help move forward.

I know this policy effort is not on the top of everyone's priority list in this body like it is on mine. It is on the top of my mine, and it is a huge priority for me for multiple reasons. One, I am a farmer's daughter. I understand. I understand what farm families are doing out there. I understand, when they get up at the crack of dawn, before the Sun comes up, they get out and work hard, to do something that gives them a tremendous sense of pride. They produce a safe and abundant and affordable supply of food and fiber for this country.

I also know it is a huge priority for me because of my State, and the fact that my State has an economy that is based on agriculture. They have a great sense of pride in not only being able to provide that safe and abundant and affordable food supply in the most efficient way possible for this great land, but they do so worldwide as well.

At a minimum, everyone here should recognize and appreciate what this bill accomplishes, even if you take for granted that the grocery store shelves are full when you go in that grocery store, even if you take for granted that you pay less than anybody in the developed world per capita for your food source, and even if you take for granted the fact that it is produced in the most environmentally respectful way, and also that it is produced in a way that is safe, through all kinds of regulations, all kinds of research that provides us the sound backing that our food source is safe.

It is safe for our children, safe for our elderly, safe for our families. That is huge. At a time when we are seeing foods coming in through our borders, through our ports that are unsafe from countries that do not put on those restrictions and regulations, for countries that do not have the efficiency on their farms that we do, it is absolutely critical that we bring ourselves together and focus on this bill.

In this bill there is a $5.28 billion increase—an increase—to our nutrition programs. These are programs that provide assistance and a nutritious meal at breakfast and lunch for children, nutritious meals for the elderly across this country, nutritious summer feeding programs, nutritious fruits and vegetables and snacks for school children. That is a huge step in the right direction.

Something we can all get behind is over a $4 billion increase to conservation. You know it is unbelievable to see that kind of an increase to reinforce those who love and use the land, that they can do so with the incentives to make sure they are using the optimum of technology and research to conserve that land that means so much to them and to future generations.

That is a third straight record for the farm bill in terms of increases in what we are seeing in this underlying bill. There is $500 million for rural development in our small communities where we are seeing a desperate need for broadband and access to the information highway where we are looking for investment from entrepreneurs and small businesses so that we can keep strong our communities in rural America, and we do not see this flight into the cities, making sure those communities can be strong for the schools and for churches and for children and the working families who live in those rural communities, who have their heritage, their heart is there in that community, so that they can stay there, so that we as a nation make those investments.

The energy incentives in this bill, when it is coupled with the Finance Committee incentives, shows a true commitment to moving renewable fuels into the marketplace. You know, it does not make a bit of difference if we continue to produce all of these renewable fuels if we do not get them into the marketplace, if we do not get them into the hands of consumers. And it also does not make any difference if we do not start to think outside the box, looking for newer and more innovative processes and research to provide renewable fuels that come from feedstock that might be leftovers.

We know we can make cellulosic ethanol from cotton sticks and rice hulls and rice straw, but we have to get that to the consumer. We have to get that process going. There are great opportunities in this bill for that.

In short, this bill is a win for every region of our great Nation. And everyone, even if your plow is a pencil, even if you have not spent time walking rice levees or scouting cotton or chopping down coffee bean plants in a bean field like I have, even if your plow is a pencil and the closest farm is 1,000 miles away from you, it should be so obvious to everyone that the farm bill provides exactly what this title suggests: it provides this Nation's security, it provides us with security of knowing that we will have the domestic production of a food supply for our people and for our Nation, that we will help feed the world with that safe and affordable and abundant supply of food and fiber.

Unfortunately, it is clear by the criticisms of the farm bill by the editorial boards and major newspapers that many of our hard-working farm families are not getting the respect they deserve for what it is they provide. It is my hope the Senate will not also take for granted the security of safe food and fiber at a time when so much of what is entering this country

is either not inspected, nor safe, or sent back.

We had a hearing in the Finance Committee. We were told about port shopping, that products coming in commodities, coming into our country come to one of our ports, get inspected, get rejected, and then they start shopping around for a port that does not have an inspector. And, yes, we have ports without inspectors.

So not only are we accepting substandard food, but we are minimizing our ability to produce our own with the control and the oversight that ensures us that what we produce domestically is safe.

This piece of legislation is about national security, just as foreign policy is in many other regions of the world. Why is it we think that when we go to these trade negotiations, usually the last thing that is negotiated is agricultural products? It is because those countries understand. Those countries have been hungry. They have been subjected to foods that are unsafe or grown in a manner they don't appreciate. But they also know they can control making sure that there is enough there, if they can control and keep out our products. Many of the commodities I grow do find themselves on the international scene as commodities left out of trade agreements. That is because they are critical. They are a staple in the global community for sustenance of life.

Whether a country provides subsidies at levels much higher than those included in this bill or protects their farmers by a prohibitive tariff structure, every country in some form or fashion ensures a domestic food supply. If we continue in the direction we are going, where we are seeing for the first time in the history of our country the possibility of a trade deficit in agricultural products, what is that going to mean to us as a nation? It is going to mean we are then going to be more dependent on other countries for food that is critical for children and families all across this land.

In the United States, the farm bill is the policy that ensures safe food and fiber. We have worked hard in the Agriculture Committee to come up with a bill that was both bipartisan and biregional, agreed upon by everybody. Everybody got something positive out of a bill that was respectful to the diversity of this country, to the diversity of how we grow our crops. Lord, it was interesting for me to talk with my colleagues from way up on the Canadian border who had snow in August. We had 12 straight days of over 100-degree weather in Arkansas. We are a diverse nation and we are blessed to be that way. It is all the more reason we have the responsibility in this body to be respectful of that diversity and what it is that each of us has to bring to the table from our States. The Agriculture Committee did that.

It also respected the needs of those who are less fortunate in the nutrition title. It respected the idea that Americans want to ensure conservation and good stewardship of the land. We did that. We looked at the need for renewable energy, and we have made a huge investment, both in the farm bill in authorizing policy and also in the Finance Committee package that accompanies it, making sure that incentives are there for communities and for ag producers and all of those in rural America that not only can we continue the research but get into production of renewable fuels and, most importantly, that we can get them to the consumer. It doesn't matter how much we produce; if we are not using it, it is not benefiting the environment and not lessening our dependence on foreign oil. In the long term, it is not going to benefit growers who are looking for that secondary market.

We should all recognize and appreciate the bounty this bill provides and what it does for the hard-working men and women in farm families across this country who support each and every one of us every day in what it is they do for us for that security. I urge my colleagues to get serious about passing this bill and providing the certainty our farm families deserve, knowing that Government stands with them. Today, this time right now in our State of Arkansas, it is time to plant the winter wheat crop. Without knowing what the policy is going to be for next year or the year after that or the year after that, it is pretty hard to go to that banker and ask for that tremendous loan for that investment one has to make in producing that safe and abundant, affordable food supply, without knowing where one's Government stands.

I appeal to my colleagues and ask them to join us on the floor to talk about how important this bill is and, more importantly, to come together and figure out a way we can make this happen before we go home to celebrate Thanksgiving and the incredible bounty this country provides. Let us make sure those who provide for us have an understanding of where their Government stands on their behalf.

I yield the floor and suggest the absence of a quorum.

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. The clerk will call the roll.

The assistant legislative clerk proceeded to call the roll.

Mr. CORNYN. I ask unanimous consent that the order for the quorum call be rescinded.

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. Without objection, it is so ordered.

Mr. CORNYN. I yield myself 10 minutes of our allotted 30 minutes.

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. The Senator is recognized.

APPROPRIATIONS

Mr. CORNYN. Mr. President, amid the news we have received this last month on a variety of fronts—some good, some bad—is some very positive news from our economy. October marked the 50th straight month of positive job creation in the United States, a new record since the Government began keeping such records in 1939. Unfortunately, Congress has set a record of its own last week, when it finally sent the first of 12 appropriations bills that should have been finished before October 1, when the new fiscal year began, to the President for his signature. Not since 1987, 20 years ago, has Congress taken this long to send a single appropriations bill to the President this late in the fiscal year. I ask this question: What family, what small business, who in the United States could run their fiscal house this way, other than the Congress? Only the Congress has the power to basically suspend the powers of disbelief and pass something called a continuing resolution so that spending remains on auto pilot at last year's levels, rather than meet the needs of this current year by passing appropriations bills. Instead of working hard together, as I genuinely believe most Members of this body want, we see instead a calculated game being played out.

I want to focus specifically on our Veterans and Military Construction bill which should have been passed as a stone-alone bill and should have been signed by the President before Veterans Day this last Monday but was not. Rather than working to see that the funding for our veterans and for quality-of-life funding for military families, which is absolutely essential for a volunteer military force such as ours, we see this bill has consciously been held behind, even though it passed some 2 months ago, presumably to serve as a vehicle for a large spending bill that will be offered in December.

This veterans funding bill is perhaps the most telling and troubling sign of the games this process has degenerated into. It strikes me—and I believe I am not alone—that there is a serious discrepancy between what Congress says to our veterans and what Congress does for our veterans. Knowing how important veterans funding is to the President and to the country as a whole and to the Members of this body, some of my colleagues have decided instead to use this bill as a vehicle to expand Washington spending and, unfortunately, engage in partisan games. Rather than funding the veterans bill by itself with important funding and benefit enhancements that will serve America's veterans and military families, the majority leader has decided, initially at least, to try to merge this bill with another bill he knew the President was going to veto. As a matter of fact, he did yesterday, the Labor-HHS bill, because it would cost American taxpayers $11 billion more than the President asked for and included a number of, shall we call them, ''interesting earmarks'' or special projects designated by Members of the Senate.

Fortunately, we were able, through a point of order urged by my senior Senator, Mrs. HUTCHISON, under Senate rules, to separate the Veterans and Military Construction bill from an overloaded Labor, Health and Human Services bill.

I ask my colleagues to consider what the American people are supposed to think when they see examples such as this. The labor bill the President vetoed included a special interest earmark for a San Francisco museum called the Exploratorium. I have never heard of the Exploratorium before, but let me explain a little about this particular earmark that was included in the vetoed bill. This is to fund, at taxpayer expense, a museum that has more than 500,000 visitors each year and an annual budget of almost $30 million. Yet the American taxpayer has been asked unknowingly to spend money on Exploratorium—payments of more than $11 per visitor over the last 6 years. What is perplexing to me is why the majority would knit together funding for this Exploratorium, for example, along with about 2,000 other earmarks or special interest appropriations, with money for veterans health care. Why should veterans be required to shoulder the burden not only for this earmark, which I think we could fairly debate the appropriateness of, but over $1 billion set aside for earmarks in a completely unrelated matter and unrelated bill? This is exactly what the majority leader tried to do last week, along with our colleagues on the other side of the aisle.

At the end of the day, we were able to stop this strategy and prevent our veterans from becoming yet another political football in the appropriations process. Unfortunately, we still haven't seemed to learn the lessons from this unfortunate gamesmanship, because we still have not yet passed the Veterans and Military Construction appropriations bill, even though it has been sitting there, waiting to go to the President for about the last 2 months. Just as we were able to free our veterans from this pork-laden trap, the majority leader indicated that the veterans bill would not actually ever get independent funding. On November 7, he said:

> Some Republicans are seeking to separate the two bills, to force a vote just on the VA bill and vote just on the Labor-Health and Human Services bill. If we do that, here is what happens. This bill will go back to the House with only the Labor-Health and Human Services bill. That is all the President will get. He will not get the veterans bill.

In other words, the majority leader on November 7 said that if we were successful in splitting these two bills apart, the President would get the porkbarrel spending bill that pluses up spending for these 2,000 earmarked special projects and is $11 billion over the President's requested amount, and the majority leader would make sure that the Veterans and Military Construction appropriations bill didn't go to the President. I don't know how this kind of action can be characterized other than a shameful way to treat our veterans and to deal with the quality-of-life issues included in the military construction portion of this appropriations bill.

It is past time to fund the Federal Government at appropriate levels and to give our veterans and troops currently in harm's way the funding they need, as well as those who have proudly worn the uniform of the U.S. military whom we honored just this last Veterans Day, last Monday. It is long past time we put aside the gamesmanship that, unfortunately, seems to characterize so much of what happens here in Washington when it comes to politics.

I think we ought to try to figure some way to work together to reverse the lowest approval rating in recent time which the American public currently has with regard to the U.S. Senate, to help put a stop to these games and liberate our Nation's finances from the grip of partisan politics, I would suggest, and to make sure we do not end up in a game of chicken where the American people are told if we do not pass a bloated Omnibus appropriations bill there will be a shutdown of the Government.

I believe we ought to go ahead and pass, by way of insurance, the Government Shutdown Prevention Act. This legislation will guarantee that the Government continues to work for the American people until Congress passes responsible appropriations bills. We need to do this sooner rather than later. It does not look as if we are going to get it done this week before we break for the Thanksgiving recess, but we sure ought to get it done when we come back on December 3.

Passing the Government Shutdown Prevention Act will make sure the American people need not be frightened into thinking the Federal Government will not continue to operate and fund essential programs while we continue to debate what the appropriate level of appropriations bills should be.

Mr. President, I yield myself 2 more minutes, to be followed by the Senator from New Hampshire.

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Mr. WHITEHOUSE). Without objection, it is so ordered.

Mr. CORNYN. Mr. President, my colleagues from the majority want to spend $23 billion above what the President has requested in his budget for discretionary spending. Now, that is $23 billion in discretionary spending over and above entitlement spending, which has been operating again on autopilot at the growth rate of about 8 percent per year. They have claimed $23 billion is not all that much money. But I would suggest that only in Washington is $23 billion to be considered pocket change. The American people are smarter than that. They know somebody has to pay for that money. It does not magically appear. What it means is the Federal Government is going to reach into their pockets and extract it from their hard-earned wages in order to fund these vast expansions of Government programs.

We need to make sure that we are better stewards of the taxpayers' dollars and that we regain the lost confidence the American people had in this institution. We need to take care of problems, for example, such as the growing alternative minimum tax, which threatens to grow from 6 million taxpayers this year to 23 million taxpayers next year—a typical so-called tax-the-rich program, which, just as they always do, tends to grow to creep into the middle class. We need to make sure the middle class does not suffer a huge tax increase by dealing with the alternative minimum tax.

Again, instead of being in lockdown, as we are on the farm bill because the majority leader will not allow any amendments to be offered except for ones he cherry-picks, we ought to be solving these problems, pass a Veterans and Military Construction bill, get it to the President, and not have a game of chicken with $23 billion in excess spending, which we know the President is going to veto. Instead we should engage in a meaningful dialog to try to come up with a negotiated amount. We should eliminate this middle-class tax increase which is going to grow from affecting 6 million people to 23 million people unless we do something about it before the end of the year.

Mr. President, I know the distinguished Senator from New Hampshire is here with us and ready to take the floor, so I yield to him.

I ask that the Senator from South Carolina, who I know is coming down after the Senator from New Hampshire, be reserved 8 minutes of the time we have remaining.

Mr. President, could I ask how much time we have remaining on this side?

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Seventeen minutes is remaining.

Mr. CORNYN. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that it be split evenly between the Senator from New Hampshire and the Senator from South Carolina.

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

The Senator from New Hampshire.

Mr. GREGG. Mr. President, I thank the Senator from Texas.

First, Mr. President, I join the Senator from Texas in asking that the majority leader and the Democratic membership free the Veterans bill and the Military Construction bill, which is ready to be sent to the President, stop holding it hostage for the purpose of holding it up with special interest projects which have nothing to do with the military or with veterans, and instead send that bill down to the President so he can sign it so our veterans can know they are getting the support they need after their great service to our Nation.

THE FARM BILL

Mr. GREGG. Mr. President, I rise to talk a little bit about the status of the farm bill because I was stunned, obviously, today to find that the majority leader—after for 2 weeks, almost, refusing to allow any amendments to the farm bill—has now decided to file cloture on the farm bill and claim this is the way things are done in the Senate. That is a statement which is pretty hard to accept with a straight face: the concept that the majority leader would set up a process in the Senate which, essentially, made him the gatekeeper of all amendments to a major authorization and appropriations bill—appropriations in the sense it has mandatory spending in it—so that any Member of the Senate who wanted to offer an amendment would have to go through the majority leader before the amendment would be allowed to come to the floor. Well, that is the way they do things in the House of Representatives, obviously, with what is known as the Rules Committee. But the Senate does not do that. The Senate has never done that.

I have heard innumerable, wonderful speeches from the senior Senator from West Virginia, the keeper, basically, of the flame of the integrity of the Senate, Mr. BYRD, on the importance of the amendment process in the Senate. I happen to subscribe to that, as I thought every Member of the Senate subscribed to that, that the greatness of the Senate is that if we put a piece of legislation on the floor, which is a significant piece of public policy, we debate it, we hear ideas on it, then we vote on those different ideas, and then we vote on passage. We do not lock down a bill and not allow any amendments to occur on that bill except those that are accepted on the majority side and by the majority leader and then say to the minority: Well, because you would not accept our process of locking down the amendment process, we are going to file cloture to shut you out completely.

That truly is an autocratic level which this Senate has never seen. Let me tell you something, it puts us on a slippery slope. It is very possible—in fact, I hope likely—that the other side of the aisle may not be in the majority forever around here and maybe not even through the next election. Certainly, if they continue to produce such a dysfunctional legislative calendar, as they have over the last year, I would think the American people would get a little frustrated and ask for a change. But they have now opened the door to running the Senate as an autocratic system, as a dictatorial system where the rights of 99 Members of the Senate are made completely subservient to 1 Member, which is the majority leader, because he has the right of recognition, he fills up the tree, and then when he does not like the amendments, he files cloture.

Let's talk about some of the amendments he does not want us to hear on this bill relative to the farm bill. He does not want an amendment offered which would say to farm families, especially to mothers in farm families: You will have access to OB/GYNs. That is one of the amendments I intended to offer. It would simply say that OB/GYNs who practice in farm and rural communities would be immune from excessive liability and lawsuits from trial lawyers.

We know for a fact we have lost most of our OB/GYNs in rural America. These baby doctors cannot practice in rural America because there are not enough clients for them to generate enough revenue to pay the cost of their malpractice insurance, which is generated by these lawsuits from trial lawyers. Well, the other side of the aisle is a kept group for the trial lawyers, so they do not want anything that could happen around here that might limit the income of trial lawyers, including allowing baby doctors to deliver babies in rural America to farm families. So they are not going to allow me to offer that amendment. What an outrage.

They do not want an amendment which would give firefighters in this country the right to bargain in order to reach agreement on contracts. Now, I do not think fires just burn in cities. Farmers have fires. In fact, if you look at what is happening in the West with wildfires, there are a lot of issues of fires for farmers in this country, especially silo fires. I know. I come from an area where there are occasional silo fires. They need firefighters. But the other side of the aisle does not want to hear about an amendment that deals with firefighters' rights. No. They want to lock that amendment out of the process.

They want to lock out of the process an amendment which would address the issue of people who are caught up in this terrible mortgage crisis we have. There are a lot of farmers, I suspect, and a lot of Americans generally who did not know how these ARMs worked when they went into these deals, and they are now finding they are being refinanced at a level where they cannot keep their homes because their interest rates are jumping up into the double-digit levels. When those homes are foreclosed on, they get a double whammy of getting hit by the IRS with what is known as a recognized gain, even though they did not have any income because their home got foreclosed on. This is a really difficult thing to do to someone, whether you are a farmer or just an average American, to first have their home foreclosed on and then to hit them with an IRS bill for having their home foreclosed on. I was going to suggest we take that issue up on the farm bill because it happens to relate to a lot of farmers who are being foreclosed on.

I was going to suggest we take up an amendment which might look at some of these new commodities that were put into this bill, such as the asparagus program and the camellia program and the chickpea program, but we do not want to hear about that. No, we do not want to address those issues.

We do not want to address the issue of the fact that this bill has in it $10 billion—$10 billion—of gamesmanship on moving dates so they can make this bill look more affordable and less costly. They don't want to have an amendment on that which might make the bill honest on its face. They don't want to hear that amendment. They don't want to hear this amendment, which is sort of ironic.

They have put in this bill what is called walking-around money—walking-around money—for the farm States in this country, actually for five farm States, called a $5 billion disaster loan fund. The way we have always handled disaster loans for the farm community—and they have them, and they are legitimate—is we have simply passed an emergency bill around here to cover the disaster when the disaster occurs. But what this bill does is set up a new fund which will be a floor, essentially, which says there is $5 billion in this kitty sitting over here for which if there is a disaster, you take this money too. What is the practical implication of that? Every wind storm that occurs in North Dakota that blows over a mailbox is going to be declared a disaster so they can get some of this money. It is putting money on the table that is just going to be used up.

We know we are going to fund disasters when they occur. Why would we prefund disasters in a way that is going to make it absolutely guaranteed that a disaster will occur, even if there is not a disaster? Well, we don't want to have an amendment which says: Let's take that disaster money and move it over to IDEA, special education. There is an account that needs some more money. There is an account which would give relief to a lot of families in this country, a lot of small towns in this country, farm communities and other communities that have a huge burden of IDEA in special education. Let's take that $5 billion out of that emergency account and, rather than having walking-around money for the five States that usually get this emergency money, use it for IDEA, which will benefit all the States in this country.

They don't want to hear those amendments.

It is incredible that on a bill of this size—one of the biggest bills we deal with as a Congress, one of the most important pieces of public policy we deal with—the other side of the aisle and the majority leader have specifically set up a procedure where amendments will not be tolerated—simply won't be tolerated. Totally inappropriate. I think basically what the other side of the aisle wants to do is kill this bill.

Now, from my perspective, this is not a good bill, and I am going to be voting against it. But I know it is going to pass if it is given a legitimate shot at

passage because there are a lot of people around here who have these different commodities, and they all vote for each other, and, as a result, they build up enough votes to pass this bill. That is the way the farm bill always works. But that is no reason why we should not have a chance to debate it, to address some of these issues, such as baby doctors in rural communities and farm communities, such as the need for firefighters to have adequate bargaining rights, such as the need for people who are getting foreclosed on not getting hit with an IRS bill, such as the need to have proper accounting on this bill for what they are actually spending, such as the need for not setting up a $5 billion walking-around money fund, such as the need for the new commodities programs for asparagus, chickpeas, and camellia. We should have amendments to address all these issues. That is what the process of the Senate is all about. But it is being denied here. The result of that denial is that those of us who happen to believe the Senate should function as a place where things are amended and discussed and aired and heard are going to have to resist this bill. So the majority seems to want to kill this bill, which is unfortunate, because in the end, this bill should at least get a fair hearing.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator's time has expired.

Mr. GREGG. Thank you, Mr. President.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from South Carolina has 7½ minutes.

KEEPING PROMISES

Mr. DEMINT. Mr. President, I think we came into this year very hopeful in a lot of ways. The Republicans lost the majority, and in some ways I think that is a good thing. We lost our discipline on spending, and for many years our Democratic colleagues were more than happy to help us and even try to one-up us during the period we were in the majority.

Our last act as the majority, though, was a good one. We were able to stop last year's omnibus bill and force Congress to move ahead under a continuing resolution that only had about 2,000 earmarks—wasteful earmarks. This year, the majority unfortunately has expanded that back to about 6,000, which is disappointing because we entered the year with a lot of promises from the new majority, a lot of hopes about things that would change. Our Democratic colleagues ran on cleaning up the culture of corruption and getting rid of a lot of wasteful earmarks.

I, for one, wanted to help. In fact, one of the first things I did this year was introduce NANCY PELOSI's, Speaker PELOSI's, earmark transparency bill in the Senate. Unfortunately, the new majority decided it wasn't right the way they did it and filled it full of loopholes, and we have been fighting all year to try to continue to disclose a lot of this wasteful spending.

Now, as I said, as we end the year, instead of the 2,000 earmarks we were at last year, we are going to 6,000 plus. We are also way over budget. The amount we have over budget this year will translate over the next 10 years to about $300 billion in additional spending. That is a lot of money for anyone to even conceive of, but just so Americans will know, that amount would allow us to continue the tax relief we have had for the last several years for another 10 years without spending any additional money as a government. That tax relief affects every American. Instead, because we haven't acted, because we haven't kept our promises, next year millions of Americans, middle-class Americans will experience a new tax that they have never experienced before, and a lot of them don't know it is coming.

The disappointment, I guess, as we end this year is there are so many needs as a nation that we haven't acted on. Instead, we have spent the year with 40 resolutions on Iraq. We have tried to expand Government health care, holding children hostage to moving to more Government-controlled health care. The 40 Iraq resolutions were all done holding our troops hostage and the funding for our troops and the weapons and the armament they need to succeed. We spent the year on things such as trying to eliminate the secret ballot for workers when folks are trying to unionize them. Workers have always had the freedom to vote secretly and not be coerced or intimidated, but we have held workers hostage this year.

We have all of these new wasteful earmarks. Americans have heard about them, whether it is a hippie museum or monuments to different Members of Congress, billion-dollar parks at the expense of our veterans funds. We have balled that all up as we go into the end of the year $300 billion over budget for the next 10 years with wasteful earmarks, including monuments to ourselves. I think we have done something even worse than the wasteful spending because we have tied to this wasteful spending ball at the end of the year the most vulnerable and disadvantaged in our society. We have tied the children to it. We have said they need more health care. We have tied our troops to it, and we are holding them hostage. Instead of giving them the money they need over the next several months, we are tying them up and holding them hostage.

Our veterans, we filled the Veterans bill with wasteful earmarks, and we are holding our veterans hostage. We have basically made human shields out of the most vulnerable Americans, and we are challenging Members of the Senate and Members of the House: Vote for this bill that is billions over budget, that contains billions of wasteful earmarks. You either vote for this bill or you are voting against children and veterans and seniors and voting against our troops. This is no way to run the most important Government in the world.

So we end the year with a lot of broken promises. We have not helped Americans buy health insurance; in fact, we have made it harder. We haven't cut spending; we have raised it. We have increased the number of earmarks from last year. All we have done is talk. While our troops are succeeding in Iraq, we are trying to cut their funding. Instead of broken promises, we need to focus on the promises we need to keep.

We have promised Americans since the beginning of our Constitution that we are going to protect them. That is our main purpose. We need to keep our promises to seniors because we have taken their money all their lives and promised them Social Security and Medicare will be there. We need to keep those promises. We need to keep the promise of making freedom work for everyone and not to use the problems in our society as an excuse to replace freedom with more Government, which is what we are in the process of doing at every turn in Washington.

I appreciate the opportunity to speak, and I hope we can end the year in a more bipartisan fashion and work on reducing the amount of spending, the wasteful earmarks, and try to focus our efforts on the real priorities of this country that affect real Americans and not to hold our people hostage to this wasteful spending. We have just another month or so to finish our business, and I hope we finish it with some honor and dignity in a way that the American people would regain some trust in this Senate and in this Congress.

Mr. President, I yield the floor, and I note the absence of a quorum.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will call the roll.

The assistant legislative clerk proceeded to call the roll.

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

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

The Senator from Michigan is recognized.

GETTING RESULTS

Ms. STABENOW. Mr. President, I come to the floor because it is amazing to listen to my friends on the other side of the aisle lament what they view are things not getting done when, in fact, we are getting things done. The truth is, we have been operating this year with an extraordinary slowness on the other side of the aisle because, first of all, they have participated in 52 filibusters since the beginning of the year—52 filibusters, maybe 53 by the end of the week, every week now. This is unprecedented. It never happened before. It never happened before; to see the minority in the Senate obstruct,

obstruct, obstruct with 52 different filibusters, trying to stop us from getting the people's business done.

I find it so interesting and amazing when my colleagues lament that not more of the appropriations process is done. As the Presiding Officer knows, our colleagues, the previous majority, didn't do a budget at all last year—at all. We are moving through the process. Despite the continual slowdowns, the efforts to stop us from proceeding, we are moving ahead. But last year, our colleagues, who lament so passionately and who come to the floor every day, didn't even pass a budget. We came in in January to a new majority and had to clean up the mess, literally. There was no budget. We had to pass a budget just to get us through the end of the year, to be able to keep services for the American people going, and we did that. We did that.

Also, during that process we put in place a few things along the way that we clearly put at the top of the list in terms of appropriations: Additional money for our veterans, clearly a priority for us; a Pell grant for our low-income students trying to go to college to have the American dream. We are now at a point where we have the budget, the appropriations process that we are working on for next year. We have seen nothing but efforts to slow that down, to veto it.

Yesterday the President vetoed the part of the budget that focuses on health care, education for our people, health research into new cures for cancer. It focuses on diabetes and Alzheimer's and Parkinson's disease, all of the areas where we hope to make breakthroughs to be able to save lives. The President vetoed that.

The President says the slight increase for restoring cuts that the President and the Republicans have made in the last several years, in our efforts to restore those funds to get the priorities right and put us back on track for middle-class families, was too much. Eleven billion dollars invested in America is too much. Twelve billion dollars a month on a war—putting our men and women in the middle of harm's way in a civil war every day—is OK, and it is not paid for. The most important thing is we are losing lives, but it is outrageous that we are seeing $12 billion a month being spent.

The President vetoed an investment in America yesterday that was less than 1 month in Iraq—an investment in our families, in our seniors, in our children, and in the future in terms of education and opportunity and research. He vetoed a bill that was, in fact, an effort to invest in America.

I have to say, despite 52 filibusters, we are, as Democrats, working with colleagues, obviously. We don't get anything done unless it is on a bipartisan basis. We know that, and we do it every day. But the truth is, our majority is getting results for middle-class Americans every day. I am proud we have placed veterans at the top of our budget. We, for the first time, have listened. We, the new majority, have listened to the veterans of this country, the veterans organizations. We took their budget called the Independent Budget—the veterans budget—and made it our own so we would make sure our veterans were fully funded. We have addressed the concerns about Walter Reed and what happens when our veterans come home and get caught between the military health system and the VA system.

Mr. President, I believe you are about to give me a high sign on the time. I ask unanimous consent for an additional 10 minutes.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Is there objection?

Without objection, it is so ordered. The Senator is recognized for an additional 10 minutes.

Ms. STABENOW. Mr. President, I am very proud of the fact that one of the first things we did this year in addition to supporting our veterans was to pass the first minimum wage increase in 10 years for working Americans. An awful lot of those are moms with two children, three children, working one job, two jobs, three jobs, trying to hold things together for their family, working hard every day. I am proud we have passed that. I am proud we have also focused on middle-class Americans and the American dream of college and the opportunity to be able to get the skills that young people and people going back to school can receive in order to be able to work hard and be successful in our new global economy. We have passed the largest student financial aid program since the GI bill. I am very proud we have done that. We are getting results for middle-class Americans every day.

On a bipartisan basis, we have also passed the America COMPETES Act, which redirects critical resources into math and science and technology for education as well as for research. I am very proud of the fact that despite the need to pass the 9/11 Commission recommendations, we have done that. Again, one of the early efforts by the new Democratic majority was to pass the 9/11 Commission recommendations to focus on critical needs, such as making radios work, so the police officers and firefighters in America can actually talk to each other and not be put in the same situation as they were on 9/11 where they were running into buildings they should have been running out of because they did not have the communications equipment that worked. We have focused on real security. We have focused, through the appropriations that we have passed, on our troops and their families, and I am very proud of that. We have also focused on important and long overdue and neglected water resources projects.

And it is wonderful to see that not only was it passed on a bipartisan basis, but when the President vetoed the bill, we joined together to say yes to protecting our waters, when the President said no. So we are getting things done. We are getting things done every single day.

We are putting the priorities of the American people first. In our budget, we have said veterans are at the top of the list, education funding opportunity is at the top of the list, and we also place children's health insurance at the top of the list. In this area, we have worked together in a wonderful bipartisan way. People are to be congratulated on both sides of the aisle for working together on children's health insurance.

The President again said no. He has vetoed the bill. We are working hard, and we have the votes in the Senate to override the veto. We are working hard to get House Republican colleagues to join us so we can invest and cover 10 million children with health insurance.

This is another example of where we have been pushing forward, changing the direction of this Congress, focusing on middle-class Americans, getting things done—trying to get things done over the objection of the President. Again, I have to go back to the whole question of the funding of the war: $12 billion a month on this war—not paid for. To cover 10 million children in America with health insurance, it is $7 billion a year, and it is in our budget. We have fully paid for that.

What kind of priorities has the President set, when he will veto children's health insurance and yet continue to ask for more and more dollars for this war? Everything we do around here is values and priorities, based on what we think is important, what we think the people who have sent us here think is important. The majority of Americans are saying this country is going in the wrong direction, that while people find themselves worried about whether they will have a job or whether it is going to go overseas or whether they will lose pay, lose income, while their health insurance premium goes up—if they even have health insurance—their gas prices go up, and college tuition is going up. They may find themselves in the situation where they cannot sell their homes due to the mortgage crisis or in a situation of foreclosure or in a sales situation where they are losing dollars.

Middle-class Americans look around them and see a world, under this administration, for the last 6 years, of failed policies and priorities—a world that doesn't work for Americans, losing opportunities rather than gaining them, working harder and harder but seeing the American dream slip away for themselves and their families.

We, as the new majority of the Senate, understand this, we get it. We are laser focused on what makes a difference to the American people every day. We are focused, and we will be coming forward with efforts to help with the mortgage crisis. I have legislation we will be bringing forward to make sure that when you lose your home to foreclosure or a short sale, you don't get a tax bill on top of that,

which will happen now if your financial institution gives you any kind of a break on refinancing. You end up, with the value of the difference, paying taxes on it. We are going to make sure that doesn't happen. We are laser focused on getting the children's health insurance bill done, focusing on the right kind of trade policy that is fair for Americans—American workers and businesses. We are focused on strengthening our country, opportunity, valuing work, focusing on the things people care about every single day. When we get up in the morning and we are focused on what we want for our children and grandchildren, in order to be able to have a wonderful life, those are the things we have been bringing forward every single day. We will continue to do that.

We are getting things done for middle-class America. That is our focus. We are getting things done. But I have to say, in conclusion, that this has not been easy. We have had 52 filibusters—which is unheard of in the Senate—in less than a year—52 filibusters that require us to get 60 votes to stop, including, I might add, on the war. We have a majority of Members of this body who want to end this strategy on the war, who have been willing to say we want to put a deadline on what is happening there and refocus on what will truly keep us safe. We have a majority of Members—an overwhelming majority—who supported Senator WEBB's effort on troop readiness, to say to our troops who are being deployed, redeployed, and redeployed, we should follow the traditional policies of the military; if you have 12 or 15 months in combat in theater, you should get the same at home for rest, retraining, and the opportunity to see your family.

We have the majority of Members who have voted to change this policy in Iraq, get us out of a civil war, bring our troops home, to have troop readiness policies that make sense; but we have had 52 filibusters, which is too many, stopping us from changing this war.

This can go to 53, 54—we know it will keep going through the next year. But so will our focus. We are not going to stop. We are focused on getting things done. We are getting results for middle-class Americans, and we are going to continue to do that every single day.

I suggest the absence of a quorum.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will call the roll.

The bill clerk proceeded to call the roll.

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

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

Mrs. MURRAY. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent to speak as in morning business.

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

VETERANS SUICIDES

Mrs. MURRAY. Mr. President, I wish to take a few minutes this morning to talk about a subject that has tragically received far too little attention, and that is the number of veterans who take their lives because our Nation has failed them.

In a breakthrough report last night, CBS News revealed that far more veterans commit suicide than has previously been reported by the Defense Department and the VA. CBS, in fact, found that in 2005, at least 6,256 veterans took their lives. That is a rate that is twice that of other Americans.

CBS also found that veterans who are aged 20 to 24—those most likely to have served in the war on terror—are taking their lives at a rate that is estimated to be between two and four times higher than nonveterans in the same age group.

CBS should be commended for pushing past this administration's stonewalling and digging to get those numbers. The administration told the network that even the VA hadn't counted the nationwide numbers.

Those findings are sad, they are horrifying, and they should be preventable. Frankly, they are a reflection of something that many of my colleagues and I have said over and over. They reflect an administration that has failed to plan, failed to own up to its responsibilities, and failed even to complete statistics on the impact of this war on our veterans. From inadequate funding to a lack of mental health professionals to a failure to help our servicemembers make the transition from battlefield back to the homefront, this administration has dropped the ball.

The Defense Department and the VA, in particular, must own up to the true cost of this war and do a better job to ensure that our heroes are not lost when they come home.

We in Congress are taking steps to try to understand and care for the mental health wounds our troops are experiencing, but we clearly have to do more. If those numbers CBS is reporting do not wake up America, I fear nothing will. It is time for all of us to wake up to the reality and the consequences of this war. It is time to wake up our neighbors and our communities. It is time to wake up our employers and our schools and ask if we are doing enough for our veterans. It is time to wake up the White House and demand better care for our veterans, those men and women who have sacrificed for all of us.

As I stand here and speak today, a generation of servicemembers is falling through the cracks because of our failure to provide for them, and that is shameful.

Five years ago, when the President asked us to go to war in Iraq, he talked to us about weapons of mass destruction, he talked about al-Qaida, he talked about the mission to fight the war on terror, but he never talked about policing a civil war. He never talked about the stress of living months without a break and constantly waiting for the next attack. He has never talked about, in my opinion, taking care of those men and women who have served us honorably when they finally come home.

In the past, our servicemembers were always given a rest, time to relax, time to regroup for battle. But we are today waging this war with an all-volunteer military. Some men and women are now serving their second, third, fourth, and now even fifth tour of duty. They are stretched to the breaking point. Too many of them are sustaining traumatic brain injuries. Too many are suffering from post-traumatic stress disorder. A third of our servicemembers are coming home with mental health conditions, and when they finally do come home, they struggle with the memories of battle. In their nightmares, they see their friends being blown apart. Some of them are turning to drugs and alcohol to numb themselves from the pain they are in.

The sad truth is that all too often the system we have set up to provide care for them does not help them, and we do not find out how much pain they are in until, obviously, it is too late.

I have taken the time to talk with these servicemembers. I have taken the time to talk with their families. I have heard their stories, and I wish to share a few with my colleagues today that illustrate, I believe, why it is so critical that we take action. These are young men and women. They are in their early twenties. They are young men and women who have served our country. They are someone's son, brother, sister, wife, best friend. Losing them is shameful.

Let me tell my colleagues about a young veteran named Justin Bailey. Justin joined the Marine Corps when he was 18, a few months after he graduated from high school. He was about to separate from the Marines in 2003 when his service was involuntarily extended because of the war in Iraq.

Justin went to Iraq. He was injured, and he returned home in pain and suffering from PTSD. He underwent several surgeries, and over a 2-year time period was prescribed a slew of medications, including hydrocone, xanax, and methadone, and he became addicted.

Justin slipped through the cracks. Despite seeking help for his addiction, he was allowed to self-medicate. Despite warnings from the FDA, he was prescribed drugs that were inconsistent with the treatment of PTSD. Justin tried to find help, but after 6 weeks in a VA program for addicts with PTSD, he never once saw a psychiatrist.

Justin's parents had assumed that he would get proper supervision in the VA program, but he didn't. This past January, Justin took too many pills and he died of an overdose.

The next young man I wish to tell my colleagues about is Joshua Omvig. Josh, I am told, was an eager soldier who dreamed of being a police officer. He insisted on graduating from high school early so he could join the military and begin his career. He was sent

to Iraq. But after one visit home his parents could see he was shaken. Ordinary things, they said, made him nervous, and he was having nightmares that made him shout out in his sleep.

When he completed his tour of duty, he was transitioned back into civilian life after only a couple of weeks. His parents saw he was not the same. They said he didn't say much about Iraq, but he did talk about hearing voices and seeing faces and he was very jittery.

His parents wanted him to get care, but he refused to see a doctor for fear it would hurt his career. Despite his parents' efforts to help him, Josh could not get over the trauma he experienced in Iraq. It got worse and his world slowly unraveled. Josh took his life at the age of 22.

Josh's and Justin's stories came to light because their families came here and asked Congress for help. As a result, we passed the Joshua Omvig Veteran Suicide Prevention Act this year because his family pushed and pushed for legislation that would require the military and the VA to better understand and treat psychological trauma for our servicemembers.

Are these extreme examples? Well, maybe, but they are not isolated examples, and the reality is many others are slipping unnoticed through the cracks today.

It would be one thing if we had no idea what the mental health strains are for our veterans, but that is not the case. We have seen servicemembers come home with mental wounds in every military conflict in which we have ever been involved.

When I was a young college student in the late sixties, I volunteered at the Seattle VA. I was assigned to the psychiatric ward. I worked with Vietnam veterans who were my age at the time coming home from Vietnam. I saw what was in their eyes. For some, it was a blank stare. For many, it was anger. For a lot, it was talking and talking and talking about what they had been through.

There was no word called post-traumatic stress syndrome when I worked at the VA with those Vietnam veterans. But we know now the strains of war and what it causes, and we should be doing so much more for the thousands and thousands of young men and women who are coming home today and feeling lost and alone in their homes and communities because no one has reached out to help them.

Our understanding of the impact that warfare has on the minds of servicemembers has evolved since I worked at the VA as a young student many years ago. One thing we know is that the mental wound suffered by men and women in uniform can be as devastating as their physical injuries. So it is long past time that the military knock down the stigma associated with mental health care. It is long past time that the military provide the care our veterans desperately need and deserve and back it up with adequate funding. We must acknowledge that this is a cost of war we cannot ignore.

What can we do to prevent more stories such as Josh and Justin? We have to better understand the trauma our troops have experienced. The Joshua Omvig Act we passed takes steps to do that, but it is so clear we have more to do. We need more mental health care clinics, and we need more providers. We need the VA to be proactive. We need them to reach out to these veterans who are not enrolled in the VA system and who are at risk for suicide. And we in Congress have to provide the money to fully fund their care.

The Senate has passed a bill that will increase funding for veterans by almost $4 billion over what the President asked. I hope we can get those improvements to our veterans as quickly as possible. We have to finally provide a seamless transition for our servicemembers when they come home, and that starts with making sure that veterans can get their disability benefits without having to fight through the system. It is unconscionable to me that our heroes return home from the battlefield today only to have to fight a bureaucracy to get the benefits they were promised.

Veterans Day was a few days ago. Many of us went home and took part in ceremonies to thank our servicemembers for securing our safety and our freedom—well-deserved. In my own speech in Kitsap County, at home in Washington State, I said I believe that Veterans Day should not be just a day for ceremony. It should be a day to consider whether there is something more we can do for our veterans. And what are the implications for not doing enough? As the ''CBS News'' report found, too often the implications are that many veterans are stretched to the breaking point. That is a tragedy. We have to wake up to the reality that we have already lost too many.

Ours is a great Nation. No matter how any of us feel about this current conflict, we know our troops are serving us honorably. But we owe them so much more than we have given them so far. We can do better. We must do better. I ask anyone who is listening to me this morning, anyone who watched the CBS report and saw those families talk about the tragedy of losing a son or a daughter to suicide after they had come home from this war, to reach out and say: Am I doing enough? Do I know of a family who is suffering? Do I know of someone at my child's school whose parent has come home? Do I know an employee who has come home from Iraq? Have I reached out myself and said: I am here for you if you need me?

All of us can do more. Congress needs to act and do more as well. We are a great nation. We should do much better.

I yield the floor, and I suggest the absence of a quorum.

The legislative clerk proceeded to call the roll.

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

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Mr. CASEY). Without objection, it is so ordered.

CONCLUSION OF MORNING BUSINESS

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Morning business is closed.

FARM, NUTRITION, AND BIOENERGY ACT OF 2007

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Under the previous order, the Senate will resume consideration of H.R. 2419, which the clerk will report.

The legislative clerk read as follows:

A bill (H.R. 2419) to provide for the continuation of agricultural programs through fiscal year 2012, and for other purposes.

Pending:

Harkin amendment No. 3500, in the nature of a substitute.

Reid (for Dorgan-Grassley) amendment No. 3508 (to amendment No. 3500), to strengthen payment limitations and direct the savings to increased funding for certain programs.

Reid amendment No. 3509 (to amendment No. 3508), to change the enactment date.

Reid amendment No. 3510 (to the language proposed to be stricken by amendment No. 3500), to change the enactment date.

Reid amendment No. 3511 (to Amendment No. 3510), to change the enactment date.

Motion to commit the bill to the Committee on Agriculture, Nutrition, and Forestry, with instructions to report back forthwith, with Reid amendment No. 3512.

Reid amendment No. 3512 (to the instructions of the motion to commit to the Committee on Agriculture, Nutrition, and Forestry, with instructions), to change the enactment date.

Reid amendment No. 3513 (to the instructions of the motion to recommit), to change the enactment date.

Reid amendment No. 3514 (to amendment No. 3513), to change the enactment date.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Iowa.

Mr. HARKIN. Mr. President, I see my friend, Senator CHAMBLISS, is on the floor. I think we are both very frustrated. I don't think, I know we are both very frustrated that we are stymied on this farm bill. We are not moving anywhere. But in hopes that maybe we can get something moving, I am going to propound some unanimous consent requests to see if we can't break out and move ahead.

So I inquire of my colleague, Senator CHAMBLISS, as to whether we can agree to a time limitation for debate with respect to the pending Dorgan-Grassley amendment. Therefore, I ask unanimous consent that there be 60 minutes of debate prior to a vote in relation to the Dorgan amendment No. 3508, with the time equally divided and controlled in the usual form; that upon the use or yielding back of time, the Senate vote in relation to the amendment; that no second-degree amendment be in order prior to the vote.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Is there objection? The Senator from Georgia.

Mr. CHAMBLISS. Mr. President, unfortunately, based upon the status of the amendments at this point in time and based upon the comments by the majority leader this morning, at this point in time I am going to have to object.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Objection is heard.

Mr. HARKIN. Mr. President, I now ask unanimous consent that we proceed to the Lugar-Lautenberg amendment regarding farm program reform; that there be 2 hours of debate with respect to the amendment prior to a vote; that no amendments be in order to the amendment prior to the vote; that the time be equally divided and controlled in the usual form; that upon the use or yielding back of the time, the Senate proceed to vote in relation to the amendment.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Is there objection? The Senator from Georgia.

Mr. CHAMBLISS. Mr. President, again, as much as I would love to accommodate the chairman of the committee, based upon the status at this time and the comments of the majority leader this morning, I will have to object.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Objection is heard.

Mr. HARKIN. Mr. President, in light of that objection, I would inquire as to whether we can enter into an agreement on the Roberts amendment No. 3548; that there be 90 minutes for debate prior to a vote in relation to the amendment, with the time equally divided and controlled in the usual form; that upon the use or yielding back of time, the Senate vote in relation to the amendment, with no second-degree amendment in order prior to the vote.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Is there objection? The Senator from Georgia.

Mr. CHAMBLISS. Mr. President, again, based upon the process that we are now involved in and the comments of the majority leader this morning relative to the farm bill, I will have to object.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Objection is heard.

Mr. HARKIN. Mr. President, let's see if there can be agreement to consider the Stevens amendment No. 3569; again that there be 60 minutes of debate prior to a vote in relation to the amendment, with no amendment in order to the amendment prior to the vote, and the time be equally divided and controlled in the usual form; that upon the use or yielding back of time, the Senate proceed to vote in relation to the amendment.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Is there objection?

Mr. CHAMBLISS. Mr. President, once again, based upon the process we are now engaged in and the comments of the majority leader this morning, I will have to object.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Objection is heard.

Mr. HARKIN. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that we proceed to the Allard amendment No. 3572; that there be 60 minutes of debate prior to a vote in relation to the amendment, with the time equally divided and controlled in the usual form, with no second-degree amendment in order prior to the vote; that upon the use or yielding back of the time, the Senate proceed to vote in relation to the amendment.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Is there objection?

Mr. CHAMBLISS. Reserving the right to object, I would say there may be some common ground.

I ask unanimous consent that the unanimous consent request of the chairman be modified and that the pending amendments and motion to recommit be withdrawn and the only amendments in order be the bipartisan list of first-degree amendments I have sent to the desk and that all first-degree amendments be subject to relevant second-degree amendments.

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

Mr. HARKIN. I do not modify my request.

Mr. CHAMBLISS. Then, Mr. President, I will have to object.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Objection is heard.

Mr. HARKIN. Mr. President, I am certain the Senator will have another unanimous consent request of his own very shortly, as he just enunciated. I just proposed five requests for votes in relation to amendments that are relevant to the farm bill. As we just heard, there are objections to each one of those.

We are ready to move ahead. We have been here now a week, over a week, on this farm bill, and we are stuck, dead in the water. Again, my friend, Senator CHAMBLISS, said he wanted to send to the desk a list of amendments that have been looked at. Not all of them have been filed, as I understand, but they have been talked about. As I understand it, there are 255 amendments. That is ridiculous. Of course, we are not going to have 255 amendments. But at least we could work. We are here; we could be working now. We could debate the Dorgan amendment and vote on it today. There are five requests I just offered right now, five amendments we could dispose of this afternoon. The other side objected to each one of those.

Again, I am extremely frustrated, as the chairman of the committee. We got a bill through. We worked very hard on it. Senator CHAMBLISS worked very hard on it. Yet we are stuck. We got it through committee. There was not one dissenting vote in the committee, not one. It is a good bill.

As Senator LINCOLN said—I heard her speech this morning—it is bipartisan, it is multiregional. There are a lot of compromises in it, as is true in any bill. But we got it through without a dissenting vote. Yet we cannot even work on it on the Senate floor? We cannot even work on it. Forget about passing it, we can't even work on it.

I just propounded five requests to have debate and votes on amendments, relevant amendments to this farm bill, and every time it was objected to.

I don't know. I just want to make it clear that we on this side are ready to do business. We have been for a week. We could have been debating relevant amendments. We could have almost—we could have been done with this bill by now.

I want to point out a little bit of history. On the last farm bill, when I was privileged to chair the committee at that time in the Senate, in 2002, we had 10 days of consideration in December and 6 days in February. That was it. Mr. President, 53 amendments were considered, not 255.

In 1996, we had 4 days of consideration, 24 amendments to the bill; in 1990, 7 days of consideration, and we proceeded to vote on it. This is very frustrating. We are here. We are ready to do business. We are ready to debate and vote. Yet the leadership on the other side says no. The leadership says no.

I wanted to make it clear, fundamentally, basically clear to all Senators and anyone watching: We on this side have been ready, are ready, are willing to debate and vote on these amendments. It has been objected to on the other side.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from North Dakota.

Mr. DORGAN. Mr. President, this is almost unbelievably disappointing. This is the second week we are on the farm bill. We have people in the Senate who believe, apparently, they are trying to imitate a set of human brake pads and stop everything. We haven't even started. How can you stop it? I don't understand this at all. If family farmers farmed like Congress legislated, there would be no food.

When it comes spring you have to plant the seeds. You have to do it. It is not an option. When it comes harvest time, you have to take it off the field. When the cows are ready to milk, you have to milk. We have a few people in Congress who believe you don't have to do anything. All you have to do, as I said, is imitate a set of human brake pads and just stop everything. I guess maybe that is a successful strategy for some, if you do not believe anything ought to get done.

The chairman of this committee, Senator HARKIN, and the ranking member, Senator CHAMBLISS, worked hard on this. I understand Senator CHAMBLISS has been objecting as a result of the minority leader's position. I understand that. But my colleague from Iowa just propounded a series of unanimous consent requests. He said let's just start. This isn't rocket science. How do you get this bill done? First, you start the bill.

As I understand it, my colleague proposed a couple of amendments from each side, Democratic amendments, Republican amendments. Just start,

have some time agreements, have a debate, have a vote.

If there are some who do not want a farm bill to be passed in this Congress, I understand. They have a right to vote against and speak against the farm bill. But why on Earth should they hold this bill hostage to their whims? We take for granted, every single day in this country, what family farmers do. They get up out there in the country, living under a yard light, get up, often very early, and do chores. They work hard. They take a lot of risks. They have big dreams. They live on hope. They must live on hope. They hope there is going to be a better crop, a better year. They hope they are going to be able to make a decent living. We take all of that for granted.

What we try to do in the Congress is to write a farm bill that says family farmers are important—yes, for economic reasons but also for cultural reasons, to have a network of families out there producing America's food. Family farmers are important, and we understand families can't survive some tough times, so we create a safety net, a bridge over price depressions. And we say: We want to help you. That is what the farm bill is about.

There are other pieces of it, nutrition and other issues, but the centerpiece of a safety net for family farmers is very important. I guess I don't remember a time when we had a farm bill on the Senate floor that has been held up. I voted against some farm bills I didn't like. But, you know, I didn't like the so-called Freedom to Farm bill, which I thought was a disaster, so I voted against it, but I didn't come down to the floor to try to prevent it from moving. I just said this is something I will not support, so I voted against it.

In this case, and in the previous case with the farm bill we operate under currently, I support it. I really want this to move forward. I do not understand. I do not understand at all. We could compare, perhaps, the Senate to a glacier, but the difference is a glacier actually moves from time to time. This Senate, on this bill, is going nowhere because of a couple of people who decided we are going to stop it.

The majority leader has brought this bill to the floor of the Senate, allowed 2 weeks for it. Both colleagues, Senator HARKIN and Senator CHAMBLISS, have worked hard. My colleague, Senator CONRAD, has been out here working hard to see if can we get a list of amendments we can begin working through. Apparently, we now know there are something like 250 amendments that have been noticed. Obviously, we are not going to have 250 amendments on this bill. We don't have time for that. Some of these amendments, a good many of them, have nothing at all to do with this subject at all—going back into immigration and a whole series of tax issues that have nothing to do with farming, agriculture, family farms.

So the question is, Can we find a way to reduce that number of amendments and then just start?

The first amendment Senator GRASSLEY and I have offered is an amendment that would, I think, improve the bill. But we have not been able to even begin the first 5 minutes of debate on that amendment. There are many others.

My colleague offers a proposal: Let's at least start on two Republican and two Democratic amendments. The first step of any journey is the most important step. Let's just begin. Here it is, a week and a half after the bill comes to the floor of the Senate, and this Senate is at parade rest. I do not understand it.

One of my great concerns at the moment is that the time has been set aside to try to get this farm bill done. Senator HARKIN and Senator CHAMBLISS wrote a farm bill that came out of the Agriculture Committee, as I understand, unanimously. You would believe, then, that represents bipartisan agreement on the central portion of a farm bill. Can we improve it a little bit? I think so. There are some amendments back and forth that perhaps will improve some portions of it. But the fact is, they wrote a bipartisan bill that had very strong support, in fact, unanimous support in the committee.

How on Earth do we get to a point where a bill that comes out of the committee unanimously, a bill that is as important as this one is to every region of the country, sits on the floor of the Senate at parade rest, and we cannot even get to debate on the first amendment? I do not understand that at all. That makes no sense to me.

The fact is, time is running out. I worry if we do not get this bill done this week—work late tonight, late tomorrow night, into Friday, get this bill done—I worry that this bill is not going to get done in any timely fashion. What an awful message for us to send to family farmers. The message in this bill is, we think they matter. We think they are an important part of this country's economic strength. Family farmers have always been the economic All-Stars.

But it is beyond me to understand what is going on here. We have amendments. My amendment is pending, but we can't even begin the first minute of debate. I don't understand it at all.

I have said before on the floor of the Senate that family farmers in this country produce a lot more than crops and food. They produce communities. They are the blood vessels that create the strength for these small towns. I grew up in one of those towns. We raised some cattle and some horses. The fact is, family farmers are very important to the economic strength and to the culture of this country. They do not expect much. They don't ask for much. They are an independent bunch of people. They are people who try to raise a family and raise a crop, way out in the country, in many cases. They are not asking for anything very much except that this country has believed for a long while that all of the uncertainties, all of the risks that accrue to family farming in many cases just wipe them out unless you have some kind of safety net. That is why we have created a safety net.

They plant a seed, hope it grows, hope it rains enough, hope it doesn't rain too much, hope it doesn't hail, hope the insects don't come, hope there isn't any crop disease. Then they hope they have a chance to harvest it in the fall and then hope when they harvest it and truck it to the elevator, it is going to have a decent price. All of that risk, all alone.

So we create a safety net to say we are going to try, if we can, to provide some strength to that hope because we want family farms to continue to exist in the future because we think it strengthens our country. That is why we write a farm bill. All of us come from different points on the compass, but we all believe basically the same thing: family farming matters for this country.

How on Earth have we gotten to the point where, on a Wednesday, a week after we start the debate on the farm bill, we have not been able to consider even one amendment?

Now we risk not getting the farm bill done. How we have gotten to this point, I don't have the foggiest understanding, but it is not healthy and not good.

I hope we can persuade the minority leader and others to let us proceed. Just start. We are not asking for the Moon. Just start discussion, debate, and vote on amendments, and let's see how quickly we can move through these to try to get a bill done before the end of this week.

Let me finish, as I started, by saying I know a lot of people have worked for a long time on this bill. There are a lot of people on both sides of the political aisle who want this bill to get done. I am among them. But there are some who have decided we ought not move forward, and they have decided the only way they would allow us to move forward is to allow all kinds of amendments that go back and recreate the debates on immigration, and you name it. The fact is, all that means is we will not get this bill done, never get this bill done. So let's go back to the tradition.

The tradition has been, with respect to farm bills, we have had farm bills on the floor of the Senate in which we debate and vote on amendments. We do not, in most cases, see amendments that have nothing to do with agriculture load down this bill and decide we are going to try to stop it from moving. I hope we can get back to that tradition. That is the tradition I think farmers would expect of us.

Let me again say, as I started, if families out there in the country farmed like we legislate—or at least like a few

people in this Chamber want to legislate—there would be no food because they would never plant the grain. It wouldn't matter, timing doesn't matter, they wouldn't harvest the grain, timing doesn't matter; they wouldn't milk the cows because they wouldn't care whether the cows are fresh or sore.

This Congress can do a whole lot better than this, and my hope is, in the coming couple of hours, we can reach agreement and begin debate on the amendments. Let's follow this trail until the amendments are done, and I think that farm bill will get a resounding vote on the floor of the Senate. I think the farm bill will get two-thirds or perhaps three-fourths in favor of it.

I yield the floor. I know we have two other Members on the Senate floor. The Senator from Colorado had indicated he wanted to speak, but I know the Senator from Georgia is on the Senate floor as well.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Georgia.

Mr. CHAMBLISS. Mr. President, I thank the Senator from North Dakota for his comments. He is exactly right. There are a lot of us in this body who wish to see this farm bill move. I actually came back a day early last week thinking the farm bill would be up the next day.

I was prepared, as ranking member, to move ahead with the farm bill. When I got here, I found out we all of a sudden were going to be caught in a process that is unique to the Senate, and that is a process where the majority leader has the right—and I understand he has the right; I understand that we did that when we were in the majority—to fill the tree, and he did so. And when he does so, it kind of brings things to a halt. That is the purpose in doing that, in trying to control what amendments may be filed. I thought after a week's time, yesterday, rather than us debating amendments, moving through, which in all likelihood we conceivably could have been through this bill by now—but instead of being able to call up amendments, debating them and voting on them over the past week, we have been stuck in this process now that requires a unanimous consent by both sides before we can move forward with the process of dealing with amendments.

Yesterday I had some hope, because Senator HARKIN and I agreed that what we thought we ought to do would be to come up with a list of amendments that are relevant, and as always is the case on any major piece of legislation, some were irrelevant amendments. I would hope we could agree on a number. Unfortunately, we have not been able to do that. As of yesterday we had about 140 Democratic amendments that were filed, and about 120 Republican amendments that were filed.

Most of them are relevant to the farm bill, but some of them are not. But it is always the case that we deal with some nonrelevant amendments.

But instead of allowing Senator HARKIN and me to move through the process of taking the amendments—the first one we had agreed to take was Senator DORGAN and Senator GRASSLEY's amendment. Instead of allowing us to move ahead and debate that amendment, and possibly have already voted on it, if we had taken it up this morning with the time agreement we had tentatively agreed to, a decision was made that we are not going to be allowed to do that, and nothing is going to happen until there is a definite agreement by both sides on not just the number of amendments but what nonrelevant amendments will be considered.

It will happen. I know this is not the first time this situation has happened in this body with a farm bill. I would remind those who were here in 2002, at that time there were 246 amendments filed; almost exactly the same number of amendments were filed to the farm bill while the Democrats were in charge in 2002. There were at least two, and there may have been three, cloture votes. I am not sure because I was not here then. But there were two or three cloture votes asked for and made on the farm bill before cloture was invoked. Those cloture votes originally were made in December of 2001. When cloture was finally invoked in February of 2002, the farm bill sailed through in a matter of a few days. So we are basically in exactly the same position we were in 2002.

But here is the problem. 2002 was an entirely different atmosphere in American agriculture. Farmers and ranchers need to be discussing next month with their bankers and their insurers and landowners from whom they lease property, or farmers whom they lease property to; they need to be talking to their equipment dealers about how much they are going to plant of what respective crops; how much insurance they are going to need; how much in the way of financing they are going to need; how much in the way of new equipment or repairs or replaced equipment they are going to need, so that come next March, in the whole Southeast, not just in my State, but in March we start planting crops. Early corn goes in in March or the first part of April. In 2002, I was a Member of the House, and I was a member of the conference committee on the farm bill that was delayed until final passage occurring sometime in March. Obviously when farmers do not know what to anticipate from the standpoint of farm policy, do not know what type of programs they are going to have available to them, it is difficult for them to make any decision regarding how much money they are going to have to finance their crops, how much insurance they are going to need, or how many acres of what crops to plant.

So here we are stuck in a process. I am not saying one side or the other is more to blame than the other. I think it is more the rules of the Senate that have got us locked into this situation. I am ready to go. I was ready to go last Tuesday morning or actually last Monday afternoon. But, unfortunately, we are in a situation now where we cannot move ahead.

I did have to object to Senator HARKIN's request. There is nothing I would rather do than move on the Grassley-Dorgan amendment, although I am strongly opposed to it. I am going to advocate a ''no'' vote on it. But I think we ought to move and get this process going and start winnowing down these 260 or so, whatever the number of amendments is we have filed, or that we have been notified that either are filed or are going to be filed.

We can do that. It was done in 2002. We can do it now, and we are ultimately going to have to do it. Whether we do it now or whether we do it in January, whether we do it in February, we are going to do it. It is a bullet we are going to have to bite.

I regret very much having to object to Senator HARKIN's request. But, by the same token, he had to not agree to amend his unanimous consent request to comply with what I asked for, which would allow us to move ahead right now with amendments.

Those folks who are out in ag country are depending on the Congress, the Presiding Officer being one of those members who sits on the Ag Committee who has a significant interest in agriculture. My friend Senator SALAZAR, a member of the committee, comes from a strong agricultural State. Folks are depending on all of us as policymakers to get our work done, and yet here we are stuck by the rules of the Senate.

As I said in the press yesterday, I would simply say again, if we do not get this bill done this week, we do not have the opportunity to work with our colleagues in the House over the next 2 weeks while we are gone to get ready for a conference in December, it is going to be extremely difficult, if not impossible, to get a farm bill passed by both bodies, on the desk of the President before the end of the year.

That does not handicap us, but it surely handicaps those folks we represent; that is, the great men and women who are the farmers and ranchers of America. So I am hopeful that over the next several hours—I do not how long it may take, but I hope in the short term we are able to reach some agreement. Particularly it boils down to the nonrelevant amendments. If the other side would be lenient with us in trying to let us get those amendments up, debate them, get them voted on, we can move this bill.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Colorado.

Mr. SALAZAR. Mr. President, I came here this morning, now afternoon, to talk about the importance of this farm bill and for us to get off the dime and get us moving forward on the farm bill. I am going to make a statement on that in a few minutes.

My friend from Utah has asked if he can go ahead of me to speak on another subject for about 10 minutes. I ask unanimous consent that the Senator from Utah be recognized for 10 minutes to speak on a subject that he will address; then, following the Senator from Utah, that I be recognized for up to 20 minutes; following my statement that Senator DURBIN be recognized for up to 15 minutes.

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

The Senator from Utah.

FISA MODERNIZATION

Mr. HATCH. Mr. President, following the unauthorized public disclosure in 2005 of what has become known as the Terrorism Surveillance Program, numerous lawsuits were filed against electronic communication service providers for their alleged participation. Currently, more than 40 lawsuits are pending, which collectively seek hundreds of billions of dollars in damages. Let me repeat that figure, hundreds of billions of dollars.

For myriad reasons which I am going to discuss, these service providers alleged to have participated deserve a round of applause and a helping hand, not a slap in the face and a kick to the gut.

The amount of misinformation concerning this issue is staggering. Given that this dialogue involves highly classified details, there are many things that simply can't be discussed. However, the committee report for the recently passed FISA modernization bill, S. 2248, from the Senate Select Committee on Intelligence is public, and contains very pertinent information.

The report mentions that as with other intelligence matters, the identities of persons or entities that provide assistance to the U.S. Government are protected as vital sources and methods of intelligence. Details of any such assistance can not be discussed. However, the committee report does mention that beginning soon after September 11, the executive branch provided written requests or directives to U.S. electronic communication service providers to obtain their assistance with communications intelligence activities that had been authorized by the President.

During consideration of FISA modernization legislation, the Intelligence Committee examined classified documents relating to this issue.

The committee, in an overwhelmingly bipartisan tally, voted to include retroactive immunity for service providers that were alleged to have cooperated with the intelligence community in the implementation of the President's surveillance program. Senators from both sides of the aisle, after careful consideration, came to this conclusion. Make no mistake, this was the right conclusion.

It was the right conclusion for the Intelligence Committee, and it should be the right conclusion for the Judiciary Committee, when it considers this bill tomorrow.

Given the astounding amount of misinformation in the public domain concerning the Terrorism Surveillance Program, it is not surprising that these lawsuits are filled with false information and baseless allegations.

Some have asked a valid question, if the companies did not break the law, why do they need immunity? Quite simply, the Government's assertion of the state secrets privilege prevents these companies from defending themselves.

This assertion by the Government is absolutely essential, as the possible disclosure of classified materials from ongoing court proceedings is a grave threat to national security. Given the necessity for the state secrets privilege, the drawback is that the companies being sued are forbidden from making their case.

In fact, the companies cannot even confirm or deny any involvement in the program whatsoever. They have no ability to defend themselves.

Ordinarily, these companies would be able to address allegations and make their case. However, the classified nature of the topic means that companies are not free to do so. They can't even have discussions with shareholders or business partners. But we need to remember, lawful silence does not equate to guilt.

Another point not mentioned nearly enough is that the Government cannot obtain the intelligence it needs without the assistance of telecommunication companies. This means that our collection capabilities are dependent on the support and collaboration of private businesses.

If retroactive immunity is not provided, these private businesses will certainly be extremely hesitant to provide any future assistance to our intelligence community. This could have a crippling effect on the security of millions of people in our society; thus, it's simply an unacceptable outcome for the safety and security of our Nation.

Any hesitation from companies to provide assistance with future Government requests could be disastrous. This could affect not only our intelligence community but domestic law enforcement efforts. The next time a child is kidnapped, and law enforcement needs help with communications, would that situation allow any hesitation from the service provider? If your son or daughter was missing, would you stand for any lack of cooperation from companies? Do we want endless teams of private company lawyers second, third, fourth, and fifth guessing lawful orders to compel their assistance?

This is not the only problem with not including retroactive immunity. As the duration of these lawsuits increases, so does the chance that highly classified sources and methods of our intelligence community will be unnecessarily and unlawfully disclosed. Our enemies are acutely aware of these proceedings, and are certainly attempting to gather information previously unknown to them. The potential disclosure of classified information also puts the personnel and facilities of electronic communication service providers at risk.

Given all of the tremendous harm and damage that will occur by not passing a form of limited liability, I am amazed at the number of individuals who fail to grasp the seriousness of the issue before us.

To those who purport to oppose immunity in any form, I would hope that they take the time to actually read the bill. For those unable to tear themselves away from their favorite partisan blog, I am going to quickly tell you what the immunity provision says, and what it does not say. Remember, this bill passed 13-2 in the Intelligence Committee.

A civil action may be dismissed only if a certification is made to the court certifying that either (1) the electronic service provider did not provide the alleged assistance, or (2) the assistance was provided after the 9/11 attacks, and was described in a written request indicating that the activity was authorized by the President and determined to be lawful.

Furthermore, this certification has to be reviewed by the court before a civil action can be dismissed.

It does not provide for immunity for Government officials. It does not provide for immunity for criminal acts. Instead, it is a narrowly tailored provision that strikes a proper balance. This point can't be overlooked; the immunity provision in the current bill has absolutely zero effect on the numerous lawsuits pending against Federal Government agencies. These cases will go on, with their questionable constitutional challenges, with no impact from this bill.

Some Senators have suggested that indemnification or substitution would be possible solutions. Let me be perfectly clear, neither one is appropriate or acceptable in this situation. The Intelligence Committee considered both of these ideas, and rejected them for good reason. Indemnification, where the Federal Government would be responsible for any damages awarded against the providers, is not advisable since the providers would still be parties to the lawsuits, and thus the suits would continue with the consequences of disclosure and discovery. Not only does this further the likelihood of disclosure of classified material, but the companies will face serious damage to their business reputations, relationships with foreign countries, and stock prices. This is extremely unfair, if handled improperly.

Substitution, where the Government would litigate in place of the service providers, is not a viable solution since all of the same concerns just mentioned still apply. Even though the providers will not be parties to the litigation, discovery will still apply.

Don't we realize that having the Government fund unnecessary litigation is a tremendous waste of taxpayer dollars? The Government does not magically create dollars, it taxes hard-working Americans. When it comes to funding, who do we think the Government is?

To say that the Government should pay is to say that our mothers, fathers, brothers, sisters, sons, and daughters should have money forcefully taken from their paychecks to fund frivolous lawsuits. This is Alice in Wonderland, and down the rabbit hole we go.

Finally, for those who love to expound the catch phrase ''warrantless wiretapping'' to assert some theory of illegality, I encourage you to carefully read the fourth amendment.

Contrary to any other assertion, the fourth amendment does not always require a warrant and is based on the reasonableness of searches. While the phrase is meant to scare people, ''warrantless wiretapping'' in this instance is perfectly legal and constitutional.

Immunity is an appropriate remedy. It is just. It is necessary. It is imperative for the continued success of our intelligence gathering.

While reasonable minds can disagree about political topics, this issue requires disciplined logic, not political hyperbole. I hope that people keep the following facts in mind when considering this topic.

The program did not involve interception of domestic to domestic phone calls.

The President and the highest levels of the executive branch determined the program to be lawful and conveyed this fact repeatedly in writing to service providers.

The electronic service providers' participation was vital to the security of our country.

Lives have been saved by this program.

The companies were called on to support a lawful program that was vital to the security of our country. Do the companies require thanks or appreciation? No, but they certainly do not deserve illegitimate and false criticisms that affect their financial well being.

A grateful public should certainly appreciate the critical assistance the companies alone can provide for the public's defense. These companies are quite possibly facing irreversible harm to their business reputation and cannot defend themselves due to state secrets.

This debate has far too many Monday morning quarterbacks, applying their revisionist history to best represent their political mantra. I strongly urge all of my colleagues to support the limited immunity provided for in S. 2248. Any company that has done its part to provide for the protection of American families deserves protection in return. If not, the next time we reach out for a helping hand, we will be the ones who receive a slap to the face. And really, who could blame them?

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Colorado.

Mr. SALAZAR. Mr. President, on November 5, almost 10 days ago, I came to the floor to say there it was a proud day in my time as a Senator because we were moving forward with consideration of the 2007 farm bill. Almost 10 days have passed and we are stuck. In being stuck, we are doing a disservice to the people of America, to the people of rural America. It behooves us to move forward with the kind of process that put together the 2002 farm bill and farm bills before that, where there was a procedure set out that there was an agreed-upon set of relevant amendments that were discussed and debated on the farm bill and then a farm bill was passed. To do otherwise is, frankly, letting down the farmers and ranchers. From my point of view, that is something which we ought not to do. It is something we have a moral obligation to avoid and where both Republicans and Democrats coming together can figure out a way forward to make sure we are addressing the realities and challenges of rural America, the realities and challenges of our farmers and ranchers, and the issues related to nutrition and all of the rest of the components of this very good farm bill which has been written by the Agriculture Committee, a committee which is composed of Republicans and Democrats, of which the Presiding Officer played a significant role in putting this farm bill together. It is important we move forward.

Let me talk about why I believe it is important to move forward. I decided to run for this position in the Senate several years ago in large part because there aren't enough people in Washington and on the floor of the Senate who cared much about what happens to rural America. There are very few people here, frankly, who have lived through the hard times and celebrated the joys of being a farmer or a rancher. It is important the voices of farmers and ranchers, who have dirt under their fingernails, whose hands are unmistakably calloused by the hard work they do, be heard in this Chamber. We do a tremendous dishonor to those hard-working Americans when there are the procedural and political games that are being played here today.

The majority leader came forward and said what we ought to do is go to the farm bill. It is a good farm bill. We ought to decide that there is maybe a subset of amendments, 10, 15, 20, whatever it is, and get on with the farm bill. Yet 10 days later, we are not making very much progress. Why aren't we making progress? Is it possible that some people on the other side simply do not want a farm bill, that they would rather see this work, which has been a labor for several years by many people, be killed? Is that their agenda, to kill the farm bill?

To all the farmers and ranchers who are listening across America today, to all those organizations which have been a part of this effort over the last several years, to all those people who care about nutrition in schools, to all those who care about making sure the hungriest are being fed, the faith community and others, I ask them to make their voices heard in Washington today so we are able to move forward to get a farm bill done and to get it done before we go back for Thanksgiving. I believe if those voices are heard here, that in fact will happen.

For me, much of my life has been spent on a farm and on a ranch. I know what the joys of farming and ranching are. I know what the joy is after you have prepared a field and you go out to the field after you have applied the fertilizer and you have watered the soil and you start seeing the shoots of wheat or barley or the young plants of alfalfa spring up like magic from the soil. I know the joy of what it is like to go out in the middle of the night and to watch a baby calf being born and then, within 4 or 5 hours, to watch the baby calf begin to stand on its legs, suck on the milk, and then be out prancing around within 12 hours. It is almost a spiritual experience when you think about the beauty of nature that you get to experience firsthand as a rancher and as a farmer.

I know the joys of being there for harvest time. I know the joy of being on a combine and watching the golden color of the grain collected in the combine and dumping it out through the chutes into the trucks that take it into the bins for storage. I know the joy of putting up stacks of hay, 20,000 bales of the greenest hay that is possible. It makes you proud when your haystack is finally completed. I know all the joys that come with farming from what you get to see on the land itself.

I also know the joy that comes from the effort where a family works together, where you have, in many cases around America, family farmers and ranchers who have been on the same land for generations, as is the case with my family, where they have been on the same farm for five generations. I know the joy and special meaning of those lands, where you know the reality of every fencepost because it was my great-grandfather who put that fencepost up. I know where the ditches were built in our case on our ranch on May 15 of 1857, when they were finally adjudicated and given a water right for that ditch. We know the reality of our land and our water.

There needs to be voices in the Senate, Democrats, such as the Presiding Officer from Pennsylvania, and Republicans as well who come up and say: We are not going to let rural America down. We are not going to let this farm bill die. We are not going to let those who have some political agenda kill this farm bill, to turn their back on rural America and do what they are trying to do. It is unconscionable that they would be engaging on that agenda.

Like I know the joys of farming, I also know the hardships that come as a rancher and a farmer. I know the concerns you can have when you have cut a crop of hay and you see the clouds coming up at 10 or 11 o'clock in the morning, knowing that maybe before you get to a point where you are going to bale the hay, you are going to have a crop that will be ruined. I also know the fear of watching those clouds rise over the horizon, when you can know from the color of the cloud itself that a hailstorm is on the way and you wonder whether that storm is going to hit your crop or it is going to hit a neighbor's crop, whether devastation is going to be caused by that storm.

I also know the pain of being in a position where ranchers, farmers go to the bank and they say to the banker: I need some assistance because I can't afford to pay back my operating line because either the prices are too low this year or because we have had some kind of disaster that has affected our ability to pay you back.

I know farmers and ranchers personally who have lost their farms, who have lost their ranches, and there is nothing that is anymore painful than going to those auctions and watching those farmers and ranchers who have built their life and their entire dream around their farm or their ranch and the equipment they have and being there in a position where they are having to sell what, essentially, is the soul of their life, their farm or their ranch.

So what we do here today—what we are doing here on this farm bill—in incredibly important for rural America. It is incredibly important for farmers and ranchers. It is incredibly important for those of us who want to feed this Nation. Yet, somehow, as I see the debate taking place here, at last count there were some 255 amendments to this farm bill. Well, why are there 255 amendments to this farm bill, when we have been working on this legislation for a number of different years?

The distinguished ranking member of the committee, Senator CHAMBLISS, started to hold hearings on the farm bill several years ago. He held them all over the country—from Iowa to Georgia to other places. Then Senator HARKIN, the chairman of the committee, held hearings in my State of Colorado on the farm bill, held hearings all over the country—each of us working to produce the very best farm bill we possibly could.

In my own State of Colorado, I worked with the great agricultural organizations—from the Colorado Cattlemen's Association to the Rocky Mountain Farmers Union to a whole host of others—to make sure we were putting together the very best farm bill for America.

It is a farm bill that, in my view, is one which would give us a great opportunity to revitalize rural America, to make sure that when we look back at the dawn of this century we did not allow rural America to be sunsetted but that instead we reinvigorated rural America in a way that has not ever happened before.

We have some great opportunities to do that because this farm bill is not just about farms; it is about fuel, it is about our energy security, it is about the future of our country in so many different ways. Yet we are being stalled here. We are not being allowed to move forward to consider this legislation and the substance of this legislation.

Let me say from my point of view, when I look at the future of agriculture, the future of ranching, and the future of rural America, what I see. First, I see great promise, and then I see great hope. I see great promise and great hope if we can do for rural development that which needs to be done.

We know today that per capita income in rural America is a lot less than it is in urban America. We know today that the infrastructure issues that are faced in the small towns of rural America exceed the capacity of those communities to be able to deal with those infrastructure needs by multiple times. We know that in many towns in every one of the 50 States, and represented here, you can go through those towns and you can see what has happened as rural America has been more and more forgotten year after year.

As to the town of Antonito, located within 5 miles of part of our ranch, you can drive in that town today and can see the devastation of a great part of rural America. At one point in time there were four or five gas stations in the town of Antonito. Today, there is one gas station. At one point in time in this town of Antonito, which has a population of less than 1,000, there used be a number of different grocery stores to go and buy your food. I remember ShopRite because that is where I used to go and buy lunch sometimes when I was working out on the farm. ShopRite has closed. So have other stores. There is only one small store that survives today. You see the boarded-up streets of that town where probably 50 percent of all of the buildings today are vacant.

You see a whole host of other problems in rural America. What we have tried to do with this farm bill is to address those issues. If we are successful—as we should be—if we are successful—as we must be, as we are required to do if we are going to do our job—then we are going to open a new chapter of opportunity for America and for rural America.

That chapter of opportunity has several very important features to it. First, it will make sure we have food security for the United States of America. We do not want to become dependent on foreign sources for our food in the same say we have for oil. For me, for the time I have been in public service—and before—I have had a sign on my desk that says: "No farms, no food." So no matter where you are, the 300 million people of America every day should remind themselves of that reality: "No farms, no food." This is about the food security of our Nation.

Secondly, the vision that we have with this farm bill we have worked on so hard for so many years is that we will contribute significantly to making sure we get rid of our addiction to foreign oil and that we grow our way to energy independence. The energy aspects of title IX of this farm bill are the most robust in the history of the United States of America. What you will see with this legislation, as it is implemented, is a rural America helping us grow our way to energy independence.

Senator GRASSLEY and I cosponsored legislation, a resolution which passed both this body as well as the House of Representatives, that says we can grow 25 percent of our energy from renewable energy resources. That is the ambitious vision that is included in this legislation. The energy components of the farm bill are incredibly important to the national security of the United States, to the environmental security of our world, as well as to the economic opportunities for America.

So I am hopeful we will open this chapter of energy opportunity with the passage of this farm bill, and that we will get it done as soon as possible.

Finally, when we think about the great conservationists of our country, there are no better people to take care of their land and their water than those who depend on it for a living. If you are a farmer or you are a rancher, you know you have to take care of your land and your water because that is your way of life. If something happens to your land and to your water, your way of life is taken away from you. So the conservation programs which are such a major part of this legislation are a keystone to the future of how we take care of our planet.

This legislation, under the leadership of Senator HARKIN, is the best legislation that has ever come forward on a farm bill with respect to the many conservation programs that include the Wetlands Reserve Program, the Conservation Reserve Program, and a whole host of other programs that are going to be important to make sure we have the best conservation agenda possible for our Nation.

In conclusion, I would make a plea to my colleagues, and that is that we work together to narrow down the number of amendments that need to be considered, and that we set about a process that will bring about a conclusion to this farm bill, so that then we can go to conference and we can get a farm bill that is a good farm bill for America, delivered to the President.

I also say to my colleagues—and there are some—who want this bill killed, don't do it. Don't kill this bill. It is too important for this country. Across America, people ought to be beating the drums in every State, in every county, in every village, on every farm and every ranch. They ought to be beating the drums and using their

telephones calling the Members of this Senate, telling us we ought not to leave here until the job is done. And the job will be done when we get this farm bill adopted by this Senate, which I predict if this bill, in its current fashion, were to be brought to a vote today, it would pass with about 70 to 75 votes.

Mr. President, I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Mr. MENENDEZ). The Senator from Illinois.

Mr. DURBIN. Mr. President, I thank my colleague from Colorado. He comes to the Senate with an amazing background. I have sat and talked to him from time to time about his family. Senator SALAZAR's family came to the United States 400 or 500 years ago. They were some of the earliest settlers of our country, in the southwestern part of the United States. The founding of the city of Santa Fe, NM, his family was directly involved in; the naming of mountain ranges and rivers. They were there long before my ancestors ever had the good fortune to come to these shores.

I have also heard the stories of his youth, how he grew up on a ranch in Colorado with some very difficult circumstances, without the creature comforts many of us in the cities were used to. It is clearly in his blood and in his heart. When he speaks about this farm bill, he is not talking about some academic conversation but, rather, about the reason he came to the Senate, to make sure families such as his would have a voice in so many different areas but particularly when it came to this bill.

This monster of a bill, 1,600 pages, is a bill we take up every 5 years. It is the farm bill. But it includes so much more, as Senator SALAZAR has told us. It is not just about keeping our farms productive and our ranches profitable, but it is about rural America, small town America, the America of the Senator's youth, and the America I was fortunate enough to represent as a Congressman in downstate Illinois for so long.

His statement on the subject is not just another political speech. I know it came from the heart. I thank him for reminding us about the importance of this bill to small town America, to farmers and ranchers across America, and why these very practical, commonsense, hardheaded folks would find it hard to understand what is happening on the Senate floor over the last week and a half.

You see, for 10 days we have virtually tied up and stopped the Senate in the consideration of this farm bill. It should have been passed a long time ago. When you take a look back at previous farm bills, in 1990 there were 7 days of consideration of the farm bill. Mr. President, 122 amendments were dealt with. There were only 2 that were not relevant to a farm bill—only 2—and 122 were.

In 1996, 4 days were spent on the farm bill, and 24 amendments were considered to the bill. None of them were about anything other than farming and agriculture.

In 2001 and 2002, there were about 16 days of consideration on the farm bill, with 53 amendments. Only one was offered that did not have anything to do with the farm bill, which was offered by Senator KYL of Arizona on the estate tax. There was one side-by-side amendment offered by Senator CONRAD. That was it.

Well, it is a different story today. Senator SALAZAR has told us. This morning, Senator REID, the majority leader, the Democratic leader, gave me a list of the Republican amendments they want to call on this farm bill. We have been tied in knots now for almost 10 days in the Senate because the Republicans refuse to come up with a list of amendments we could consider.

They finally came up with this list. When you take a look at the amendments on this list, you can understand what their game plan is. After all the time we spent in preparing this bill, it is very clear they do not want this bill to be called. They do not want us to debate it. They want to talk about everything under the Sun except a farm bill.

Here are a couple examples of things they think should be talked about: Senator MURKOWSKI of Alaska thinks the farm bill is a good time to talk about *Exxon Valdez* litigation. Senator KYL of Arizona believes this is the tax bill, so he wants to talk about the alternative minimum tax. In fact, he has filed at least one amendment, maybe more, on the subject. Senator LOTT, the Republican whip, thinks this is a good tax bill, too. Let's get into a debate about the alternative minimum tax, an issue which clearly we will debate and will decide before the end of the year.

Senator COBURN believes we should talk about the estate tax. Senator MCCONNELL also wants to talk about the estate tax. He also wants to talk about the alternative minimum tax. Senator STEVENS of Alaska wants to talk about protecting kids from online predators. I am all for that. I am trying to figure out what the connection is with the farm bill, though.

Senator GREGG is one of the most prolific when it comes to producing amendments which have little or nothing to do with the farm bill. He wants us to get into a debate on the mortgage crisis in America. It truly is a crisis. He thinks the farm bill is the place to do it. He wants to talk about immigration, too, while we are on the farm bill—not ag workers and immigrants brought in for that purpose—but the issue of driver's licenses for the undocumented. He also thinks it is important for us to get into an issue of collective bargaining for firefighters. I happen to be a cosponsor of that bill. I never would have dreamed that amendment should be offered on a farm bill. Senator GREGG of New Hampshire—I don't know how many farmers there are in his State. I don't know what they grow; I am sure they are very good people—has decided their interests have to be set aside. He has other things he wants to talk about.

He also has the notion in which he thinks, in addition to immigration, mortgages, firefighters' right to collective bargaining, we should in the farm bill say women who live in rural areas of America will be denied the right to sue doctors guilty of malpractice. Women in rural areas will have a limited legal right to sue doctors guilty of malpractice. Well, I am sure the rural women of America are grateful Senator GREGG wants to make sure they are a special class, unable to use their constitutional legal rights in court if they are injured or a member of their family is killed as a result of medical malpractice. He thinks that belongs on the farm bill. He also has one about the Gulf of Mexico. I will have to dig into that. He has gone far afield. I think he turned his legislative staff loose and said: Got any ideas? Let's put an amendment on the farm bill.

Senator DOLE wants to get into taxes. It goes on and on; page after page of amendments.

Well, clearly, we can't consider those amendments if we are serious about passing a farm bill. So what Senator REID and Senator HARKIN, the chairman of the Agriculture Committee, did was say to the Republican side: Let's get serious. Let's get down to business. Let's cooperate. Let's bring up the amendments that relate to the farm bill, and let's do it on a bipartisan basis.

So this morning Senator HARKIN said: How about starting with the amendment of the Senator from North Dakota, Senator DORGAN, cosponsored by Senator GRASSLEY, a Republican of Iowa. Let's have limited time for debate, and then let's vote on it. Well, Senator SAXBY CHAMBLISS of Georgia, the ranking Republican on the Senate Agriculture Committee, objected. He didn't want to bring up a bipartisan amendment to be debated for 60 minutes and vote on it.

Then Senator HARKIN said: Well, let's pick another bipartisan amendment, the Lugar-Lautenberg amendment regarding farm program reform, 2 hours of debate and a vote. Senator SAXBY CHAMBLISS, the Republican on the Senate Agriculture Committee, objected.

Senator HARKIN, undaunted, then suggested that Senator PAT ROBERTS of Kansas, a man who has an extensive background in the House and Senate on ag programs, be given 90 minutes on his amendment, and then a vote. Senator SAXBY CHAMBLISS, the Republican ranking member on the Senate Agriculture Committee, objected to even calling up his colleague's amendment for a vote. Do you see a pattern emerging? It isn't so much about amendments and votes; it is a matter of stopping the bill.

Senator HARKIN, indefatigable, then suggested that Senator STEVENS of Alaska—another Republican—be allowed to call up his amendment with 60

minutes of debate and a vote. Senator CHAMBLISS, still stuck on the agenda of stopping this bill, objected.

Then Senator HARKIN, showing the magnanimity of a great corn husker from Iowa, suggested we proceed to the amendment by Senator ALLARD, a Republican from Colorado, 60 minutes of debate and a vote. Senator CHAMBLISS, unmoved by the generosity of Senator HARKIN, objected. Five requests, every one of them but one an amendment either sponsored by a Republican or cosponsored by a Republican, and the Republicans objected.

Well, you don't need to be a C–SPAN addict to figure out what is going on. The Republicans don't want us to finish the farm bill. After months and months of hearings, after an elaborate process, after negotiations and compromises on both sides, after a lot of hard work, 1,600 pages of policy are rejected by the Republicans. I am not surprised. This is the party that failed for 6 years—6 straight years—to pass the Water Resources Development Act, a critical bill for farmers in my State. This bill will provide the funds to upgrade the locks and dams so important for ag commerce. It wasn't a major priority for the Republican Congress. For 6 years, they ignored it, failed to pass it. We finally passed it this year, and last week, in a historic Senate vote, overrode the President's veto the 107th time it has occurred on the floor of the Senate. The Republicans, left to their own devices, couldn't pass the bill. When we finally passed it on a bipartisan basis, their President vetoed it, and they joined us in overriding the veto.

Now comes the farm bill, which doesn't come around that often—it has been about 5 years—and they want to stop this one too. They want to stop it by killing it with amendments. Senator HARKIN has gone out of his way to give them votes and debate on critical amendments that do relate to the farm bill, but that is not their strategy and that is not their goal. Their goal is to kill the farm bill. I am not sure why.

In my State, I would hazard a guess that there are more Republicans who are farmers than Democrats. It doesn't make much difference from my point of view as a Senator; I am going to help farmers in general, and their political identity is secondary. But why would they turn their backs on so many farmers across America when we have a chance to pass this farm bill? Why wouldn't they agree to a reasonable number of amendments that stick with the farm bill and what it is all about? Well, because, frankly, they don't want us to achieve the goal of passing the farm bill. It isn't new to many of us. We have seen it happen over and over again.

We have something in the Senate called a filibuster, and a filibuster goes back in history at least 90 years. We said at that time, any Senator can stop any bill from being debated and considered. About 90 years ago, we amended that and said: Well, I will tell you, if 67 Senators step forward and say we want to go to the bill anyway, they can overrule that one Senator who said no—67. That was back 90 years ago. About 40 years ago, that was changed to 60 Senators. So you have a filibuster, which is an attempt to stop the debate, stop the progress of the bill, and if 60 Senators will step forward and say we disagree, then you move forward with the amendment, you move forward with the bill. That is the filibuster in the simplest terms.

In the history of the Senate, the most prolific use of the filibuster to delay votes and kill bills produced 58—58—filibusters over 2 years—58 over 2 years. Well, our colleagues on the Republican side of the aisle are about to break through that record dramatically. Senator STABENOW has created this chart. It shows to date 52 Republican filibusters on motions for cloture—52 this year. We still have another year and 2 months to go. The Republicans have tried to stop legislation on this floor with a filibuster and a motion for cloture 52 times. So this is certainly going to be the Republican Senate on steroids when it comes to filibusters. They are going to bust through the old record, and they are going to stop everything they can, including a bipartisan farm bill.

They accomplished so little when they were in charge and in control that they want to make sure we accomplish as little as possible. That is unfortunate. It is unfortunate because the American people want us to cooperate. They want us to compromise. They want us to try to come up with legislation that solves America's problems, not squabble and fight and exalt our differences.

Luckily, there have been a few things—in fact, a significant number of things—that have been enacted by this Congress, despite 52 filibusters. I think back on passing the increase in the minimum wage, and I think it was the first time in 10 years we finally passed an increase in the Federal minimum wage. We passed historic legislation to provide student loans for students from families with limited means, reducing the cost of those loans and forgiving some of those loans. We passed that. We also managed to pass the Children's Health Insurance Program, a program that would extend coverage to another 4 million uninsured children in America—children who weren't the poorest, because those kids are taken care of in our caring Nation; and not the luckiest, because their parents don't have health insurance—but those caught right in the middle. Mom and dad go to work, no benefits, and we had a program that said let's help them. Let's provide private health insurance for those kids. Well, the President stopped that, vetoed it, and the Republicans refused to override that veto. We passed it, not once but twice, despite the odds against us in passing important legislation.

I think about stem cell research, too—the first President in history to have a Federal prohibition against medical research when it involves stem cells. We passed it with a bipartisan vote to override this prohibition. The President vetoed it.

So time and again, whether it is help for education or health care, we have been up against it: The failure of the Republicans to cooperate and pass the legislation, or the President's veto that they are afraid to override. That, I think, is the story of the Republican strategy of this session. It puzzles me. Do they think this is a winning strategy in America, a party so bereft of ideas and policies that all they can do is stop us?

This bill is not a Democratic bill, this farm bill. I think Senator CHAMBLISS, if he were on the floor today, would readily concede he played a big role in writing this bill. Senator ROBERTS of Kansas played a major role in writing this bill. Two Republican Senators who were involved in this legislation. Yet when it comes to trying to pass it, unfortunately, Senator CHAMBLISS objected five times in our attempts to bring this bill forward and move it forward.

They don't want this Senate to achieve anything, whether it is a farm bill or whatever it happens to be. But we are not going to quit. We are not going to be discouraged. We can only hope that those who follow this debate will respond. If you live in rural America, small town America, a farm family, a ranching family; if you know the importance of rural electric; if you know what it means to have soil and water conservation programs to protect the area you live in; if you think that bringing broadband Internet to all of America, including small towns and rural areas is important; if you think our Food Stamp Program to make sure the poorest in our country have something to eat is important; if you are worried about school lunch programs and whether they have good quality so our kids get nutritious food; if you happen to believe that the WIC Program, which is a program which helps low-income mothers and their babies is important; if you believe that making certain our farm sector in America can survive difficult times—a bad year—whether it is a drought or a flood, a tornado; if you think it is important we have programs to protect that part of America; if you believe we need to have alternative sources of fuel and not be at the mercy of OPEC and the Middle East sheiks and we should be producing ethanol and other forms of fuel that can help us move toward energy independence; if you think any of those things are important, I encourage you to contact your Senator and tell them to get moving.

Ten days on the farm bill with nothing happening is unacceptable. It is the Senate at its worst. It is the minority with their program at its worst.

We need to have bipartisan cooperation. Senator HARKIN tried repeatedly.

We will keep trying. But if the object of the Republicans is to run out the clock, to have us break and go home for Thanksgiving with no farm bill passed, I assume they can achieve that. Boy, talk about bragging rights, going home to your State and saying: We stopped the farm bill. You know, every 5 years, it comes around. We stopped it cold, even though it is a bipartisan bill. That is what they will be able to brag about.

Senator GREGG has told me he has lots of amendments. He is thinking of even more. He is ingenious when it comes to different subjects, and I am sure his staff is busy right now thinking of other amendments they can add to this bill that have nothing to do with the farm bill, and he is going to want to ask that we vote on every single one of them. We could all do that. I guess there would be some personal satisfaction, but at the end of the day, very little legislation and very little to show for our efforts. This list, this three-page list of Republican amendments, is an indication of bad faith. If they are serious about a farm bill—and we should be—let's agree to a reasonable number of germane, relevant amendments that have something to do with the farm bill. Let's not make this a bill for all seasons; let's make this a bill for America's agricultural sector that counts on us.

I yield the floor and suggest the absence of a quorum.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will call the roll.

The bill clerk proceeded to call the roll.

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

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

ORDER FOR RECESS

Mr. DURBIN. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the Senate stand in recess today from 2 to 3:30 p.m.

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

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

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will call the roll.

The bill clerk proceeded to call the roll.

Mr. BROWN. 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. BROWN. Mr. President, we have for many weeks now been debating in this Chamber the 2007 farm bill. In my State of Ohio, passage of this legislation is essential to ensuring the well-being of middle-class and low-income families throughout our State. The bill is an agriculture bill, it is a hunger bill, it is an energy bill, it is a conservation bill. Melding these priorities is not easy. Melding these priorities into a bill that helps farmers, that advances our Nation's energy goals, that increases the focus on conservation, and that bolsters nutrition programs is a profound accomplishment.

As we debate the complex components of this legislation, I applaud Chairman TOM HARKIN, a Senator from Iowa, for his leadership. We must never lose sight that this bill is about families. Families in Ohio and across the Nation are depending on us to pass this legislation in a timely manner.

This spring, I traveled throughout Ohio and heard directly from farmers about what they need in this year's farm bill. They need the same thing any other entrepreneur needs—a fair shake. They need a safety net that makes sense given the revenue fluctuations they experience. They need for Washington rhetoric about conservation and alternative energy to translate into commonsense programs and meaningful incentives.

This bill will help family farmers in Ohio and in New Jersey, the State of the Presiding Officer, and across our country by strengthening and diversifying the farm safety net. Current farm programs protect farmers from chronically low prices. However, these programs do little to help farmers when prices are high but yields are low, resulting in a revenue shortfall. By targeting overall revenue rather than simply price, farmers can receive better protection against swings in prices and natural disasters.

Currently, crop prices are high but volatile. Farmers' input costs are rising, as well as their overall risks. Farmers should be given the opportunity to choose an alternative safety net if it better allows them to manage their own farm's risk in today's uncertain and evolving farm environment.

The average crop revenue program, brought to this bill by Senator DURBIN, Chairman HARKIN, and me, gives farmers a choice. The average crop revenue program will matter to help those farmers with a safety net. For the first time ever, farmers will be able to enroll in a program—it is their choice; they don't have to—they can enroll in a program that insures against revenue instability which for many farmers makes more sense than a price-focused safety net, which is the old farm program.

As I traveled around Ohio, I met with Mark Schweibert, a corn farmer in Henry County in northwest Ohio who will likely take advantage of average crop revenue. He will be supplying corn to one of the first ethanol plants in Ohio. I met that same week with Ralph Dull, a hog farmer from Montgomery County, who uses wind turbines to provide on-farm energy.

This farm bill makes a commitment to move beyond antiquated energy sources and to prepare American agriculture to lead the world in renewable energy production. With the right resources, the right incentives, farmers can help decrease our dependence on foreign oil and produce cleaner, sustainable, renewable energy. In a State such as Ohio, with a talented labor force and a proud manufacturing history, that just doesn't mean stronger farms, more prosperous farms; it means a better Ohio and a stronger economy.

This bill will provide more than $4 billion in additional funding for conservation programs to help farmers protect our water quality, expand our wildlife habitat, and preserve endangered farmland. And this bill does something else equally important: It fights hunger.

Earlier this year, when the Agriculture Committee began this process, we heard from Rhonda Stewart of Hamilton, OH. Rhonda Stewart, a single mother, came with her young son. She told us a story. She told us that she works a full-time job, has no health care, and makes about, I believe, $9 an hour. She teaches Sunday school, She is involved with the Cub Scouts for her son, and she is president of the PTA at her son's school. She plays by the rules. She works hard. She said that at the beginning of the month, as she is a food stamp beneficiary, she makes pork chops for her son once or twice that first week. Later on in the month, maybe she takes him to a fast food restaurant. Almost invariably at the end of the month, she says she sits down at the kitchen table and her son is eating dinner and she does not.

Her son says: Mom, what is wrong? Are you not hungry?

She says: I am not feeling well tonight.

For Rhonda Stewart, who teaches Sunday school, is involved with the Cub Scouts, is president of the PTA, works hard, pays her taxes, raises a son, is a food stamp beneficiary of $1 per person per meal, and $6 a day roughly for Rhonda Stewart does not go far enough. What we do in this Chamber can help Rhonda Stewart, her family, and millions of families such as hers. The farm bill increases food stamp benefits and indexes those benefits to inflation. When the purchasing power of food stamps erodes, so does our Nation's progress against hunger. We are the wealthiest country in the world. We are a caring, compassionate people. Families in our country, especially families who work hard, such as Rhonda Stewart and her family, should not go hungry.

I am pleased with the overall bill. There are some things we can do to improve it. The public is perfectly willing to help family farmers when they need it, as we should. However, taxpayers will not support massive payments to farms that have substantial net incomes or huge payments to farmers who are not really farmers, who have huge off-farm income and really just happen to own farmland.

I will be offering an amendment to return some of the excess subsidies in the Crop Insurance Program to the American taxpayers and to provide funding for the McGovern-Dole program.

We have heard, of course, tales of woe from the crop insurance industry over

the past few weeks as they furiously lobby against this amendment. But the facts tell a different story. Instead of letting the crop insurance industry exceed even their already record returns, I think we will get far better returns with modest investments at home and abroad. The McGovern-Dole program—which would be funded with part of the revenues from the crop insurance amendment—provides funding for school lunches in developing nations. The potential benefits are immense for our national security. We responded decades ago to a hostile Communist threat in Europe with the Marshall Plan. Our best response to a hostile threat overseas is to provide help in nutrition and education for people who desperately need it.

Passage of the 2007 farm bill is not just a responsible thing to do for this body, it is the right thing to do for our families, for our farmers, and for our Nation.

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

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Mr. BROWN). Without objection, it is so ordered.

Mr. MENENDEZ. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent to speak as in morning business.

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

Mr. MENENDEZ. Mr. President, I personally thank you for your courtesy in taking over the Presiding Officer duties so that I may make these comments. I appreciate your courtesy.

IRAQ

Mr. MENENDEZ. Mr. President, 3 weeks ago, I began a series of speeches on the price America is paying for the failed war in Iraq, and I wish to continue today. The number of American service men and women killed in action has risen to 3,855, and with every death of a husband or wife, a son or daughter, a mom or dad, the suffering of a family soars to that place where numbers do not matter, to that place where pain is beyond infinite.

I have spoken about what the war has cost us financially. Since the war began more than 4 long years ago, we have spent over $455 billion. Over the long run, it will cost almost $2 trillion. Again, those are not just numbers, those were cargo scanners that could have been installed at our ports, safer bridges that could have been built, life-saving cancer research that could have been done, children who could have been educated, lives that could have been saved—a world of possibilities that passed by us all. I have tried to help us all imagine what we are giving up by failing to awaken ourselves from the living nightmare that is the war in Iraq.

Today, I wish to talk about the people who have given so much, people who will be paying for this war for the rest of their lives—our veterans and their families.

On Sunday, we celebrated Veterans Day. I wish to talk about how much we could do for those who have served with the amount of money we have used to send them into harm's way.

Mr. President, 28,451 troops have come back from Iraq with horrible wounds. Some wounds are physical. Some have had their legs or arms blown off by bombs. Some are blind from shrapnel in their eyes.

And some wounds are mental. Denying that war can wound a brain along with the rest of the body is denying so many veterans' nightmares, flashbacks, shocks or changes in personality so radical—so radical—that loved ones can no longer recognize the person they once knew.

Today, Army researchers are releasing a study showing that the full psychological impact of the war tends to hit soldiers even harder 6 months after they have returned from the war. So the ranks of those suffering are about to grow by many thousands.

Beyond the human cost of these injuries, the financial costs to our society are tremendous. A report released by Physicians for Social Responsibility puts the cost of medical care and disability benefits for veterans returning from Iraq at over $660 billion. So in a very direct sense, the war has been more than twice as financially expensive as we might think just looking at the combat costs.

The human and financial costs don't end with just health care. Here is a shocking statistic, Mr. President: Veterans make up one in four homeless people in this country. That means almost 200,000 veterans don't have a home to go back to tonight. Experts say the rates of homelessness are spiraling up faster than they did after the war in Vietnam.

Mr. President, that is a moral outrage. These people put their lives on the line for our country, no questions asked. It is a shame our men and women in uniform would be sent to patrol the streets of Baghdad only to have to come back and sleep on the streets of their own hometowns.

That is why Democrats in Congress are working to give veterans the support they deserve. The Senate recently passed a bill that contains the largest increase in funding for our veterans in history. We are reinvigorating our Veterans Affairs Department with a record $87 billion, which is several billion dollars more than President Bush said he was willing to spend on our veterans, with $37 billion for veterans health care. Billions of dollars are headed to expand medical services and beef up the administrative side so vets spend less time waiting to get their benefits.

Now, compare this to the costs of combat. Let's compare the investment in the men and women who serve in the uniform of the United States to the costs of combat. We could pay for the entire Veterans Health Administration budget—the entire Veterans Health Administration budget, all $37 billion—with what we spend in less than 4 months of combat in Iraq. Take care of every veteran, in terms of the veterans health care system. We could pay for that entire budget, $37 billion, with what we spend in less than 4 months of combat in Iraq. And some say it is too much? Where are their priorities?

Just as important as making sure vets have excellent health care is making sure they have an opportunity to get an excellent education. I am proud to be a cosponsor of a bill offered by Senator WEBB that would be the biggest boost to veterans education since World War II. Preparing thousands of veterans to enter the civilian workforce with a first-rate education would cost about $5.4 billion next year—$5.4 billion—for, in essence, a new GI education bill. In other words, it would cost what it takes to fund combat in Iraq for roughly 2 weeks to make sure thousands of veterans can enter the civilian workforce when they come back.

Here is one of our challenges. Many of our vets come back and find the jobs they once had are no longer there. They find themselves, after serving their Nation, unemployed. The type of first-rate education we could give them would clearly create an opportunity to ensure they would have greater skills, greater employability, and that would take roughly 2 weeks of funding for the war in Iraq.

Democrats in Congress are also working to end the pandemic of homelessness. I joined with Senator OBAMA to support a bill called Homes for Heroes. The bill would establish permanent housing and services for low-income veterans and their families. It would make more rental assistance available to help providers of veteran housing and services, and focus more attention on vets who are homeless. Of course, the more soldiers who go off to war, the more necessary this bill becomes.

The portion of the bill that helps community and nonprofit organizations offer housing to low-income veterans would require about $225 million to fund. We grind up enough money to house thousands of veterans in 16 hours in Iraq—not even a day. The costs of combat compared to the opportunity to providing a year of expanded housing for homeless veterans would cost the same as 16 hours of the amount we spend in Iraq. Some say too much. Where are your values? What are your priorities? How is it that you choose?

Of course, the price we pay in dollars can never compare to the price our wounded warriors and their families pay in lost limbs, in haunted dreams, and in lives changed forever. That is a price not one more soldier should be asked to pay for a pointless war. In the meantime, we need to act fast to get returning vets the help they need. Veterans got their wounds following their

Government's orders. Those wounds can only heal if the Government reorders its priorities.

Democrats wanted to send the bill increasing funding for veterans to the President before Veterans Day, but President Bush is trying to use veterans funding as an excuse to veto other programs on which America depends. The President has also said funding a new GI bill for veterans' education is too expensive. Too expensive. Never have calls for fiscal responsibility been so morally irresponsible.

First and foremost, we can never forget the price tag our veterans have ultimately paid with their service, and the price tag for veterans services wouldn't be so high if this administration didn't recklessly send them into harm's way to begin with. The President seems to think we can't afford to spend on both veterans health and children's health. He seems to think we can't afford to treat the wounds our soldiers suffer and fund cancer research to save civilians from that brutal killer. He seems to think we can't afford to ensure the safety of our returning soldiers and make sure all Americans find safety in the workplace. But he did seem to think we could afford to chase Osama bin Laden in Afghanistan—as we should have—and then invade Iraq, even though both situations today are major challenges. He did seem to think we could fight a $2 trillion war in Iraq and give a massive tax cut to millionaires and billionaires, even though the economy hovers near recession and most American families are no better off now than they were at the beginning of this administration. He did seem to think he could sign every bill—every bill—the Republican-controlled Congress sent him, running up a debt to the tune of $3 trillion, borrowing money from foreign countries to pay for a war that makes no sense, ignoring pressing national priorities, underfunding care for veterans, leaving our ports vulnerable, leaving our educational systems underfunded, leaving the massive crisis in global climate change completely ignored, leaving children in this country without health care—because we have wanted to expand the number of uninsured children who have no health care coverage to those who would have health care coverage under our bill—leaving 47 million Americans with no health insurance whatsoever, and he thought that he could get away with all of it.

Well, Mr. President, now is the time for us to stand up and say: Sometimes you can't have it both ways. When it comes to children's health, when it comes to education and homeland security and veterans care, we had better be getting all the support we need.

On Sunday, our Nation devoted a day to those who devoted themselves to the Nation for military service. We took that day to celebrate how lucky we are—how lucky we are—and how unbelievably blessed we are as a nation to have such brave men and women rise again and again to offer their service when they hear the call. I hope we took that day to offer not just words but deeds of thanks.

A grateful nation not only goes to a Veterans Day observance or marches in a Memorial Day parade, as we should, but a grateful nation shows their gratitude by how we treat veterans in terms of getting them the health care they need, how we treat them in terms of taking care of their disabilities, and how we take care of the survivors of those who have made the ultimate sacrifice. That is the true measure of a grateful nation.

We took that day to remember the duty we have to them because of the devotion they have shown to us. Veterans Day is about a fundamental principle. When soldiers are shipped off to war, if we can look them in the eye and tell them there is a good reason we are waving goodbye, we better be able to look them in the eye when they come back and tell them we mean it when we say: Welcome home.

With 171,000 troops still in Iraq, I hope America's message on Sunday was: We look forward to the soonest possible year when you will celebrate Veterans Day here with all of us. We welcome you back, and we honor you by how we take care of you in your health care, for those who have disabilities, and how we have taken care of the families of those who have made the ultimate sacrifice. That will be the true measure of whether we are a grateful nation.

Mr. President, I yield the floor, and I suggest the absence of a quorum.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will call the roll.

The legislative clerk proceeded to call the roll.

Ms. KLOBUCHAR. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent the order for the quorum call be rescinded.

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Mr. MENENDEZ). Without objection, it is so ordered.

Ms. KLOBUCHAR. Mr. President, I am here to speak on the farm bill once again. I have done this before, but I wish to urge my colleagues across the aisle to move on this farm bill. I think it is incredibly important for my State of Minnesota and for our country that we move forward.

Minnesota is one of the largest agricultural States in the Nation. As a member of the Senate Agriculture Committee, where we worked hard to reach a bipartisan compromise under the leadership of Chairman HARKIN and Ranking Member CHAMBLISS, as well as Senator CONRAD and Senator BAUCUS—they worked hard on this—I believe we need to move forward. The bipartisan farm bill before us will invest in our farms and our rural communities so they will be a strong, growing, and innovative part of the 21st Century.

I have seen firsthand in my State, where I visited all 87 counties 2 years in a row, what the 2002 farm bill meant for rural America. It revitalized our communities. It gave our farmers the chance to take a risk and expand their production. We are on the cusp of starting to move forward toward energy independence. We are on the cusp of not depending on these oil cartels in the Mideast and instead investing in the farmers and the workers of the Midwest. I do not believe we should turn away from that. I believe it is time to move forward.

America's farm safety net was created during the Great Depression as an essential reform to help support rural communities and protect struggling family farmers from the financial shocks of volatile prices and equally volatile weather. Almost 75 years later, the reasons for maintaining that safety net still exist.

As I said, the 2002 farm bill spurred rural development by allowing farmers across Minnesota and across this country to expand production. Because of the gains in productivity and the expansion of the last farm bill, the 2002 farm bill came in, under a 10-year period, $17 billion under budget.

As we continue to debate the 2007 farm bill—and I hope my colleagues on the other side of the aisle will allow us to debate this farm bill—it is important not to underestimate the value of a strong farm bill. That is why, as a member of the Senate Agriculture Committee, I support this bill.

I do believe, as I know the Presiding Officer does, there should be more reform. I support the Dorgan-Grassley amendment to put some limits on subsidies. I also believe we should have some limits on eligibility—I suggest $750,000 for a full-time farmer, $250,000 income for a part-time farmer. I don't think there are the significant limits we need in the current farm bill. But, that said, we are not even going to be able to get to talk about those important reforms if we do not allow this bill to move forward. I think that is what our leadership is trying to do every day with this farm bill.

One of the issues that most interests me about this bill is the increased focus on cellulosic-based ethanol. That is a part our office worked on. Actually, the bill we drafted is a part of this bill. The idea is to build on our corn-based ethanol and soybean-based biodiesel to a new generation of cellulosic ethanol. It is better for the environment. It puts carbon back in the soil and is higher in energy content. We are not going to get there unless we have the incentives in place.

I know there are people who complain about ethanol, but I tell you I think of it as the computer industry in the 1970s, when the computers were in these huge rooms and they got more and more efficient and changed our country. It is the same with fuel. Right now we are at the infancy of an industry, ethanol and biomass and other kinds of farm-based fuel. We are at the beginning. If we let the oil companies have their way and tell us it is stopping them from building their refineries and allow them to get in the way

and not allow us to retail the fuel as we should—there are outrageous stories of them not allowing the prices to be posted or the pumps to be put in. There are only 1,200 ethanol pumps in this country and 320 of them are in my State, but who is counting. If we are going to move forward with biomass and with our own energy, we have to allow this industry to develop.

When I talk to farmers across our State, what they like most about the 2002 farm bill is the safety net and the way it worked. It worked well for the first time in a long time. What we did with this farm bill was basically allow that safety net to stay in place and also rebalance the commodity programs to be more equitable for some northern crops such as wheat, oats, barley, soybeans, and canola.

I met with our wheat and barley growers a few hours ago. They are one of the many groups that care a lot about this. Again, they revitalized a lot of the areas of our State that had been troubled because of the fact that we have a thriving rural economy.

Another top priority for Minnesota farmers was creating a permanent program for disaster assistance. I thank Senator BAUCUS and the Finance Committee for their work in this area. Farmers are tired of coming back to Congress every year with a tin cup. We have been hit by drought, flooding, and everything in between. They had to wait for 3 years for Congress to pass the ad hoc disaster relief bill, and the permanent program of disaster relief will give farmers the security they need in moving forward.

I urge my colleagues on the other side of the aisle who are from farm States to think about the importance of this disaster program for their States.

The farm bill is not, as we know, just about the commodity programs and the safety net. It is also about energy. It is also, as I mentioned, about biofuels. I mentioned the cellulosic piece of it that is so important. It also includes bipartisan legislation Senator CRAPO and I introduced to double the mandatory funding for the Biodiesel Education Program. Spreading the word about biodiesel to drivers and gas stations is very important if we are going to help that industry. Again, I urge every Senator who wants less dependence on foreign oil to look at the energy portion of this farm bill.

One of the things that has plagued our rural communities in the last decade or so is the inability for younger people to get involved in farming. The committee accepted my amendment to improve the Beginning Farmer and Rancher Program. There are real opportunities today to start out in farming, especially in growing areas such as organic farming and energy production. But beginning farmers also face big obstacles, including limited access to credit and technical assistance and the high price of land.

The Beginning Farmer and Rancher Programs in this farm bill provide mentoring and outreach for new farmers and training in business planning and credit building—the skills they need to succeed and to stay on the land. If you are concerned because you have seen fewer and fewer young people going into farming in your State, I urge you to move this bill forward.

As I said, there are a lot of good things for Minnesota and for our country in this farm bill. There is, however, one area that needs reform and that is that we need to stop urban millionaires from pocketing farm subsidies intended for hard-working farmers. Here are the facts in our State. Minnesota is the sixth largest agricultural-producing State in the Nation and, I would add, as we approach Thanksgiving, the No. 1 turkey producer in our country. I was able to judge a race recently between a Minnesota turkey and a Texas turkey at the King Turkey Days in Worthington, MN, and I would like to report that the Minnesota turkey won the race. The Texas turkey got too cold and had to be carried over the finish line.

Minnesota, as I said, is the sixth largest agricultural-producing State in the Nation. Nationally, 60 farms have collected more than $1 million each under the 2002 farm bill. None of them are in our State. The average income for Minnesota farms, after expenses, is $54,000, but under the current system, a part-time farmer can have an income as high as $2.5 million from outside sources and still qualify for Federal benefits.

I very strongly support this farm bill, but I also believe we need some reform in this area because it makes no sense to hand out payments to multimillionaires when this money should be targeted to family farmers and conservation and nutrition and other programs under the farm bill. Right now, nearly 600 residents of New York City, 559 residents of Washington, DC, and even 21 residents of Beverly Hills 90210 received Federal farm checks in the past 3 years. Some collected hundreds of thousands of dollars.

We have the opportunity to fix this in this farm bill because the administration has not been doing its job in enforcing the rules, so I say let's use this farm bill to do it. Already in this farm bill in both the House and the Senate we have gotten rid of the ''three entity'' rule, of which there is much abuse. The House bill does contain some income eligibility limits. I believe it is $1 million for a full-time farmer, $500,000 for the part-time farmer. We, in this farm bill, have an ability to go further, as I suggested, with an amendment for $750,000 for full time and $250,000 part time. The Dorgan-Grassley amendment, which passed this Chamber in the past, would keep subsidy levels at $250,000. You put that in this farm bill. If we don't have this farm bill, if our colleagues will not allow the Senate to proceed, if we are not allowed to make this reform which the administration has not enforced on its own—I believe this is a great opportunity for us.

For the reasons I laid out there for the energy title, which is forward thinking, for the conservation title, which is more funding and much more aggressive look at conservation, for the nutrition title, where we are finally promoting our fruits and vegetables and are doing new things to promote more healthy kids—these are all things that are different about this farm bill. If we rest on our laurels and don't do anything new, we are not going to be able to move in the direction we want for the energy revolution in this country.

When my daughter did a project for sixth grade on biofuels last year, she actually drew a map of the State of Minnesota.

She had two little dots that said ''Minneapolis'' and ''St. Paul,'' then she had a big circle that said ''Pine City, the home of farmer Tom Peterson.'' That is whom she had talked to about biofuels.

I tell you this story because the future for our economy in Minnesota and across the country, when you look at energy, the rural part of our country is going to have a big piece of this. It is necessary for that development.

If we do not pass this farm bill, we are not going to get there. I urge my colleagues, for that and many other reasons, to move forward with the 2007 farm bill.

UNANIMOUS-CONSENT AGREEMENT—H.R. 1429

Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that at 3:30 p.m. today, the Senate proceed to the consideration of the conference report to accompany H.R. 1429, Head Start Authorization; that it be considered under the following limitations; that there be 60 minutes of debate with respect to the conference report, with the time equally divided and controlled between the chair and ranking member of the HELP Committee, or their designees; that upon the use or yielding back of time, the Senate proceed to vote on adoption of the conference report without further intervening action or debate.

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

RECESS

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Under the previous order, the Senate stands in recess until 3:30 p.m.

Thereupon, at 2:01 p.m., the Senate recessed until 3:30 p.m. and reassembled when called to order by the Presiding Officer (Mr. SANDERS).

IMPROVING HEAD START FOR SCHOOL READINESS ACT OF 2007—CONFERENCE REPORT

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Under the previous order, the Senate will now proceed to the consideration of the conference report to accompany H.R. 1429, which the clerk will report by title.

The legislative clerk read as follows:

The committee of conference on the disagreeing votes of the two Houses on the amendment of the Senate to the bill (H.R. 1429) to reauthorize the Head Start Act, to improve program quality, to expand access, and for other purposes, having met, have agreed that the House recede from its disagreement to the amendment of the Senate and agree to the same with an amendment and the Senate agree to the same, signed by a majority of the conferees on the part of both Houses.

(The conference report is printed in the House proceedings of the RECORD of Friday, November 9, 2007.)

The PRESIDING OFFICER. There will be 60 minutes of debate equally divided.

The Senator from Massachusetts.

Mr. KENNEDY. Mr. President, I thank my friend and colleague, the Senator from Wyoming, Mr. ENZI, for his strong advocacy and extremely effective work on this legislation. I also thank the staff of the HELP committee for their work on this important piece of legislation. This is an important moment in the Senate because this reauthorization of Head Start focuses on the most vulnerable members of society, the children, and it delivers a message of hope for these children and their families.

HELP Committee members are extremely involved and active in all the matters that come before our committee, but never more than on issues of education and early childhood development. We have before us legislation that reflects a coming together of both parties and both chambers of Congress to address the needs of children in our society. Reflected in this legislation are the interest of some of those who aren't with us physically, colleagues who are involved in the Presidential campaign. Senator DODD, who has been a longtime leader in the Senate on children and children's interests, has had important suggestions and recommendations. BARACK OBAMA has followed this process very closely and has been in frequent communication with us. Senator CLINTON has been very much involved in crafting this legislation, as well as a number of other pieces of legislation we approved in the committee earlier today.

We welcome an overwhelming vote this afternoon. There was an overwhelmingly bipartisan vote in the House of Representatives, 381 to 36. I am hopeful we will have a similar expression of support in the Senate.

We have an hour. I know I have several colleagues who want to talk. I will yield myself 12 minutes. I don't know how much I have used so far.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator has used 3½ minutes. Is that another 12 on top of the 3½?

Mr. KENNEDY. No, a total of 12. If the Chair will let me know when I have a minute and a half, I would appreciate that.

Planning for Head Start began in the early 1960s, before we knew all that we know today about how to best intervene and support the lives of young children living in poverty. At that time, as Attorney General, my brother Robert Kennedy decided to tackle the problem of juvenile delinquency. Research pointed to poverty as the root of the Nation's social and economic challenges. It was agreed that a strategy based on early education could be a significant part of the answer.

In August 1964, President Johnson and Congress launched the war on poverty by passing the Economic Opportunity Act. The Nation's poor numbered 10 million, with nearly half under the age of 12.

In the fall of that year, my brother-in-law, Sargent Shriver, convened a panel of experts in child development, education, public health, and social work to lay a foundation for the Head Start program. He envisioned a bold national commitment to prepare our neediest children for kindergarten and first grade. He conferred with experts like Dr. Edward Zigler, who is still a vigorous, forceful advocate for children, and they agreed that a comprehensive approach was needed. Preschool was the centerpiece of the plan, but a major emphasis was placed on health care and parent involvement, too.

The following year, Head Start came into being as an 8-week summer program. With the help of thousands of volunteers, it served 560,000 children through preschool classes, medical and dental care, and health services. Over the years, it would reach over 24 million.

Today the face of poverty and of America's neediest families has changed. The American workplace has changed, and our education system is being challenged to keep up with the global economy. Head Start has always adapted, finding new ways to respond to the demands on low-income, working families. But its mission has remained the same—to help our most vulnerable children succeed in school and in life.

When parents are asked what they most want to accomplish in life, their answer undoubtedly includes a desire to open the doors of opportunity for their children. They want a fair chance for their children to grow up in a healthy and safe environment, to graduate from high school and go on to college, and to achieve the American dream.

That dream should be available to every child in America. But far too often, families are still struggling to put food on the table, buy clothes for their children, pay the rent, or see a doctor. Poverty is again on the rise. Today, one out of every five children in America grows up poor.

Poverty has many dimensions. It is a labor issue, because pay is so low and workers are exploited. It is a civil rights issue, because so many African American and Latino families are often the ones left behind. It is a health care issue, because the health care that families in poverty receive is so substandard. Most of all, it is a children's issue, because the children of the poor have done nothing wrong. But they still pay the price.

It is our responsibility as a Nation to help those in need. The Federal bedrock of that commitment is Head Start. It has always been an important symbol of our responsibility to others. At its core are the values that shaped our democracy: Equity, opportunity, community empowerment, and economic progress.

Head Start is based on the premise that education is the key to the future and to breaking down the destructive forces of poverty.

It provides the starting point for a child's day, with a healthy meal each morning and a promise to parents that while they are at work and balancing two jobs, their children will see a doctor and dentist, and receive immunizations.

It provides children with the building blocks they need to enter school ready to learn. It teaches the social and emotional skills needed by children to pay attention in the classroom and get along well with others. It expands their vocabulary, gets them excited about reading, and teaches them to count.

It welcomes parents into its programs, gives them opportunities to make decisions about their child's learning and development, and sometimes helps families find a roof for over their head.

Over the years, with each new educational and developmental advance in research, we have learned more about how Head Start can be improved. And with that learning, modifications have been made to enable the program to be even more effective.

In 1972, the Child Development Associate program was established, to provide a standard of quality for Head Start teachers and aides.

In 1974, the reauthorization of Head Start established the comprehensive Program Performance Standards to guide Head Start centers in providing essential educational, health, and social services, and achieving parental involvement. The reauthorization also paved the way for a network of training and technical assistance activities to help Head Start agencies enhance the quality of their programs.

In the 1980s and early 1990s, the Indian and Migrant Head Start programs were formed, and family service centers were established to combat illiteracy, substance abuse, and unemployment in Head Start communities. At that time, Head Start also began its important focus on improving transitions for preschool children to public schools.

In 1994, we created Early Head Start to serve low-income infants and toddlers in the first 3 years of their development. That legislation also led to the development of improved performance measures to assess outcomes in Head Start and new guidelines for monitoring Head Start programs.

The current reauthorization applies the lessons learned from the past with the new knowledge of child development and early education to enable Head Start to be even more successful in the years ahead.

There is no question that Head Start is effective. Our own federally mandated study of Head Start found that it expands children's vocabularies, and makes the greatest difference for those with the greatest needs. Head Start improves children's writing skills, and helps children grow in their social skills and behavior.

By the time Head Start children complete their kindergarten year, their skills and developmental abilities are near the national average, with scores of 99 in early literacy, 98 in early writing, 95 in early math, and 95 in vocabulary.

We are talking about the most disadvantaged children in America. They are often well behind in terms of their ability to enter school ready to start. Look at the results at the end of kindergarten. Head Start children catch up to their peers, to the national norm. It brings the children up so, hopefully, we will be, as a country and society, more equitable, more fair.

This reauthorization maintains high standards and comprehensive services in Head Start. It upgrades educational components of the program, and ensures that it delivers the skills and support that children need to succeed in kindergarten and the early grades. It promotes greater partnerships between Head Start programs and local schools, and ensures that services continue to be framed by the highly effective Head Start Child Outcomes Framework. It also provides a needed bridge for parents to their local schools, to promote greater coordination and ease the transition of children from preschool to kindergarten.

We also terminate the flawed National Reporting System, and ensure that new educational standards and measures used in Head Start will be informed by the National Academy of Sciences. Two years ago, the Government Accountability Office confirmed many of our long-standing concerns with this assessment, concluding that the test is not valid to make determinations about programs and students. The study also confirmed that the test was inconsistent with nationally-recognized testing standards, and unclear in its purpose.

This reauthorization ensures that any assessments used in Head Start will be valid and reliable, fair to children from all backgrounds, and measure the whole child. Head Start children and their families deserve nothing less.

Head Start teachers and staff are the heart and future of the program. They help children learn to identify letters and arrange the pieces of puzzles. They teach them to brush their teeth, wash their hands, make friends, and follow rules.

This reauthorization sets important and unprecedented goals for enhancing the skills and qualifications of Head Start teachers and staff. In this reauthorization, we are striving to help all teachers earn their associate's degree over the next 6 years, help half of all teachers in Head Start earn their bachelor's degree, and help all assistant teachers work toward completing a CDA or another early education credential.

These are ambitious goals. But we know that learning and development of young children require good teachers and that there is a strong link between educational qualifications and the quality of programs.

The quality of a program doesn't just depend on the educational background of its teachers, which is why we are also calling for professional development and a career advancement plan for every Head Start employee including family service workers, assistant teachers, and curriculum coordinators. We have established new partnerships to increase staff in Head Start who are prepared to serve the diverse children enrolled in the programs.

Most of all, we have worked to ensure that Head Start agencies have a dedicated stream of funds to provide needed training for teachers. The reauthorization dedicates $2 million this year to local training and improvement efforts, much of which will be used to improve and strengthen the Head Start workforce. We commit to confronting the persistent challenge of compensating Head Start teachers as the professionals that they are. Head Start teachers earn half the salary of kindergarten teachers, and turnover is about 11 percent per year.

This conference report commits 40 percent of new funds in Head Start to program quality and teacher salaries, to do more to attract and retain caring and committed leaders. It ensures that each Head Start Center will receive an annual cost-of-living increase to keep up with the rising costs of operation and overhead.

We grant additional flexibility in this reauthorization for Head Start to serve thousands of additional low-income children in need, by including families just above the Federal poverty level. It is essential for Head Start to prioritize its services to the neediest families in their communities. But this new flexibility enables those living near poverty and earning less than what they need to get by to receive assistance too. It is the right thing to do, and it is what Head Start is all about.

The reauthorization also makes a long-overdue commitment to expanding Head Start programs in Indian country, and programs for migrant and seasonal farmworkers. By reserving up to $20 million annually to expand services in these programs, we can hopefully reach an additional 5,500 migrant children and an additional 5,100 Native American children living in poverty. New provisions are also included to enhance services for homeless children, children who are English language learners, and children with disabilities in order to ensure that these populations receive the care and attention they deserve.

Accountability is a cornerstone of excellence and should start early. Head Start should be accountable for its commitment to provide safe and healthy learning environments, to support each child's individual pattern of development and learning, to build community partnerships in services to children, and to involve parents in their child's growth.

This reauthorization makes significant progress in increasing accountability and investing in excellence in Head Start. It continues the comprehensive monitoring that has become a hallmark of Head Start, and ensures that reviews are fair and balanced in order to account for challenges and strengths in programs. It also establishes a new system for the designation of Head Start grants, to be phased in over the next several years.

We know that the vast majority of Head Start programs provide outstanding services—fewer than 20 percent of programs are found to be deficient each year. But where serious deficiencies exist, we must see that substantial problems do not languish at the expense of children. If a local program is unable to meet Head Start's high standards of quality, timely action should be taken. This new system will facilitate accountability and funding decisions, and do so in a manner that is transparent, fair, and responsive to the local needs of families and children.

We have established greater accountability for enrollment in programs and delineated a clear system of governance in Head Start.

The reauthorization also takes important steps to expand Early Head Start. Since its inception, results have proven that Early Head Start is one of the most effective programs of the Department of Health and Human Services. In this legislation, we improve the training and assistance network serving Early Head Start and guarantee a dedicated expert in each State to work with programs to meet the needs of infants and toddlers. We also expand the screening available to infants exposed to trauma, violence, or other circumstances detrimental to their development. We commit to expanding Early Head Start to serve an additional 8,000 low-income infants and toddlers over the next 5 years.

As in elementary and secondary education, reform in early childhood education requires resources. Today, half of all children eligible for Head Start have no access to it. Early Head Start however, serves only 3 percent of eligible infants and toddlers—we leave behind a shameful 97 percent.

When Sargent Shriver discussed the war on poverty, he said ''You have to put immense resources into winning a

war.'' He was right, and he wasn't talking about wars like Iraq. He was talking about the war on poverty. This conference report increases authorizations for Head Start to $7.3 billion in fiscal year 2008, $7.6 billion in fiscal year 2009, and $7.9 billion in fiscal year 2010. On a bipartisan basis, the conferees have signaled a commitment to invest more in our youngest children, and to assist Head Start in responding to the changing and evolving needs of the communities it serves.

Research shows that the first 5 years of life make an immense difference for a child. Those who attend high-quality early education programs are more likely to do well when they reach elementary school, are less likely to be held back a grade, and are more likely to graduate from high school and go on to college.

Our Federal investment in early childhood education clearly pays off—for every dollar invested in high-quality early education, there is a 16 dollar return later in life.

All children—regardless of their background—deserve to learn and develop. We need to strengthen early childhood for young children, in order to help them succeed later in school and in life.

A comprehensive curriculum and a stable and well-qualified workforce are cornerstones of a good early education. I am especially pleased that this reauthorization of Head Start includes a blueprint to strengthen the array of early childhood programs and services for young children.

The bill establishes an Early Childhood Advisory Council to examine needs of early childhood programs, develop a plan to improve professional development, upgrade standards, enhance collaboration among programs, and improve data collection.

More than 40 States have early learning standards in place or under development. States such as Massachusetts, Connecticut, and Illinois have developed the systems needed to improve program quality and expand access to programs in the early years. We need to build on that progress. States that are ready to take on the challenge of implementing needed improvements in their early education programs will qualify for incentive grants to get such improvements under way.

One of our highest priorities in Congress is to expand educational opportunities for every American. In this age of globalization, every citizen deserves a chance to acquire the skills needed to compete in the modern economy. That challenge begins at birth, and accelerates in the early years of life well before children even begin kindergarten.

This reauthorization helps us reach this essential goal. It keeps Head Start on its successful path, and enables it to continue to thrive and improve.

We still haven't won the war on poverty in America. But thanks to Head Start, we are getting closer. Day by day, and one child at a time. This conference report continues that indispensable progress, and I urge my colleagues to approve it.

Mr. President, we have others who desire to speak at this time. I will have a chance with the remaining time, perhaps, to get into some of the additional items.

Mr. President, I reserve the remainder of my time.

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. The Senator from Wyoming.

Mr. ENZI. Mr. President, I thank Senator KENNEDY for that excellent recap of what has taken us months, in fact, years to get done.

I am pleased after many years of false starts, we have finally reached agreement on Head Start reauthorization. This conference agreement is a bipartisan, bicameral effort that focuses on improving the lives of low-income children and their families. We need to ensure that children, regardless of their circumstances, have the opportunity to get the preparation they need to enter school ready to learn and be successful.

The Head Start Program was established in 1965 as part of the war on poverty to level the playing field for low-income children. The purpose of the program was, and remains, to provide educational and other developmental services to children in very low income families. It recognizes that children do not start school with the same set of experiences or knowledge. Head Start programs provide low-income children with a solid base of experiences and knowledge that enables them to start their elementary school experience on par with their more affluent peers.

Since its creation, Head Start has been a comprehensive, early childhood development program that provides educational, health, nutritional, social, and other services to low-income, preschool-aged children and their families. Head Start currently provides services to over 900,000 children and their families through a network of over 1,600 public and private agencies. This program also recognizes the important role that families play in a child's development and encourages their regular participation in the program.

I do thank Senator KENNEDY and Congressman MILLER for their commitment to working together on a bipartisan basis. That commitment has resulted in a conference report that meets the needs of children and families who participate in Head Start programs throughout our Nation. I also thank my other colleagues, particularly Senators ALEXANDER and DODD, and Congressmen MCKEON, KILDEE, and CASTLE, for their fine work and dedication to this important legislation.

The conference agreement before us today builds off legislation we developed last Congress when I was chairman of the HELP Committee. Senator KENNEDY agreed to use that legislation as the base for this year's bill to build on the bipartisan support it had received. Senator KENNEDY and I understand that to get anything done, especially in the Senate, you have to have bipartisan support.

Years ago, I established an ''80-percent rule'' to help guide my work in committee and on the Senate floor. It means that 80 percent of what Congress works on we agree to. The other 20 percent is the stuff we may never agree on. But that is what always seems to get the attention. I do think we do our best work when we focus on the 80 percent. Legislation seems to move more quickly when we work together in a bipartisan way.

I am pretty certain people in Massachusetts are cringing, and people in Wyoming are cringing and saying: Oh, no, KENNEDY and ENZI are doing it again. But that is the way things get done, and we have quite a track record of doing things that wind up pretty unanimous on both sides of the Capitol because they figure with our two backgrounds it has to be reasonable or we will not agree. That is exactly how it works out.

So this bill probably will not make headlines, and it is not the most sensational sound bite. However, this is work Congress can and must do to improve the lives of children and families across America.

Today, with the passage of the Head Start conference report, we begin to fulfill this obligation. But our work is far from done. This is just the first in a number of education and training bills we have to complete this Congress.

With the reauthorization of the Head Start Act, the first bookend is in place. I hope we can continue to work together on legislation to reauthorize No Child Left Behind, the Higher Education Act, and the Workforce Investment Act. These four bills represent the continuum of education and workforce training legislation supported by the Federal Government—with Head Start as one bookend and the Workforce Investment Act as the other.

These acts support programs from preschool, through elementary and high school, into postsecondary education and the workforce, and are critical to maintaining our global competitiveness. We cannot afford to let those programs fall victim to election year politics.

I am pleased the House Education and Labor Committee has moved forward with the markup of the reauthorization of the Higher Education Act. It is my hope we can continue this momentum and move into a conference on that important legislation in the very near future.

Head Start provides the building blocks children need for success later in life. The Improving Head Start for School Readiness Act of 2007 before us today helps ensure that children in Head Start programs will be better prepared to enter school with the skills necessary to succeed. We have always worked hard to improve and strengthen this act because we believe in the future success of all children.

I am particularly pleased with the accountability provisions in this conference report. The conference agreement includes important changes related to the evaluation and review of grantees. We have taken steps to increase the quality of Head Start, and there is now greater clarity for grantees as to what constitutes a program deficiency.

The roles of governing body and policy councils have been clarified and strengthened, while also preserving the important role of parents. It is absolutely necessary and vital that a single entity, the governing body, has fiscal and legal control of the Federal grant dollars. That said, we maintain the equally vital and necessary role of the policy councils in setting program priorities, classroom activities, and classroom personnel changes. We believe this will help ensure the continued integrity of the Head Start Program for years to come.

Parents are their children's first teachers. It is vital we continue to encourage and strengthen the role parents play in Head Start programs. This conference agreement increases the presence of parents in Head Start programs. It strengthens services for families, and it provides training and development opportunities for parents who serve on policy councils and governing boards.

Today we are taking the final legislative step toward a comprehensive and bipartisan reauthorization of the Head Start Program. As we take this step to reauthorize Head Start, it is important we review the effectiveness and need for the 57 other early childhood and preschool programs currently receiving Federal support. Many of those programs are programs in name only. Others are ineffective and fail to provide the services children need to be ready for school. We have to direct funds to programs that have been shown to be effective at preparing children for success in elementary school. Head Start is a successful program that deserves our continued support. This support should not be diluted by competing programs or the creation of new programs.

I again wish to thank all the members of both committees, in particular Senators KENNEDY, ALEXANDER, ISAKSON and DODD, and Congressmen MILLER, MCKEON, KILDEE, and CASTLE, for getting this done.

I also thank all of the staff who worked to complete this reauthorization. Many of them have been working toward this day since early January. In particular, I would like to thank the following staff for Congressman MILLER: Ruth Friedman, Lamont Ivey, Denise Forte, and Stephanie Moore; for Congressman MCKEON: Kirsten Duncan, James Bergeron, and Susan Ross; for Congressman KILDEE: Lloyd Horwich; for Congressman CASTLE: Jessica Gross; for Senator KENNEDY: Roberto Rodriguez, Carmel Martin, and David Johns—I would like to mention how well Senator KENNEDY's staff and my staff have been able to work together on all of the issues—for Senator ISAKSON: Glee Smith; for Senator ALEXANDER: David Cleary and Sarah Rittling; and for Senator DODD: Catherine Hildum, and former staffer Sharon Lewis.

For my staff, I want to be sure to thank Lindsay Hunsicker, who has done a marvelous job of working and understanding and providing some creativity in the decisions that had to be made to get here; Beth Buehlmann, who oversees all of these education issues and is making sure they are moving forward in a bipartisan way; and Ilyse Schuman, who is the legal brains behind the drafting and decisions for my team; Katherine McGuire, who heads up the team as staff director; and, of course, Kelly Hastings.

Passage of this conference report will ensure that low-income children are prepared not only for success in school but, most importantly, for later success in life.

I look forward to getting this conference report to President Bush for his signature as soon as possible.

Mr. President, I yield the floor and reserve the remainder of my time.

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. The Senator from Massachusetts.

Mr. KENNEDY. Mr. President, I yield 5 minutes to the Senator from Washington, Mrs. MURRAY, who has been particularly involved in making sure parents are going to be included in this program. She has been such an outspoken advocate for the homeless and foster children who so often get left out and left behind. She is a former schoolteacher herself and member of a school board. She brings extraordinary knowledge, experience, and understanding to this problem. We are very fortunate to have her on our committee, and the Senate is very fortunate to have her as well. I hope they listen to her message.

Mr. President, I yield 5 minutes to the Senator from Washington.

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. The Senator from Washington is recognized.

Mrs. MURRAY. Mr. President, I thank the Senator from Massachusetts.

I am delighted we are here today to talk about one of the most important things this Congress has done for our children, and that is the Head Start Program.

I thank the Senators from Massachusetts and Wyoming for shepherding this important bill to the floor today, where it is in its last final step before it reaches the President for his signature.

For over 40 years now, Head Start has helped children from low-income families build the confidence and skills they have to have to succeed in school. As the Senator from Massachusetts said, I am a former preschool teacher, parent, school board member, and U.S. Senator. I can tell you, I have seen from every aspect how this important program benefits our children.

Today, I am very excited we are taking a vote to renew this important program. The bill we have in front of us now strengthens Head Start by making it more efficient, more accommodating, and more sensitive to our children's social, emotional, and developmental needs. It will allow us to better serve millions of children and improve on this already successful program.

This bill will help raise the quality that Senator KENNEDY talked about of our Head Start services across the country so that we ensure all of our children, no matter where they live, receive high quality, consistent services. Also, it will help ensure that all Head Start partners from our early childhood centers to our elementary schools, our childcare centers, our health care providers, our family service centers, are all working together in a coordinated way so we can best serve our young children and their families.

This bill increases funding authorization for Head Start each year from 2008 to 2010, and that will enable even more of our kids to start school ready to learn than ever before. I hope all of our colleagues will support this important bill, and I urge the President to sign it as soon as possible so we can put these new tools to work for our kids.

As the, I believe, only former preschool teacher here in the Senate, I feel a personal obligation to stand up for all of our young children. And standing up for our children, particularly our most vulnerable children, means standing up for Head Start. Each year, nearly a million poor children across this country attend our Head Start programs. Those kids didn't choose to be poor, but fortunately, since they live in this Nation, which values our young people, many of them are enrolled in Head Start where they can get the tools and the training they need to prepare them for school.

I thank Senator KENNEDY and his staff as well as Ranking Member ENZI for working so hard on this bill.

I am particularly proud of the provisions that increase Head Start access for our homeless and for our foster children. This bill will help improve transportation and services for these children and places a priority on enrolling them. These are some of our kids who face some of the greatest barriers to learning in our society, and I am glad we are making their success in school and in life an immediate priority.

I also fought to make sure that parents of children enrolled in this program have a voice in the decision-making process on local Head Start issues. I think our parents need to be involved in these programs and to have responsibility, and I think as their kids get a jump on learning through Head Start, this program will help our parents begin to understand that they have a very important and critical role in shaping their children's education. So I am very proud we were able to work out that language and move forward in a positive direction.

To name a few other quick additions, this reauthorization improves the transition of Head Start children to school by making sure that the curriculum they get matches their State early learning standards and kindergarten skills, which is very important. It also reserves 40 percent of new Head Start funds to improve programs as well as increase salaries for staffers, and it enables Native-American and migrant Head Start programs to expand, which will increase access to early learning for those particularly vulnerable populations.

I have visited Head Start centers all across my State. I have talked with teachers, I have talked with the parents, and I have talked with advocates about ways we can improve Head Start. I am very pleased that a number of their suggestions have been put into this bill. Washington State, my home State, is a leader in early learning efforts. I think we can all be proud of this bill, and I hope all of our colleagues will support it.

I yield the floor.

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. The Senator's time has expired.

Mr. ENZI. Mr. President, I yield 7 minutes to the former Secretary of Education.

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. The Senator from Tennessee is recognized.

Mr. ALEXANDER. Mr. President, I ask the Chair to please let me know when I have 1 minute remaining.

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. The Chair will so advise.

Mr. ALEXANDER. Mr. President, it is not too much to say that this vote on this piece of legislation on Head Start is about whose century this century will be. Some say it will be China's century. Some say it will be India's century. I think the jury is still out, but I do believe it can be the American century, and I believe it is up to us to make sure it is.

We have the advantages in our country. One of them, of course, is our brain power advantage. We don't have better brains than others, but since World War II, we have spent a great deal of time building our education system, our universities, our research laboratories. We worked together this year to pass the America COMPETES Act, authorizing $34 billion over the next 3 years to step that up. A second advantage we have is the e pluribus unum. We are one country. Where different countries are fractured, we are working here to help our children and our new arrivals learn English, our common language, and to learn our American history so we can stay as one country. That is an advantage we have. The third advantage we have is that we are the only country in the world that believes that anything is possible. We don't say leave just a few children behind, or 80 percent of us are created equal; we set these very high goals. Anything is possible. Most of our politics is about failing to reach the goals, dealing with the disappointment, and then trying again.

How do we make sure that the dream that anything is possible is real? Well, No. 1, we keep down taxes and we keep down regulations, and we keep markets free so people can go from the back to the front of the line. The other thing we do is to make sure that all Americans have a chance to get to the starting line ready. Some people need some help, and that is what Head Start is about.

I was very pleased to come to this floor in the earlier part of this year with Senator KENNEDY, Senator ENZI, and Senator DODD, introducing a piece of legislation that we hoped would get to the point this one has today. I thank them for the way they have worked on this for the last 3 or 4 years. It didn't matter much whether it was a Republican or a Democratic Senate; we all worked together and we are here now with this result.

A lot has changed, and there are four major advantages to this bill, in my opinion. No. 1, I call special attention to the 200 new centers of excellence that are created. These are opportunities for Governors to look, say, at Nashville or at Boston or at some place in their State and designate a center of excellence. These would be shining examples of all of the best efforts that are being made for early childhood education. The centers would get up to $200,000 a year for 5 years and would hopefully try to coordinate all early childhood education and development efforts.

When I was a child, my mother's preschool class in the garage in our backyard was the only preschool education program in town. In the 1970s, Tennessee adopted public kindergarten for the first time, a few years after Head Start. Well, today, Head Start is a $7 billion program. It has 1,700 agencies, 29,000 centers, but that is far from all the effort we are making. There are 21 billion Federal dollars for early childhood education, and many State and local dollars. They are not always spent in the most efficient manner. The President thought it would be better to give the Head Start funds to the States. I disagree with that. We have disagreed with that, but we have respected his impulse by saying in these 200 centers for the next 5 years, let's see what happens. Let's see what happens when States work with local governments and put all the Federal, State, and local money together for early childhood education in these centers for excellence.

Second, there is a system for renewal for Head Start agencies. There is not an automatic renewal after this time, and the Secretary of Health and Human Services will develop a process for that to make sure that for every cycle, the Head Start agency earns its right to continue. Third, there is clear authority to governing boards about the big dollars we are spending here and the big lives we are affecting. We heard eloquent testimony from the mayor of Shelby County, A.C. Wharton, about money that was stolen down there. So we have done a better job listening to Mayor Wharton and to others in making it clear who is in charge of the money, who is in charge of the administration, and at the same time, making sure that the parents, who are the lifeblood of the uniqueness of Head Start, are active and full participants through policy councils.

Finally, as the President also recommended, we have worked over the last 2 or 3 years in developing this bill to increase cognitive learning standards. Forty years ago, we didn't know nearly as much about how the brains of very young children work, but we know now that to be ready to learn, to be at the starting line when the time comes to go to school, children need to learn more in their earlier years. So Head Start will provide that opportunity.

It is not too much to say that this bill is about whose century this will be. We hope it will be the century of every child in the world, but we like the idea that it could be the American century, and we want to take full advantage of the assets we have. One of the assets we have is the dream that anything is possible, that you can go from the back of the line to the front. We will keep our markets free. We will try to keep our taxes down. We will get rid of unnecessary regulations so people can get ahead. But this bill is a commitment that says we will also make certain we will do our best to make sure every single child has an opportunity to get to the starting line ready to succeed.

Thank you, Mr. President.

Ms. MIKULSKI. Mr. President, I am proud to rise in support of the conference report for the Head Start for School Readiness Act. Since 1965, Head Start has been one of the most successful Federal programs for helping low-income children and their families. This long overdue reauthorization is good news for over a million Americans who rely on Head Start's comprehensive services.

Head Start is for the poorest children. About 75 percent of Head Start families are at or below the poverty level. For a family of four, that is just $20,600 per year. These children are often the furthest behind in learning to read and learning the alphabet. Yet Head Start makes a difference. In 1 year, these students see huge improvements in their vocabulary, increasing from the 16th percentile to the 32nd percentile, which is almost the national norm.

But Head Start does so much more. It brings children to the doctor to get immunizations and hearing checks. It helps parents get on the right track. Many parents become Head Start teachers and go back to school to get their degrees. It provides nutritious meals for children who might otherwise go hungry. I am a social worker. I have seen first hand children whose lives were changed by a simple hearing

aid or a good breakfast. Believe me: it can make all the difference.

Head Start is also a smart investment. Research shows that society accrues $9 in benefits for every $1 invested in Head Start children. Head Start graduates are more likely to have increased earnings and employment than non-Head Start participants. Head Start graduates are also less likely to be dependent on welfare or to have been charged with a crime when compared to their siblings who did not participate in the program.

Unfortunately, only 60 percent of eligible preschool children are in Head Start, and less than 5 percent of eligible infants and toddlers are in Early Head Start. In Maryland, about 25 percent of eligible children age zero to 5 years are in Head Start and Early Head Start. The Bush administration has underfunded this critical Federal program for the past 7 years. Now is the time to renew the Federal investment in Head Start.

That is why I am proud to support this bill that makes low-income children and families a priority in the Federal checkbook. It increases the authorized spending level from $6.9 billion in fiscal year 2007 to $7.3 billion in fiscal year 2008. That is nearly a $450 million increase. This increased investment will allow tens of thousands more children to participate in the program who would be otherwise turned away because of inadequate funding.

This bill also expands Head Start by increasing the eligibility income level from $20,600 to $26,800. This means that a family of four who are scrimping and saving on an annual income of only $26,800 will no longer be denied the comprehensive services Head Start provides.

The Head Start for School Readiness Act makes a serious investment in our youngest children and their families. The benefits of Head Start to the children, their families and society at large far outweighs the cost. I urge my Senate colleagues to vote in favor of this conference report. Our young children deserve nothing less.

Mr. REED. Mr. President, I strongly support H.R. 1429, the Improving Head Start for School Readiness Act of 2007. This important bipartisan legislation, which I helped craft as a member of the Senate Education Committee and as a conferee, reauthorizes the Head Start Act for the first time since 1998 and strengthens our commitment to ensuring that the nation's neediest children receive high-quality early education supports and services.

Since 1965, Head Start has provided comprehensive early childhood development, educational, health, nutritional, social and other services to low-income preschool children and their families, and this reauthorization builds on our long-standing investment in this essential initiative.

There are two provisions that I am particularly pleased are included in this legislation, and which are important to my State of Rhode Island. First, the Improving Head Start for School Readiness Act builds on provisions I first authored in 2003 to provide Head Start programs with additional flexibility to serve children up to 130 percent of poverty. Current law limits program eligibility to 100 percent of poverty or below. This increase in income eligibility will enhance the opportunity for struggling, low-income families to participate in Head Start while ensuring that programs prioritize serving families under the poverty guideline and enhance outreach to ensure those most in need are served first. Raising the income eligibility limit finally puts Head Start on the same level as other means-tested programs, which essentially all serve above the poverty level to provide for greater participation and help the working poor.

Second, this legislation for the first time establishes the Parent Policy Council as a decisionmaking authority within the governing structure of Head Start programs. Strong parent involvement in their children's early education and development has been a key tenet of the Head Start program since its inception in 1965, and is one of the primary reasons for the program's continuing success.

This reauthorization also includes a provision I authored to enhance coordination between Head Start programs and school and public libraries to excite children about the world of books, assist in literacy training for Head Start teachers, and support parents and other caregivers in literacy efforts.

Additionally, I am pleased that this conference report does not permit employment discrimination based on religion despite the administration's continuing advocacy for such a change. Faith-based organizations are an integral part of Head Start. However, there is no need to change a program that has encouraged their participation by allowing such discrimination.

I want to thank Chairmen KENNEDY, DODD, and MILLER and Ranking Members ENZI, ALEXANDER, and MCKEON and their staffs, for their extraordinary work on this conference report. The Improving Head Start for School Readiness Act is significant legislation for the people of Rhode Island and the nation, and I am pleased to support it. This strong reauthorization in tandem with necessary funding increases will ensure that Head Start can continue its important and critical work to lessen the effects of poverty and ensure that children are successfully prepared for school and life.

Mr. HATCH. Mr. President, today we approved the Conference Report on the Improving Head Start for School Readiness Act of 2007—H.R. 1429. I applaud the good work of all involved. I particularly want to commend Chairman KENNEDY and Senator ENZI, as well as Chairman MILLER and Representative MCKEON on the House side for their collective work on this important bill.

Head Start is a national program promoting school readiness through educational, health, nutritional, and social services. Currently, Head Start serves over 900,000 low-income children and their families in approximately 1,600 programs run by public and private agencies. As a whole-child, whole-family program, Head Start prepares children for what we hope will be a lifetime of learning.

I want to recognize and commend our Head Start programs in Utah. They do an outstanding job, and I believe this legislation will go a long way to providing additional support for them. I have appreciated their input during this long process.

I have been struck by some of the stories shared by our Head Start people in Utah. I remember hearing from one of our Head Start Directors that a number of children have never held a book before entering the program. When they are handed their first book, many don't know how to open it. Entering Head Start swings wide the doors of learning and opportunity and exposes young children to the reading and learning process.

I have also heard stories of Head Start children who were suffering from major medical problems that would not only threaten their ability to learn but their very lives. One of the great characteristics of the Head Start program includes the identification and treatment of several medical conditions, many problems can be detected and treated before they become serious learning impediments.

The Improving Head Start for School Readiness Act of 2007 not only reauthorizes the program, it greatly improves and strengthens it. This bill will enable more low-income children to get into the Head Start program. Utah has only been able to serve just over 50 percent of its eligible children. This bill provides for the expansion of Head Start and Early Head Start in States, like Utah, serving fewer than 60 percent of eligible children.

This bill strengthens the accountability of Head Start programs and improves the overall quality of Head Start grantees, as they will be reviewed every 5 years. It clarifies and strengthens the role of the governing board in the oversight of the program. It also respects the priority role of parents and family through the collaborative role of the policy councils and operations of the Head Start programs.

Through this legislation, the Head Start workforce is strengthened, as goals have been established for education standards for Head Start teachers, curriculum specialists, and teacher assistants. It requires Head Start teachers to have in-service training every year and ensures professional development for all Head Start staff working directly with children.

The Improving Head Start for School Readiness Act of 2007 strengthens coordination and collaboration of the program by aligning services with

State early learning standards, providing professional development opportunities for Head Start staff, and promoting partnerships with other agencies.

Because I believe that education is best done at the local and State levels with appropriate Federal support, I am pleased that under this bill, states will designate a State Advisory Council that will closely address the education and care of children from birth to school entry. I strongly support the authorization for Centers of Excellence to designate model exemplary Head Start programs in every State.

One of the concerns expressed by many of us as we started this process years ago, was the challenge of strengthening the academic portions of Head Start. Under this bill, Head Start agencies will use scientifically based measures to support learning and program evaluation. Recommendations of the National Academy of Science study on Developmental Outcomes and Assessments for Young Children will be incorporated. Although the National Reporting System was intended to improve the program, it was found to be time-consuming and unwieldy for Head Start programs, and without demonstrated benefits. That reporting system has been eliminated under this bill.

In order to educate every child in our country, we must prepare them. Many pre-school children, particularly those who are disadvantaged, would have learning difficulties long before they entered elementary school. This bill will help these young, vulnerable, and teachable children develop the necessary early reading and math skills to be successful in school. It will address their health and nutritional needs, and it will provide important socialization. It also engages and empowers parents, and benefits us as a Nation.

I was proud to have worked with my colleagues on the Senate Health, Education, Labor, and Pensions Committee to get this bill through the legislative process, and I was pleased to see it pass unanimously today.

Mr. DURBIN. Mr. President, I rise today in support of the conference report to accompany the Head Start reauthorization bill. For the first time since 1998, Congress will send a bill to the President to reauthorize and strengthen the Head Start program.

A child's education begins well before he or she enters a school building for the first day of kindergarten. The children who succeed in kindergarten are the children whose parents read to them every day, who talk with them, and who engage their minds with games, art, and new experiences. These are the children who enter kindergarten ready to learn.

Unfortunately, many children enter kindergarten well behind their peers. They may have parents whose long hours interfere with the kind of time they spend with their small children. Or they may have parents who don't know how important these early developmental activities are. That is why we created Head Start in 1965, to make sure low-income children are ready to learn when they arrive in kindergarten. Head Start provides preschool-aged, low-income children and their families with school activities, health screening, healthy snacks, and structure to encourage parental involvement.

Each year, over 900,000 children are served by Head Start nationwide; 40,000 of those children live in my home State of Illinois. The legislation that we are considering today will increase authorized funding for Head Start to $7.9 billion in fiscal year 2010, allowing tens of thousands more children to participate in the program.

The legislation will also expand eligibility, allowing Head Start to serve low-income children and families up to 130 percent of Federal poverty, or $26,800 for a family of four. It will also expand the Early Head Start program, so it can reach an additional 8,000 low-income infants and toddlers. The earlier children enroll in Head Start programs, the more likely they are to succeed once they enter kindergarten.

The legislation also sets new minimum qualification standards for Head Start teachers. Within 6 years, all Head Start teachers must have an associate's degree, and half of all teachers must have a bachelor's degree. Forty percent of new funding will be reserved for program quality enhancements, including much-needed salary increases for Head Start staff.

Educational standards will be strengthened in Head Start programs to make sure children are presented with language and literacy, math, science, and other cognitive development material. These new standards will be updated and aligned with the latest research in child development. The legislation we are considering today will improve the transition for children who are leaving Head Start to enter kindergarten, through better coordination between Head Start programs and schools, shared teacher training, and alignment of curriculum.

I am especially pleased that this legislation strengthens Head Start without weakening its long-standing civil rights protections for more than 200,000 Head Start teachers and 1.3 million parent volunteers.

Since 1972, the law has prohibited agencies that receive government funding for Head Start from employment discrimination on the basis of race, creed, color, national origin, sex, political affiliation, or beliefs. These civil rights protections have been reaffirmed all six times that the Head Start program has been reauthorized since then, and I strongly support the seventh reaffirmation today.

Preserving this provision is especially important given this administration's attempts to overturn long-standing principles of nondiscrimination through Executive orders, proposed legislation, and, recently, Department of Justice opinions.

Let me be clear. I support the right of religious organizations to use religious criteria in hiring people to carry out their religious work. This exception—which is the current law—makes sense because it allows people of common faith to work together to further their religion's mission.

However, there is a fundamental difference between religious organizations using their own funds for their religious work and religious organizations using government funds for that purpose. In 1972, Congress established the current, expanded religious exception under title VII of the Civil Rights Act of 1964. The same Congress established the nondiscrimination provisions in Head Start that continue with today's legislation. They understood the difference between permitting hiring based on religion for religious functions not funded by the government, and allowing discrimination based on religion in hiring people to carry out activities funded by the Federal Government.

I also want to address a memo released last month by the Department of Justice entitled ''Effect of the Religious Freedom Restoration Act on Faith-Based Applicants for Grants.'' This troubling memo concludes that the Religious Freedom Restoration Act allows faith-based organizations to receive Federal funds even when considering religion in employment. It further asserts that RFRA ''protects this right to prefer co-religionists for employees even if the statute that authorizes the funding program generally forbids consideration of religion in employment decisions by grantees.''

I strongly disagree with these conclusions in general, and especially with respect to the legislation before us today. The law and the history regarding Head Start is clear with respect to nondiscrimination in employment, and this explicit civil rights protection must be followed.

In closing, I want to affirm my strong support for the participation of religious organizations in the Head Start program. These organizations provide critical support for our Nation's children in 5 percent of Head Start centers and greatly improve our pre-schoolers' education. It is not surprising that Head Start is the second-largest source of federal funding for faith-based organizations.

This program truly is a model for how the government can successfully partner with faith-based organizations, while complying with nondiscrimination requirements.

I thank Senators KENNEDY and ENZI for their bipartisan work on this important legislation, and I urge my colleagues to support this conference report.

Mr. KENNEDY. Mr. President, as I understand, we have 9 minutes left. Am I correct?

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. The Senator is correct.

Mr. KENNEDY. I yield 3 minutes to the Senator from Ohio and 3 minutes to the Senator from Vermont, and I will take the last 3 minutes, and we will alternate with our Republican colleagues.

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. The Senator from Ohio is recognized.

Mr. BROWN. Mr. President, I thank Chairman KENNEDY and Ranking Member ENZI for their leadership, as well as the staff, for their tireless work on the Head Start reauthorization bill. It is long overdue. It will help prepare thousands of low-income children for their transition into school and for their success later in life.

There is no greater investment, of course, that we can make than investing in our children. This legislation means an additional 8,000 low-income infants and toddlers younger than those who have traditionally been enrolled in Head Start will be eligible for the program. Teachers will receive more training, the critical training they need and the cost-of-living increases that they deserve. This legislation means expansion of the program to children whose families earn just above the poverty line. For tens of thousands of children in this country, this legislation gives them hope. It is a step forward, a major step forward.

Yesterday, unfortunately, the President vetoed the funding for Head Start. That is why we take a step forward today with this Head Start reauthorization, as the President took a step backward in vetoing the funding for Head Start. Budgets, we know, are about priorities. Whether it is a family budget, it speaks to your values; whether it is a Federal budget, it speaks to our values. Vetoing funding for Head Start, for medical research, and for job training as the President did yesterday, tells us something about his priorities.

I am pleased that on a bipartisan basis, by passing legislation that expands Head Start to reach more low-income children, this Senate is saying our priorities are different. I hope that together we can override the President's veto and fulfill the promise inherent in the Head Start Program.

I thank my colleagues on both sides of the aisle for their good work on this Head Start reauthorization. We should move forward.

Mr. ENZI. Mr. President, how much time do I have remaining?

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. Almost 14 minutes.

Mr. ENZI. I yield 7 minutes to the Senator from Georgia, who has always played a tremendous role in this piece of work with his staff person Glee Smith, and he brings with him a world of knowledge from Georgia where he served as the chief school official there. They set some precedent-setting things at all levels of education while he was doing that, and he did it in conjunction with former Senator Zell Miller, who was Governor at that time. I yield 7 minutes to the Senator from Georgia.

Mr. ISAKSON. Mr. President, I wish to thank Ranking Member ENZI for his kind remarks and his tremendous dedication and commitment to bringing this conference report to the floor. I particularly want to thank Senator KENNEDY from Massachusetts, who is a consummate legislator by anybody's definition and a very committed individual in the development of our youth and the betterment of education.

As Senator ENZI said, about a decade ago I served as chairman of the State Board of Education in the administration of my predecessor in this seat who was then Governor Zell Miller. Those were the years that the breakthrough brain research came forward and illustrated conclusively that there is a direct correlation between early childhood development and the potential development of a person as an adult. We worked very hard together in Georgia to improve the plight of all Georgians and did everything we could to develop new programs. One of them that we developed was none other than the 4-year-old prekindergarten program which now is available to every child in Georgia. It is a program that builds on the fact that the earlier you can begin instruction, the earlier you can improve the environment and the atmosphere in which a child is exposed, the better that child is going to do.

It is critical for us, if we want to turn around the trend in terms of dropouts in this country, to see to it that we enhance and enrich the lives of every single student who is going to go to our public schools.

Mr. President, it is conclusive that the environment in which a child lives in their early years—that to which they are exposed, their nutrition, the total environment—is directly a correlation to their ability to learn. The Head Start Program is designed to get to those children most in need for quality support, for uplift, for a greater self-esteem, and for a leg up, a chance to get to go to a 4-year-old prekindergarten program or to a kindergarten program ready to learn.

USA Today ran an article about a week ago talking about America's dropout factories, and it enumerated schools in almost every State, with dropout rates of 40, 50, 60 percent. If you looked at the facts around those articles and those schools, you would find a common denominator: Those schools' children came from the least of backgrounds, with the least support, and from the poorest of environments. We have an obligation to ourselves and, as Senator ALEXANDER said, America's future to see to it that every American child arrives at kindergarten or first grade ready to learn. The advancement of programs such as Head Start will make that happen.

I commend Senators ALEXANDER, ENZI, and KENNEDY, Congressmen MILLER and MCKEON, and all those who worked on this important legislation. I urge every Member to cast a favorable vote in favor of a better atmosphere for our young children to grow up in, better exposure to those things that help them go to school ready to learn, and turn around the paradigm on dropouts in the United States.

I yield the floor.

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. The Senator from Vermont is recognized.

Mr. SANDERS. Mr. President, I wish to add my voice to the others and thank Senator KENNEDY and Senator ENZI for their leadership on this issue and for the cooperative, bipartisan relationship we see on that committee, which makes it perhaps the most productive committee in the Senate.

As others have said, this is a very important day forward for the children of our country. Right now, I am thinking about the Head Start workers in Vermont who do such an extraordinary job in reaching out and providing for low-income kids throughout our State, and I know the same is true throughout this country. They are dedicated people, they are underpaid and overworked, but they do it for the love of the children. I very much appreciate all they are doing.

Mr. President, while this is, in fact, an important day forward, it is significant to point out again that this is an authorization bill, not an appropriations bill. We had the disappointment just the other day of the President vetoing the Labor-HHS bill, which includes Head Start. My hope is that in the very near future we are going to have a strong Labor bill, with adequate funding for Head Start, but more significantly—and this is an issue I will talk about until the cows come home—we have to change our national priorities with regard to how we treat the children of this country.

Every Member of Congress, every American should be deeply ashamed and embarrassed that in this great country, we have, by far, the highest rate of childhood poverty in the industrialized world. The figures are that between 18 and 20 percent of our children live in poverty. As other speakers have pointed out, if children at an early age don't get the intellectual and emotional nourishment they need, they are not going to do well in life. It is not an accident that at the same time we have the highest rate of childhood poverty, we also have the highest rate of incarceration of any major nation on Earth. So we don't take adequate care of our children, and, lo and behold, we are shocked when they end up behind bars, and we spend $50,000 to $70,000 for each person who is incarcerated. It makes a lot more sense to me—and I hope my colleagues agree—that we put that money up front to make sure all of our kids get the opportunities they are entitled to as young Americans.

The truth is that while this bill is a significant step forward—and I applaud all those who built it—as Senator KENNEDY indicated earlier, only one-half of

the eligible children in America today, because of inadequate funding, are able to get into the Head Start Program. So this is an important step forward. I congratulate all who have made this day possible. We have a long way to go to, in fact, keep the faith with the children of America.

Mr. ENZI. Mr. President, I yield 3 minutes to the Senator from New Hampshire.

Mr. GREGG. Mr. President, I thank the Senator from Wyoming and the Senator from Massachusetts. I rise to express my appreciation for their excellent work on this legislation. It has been a long time in gestation. I think it reflects their commitment to legislating in a bipartisan and effective way that the bill is now at this stage. I congratulate them.

I think anybody who has been exposed to Head Start is impressed by the program. There have been studies and reports of that which can be done to improve the program, and hopefully this bill will work in that direction. But the underlying idea of giving low-income kids the ability to come into an atmosphere where they get nurturing, good nutrition, and now, because of this bill, where they get starting blocks for learning how to deal with an academic program is totally appropriate and something that has succeeded.

If you look at what we are facing as a nation, as discussed here at considerable length—I heard the Senator from Tennessee make an excellent statement on the needs of education, and what our country really needs is the ability to bring into the educational mainstream children who today, unfortunately, are not able or do not come to school with the necessary skills to compete with some of their fellow students. Head Start gives those children that opportunity. It gives low-income kids the ability to start kindergarten and get into the first grade with an understanding of how, first, to be social and deal with an atmosphere where there are other children; secondly, to have the necessary nutrition to get through the day and be able to learn; and third, begin the building blocks of learning. This program works, and it has worked. It is something that should be continued to be supported by the Federal Government and also by the local communities that stand behind Head Start.

That is one of the great things about Head Start. In my experience, when you go to a local Head Start center in New Hampshire—or anywhere—as chairman of the committee, I visited Head Start centers all across the country. They are usually community-oriented events. Behind those teachers and committed people, who are willing to spend the day with the children and try to make their lives better during the day, there are usually a lot of volunteers and people from the community stepping up to also make those programs work well.

So Head Start is one of the success stories and one of the things we need as one of the building blocks in order to continue to make America a great place to live and give people the ability to participate in the American dream.

Again, I thank the Senators for orchestrating this effort.

I yield the floor.

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. Who yields time? The Senator from Wyoming is recognized.

Mr. ENZI. Mr. President, it has been a pleasure and an honor to get to work on this bill and to work with people on both sides of the aisle. You can see the unanimity from the Republican side and the Democratic side in making sure the bill came to pass.

As I mentioned before, we have had a lot of false starts trying to get Head Start done. This time, we have gotten through the process. Today, we will have a positive vote and send it to the President for signature. I think you can tell from the debate that it has been a very positive process.

The only distinction appears to be the few comments we have had about the Labor-HHS appropriations bill. I don't want to get into that issue because it will take a long time to discuss it. I ask unanimous consent to have the Wall Street Journal article from today called ''Return to Spender'' printed in the RECORD to counter some of the things talked about. It wasn't Head Start that he vetoed; it was the entire Labor-HHS budget.

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

RETURN TO SPENDER

Congressional Democrats spent the fall preparing for their budget confrontation with the White House, and the strategy they seem to have settled on is futility. They knew President Bush would veto their first appropriations bill, as he did yesterday, and they also knew they'd lack the votes for an override. If they're wondering why the bottom's fallen out of their approval ratings, here it is.

Mr. Bush said the bill exceeds ''reasonable and responsible levels for discretionary spending,'' and he was being too kind. Ostensibly the $606 billion ''minibus''—combining funding for the Departments of Labor, Health and Human Services, and Education—is ''only'' $12.2 billion beyond the President's budget request for discretionary spending. But that's more than half of the $22 billion that Democrats want to spend for 2008 above the Administration's top line. (That $22 billion, by the way, swells to at least $205 billion in additional outlays over five years.)

Democrats are already feigning outrage. House Appropriations kingpin David Obey complained, ''There has been virtually no criticism of its contents,'' and if he's only referring to Congress, he's not far off. The bill marks a return to Capitol Hill's earmarks-as-usual spending culture, assuming it ever abated. There are more than 2,200 earmarks worth some $1 billion.

The pork includes $1.5 million for the AFL–CIO Working for America Institute and $2.2 million for the AFL–CIO Appalachian Council. There's $500,000 for a ''virtual herbarium'' in New York and $50,000 for a Utah ''ice center.'' Also check off $1 million for the Clinton School of Public Service in Little Rock, and another $1 million for the Thomas Daschle Center for Public Service and Representative Democracy at South Dakota State University. Plus the usual assorted millions for art centers, aquariums, aviation and jazz museums, and so forth.

The Members also reverted to habit by using a House-Senate conference to ''airdrop'' $155 million in earmarks that were not included in earlier editions—in violation of the 2006 ethics ''reform.'' The conference also clandestinely removed a provision barring federal funding for the ''hippies museum'' near Woodstock. All of this from Democrats who rode into the majority promising to restore ''fiscal discipline.''

Mr. Obey was especially instructive in a speech immediately before the final House vote: ''I would ask every serious-minded person in this body, if they really think there is a chance of a snowball in Hades that Members' earmarks on either side of the aisle will survive if we wind up at the President's level of funding.'' He concluded: ''The fate of every project . . . is in your hands.''

The Democrats were desperate for a veto-proof majority, and for the sake of their earmarks some Republicans were content to go along. The pork, of course, was cover for much larger domestic spending excesses, including a $2.4 billion budget gimmick for'' advance appropriations'' designed to circumvent Democratic ''pay as you go'' budget rules. Thankfully, enough GOP Members realized it, and maybe a few even hoped to recover their credibility on spending.

Since there aren't enough votes to override Mr. Bush, it's back to the drawing board. Maybe next time Democrats should try something new—say, spending less money.

Mr. ENZI. I hope the vote today will display the unanimity we have had while working on this bill. I congratulate the Senator from Massachusetts for the way he is running the committee. We have not just done hearings on things—hearings are a little more divisive than the other mechanism, which has been his morning coffees. In hearings, the two sides bring people to testify, and we kind of beat up on each other's witnesses. In the coffees he has held, we get to bring in a bunch of people and hear what they think. We have the interaction of one person who has had experience, and he talks to another person who has had experience, and they talk about how the two experiences might come together. That has been helpful on this bill, as well as the other ones, the bookends I mentioned. This being the first part of the bookend, and the next one we will be working on is No Child Left Behind.

We have already done the Higher Education Act on this side. I look forward to conferencing that and getting on to the Workforce Investment Act, which passed this body twice already but never has been conferenced. Our work is still cut out for us, but this is a day to celebrate the good work done on both sides of the aisle.

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. The Senator from Massachusetts is recognized.

Mr. KENNEDY. Mr. President, I thank my friend and colleague from Wyoming. He believes we ought to listen to experts before we actually legislate, which was a rather dramatic

thought to many around here. He certainly is right. He reminds us of our unfinished business in terms of higher education and the workforce legislation. We are strongly committed, and we will get a response on that.

UNANIMOUS-CONSENT AGREEMENT—H. CON. RES. 258

Mr. KENNEDY. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that upon the adoption of the conference report to accompany H.R. 1429, the Senate proceed to the consideration of H. Con. Res. 258, a correcting resolution; that the concurrent resolution be agreed to and the motion to reconsider be laid upon the table.

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. Is there objection? Without objection, it is so ordered.

Mr. KENNEDY. Finally, I would take a few moments to mention the staff who worked on this bill. I want to personally mention those who have worked so hard on this legislation. Some have been working on this for 4 years. I will not get into the reasons for that. This has been a very long and, in the past, contentious piece of legislation and without them, there is no way we could have completed this bill.

I would like to thank Michael Myers, Carmel Martin, Roberto Rodriguez, David Johns, Lily Clark, Liz Maher, and Raquel Alvarenga from my staff.

I would like to thank Katherine Graham Hildum of Senator DODD's staff; Janelle Krishnamoorthy of Senator HARKIN's staff; Mildred Otero of Senator CLINTON's staff; Michael Yudin of Senator BINGAMAN's staff; Robin Juliano of Senator MIKULSKI's staff; Seth Gerson of Senator REED's staff; Kathryn Young of Senator MURRAY's staff; Will Jawando of Senator BROWN's staff; Huck Gutman of Senator SANDERS' staff; and Steve Robinson of Senator OBAMA's staff.

This has been a bipartisan process all the way. I would also like to thank Senator ENZI's wonderful staff, specifically Katherine McGuire, Beth Buehlmann, Lindsay Hunsicker, and Adam Briddell.

I would also like to thank David Cleary and Sarah Rittling of Senator ALEXANDER's staff; Celia Sims of Senator BURR's staff; Juliann Andreen of Senator HATCH's staff; Allison Dembeck of Senator GREGG's staff; Elizabeth Floyd of Senator COBURN's staff; Karen McCarthy of Senator MURKOWSKI's staff; Suzanne Singleterry of Senator ALLARD's staff; Glee Smith of Senator ISAKSON's staff; and Alison Anway of Senator ROBERTS' staff.

It is important to mention the work done by our colleagues in the House and I would like to thank Ruth Freidman of Congressman MILLER's staff; James Bergeron, Kristen Duncan and Susan Ross of Congressman MCKEON's staff; Lloyd Horwich of Congressman KILDEE's staff and Jessica Gross of Congressman CASTLE's staff for all of their work on this legislation.

I would like to thank especially Roberto Rodriguez and David Johns who have taken the lead on Head Start in my office. Their good work has made all the difference. I know Roberto is especially pleased to see the Senate and House pass this conference report, as he has worked on this legislation for several years now. I commend him for his expertise, diligence, good nature and all of his efforts.

Mr. President, finally, the Head Start Program reaches the neediest children in this country. It reaches them to help and assist by providing health care, teaching proper nutrition, and by supporting proper development of cognitive abilities to ensure that children are ready to successfully transition to school.

Head Start is targeted to the neediest children in this country. Even with the small numbers we reach—we only reach a million, and there are 4 million poor children who are between ages 0 and 5—we see the difference it makes. Head Start raises them to a level playing ground. That is what our country is really about—trying to raise people to a level playing ground. Head Start alone does not guarantee success, but it gives them the opportunity to be successful.

If we have a group in our society that needs this kind of support, it is our children. As pointed out in this debate, through no fault of their own many children are born into difficult and challenging circumstances. As a nation we have a responsibility to get them up to a point where they can succeed in school and in life. That is what Head Start is about—a recognition that our Nation believes that children who are living in poverty, in some of the most challenging circumstances, should have the opportunity to be on a level playing field.

Finally, there is one thing we have learned in the area of education; that is, the more resources are targeted to early education, the better the opportunities these children have to succeed.

In this reauthorization we have taken advantage of the lessons we have learned from Head Start's successful history and built upon excellent recommendations made by members of our committee. This is a very solid and important piece of legislation that will make a difference in the lives of millions of children. I urge the Senate to support it.

Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the following three letters in support of the Head Start reauthorization conference report be printed in the CONGRESSIONAL RECORD following my remarks on the conference report.

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

NATIONAL HEAD START ASSOCIATION,
Alexandria, VA, November 13, 2007.

Hon. EDWARD KENNEDY,
Chairman, Senate Committee on Health, Education, Labor & Pension, Washington, DC

DEAR CHAIRMAN KENNEDY: On behalf of the National Head Start Association, the children, parents, staff and teachers of Head Start and Early Head Start programs, and the Board of Directors, I would like to take this opportunity to congratulate you, the members of the Senate Committee on Health, Education, Labor and Pension for supporting the reauthorization of Head Start—truly a bipartisan effort and success story for America's premier preschool program, Head Start.

As the national association representing the Head Start community, we represent more than 1 million children and their families, 200,000 staff, and 2,700 Head Start programs. With the assistance of over 1 million volunteers, these programs comprehensively meet the early childhood development, educational, health and family needs of our children.

Head Start as you very well know, was established in 1965 as part of President Lyndon Baines Johnson's ''Great Society'' program, and is the most successful, longest running, national school readiness program in the United States. Head Start has served over 25 million preschool-age children, infants, toddlers, and pregnant women since its inception. Your successful reauthorization of Head Start signals the continued legacy for future low-income children and families.

The Head Start reauthorization bill is a lesson in bipartisan cooperation and leadership in addressing a critical priority need of our country—the preschool readiness of our children. In short, the ''Improving Head Start Act'' addresses income eligibility, where the working poor are supported and provided incentives to work; terminates the National Reporting System; helps more programs operate full-day and year round; reaffirms the accreditation of teachers in early childhood; provides expansion for Migrant and Seasonal Head Start and American Indian/Alaskan Native populations; and underscores the importance of parental involvement in the education of their children.

Therefore, I call upon our longtime friends and supporters in the U.S. Congress to approve overwhelmingly the ''Improving Head Start Act of 2007'' and send it to the President for his signature.

Again, congratulations on your success and that of our children and families.

With great gratitude,

SARAH GREENE,
President and CEO.

FIGHT CRIME:
INVEST IN KIDS,
Washington, DC, November 14, 2007.

DEAR SENATORS KENNEDY, ENZI, DODD AND ALEXANDER: The over 3,500 police chiefs, sheriffs, prosecutors and violence survivors of Fight Crime: Invest in Kids know from the front lines—and the research—that investments in Head Start are critical to our nation's public safety. Head Start helps kids get a good start in life so that they avoid later criminality and grow up to become responsible citizens. But the maximum crime reduction impacts—and many other benefits of Head Start—can only occur when programs reach more of the at-risk kids and are comprehensive and of the highest quality.

We are pleased that the final conference report version of the Improving Head Start Act of 2007 (H.R. 1429) includes the following:

Funding authorization: We are pleased the bill includes increased funding authorizations in Fiscal Years (FY) 2008–2010, with ''such sums'' funding levels for FY11–FY12. A $750 million increase in FY08—beyond the FY07 level—is needed to simply restore funding to the FY02 service level. And that level would only serve a small portion of the eligible, poor kids now left out of Head Start. These increases are an important first step in the right direction.

Teacher qualifications: We are pleased the bill includes a quality improvement requirement that 50% of classroom lead teachers

have at least a bachelor's degree by 2013. The requirement is crucial to Head Start program quality, since no peer-reviewed, scientific research study has found an early care and education program that demonstrated significant, long-term crime reduction and education results without a bachelor's degree teacher requirement.

Quality improvement set-aside: We are pleased the bill directs 40% of annual increases over the prior year's funding level to quality improvement, with half of those funds directed toward improved teacher compensation rates. Improved teacher compensation is critical to attracting and retaining better-educated individuals—who would otherwise flock to higher-paying opportunities, including K–12 schools.

Targeting to serve the poorest children: We are pleased the bill maintains Head Start's priority for serving the poorest, most at-risk children by ensuring that children living in poverty are served first as income eligibility is expanded to 130% of the Federal Poverty Level.

Early head start: We are pleased that bill adds flexibility for Head Start programs to serve zero-to-three-year-olds if they meet the Early Head Start quality standards. In addition, we are pleased that the bill directs half of new expansion funding toward Early Head Start enrollment increases.

The bill also includes several provisions that will continue to strengthen Head Start's quality:

No state block grants, state waivers, or state application authority that might have endangered current quality standards;

Training/technical assistance activities (including through a 2.5%–3% set-aside);

Strengthened research-based school readiness elements of Head Start (of course, it is critical to maintain and strengthen all eight of the domains of Head Start's outcomes framework);

Strengthened parent education and home visiting provisions;

A requirement that Head Start agencies utilize high-quality, research-based developmental screening tools to identify children with early emotional and behavioral problems, so kids can receive the treatment they need to prevent later delinquency;

Improvements in fiscal and program accountability among grantees, including improved monitoring and termination of grantees that are significantly and/or systemically deficient;

Enhanced outreach to at-risk kids;

Enhanced collaboration and coordination efforts requirements between local Head Start grantees and other early education providers though collaboration grants;

Increased state-level coordination through State Advisory Councils on Early Childhood Education and Care;

The development of an integrated data collection system to provide complete information about children served by the programs and the services offered; and

Suspension of the National Reporting System, and provisions for any future assessment approaches to be based on the results the National Academy of Sciences study regarding appropriate, comprehensive and scientifically valid and reliable child assessments.

We appreciate the efforts of the Health, Education, Labor and Pensions Committee and the Education and Labor Committee to strengthen Head Start through this reauthorization legislation. This bill will benefit at-risk kids now and help ensure safer communities in the years to come. The result will be generations of disadvantaged children progressing toward school success and graduation rather than later arrest and incarceration.

Sincerely,

DAVID S. KASS,
President.
MIRIAM A. ROLLIN,
Vice President.

COMMUNITY ACTION AGENCIES WELCOME HEAD START RENEWAL

WASHINGTON (Nov. 14, 2007).—The nation's Community Action Agencies applaud the work of Senate and House conferees on Head Start reauthorization and look forward to passage of this national child development legislation later this week.

Community Action Agencies (CAAs) administer 30 percent of Head Start grants and a third of all enrollments nationwide. Children and families participating in programs offered by CAAs also benefit from the comprehensive services offered by these organizations to help them secure housing, gain employment, and build assets to help them achieve economic security.

''Low-wage working families who turn to Community Action Agencies to prepare their children for school with Head Start leave with a variety of resources to help them improve the lives of the entire family,'' said National Community Action Foundation Executive Director David Bradley.

The conference agreement expands access for more eligible children, increases classroom quality, enhances the Head Start workforce, strengthens governance and provides more tools for greater accountability.

''It is commendable that this Congress has focused so much of its agenda on domestic issues that are important to American voters, and, in this instance, has been able to do so with strong bipartisan cooperation to assist low-wage working families,'' Bradley said.

''Once these important enhancements are adopted for the Head Start program, we hope that Congress will next turn its attention to the remaining Human Services initiatives: the Low-Income Home Energy Assistance Program (LIHEAP) and the Community Services Block Grant,'' he said. ''These programs make key investments in the daily lives of low-wage working American families, and are long overdue for reauthorization. NCAF hopes its proposals to strengthen and modernize these programs will be considered soon.''

Mr. KENNEDY. I yield back whatever time remains, and I ask for the yeas and nays.

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. Is there a sufficient second?

There appears to be a sufficient second.

The question is on agreeing to the conference report to accompany H.R. 1429.

The clerk will call the roll.

The assistant legislative clerk called the roll.

Mr. DURBIN. I announce that the Senator from Delaware (Mr. BIDEN), the Senator from New York (Mrs. CLINTON), the Senator from Connecticut (Mr. DODD), and the Senator from Illinois (Mr. OBAMA) are necessarily absent.

Mr. LOTT. The following Senator is necessarily absent: the Senator from Arizona (Mr. MCCAIN).

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. Are there any other Senators in the Chamber desiring to vote?

The result was announced—yeas 95, nays 0, as follows:

[Rollcall Vote No. 409 Leg.]

YEAS—95

Akaka	Dorgan	McConnell
Alexander	Durbin	Menendez
Allard	Ensign	Mikulski
Barrasso	Enzi	Murkowski
Baucus	Feingold	Murray
Bayh	Feinstein	Nelson (FL)
Bennett	Graham	Nelson (NE)
Bingaman	Grassley	Pryor
Bond	Gregg	Reed
Boxer	Hagel	Reid
Brown	Harkin	Roberts
Brownback	Hatch	Rockefeller
Bunning	Hutchison	Salazar
Burr	Inhofe	Sanders
Byrd	Inouye	Schumer
Cantwell	Isakson	Sessions
Cardin	Johnson	Shelby
Carper	Kennedy	Smith
Casey	Kerry	Snowe
Chambliss	Klobuchar	Specter
Coburn	Kohl	Stabenow
Cochran	Kyl	Stevens
Coleman	Landrieu	Sununu
Collins	Lautenberg	Tester
Conrad	Leahy	Thune
Corker	Levin	Vitter
Cornyn	Lieberman	Voinovich
Craig	Lincoln	Warner
Crapo	Lott	Webb
DeMint	Lugar	Whitehouse
Dole	Martinez	Wyden
Domenici	McCaskill	

NOT VOTING—5

Biden	Dodd	Obama
Clinton	McCain	

The conference report was agreed to.

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

• Mrs. CLINTON. Mr. President, I rise to applaud the Senate passage of the Head Start Improvement for School Readiness Act of 2007—a product of hard work by my colleagues on both sides of the aisle.

For more than 40 years, Head Start has provided comprehensive services to poor families—health, nutrition, academic skills, family literacy, and more—ensuring children get the cognitive, social-emotional, and academic skills they need to succeed in kindergarten and later in life. In New York, almost 50,000 families benefit from Head Start services.

This bill takes several steps forward in strengthening Head Start programs across the country. It dramatically expands Early Head Start—a program created under the Clinton administration to reach children from birth to age 3. Though we have decades of research underscoring the importance of this stage of development, Early Head Start has only been able to reach 3 percent of eligible infants and toddlers. This conference report doubles Early Head Start funding from 10 percent to 20 percent to ensure more infants and toddlers receive services and arrive at kindergarten ready to learn.

The conference report increases Head Start authorization by 6 percent in the first year and 4 percent in the following 2 years. For years, our Head Start providers have had to make difficult decisions in the face of President Bush's budgets that have included flat-funding or funding cuts, as well as the effects of inflation. Many centers had to cut back on comprehensive services that Head Start families rely on. In

New York, programs have been forced to eliminate vital transportation services. This much needed increase in funding will finally give Head Start agencies the resources they need to maintain enrollment, improve quality service levels, and provide for the necessary cost of living increase for teachers.

The Head Start Improvement for School Readiness Act of 2007 enhances teacher quality. Research has shown that the right teaching training and successful instruction lead to successful Head Start programs. Right now, about a third of Head Start teachers hold a bachelor's degree. This bill will help increase the skills and training of more Head Start teachers and increase the quality of instruction for Head Start children. I am also pleased this conference report retains the important roles parents have always maintained in Head Start programs, including ensuring parents' voices are heard in Head Start's daily operations.

The bill also increases a portion of the income eligibility guidelines from the current 100 percent of poverty level to children in families with income up to 130 percent of poverty. This is particularly important for States like New York, where the cost of living is higher than most States'. Many programs need flexibility in serving these families earning just slightly above the poverty line, including the ability to assist families who have moved off welfare and are now working and struggling to make ends meet. For New York City, this provision means thousands more children will be able to participate in Head Start programs. This bill will give those hard working families support as they become self sustainable.

This bill also terminates use of the National Reporting System, NRS. I have expressed my concern about this test for several years now. In 2003, I joined my colleague Senator BINGAMAN in offering an amendment during the markup of Head Start to suspend NRS. In 2005, the Government Accountability Office produced a report underscoring our concerns when it called into question the validity and reliability of the NRS. I am pleased this bill suspends the unfair NRS test and asks the National Academy of Sciences to make recommendations on an appropriate assessment for young children.

Head Start is critical to ensuring our most vulnerable children enter school ready to learn. Head Start has provided comprehensive services to low-income families—from health and nutrition, to academic skills and family literacy. I am pleased that we were able to move this bill forward in this session in a bipartisan fashion. The Senate passage of this bill is a victory for our neediest children and the Head Start community that serves them.●

Mr. KENNEDY. I move to reconsider the vote and to lay that motion on the table.

The motion to lay on the table was agreed to.

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. Under the previous order, H. Con. Res. 258 is adopted, and a motion to reconsider that vote is considered made and laid on the table.

The resolution (H. Con. Res. 258) was agreed to.

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

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. The clerk will call the roll.

The legislative clerk proceeded to call the roll.

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

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Mr. SALAZAR). Without objection, it is so ordered.

FARM, NUTRITION, AND BIOENERGY ACT OF 2007—Continued

Mr. REID. Mr. President, it is my understanding that we are on the farm bill?

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator is correct.

CLOTURE MOTION

Mr. REID. I send a cloture motion to the desk on the substitute.

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

The assistant 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 Harkin amendment No. 3500 (Substitute) to H.R. 2419, the farm bill.

Tom Harkin, Jon Tester, Daniel K. Inouye, Dick Durbin, Patrick J. Leahy, Patty Murray, Bernard Sanders, Kent Conrad, Ben Cardin, Debbie Stabenow, Ben Nelson, Byron L. Dorgan, Max Baucus, Ken Salazar, Claire McCaskill, Bob Casey, Jr., Sherrod Brown.

CLOTURE MOTION

Mr. REID. Mr. President, I send another 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 assistant 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. 339, H.R. 2419, the Farm, Nutrition, and Bioenergy Act of 2007.

Tom Harkin, Harry Reid, Kent Conrad, Ben Nelson, Amy Klobuchar, Frank R. Lautenberg, Daniel K. Inouye, Bernard Sanders, Russell D. Feingold, Patty Murray, Claire McCaskill, Byron L. Dorgan, Max Baucus, John Kerry, Debbie Stabenow, Richard J. Durbin, Sherrod Brown.

Mr. REID. Mr. President, I indicated this morning that sometime today, unless something changed, I would file a cloture motion on the Dorgan-Grassley amendment and, as I have indicated, on the bill, which I have just done. I had a long conversation with the distinguished Senator from North Dakota. Very few people know the farm bill as well as he does. Certainly his partner in this amendment, Senator GRASSLEY—no one can dispute his knowledge of the farm bill.

It is the feeling of Senator DORGAN, after having conferred with Senator GRASSLEY, that it would not be in the interests of the Senate, the farm community, and the country to go forward on cloture on that amendment at this time. I have followed their suggestion and that is why I did not go forward with this.

Unless something is worked out, it appears very clear—we have heard the debate all day on the farm bill. Tremendously difficult, hard work has gone on. The bill was reported out of the Agriculture Committee. Every Senator there voted for it. There was not a recorded ''no'' vote, but that only says part of the story. The rest of the story is numerous Senators worked for weeks and weeks to arrive at a point where a bill could come out of that committee. It came out here to the floor. It came out last week and we have tried to move forward on it. That we have been unable to do that was unfortunate.

I hope Senators, when they are called upon to vote cloture on this matter, would understand that the work of the committee was very good work. Does that mean there should not be amendments to improve it? Probably not. But if we did nothing more than pass the bill that came out of that committee and took it to conference with the House-passed bill, we would be way ahead of the game. I hope that is what Senators will understand.

I am confident virtually every Democratic Senator will vote for cloture on the farm bill, even though there are many Democratic Senators whose No. 1 industry in the State is not agriculture. But they recognize that agriculture is an important business for this country. It is an important business for this country for so many reasons, one of which is the farming and ranching industry in this country is exemplary. We are able to compete with the rest of the world, without any question. We have modern techniques that have gone into farming that have made our production extraordinary.

We now have, as represented by Senator TESTER from Montana—one example—we have now a thriving business in America of organic farming. There are many people in this Senate who, when they go shopping, will only buy organic produce. That is part of this bill. Part of this bill recognizes that. It is very unfortunate that we have been stopped from going forward on this bill because people want to vote on immigration matters, they want to vote on tax matters, they want to vote on issues that are not related. I went over that entire list this morning, of all the nonrelevant, totally nongermane amendments that have been given to us.

I have said we Democrats will agree to five amendments. Five amendments; that is all we want. We don't expect the same from the Republicans. If they want more amendments—fine, give them to us. I said to SAXBY CHAMBLISS and to TRENT LOTT, we will even take a look at some of the nonrelevant amendments. If you want to meet the standard that has been in the last three farm bills and come up with one amendment—that is what has been the average—but come up with some nonrelevant amendments that people believe they have to offer, we will be happy to consider that. But let's agree to a finite number of amendments. We will take a few. The Republicans have more than we have.

This is something we want to do. We want to do the farm bill. As I have said before on the Senate floor, the farm bill is not the most important bill for the State of Nevada. When I go shopping at Smith's or one of the other grocery stores in Las Vegas, I am impressed with all that I find on those shelves: food produced in America. There is no question we import some food. I always look at the labels. We get some mangoes from other places and a few things, but we in America do well. Even though I am from Nevada—and I am very proud of the white onions we grow. The largest white onion producer is in Nevada, in Lyon County. I am happy about the garlic we grow and I am happy about the alfalfa we grow, but the driving force is tourism and gold. We produce 85 percent of all the gold that is produced in America.

But I think I represent the Democratic caucus. We are not all pushing forward on this farm bill because it is the most important thing in our State, directly. But indirectly, it is one of the most important things this body can do.

There can be all the statements made about: he will not take down the tree, and we never did do this before, and the last bill we had 240 amendments, the one before we had 196 or whatever it is. Of course there are a lot of amendments filed on bills, but we don't deal with that many of them. We have been stopped for 10 days from dealing with these amendments.

I reach out to my Republican colleagues and I say this with all sincerity: You want to bring down this bill? That is what you are doing. Yes, maybe we can take it up some other time, and I will certainly try to do that, but I think the time is slowly evaporating here. We need to get this bill done. We could still complete the bill before we leave here. If we couldn't complete the bill before we leave here for Thanksgiving, we certainly could get it teed up so we could finish in a day or so when we get back.

I hope above all hope, with the hard work that has gone into this bill on a bipartisan basis—this is not a Democratic bill by any stretch of the imagination; this is a bipartisan farm bill—I hope somehow we can work our way out of this.

I stand willing to do whatever I can, to be as reasonable as I can be. I am sure I have Senators on my side of the aisle over here who are not happy with the proposal I have made—five amendments. But I have done that because I believe it is that important to get the bill done.

This is a bill where there will be a conference. We have had bills that passed here and passed the House and we have not had a conference. This is a bill that will be conferenced.

Mr. MCCONNELL. Will the majority leader yield?

Mr. REID. I will be happy to yield to my friend from Kentucky for a question.

Mr. MCCONNELL. I believe I heard my good friend say what we needed to do was get a list of amendments and a starting place. I remind my good friend from Nevada, the majority leader, we were prepared to do that yesterday. We are prepared to do that now, if we could enter into an agreement to have a finite list of amendments, which I offered to do yesterday. That would at least define the universe, and at whatever point we get back to beginning to make progress on the bill, it would be a good starting place.

I was pleased to hear the majority leader indicate that is what we need to do and I say to him I am happy to do that.

Mr. REID. I say to my friend, as you can see, looking at our list, our list of amendments is mostly amendments saying, ''If you offer one, I am going to offer one.'' I don't have the list before me. Well over half of the amendments we have are ''relevant''—just relevant amendments. In the vernacular, that means I have an amendment but probably not. That is to protect them in case they want to offer an amendment.

I plead to my colleagues on the other side of the aisle—yes, you have given us a list. But give us a real list. I have made a proposal I think is very reasonable. We will take five relevant amendments. You give us a number of amendments that you have, relevant and nonrelevant, and let's see if we can work something out. I talked with the distinguished manager of the bill and he said to me: I have no authority to do anything. So talking to my friend from Georgia, for lack of a better description, is a waste of my time. He says he has no authority to do anything. What kind of negotiation is that?

Mr. MCCONNELL. Will the majority leader yield?

Mr. REID. Of course.

Mr. MCCONNELL. Would the majority leader agree with me that it would be at least desirable to prevent there being a further proliferation of amendments? It strikes me the longer we are out here, the more the amendments would multiply. Why would it not be a good idea to enter into a consent agreement now to limit the universe of amendments, as I was prepared to do yesterday, at least to give us a first step toward preventing the multiplicity of amendments that have a way of coming out of the woodwork around here, so at whatever point we go back to the farm bill we have at least defined the universe? That is the way we almost always start on a bill of that magnitude. It is the way we started on past farm bills. At the end we, of course, will pass a farm bill. We have in the past and we will this year.

I ask my friend from Nevada, what would be wrong with locking in the master, the universe—the list that we both produced yesterday? I was happy to enter into a consent agreement to limit the amendments to that 24 hours ago.

Mr. REID. I say to my friend, there is no question, if you have to walk a mile, a few steps is better than nothing. Here is what I would be willing to do on behalf of the Democratic caucus. OK, we have your list, they have our list. We have two lists. I would have no problem entering into an agreement that that is a finite list. How we complete all those amendments is a different question. I am not going to take down the tree at this stage. I am happy to work on that at a subsequent time, to see what we can do in that regard, but I am willing to do that.

We have their amendments and our amendments. I agree to a unanimous consent proposal that that is the finite list of amendments and that we will try to figure out a way to move through that. Maybe, as I have indicated, each mile has to be done in short steps. This would be a short step. I would be willing to do that.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Is there objection?

Mr. MCCONNELL. Mr. President, obviously we prefer the tree be taken down so we didn't have one Senator, in effect, dictating to the rest of the Senate what amendments get to be considered. But it does strike me that at least that is a place to start. Both sides are familiar with the list that was produced yesterday. I wish to ask unanimous consent that that list be adopted as the list that could be—we all know the vast majority of these amendments are never offered and will not be offered on this one.

Mr. REID. Mr. President, I would say to my friend and friends on the other side of the aisle, we will continue to work. We have now a tentative arrangement, starting arrangement. This is not the end, we know that. But we will figure out a way that people can offer amendments.

I will be happy to consider—I do not like language like this, but that is what we use around here, ''take down the tree.'' That kind of turns into a buzzword for—it is kind of like ''earmarks'' or something like it is real bad.

So I would be happy, at this stage, to accept the proposal that these two lists the staff has, these be the entire universe of the amendments that we will work on, on this bill. We will come back at a subsequent time to figure out

a way to take down the tree and work our way through these.

I think it is fair. I would say this to my friend, that these amendments would be subject to relevant second-degree amendments. I accept that.

Mr. MCCONNELL. Reserving the right to object, obviously I am not going to, I wish to make sure we do not have any misunderstanding. This is a little, small step forward. This does not mean we will invoke cloture on either the bill or the substitute.

But it does indicate there is an interest, on this side of the aisle and on the other side of the aisle, in preventing the further kind of proliferation of amendments that will go on a virtually daily basis until we define the universe.

At whatever point we go back to the bill and seriously try to go forward with it, we can have further discussions about some further limitation of amendments. We are certainly, in order to agree to any further limitation of amendments, going to want the tree to be unfilled so we can have a more free-flowing debate on this bill, as we have had in the past.

Mr. REID. I am happy to work with my esteemed colleague, the minority leader, to see how we can work our way through this procedure. We have taken a short step, but it is at least a very important step.

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

Mr. REID. I want to make sure I got the nod of Senator MCCONNELL's important staff person. The agreement says there will be unanimous consent that there be only relevant second-degree amendments.

Mr. MCCONNELL. Yes.

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

Mr. DORGAN. Reserving the right to object, I shall not object to a baby step, but let me try to understand exactly what we have.

I looked at the list that is before us. My name is not on that list. I assume that the Dorgan-Grassley amendment is now pending. And if the tree is taken—

Mr. REID. You are protected.

Mr. DORGAN. I wish to make sure there is protection for that amendment. I also would like, if I might for a moment, to say that the cloture motion you have filed does not alter or change the opportunity for Senator GRASSLEY and myself? The point that you had made was I did not want a vote on the Dorgan-Grassley amendment to be a cloture vote because there may be some who feel they have to vote with their leadership on a cloture, in a manner that would be different than if we had it straight up and down on the merits. It will still be pending, and we will intend to pursue that amendment.

The list of amendments is as follows:

Akaka—Amdt. No. 3538, Alexander—SoS: Broadband, Alexander—Increase Ag Research, Alexander—Strike renewable tax credit, Alexander—Wind energy tax credit, Alexander—Wind energy property taxes, Allard—PART, Allard—Vet Food Systems, Allard—Forest Reassessment, Barrasso—Support project-7, Baucus—State assistance for beginning farmers (Amdt. No. 3598), Baucus—Ag Research, Baucus—Brucellosis, Baucus—Agriculture supply, Bingaman—1 relevant amendment, Bingaman—Ground and water surface conservation program, Bingaman—Regional Water Enhancement program, Bond—Food Stamps, Bond—Red-tape Reduction, Bond—Research.

Boxer—6 relevant amendments, Brown/Hatch—Crop Insurance, Bunning—Disaster Relief, Cantwell—Study on climate change and impact on wine industry, Cantwell—increase funding specialty crop block grant, Cantwell—Minor oil seed crops, Cantwell—tree assistance program, Cardin—2 relevant amendments, Casey—crop insurance, Casey—agriculture inspectors, Casey—food stamp nutrition education, Casey—emergency funding for invasive pests and diseases, Chambliss—Farm Credit Service, Chambliss—Crop Insurance Fix, Chambliss—Trade-strikes section 3101, Chambliss—Biotech—PPV, Chambliss—Sugar technical fix, Chambliss—Ethanol/direct payments, Chambliss—Conservation AGI, Chambliss—5 Relevant.

Chambliss—2 Relevant to any on the list, Coburn—Waste, Coburn—Chinese garden maintenance, Coburn—Transparency, Coburn—Estate payments, Coburn—Federal hunger problems, Coburn—Crop Insurance, Coburn—Equip, Coleman—AGI Caps, Coleman—Drivers License, Conrad—3 relevant amendments, Corker—Coal gasification project credits, Cornyn—Child obesity study, Cornyn—Strike Disaster Trust Fund, Cornyn—New Budget P/O, Craig—Loan Repayment, Craig—Land Preservation, Craig—Worker Housing, Craig—Biogas.

DeMint—Death tax, Dorgan CRP, Dorgan—2 SECA tax amendments, Dorgan—Secretary's rule regarding cattle and beef (Amdt. No. 3602), Dorgan—Amdt. No. 3508 (pending), Dorgan—payment limits, Dole—Tax Credit, Domenici—Renewable Energy, Domenici—Land Transfer, Durbin—Food Safety sunset, Durbin—McGovern-Dole funding, Durbin—ACR improvements, Durbin—Puppy information, Durbin—Low-interest financing to fight invasive species, Durbin—Food Safety, Ensign—5 Relevant Amendments, Enzi—Captive Supply, Feingold—13 relevant amendments, Feinstein—Ag inspectors, Feinstein—Energy market oversight, Feinstein—Leafy greens, Feinstein—Clementines.

Graham—Cellulosic Ethanol, Grassley—Agricultural mergers, Gregg-Mortgage Crisis, Gregg—Drivers License, Gregg—Firefighters, Gregg—Ag disaster funds, Gregg—Farm stress program, Gregg—Proper budget accounting, Gregg—Commodity subsidies, Gregg—Sugar Program, Gregg—Loss assistance (asparagus), Gregg—Commodity subsidies, Gregg—Gulf of Mexico, Gregg—Farm and rural healthcare.

Harkin—7 relevant amendments, Harkin—2 amendments relevant to any on the list, Harkin—School nutrition standards, Harkin—Packers and stockyards Act, Harkin—Managers' Amendments, Hutchison—Southwest Dairy, Hutchison—Land Grants, Hutchison—Rio Grande, Hutchison—Renewables, Inouye—Food for Peace, Inouye—Rail related, Inouye—Broaband Data, Inouye—Energy related, Inouye—Sugar/ethanol loan guarantee grant program, Inouye—Exemption for Hawaii, Inouye—Reimbursement payment to geographically disadvantaged farmers/ranchers.

Kerry—4 relevant amendments, Kohl—Revised membership/Federal Milk Marketing (Amdt. No. 3531), Kohl—SOS Rural Energy America Program (Amdt. No. 3532), Kohl—Amdt. No. 3533, Kohl—Amdt. No. 3534, Kohl—Amdt. No. 3535, Kohl—Amdt. No. 3536, Kohl—Amdt. No. 3537, Kohl—Amdt. No. 3555, Klobuchar—AGI Limits, Klobuchar—Timber contracts, Klobuchar—Beginning farmers/ranchers, Kyl—Tax/AMT, Kyl—Relevant.

Landrieu—7 relevant amendments, Lautenberg—FRESH Act, Lautenberg—FEED Act, Levin—Energy Markets, Lincoln—4 Ag tax amendments, Lincoln—Bio Fuels, Lincoln—Small Procedure Credit, Lincoln—1 relevant amendment, Lott—Gulf of Mexico task force, Lott—Tax/AMT, Lott—2 Relevant, Lugar—Complete overhaul, Lugar—Trade, Lugar—2 Relevant.

McCaskill—Amdt. No. 3556, McConnell—4 Relevant, McConnell—Death Tax, McConnell—AMT, McConnell—Tax/Horses, McConnell—2 Relevant to any on the list, Menendez—4 relevant amendments, Mikulski—2 cloned foods amendments, Mikulski—2 H2B amendments, Murkowski—Exxon Valdez litigation, Murkowski—Specialty crops, Murray—2 Conservation amendments, Murray—Energy, Murray—Specialty crop, Nelson (NE)—Amdt. No. 3576, Pryor—Broadband (Amdt. No. 3625), Pryor—4 relevant amendments.

Reid—Amdt. No. 3509, Reid—Amdt. No. 3510, Reid—Amdt. No. 3511, Reid—Amdt. No. 3512, Reid—Amdt. No. 3513, Reid—Amdt. No. 3514, Reid—2 relevant amendments, Reid—2 amendments relevant to any on the list, Roberts—Technical, Roberts—Ag Fair Practices, Roberts—Definitions, Roberts—Regulations, Roberts—Conservation, Roberts—Conservation, Roberts—Trade, Roberts—Nutrition, Roberts—Rural Development, Roberts—Rural Development, Salazar—Cellulosic Biofuels Production Incentives (Amdt. No. 3616), Salazar—Colorado Good Neighbor Agreements (Forestry), Sanders—Amdt. No. 3595, Schumer—5 Conservation amendments, Sessions—Rural Hospital, Sessions—Farm Savings Accounts.

Smith—Americorp Vista volunteers, Smith—River Conservatory, Smith—Deschutes River, Smith—Wallowa Lake Dam, Smith—Oregon Subbasins, Smith—North Irrigation unit, Smith—Irrigation Districts, Smith—Fire sprinkler systems, Stabenow—Local farmer initiative—Buy America, Stabenow—CSFP, Stevens—Protecting Kids Online, Stevens—e911, Stevens—FSA operating loans, Stevens—Quarantine inspection fees, Stevens—Bloc Grant to seafood, Stevens—AQI User Fees, Stevens—Fishing Loans, Sununu—Biomass Fuel.

Tester—Amdt No. 3516, Tester—Live Stock Title, Thune—Bioluels, Vitter—National Finance Center, Webb—3 relevant amendments, Wyden—Illegal logging, Wyden—Biomass grants (Nov. 14, 2007).

Mr. REID. Mr. President, I wish to announce there will be no further votes on this today.

Unless someone has something else, I yield to my friend from Kansas.

Mr. BROWNBACK. Mr. President, I wanted to speak on the farm bill. I am glad to see we are taking baby steps forward. If the leaders have their things worked out, I want to go ahead and speak.

The farm bill obviously for my State is a very important issue. I appreciate that we are making some steps forward. I do think it would be wiser if we could start amending and start working as a legislative body and see how far we get. We have been on the bill now for 10 days. We have not had a vote. It seems it would be prudent to go ahead and try it. I realize the leaders are trying to work something out,

and I hope they can. But each day we do not get something moving, we are not moving forward on the farm bill.

I think we can trust each other in the process. I do want to recognize the work that has been done by the committee on the farm bill, the Agriculture Committee and their work. I think they have done a number of very nice things in the bill. I say that as someone from an agricultural State, from an agricultural family, who has been Secretary of Agriculture for the State of Kansas and has a degree in agriculture.

I can see some very positive things. I like the overall trend in certain areas of the bill and some of it not. I wish to comment on both of those and make one particular policy provision notice to my colleagues and friends in the Senate.

The Senate farm bill creates the Average Crop Revenue Program, a new safety net for farmers to utilize if they choose to do so. That is key for me, giving farmers the choice in how they manage their risk and not requiring that they take and use this program. Farmers may choose to stay in the current system or may opt into the new ACR Program. I think that flexibility is a good way to go forward.

Despite several threats throughout the year, the farm bill leaves direct payments at their current level. I think that is a victory and that is good for farmers in farm country. Direct payments are the only commodity title program that provides direct assistance to producers when they have no crop to harvest. Unfortunately, that happens all too often in my State.

It has happened in places of my State this year. In fact, 2 weeks ago, I was in a field of soybeans tilling them up. There was not enough there to harvest. It happens. There is nothing a farmer can do about it if the weather breaks that poorly against him.

So I am pleased to see those direct payments continue to exist, because when you have no crop, it does not matter how much the price is, it doesn't work, you have nothing to sell.

I also particularly appreciate the expanded research for energy coming from agriculture. To me, this has been one of the Holy Grails in agriculture for years and years, to expand the definition of the business from food and fiber, to food, fiber, and fuels. This effort recognizes our need to grow more of our own fuel to help in the environment in doing that, to help in the economy, the rural economy in doing that. It recognizes this fabulous chance we have in a world today to do things along that line.

If I could take a moment to set a root off to the side or shoot it off to the side, on this particular energy provision, I think there is another way we can also go that the managers have put in the base bill; that is, replacing oil-based products with starch-based products. This is again something the agricultural industry has worked at for a long time, is doing a much better job of, but we still do not have many of the products on the marketplace.

For instance, I had a company from my State, Midwest Grain Products, in my office 2 weeks ago with now 100 percent starch-based plastic utensils. He gave me some spoons and chopsticks that were made 100 percent out of wheat starch. They had been going 50 percent out of starch and 50 percent out of oil-based products. But he is now at 100 percent.

Yet they have not been able to crack through the marketplace yet on this, a totally biodegradable product made out of agricultural commodities, better for the environment, certainly better for our economy.

One of the things we have put in this farm bill is a New Uses Expo, where we would showcase on an annual basis, almost like you do at an auto show, the computer shows, on an annual basis, the new widgets coming out of agriculture, replacing, in many times and places, oil-based products with agricultural-based products, but showcasing that, having the Secretary of Agriculture and indeed even the Secretary of Energy cohosting that event. I think that is something that can help us expand the marketplace and expand value added coming out of agriculture, which is key for rural communities in my State and many others.

There are problems in the bill. That is why I hoped we could get some amendments moving. First, the bill contains a ban on packers owning livestock. This is a very contentious issue in my State and many places around the country.

Under this packer ban provision, processers would be prohibited from owning, feeding or controlling livestock more than 14 days before slaughter. You can look at this, and as someone raised in a farm family, I look at this and say: Well, that sounds like a pretty good thing. I do not want packers owning livestock. I want the family farm, I want my dad and my brother to be owning that livestock rather than the packers.

But then you start looking at the marketplace and the changes taking place in the marketplace and say: Wait. This is going to disrupt some good things happening. Ten days ago, I was on a ranch, a feed yard in Lyons, KS. They are raising certified Angus beef, natural, no artificial hormones, no antibiotics in the livestock, and then direct marketing that to consumers on the east coast, a great innovative product they have got coming out. They are getting a premium then for farmers when they can market this product that way.

But to do it, they had to enter into a contractual agreement with the packers that are set to process the animal and to deliver it to the end consumer, to the stores that they are going to directly to the consumers with.

So with this packer prohibition ban, this innovative market technique that is getting more in the pocketbooks of my farmers, because they are working with the packers, going straight to the consumer with a product they want, certified Angus beef, that is all natural, you are going to break that supply chain.

They are not going to be able to work with the packer on a contractual arrangement to do this. They are saying: Look, this is going to hurt us. We are not going to be able to do this. Now your ban that you are doing to try to save family farmers is going to hurt family farmers. So this is kind of the law of unintended consequences, that something people are trying to do on a positive basis to help family farmers is, in the end, going to hurt many of them in being able to increase the income they get from their livestock.

That is what they need. They need to be able to get more income from their livestock, and here is a key marketing tool and a way to be able to do that. I would hope that would be something we could deal with and something we can get passed.

Overall, I do not want to take a lot of time of my colleagues, other than to recognize the importance of getting this bill through. I would urge them on the Democratic side to let us start doing some amendments and working this bill through. I think we have a good base bill to work from. I think we can make some sensible decisions around here and get a farm bill through that is important to my State, important to the country, important to the future of the industry, and important to security in the United States on energy security.

But to do that, we need to get the process going. I would urge my colleagues to allow that to move on forward.

Mr. SMITH. Mr. President, I want to express my support for the tribal forestry provisions in title VIII of S. 2302, the Food and Energy Security Act of 2007, also referred to as the 2007 farm bill. These tribal provisions make important and needed improvements in the U.S. Forest Service by authorizing direct tribal governmental participation in State and private forestry conservation and support activities, and by providing the Secretary with flexible authority to enhance and facilitate tribal relations with the Forest Service and activities on National Forest System lands. The Committee on Agriculture, Nutrition and Forestry is to be commended for its bipartisan development and adoption of these provisions.

There are nine federally recognized tribes within my home State of Oregon, and it is my pleasure to serve on the Committee on Indian Affairs. Indian tribal governments are separate sovereigns that have a unique government-to-government relationship with the United States. That relationship embraces special duties to tribes that extend throughout the Federal Government, including the Department of Agriculture and the U.S. Forest Service.

Within the Forest Service, State and private forestry programs authorized by the Cooperative Forestry Assistance Act are intended to conserve and strengthen America's non-Federal forest resources across the landscape. However, the Cooperative Forestry Assistance Act of 1978 does not authorize direct support to tribal governments, and the Forest Service has found that tribal forest land participation is inconsistent and low. The new authorities in title VIII will help rectify these matters by establishing a more appropriate and equitable relationship between tribal government and the Forest Service. In so doing, it will also enable State and private forestry to better meet its mission among all stakeholders across the landscape.

The tribal provisions in title VIII authorize direct tribal governmental participation in a new Community Forest and Open Space Conservation program and in the established forest legacy conservation easement program. The title also authorizes Forest Service support directly to tribal governments for consultation and coordination, for conservation activities, and for technical assistance for tribal forest resources.

Additional tribal provisions in title VIII facilitate the Forest Service's interaction with tribal governments on National Forest System lands. In Oregon, all nine of the tribes in the State have deep historical ties and active current interests in the National Forests around the State. From time immemorial, the tribes have drawn physical and spiritual sustenance from what are today Oregon's national forests, and they continue those activities to this day. Of course, the modern conduct of those activities involves both the tribes and the Forest Service, and the Senate's farm bill provides the Secretary and the Forest Service new authorities that will enable these two stewards of our forests—one ancient and one contemporary—to work in closer cooperation. The bill gives clear authority for the reburial of tribal remains and cultural items on National Forest System land, and it allows free tribal access to forest products from the national forests for cultural and traditional purposes. It also allows the Secretary to temporarily close National Forest System land for the tribal conduct of cultural and traditional activities. Finally, it enables the Secretary to preserve the confidentiality of sensitive tribal information that has come into the possession of the Forest Service in the course of its collaborating with tribes.

The tribal forestry authorities in title VIII of S. 2302 are a historic step forward for the Forest Service and tribal governments. They are supported by Oregon tribes and I am pleased they are in the bill. Once again, I want to express my support, and I urge the support of all my colleagues as well.

I yield the floor and suggest the absence of a quorum.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will call the roll.

The legislative clerk proceeded to call the roll.

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

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Ms. CANTWELL). Without objection, it is so ordered.

NUCLEAR TERRORISM

Mr. CASEY. Madam President, the United States today faces a broad set of national security challenges, so many of them, but just to name a few: initiating a responsible redeployment of U.S. combat troops out of Iraq, preventing the Taliban from making a comeback in Afghanistan, addressing the current turmoil in Pakistan, responding to antidemocratic trends in Russia.

Our whole country has a full plate of national security challenges. So today I wish to speak about one of those, but I think it is at the top of the list, and I think it is an issue that has not received nearly enough attention in the Senate or in the other body. It is a longer term threat that has not received the attention it deserves, but I believe this issue is the single greatest peril to this great Nation, and that is the prospect that a terrorist group, possibly with the active support of a nation state, will detonate an improvised nuclear weapon in an American city.

I commend those who have displayed outstanding leadership on this issue, many of these individuals over several years, if not, in some cases, decades. Former Senator Nunn, of course, has been a leader on this issue; Senator LUGAR, a colleague of ours and the ranking member of the Foreign Relations Committee, a committee on which I have the honor to serve; and, of course, the chairman of that committee, Senator JOE BIDEN. All of these individuals and others have worked on this issue for many years.

In the weeks following 9/11, a lot of Americans know our intelligence community picked up a very frightening report from an agent. It was rumored that al-Qaida had acquired a Soviet-era nuclear weapon and had managed to smuggle it into New York City. The response of our Government, although secret at the time, was swift. Teams of experts were deployed across New York City with state-of-the-art detection equipment in an effort to track down this bomb before it exploded.

The threat was ultimately discounted. There was no nuclear weapon inside the United States at that time. The intelligence community's agent had bad information. But what is so frightening about these events is that it is entirely plausible that al-Qaida could have smuggled a nuclear weapon into our Nation.

One can only imagine the retrospective questions that would have followed such a horrific attack. What could our Federal Government have done to prevent such a detonation, we would ask. What policies or programs did we fail to prioritize? And, thirdly, how could we not have appreciated the urgency and the magnitude of the threat of nuclear terrorism?

I hope we never have to ask and answer those questions. But here we are 6 years later and neither the United States nor any other nation has been forced to confront the aftermath of a terrorist attack involving a nuclear weapon. Yet I regret to say we cannot rely upon good luck continuing indefinitely. The threat of nuclear terrorism persists, and the United States and the international community are failing to move quickly enough to neutralize this threat.

Why am I so concerned about nuclear terrorism and the challenges that it poses, not just for the world of today but for the world of our children and the world of our grandchildren? Some may ask that, and in response I just will cite a couple examples as to why I and everyone in this body should be concerned.

No. 1, last year a Russian citizen was arrested in Georgia on charges of seeking to smuggle 100 grams of highly enriched uranium on the local black market in that country, with the promise made that he could deliver another 2 to 3 kilograms of highly enriched uranium at a later time.

This arrest on smuggling charges is only one of hundreds involving fissile material that have emerged since the breakup of the Soviet Union in 1991. The good news is the quantities detected so far have been very small. The bad news is, just as with drug trafficking, those transactions come to our attention only after a fraction of what may actually be occurring.

No. 2, too many facilities across the globe do not yet have the security safeguards we should demand for stockpiles of fissile material. Today, as many as 40 nations—40 nations—possess the key materials and components required to assemble a nuclear weapon. Surprisingly, we don't fully understand the magnitude of this problem. Among other experts, Dr. Matthew Bunn, a leading expert on nuclear terrorism, reports that neither the United States nor the International Atomic Energy Agency—we know from the news as IAEA—has a comprehensive prioritized list assessing which facilities around the world pose the most serious risk of nuclear theft.

Finally, the third example I would cite in terms of why this is such an important issue and important question is, a columnist by the name of David Ignatius, with the Washington Post, reported last month that a senior Energy Department intelligence official had briefed the President and other administration officials that al-Qaida is engaged in a long-term mission—a long-term mission—to acquire a nuclear weapon to use against the United

States. According to this report by a senior Energy Department official, al-Qaida may have held off against further attacks against our Nation since 9/11 to focus on attaining a nuclear weapon.

Madam President, I do have good news in this area. It is a serious topic, but there is some good news to report, although it also presents a challenge to us. The good news is, we know exactly what needs to be done to address the threat of nuclear terrorism. And a terrorist group as sophisticated as al-Qaida cannot build a nuclear weapon from scratch. The production of nuclear weapons and the fissile material that gives these nuclear weapons their deadly explosive power remains a capacity limited to a national government. A terrorist group can acquire a nuclear weapon through several means: It can purchase or steal a completed warhead from a state, or it can acquire the weapons-grade plutonium or enriched uranium at the core of a nuclear warhead to devise an improvised nuclear device.

Thus, if the United States works in concert with other nations to ''lock down'' nuclear warheads and weapons grade materials around the world, we can prevent terrorists from accessing this material in the first place. We are making some progress on this front through programs such as the Nunn-Lugar effort—named after Senators Nunn and Lugar. This effort to dismantle nuclear weapons and secure excess nuclear materials is playing out, but we are not moving fast enough. Additional funding is required but, perhaps even more important, high-level attention at the level of Presidents and Prime Ministers is necessary to break through the bureaucratic obstacles and political inertia blocking more rapid security gains.

After 9/11, the President should have made nuclear terrorism a key international priority, raising it to the very top of the U.S.-Russian agenda, for example. Instead, this administration continued a business-as-usual approach. I believe this was a gross misjudgment. This issue cries out for Presidential leadership.

But as vital as cooperative threat reduction programs are, we must go above and beyond them if we are to be successful in deterring a nuclear attack or nuclear terrorism. Not only should we do everything we can to prevent terrorist groups from acquiring the means to detonate a nuclear weapon, we must also fortify our capability to deter their use. A terrorist group such as al-Qaida is undeterred, but states, and certainly the states from which al-Qaida would acquire or steal a nuclear weapon, are not undeterred. We should make sure we keep pressure on them. We must enhance our ability to threaten overwhelming retribution against any state that by inattention or lax security enables a terrorist group to detonate a nuclear warhead in the United States.

We can do this in a number of ways: First, we must elevate the cost for individuals and businesses that choose to facilitate illicit smuggling of fissile material and related nuclear components. Nuclear smugglers and nuclear smuggling networks rely upon middlemen to transport fissile material and nuclear components, to forge export licenses and Customs slips, and engage in other black market activities. Too often in the past, when such individuals and businesses are caught in the act, so to speak, or with their hands dirty, they receive minimal prison sentences. For example, the Russian citizen arrested in Georgia for nuclear smuggling was sentenced to only 8 years in prison. These lax criminal penalties cannot deter future actions of nuclear smuggling.

Aiding and abetting nuclear smuggling is abhorrent and should be recognized for what it is—a crime against humanity. Just as the international community has banded together in the past to stigmatize the slave trade and genocide as crimes against humanity, so too should it now do the same thing for those who help terrorist groups acquire weapons of mass destruction. The United States should be a leader in this effort.

No. 2, we should be working with the International Atomic Energy Agency to establish a global library, a library of nuclear fissile material. If the IAEA were to have nuclear samples from every weapons production facility in the world, when a nuclear device exploded somewhere in the world, we could, in short order, trace the nuclear material used in that explosion to the originating reactor or production facility. The capability of a library such as this could serve as a powerful deterrent. If a state knew it could be held ultimately responsible for a nuclear detonation, it would have a far greater incentive to secure and protect its nuclear materials. Those states that refuse to cooperate with such a global library would risk condemnation and suspicion in the event of a nuclear attack.

Our colleague, Senator BIDEN, the chairman of the Foreign Relations Committee, has worked with the Armed Services Committee to strengthen U.S. efforts to take the first steps toward such a global library. Today, a group such as al-Qaida can get away with a nuclear attack on the United States because it does not have a fixed address at which we can easily retaliate. The same, however, does not apply to a nation that intentionally or through lax security provides the means for a terrorist group to detonate a nuclear device. The United States must leverage the same type of deterrence against those nations as it did against the Soviet Union during the Cold War.

Finally, we must be doing more in the overall effort to combat nuclear proliferation among states. It is a very simple equation. The more states that acquire a nuclear weapon and fissile material, the more likely it is one of those states or some of those weapons and/or fissile material may be vulnerable to theft or illicit sale to terrorist groups. That is but one reason we must prevent Iran from acquiring nuclear weapons. It is why we must work with our international allies and partners to continue to ensure that North Korea verifiably dismantles its nuclear facilities and weapons under the Six Party Talks. This link between nuclear proliferation and nuclear terrorism demonstrates the importance of reinforcing the Nuclear Nonproliferation Treaty.

It is very difficult to imagine the utter devastation of an American city by an improvised nuclear device. It is perhaps for that reason the spectre of nuclear terrorism remains an abstract threat today. Yet before 9/11, very few of us could appreciate the dangers by commercial jet airliners hijacked by those on a suicide mission.

Madam President, the time for action on the challenge of nuclear terrorism is now. We must move to bolster existing threat reduction programs, strengthen our deterrence capability against those who would perpetrate acts of nuclear terrorism, and, finally, recommit ourselves to the effort to reduce the role and the number of nuclear weapons in our world today. We do not have the luxury of time to wait.

Before I relinquish the floor, I want to thank one of our great staff members for his work on this and so many other areas of our work. Jofi Joseph is one of our great legislative assistants who did a lot of work on this to prepare these remarks, and in so many other areas, and I want to commend him for his work.

Madam President, I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The majority leader is recognized.

FHA MODERNIZATION ACT

Mr. REID. Madam President, I am glad I had the opportunity to listen to my friend from Pennsylvania give this very well thought out and very important statement. It is important for our country and for the world. Thank you very much.

Madam President, tomorrow, among other things, we will turn to consideration of the FHA Modernization Act, which has now been reported by the Senate Banking Committee. The bill enjoys wide bipartisan support, and for a good reason. It passed out of the committee by an overwhelming 20-to-1 vote.

The reason we must act now is clear for all to see. Every day new evidence emerges, and the depth and severity of our country's subprime mortgage and foreclosure crisis is painted before our eyes. Hundreds of thousands of mortgages are now delinquent nationwide. This is leading to real pain and hardship for American families. The most alarming fact is, this could be just the beginning.

This is why House and Senate Democrats announced earlier this year that we would address the subprime mortgage and foreclosure crisis comprehensively. I am pleased to say Democrats and Republicans have joined to work diligently toward that goal. Tomorrow, we bring the product of that hard work to the floor of the Senate.

This modernization bill is one of several ways we plan to assist deserving families not with a handout or a bailout but with education and assistance to help them weather this storm.

UNANIMOUS CONSENT AGREEMENT—H.R. 4156

Mr. REID. Madam President, I ask unanimous consent that when the Senate begins the rule XIV procedure with respect to the House bridge bill regarding funding for Iraq and Afghanistan, that it be considered as having been initiated on Wednesday, November 14.

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

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

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Mr. CASEY). Without objection, it is so ordered.

MORNING BUSINESS

Mr. DURBIN. I ask unanimous consent to go into morning business.

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

VETERANS LEGISLATION

Mr. AKAKA. Mr. President, last Thursday, November 8, 2007, the assistant majority leader, Senator DURBIN, propounded unanimous consent agreements on two bills reported by the Veterans' Affairs Committee—S. 1233, the proposed ''Veterans Traumatic Brain Injury and Other Health Programs Improvement Act of 2007'' and S. 1315, the proposed ''Veterans Benefits Enhancement Act of 2007.''

Both proposed agreements called for the bills to be considered ''at any time determined by the majority leader, following consultation with the Republican leader'' and also provided that the only amendments that would be in order would be ''first-degree amendments that are relevant to subject matter of the bill.'' In other words, the request was for the Senate to take up these two bills, ordered reported by the committee in late June and reported in August, at some future time with the only exclusion being that no nonrelevant amendments would be in order.

It is hard to think of a more modest request for action on legislation. Unfortunately, my friend and colleague, the former chairman and ranking member of the committee, Senator CRAIG, objected to both unanimous consent agreements.

In explaining his objection, Senator CRAIG expressed the view that some provisions in the two bills are ''controversial enough to merit considerable floor debate.'' Whether I agree with that characterization of the provisions, I would not seek to keep Senator CRAIG or any other Senator from debating the two bills. As I just noted, that was precisely what the unanimous consent called for—debate, at a mutually agreed upon time, with the only limitation being that any amendment had to be relevant. Judging by the concerns Senator CRAIG discussed in his explanation of his objection to the unanimous consent agreement, his amendments would, indeed, be relevant.

I was patient while our colleagues on the other side of the aisle dealt with the upheaval that followed the unanticipated change in the minority leadership on the committee. I recognized that they needed time to reorganize and for Senator BURR to move into his new role as the committee's ranking member. However, that change in the ranking member's position occurred over 2 months ago. It is time to bring these bills to the floor, time to engage in a full and open debate, time to vote on any amendments, and time to allow the Senate to have its say on the bills.

In his objection, Senator CRAIG spoke of the committee's history of working in a bipartisan fashion to resolve differences at the committee level. He is certainly correct that our committee rarely brings measures to the floor for debate. However, I do not understand that history to mean that any and all differences of opinion on legislation are resolved before we seek Senate action. Rather, it is my understanding that the committee's bipartisan practice means that we seek to negotiate so as to reach agreed-upon positions on legislation after legislative hearings and before committee markups. When we are unable to reach agreement, there is an opportunity for amendments to be offered during markups. After a markup, our traditional practice has been to move forward from a committee markup without further debate on the floor.

That approach is exactly what happened in 2005, when Senator CRAIG was chairman of the committee. He and I had negotiated on a variety of legislative initiatives up to the markup but could not reach agreement on a number of matters. At the markup, I offered amendments—five or six is my memory—on a number of the issues about which I had strong feelings. I did not, however, continue to pursue those matters on the floor. And I most assuredly did not do anything to block Senate consideration of the legislation that I had sought to amend. In fact, as ranking member, I worked with then-Chairman CRAIG to gain passage of the legislation by unanimous consent.

While I would certainly appreciate similar cooperation with respect to S. 1233 and S. 1315, I realize that Senator CRAIG and others may wish to continue to pursue amendments during debate before the full Senate, and I am prepared to support that result. All that is needed for that to happen is for agreement to be reached to begin that debate, as set forth in the unanimous consent agreement put forward by Senator DURBIN last week.

I do not know why others on the other side of the aisle are blocking this debate. I urge them to reconsider and to agree to allow the debate to go forward. Our committee should finish our work. America's veterans deserve no less.

MORTGAGE CANCELLATION RELIEF ACT

Mr. HATCH. Mr. President, I rise to speak concerning the Mortgage Cancellation Relief Act, S. 1394. In previous Congresses, I have introduced this legislation to provide immediate tax relief to homeowners adversely impacted by the recent downturn in the Nation's housing markets.

However, this Congress, I am pleased to join my friend and colleague from Michigan, Senator DEBBIE STABENOW, as a cosponsor of S. 1394. She was on the floor earlier this morning, and she had the opportunity to address this bill. I want to thank her for her continued interest in this issue.

I agree with her that it is well past time for Congress to act on this legislation.

There are a number of positive things I can say about S. 1394. It is a bipartisan bill. It is sound tax policy. It is good economic policy. And it treats those who have been impacted by housing declines fairly in their time of need.

As I mentioned, Senator STABENOW introduced this bill in May.

The President recommended a similar proposal in August.

However, the one not-so-positive thing I can say is that it is not law.

We are now into November. And despite all of the positive aspects of S. 1394, it has still not been reported by the Finance Committee or debated on the Senate floor.

The problem addressed by this legislation has its roots in the housing market.

In September, overall home sales slid 8 percent from the month before. Single-family sales slowed to the lowest pace in nearly 10 years.

Inventory is going up. At the end of August, there was a 9.6-month supply of homes. At the end of September, there was a 10.5-month supply of homes on the market.

So supply is up, and demand is down.

A high school senior, barely paying attention in his economics class, could tell you the result.

The result is a buyer's market. The median home price is down 4.2 percent from the year before.

With the dip in the housing market has come a corollary decrease in new home construction.

According to one recent estimate, construction spending on all new homes fell by 22 percent in 2007. The decline was even greater for single family homes—25 percent.

With another 4 percent dip in 2008, residential construction spending will be down to $254 billion in 2008 from $384 billion in 2005.

While this is not good news for the Nation's builders, at least it tells us that the U.S. housing market is functioning rationally. As the supply of housing tightens, demand and prices will once again go up. This leads many economists to believe that housing markets will turn the corner sooner rather than later.

In the meantime, however, we have a deadly economic mix of declining housing prices, interest rate volatility, and adjustable rate mortgages that are beginning to reset. When this convergence of events takes place and is followed by a certain unnecessarily punitive and totally unfair provision in our Tax Code, life becomes even more burdensome for some of our most vulnerable families and communities.

Let me explain why.

Adjustable rate mortgages are a product that provides an opportunity for millions of families to achieve home ownership. Because they pose less risk to lenders, these mortgages can be a more affordable product that allows families to purchase homes while assuming the risk that interest rates will increase.

Yet because of the easy availability of adjustable rate mortgages, some people took out very high mortgages and according to the Wall Street Journal, there are 17 percent adjustable rate mortgage holders who cannot make their payments on time.

We are currently witnessing how well private industry will be able to handle this problem on its own. The Nation's largest mortgage lender, Countrywide Financial, announced that it is modifying the terms of $16 billion in adjustable rate mortgages. Thirty thousand have already restructured their loans, and Countrywide intends to contact 52,000 borrowers to see if they would like to restructure their loans as well.

Still, the declines in the Nation's housing markets have left two groups particularly vulnerable.

First, there are those who sell their homes for less than the outstanding amount of the mortgage.

Second, there are those who are unable to make their mortgage payments and suffer foreclosure.

As I mentioned earlier, the Tax Code effectively kicks these folks while they are down.

The Internal Revenue Code defines income very broadly.

And when lenders forgive mortgage debt in a short-sale or a foreclosure, the borrower has technically received taxable income. Yet this is phantom income, and it makes little sense to have these financially vulnerable families getting a form 1099 and an increased tax liability for income they never received.

This makes little sense as public policy. And it is inequitable as tax policy.

Section 121 of the Internal Revenue Code allows the exclusion of up to $250,000—or $500,000 on a joint return—of gain on the sale of a home. Few people realize gains in excess of this statutory exclusion. And for those who do, those gains are taxed at lower capital gains rates.

Yet if a family is in such a dire financial situation that it is losing its home or selling it at a loss, the phantom gain on these transactions is taxed at ordinary income rates.

With adjustable rate mortgages being reset, growing housing inventory, and declining housing prices, too many people will be getting a 1099 form in the mail telling them that they owe income taxes on this debt forgiveness.

This is not the way it ought to be.

Our legislation would remedy this problem by excluding this debt forgiveness from gross income.

There is precedent for this. Congress provided similar relief in the wake of Hurricane Katrina.

Given the ramifications of housing market declines, we should extend this needed relief to all Americans who find themselves receiving this kind of phantom income.

Yes, we would forgo some tax revenue by making this simple, fair, and commonsense change to our tax laws, but the House has found a reasonable offset that is supported by the housing industry so the net effect to the Federal budget should be zero.

As I stated earlier, it is time to act. I am not sure what the delay is.

The drop in the housing market and the problems with adjustable rate mortgages are no longer breaking news. It has been nearly 6 months since this bipartisan legislation was introduced. It has been over 2 months since the President indicated he supported this legislation and wanted to get it signed into law.

This Congress seems to have ground to a halt.

You can hear crickets chirping on the Senate floor lately. To say we are too busy to address this important legislation is simply false.

The lack of quick action on this legislation is no longer acceptable.

I urge my colleagues to support S. 1394 and for the Senate to pass this legislation as soon as possible. Families in need and vulnerable communities demand that we act.

MOTORCOACH ENHANCED SAFETY ACT

Mr. BROWN. Mr. President, on March 1, 2007, the Bluffton University baseball team left Ohio for a tournament in Florida.

Early the next morning on Interstate 75 in Atlanta, their trip came to a tragic halt when their motorcoach, attempting to exit the highway, fell off an overpass and landed on its side on the road below.

The crash resulted in the deaths of five members of the baseball team: Tyler Williams, Cody Holp, Scott Harmon, Zack Arend, David Joseph Betts. The driver, Jerome Niemeyer, and his wife Jean were also killed in the crash. Many of the other 33 passengers were treated for injuries.

For John Betts, who lost his son David in the crash, it was important to take the accident and make it into something positive, in honor of his son and the other bright, talented young men who died that morning. Motorcoach safety became his crusade.

Mr. Betts has been interviewed by the media, local and national, bringing to light the need for stronger motorcoach safety regulations.

He has called for seatbelts for all passengers as well as other regulations that lower the risk of injury or fatality in accidents.

Mr. Betts sees upgrading the safety laws for motorcoaches as an opportunity to save the lives of future riders.

More importantly, he sees it as a way to memorialize David and his teammates and, as he puts it, to make the world they lived in better than it was when they left it.

Sadly, the Bluffton University baseball team's fatal accident was not unique. We have witnessed story after story about motorcoach accidents.

While the investigation into the cause of the crash is ongoing, one thing is clear—stronger safety regulations could have minimized the fatalities resulting from this crash.

The Motorcoach Safety Enhancement Act, which I introduced today along with Senator HUTCHISON, would address the shortfall in safety regulations for motorcoaches.

Many of the injuries sustained in motorcoaches could be prevented by incorporating high-quality safety technologies that exist today but are not widely used, such as crush-proof roofing and glazed windows to prevent ejection.

More basic safety features, such as readily accessible fire extinguishers and seatbelts for all passengers, are still not required on motorcoaches.

As a father of four, I find it particularly disturbing to know students are still riding in vehicles without even the option of buckling up.

I applaud Mr. Betts and the other Bluffton parents for their courageous fight in the midst of so much personal pain.

Seatbelts, window glazing, fire extinguishers—these are not new technologies. These are commonsense safety features that are widely used.

And they are features that the National Transportation Safety Board recommends be enacted into law. Yet they have been languishing for years.

The Motorcoach Safety Enhancement Act would instruct the Secretary of

Transportation to enact these and other safety features. It would put a timeframe on final rulings so these safety requirements do not spend any more time in limbo.

This bill takes the lessons learned from the tragic events of the Bluffton University baseball team's motorcoach accident, and aims to correct them for future riders.

It is my hope that in the future, parents will not have to endure the anguish and grief that John Betts and the other family members experienced.

I hope for swift consideration of this bill.

ADDITIONAL STATEMENTS

RECOGNIZING THE STUDENT CONSERVATION ASSOCIATION

• Mr. GREGG. Mr. President, today I honor the 50th anniversary of the Student Conservation Association. Over these last five decades, the SCA has led the way in promoting the importance of conservation service and stewardship. Its staff and supporters have made an extraordinary commitment to instilling this ethic in our country's young people. While it is headquartered in my home State of New Hampshire, the SCA's reach and influence go far beyond the borders of New Hampshire. Since its founding in 1957 by Elizabeth C. Titus Putnam, nearly 50,000 SCA volunteers have worked to protect the critical natural habitats and threatened wildlife in our country's parks, forests, and urban green spaces. Its members can be found in all 50 States, as well as Canada, Mexico, Brazil, Germany and Latvia. In 2006 alone, 4,000 volunteers logged 1.6 million service hours at 511 separate sites. In past years, they worked to restore the Everglades following the devastation Hurricane Hugo left behind and to repair the damage to Yellowstone National Park following the fires which damaged that park in 1988. This year, they were chosen to lead the Northwest Recovery at Mount Ranier and other parks in that region of the United States following the floods of 2006. It is, in fact, the largest conservation service program in the country.

Those numbers and facts are impressive, but they do not fully convey the central role this organization plays in strengthening the quality of life in the United States. The thousands of volunteers and interns clearly have relished meeting the obligation we all have to protecting the vital natural areas in our country. Their unique dedication and enthusiasm have made them great role models and leaders. These qualities explain why such Federal agencies as the Bureau of Land Management, U.S. Forest Service, U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, and the U.S. Armed Forces all have partnered with the SCA and are the reason the White House, National Wildlife Federation, and the National Park Service have recognized the SCA's achievements.

The prime architect behind the SCA is Elizabeth Titus Putnam, and I am especially pleased to honor her. It is a great reflection on her character that the vision she developed 50 years ago became a reality. Her energy and passion for environmental protection have touched countless people and demonstrate why the SCA continues to be an effective and vibrant organization.

For these reasons, I am proud to be a member of the 50th Anniversary Honorary Committee. I hope all the alumni and current volunteers will long remember the deep impact they have made on communities from Maine to Hawaii and from Alaska to Florida. Happy Birthday to the Student Conservation Association and my best wishes for continued success.•

RETIREMENT OF BRIGADIER GENERAL WILLIAM T. BESTER

• Mr. INOUYE. Mr. President, I wish to recognize the service of a great public servant, outstanding Army officer, and dedicated academic leader.

In his latest stint of public service, BG William T. Bester, U.S. Army retired, distinguished himself by exceptionally meritorious service to the Graduate School of Nursing, Uniformed Services University of the Health Sciences, Bethesda, MD, as acting dean from 10 July 2006 to 30 December 2007.

During this period, the outstanding leadership and ceaseless efforts of General Bester resulted in major contributions to the Graduate School of Nursing, GSN, and to the Uniformed Services University, USU. He assumed his duties during a period of significant change and growth in the history of the GSN and the USU. He lead efforts in dealing with substantial change in the GSN: planning for a new psychiatric/mental health nurse practitioner master's option, facilitating the merger of the GSN and Navy nurse anesthesia master's option, fostering renewed collaboration with the Federal nursing service chiefs, FNSCs, assisting the USU with the search for a new brigade commander and GSN dean, and dealing with base closure and realignment strategy and requirements. He focused on every issue with unwavering directness, a spirit of community participation, collegial respect, enthusiasm, and a wonderful sense of humor and fair play. His leadership brought about a change in GSN character and personality that is visible at every level of USU. His tenure has been marked by strong, supportive relationships with senior USU leaders, an increase in FNSC collaboration and trust resulting in additional senior scholars assigned to the Nursing Science Doctoral Program and new educational program opportunities and increased student involvement in and enthusiasm for the school and the university.

Working closely with my office, he was instrumental in solidifying DOD core budgeting for the GSN. He negotiated an expansion of faculty research support with the School of Medicine and the USU vice president for research. He established a sense of calm and collaborative team building by fostering a common vision, always listening to the faculty and staff issues, and addressing their concerns. As a genuine and dedicated ambassador of the university, General Bester often represented the USU president at external senior level meetings. His career interdisciplinary leadership experiences and the respect he maintains within the Department of Defense always provided credibility as spokesperson when he represented the university and its president. These same qualities allowed him to be an essential advisor to President Rice during a time of significant change within USU, on the Bethesda campus, and in emerging military and Federal health cooperative concerns. Brigadier General Bester's total dedication to service in all aspects of his leadership of the Graduate School of Nursing and his exceptional leadership contributions to USU reflect an unsurpassed commitment to maintaining the highest standards for military and Federal health nurse education at the Uniformed Services University. The distinctive accomplishments of Brigadier General Bester reflect great credit upon himself, the Department of Defense, and the Uniformed Services University.

The Uniformed Services University of the Health Sciences continues to fulfill our vision as a key part of the Nation's academic health education enterprise because of the dedication of its faculty and administrative leadership. General Bester exemplifies the best of the best. We owe a debt of gratitude for his years of public service, and I wish to take this opportunity to thank him along with his family: his wife Cheryl, his son Jason, daughter Jodi, and grandsons Will and Jake.

We wish General Bester Godspeed as he returns to his family and Texas where his children and grandchildren now live.•

RECOGNIZING JORDAN-FERNALD FUNERAL HOMES

• Ms. SNOWE. Mr. President, I wish to recognize Jordan-Fernald Funeral Homes, an outstanding small business in my home State of Maine that exemplifies the best of Maine's community spirit. Founded in 1860 by the Fernald family, Jordan-Fernald is now in its fourth and fifth generations of ownership. Over the years, the Fernalds purchased several Jordan Funeral Home locations to become Jordan-Fernald in 2004. Currently, four Fernalds siblings—Bill, Tom, and Lauri, along with their father, Robert—co-own the business.

Presently maintaining funeral homes in four towns in Hancock County, the Fernalds have always prided themselves on their stalwart commitment to the ever-changing needs of the local communities. For example, Bill participates in a local project to prepare

the Hancock County area against a potential pandemic flu. Meanwhile, Tom serves on the boards of the Maine Funeral Directors Association and the Maine Coast Memorial Hospital and Lauri serves on the boards of the Hospice of Hancock County, the Abbe Museum, and the Hospice Regatta of Maine. Finally, Robert is well known in the area for his work on behalf of the Lions Club.

In recognition of the Fernalds' contributions to the communities, Jordan-Fernald received the Gannett Family Business of the Year Award in 2005. This award recognizes family-run businesses that demonstrate creativity in ensuring their company's vitality while maintaining ties with their communities and stakeholders. Jordan-Fernald was selected, along with one other business, out of a pool of 22 nominees. Family-owned businesses represent approximately 90 percent of all Maine businesses, yet less than 30 percent survive to the second generation and only 13 percent survive to the third generation, making it all the more impressive that Jordan-Fernald has survived to the fifth generation!

Most recently, Jordan-Fernald received the Top Drawer Award from the Ellsworth Area Chamber of Commerce. The award is presented to a business that has made a substantial contribution to the growth, development, and improvement of Ellsworth, Hancock County, and the State of Maine. The Ellsworth Area Chamber president, Chrissi Maguire-Harding, cited Jordan-Fernald's commitment to the region through participation on community boards, support of other businesses, and economic growth as the main reasons for the award. In modern times, where one-third of Maine funeral homes are owned by a single corporation based in Texas, Jordan-Fernald has managed to maintain independence and a bountiful community spirit.

Jordan-Fernald is an exemplary small business. The firm's dynamic approach toward business and community involvement benefits everyone throughout eastern Maine and, indeed, the entire State of Maine. I commend Jordan-Fernald Funeral Homes for its dedication and leadership, and I wish the enterprise much success going forward.●

RECOGNIZING THE RAPID CITY MEALS PROGRAM

● Mr. THUNE. Mr. President, today I honor the Rapid City, SD, MEALS program as they celebrate 26 years of dedicated service to the Black Hills community.

For more than a quarter century, the Rapid City MEALS program has provided our seniors with quality nutrition, education, community, and support services so they can live in their own homes and maintain their independence.

The MEALS program would not be able to perform its invaluable mission without the hard work and dedication of the many volunteers who put in countless hours serving the needs of others. These compassionate individuals are truly the backbone of the Rapid City community and I hope that their service will inspire others to lend a helping hand.

It gives me great pleasure, with the State of South Dakota, to congratulate the MEALS Program of Rapid City on this important anniversary and wish them continued success in the years to come.●

MESSAGE FROM THE HOUSE DURING RECESS

Under authority of the order of the Senate of January 4, 2007, the Secretary of the Senate, on November 14, 2007, during the recess of the Senate, received a message from the House of Representatives announcing that the House agrees to the report of the committee of conference on the disagreeing votes of the two Houses on the amendment of the Senate to the bill (H.R. 1429) to reauthorize the Head Start Act, to improve program quality, to expand access, and for other purposes.

The message also announced that the House has agreed to the following concurrent resolution, in which it requests the concurrence of the Senate:

H. Con. Res. 258. Concurrent resolution directing the Clerk of the House of Representatives to correct the enrollment of H.R. 1429.

MESSAGES FROM THE HOUSE

At 5:01 p.m., a message from the House of Representatives, delivered by Ms. Niland, announced that the House has passed the following bills and joint resolution, in which it requests the concurrence of the Senate:

H.R. 1534. An act to prohibit certain sales, distributions, and transfers of elemental mercury, to prohibit the export of elemental mercury, and for other purposes.

H.R. 1593. An act to reauthorize the grant program for reentry of offenders into the community in the Omnibus Crime Control and Safe Streets Act of 1968, to improve reentry planning and implementation, and for other purposes.

H.R. 2614. An act to amend the Reclamation Wastewater and Groundwater Study and Facilities Act to authorize the Secretary of the Interior to participate in certain water projects in California.

H.R. 2627. An act to establish the Thomas Edison National Historical Park in the State of New Jersey as the successor to the Edison National Historic Site.

H.R. 2705. An act to amend the Compact of Free Association Amendments Act of 2003, and for other purposes.

H.R. 3013. An act to provide appropriate protection to attorney-client privileged communications and attorney work product.

H.R. 3315. An act to provide that the great hall of the Capitol Visitor Center shall be known as Emancipation Hall.

H.R. 3403. An act to promote and enhance public safety by facilitating the rapid deployment of IP-enabled 911 and E–911 services, encourage the Nation's transition to a national IP-enabled emergency network, and improve 911 and E–911 access to those with disabilities.

H.R. 3461. An act to establish a public awareness campaign regarding Internet safety.

H.R. 3470. An act to designate the facility of the United States Postal Service located at 744 West Oglethorpe Highway in Hinesville, Georgia, as the ''John Sidney 'Sid' Flowers Post Office Building''.

H.R. 3569. An act to designate the facility of the United States Postal Service located at 16731 Santa Ana Avenue in Fontana, California, as the ''Beatrice E. Watson Post Office Building''.

H.R. 3703. An act to amend section 5112(p)(1)(A) of title 31, United States Code, to allow an exception from the $1 coin dispensing capability requirement for certain vending machines.

H.R. 3919. An act to provide for a comprehensive nationwide inventory of existing broadband service, and for other purposes.

H.R. 3974. An act to designate the facility of the United States Postal Service located at 797 Sam Bass Road in Round Rock, Texas, as the ''Marine Corps Corporal Steven P. Gill Post Office Building''.

H.R. 4134. An act to direct the Attorney General to provide grants for Internet crime prevention education programs.

H.R. 4153. An act to make certain technical corrections and transition amendments to the College Cost Reduction and Access Act.

H.R. 4154. An act to increase the insurance limitations on Federal insurance for bonds issued by the designated bonding authority for Historically Black Colleges and Universities capital financing.

H.J. Res. 62. Joint resolution to honor the achievements and contributions of Native Americans he United States, and for other purposes.

The message also announced that the House has agreed to the following concurrent resolutions, in which it requests the concurrence of the Senate:

H. Con. Res. 122. Concurrent resolution supporting the goal and mission of America Recycles Day.

H. Con. Res. 211. Concurrent resolution supporting the goals and ideals of World Diabetes Day.

H. Con. Res. 229. Concurrent resolution expressing the sense of the Congress that the United States should seek a review of compliance by all nations with the International Commission for the Conservation of Atlantic Tunas' conservation and management recommendations for Atlantic bluefin tuna and other species, and should pursue strengthened conservation and management measures to facilitate the recovery of the Atlantic bluefin tuna, and for other purposes.

The message further announced that the House has agreed to the following concurrent resolution:

S. Con. Res. 45. Concurrent resolution commending the Ed Block Courage Award Foundation for its work in aiding children and families affected by child abuse, and designating November 2007 as National Courage Month.

At 5:48 p.m., a message from the House of Representatives, delivered by Ms. Niland, one of its reading clerks, announced that the House agrees to the report of the committee of conference on the disagreeing votes of the two Houses on the amendment of the Senate to the bill (H.R. 3074) making appropriations for the Departments of Transportation, and Housing and Urban Development, and related agencies for the fiscal year ending September 30, 2008, and for other purposes.

MEASURES REFERRED

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

H.R. 1534. To prohibit certain sales, distributions, and transfers of elemental mercury, to prohibit the export of elemental mercury, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Environment and Public Works.

H.R. 1593. An act to reauthorize the grant program for reentry of offenders into the community in the Omnibus Crime Control and Safe Streets Act of 1968, to improve reentry planning and implementation, and for other purposes; to the Committee on the Judiciary.

H.R. 2614. An act to amend the Reclamation Wastewater and Groundwater Study and Facilities Act to authorize the Secretary of the Interior to participate in certain water projects in California; to the Committee on Energy and Natural Resources.

H.R. 2627. An act to establish the Thomas Edison National Historical Park in the State of New Jersey as the successor to the Edison National Historic Site; to the Committee on Energy and Natural Resources.

H.R. 3013. An act to provide appropriate protection to attorney-client privileged communications and attorney work product; to the Committee on the Judiciary.

H.R. 3403. An act to promote and enhance public safety by facilitating the rapid deployment of IP-enabled 911 and E–911 services, encouraging the nation's transition to a national IP-enabled emergency network and improve 911 and E–911 access to those with disabilities; to the Committee on Commerce, Science, and Transportation.

H.R. 3461. An act to establish a public awareness campaign regarding Internet safety; to the Committee on Commerce, Science, and Transportation.

H.R. 3470. An act to designate the facility of the United States Postal Service located at 744 West Oglethorpe Highway in Hinesville, Georgia, as the ''John Sidney 'Sid' Flowers Post Office Building''; to the Committee on Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs.

H.R. 3569. An act to designate the facility of the United States Postal Service located at 16731 Santa Ana Avenue in Fontana, California, as the ''Beatrice E. Watson Post Office Building''; to the Committee on Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs.

H.R. 3919. An act to provide for a comprehensive nationwide inventory of existing broadband service, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Commerce, Science, and Transportation.

H.R. 3974. An act to designate the facility of the United States Postal Service located at 797 Sam Bass Road in Round Rock, Texas, as the ''Marine Corps Corporal Steven P. Gill Post Office Building''; to the Committee on Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs.

H.R. 4134. An act to direct the Attorney General to provide grants for Internet crime prevention education programs; to the Committee on the Judiciary.

H.R. 4153. An act to make certain technical corrections and transition amendments to the College Cost Reduction and Access Act; to the Committee on Health, Education, Labor, and Pensions.

H.R. 4154. An act to increase the insurance limitations on Federal insurance for bonds issued by the designated bonding authority for Historically Black Colleges and Universities capital financing; to the Committee on Health, Education, Labor, and Pensions.

H.J. Res. 62. Joint resolution to honor the achievements and contributions of Native Americans to the United States, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Indian Affairs.

The following concurrent resolutions were read, and referred as indicated:

H. Con. Res. 122. Concurrent resolution supporting the goal and mission of America Recycles Day; to the Committee on Environment and Public Works.

H. Con. Res. 211. Concurrent resolution supporting the goals and ideals of World Diabetes Day; to the Committee on Health, Education, Labor, and Pensions.

H. Con. Res. 229. Concurrent resolution expressing the sense of the Congress that the United States should seek a review of compliance by all nations with the International Commission for the Conservation of Atlantic Tunas' conservation and management recommendations for Atlantic bluefin tuna and other species, and should pursue strengthened conservation and management measures to facilitate the recovery of the Atlantic bluefin tuna, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Commerce, Science, and Transportation.

MEASURES PLACED ON THE CALENDAR

The following bills were read the second time, and placed on the calendar:

H.R. 3996. An act to amend the Internal Revenue Code of 1986 to extend certain expiring provisions, and for other purposes.

S. 2334. A bill to withhold 10 percent of the Federal funding apportioned for highway construction and maintenance from States that issue driver's licenses to individuals without verifying the legal status of such individuals.

S. 2340. A bill making emergency supplemental appropriations for the Department of Defense for the fiscal year ending September 30, 2008, and for other purposes.

S. 2346. A bill to temporarily increase the portfolio caps applicable to Freddie Mac and Fannie Mae, to provide the necessary financing to curb foreclosures by facilitating the refinancing of at-risk subprime borrowers into safe, affordable loans, and for other purposes.

S. 2348. A bill to ensure control over the United States border and to strengthen enforcement of the immigration laws.

The following bill was read the first and second times by unanimous consent, and placed on the calendar:

H.R. 2705. An act to amend the Compact of Free Association Amendments Act of 2003, and for other purposes.

REPORTS OF COMMITTEES

The following reports of committees were submitted:

By Mr. INOUYE, from the Committee on Commerce, Science, and Transportation, without amendment:

S. 311. A bill to amend the Horse Protection Act to prohibit the shipping, transporting, moving, delivering, receiving, possessing, purchasing, selling, or donation of horses and other equines to be slaughtered for human consumption, and for other purposes (Rept. No. 110-229).

By Mr. LIEBERMAN, from the Committee on Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs, without amendment:

H.R. 2089. A bill to designate the facility of the United States Postal Service located at 701 Loyola Avenue in New Orleans, Louisiana, as the ''Louisiana Armed Services Veterans Post Office''.

H.R. 2276. A bill to designate the facility of the United States Postal Service located at 203 North Main Street in Vassar, Michigan, as the ''Corporal Christopher E. Esckelson Post Office Building''.

H.R. 3297. A bill to designate the facility of the United States Postal Service located at 950 West Trenton Avenue in Morrisville, Pennsylvania, as the ''Nate De Tample Post Office Building''.

H.R. 3307. A bill to designate the facility of the United States Postal Service located at 570 Broadway in Bayonne, New Jersey, as the ''Dennis P. Collins Post Office Building''.

H.R. 3308. A bill to designate the facility of the United States Postal Service located at 216 East Main Street in Atwood, Indiana, as the ''Lance Corporal David K. Fribley Post Office''.

H.R. 3325. A bill to designate the facility of the United States Postal Service located at 235 Mountain Road in Suffield, Connecticut, as the ''Corporal Stephen R. Bixler Post Office''.

H.R. 3382. A bill to designate the facility of the United States Postal Service located at 200 North William Street in Goldsboro, North Carolina, as the ''Philip A. Baddour, Sr. Post Office''.

H.R. 3446. A bill to designate the facility of the United States Postal Service located at 202 East Michigan Avenue in Marshall, Michigan, as the ''Michael W. Schragg Post Office Building''.

H.R. 3518. To designate the facility of the United States Postal Service located at 1430 South Highway 29 in Cantonment, Florida, as the ''Charles H. Hendrix Post Office Building''.

H.R. 3530. A bill to designate the facility of the United States Postal Service located at 1400 Highway 41 North in Inverness, Florida, as the ''Chief Warrant Officer Aaron Weaver Post Office Building''.

H.R. 3572. A bill to designate the facility of the United States Postal Service located at 4320 Blue Parkway in Kansas City, Missouri, as the ''Wallace S. Hartsfield Post Office Building''.

S. 2107. A bill to designate the facility of the United States Postal Service located at 570 Broadway in Bayonne, New Jersey, as the ''Dennis P. Collins Post Office Building''.

S. 2110. A bill to designate the facility of the United States Postal Service located at 427 North Street in Taft, California, as the ''Larry S. Pierce Post Office''.

S. 2150. A bill to designate the facility of the United States Postal Service located at 4320 Blue Parkway in Kansas City, Missouri, as the ''Wallace S. Hartsfield Post Office Building''.

S. 2174. A bill to designate the facility of the United States Postal Service located at 175 South Monroe Street in Tiffin, Ohio, as the ''Paul E. Gillmor Post Office Building''.

S. 2290. A bill to designate the facility of the United States Postal Service located at 16731 Santa Ana Avenue in Fontana, California, as the ''Beatrice E. Watson Post Office Building''.

EXECUTIVE REPORTS OF COMMITTEE

The following executive reports of committee were submitted:

By Mr. BIDEN, from the Committee on Foreign Relations:

[Treaty Doc. 110–3 Tax Convention with Belgium (Ex. Rept. 110–2); Treaty Doc. 109–19 Protocol Amending Tax Convention with Denmark (Ex. Rept. 110–3); Treaty Doc. 109–18 Protocol Amending Tax Convention with Finland (Ex. Rept. 110–4); and Treaty Doc. 109–20 Protocol Amending Tax Convention with Germany (Ex. Rept. 110–5)]

The text of the committee-recommended resolutions of advice and consent to ratification are as follows:

110–3: TAX CONVENTION WITH BELGIUM

Resolved (two-thirds of the Senators present concurring therein),

The Senate advises and consents to the ratification of the Convention Between the Government of the United States of America and the Government of the Kingdom of Belgium for the Avoidance of Double Taxation and the Prevention of Fiscal Evasion with Respect to Taxes on Income and accompanying Protocol, signed at Brussels on November 27, 2006 (Treaty Doc. 110–3).

109–19: PROTOCOL AMENDING TAX CONVENTION WITH DENMARK

Resolved (two-thirds of the Senators present concurring therein),

The Senate advises and consents to the ratification of the Protocol Amending the Convention between the Government of the United States of America and the Government of the Kingdom of Denmark for the Avoidance of Double Taxation and the Prevention of Fiscal Evasion with Respect to Taxes on Income, signed at Copenhagen on May 2, 2006 (Treaty Doc. 109–19).

109–18: PROTOCOL AMENDING TAX CONVENTION WITH FINLAND

Resolved (two-thirds of the Senators present concurring therein),

The Senate advises and consents to the ratification of the Protocol Amending the Convention between the Government of the United States of America and the Government of the Republic of Finland for the Avoidance of Double Taxation and the Prevention of Fiscal Evasion with Respect to Taxes on Income and on Capital, signed at Helsinki on May 31, 2006 (Treaty Doc. 109–18).

109–20: PROTOCOL AMENDING TAX CONVENTION WITH GERMANY

Resolved (two-thirds of the Senators present concurring therein),

The Senate advises and consents to the ratification of the Protocol Amending the Convention between the United States of America and the Federal Republic of Germany for the Avoidance of Double Taxation and the Prevention of Fiscal Evasion with Respect to Taxes on Income and Capital and to Certain Other Taxes, signed at Berlin on June 1, 2006 and an Exchange of Notes dated August 17, 2006 (EC–2046) (Treaty Doc. 109–20).

EXECUTIVE REPORTS OF COMMITTEES

The following executive reports of nominations were submitted:

By Mr. KENNEDY for the Committee on Health, Education, Labor, and Pensions.

Charles E. F. Millard, of New York, to be Director of the Pension Benefit Guaranty Corporation.

*Mark D. Gearan, of New York, to be a Member of the Board of Directors of the Corporation for National and Community Service for a term expiring December 1, 2010.

*Julie Fisher Cummings, of Michigan, to be a Member of the Board of Directors of the Corporation for National and Community Service for a term expiring September 14, 2011.

*Donna N. Williams, of Texas, to be a Member of the Board of Directors of the Corporation for National and Community Service for a term expiring October 6, 2009.

*Tom Osborne, of Nebraska, to be a Member of the Board of Directors of the Corporation for National and Community Service for a term expiring October 6, 2012.

*Alan D. Solomont, of Massachusetts, to be a Member of the Board of Directors of the Corporation for National and Community Service for a term expiring October 6, 2009.

Mr. KENNEDY. Mr. President, for the Committee on Health, Education, Labor, and Pensions I report favorably the following nomination list which was printed in the RECORD on the date indicated, and ask unanimous consent, to save the expense of reprinting on the Executive Calendar that this nomination lie at the Secretary's desk for the information of Senators.

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

Public Health Service nominations beginning with Harry J. Brown and ending with Elaine C. Wolff, which nominations were received by the Senate and appeared in the Congressional Record on October 16, 2007.

By Mr. LIEBERMAN for the Committee on Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs.

*Ellen C. Williams, of Kentucky, to be a Governor of the United States Postal Service for a term expiring December 8, 2014.

*W. Ross Ashley, III, of Virginia, to be an Assistant Administrator of the Federal Emergency Management Agency, Department of Homeland Security.

*Nomination was reported with recommendation that it be confirmed subject to the nominee's commitment to respond to requests to appear and testify before any duly constituted committee of the Senate.

(Nominations without an asterisk were reported with the recommendation that they be confirmed.)

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. REID (for Mr. BIDEN (for himself and Mr. LUGAR)):

S. 2349. A bill to reauthorize the programs of the Overseas Private Investment Corporation, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Foreign Relations.

By Mr. MENENDEZ:

S. 2350. A bill to establish a grant program to provide screenings for glaucoma to individuals determined to be at a high risk for glaucoma, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Finance.

By Mr. SCHUMER:

S. 2351. A bill to amend the Internal Revenue Code of 1986 to provide a tax credit for medical research related to developing qualified infectious disease products; to the Committee on Finance.

By Mr. JOHNSON (for himself, Mr. COLEMAN, Mr. HARKIN, and Mr. MENENDEZ):

S. 2352. A bill to amend title XVIII of the Social Security Act to provide Medicare beneficiaries greater choice with regard to accessing hearing health services and benefits; to the Committee on Finance.

By Mr. DURBIN:

S. 2353. A bill to increase the annual salaries of justices and judges of the United States, and to increase fees for bankruptcy trustees; to the Committee on the Judiciary.

By Mr. CRAPO (for himself and Mr. CRAIG):

S. 2354. A bill to direct the Secretary of the Interior to convey 4 parcels of land from the Bureau of Land Management to the city of Twin Falls, Idaho; to the Committee on Energy and Natural Resources.

By Ms. CANTWELL:

S. 2355. A bill to amend the National Climate Program Act to enhance the ability of the United States to develop and implement climate change adaptation programs and policies, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Commerce, Science, and Transportation.

By Mr. COLEMAN:

S. 2356. A bill to enhance national security by restricting access of illegal aliens to driver's licenses and State-issued identification documents; to the Committee on the Judiciary.

SUBMISSION OF CONCURRENT AND SENATE RESOLUTIONS

The following concurrent resolutions and Senate resolutions were read, and referred (or acted upon), as indicated:

By Ms. MURKOWSKI (for herself, Mr. AKAKA, Mr. STEVENS, Mr. BINGAMAN, Mr. ISAKSON, Mr. LOTT, Mr. DORGAN, Mr. BENNETT, Mr. SHELBY, Ms. MIKULSKI, Mr. ROBERTS, Mrs. DOLE, Mr. INOUYE, Mr. LAUTENBERG, Mr. CASEY, Mr. OBAMA, Mr. BUNNING, Mr. INHOFE, Mr. DOMENICI, Mr. CRAPO, Mr. COLEMAN, Mr. GRAHAM, Mr. SALAZAR, Mr. BROWNBACK, Mr. VOINOVICH, Mr. NELSON of Florida, Mr. BIDEN, Mrs. CLINTON, Mr. CRAIG, Mr. MARTINEZ, Mr. MCCAIN, Mr. JOHNSON, Mrs. HUTCHISON, Mr. GREGG, Ms. STABENOW, Mr. KENNEDY, Mr. SUNUNU, Mr. COCHRAN, Mr. WHITEHOUSE, and Mr. BAUCUS):

S. Res. 378. A resolution recognizing and thanking all military families for the tremendous sacrifices and contributions they have made to the Nation; considered and agreed to.

By Mr. HATCH (for himself and Mr. BENNETT):

S. Res. 379. A resolution designating Thursday, November 15, 2007, as ''Feed America Thursday''; considered and agreed to.

By Mr. STEVENS (for himself and Mr. INOUYE):

S. Res. 380. A resolution recognizing Hostelling International USA for 75 years of service to intercultural understanding and to youth travel; considered and agreed to.

By Mr. FEINGOLD (for himself, Mr. DODD, Mr. LEAHY, Mr. KERRY, Mr. CASEY, Mr. MENENDEZ, and Mr. DURBIN):

S. Res. 381. A resolution remembering and commemorating the lives and work of Maryknoll Sisters Maura Clarke and Ita Ford, Ursuline Sister Dorothy Kazel, and Cleveland Lay Mission Team Member Jean Donovan, who were executed by members of the Armed Forces of El Salvador on December 2, 1980; considered and agreed to.

By Ms. STABENOW (for herself, Mr. DOMENICI, Mr. LAUTENBERG, and Mr. COLEMAN):

S. Res. 382. A resolution supporting the goals and ideals of World Diabetes Day; considered and agreed to.

ADDITIONAL COSPONSORS

S. 22

At the request of Mr. WEBB, the name of the Senator from Illinois (Mr. OBAMA) was added as a cosponsor of S. 22, a bill to amend title 38, United States Code, to establish a program of educational assistance for members of the Armed Forces who serve in the Armed Forces after September 11, 2001, and for other purposes.

S. 67

At the request of Mr. INOUYE, the name of the Senator from North Dakota (Mr. DORGAN) was added as a cosponsor of S. 67, a bill to amend title 10, United States Code, to permit former members of the Armed Forces who have a service-connected disability rated as total to travel on military aircraft in the same manner and to the same extent as retired members of the Armed Forces are entitled to travel on such aircraft.

S. 507

At the request of Mr. CONRAD, the name of the Senator from Arkansas (Mrs. LINCOLN) was added as a cosponsor of S. 507, a bill to amend title XVIII of the Social Security Act to provide for reimbursement of certified midwife services and to provide for more equitable reimbursement rates for certified nurse-midwife services.

S. 518

At the request of Ms. SNOWE, the name of the Senator from Illinois (Mr. DURBIN) was added as a cosponsor of S. 518, a bill to amend the Education Sciences Reform Act of 2002 to require the Statistics Commissioner to collect information from coeducational secondary schools on such schools' athletic programs.

S. 578

At the request of Mr. JOHNSON, his name was added as a cosponsor of S. 578, a bill to amend title XIX of the Social Security Act to improve requirements under the Medicaid program for items and services furnished in or through an educational program or setting to children, including children with developmental, physical, or mental health needs, and for other purposes.

S. 583

At the request of Mr. SALAZAR, the names of the Senator from Minnesota (Mr. COLEMAN) and the Senator from South Dakota (Mr. JOHNSON) were added as cosponsors of S. 583, a bill to create a competitive grant program for States to enable the States to award salary bonuses to highly qualified elementary school or secondary school teachers who teach, or commit to teach, for at least 3 academic years in a school served by a rural local educational agency.

S. 968

At the request of Mrs. BOXER, the name of the Senator from Delaware (Mr. BIDEN) was added as a cosponsor of S. 968, a bill to amend the Foreign Assistance Act of 1961 to provide increased assistance for the prevention, treatment, and control of tuberculosis, and for other purposes.

S. 1164

At the request of Mr. CARDIN, the name of the Senator from New Mexico (Mr. BINGAMAN) was added as a cosponsor of S. 1164, a bill to amend title XVIII of the Social Security Act to improve patient access to, and utilization of, the colorectal cancer screening benefit under the Medicare Program.

S. 1382

At the request of Mr. REID, the names of the Senator from Arkansas (Mr. PRYOR), the Senator from New Hampshire (Mr. SUNUNU) and the Senator from Arkansas (Mrs. LINCOLN) were added as cosponsors of S. 1382, a bill to amend the Public Health Service Act to provide for the establishment of an Amyotrophic Lateral Sclerosis Registry.

S. 1394

At the request of Ms. STABENOW, the name of the Senator from Connecticut (Mr. LIEBERMAN) was added as a cosponsor of S. 1394, a bill to amend the Internal Revenue Code of 1986, to exclude from gross income of individual taxpayers discharges of indebtedness attributable to certain forgiven residential mortgage obligations.

S. 1465

At the request of Mr. CONRAD, the name of the Senator from Maryland (Mr. CARDIN) was added as a cosponsor of S. 1465, a bill to amend title XVIII of the Social Security Act to provide for coverage under the Medicare program of certain medical mobility devices approved as class III medical devices.

S. 1494

At the request of Mr. DOMENICI, the name of the Senator from Texas (Mr. CORNYN) was added as a cosponsor of S. 1494, a bill to amend the Public Health Service Act to reauthorize the special diabetes programs for Type I diabetes and Indians under that Act.

S. 1534

At the request of Mr. BROWNBACK, the name of the Senator from Minnesota (Mr. COLEMAN) was added as a cosponsor of S. 1534, a bill to hold the current regime in Iran accountable for its human rights record and to support a transition to democracy in Iran.

S. 1551

At the request of Mr. BROWN, the name of the Senator from Alaska (Ms. MURKOWSKI) was added as a cosponsor of S. 1551, a bill to amend the Public Health Service Act with respect to making progress toward the goal of eliminating tuberculosis, and for other purposes.

S. 1679

At the request of Mr. DURBIN, his name was added as a cosponsor of S. 1679, a bill to provide that the great hall of the Capitol Visitor Center shall be known as Emancipation Hall.

At the request of Ms. LANDRIEU, the names of the Senator from Arkansas (Mrs. LINCOLN), the Senator from Michigan (Mr. LEVIN) and the Senator from California (Mrs. BOXER) were added as cosponsors of S. 1679, supra.

S. 1734

At the request of Mrs. BOXER, the name of the Senator from Oregon (Mr. WYDEN) was added as a cosponsor of S. 1734, a bill to provide for prostate cancer imaging research and education.

S. 1852

At the request of Mr. INOUYE, the name of the Senator from Montana (Mr. BAUCUS) was added as a cosponsor of S. 1852, a bill to designate the Friday after Thanksgiving of each year as ''Native American Heritage Day'' in honor of the achievements and contributions of Native Americans to the United States.

S. 1858

At the request of Mr. CASEY, his name was added as a cosponsor of S. 1858, a bill to amend the Public Health Service Act to establish grant programs to provide for education and outreach on newborn screening and coordinated followup care once newborn screening has been conducted, to reauthorize programs under part A of title XI of such Act, and for other purposes.

At the request of Mr. HARKIN, his name was added as a cosponsor of S. 1858, supra.

At the request of Ms. MIKULSKI, her name was added as a cosponsor of S. 1858, supra.

S. 1943

At the request of Mr. KENNEDY, the name of the Senator from Connecticut (Mr. DODD) was added as a cosponsor of S. 1943, a bill to establish uniform standards for interrogation techniques applicable to individuals under the custody or physical control of the United States Government.

S. 1958

At the request of Mr. CONRAD, the names of the Senator from Nebraska (Mr. HAGEL) and the Senator from Kentucky (Mr. MCCONNELL) were added as cosponsors of S. 1958, a bill to amend title XVIII of the Social Security Act to ensure and foster continued patient quality of care by establishing facility and patient criteria for long-term care hospitals and related improvements under the Medicare program.

S. 1991

At the request of Mr. BUNNING, the name of the Senator from Tennessee (Mr. ALEXANDER) was added as a cosponsor of S. 1991, a bill to authorize the Secretary of the Interior to conduct a study to determine the suitability and feasibility of extending the Lewis and Clark National Historic Trail to include additional sites associated with the preparation and return phases of the expedition, and for other purposes.

S. 2056

At the request of Mr. ROCKEFELLER, the name of the Senator from Washington (Ms. CANTWELL) was added as a cosponsor of S. 2056, a bill to amend title XVIII of the Social Security Act

to restore financial stability to Medicare anesthesiology teaching programs for resident physicians.

S. 2071

At the request of Mrs. FEINSTEIN, the names of the Senator from Nevada (Mr. REID) and the Senator from Hawaii (Mr. AKAKA) were added as cosponsors of S. 2071, a bill to enhance the ability to combat methamphetamine.

S. 2123

At the request of Mr. GREGG, the name of the Senator from Illinois (Mr. DURBIN) was added as a cosponsor of S. 2123, a bill to provide collective bargaining rights for public safety officers employed by States or their political subdivisions.

S. 2136

At the request of Mr. DURBIN, the name of the Senator from Delaware (Mr. BIDEN) was added as a cosponsor of S. 2136, a bill to address the treatment of primary mortgages in bankruptcy, and for other purposes.

S. 2161

At the request of Mr. ISAKSON, the name of the Senator from Mississippi (Mr. COCHRAN) was added as a cosponsor of S. 2161, a bill to ensure and foster continued patient safety and quality of care by making the antitrust laws apply to negotiations between groups of independent pharmacies and health plans and health insurance issuers (including health plans under parts C and D of the Medicare Program) in the same manner as such laws apply to protected activities under the National Labor Relations Act.

S. 2257

At the request of Mr. NELSON of Florida, his name was added as a cosponsor of S. 2257, a bill to impose sanctions on officials of the State Peace and Development Council in Burma, to amend the Burmese Freedom and Democracy Act of 2003 to prohibit the importation of gemstones and hardwoods from Burma, to promote a coordinated international effort to restore civilian democratic rule to Burma, and for other purposes.

At the request of Mr. BIDEN, the name of the Senator from New Hampshire (Mr. SUNUNU) was added as a cosponsor of S. 2257, supra.

S. 2278

At the request of Mr. DURBIN, the name of the Senator from New York (Mrs. CLINTON) was added as a cosponsor of S. 2278, a bill to improve the prevention, detection, and treatment of community and healthcare-associated infections (CHAI), with a focus on antibiotic-resistant bacteria.

S. 2303

At the request of Mr. BURR, the name of the Senator from Tennessee (Mr. ALEXANDER) was added as a cosponsor of S. 2303, a bill to amend section 435(o) of the Higher Education Act of 1965 regarding the definition of economic hardship.

S. 2324

At the request of Mrs. MCCASKILL, the names of the Senator from Alaska (Mr. STEVENS) and the Senator from Delaware (Mr. CARPER) were added as cosponsors of S. 2324, a bill to amend the Inspector General Act of 1978 (5 U.S.C. App.) to enhance the Offices of the Inspectors General, to create a Council of the Inspectors General on Integrity and Efficiency, and for other purposes.

S. 2331

At the request of Mr. WARNER, the name of the Senator from Kansas (Mr. ROBERTS) was added as a cosponsor of S. 2331, a bill to exclude from gross income payments from the Hokie Spirit Memorial Fund to the victims of the tragic event, loss of life and limb, at Virginia Polytechnic Institute & State University.

S. 2332

At the request of Mr. DORGAN, the name of the Senator from Montana (Mr. TESTER) was added as a cosponsor of S. 2332, a bill to promote transparency in the adoption of new media ownership rules by the Federal Communications Commission, and to establish an independent panel to make recommendations on how to increase the representation of women and minorities in broadcast media ownership.

S. 2340

At the request of Mr. COCHRAN, his name was added as a cosponsor of S. 2340, a bill making emergency supplemental appropriations for the Department of Defense for the fiscal year ending September 30, 2008, and for other purposes.

S. 2347

At the request of Mr. BAUCUS, his name was added as a cosponsor of S. 2347, a bill to restore and protect access to discount drug prices for university-based and safety-net clinics.

At the request of Mr. DURBIN, his name was added as a cosponsor of S. 2347, supra.

S. 2348

At the request of Mr. CORNYN, the names of the Senator from Florida (Mr. MARTINEZ), the Senator from Georgia (Mr. ISAKSON), the Senator from New Hampshire (Mr. SUNUNU), the Senator from Kansas (Mr. ROBERTS), the Senator from Arizona (Mr. KYL), the Senator from New Mexico (Mr. DOMENICI) and the Senator from North Carolina (Mr. BURR) were added as cosponsors of S. 2348, a bill to ensure control over the United States border and to strengthen enforcement of the immigration laws.

S. RES. 273

At the request of Ms. MIKULSKI, the name of the Senator from Maryland (Mr. CARDIN) was added as a cosponsor of S. Res. 273, a resolution expressing the sense of the Senate that the United States Postal Service should issue a semipostal stamp to support medical research relating to Alzheimer's disease.

S. RES. 356

At the request of Mr. DURBIN, the names of the Senator from California (Mrs. FEINSTEIN) and the Senator from South Dakota (Mr. JOHNSON) were added as cosponsors of S. Res. 356, a resolution affirming that any offensive military action taken against Iran must be explicitly approved by Congress before such action may be initiated.

S. RES. 358

At the request of Mr. SMITH, the name of the Senator from Mississippi (Mr. LOTT) was added as a cosponsor of S. Res. 358, a resolution expressing the importance of friendship and cooperation between the United States and Turkey.

S. RES. 376

At the request of Mr. KERRY, the name of the Senator from Rhode Island (Mr. WHITEHOUSE) was added as a cosponsor of S. Res. 376, a resolution providing the sense of the Senate that the Secretary of Commerce should declare a commercial fishery failure for the groundfish fishery for Massachusetts, Maine, New Hampshire, and Rhode Island and immediately propose regulations to implement section 312(a) of the Magnuson-Stevens Fishery Conservation and Management Act.

AMENDMENT NO. 3508

At the request of Mr. DORGAN, the names of the Senator from New Jersey (Mr. MENENDEZ) and the Senator from Arizona (Mr. MCCAIN) were added as cosponsors of amendment No. 3508 proposed to H.R. 2419, a bill to provide for the continuation of agricultural programs through fiscal year 2012, and for other purposes.

AMENDMENT NO. 3544

At the request of Mrs. LINCOLN, the name of the Senator from Arkansas (Mr. PRYOR) was added as a cosponsor of amendment No. 3544 intended to be proposed to H.R. 2419, a bill to provide for the continuation of agricultural programs through fiscal year 2012, and for other purposes.

AMENDMENT NO. 3545

At the request of Mrs. LINCOLN, the name of the Senator from Arkansas (Mr. PRYOR) was added as a cosponsor of amendment No. 3545 intended to be proposed to H.R. 2419, a bill to provide for the continuation of agricultural programs through fiscal year 2012, and for other purposes.

AMENDMENT NO. 3615

At the request of Mr. GREGG, the names of the Senator from Maine (Ms. COLLINS), the Senator from Connecticut (Mr. DODD) and the Senator from Oregon (Mr. SMITH) were added as cosponsors of amendment No. 3615 intended to be proposed to H.R. 2419, a bill to provide for the continuation of agricultural programs through fiscal year 2012, and for other purposes.

AMENDMENT NO. 3616

At the request of Mr. SALAZAR, the name of the Senator from Oregon (Mr. SMITH) was added as a cosponsor of amendment No. 3616 intended to be proposed to H.R. 2419, a bill to provide for the continuation of agricultural programs through fiscal year 2012, and for other purposes.

AMENDMENT NO. 3625

At the request of Mr. PRYOR, the name of the Senator from Arkansas (Mrs. LINCOLN) was added as a cosponsor of amendment No. 3625 intended to be proposed to H.R. 2419, a bill to provide for the continuation of agricultural programs through fiscal year 2012, and for other purposes.

AMENDMENT NO. 3649

At the request of Mr. KERRY, the name of the Senator from Rhode Island (Mr. WHITEHOUSE) was added as a cosponsor of amendment No. 3649 intended to be proposed to H.R. 2419, a bill to provide for the continuation of agricultural programs through fiscal year 2012, and for other purposes.

STATEMENTS ON INTRODUCED BILLS AND JOINT RESOLUTIONS

By Mr. JOHNSON (for himself, Mr. COLEMAN, Mr. HARKIN, and Mr. MENENDEZ):

S. 2352. A bill to amend title XVIII of the Social Security Act to provide Medicare beneficiaries greater choice with regard to accessing hearing health services and benefits; to the Committee on Finance.

Mr. JOHNSON. Mr. President, I am pleased to introduce the Medicare Hearing Health Care Enhancement Act with my colleagues, Senators HARKIN, COLEMAN, and MENENDEZ. This legislation is the companion bill to legislation introduced in the House by Representative MIKE ROSS, with a number of cosponsors.

This legislation will provide Medicare beneficiaries with the same hearing care options available to veterans and Federal employees, including every member of this body. Under this bill, Medicare beneficiaries who experience hearing problems will have the option of going directly to an audiologist, rather than first visiting a physician. This is the policy for the health care programs administered by the Department of Veterans Affairs and the Office of Personnel Management. Direct access works well for our veterans and for Federal employees, including Members of Congress, and direct access should be available to senior citizens in the Medicare program.

More than 31 million Americans have some type of hearing problem, making hearing loss the third most common health problem in the U.S. Many of them are older Americans, and this statistic is fast increasing with the aging of the ''baby boomers.'' Yet half of all hearing impaired persons are under age 65. With 80 to 90 percent of hearing problems not medically or surgically treatable, it seems only reasonable that Medicare patients be allowed to consult with an audiologist without first seeing another health care provider. It is part of regular audiological practice to refer patients for medical management when clinical indicators are present.

In 1992, the Department of Veterans Affairs, VA, changed its health care policy to allow for the option of direct access to a licensed audiologist. The VA reports: ''the policy has provided and continues to provide high quality, cost effective, and successful hearing health care to veterans.'' The VA did not experience increased utilization of audiology services due to the policy change and instead found, ''the policy did not increase the number of visits beyond what would be expected in the aging veteran population.''

In 2003, the Congress in the Appropriations Conference Report number 108–10 recommended that the Center for Medicare and Medicaid Services make this change. We have since learned that CMS does not have the authority to do so under current law. Therefore, I hope that we can all agree that this is a common sense idea whose time has come, and move this legislation forward to enactment.

Direct access would facilitate access to hearing care without expanding the scope of practice for audiologists. This legislation will make it easier for Medicare beneficiaries, particularly in rural America, to have the same high quality hearing care provided by the VA and OPM. It is also important to point out that both the Medicare and Medicaid programs now recognize State licensure as the appropriate standard for determining who is a qualified audiologist.

This legislation enjoys the support of a large number of organizations including the American Academy of Audiology, the American Speech-Language and Hearing Association, the National Association of the Deaf and the National Rural Health Association. I commend this legislation to the attention of my colleagues and urge them to lend their support by cosponsoring this bill.

By Mr. DURBIN:

S. 2353. A bill to increase the annual salaries of justices and judges of the United States, and to increase fees for bankruptcy trustees; to the Committee on the Judiciary.

Mr. DURBIN. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the text of the bill be printed in the RECORD.

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

S. 2353

Be it enacted by the Senate and House of Representatives of the United States of America in Congress assembled,

SECTION 1. SHORT TITLE.

This Act may be cited as the ''Fair Judicial Compensation Act of 2007''.

SEC. 2. JUDICIAL SALARY INCREASE.

(a) IN GENERAL.—The annual salaries of the Chief Justice of the United States, associate justices of the Supreme Court of the United States, United States circuit judges, United States district judges, and judges of the United States Court of International Trade are increased in the amount of 16.5 percent of their respective annual salary rates in effect on the effective date of this Act, rounded to the nearest $100 (or, if midway between multiples of $100, to the next higher multiple of $100).

(b) COORDINATION RULE.—If a pay adjustment under subsection (a) is to be made for an office or position as of the same date that any other pay adjustment would take effect for such office or position, the adjustment under this Act shall be made first.

(c) EFFECTIVE DATE.—This section shall take effect on the first day of the first applicable pay period beginning on or after the date of enactment of this Act.

SEC. 3. BANKRUPTCY TRUSTEES.

Section 330(b)(2) of title 11, United States Code, is amended, in the undesignated matter following subparagraph (B), by striking ''$15'' each place that term appears and inserting ''$55''.

SEC. 4. AUTHORIZATION OF APPROPRIATIONS.

There are authorized to be appropriated such sums as may be necessary to carry out this Act.

By Ms. CANTWELL:

S. 2355. A bill to amend the National Climate Program Act to enhance the ability of the United States to develop and implement climate change adaptation programs and policies, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Commerce, Science, and Transportation.

Ms. CANTWELL. Mr. President, I rise today to introduce the Climate Change Adaptation Act of 2007.

Before I describe the merits of this bill, I would like to take a moment to commend many of my colleagues for their ongoing efforts to develop legislative solutions to meet the enormous challenges global warming poses to our Nation and our planet. I feel this bill helps address a somewhat overlooked, but key tool, to tackling this preeminent challenge facing our Nation.

I am proud that Washington State is taking the lead on the issue of global climate change. While my State's contribution to global warming is relatively small—because we are fortunate enough to derive about 70 percent of our electricity from inexpensive, emissions-free hydropower—global warming threatens to seriously impact our economy.

Ironically, one of the primary impacts of global warming on the Pacific Northwest will be to change our rainfall patterns in a way that reduces the amount of water available for hydropower production.

And these changes will not only harm electricity generation, they will also impact billions of dollars of economic infrastructure associated with irrigation systems, municipal water supplies, even ski resorts that depend on our historic snowfall patterns.

Faced with these possibilities, we must ask several simple questions: What are we doing to prepare for these changes? How are predicted sea level rises being incorporated into shoreline restoration projects, siting of public infrastructure, or disaster response plans, among many other examples? What tools do we need to give Federal, State, and local decisionmakers to take climate change into account on long-term, multibillion-dollar decisions?

Unfortunately, we don't have any answers.

As we discovered when I held a hearing on ocean acidification as chair of the Oceans, Atmosphere, Fisheries and Coast Guard subcommittee last May, our Government is ill-equipped to plan for the consequences of global climate change. We simply lack the tools to develop the strategies we need to adapt.

In August, the Government Accountability Office found that the Federal government is not providing Federal agencies with the proper tools or policy mandates to take climate change impacts into account in carrying out their responsibilities to manage public resources.

In September, the National Academy of Sciences concluded there is a tremendous need to improve the delivery of climate change information to Federal, regional, and local levels so they can take climate change impacts into account in planning and managing resources.

The reality is that even if we were somehow able to stop using fossil fuels today, a certain degree of warming and ocean acidification will still occur over the next 2 or 3 decades.

While my top priority is to move our Nation to a clean energy system, we must face the fact that global warming is happening already, and it is only going to get worse.

That is why I am pleased today to be introducing the Climate Change Adaptation Act—a bill to ensure that our government plans for the changes that global warming will inevitably bring. This bill will require the President to develop a national strategy for addressing the impacts that climate change will have on our natural resources. It will also specifically require NOAA to conduct vulnerability assessments on the impacts of climate change on coastal and ocean resources, and to prepare adaptation plans for those resources.

Planning for the future isn't just common sense—it's responsible government.

This bill is complementary to several bills under consideration by the Commerce Committee on which I serve, including the Kerry-Snowe bill that was under discussion at a Commerce Committee hearing earlier today. Their bill contains many provisions I believe are vitally important—including language I authored with Senator COLLINS on the need for a program to study the threat of abrupt climate change. I'm also proud to work with Senator LAUTENBERG on legislation combating ocean acidification.

I look forward to working with my colleagues to move all these critical bills out of the committee and through the Senate in the coming weeks.

Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the full text of the bill be printed in the RECORD.

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

S. 2355

Be it enacted by the Senate and House of Representatives of the United States of America in Congress assembled,

SECTION 1. SHORT TITLE.

This Act may be cited as the ''Climate Change Adaptation Act''.

SEC. 2. AMENDMENT OF NATIONAL CLIMATE PROGRAM ACT.

Except as otherwise expressly provided, whenever in this title an amendment or repeal is expressed in terms of an amendment to, or repeal of, a section or other provision, the reference shall be considered to be made to a section or other provision of the National Climate Program Act (15 U.S.C. 2901 et seq.).

SEC. 3. FINDINGS.

Section 2 (15 U.S.C. 2601) is amended to read as follows:

''SEC. 2. FINDINGS.

''The Congress finds that—

''(1) weather, climate change, and climate variability affect public safety, environmental services and security, human health, agriculture, energy use, water resources, and other factors vital to national security and human welfare;

''(2) the present rate of advance of national efforts in research and development and the application of such advances is inadequate to meet the challenges posed by observed and projected rates of climate change and climate variability and the increasing demand for information to guide planning and response across all sectors;

''(3) the United States lacks adequate research, infrastructure, and coordinated outreach and communication mechanisms to meet national climate monitoring, prediction, and decision support needs for adapting to and mitigating the impacts of climate change and climate variability;

''(4) information regarding climate change and climate variability is not being fully disseminated or used, and Federal efforts have given insufficient attention to assessing and applying this information;

''(5) climate change and climate variability occur on a global basis making international cooperation essential for the purpose of sharing the benefits and costs of a global effort to understand and communicate these changes;

''(6) recent scientific reports by the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change conclusively found that climate change is occurring, and that impacts from climate change can be expected in even shorter time periods than had been previously predicted;

''(7) the Panel found that the resilience of many ecosystems is likely to be exceeded this century by an unprecedented combination of climate change, associated disturbances such as flooding and drought, and other global change drivers such as land-use change;

''(8) according to the Panel, approximately 20 to 30 percent of plant and animal species assessed so far are likely to be at increased risk of extinction if increases in global average temperature exceed 1.5 to 2.5 degrees Celsius;

''(9) the Panel also found that the progressive acidification of oceans due to increasing atmospheric carbon dioxide is expected to have negative impacts on marine shell-forming organisms, such as corals, and their dependent species;

''(10) the Panel found that coasts will be exposed to increasing risks, including coastal erosion, over coming decades due to climate change and sea-level rise, and that adaptation costs for vulnerable coasts are much less than the costs of inaction;

''(11) in its September, 2007, study entitled Evaluating Progress of the U.S. Climate Change Science Program: Methods and Preliminary Results, the National Academy of Sciences concluded that there is a tremendous need to improve the delivery of information to decision makers at the Federal, regional, and local levels on climate change impacts and to take such impacts into account in planning and in managing resources;

''(12) States and local communities may need Federal assistance in developing and implementing strategies to address the impacts of climate change;

''(13) in its August, 2007, report entitled Climate Change: Agencies Should Develop Guidance for Addressing the Effects on Federal Land and Water Resources, GAO-07-863, the Government Accountability Office found that the Federal government is not providing the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration and other Federal agencies that are responsible for managing natural resources with the proper tools or policy mandates to take the impacts of climate change into account in carrying out their responsibilities to manage public resources;

''(14) the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration, which plays a leading role in the Federal government's Global Change Research Program, has a key role to play both in predicting impacts of climate change on natural resources and in improving the delivery of information critical to adaptation and management to end users; and

''(15) the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration has a key role to play in addressing the impacts of climate change on our Nation's coastal areas and ocean resources.''.

SEC. 4. DEFINITIONS.

Section 4 (15 U.S.C. 2903) is amended by striking paragraphs (1) and (2) and redesignating paragraphs (3) and (4) as paragraphs (1) and (2).

SEC. 5. NATIONAL CLIMATE PROGRAM ELEMENTS.

Section 5 (15 U.S.C. 2904) is amended—

(1) by striking ''subsection (d)(9);'' in subsection (b)(1) and inserting ''section 6;'';

(2) by striking subsections (c), (e), (f), and (g); and

(3) by striking subsection (d) and inserting the following:

''(c) PROGRAM ELEMENTS.—

''(1) IN GENERAL.—The Program shall include—

''(1) a strategic plan to address the impacts of climate change within the United States; and

''(2) a National Climate Service to be established within the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration.''.

SEC. 6. NATIONAL CLIMATE STRATEGY.

The Act is amended by striking sections 6 through 9 (15 U.S.C. 2905 et seq.) and inserting the following:

''SEC. 6. NATIONAL STRATEGIC PLAN FOR CLIMATE CHANGE ADAPTATION.

''(a) IN GENERAL.—Not later than 2 years after the date of enactment of the Climate Change Adaptation Act, the President shall provide to the Congress a 5-year national strategic plan to address the impacts of climate change within the United States, to implement such strategy for Federally-managed resources and actions, and to provide information to and coordinate with State and local governments and nongovernmental entities to support similar efforts with respect to non-Federal natural resources. The President shall provide a mechanism for consulting with States and local governments, the private sector, universities, and other nongovernmental entities in developing the plan. The plan shall be updated at least every 5 years.

''(b) CONTENTS OF PLAN.—The plan shall, at a minimum—

''(1) identify existing Federal requirements, protocols, and capabilities for addressing climate change impacts on Federally managed resources and actions;

''(2) identify measures to improve such capabilities and the utilization of such capabilities;

''(3) include protocols to integrate climate change impacts into Federal agency actions and policies, consistent with existing authorities;

''(4) address vulnerabilities and priorities identified through the assessments carried out under the Global Change Research Act of 1990 and this Act;

''(5) establish a mechanism for the exchange of information related to addressing the impacts of climate change with, and provide technical assistance to, State and local governments and nongovernmental entities;

''(6) develop partnerships with State and local governments and nongovernmental entities to support and coordinate implementation of the plan;

''(7) include implementation and funding strategies for short-term and long-term actions that may be taken at the national, regional, State, and local level;

''(8) establish a process to develop more detailed agency and department- specific plans;

''(9) identify opportunities to utilize remote sensing and other geospatial technologies to improve planning for adaptation to climate change impacts; and

''(10) identify existing legal authorities and additional authorities necessary to implement the plan.

''(c) AGENCY-LEVEL STRATEGIES.—

''(1) AGENCY PLANS.—Each department and agency of the Executive Branch shall develop a detailed plan, based on the national plan, for addressing climate change impacts with respect to such department or agencies policies and actions, within 1 year after the date that the plan is submitted under subsection (b) and provide such plan to Congress.

''(2) INTERIM ACTIVITIES.—Nothing in this section shall be understood to prevent any Federal agency or department to take climate change impacts into account, consistent with its existing authorities, until the plans are provided to Congress and steps to implement such plans are taken.

''(d) COORDINATION.—The President shall ensure that the mechanism to provide information related to addressing the impacts of climate change to State and local governments and nongovernmental entities is appropriately coordinated or integrated with existing programs that provide similar information on climate change predictions.

''(e) RELATIONSHIP TO OTHER AUTHORITIES.—Nothing in this section shall supersede any Federal authority in effect on the date of enactment of the Climate Change Adaptation Act.

''(f) AUTHORIZATION OF APPROPRIATIONS.—There are authorized to be appropriated for each of fiscal years 2009 through 2013 $10,000,000 to carry out this section.

''SEC. 7. OCEAN AND COASTAL VULNERABILITY AND ADAPTATION.

''(a) COASTAL AND OCEAN VULNERABILITY.—

''(1) IN GENERAL.—Within 2 years after the date of enactment of the Climate Change Adaptation Act, the Secretary of Commerce shall, in consultation with the appropriate Federal, State, and local governmental entities, conduct regional assessments of the vulnerability of coastal and ocean areas and resources to hazards associated with climate change, climate variability, and ocean acidification including—

''(A) sea level rise;

''(B) fluctuation of Great Lakes water levels;

''(C) increases in severe weather events;

''(D) storm surge;

''(E) rainfall;

''(F) flooding and inundation;

''(G) changes in sea ice;

''(H) changes in ocean currents impacting global heat transfer;

''(I) increased siltation due to coastal erosion;

''(J) shifts in the hydrological cycle;

''(K) natural hazards, including tsunami, drought, flood, and fire;

''(L) coral reef bleaching; and

''(M) alteration of ecological communities, including at the ecosystem or watershed levels,

''(2) UPDATES.—The Secretary shall update such assessments at least once every 5 years.

''(3) REGIONAL COASTAL AND OCEAN ASSESSMENTS.—In preparing the regional coastal assessments, the Secretary shall take into account the information and assessments being developed pursuant to the Global Change Research Program. The regional assessments shall include an evaluation of—

''(A) physical, biological, and ecological impacts, such as coastal erosion, flooding and loss of estuarine habitat, saltwater intrusion of aquifers and saltwater encroachment, impacts on food web distribution, species migration, species abundance, and changes in marine pathogens and diseases;

''(B) social impacts associated with threats to and potential losses of housing, communities, and infrastructure; and

''(C) economic impacts on local, State, and regional economies, including the impact on abundance or distribution of economically important living marine resources.

''(b) COASTAL AND OCEAN ADAPTATION PLAN.—The Secretary shall, within 3 years after the date of enactment of the Climate Change Adaptation Act, submit to the Congress a national coastal and ocean adaptation plan, composed of individual regional adaptation plans that recommend targets and strategies to address coastal and ocean impacts associated with climate change, ocean acidification, sea level rise, and climate variability. The plan shall be developed with the participation of other Federal, State, and local government agencies that will be critical in the implementation of the plan at the State and local levels and shall take into account recommendations of the National Science Board in its January 12, 2007, report entitled Hurricane Warning: The Critical Need for a National Hurricane Research Initiative and other relevant studies, and not duplicate existing Federal and State hazard planning requirements. The Plan shall recommend both short- and long-term adaptation strategies and shall include recommendations regarding—

''(1) Federal flood insurance program modifications;

''(2) areas that have been identified as high risk through mapping and assessment;

''(3) mitigation incentives such as rolling easements, strategic retreat, State or Federal acquisition in fee simple or other interest in land, construction standards, and zoning;

''(4) land and property owner education;

''(5) economic planning for small communities dependent upon affected coastal and ocean resources, including fisheries;

''(6) coastal hazards protocols to reduce the risk of damage to lives and property, and a process for evaluating the implementation of such protocols;

''(7) strategies to address impacts on the most vulnerable living marine resources;

''(8) proposals to integrate measures into the actions and policies of the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration;

''(9) a plan for additional research and development of technologies and capabilities to address such impacts;

''(10) plans to pursue bilateral and multilateral agreements necessary to effectively address such impacts;

''(11) partnerships with States and nongovernmental organizations;

''(12) methods to mitigate the impacts identified, including habitat restoration measures; and

''(12) funding requirements and mechanisms.

''(c) TECHNICAL PLANNING ASSISTANCE.—The Secretary, through the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration, shall establish a coordinated program to provide technical planning assistance and products to coastal States and local governments as they develop and implement adaptation or mitigation strategies and plans. Products, information, tools and technical expertise generated from the development of the regional coastal and ocean assessments and the coastal and ocean adaptation plans will be made available to coastal States for the purposes of developing their own State and local plans.

''(d) COASTAL AND OCEAN ADAPTATION GRANTS.—

''(1) IN GENERAL.—The Secretary shall provide grants of financial assistance to coastal States with federally approved coastal zone management programs to develop and begin implementing coastal and ocean adaptation programs.

''(2) ALLOCATION OF FUNDS.—The Secretary shall distribute grant funds under paragraph (1) among coastal States in accordance with the formula established under section 306(c) of the Coastal Zone Management Act of 1972 (16 U.S.C. 1455(c)), adjusted in consultation with the States as necessary to provide assistance to particularly vulnerable coastlines.

''(3) MATCHING REQUIREMENT.—The Secretary shall make grants under paragraph (1) on a matching basis under which the ratio of Federal to State funds is—

''(A) 4 to 1 in the first fiscal year;

''(B) 2.3 to 1 in the second fiscal year;

''(C) 2 to 1 in the third fiscal year; and

''(D) 1 to 1 thereafter.

(e) AUTHORIZATION OF APPROPRIATIONS.—There are authorized to be appropriated to the Under Secretary of Commerce for Oceans and Atmosphere $35,000,000 for each of fiscal years 2009 through 2013 to carry out the provisions of this section, of which $25,000,000 shall be available for grants under subsection (d) for each of such fiscal years. Not more than 75 percent of the amount available for grants under subsection (d) for any fiscal year may be used for grants relating to coastal impacts.''.

SUBMITTED RESOLUTIONS

SENATE RESOLUTION 378—RECOGNIZING AND THANKING ALL MILITARY FAMILIES FOR THE TREMENDOUS SACRIFICES AND CONTRIBUTIONS THEY HAVE MADE TO THE NATION

Ms. MURKOWSKI (for herself, Mr. AKAKA, Mr. STEVENS, Mr. BINGAMAN, Mr. ISAKSON, Mr. LOTT, Mr. DORGAN, Mr. BENNETT, Mr. SHELBY, Ms. MIKULSKI, Mr. ROBERTS, Mrs. DOLE, Mr. INOUYE, Mr. LAUTENBERG, Mr. CASEY, Mr. OBAMA, Mr. BUNNING, Mr. INHOFE, Mr. DOMENICI, Mr. CRAPO, Mr. COLEMAN, Mr. GRAHAM, Mr. SALAZAR, Mr. BROWNBACK, Mr. VOINOVICH, Mr. NELSON of Florida, Mr. BIDEN, Mrs. CLINTON, Mr. CRAIG, Mr. MARTINEZ, Mr. MCCAIN, Mr. JOHNSON, Mrs. HUTCHISON,

Mr. GREGG, Ms. STABENOW, Mr. KENNEDY, Mr. SUNUNU, Mr. COCHRAN, Mr. WHITEHOUSE, and Mr. BAUCUS) submitted the following resolution; which was considered and agreed to:

S. RES. 378

Whereas there are currently more than 3,000,000 immediate family members of individuals serving in the Armed Forces;

Whereas these family members bear the most immediate and profound burden of the absence of their loved ones during the performance of their duties;

Whereas these families have been the bedrock of support and strength for our Nation's Armed Forces for over 230 years;

Whereas military families serve this country with an equal amount of dedication and patriotism as their loved ones who are fighting for the United States;

Whereas the families of servicemembers—whether in the regular components of the Armed Forces, the Reserve, or the National Guard—feel enormous amounts of pride, love, and trepidation during the absence of their loved ones;

Whereas it is essential that the Nation recognize the contributions made by military families and celebrate their strength; and

Whereas the Senate stands in humble respect of the sacrifice made by our military families: Now, therefore, be it

Resolved, That the Senate—

(1) honors the families of members of the Armed Forces and recognizes that they too share in the burden of protecting the Nation;

(2) urges the people of the United States to join with the Senate in thanking military families for their tremendous sacrifice on behalf of the Nation; and

(3) recognizes with great appreciation the contributions made by military families in providing the essential personal support that our Nation's warriors need.

SENATE RESOLUTION 379—DESIGNATING THURSDAY, NOVEMBER 15, 2007, AS ''FEED AMERICA THURSDAY''

Mr. HATCH (for himself and Mr. BENNETT) submitted the following resolution; which was considered and agreed to:

S. RES. 379

Whereas Thanksgiving Day celebrates the spirit of selfless giving and an appreciation for family and friends;

Whereas the spirit of Thanksgiving Day is a virtue upon which the Nation was founded;

Whereas, according to the Department of Agriculture, roughly 35,000,000 people in the United States, including 12,000,000 children, continue to live in households that do not have an adequate supply of food; and

Whereas selfless sacrifice breeds a genuine spirit of thanksgiving, both affirming and restoring fundamental principles in our society: Now, therefore, be it

Resolved, That the Senate—

(1) designates Thursday, November 15, 2007, as ''Feed America Thursday''; and

(2) encourages the people of the United States to sacrifice 2 meals on Thursday, November 15, 2007, and to donate the money that they would have spent on food to a religious or charitable organization of their choice for the purpose of feeding the hungry.

SENATE RESOLUTION 380—RECOGNIZING HOSTELLING INTERNATIONAL USA FOR 75 YEARS OF SERVICE TO INTERCULTURAL UNDERSTANDING AND TO YOUTH TRAVEL

Mr. STEVENS (for himself and Mr. INOUYE) submitted the following resolution; which was considered and agreed to:

S. RES. 380

Whereas travel promotes awareness and knowledge of peoples, places, and cultures;

Whereas hostelling is educational travel, local and global, using hostels and other programs to facilitate interaction among travelers and with local communities;

Whereas hostels are simple, safe, shared accommodations that promote community and cooperation among users and introduce young people of limited means to travel;

Whereas Hostelling International USA (HI-USA) is a nonprofit educational organization established in 1934 as American Youth Hostels to promote hostelling in the United States;

Whereas, since its founding, HI-USA has provided in its hostels more than 22,000,000 overnight stays to visitors from the United States and more than 150 countries worldwide;

Whereas today HI-USA has a network of 70 hostels in areas of cultural, historic, and recreational interest, often in partnership with public, private, and other nonprofit organizations, that annually hosts nearly 1,000,000 overnights stays by both domestic and foreign travelers;

Whereas HI-USA today offers programs through its hostels and local chapters that promote the appreciation of local culture and environment, while facilitating the discovery of both world and self, to more than 65,000 participants annually;

Whereas HI-USA has made a unique and notable contribution to intercultural understanding in the United States and worldwide, especially among youth: Now, therefore, be it

Resolved, That the Senate—

(1) congratulates Hostelling International USA on its 75 years of service; and

(2) commends Hostelling International USA for its contributions to intercultural exchange and its leadership in the field of youth travel.

SENATE RESOLUTION 381—REMEMBERING AND COMMEMORATING THE LIVES AND WORK OF MARYKNOLL SISTERS MAURA CLARKE AND ITA FORD, URSULINE SISTER DOROTHY KAZEL, AND CLEVELAND LAY MISSION TEAM MEMBER JEAN DONOVAN, WHO WERE EXECUTED BY MEMBERS OF THE ARMED FORCES OF EL SALVADOR ON DECEMBER 2, 1980

Mr. FEINGOLD (for himself, Mr. DODD, Mr. LEAHY, Mr. KERRY, Mr. CASEY, Mr. MENENDEZ, and Mr. DURBIN) submitted the followint resolution; which was considered and agreed to:

S. RES. 381

Whereas on December 2, 1980, four churchwomen from the United States, Maryknoll Sisters Maura Clarke and Ita Ford, Ursuline Sister Dorothy Kazel, and Cleveland Lay Mission Team Member Jean Donovan, were violated and executed by members of the National Guard of El Salvador;

Whereas in 1980, Maryknoll Sisters Maura Clarke and Ita Ford were working in the parish of the Church of San Juan Bautista in Chalatenango, El Salvador, providing food, transportation, and other assistance to refugees, and Ursuline Sister Dorothy Kazel and Cleveland Lay Mission Team Member Jean Donovan were working in the parish of the Church of the Immaculate Conception in La Libertad, El Salvador, providing assistance and support to refugees and other victims of violence;

Whereas these four churchwomen from the United States dedicated their lives to working with the poor of El Salvador, especially women and children left homeless, displaced, and destitute by the civil war in El Salvador;

Whereas these four churchwomen from the United States were among the more than 70,000 civilians who were murdered during the course of the civil war in El Salvador;

Whereas on May 23 and May 24, 1984, five members of the National Guard of El Salvador, Subsergeant Luis Antonio Colindres Aleman, Daniel Canales Ramirez, Carlos Joaquin Contreras Palacios, Francisco Orlando Contreras Recinos, and Jose Roberto Moreno Canjura, were found guilty by the El Salvador courts of the executions of these four churchwomen from the United States and were sentenced to 30 years in prison, marking the first time in El Salvador history in which a member of the Armed Forces of El Salvador was convicted of murder by an El Salvador judge;

Whereas the United Nations Commission on the Truth for El Salvador was established under the terms of the historic January 1992 Peace Accords that ended 12 years of civil war in El Salvador and was charged to investigate and report to the El Salvador people on human rights crimes committed by all sides during the course of the civil war;

Whereas in March 1993, the United Nations Commission on the Truth for El Salvador found that the execution of these four churchwomen from the United States was planned, that Subsergeant Luis Antonio Colindres Aleman carried out orders from a superior to execute them, that then Colonel Carlos Eugenio Vides Casanova, then Director-General of the National Guard and his cousin, Lieutenant Colonel Oscar Edgardo Casanova Vejar, then Commander of the Zacatecoluca military detachment where the murders were committed, and other military personnel knew that members of the National Guard had committed the murders pursuant to orders of a superior, and that the subsequent coverup of the facts adversely affected the judicial investigation into the murders of the churchwomen;

Whereas the United Nations Commission on the Truth for El Salvador determined that General Jose Guillermo Garcia, then Minister of Defense, made no serious effort to conduct a thorough investigation of responsibility for the murders of these four churchwomen from the United States;

Whereas the families of these four churchwomen from the United States continue their efforts to determine the full truth surrounding the murders of their loved ones, appreciate the cooperation of United States Government agencies in disclosing and providing documents relevant to the murders of the churchwomen, and pursue requests to release to the family members the few remaining undisclosed documents and reports pertaining to the case;

Whereas the families of these four churchwomen from the United States appreciate the ability of those harmed by violence to bring suit against El Salvador military officers in United States courts under the Torture Victim Protection Act of 1991 (28 U.S.C. 1350 note);

Whereas the lives of these four churchwomen from the United States have, for the past 27 years, served as inspiration for and continue to inspire Salvadorans, Americans, and people throughout the world to answer the call to service and to pursue lives dedicated to addressing the needs and aspirations of the poor, the vulnerable, and the disadvantaged, especially among women and children;

Whereas the lives of these four churchwomen from the United States have also inspired numerous books, plays, films, music, religious events, and cultural events;

Whereas schools, libraries, research centers, spiritual centers, health clinics, women's and children's programs in the United States and in El Salvador have been named after or dedicated to Sisters Maura Clarke, Ita Ford, Dorothy Kazel, and lay missionary Jean Donovan;

Whereas the Maryknoll Sisters, headquartered in Ossining, New York, the Ursuline Sisters, headquartered in Cleveland, Ohio, numerous religious task forces in the United States, and the Salvadoran and international religious communities based in El Salvador annually commemorate the lives and martyrdom of these four churchwomen from the United States;

Whereas the historic January 1992 Peace Accords ended 12 years of civil war in El Salvador and have allowed the Government and the people of El Salvador to achieve significant progress in creating and strengthening democratic, political, economic, and social institutions in El Salvador; and

Whereas December 2, 2007, marks the 27th anniversary of the deaths of these four spiritual, courageous, and generous churchwomen from the United States: Now, therefore, be it

Resolved, That the Senate—

(1) remembers and commemorates the lives and work of Sisters Maura Clarke, Ita Ford, and Dorothy Kazel and lay missionary Jean Donovan;

(2) extends sympathy and support for the families, friends, and religious communities of these four churchwomen from the United States;

(3) continues to find inspiration in the lives and work of these four churchwomen from the United States;

(4) calls upon the people of the United States and religious congregations to participate in local, national, and international events commemorating the 27th anniversary of the martyrdom of these four churchwomen from the United States;

(5) recognizes that while progress has been made in El Salvador during the post-civil war period, the work begun by these four churchwomen from the United States remains unfinished and social and economic hardships persist among many sectors of El Salvador society; and

(6) calls upon the President, the Secretary of State, the Administrator of the United States Agency for International Development, and the heads of other United States Government agencies to continue to support and collaborate with the Government of El Salvador and with private sector, nongovernmental, regional, international, and religious organizations in their efforts to reduce poverty and hunger and to promote educational opportunity, health care, and social equity for the people of El Salvador.

SENATE RESOLUTION 382—SUPPORTING THE GOALS AND IDEALS OF WORLD DIABETES DAY

Ms. STABENOW (for herself, Mr. DOMENICI, Mr. LAUTENBERG, and Mr. COLEMAN) submitted the following resolution; which was considered and agreed to:

S. RES. 382

Whereas the World Health Organization and the International Diabetes Federation established World Diabetes Day in 1991 with the aim of coordinating diabetes advocacy worldwide;

Whereas World Diabetes Day is celebrated annually on November 14;

Whereas, on December 20, 2006, the General Assembly of the United Nations passed a landmark resolution recognizing diabetes as a chronic, debilitating, and costly disease;

Whereas the resolution designates World Diabetes Day as a United Nations Day to be observed every year starting in 2007 in order to raise global awareness of diabetes;

Whereas the theme of the 2007 United Nations World Diabetes Day campaign focuses on raising awareness of diabetes in children and adolescents, who face unique challenges when diagnosed with diabetes;

Whereas the United Nations campaign aims, among other objectives, to firmly establish the message that no child should die of diabetes;

Whereas the global diabetes epidemic has devastating effects on families, societies, and national economies;

Whereas diabetes is the 4th leading cause of death by disease in the world, and is the 6th leading cause of death in the United States;

Whereas diabetes is a leading cause of blindness, kidney failure, amputation, heart attack, and stroke;

Whereas in almost every country the incidence of diabetes is increasing, growing from an estimated 30,000,000 people worldwide in 1985 to an estimated 245,000,000 people in 2007, and to 380,000,000 by 2025, as reported by the International Diabetes Federation;

Whereas diabetes is one of the most common chronic childhood diseases;

Whereas diabetes can strike children at any age, and when diagnosed in young people the risk of developing life-threatening complications at an early age increases and life expectancy is shortened by, on average, 10 to 20 years;

Whereas new figures from the International Diabetes Federation's Diabetes Atlas suggest that more than 70,000 children develop type 1 diabetes each year and 440,000 children worldwide under the age of 14 now live with type 1 diabetes;

Whereas recent data indicate that 1 out of every 3 children born in the United States will develop diabetes during their lifetime, including 1 out of every 2 children from ethnic minority groups;

Whereas in low- and middle-income countries, many children with diabetes die because they are diagnosed late or misdiagnosed or because insulin is unaffordable, unavailable, or in short supply;

Whereas the incidence of type 2 diabetes, which was previously rare in children, is rising at alarming rates, with more than 200 children a day developing this form of diabetes;

Whereas obesity is a major contributor to type 2 diabetes;

Whereas according to the International Obesity Task Force of the International Association for the Study of Obesity, 155,000,000 school-age children worldwide are overweight, representing at least 1 out of every 10 school-age children;

Whereas at least 30,000,000 of those overweight children are classified as obese, accounting for at least 2 percent of the world's children between the ages of 5 and 17 years of age;

Whereas research has shown conclusively that type 2 diabetes can be prevented or significantly delayed through healthy weight maintenance and regular physical activity;

Whereas adopting a lifestyle high in physical activity and adopting a low-sugar, low-fat diet can successfully prevent the onset of obesity and diabetes among school-age children;

Whereas diabetes is costly, with the world estimated to spend at least $232,000,000,000 in 2007 and over $302,500,000,000 by 2025 to treat and prevent diabetes and its complications;

Whereas world treatment costs for diabetes are growing more quickly than the world population;

Whereas diabetes threatens to subvert global economic advancement by both straining government budgets worldwide (with the cost of diabetes-related disability payments, pensions, social and medical service costs, and lost revenue) and burdening private health insurers and employers with spiraling health care costs;

Whereas by 2025 the largest increases in diabetes prevalence will take place in developing countries, whose economies are less able to support increased expenditures to provide for those with the disease and engage in effective prevention efforts; and

Whereas the economic impact of diabetes threatens to undermine the achievement of the United Nation's Millennium Development Goals for developing countries: Now, therefore, be it

Resolved, That the Senate supports the goals and ideals of World Diabetes Day.

AMENDMENTS SUBMITTED AND PROPOSED

SA 3654. Mr. SCHUMER submitted an amendment intended to be proposed to amendment SA 3500 proposed by Mr. HARKIN (for himself, Mr. CHAMBLISS, Mr. BAUCUS, and Mr. GRASSLEY) to the bill H.R. 2419, to provide for the continuation of agricultural programs through fiscal year 2012, and for other purposes; which was ordered to lie on the table.

SA 3655. Mr. BAUCUS (for himself, Mr. ENZI, Mr. TESTER, Mr. CRAIG, Mr. CRAPO, and Mr. BARRASSO) submitted an amendment intended to be proposed to amendment SA 3500 proposed by Mr. HARKIN (for himself, Mr. CHAMBLISS, Mr. BAUCUS, and Mr. GRASSLEY) to the bill H.R. 2419, supra; which was ordered to lie on the table.

SA 3656. Mr. PRYOR (for himself and Mrs. LINCOLN) submitted an amendment intended to be proposed by him to the bill H.R. 2419, supra; which was ordered to lie on the table.

SA 3657. Mr. PRYOR (for himself and Mrs. LINCOLN) submitted an amendment intended to be proposed by him to the bill H.R. 2419, supra; which was ordered to lie on the table.

SA 3658. Mr. DURBIN submitted an amendment intended to be proposed by him to the bill H.R. 2419, supra; which was ordered to lie on the table.

SA 3659. Mr. NELSON, of Nebraska submitted an amendment intended to be proposed to amendment SA 3500 proposed by Mr. HARKIN (for himself, Mr. CHAMBLISS, Mr. BAUCUS, and Mr. GRASSLEY) to the bill H.R. 2419, supra; which was ordered to lie on the table.

SA 3660. Mr. BAUCUS (for himself and Mr. CRAPO) submitted an amendment intended to be proposed by him to the bill H.R. 2419, supra; which was ordered to lie on the table.

SA 3661. Mr. KENNEDY submitted an amendment intended to be proposed by him to the bill H.R. 2419, supra; which was ordered to lie on the table.

SA 3662. Mr. FEINGOLD submitted an amendment intended to be proposed by him

to the bill H.R. 2419, supra; which was ordered to lie on the table.

SA 3663. Mr. VITTER submitted an amendment intended to be proposed to amendment SA 3500 proposed by Mr. HARKIN (for himself, Mr. CHAMBLISS, Mr. BAUCUS, and Mr. GRASSLEY) to the bill H.R. 2419, supra; which was ordered to lie on the table.

SA 3664. Mrs. HUTCHISON submitted an amendment intended to be proposed to amendment SA 3500 proposed by Mr. HARKIN (for himself, Mr. CHAMBLISS, Mr. BAUCUS, and Mr. GRASSLEY) to the bill H.R. 2419, supra; which was ordered to lie on the table.

SA 3665. Mr. ENSIGN submitted an amendment intended to be proposed by him to the bill H.R. 2419, supra; which was ordered to lie on the table.

SA 3666. Mr. TESTER (for himself, Mr. GRASSLEY, and Mr. HARKIN) submitted an amendment intended to be proposed to amendment SA 3500 proposed by Mr. HARKIN (for himself, Mr. CHAMBLISS, Mr. BAUCUS, and Mr. GRASSLEY) to the bill H.R. 2419, supra; which was ordered to lie on the table.

SA 3667. Mr. HARKIN (for himself, Mr. ENZI, Mr. JOHNSON, Mr. BARRASSO, Mr. DORGAN, Mr. GRASSLEY, Mr. FEINGOLD, and Mr. TESTER) submitted an amendment intended to be proposed to amendment SA 3500 proposed by Mr. HARKIN (for himself, Mr. CHAMBLISS, Mr. BAUCUS, and Mr. GRASSLEY) to the bill H.R. 2419, supra; which was ordered to lie on the table.

SA 3668. Mr. BAUCUS submitted an amendment intended to be proposed by him to the bill H.R. 2419, supra; which was ordered to lie on the table.

SA 3669. Mr. GREGG submitted an amendment intended to be proposed to amendment SA 3500 proposed by Mr. HARKIN (for himself, Mr. CHAMBLISS, Mr. BAUCUS, and Mr. GRASSLEY) to the bill H.R. 2419, supra; which was ordered to lie on the table.

SA 3670. Mr. GREGG submitted an amendment intended to be proposed by him to the bill H.R. 2419, supra; which was ordered to lie on the table.

SA 3671. Mr. GREGG submitted an amendment intended to be proposed by him to the bill H.R. 2419, supra; which was ordered to lie on the table.

SA 3672. Mr. GREGG submitted an amendment intended to be proposed to amendment SA 3500 proposed by Mr. HARKIN (for himself, Mr. CHAMBLISS, Mr. BAUCUS, and Mr. GRASSLEY) to the bill H.R. 2419, supra; which was ordered to lie on the table.

SA 3673. Mr. GREGG submitted an amendment intended to be proposed by him to the bill H.R. 2419, supra; which was ordered to lie on the table.

SA 3674. Mr. GREGG submitted an amendment intended to be proposed by him to the bill H.R. 2419, supra; which was ordered to lie on the table.

SA 3675. Mr. GREGG submitted an amendment intended to be proposed to amendment SA 3500 proposed by Mr. HARKIN (for himself, Mr. CHAMBLISS, Mr. BAUCUS, and Mr. GRASSLEY) to the bill H.R. 2419, supra; which was ordered to lie on the table.

SA 3676. Mr. DURBIN (for Mrs. FEINSTEIN (for herself and Mrs. HUTCHISON)) proposed an amendment to the bill S. 597, to extend the special postage stamp for breast cancer research for 4 years .

SA 3677. Mr. DURBIN (for Mr. MENENDEZ) proposed an amendment to the resolution S. Res. 299, recognizing the religious and historical significance of the festival of Diwali.

SA 3678. Mr. DURBIN (for Mrs. FEINSTEIN) proposed an amendment to the bill S. 597, to extend the special postage stamp for breast cancer research for 4 years.

TEXT OF AMENDMENTS

SA 3654. Mr. SCHUMER submitted an amendment intended to be proposed to amendment SA 3500 proposed by Mr. HARKIN (for himself, Mr. CHAMBLISS, Mr. BAUCUS, and Mr. GRASSLEY) to the bill H.R. 2419, to provide for the continuation of agricultural programs through fiscal year 2012, and for other purposes; which was ordered to lie on the table; as follows:

On page 272, after line 24, add the following:

SEC. 19___ SHARE OF RISK.

(a) IN GENERAL.—Section 508(k)(3) of the Federal Crop Insurance Act (7 U.S.C. 1508(k)(3)) is amended—

(1) by striking ''require the reinsured'' and inserting the following: ''require—

''(A) the reinsured'';

(2) by striking the period at the end and inserting ''; and''; and

(3) by adding at the end the following:

''(B)(i) the cumulative underwriting gain or loss, and the associated premium and losses with such amount, calculated under any reinsurance agreement (except livestock) ceded to the Corporation by each approved insurance provider to be not less than 12.5 percent; and

''(ii) the Corporation to pay a ceding commission to reinsured companies of 2 percent of the premium used to define the loss ratio for the book of business of the approved insurance provider that is described in clause (i).''.

(b) CONFORMING AMENDMENTS.—Section 516(a)(2) of the Federal Crop Insurance Act (7 U.S.C. 1516(a)(2)) is amended by adding at the end the following:

''(E) Costs associated with the ceding commissions described in section 508(k)(3)(B)(ii).''.

(c) EFFECTIVE DATE.—The amendments made by this section take effect on June 30, 2008.

On page 273, lines 12 and 13, strike ''2 percentage points'' and insert ''4.0 percentage points''.

Beginning on page 445, strike line 18 and all that follows through page 446, line 7, and insert the following:

''(5) The farmland protection program under subchapter B of chapter 2, using, to the maximum extent practicable, $110,000,000 for each of fiscal years 2008 through 2012.

''(6) The grassland reserve program under chapter C of chapter 2, using, to the maximum extent practicable, $300,000,000 for the period of fiscal years 2008 through 2012.

''(7) The environmental quality incentives program under chapter 4, using, to the maximum extent practicable—

''(A) $1,345,000,000 for fiscal year 2008;

''(B) $1,350,000,000 for fiscal year 2009;

''(C) $1,385,000,000 for fiscal year 2010; and

''(D) $1,420,000,000 for each of fiscal years 2011 and 2012.''.

SA 3655. Mr. BAUCUS (for himself, Mr. ENZI, Mr. TESTER, Mr. CRAIG, Mr. CRAPO, and Mr. BARRASSO) submitted an amendment intended to be proposed to amendment SA 3500 proposed by Mr. HARKIN (for himself, Mr. CHAMBLISS, Mr. BAUCUS, and Mr. GRASSLEY) to the bill H.R. 2419, to provide for the continuation of agricultural programs through fiscal year 2012, and for other purposes; which was ordered to lie on the table; as follows:

On page 972, strike line 2 and insert the following:

on reproductive fitness and related measures.

''(56) BRUCELLOSIS CONTROL AND ERADICATION.—Research and extension grants may be made available—

''(A) for the conduct of research relating to the development of vaccines and vaccine delivery systems to effectively control and eliminate brucellosis in wildlife; and

''(B) to assist with the controlling of the spread of brucellosis from wildlife to domestic animals in the greater Yellowstone area.''

SA 3656. Mr. PRYOR (for himself and Mrs. LINCOLN) submitted an amendment intended to be proposed by him to the bill H.R. 2419, to provide for the continuation of agricultural programs through fiscal year 2012, and for other purposes; which was ordered to lie on the table; as follows:

On page 1192, strike line 13 and insert the following:

''SEC. 9023. REPORT ON THE GROWTH POTENTIAL FOR CELLULOSIC MATERIAL.

''Not later than 18 months after the date of enactment of this Act, the Secretary shall submit to the Committee on Agriculture of the House of Representatives and the Committee on Agriculture, Nutrition, and Forestry of the Senate a comprehensive report that, on a State-by-State basis—

''(1) identifies the range of cellulosic feedstock materials that can be grown and are viable candidates for renewable fuel production;

''(2) estimates the acreage available for growing the cellulosic feedstock materials identified under paragraph (1);

''(3) estimates the quantity of available energy per acre for each cellulosic feedstock material identified under paragraph (1);

''(4) calculates the development potential for growing cellulosic feedstock materials, based on—

''(A) the range of cellulosic materials available for growth;

''(B) soil quality;

''(C) climate variables;

''(D) the quality and availability of water;

''(E) agriculture systems that are in place as of the date of enactment of this Act;

''(F) available acreage; and

''(G) other relevant factors identified by the Secretary; and

''(5) rates the development potential for growing cellulosic feedstock material, with the ratings displayed on maps of the United States that indicate the development potential of each State, as calculated by the Secretary under paragraph (4).

''SEC. 9024. FURTURE FARMSTEADS PROGRAM.

SA 3657. Mr. PRYOR (for himself and Mrs. LINCOLN) submitted an amendment intended to be proposed by him to the bill H.R. 2419, to provide for the continuation of agricultural programs through fiscal year 2012, and for other purposes; which was ordered to lie on the table; as follows:

On page 1362, between lines 19 and 20, insert the following:

SEC. 11072. REGULATIONS TO IMPROVE MANAGEMENT AND OVERSIGHT OF CERTAIN REGULATED ARTICLES.

(a) IN GENERAL.—Not later than 18 months after the date of enactment of this Act, the Secretary shall promulgate regulations—

(1) to implement, as appropriate, each issue identified in the document entitled ''Lessons Learned and Revisions under Consideration for APHIS' Biotechnology Framework'', dated October 4, 2007; and

(2) to improve the management and oversight of articles regulated under the Plant Protection Act (7 U.S.C. 7701 et seq.).

(b) INCLUSIONS.—In promulgating regulations under subsection (a), the Secretary

shall include provisions that are designed to enhance—

(1) the quality and completeness of records;

(2) the availability of representative samples;

(3) the maintenance of identity and control in the event of an unauthorized release;

(4) corrective actions in the event of an unauthorized release;

(5) protocols for conducting molecular forensics;

(6) clarity in contractual agreements;

(7) the use of the latest scientific techniques for isolation and confinement;

(8) standards for quality management systems and effective research (including laboratory, greenhouse, and field research); and

(9) the design of electronic permits to store documents and other information relating to the permit and notification processes.

(c) CONSIDERATION.—In promulgating regulations under subsection (a), the Secretary shall consider—

(1) establishing—

(A) a level of potential risk presented by each regulated article (including unintended release);

(B) a means to identify regulated articles (including the retention of seed samples); and

(C) scientifically valid and proven isolation and containment distances; and

(2) requiring permit holders—

(A) to maintain a positive chain of custody;

(B) to provide for the maintenance of records;

(C) to provide for the accounting of material;

(D) to conduct periodic audits;

(E) to establish an appropriate training program;

(F) to provide contingency and corrective action plans; and

(G) to submit reports as the Secretary considers to be appropriate.

SA 3658. Mr. DURBIN submitted an amendment intended to be proposed by him to the bill H.R. 2419, to provide for the continuation of agricultural programs through fiscal year 2012, and for other purposes; which was ordered to lie on the table; as follows:

On page 1362, between lines 19 and 20, insert the following:

SEC. 11072. INVASIVE SPECIES REVOLVING LOAN FUND.

(a) DEFINITIONS.—In this section:

(1) AUTHORIZED EQUIPMENT.—

(A) IN GENERAL.—The term ''authorized equipment'' means any equipment necessary for the management of forest land.

(B) INCLUSIONS.—The term ''authorized equipment''includes—

(i) cherry pickers;

(ii) equipment necessary for—

(I) the construction of staging and marshalling areas;

(II) the planting of trees; and

(III) the surveying of forest land;

(iii) vehicles capable of transporting harvested trees;

(iv) wood chippers; and

(v) any other appropriate equipment, as determined by the Secretary.

(2) FUND.—The term ''Fund'' means the Invasive Species Revolving Loan Fund established by subsection (b).

(3) SECRETARY.—The term ''Secretary'' means the Secretary of Agriculture, acting through the Deputy Chief of the State and Private Forestry organization.

(b) ESTABLISHMENT OF FUND.—There is established in the Treasury of the United States a revolving fund, to be known as the ''Invasive Species Revolving Loan Fund'', consisting of such amounts as are appropriated to the Fund under subsection (f).

(c) EXPENDITURES FROM FUND.—

(1) IN GENERAL.—Subject to paragraph (2), on request by the Secretary, the Secretary of the Treasury shall transfer from the Fund to the Secretary such amounts as the Secretary determines are necessary to provide loans under subsection (e).

(2) ADMINISTRATIVE EXPENSES.—An amount not exceeding 10 percent of the amounts in the Fund shall be available for each fiscal year to pay the administrative expenses necessary to carry out this section.

(d) TRANSFERS OF AMOUNTS.—

(1) IN GENERAL.—The amounts required to be transferred to the Fund under this section shall be transferred at least monthly from the general fund of the Treasury to the Fund on the basis of estimates made by the Secretary of the Treasury.

(2) ADJUSTMENTS.—Proper adjustment shall be made in amounts subsequently transferred to the extent prior estimates were in excess of or less than the amounts required to be transferred.

(e) USES OF FUND.—

(1) LOANS.—

(A) IN GENERAL.—The Secretary shall use amounts in the Fund to provide loans to eligible units of local government to finance purchases of authorized equipment to monitor, remove, dispose of, and replace infested trees that are located—

(i) on land under the jurisdiction of the eligible units of local government; and

(ii) within the borders of quarantine areas infested by invasive species.

(B) MAXIMUM AMOUNT.—The maximum amount of a loan that may be provided by the Secretary to an eligible unit of local government under this subsection shall be the lesser of—

(i) the amount that the eligible unit of local government has appropriated—

(I) to finance purchases of authorized equipment to monitor, remove, dispose of, and replace infested trees that are located—

(aa) on land under the jurisdiction of the eligible unit of local government; and

(bb) within the borders of a quarantine area infested by invasive species; and

(II) to enter into contracts with appropriate individuals and entities to monitor, remove, dispose of, and replace infested trees that are located in each area described in subclause (I); or

(ii) $5,000,000.

(C) INTEREST RATE.—The interest rate on any loan made by the Secretary under this paragraph shall be a rate equal to 2 percent.

(D) REPORT.—Not later than 180 days after the date on which an eligible unit of local government receives a loan provided by the Secretary under subparagraph (A), the eligible unit of local government shall submit to the Secretary a report that describes each purchase made by the eligible unit of local government using assistance provided through the loan.

(2) LOAN REPAYMENT SCHEDULE.—

(A) IN GENERAL.—To be eligible to receive a loan from the Secretary under paragraph (1), in accordance with each requirement described in subparagraph (B), an eligible unit of local government shall enter into an agreement with the Secretary to establish a loan repayment schedule relating to the repayment of the loan.

(B) REQUIREMENTS RELATING TO LOAN REPAYMENT SCHEDULE.—A loan repayment schedule established under subparagraph (A) shall require the eligible unit of local government—

(i) to repay to the Secretary of the Treasury, not later than 1 year after the date on which the eligible unit of local government receives a loan under paragraph (1), and semiannually thereafter, an amount equal to the quotient obtained by dividing—

(I) the principal amount of the loan (including interest); by

(II) the total quantity of payments that the eligible unit of local government is required to make during the repayment period of the loan; and

(ii) not later than 20 years after the date on which the eligible unit of local government receives a loan under paragraph (1), to complete repayment to the Secretary of the Treasury of the loan made under this section (including interest).

(f) AUTHORIZATION OF APPROPRIATIONS.—There are authorized to be appropriated to the Fund such sums as are necessary to carry out this section.

SEC. 11073. COOPERATIVE AGREEMENTS RELATING TO INVASIVE SPECIES PREVENTION ACTIVITIES.

Any cooperative agreement entered into after the date of enactment of this Act between the Secretary and a State relating to the prevention of invasive species infestation shall allow the State to provide any cost-sharing assistance or financing mechanism provided to the State under the cooperative agreement to a unit of local government of the State that—

(1) is engaged in any activity relating to the prevention of invasive species infestation; and

(2) is capable of documenting each invasive species infestation prevention activity generally carried out by—

(A) the Department of Agriculture; or

(B) the State department of agriculture that has jurisdiction over the unit of local government.

SA 3659. Mr. NELSON of Nebraska submitted an amendment intended to be proposed to amendment SA 3500 proposed by Mr. HARKIN (for himself, Mr. CHAMBLISS, Mr. BAUCUS, and Mr. GRASSLEY) to the bill H.R. 2419, to provide for the continuation of agricultural programs through fiscal year 2012, and for other purposes; which was ordered to lie on the table; as follows:

On page 895, trike lines 4 through 7 and insert the following:

Section 1408 of the National Agricultural Research, Extension, and Teaching Policy Act of 1977 (7 U.S.C. 3123) is amended—

(A) in subsection (g)(1), by striking ''$350,000'' and inserting ''$500,000''; and

(B) in subsection (h), by striking ''2007'' and inserting ''2012''.

SA 3660. Mr. BAUCUS (for himself and Mr. CRAPO) submitted an amendment intended to be proposed by him to the bill H.R. 2419, to provide for the continuation of agricultural programs through fiscal year 2012, and for other purposes; which was ordered to lie on the table; as follows:

At the appropriate place in title III, insert the following:

SEC. 3___. AGRICULTURAL SUPPLY.

(a) IN GENERAL.—Section 902(1) of the Trade Sanctions Reform and Export Enhancement Act of 2000 (22 U.S.C. 7201(1)) is amended—

(1) by striking paragraph (1);

(2) by redesignating paragraph (2) as paragraph (1); and

(3) by inserting after paragraph (1) the following:

''(2) AGRICULTURAL SUPPLY.—The term 'agricultural supply' includes—

''(A) agricultural commodities; and

''(B)(i) agriculture-related processing equipment;

''(ii) agriculture-related machinery; and

''(iii) other capital goods related to the storage or handling of agricultural commodities or products.''.

(b) CONFORMING AMENDMENTS.—The Trade Sanctions Reform and Export Enhancement Act of 2000 (22 U.S.C. 7201 et seq.) is amended—

(1) by striking ''agricultural commodities'' each place it appears and inserting ''agricultural supplies'';

(2) in section 904(2), by striking ''agricultural commodity'' and inserting ''agricultural supply''; and

(3) in section 910(a), in the subsection heading, by striking ''AGRICULTURAL COMMODITIES'' and inserting ''AGRICULTURAL SUPPLIES''.

SEC. 3___. CLARIFICATION OF PAYMENT TERMS UNDER TSREEA.

Section 908(b)(1) of the Trade Sanctions Reform and Export Enhancement Act of 2000 (22 U.S.C. 7207(b)(1)) is amended—

(1) by redesignating subparagraphs (A) and (B) as clauses (i) and (ii), respectively, and indenting appropriately;

(2) striking ''(1) IN GENERAL.—No United States person'' and inserting the following:

''(1) PROHIBITION.—

''(A) IN GENERAL.—No United States person''; and

(3) in the undesignated matter following clause (ii) (as redesignated by paragraph (1)), by striking ''Nothing in this paragraph'' and inserting the following:

''(B) DEFINITION OF PAYMENT OF CASH IN ADVANCE.—Notwithstanding any other provision of law, for purposes of this paragraph, the term 'payment of cash in advance' means only that payment must be received by the seller of an agricultural supply to Cuba or any person in Cuba before surrendering physical possession of the agricultural supply.

''(C) REGULATIONS.—The Secretary of the Treasury shall publish in the Federal Register a description of the contents of this section as a clarification of the regulations of the Secretary regarding sales under this title to Cuba.

''(D) CLARIFICATION.—Nothing in this paragraph''.

SEC. 3___. REQUIREMENTS RELATING TO CERTAIN TRAVEL-RELATED TRANSACTIONS WITH CUBA.

Section 910 of the Trade Sanctions Reform and Export Enhancement Act of 2000 (22 U.S.C. 7208) is amended by adding at the end the following:

''(c) GENERAL LICENSE AUTHORITY FOR TRAVEL-RELATED EXPENDITURES IN CUBA BY PERSONS ENGAGING IN TSREEA-AUTHORIZED SALES AND MARKETING ACTIVITIES.—

''(1) DEFINITION OF SALES AND MARKETING ACTIVITY.—

''(A) IN GENERAL.—In this subsection, the term 'sales and marketing activity' means any activity with respect to travel to, from, or within Cuba that is undertaken by United States persons—

''(i) to explore the market in Cuba for products authorized under this title; or

''(ii) to engage in sales activities with respect to such products.

''(B) INCLUSION.—The term 'sales and marketing activity' includes exhibiting, negotiating, marketing, surveying the market, and delivering and servicing products authorized under this title.

''(2) AUTHORIZATION.—The Secretary of the Treasury shall authorize under a general license the travel-related transactions listed in paragraph (c) of section 515.560 of title 31, Code of Federal Regulations (as in effect on June 1, 2007), for travel to, from, or within Cuba in connection with sales and marketing activities involving products approved for sale under this title.

''(3) AUTHORIZED PERSONS.—Persons authorized to travel to Cuba under paragraph (2) shall include—

''(A) producers of products authorized under this title;

''(B) distributors of such products; and

''(C) representatives of trade organizations that promote the interests of producers and distributors of such products.

''(4) REGULATIONS.—The Secretary of the Treasury shall promulgate such rules and regulations as are necessary to carry out this subsection.''.

SEC. 3___. AUTHORIZATION OF DIRECT TRANSFERS BETWEEN CUBAN AND UNITED STATES FINANCIAL INSTITUTIONS.

The Trade Sanctions Reform and Export Enhancement Act of 2000 is amended—

(1) by redesignating section 911 (22 U.S.C. 7201 note; Public Law 106–387) as section 912; and

(2) by inserting after section 910 (22 U.S.C. 7209) the following:

''SEC. 911. AUTHORIZATION OF DIRECT TRANSFERS BETWEEN CUBAN AND UNITED STATES FINANCIAL INSTITUTIONS.

''Notwithstanding any other provision of law (including regulations), the President shall not restrict direct transfers from Cuban to United States financial institutions executed in payment for products authorized by this Act.''.

SEC. 3___. SENSE OF CONGRESS THAT PROSPECTIVE PURCHASERS OF TSREEA PRODUCTS SHOULD BE ISSUED VISAS TO ENTER THE UNITED STATES.

(a) SENSE OF CONGRESS.—It is the sense of Congress that the Secretary of State should issue visas for temporary entry into the United States of Cuban nationals who demonstrate a full itinerary of purchasing activities relating to the Trade Sanctions Reform and Export Enhancement Act of 2000 (22 U.S.C. 7201 et seq.) while in the United States.

(b) PERIODIC REPORTS.—Not later than 45 days after the date of enactment of this Act and every 90 days thereafter, the Secretary of State shall submit to the Committees on Agriculture, Foreign Affairs, and Ways and Means of the House of Representatives and the Committees on Agriculture, Nutrition, and Forestry, Finance, and Foreign Relations of the Senate a report that describes any actions of the Secretary relating to this section, including—

(1) a full description of each application received from a Cuban national to travel to the United States to engage in purchasing activities described in subsection (a); and

(2) a description of the disposition of each such application.

SA 3661. Mr. KENNEDY submitted an amendment intended to be proposed by him to the bill H.R. 2419, to provide for the continuation of agricultural programs through fiscal year 2012, and for other purposes; which was ordered to lie on the table; as follows;

At the appropriate place, insert the following:

SEC.___. PREVENTING CHILDHOOD OBESITY.

(a) FEDERAL LEADERSHIP COMMISSION TO PREVENT CHILDHOOD OBESITY.—Part Q of title III of the Public Health Service Act (42 U.S.C. 280h et seq.) is amended by adding at the end the following:

''SEC. 399Z–1. FEDERAL LEADERSHIP COMMISSION TO PREVENT CHILDHOOD OBESITY.

''(a) IN GENERAL.—The Secretary shall ensure that the Federal Government coordinates efforts to develop, implement, and enforce policies that promote messages and activities designed to prevent obesity among children and youth.

''(b) ESTABLISHMENT OF LEADERSHIP COMMISSION.—The Secretary, acting through the Director of the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, shall establish within the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention a Federal Leadership Commission to Prevent Childhood Obesity (referred to in this section as the 'Commission') to assess and make recommendations for Federal departmental policies, programs, and messages relating to the prevention of childhood obesity. The Director shall serve as the chairperson of the Commission.

''(c) MEMBERSHIP.—The Commission shall include representatives of offices and agencies within—

''(1) the Department of Health and Human Services;

''(2) the Department of Agriculture;

''(3) the Department of Commerce;

''(4) the Department of Education;

''(5) the Department of Housing and Urban Development;

''(6) the Department of the Interior;

''(7) the Department of Labor;

''(8) the Department of Transportation;

''(9) the Federal Trade Commission; and

''(10) other Federal entities as determined appropriate by the Secretary.

''(d) DUTIES.—The Commission shall—

''(1) serve as a centralized mechanism to coordinate activities related to obesity prevention across all Federal departments and agencies;

''(2) establish specific goals for obesity prevention, and determine accountability for reaching these goals, within and across Federal departments and agencies;

''(3) review evaluation and economic data relating to the impact of Federal interventions on the prevention of childhood obesity;

''(4) provide a description of evidence-based best practices, model programs, effective guidelines, and other strategies for preventing childhood obesity;

''(5) make recommendations to improve Federal efforts relating to obesity prevention and to ensure Federal efforts are consistent with available standards and evidence; and

''(6) monitor Federal progress in meeting specific obesity prevention goals.

''(e) STUDY; SUMMIT; GUIDELINES.—

''(1) STUDY.—The Government Accountability Office shall—

''(A) conduct a study to assess the effect of Federal nutrition assistance programs and agricultural policies on the prevention of childhood obesity, and prepare a report on the results of such study that shall include a description and evaluation of the content and impact of Federal agriculture subsidy and commodity programs and policies as such relate to Federal nutrition programs;

''(B) make recommendations to guide or revise Federal policies for ensuring access to nutritional foods in Federal nutrition assistance programs; and

''(C) complete the activities provided for under this section not later than 18 months after the date of enactment of this section.

''(2) INSTITUTE OF MEDICINE STUDY.—

''(A) IN GENERAL.—Not later than 6 months after the date of enactment of this section, the Secretary shall request that the Institute of Medicine (or similar organization) conduct a study and make recommendations on guidelines for nutritional food and physical activity advertising and marketing to prevent childhood obesity. In conducting such study the Institute of Medicine shall—

''(i) evaluate children's advertising and marketing guidelines and evidence-based literature relating to the impact of advertising on nutritional foods and physical activity in children and youth; and

''(ii) make recommendations on national guidelines for advertising and marketing

practices relating to children and youth that—

''(I) reduce the exposure of children and youth to advertising and marketing of foods of poor or minimal nutritional value and practices that promote sedentary behavior; and

''(11) increase the number of media messages that promote physical activity and sound nutrition.

''(B) GUIDELINES.—Not later than 2 years after the date of enactment of this section, the Institute of Medicine shall submit to the Commission the final report concerning the results of the study, and making the recommendations, required under this paragraph.

''(3) NATIONAL SUMMIT.—

''(A) IN GENERAL.—Not later than 1 year after the date on which the report under paragraph (2)(B) is submitted, the Commission shall convene a National Summit to Implement Food and Physical Activity Advertising and Marketing Guidelines to Prevent Childhood Obesity (referred to in this section as the 'Summit').

''(B) COLLABORATIVE EFFORT.—The Summit shall be a collaborative effort and include representatives from—

''(i) education and child development groups;

''(ii) public health and behavioral science groups;

''(iii) child advocacy and health care provider groups; and

''(iv) advertising and marketing industry.

''(C) ACTIVITIES.—The participants in the Summit shall develop a 5-year plan for implementing the national guidelines recommended by the Institute of Medicine in the report submitted under paragraph (2)(B).

''(D) EVALUATION AND REPORTS.—Not later than 1 year after the date of enactment of this section, and biannually thereafter, the Commission shall evaluate and submit a report to Congress on the efforts of the Federal Government to implement the recommendations made by the Institute of Medicine in the report under paragraph (2)(B) that shall include a detailed description of the plan of the Secretary to implement such recommendations.

''(f) AUTHORIZATION OF APPROPRIATIONS.—There are authorized to be appropriated to carry out this section, such sums as may be necessary for each of fiscal years 2006 through 2010.

''(g) DEFINITIONS.—For purposes of this section, the definitions contained in section 401 of the Prevention of Childhood Obesity Act shall apply.''.

(b) FEDERAL TRADE COMMISSION AND MARKETING TO CHILDREN AND YOUTH.—

(1) IN GENERAL.—Notwithstanding section 18 of the Federal Trade Commission Act (15 U.S.C. 57a), the Federal Trade Commission is authorized to promulgate regulations and monitor compliance with the guidelines for advertising and marketing of nutritional foods and physical activity directed at children and youth, as recommended by the National Summit to Implement Food and Physical Activity Advertising and Marketing Guidelines to Prevent Childhood Obesity (as established under section 399Z–1(e)(3) of the Public Health Service Act).

(2) FINES.—Notwithstanding section 18 of the Federal Trade Commission Act (15 U.S.C. 57a), the Federal Trade Commission may assess fines on advertisers or network and media groups that fail to comply with the guidelines described in paragraph (1).

SA 3662. Mr. FEINGOLD submitted an amendment intended to be proposed by him to the bill H.R. 2419, to provide for the continuation of agricultural programs through fiscal year 2012, and for other purposes; which was ordered to lie on the table; as follows:

At the end of title IX, add the following:

SEC. 9_____. SENSE OF CONGRESS REGARDING COOPERATIVE REGIONAL RESEARCH, EXTENSION, AND EDUCATION PROGRAMS ON BIOFUELS AND BIOPRODUCTS.

It is the sense of Congress that the Secretary shall continue to allow and support efforts of regional consortiums of public institutions, including land grant universities and State departments of agriculture, to jointly support the bioeconomy through research, extension, and education activities, including—

(1) expanding the use of biomass;

(2) improving the efficiency and sustainability of bioenergy;

(3) supporting local ownership in the bioeconomy;

(4) communicating about the bioeconomy;

(5) facilitating information sharing; and

(6) assisting to coordinate regional approaches.

SA 3663. Mr. VITTER submitted an amendment intended to be proposed to amendment SA 3500 proposed by Mr. HARKIN (for himself, Mr. CHAMBLISS, Mr. BAUCUS, and Mr. GRASSLEY) to the bill H.R. 2419, to provide for the continuation of agricultural programs through fiscal year 2012, and for other purposes; which was ordered to lie on the table; as follows:

At the end of subtitle F of title VII, add the following:

SEC. 75___. MODIFICATIONS TO INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY SERVICE.

(a) IN GENERAL.—The Secretary shall not implement any modification that reduces the availability or provision of information technology service, or administrative management control of that service, including data or center service agency, functions, and personnel at the National Finance Center and the National Information Technology Center service locations, until the date on which the Committee on Agriculture of the House of Representatives and the Committee on Agriculture, Nutrition, and Forestry of the Senate receive a written determination and report from the Chief Financial Officer or Chief Information Officer of the Department of Agriculture and the Secretary that states that the implementation of the modification is in the best interests of the Department of Agriculture.

(b) REPORT ON PROPOSED MODIFICATIONS.—Not later than 180 days after the date of enactment of this Act, the Secretary shall submit to the Committee on Agriculture of the House of Representatives, the Committee on Agriculture, Nutrition, and Forestry of the Senate, and the Comptroller General a report on any proposed modification to reduce the availability or provision of any information technology service, or administrative management control of such a service, including data or center service agency, functions, and personnel at the National Finance Center and National Technology Center service locations, that includes—

(1) a business case analysis (including of the near- and long-term costs and benefits to the Department of Agriculture and all other Federal agencies and departments that benefit from services provided by the National Finance Center and the National Information Technology Center service locations) of the proposed modifications, as compared with maintaining administrative management control or information technology service functions and personnel in the existing structure and at present locations; and

(2) an analysis of the impact of any changes in that administrative management control or information technology service (including data or center service agency, functions, and personnel) on the ability of the National Finance Center and National Information Technology Center service locations to provide, in the near- and long-term, to all Federal agencies and departments, cost-effective, secure, efficient, and interoperable—

(A) information technology services;

(B) cross-servicing;

(C) e-payroll services; and

(D) human resource line-of-business services.

(c) ASSESSMENT.—Not later than 90 days after the date on which the Comptroller General receives the report submitted under subsection (b), the Comptroller General shall submit to the Committee on Agriculture of the House of Representatives and the Committee on Agriculture, Nutrition, and Forestry of the Senate a detailed written assessment of the report that includes an analysis (including of near- and long-term cost benefits and impacts) of the alternatives available to all Federal agencies and departments to acquire cost-effective, secure, efficient, and interoperable information technology, cross-servicing, e-payroll, and human resource line-of-business services.

(d) OPERATING RESERVE.—

(1) IN GENERAL.—Of annual income amounts in the working capital fund of the Department of Agriculture allocated for the National Finance Center, the Secretary may reserve not more than 4 percent—

(A) for the replacement or acquisition of capital equipment, including equipment for—

(i) the improvement and implementation of a financial management plan;

(ii) information technology; and

(iii) other systems of the National Finance Center; or

(B) to pay any unforeseen, extraordinary costs of the National Finance Center.

(2) AVAILABILITY FOR OBLIGATION.—

(A) IN GENERAL.—Except as provided in subparagraph (B), none of the amounts reserved under paragraph (1) shall be available for obligation unless the Secretary submits notification of the obligation to—

(i) the Committees on Appropriations and Agriculture of the House of Representatives; and

(ii) the Committees on Appropriations and Agriculture, Nutrition, and Forestry of the Senate.

(B) EXCEPTION.—The limitation described in subparagraph (A) shall not apply to any obligation that, as determined by the Secretary, is necessary—

(i) to respond to a declared state of emergency that significantly impacts the operations of the National Finance Center; or

(ii) to evacuate employees of the National Finance Center to a safe haven to continue operations of the National Finance Center.

SA 3664. Mrs. HUTCHISON submitted an amendment intended to be proposed to amendment SA 3500 proposed by Mr. HARKIN (for himself, Mr. CHAMBLISS, Mr. BAUCUS, and Mr. GRASSLEY) to the bill H.R. 2419, to provide for the continuation of agricultural programs through fiscal year 2012, and for other purposes; which was ordered to lie on the table; as follows:

On page 1362, between lines 19 and 20, insert the following:

SEC. 11_____. RIO GRANDE BASIN MANAGEMENT PROJECT.

The Food Security Act of 1985 is amended by inserting after section 1240K (as added by section 2361) the following:

"SEC. 1240L. RIO GRANDE BASIN MANAGEMENT PROJECT.

''(a) DEFINITION OF RIO GRANDE BASIN.—In this section, the term 'Rio Grande Basin' includes all tributaries, backwaters, and side channels (including watersheds) of the United States that drain into the Rio Grande River.

''(b) ESTABLISHMENT.—The Secretary, in conjunction with partnerships of institutions of higher education working with farmers, ranchers, and other rural landowners, shall establish a program under which the Secretary shall provide grants to the partnerships to benefit the Rio Grande Basin by—

''(1) restoring water flow and the riparian habitat;

''(2) improving usage;

''(3) addressing demand for drinking water;

''(4) providing technical assistance to agricultural and municipal water systems; and

''(5) reducing biological and chemical hazards through alternative treatment of water and wastewater.

''(c) USE OF FUNDS.—

''(1) IN GENERAL.—A grant provided under this section may be used by a partnership for the costs of carrying out an activity described in subsection (b), including the costs of—

''(A) direct labor;

''(B) appropriate travel;

''(C) equipment;

''(D) instrumentation;

''(E) analytical laboratory work;

''(F) subcontracting;

''(G) cooperative research agreements; and

''(H) similar related expenses and costs.

''(2) LIMITATION.—A grant provided under this section shall not be used to purchase or construct any building.

''(d) REPORTS.—A partnership that receives a grant under this subsection shall submit to the Secretary annual reports describing—

''(1) the expenses of the partnership during the preceding calendar year; and

''(2) such other financial information as the Secretary may require.

''(e) FUNDING.—There are authorized to be appropriated such sums as are necessary to carry out this section for each of fiscal years 2008 through 2012, to remain available until expended.''.

SA 3665. Mr. ENSIGN submitted an amendment intended to be proposed by him to the bill H.R. 2419, to provide for the continuation of agricultural programs through fiscal year 2012, and for other purposes; which was ordered to lie on the table; as follows:

Beginning on page 210, strike line 20 and all that follows through page 212, line 21, and insert the following:

''(1) PROGRAMS.—

''(A) COMMODITY PROGRAMS.—Notwithstanding any other provision of law, an individual or entity shall not be eligible to receive any benefit described in paragraph (2)(A) during a crop year if the average adjusted gross income of the individual or entity exceeds $200,000.

''(B) CONSERVATION PROGRAMS.—Notwithstanding any other provision of law, an individual or entity shall not be eligible to receive any benefit described in paragraph (2)(B) during a fiscal year if the average adjusted gross income of the individual or entity exceeds $2,500,000, unless not less than 75 percent of the average adjusted gross income of the individual or entity is derived from farming, ranching, or forestry operations, as determined by the Secretary.

''(2) COVERED BENEFITS.—

''(A) IN GENERAL.—Paragraph (1)(A) applies with respect to the following:

''(i) A direct payment or counter-cyclical payment under part I or III of subtitle A of title I of the Food and Energy Security Act of 2007.

''(ii) A marketing loan gain or loan deficiency payment under part II or III of subtitle A of title I of the Food and Energy Security Act of 2007.

''(iii) An average crop revenue payment under subtitle B of title I of Food and Energy Security Act of 2007.

''(B) CONSERVATION PROGRAMS.—Paragraph (1)(B) applies with respect to a payment under any program under—

SA 3666. Mr. TESTER (for himself, Mr. GRASSLEY, and Mr. HARKIN) submitted an amendment intended to be proposed to amendment SA 3500 proposed by Mr. HARKIN (for himself, Mr. CHAMBLISS, Mr. BAUCUS, and Mr. GRASSLEY) to the bill H.R. 2419, to provide for the continuation of agricultural programs through fiscal year 2012, and for other purposes; which was ordered to lie on the table; as follows:

On page 1232, strike lines 9 through 12 and insert the following:

(1) by redesignating subsections (f) and (g) as subsections (g) and (h), respectively;

(2) in subsections (c), (d), (e), and (g) (as redesignated by paragraph (1)), by striking the semicolon each place it appears and inserting '', regardless of any alleged business justification;''; and

(3) by inserting after subsection (e) the following:

On page 1233, line 20, strike ''subsection (a)'' and insert ''subsection (a)(3)''.

On page 1234, line 2, strike ''subsection (a)'' and insert ''subsection (a)(3)''.

SA 3667. Mr. HARKIN (for himself, Mr. ENZI, Mr. JOHNSON, Mr. BARRASSO, Mr. DORGAN, Mr. GRASSLEY, Mr. FEINGOLD, and Mr. TESTER) submitted an amendment intended to be proposed to amendment SA 3500 proposed by Mr. HARKIN (for himself, Mr. CHAMBLISS, Mr. BAUCUS, and Mr. GRASSLEY) to the bill H.R. 2419, to provide for the continuation of agricultural programs through fiscal year 2012, and for other purposes; which was ordered to lie on the table; as follows:

On page 1232, between lines 4 and 5, insert the following:

SEC. 10207. NO COMPETITIVE INJURY REQUIREMENT.

(a) PACKERS AND STOCKYARDS ACT, 1921.—Section 202(a) of the Packers and Stockyards Act, 1921 (7 U.S.C. 192(a)), is amended by inserting '', regardless of whether the practice or device causes a competitive injury'' after ''or device''.

(b) EFFECTIVE DATE.—The amendment made by subsection (a) takes effect on the earlier of—

(1) the date on which the Department promulgates a final regulation to reflect the amendment made by subsection (a); and

(2) the date that is 1 year after the date of enactment of this Act.

SA 3668. Mr. BAUCUS submitted an amendment intended to be proposed by him to the bill H.R. 2419, to provide for the continuation of agricultural programs through fiscal year 2012, and for other purposes; which was ordered to lie on the table; as follows:

At the appropriate place in title III, insert the following:

SEC. 3___. AGRICULTURAL SUPPLY.

(a) IN GENERAL.—Section 902(1) of the Trade Sanctions Reform and Export Enhancement Act of 2000 (22 U.S.C. 7201(1)) is amended—

(1) by striking paragraph (1);

(2) by redesignating paragraph (2) as paragraph (1); and

(3) by inserting after paragraph (1) the following:

''(2) AGRICULTURAL SUPPLY.—The term 'agricultural supply' includes—

''(A) agricultural commodities; and

''(B)(i) agriculture-related processing equipment;

''(ii) agriculture-related machinery; and

''(iii) other capital goods related to the storage or handling of agricultural commodities or products.''.

(b) CONFORMING AMENDMENTS.—The Trade Sanctions Reform and Export Enhancement Act of 2000 (22 U.S.C. 7201 et seq.) is amended—

(1) by striking ''agricultural commodities'' each place it appears and inserting ''agricultural supplies'';

(2) in section 904(2), by striking ''agricultural commodity'' and inserting ''agricultural supply''; and

(3) in section 910(a), in the subsection heading, by striking ''AGRICULTURAL COMMODITIES'' and inserting ''AGRICULTURAL SUPPLIES''.

SEC. 3___. CLARIFICATION OF PAYMENT TERMS UNDER TSREEA.

Section 908(b)(1) of the Trade Sanctions Reform and Export Enhancement Act of 2000 (22 U.S.C. 7207(b)(1)) is amended—

(1) by redesignating subparagraphs (A) and (B) as clauses (i) and (ii), respectively, and indenting appropriately;

(2) striking ''(1) IN GENERAL.—No United States person'' and inserting the following:

''(1) PROHIBITION.—

''(A) IN GENERAL.—No United States person''; and

(3) in the undesignated matter following clause (ii) (as redesignated by paragraph (1)), by striking ''Nothing in this paragraph'' and inserting the following:

''(B) DEFINITION OF PAYMENT OF CASH IN ADVANCE.—Notwithstanding any other provision of law, for purposes of this paragraph, the term 'payment of cash in advance' means only that payment must be received by the seller of an agricultural supply to Cuba or any person in Cuba before surrendering physical possession of the agricultural supply.

''(C) REGULATIONS.—The Secretary of the Treasury shall publish in the Federal Register a description of the contents of this section as a clarification of the regulations of the Secretary regarding sales under this title to Cuba.

''(D) CLARIFICATION.—Nothing in this paragraph''.

SEC. 3___. REQUIREMENTS RELATING TO CERTAIN TRAVEL-RELATED TRANSACTIONS WITH CUBA.

Section 910 of the Trade Sanctions Reform and Export Enhancement Act of 2000 (22 U.S.C. 7208) is amended by adding at the end the following:

''(c) GENERAL LICENSE AUTHORITY FOR TRAVEL-RELATED EXPENDITURES IN CUBA BY PERSONS ENGAGING IN TSREEA-AUTHORIZED SALES AND MARKETING ACTIVITIES.—

''(1) DEFINITION OF SALES AND MARKETING ACTIVITY.—

''(A) IN GENERAL.—In this subsection, the term 'sales and marketing activity' means any activity with respect to travel to, from, or within Cuba that is undertaken by United States persons—

''(i) to explore the market in Cuba for products authorized under this title; or

''(ii) to engage in sales activities with respect to such products.

''(B) INCLUSION.—The term 'sales and marketing activity' includes exhibiting, negotiating, marketing, surveying the market, and delivering and servicing products authorized under this title.

''(2) AUTHORIZATION.—The Secretary of the Treasury shall authorize under a general license the travel-related transactions listed in paragraph (c) of section 515.560 of title 31, Code of Federal Regulations (as in effect on June 1, 2007), for travel to, from, or within Cuba in connection with sales and marketing activities involving products approved for sale under this title.

''(3) AUTHORIZED PERSONS.—Persons authorized to travel to Cuba under paragraph (2) shall include—

''(A) producers of products authorized under this title;

''(B) distributors of such products; and

''(C) representatives of trade organizations that promote the interests of producers and distributors of such products.

''(4) REGULATIONS.—The Secretary of the Treasury shall promulgate such rules and regulations as are necessary to carry out this subsection.''.

SEC. 3___. AUTHORIZATION OF DIRECT TRANSFERS BETWEEN CUBAN AND UNITED STATES FINANCIAL INSTITUTIONS.

The Trade Sanctions Reform and Export Enhancement Act of 2000 is amended—

(1) by redesignating section 911 (22 U.S.C. 7201 note; Public Law 106–387) as section 912; and

(2) by inserting after section 910 (22 U.S.C. 7209) the following:

''SEC. 911. AUTHORIZATION OF DIRECT TRANSFERS BETWEEN CUBAN AND UNITED STATES FINANCIAL INSTITUTIONS.

''Notwithstanding any other provision of law (including regulations), the President shall not restrict direct transfers from Cuban to United States financial institutions executed in payment for products authorized by this Act.''.

SA 3669. Mr. GREGG submitted an amendment intended to be proposed to amendment SA 3500 proposed by Mr. HARKIN (for himself, Mr. CHAMBLISS, Mr. BAUCUS, and Mr. GRASSLEY) to the bill H.R. 2419, to provide for the continuation of agricultural programs through fiscal year 2012, and for other purposes; which was ordered to lie on the table; as follows:

On page 160, after line 24, insert the following:

SEC. 15___. PROHIBITION ON SUGAR ASSISTANCE WITHOUT HEALTH CERTIFICATION.

Notwithstanding any other provision of this title or an amendment made by this title, no loan, payment, purchase, allotment, or other assistance may be provided to or for a producer of sugarcane or sugar beets under this title or an amendment made by this title unless the Secretary of Health and Human Services certifies to Congress, before the assistance is provided, that sugarcane, sugar beets, and the products of sugarcane and sugar beets do not contribute to childhood obesity, tooth decay, or diabetes.

SA 3670. Mr. GREGG submitted an amendment intended to be proposed by him to the bill H.R. 2419, to provide for the continuation of agricultural programs through fiscal year 2012, and for other purposes; which was ordered to lie on the table; as follows:

At the appropriate place, insert the following:

SEC. ___. PROHIBITION ON ISSUANCE OF IDENTIFICATION DOCUMENTS TO ILLEGAL ALIENS.

Notwithstanding any other provision of law and after the date that is 1 year after the date of the enactment of this Act, no State or subdivision of a State may issue a driver's license or other identification document to an alien who is unlawfully present in the United States.

SA 3671. Mr. GREGG submitted an amendment intended to be proposed by him to the bill H.R. 2419, to provide for the continuation of agricultural programs through fiscal year 2012, and for other purposes; which was ordered to lie on the table; as follows:

Strike section 7042.

SA 3672. Mr. GREGG submitted an amendment intended to be proposed to amendment SA 3500 proposed by Mr. HARKIN (for himself, Mr. CHAMBLISS, Mr. BAUCUS, and Mr. GRASSLEY) to the bill H.R. 2419, to provide for the continuation of agricultural programs through fiscal year 2012, and for other purposes; which was ordered to lie on the table; as follows:

Beginning on page 254, strike line 19 and all that follows through page 255, line 22.

SA 3673. Mr. GREGG submitted an amendment intended to be proposed by him to the bill H.R. 2419, to provide for the continuation of agricultural programs through fiscal year 2012, and for other purposes; which was ordered to lie on the table; as follows:

At the appropriate place, insert the following:

TITLE ___—

HEALTHY MOTHERS AND HEALTHY BABIES RURAL ACCESS TO CARE

SEC. _01. SHORT TITLE.

This title may be cited as the ''Healthy Mothers and Healthy Babies Rural Access to Care Act''.

SEC. _02. FINDINGS AND PURPOSE.

(a) FINDINGS.—

(1) EFFECT ON WOMEN'S ACCESS TO HEALTH SERVICES.—Congress finds that—

(A) the current civil justice system is eroding women's access to obstetrical and gynecological services;

(B) the American College of Obstetricians and Gynecologists (ACOG) has identified nearly half of the States as having a medical liability insurance crisis that is threatening access to high-quality obstetrical and gynecological services;

(C) because of the high cost of medical liability insurance and the risk of being sued, one in seven obstetricians and gynecologists have stopped practicing obstetrics and one in five has decreased their number of high-risk obstetrics patients; and

(D) because of the lack of availability of obstetrical services, women—

(i) must travel longer distances and cross State lines to find a doctor;

(ii) have longer waiting periods (in some cases months) for appointments;

(iii) have shorter visits with their physicians once they get appointments;

(iv) have less access to maternal-fetal medicine specialists, physicians with the most experience and training in the care of women with high-risk pregnancies; and

(v) have fewer hospitals with maternity wards where they can deliver their child, potentially endangering the lives and health of the woman and her unborn child.

(2) EFFECT ON INTERSTATE COMMERCE.—Congress finds that the health care and insurance industries are industries affecting interstate commerce and the health care liability litigation systems existing throughout the United States are activities that affect interstate commerce by contributing to the high costs of health care and premiums for health care liability insurance purchased by health care system providers.

(3) EFFECT ON FEDERAL SPENDING.—Congress finds that the health care liability litigation systems existing throughout the United States have a significant effect on the amount, distribution, and use of Federal funds because of—

(A) the large number of individuals who receive health care benefits under programs operated or financed by the Federal Government;

(B) the large number of individuals who benefit because of the exclusion from Federal taxes of the amounts spent to provide them with health insurance benefits; and

(C) the large number of health care providers who provide items or services for which the Federal Government makes payments.

(b) PURPOSE.—It is the purpose of this title to implement reasonable, comprehensive, and effective health care liability reforms designed to—

(1) improve the availability of health care services in cases in which health care liability actions have been shown to be a factor in the decreased availability of services;

(2) reduce the incidence of ''defensive medicine'' and lower the cost of health care liability insurance, all of which contribute to the escalation of health care costs;

(3) ensure that persons with meritorious health care injury claims receive fair and adequate compensation, including reasonable noneconomic damages;

(4) improve the fairness and cost-effectiveness of our current health care liability system to resolve disputes over, and provide compensation for, health care liability by reducing uncertainty in the amount of compensation provided to injured individuals; and

(5) provide an increased sharing of information in the health care system which will reduce unintended injury and improve patient care.

SEC. _03. DEFINITIONS.

In this title:

(1) ALTERNATIVE DISPUTE RESOLUTION SYSTEM; ADR.—The term ''alternative dispute resolution system'' or ''ADR'' means a system that provides for the resolution of health care lawsuits in a manner other than through a civil action brought in a State or Federal court.

(2) CLAIMANT.—The term ''claimant'' means any person who brings a health care lawsuit, including a person who asserts or claims a right to legal or equitable contribution, indemnity or subrogation, arising out of a health care liability claim or action, and any person on whose behalf such a claim is asserted or such an action is brought, whether deceased, incompetent, or a minor.

(3) COLLATERAL SOURCE BENEFITS.—The term ''collateral source benefits'' means any amount paid or reasonably likely to be paid in the future to or on behalf of the claimant, or any service, product or other benefit provided or reasonably likely to be provided in the future to or on behalf of the claimant, as a result of the injury or wrongful death, pursuant to—

(A) any State or Federal health, sickness, income-disability, accident, or workers' compensation law;

(B) any health, sickness, income-disability, or accident insurance that provides health benefits or income-disability coverage;

(C) any contract or agreement of any group, organization, partnership, or corporation to provide, pay for, or reimburse the cost of medical, hospital, dental, or income disability benefits; and

(D) any other publicly or privately funded program.

(4) COMPENSATORY DAMAGES.—The term ''compensatory damages'' means objectively verifiable monetary losses incurred as a result of the provision of, use of, or payment for (or failure to provide, use, or pay for) health care services or medical products, such as past and future medical expenses, loss of past and future earnings, cost of obtaining domestic services, loss of employment, and loss of business or employment opportunities, damages for physical and emotional pain, suffering, inconvenience, physical impairment, mental anguish, disfigurement, loss of enjoyment of life, loss of society and companionship, loss of consortium (other than loss of domestic service), hedonic damages, injury to reputation, and all other nonpecuniary losses of any kind or nature. Such term includes economic damages and noneconomic damages, as such terms are defined in this section.

(5) CONTINGENT FEE.—The term ''contingent fee'' includes all compensation to any person or persons which is payable only if a recovery is effected on behalf of one or more claimants.

(6) ECONOMIC DAMAGES.—The term ''economic damages'' means objectively verifiable monetary losses incurred as a result of the provision of, use of, or payment for (or failure to provide, use, or pay for) health care services or medical products, such as past and future medical expenses, loss of past and future earnings, cost of obtaining domestic services, loss of employment, and loss of business or employment opportunities.

(7) HEALTH CARE GOODS OR SERVICES.—The term ''health care goods or services'' means any obstetrical or gynecological goods or services provided by a health care institution, provider, or by any individual working under the supervision of a health care provider, that relates to the diagnosis, prevention, care, or treatment of any obstetrical or gynecological-related human disease or impairment, or the assessment of the health of human beings.

(8) HEALTH CARE INSTITUTION.—The term ''health care institution'' means any entity licensed under Federal or State law to provide health care services (including but not limited to ambulatory surgical centers, assisted living facilities, emergency medical services providers, hospices, hospitals and hospital systems, nursing homes, or other entities licensed to provide such services).

(9) HEALTH CARE LAWSUIT.—The term ''health care lawsuit'' means any health care liability claim concerning the provision of obstetrical or gynecological goods or services affecting interstate commerce, or any health care liability action concerning the provision of (or the failure to provide) obstetrical or gynecological goods or services affecting interstate commerce, brought in a State or Federal court or pursuant to an alternative dispute resolution system, against a physician or other health care provider who delivers obstetrical or gynecological services in an rural area or a health care institution (only with respect to obstetrical or gynecological services) located in a rural area regardless of the theory of liability on which the claim is based, or the number of claimants, plaintiffs, defendants, or other parties, or the number of claims or causes of action, in which the claimant alleges a health care liability claim.

(10) HEALTH CARE LIABILITY ACTION.—The term ''health care liability action'' means a civil action brought in a State or Federal Court or pursuant to an alternative dispute resolution system, against a health care provider who delivers obstetrical or gynecological services in a rural area or a health care institution (only with respect to obstetrical or gynecological services) located in a rural area regardless of the theory of liability on which the claim is based, or the number of plaintiffs, defendants, or other parties, or the number of causes of action, in which the claimant alleges a health care liability claim.

(11) HEALTH CARE LIABILITY CLAIM.—The term ''health care liability claim'' means a demand by any person, whether or not pursuant to ADR, against a health care provider who delivers obstetrical or gynecological services in a rural area or a health care institution (only with respect to obstetrical or gynecological services) located in a rural area, including third-party claims, cross-claims, counter-claims, or contribution claims, which are based upon the provision of, use of, or payment for (or the failure to provide, use, or pay for) obstetrical or gynecological services, regardless of the theory of liability on which the claim is based, or the number of plaintiffs, defendants, or other parties, or the number of causes of action.

(12) HEALTH CARE PROVIDER.—

(A) IN GENERAL.—The term ''health care provider'' means any person (including but not limited to a physician (as defined by section 1861(r) of the Social Security Act (42 U.S.C. 1395x(r)), nurse, dentist, podiatrist, pharmacist, chiropractor, or optometrist) required by State or Federal law to be licensed, registered, or certified to provide health care services, and being either so licensed, registered, or certified, or exempted from such requirement by other statute or regulation, and who is providing such services in a rural area.

(B) TREATMENT OF CERTAIN PROFESSIONAL ASSOCIATIONS.—For purposes of this title, a professional association that is organized under State law by an individual physician or group of physicians, a partnership or limited liability partnership formed by a group of physicians, a nonprofit health corporation certified under State law, or a company formed by a group of physicians under State law shall be treated as a health care provider under subparagraph (A).

(13) MALICIOUS INTENT TO INJURE.—The term ''malicious intent to injure'' means intentionally causing or attempting to cause physical injury other than providing health care goods or services.

(14) NONECONOMIC DAMAGES.—The term ''noneconomic damages'' means damages for physical and emotional pain, suffering, inconvenience, physical impairment, mental anguish, disfigurement, loss of enjoyment of life, loss of society and companionship, loss of consortium (other than loss of domestic service), hedonic damages, injury to reputation, and all other nonpecuniary losses of any kind or nature.

(15) OBSTETRICAL OR GYNECOLOGICAL SERVICES.—The term ''obstetrical or gynecological services'' means services for prenatal care or labor and delivery, including the immediate postpartum period (as determined in accordance with the definition of postpartum used for purposes of title XIX of the Social Security Act (42 U.S.C. 1396 et seq.)).

(16) PUNITIVE DAMAGES.—The term ''punitive damages'' means damages awarded, for the purpose of punishment or deterrence, and not solely for compensatory purposes, against a health care provider who delivers obstetrical or gynecological services or a health care institution. Punitive damages are neither economic nor noneconomic damages.

(17) RECOVERY.—The term ''recovery'' means the net sum recovered after deducting any disbursements or costs incurred in connection with prosecution or settlement of the claim, including all costs paid or advanced by any person. Costs of health care incurred by the plaintiff and the attorneys' office overhead costs or charges for legal services are not deductible disbursements or costs for such purpose.

(18) RURAL AREA.—The term ''rural area'' means any area of the United States that is not—

(A) included within the boundaries of any city, town, borough, or village, whether incorporated or unincorporated, with a population of more than 20,000 inhabitants; or

(B) the urbanized area contiguous and adjacent to such a city or town.

(19) STATE.—The term ''State'' means each of the several States, the District of Columbia, the Commonwealth of Puerto Rico, the Virgin Islands, Guam, American Samoa, the Northern Mariana Islands, the Trust Territory of the Pacific Islands, and any other territory or possession of the United States, or any political subdivision thereof.

SEC. __04. ENCOURAGING SPEEDY RESOLUTION OF CLAIMS.

(a) IN GENERAL.—Except as otherwise provided for in this section, the time for the commencement of a health care lawsuit shall be 3 years after the date of manifestation of injury or 1 year after the claimant discovers, or through the use of reasonable diligence should have discovered, the injury, whichever occurs first.

(b) GENERAL EXCEPTION.—The time for the commencement of a health care lawsuit shall not exceed 3 years after the date of manifestation of injury unless the tolling of time was delayed as a result of—

(1) fraud;

(2) intentional concealment; or

(3) the presence of a foreign body, which has no therapeutic or diagnostic purpose or effect, in the person of the injured person.

(c) MINORS.—An action by a minor shall be commenced within 3 years from the date of the alleged manifestation of injury except that if such minor is under the full age of 6 years, such action shall be commenced within 3 years of the manifestation of injury, or prior to the eighth birthday of the minor, whichever provides a longer period. Such time limitation shall be tolled for minors for any period during which a parent or guardian and a health care provider or health care institution have committed fraud or collusion in the failure to bring an action on behalf of the injured minor.

(d) RULE 11 SANCTIONS.—Whenever a Federal or State court determines (whether by motion of the parties or whether on the motion of the court) that there has been a violation of Rule 11 of the Federal Rules of Civil Procedure (or a similar violation of applicable State court rules) in a health care liability action to which this title applies, the court shall impose upon the attorneys, law firms, or pro se litigants that have violated Rule 11 or are responsible for the violation, an appropriate sanction, which shall include an order to pay the other party or parties for the reasonable expenses incurred as a direct result of the filing of the pleading, motion, or other paper that is the subject of the violation, including a reasonable attorneys' fee. Such sanction shall be sufficient to deter repetition of such conduct or comparable conduct by others similarly situated, and to compensate the party or parties injured by such conduct.

SEC. __05. COMPENSATING PATIENT INJURY.

(a) UNLIMITED AMOUNT OF DAMAGES FOR ACTUAL ECONOMIC LOSSES IN HEALTH CARE LAWSUITS.—In any health care lawsuit, nothing

in this title shall limit the recovery by a claimant of the full amount of the available economic damages, notwithstanding the limitation contained in subsection (b).

(b) ADDITIONAL NONECONOMIC DAMAGES.—

(1) HEALTH CARE PROVIDERS.—In any health care lawsuit where final judgment is rendered against a health care provider, the amount of noneconomic damages recovered from the provider, if otherwise available under applicable Federal or State law, may be as much as $250,000, regardless of the number of parties other than a health care institution against whom the action is brought or the number of separate claims or actions brought with respect to the same occurrence.

(2) HEALTH CARE INSTITUTIONS.—

(A) SINGLE INSTITUTION.—In any health care lawsuit where final judgment is rendered against a single health care institution, the amount of noneconomic damages recovered from the institution, if otherwise available under applicable Federal or State law, may be as much as $250,000, regardless of the number of parties against whom the action is brought or the number of separate claims or actions brought with respect to the same occurrence.

(B) MULTIPLE INSTITUTIONS.—In any health care lawsuit where final judgment is rendered against more than one health care institution, the amount of noneconomic damages recovered from each institution, if otherwise available under applicable Federal or State law, may be as much as $250,000, regardless of the number of parties against whom the action is brought or the number of separate claims or actions brought with respect to the same occurrence, except that the total amount recovered from all such institutions in such lawsuit shall not exceed $500,000.

(c) NO DISCOUNT OF AWARD FOR NONECONOMIC DAMAGES.—In any health care lawsuit—

(1) an award for future noneconomic damages shall not be discounted to present value;

(2) the jury shall not be informed about the maximum award for noneconomic damages under subsection (b);

(3) an award for noneconomic damages in excess of the limitations provided for in subsection (b) shall be reduced either before the entry of judgment, or by amendment of the judgment after entry of judgment, and such reduction shall be made before accounting for any other reduction in damages required by law; and

(4) if separate awards are rendered for past and future noneconomic damages and the combined awards exceed the limitations provided for in subsection (b), the future noneconomic damages shall be reduced first.

(d) FAIR SHARE RULE.—In any health care lawsuit, each party shall be liable for that party's several share of any damages only and not for the share of any other person. Each party shall be liable only for the amount of damages allocated to such party in direct proportion to such party's percentage of responsibility. A separate judgment shall be rendered against each such party for the amount allocated to such party. For purposes of this section, the trier of fact shall determine the proportion of responsibility of each party for the claimant's harm.

SEC. __06. MAXIMIZING PATIENT RECOVERY.

(a) COURT SUPERVISION OF SHARE OF DAMAGES ACTUALLY PAID TO CLAIMANTS.—

(1) IN GENERAL.—In any health care lawsuit, the court shall supervise the arrangements for payment of damages to protect against conflicts of interest that may have the effect of reducing the amount of damages awarded that are actually paid to claimants.

(2) CONTINGENCY FEES.—

(A) IN GENERAL.—In any health care lawsuit in which the attorney for a party claims a financial stake in the outcome by virtue of a contingent fee, the court shall have the power to restrict the payment of a claimant's damage recovery to such attorney, and to redirect such damages to the claimant based upon the interests of justice and principles of equity.

(B) LIMITATION.—The total of all contingent fees for representing all claimants in a health care lawsuit shall not exceed the following limits:

(i) 40 percent of the first $50,000 recovered by the claimant(s).

(ii) 33⅓ percent of the next $50,000 recovered by the claimant(s).

(iii) 25 percent of the next $500,000 recovered by the claimant(s).

(iv) 15 percent of any amount by which the recovery by the claimant(s) is in excess of $600,000.

(b) APPLICABILITY.—

(1) IN GENERAL.—The limitations in subsection (a) shall apply whether the recovery is by judgment, settlement, mediation, arbitration, or any other form of alternative dispute resolution.

(2) MINORS.—In a health care lawsuit involving a minor or incompetent person, a court retains the authority to authorize or approve a fee that is less than the maximum permitted under this section.

(c) EXPERT WITNESSES.—

(1) REQUIREMENT.—No individual shall be qualified to testify as an expert witness concerning issues of negligence in any health care lawsuit against a defendant unless such individual—

(A) except as required under paragraph (2), is a health care professional who—

(i) is appropriately credentialed or licensed in 1 or more States to deliver health care services; and

(ii) typically treats the diagnosis or condition or provides the type of treatment under review; and

(B) can demonstrate by competent evidence that, as a result of training, education, knowledge, and experience in the evaluation, diagnosis, and treatment of the disease or injury which is the subject matter of the lawsuit against the defendant, the individual was substantially familiar with applicable standards of care and practice as they relate to the act or omission which is the subject of the lawsuit on the date of the incident.

(2) PHYSICIAN REVIEW.—In a health care lawsuit, if the claim of the plaintiff involved treatment that is recommended or provided by a physician (allopathic or osteopathic), an individual shall not be qualified to be an expert witness under this subsection with respect to issues of negligence concerning such treatment unless such individual is a physician.

(3) SPECIALTIES AND SUBSPECIALTIES.—With respect to a lawsuit described in paragraph (1), a court shall not permit an expert in one medical specialty or subspecialty to testify against a defendant in another medical specialty or subspecialty unless, in addition to a showing of substantial familiarity in accordance with paragraph (1)(B), there is a showing that the standards of care and practice in the two specialty or subspecialty fields are similar.

(4) LIMITATION.—The limitations in this subsection shall not apply to expert witnesses testifying as to the degree or permanency of medical or physical impairment.

SEC. __07. ADDITIONAL HEALTH BENEFITS.

(a) IN GENERAL.—The amount of any damages received by a claimant in any health care lawsuit shall be reduced by the court by the amount of any collateral source benefits to which the claimant is entitled, less any insurance premiums or other payments made by the claimant (or by the spouse, parent, child, or legal guardian of the claimant) to obtain or secure such benefits.

(b) PRESERVATION OF CURRENT LAW.—Where a payor of collateral source benefits has a right of recovery by reimbursement or subrogation and such right is permitted under Federal or State law, subsection (a) shall not apply.

(c) APPLICATION OF PROVISION.—This section shall apply to any health care lawsuit that is settled or resolved by a fact finder.

SEC. __08. PUNITIVE DAMAGES.

(a) PUNITIVE DAMAGES PERMITTED.—

(1) IN GENERAL.—Punitive damages may, if otherwise available under applicable State or Federal law, be awarded against any person in a health care lawsuit only if it is proven by clear and convincing evidence that such person acted with malicious intent to injure the claimant, or that such person deliberately failed to avoid unnecessary injury that such person knew the claimant was substantially certain to suffer.

(2) FILING OF LAWSUIT.—No demand for punitive damages shall be included in a health care lawsuit as initially filed. A court may allow a claimant to file an amended pleading for punitive damages only upon a motion by the claimant and after a finding by the court, upon review of supporting and opposing affidavits or after a hearing, after weighing the evidence, that the claimant has established by a substantial probability that the claimant will prevail on the claim for punitive damages.

(3) SEPARATE PROCEEDING.—At the request of any party in a health care lawsuit, the trier of fact shall consider in a separate proceeding—

(A) whether punitive damages are to be awarded and the amount of such award; and

(B) the amount of punitive damages following a determination of punitive liability. If a separate proceeding is requested, evidence relevant only to the claim for punitive damages, as determined by applicable State law, shall be inadmissible in any proceeding to determine whether compensatory damages are to be awarded.

(4) LIMITATION WHERE NO COMPENSATORY DAMAGES ARE AWARDED.—In any health care lawsuit where no judgment for compensatory damages is rendered against a person, no punitive damages may be awarded with respect to the claim in such lawsuit against such person.

(b) DETERMINING AMOUNT OF PUNITIVE DAMAGES.—

(1) FACTORS CONSIDERED.—In determining the amount of punitive damages under this section, the trier of fact shall consider only the following:

(A) the severity of the harm caused by the conduct of such party;

(B) the duration of the conduct or any concealment of it by such party;

(C) the profitability of the conduct to such party;

(D) the number of products sold or medical procedures rendered for compensation, as the case may be, by such party, of the kind causing the harm complained of by the claimant;

(E) any criminal penalties imposed on such party, as a result of the conduct complained of by the claimant; and

(F) the amount of any civil fines assessed against such party as a result of the conduct complained of by the claimant.

(2) MAXIMUM AWARD.—The amount of punitive damages awarded in a health care lawsuit may not exceed an amount equal to two times the amount of economic damages awarded in the lawsuit or $250,000, whichever is greater. The jury shall not be informed of the limitation under the preceding sentence.

(c) LIABILITY OF HEALTH CARE PROVIDERS.—

(1) IN GENERAL.—A health care provider who prescribes, or who dispenses pursuant to a prescription, a drug, biological product, or medical device approved by the Food and Drug Administration, for an approved indication of the drug, biological product, or medical device, shall not be named as a party to a product liability lawsuit invoking such drug, biological product, or medical device and shall not be liable to a claimant in a class action lawsuit against the manufacturer, distributor, or product seller of such drug, biological product, or medical device.

(2) MEDICAL PRODUCT.—The term ''medical product'' means a drug or device intended for humans. The terms ''drug'' and ''device'' have the meanings given such terms in sections 201(g)(1) and 201(h) of the Federal Food, Drug and Cosmetic Act (21 U.S.C. 321), respectively, including any component or raw material used therein, but excluding health care services.

SEC. __09. AUTHORIZATION OF PAYMENT OF FUTURE DAMAGES TO CLAIMANTS IN HEALTH CARE LAWSUITS.

(a) IN GENERAL.—In any health care lawsuit, if an award of future damages, without reduction to present value, equaling or exceeding $50,000 is made against a party with sufficient insurance or other assets to fund a periodic payment of such a judgment, the court shall, at the request of any party, enter a judgment ordering that the future damages be paid by periodic payments. In any health care lawsuit, the court may be guided by the Uniform Periodic Payment of Judgments Act promulgated by the National Conference of Commissioners on Uniform State Laws.

(b) APPLICABILITY.—This section applies to all actions which have not been first set for trial or retrial before the effective date of this title.

SEC. __10. EFFECT ON OTHER LAWS.

(a) GENERAL VACCINE INJURY.—

(1) IN GENERAL.—To the extent that title XXI of the Public Health Service Act establishes a Federal rule of law applicable to a civil action brought for a vaccine-related injury or death—

(A) this title shall not affect the application of the rule of law to such an action; and

(B) any rule of law prescribed by this title in conflict with a rule of law of such title XXI shall not apply to such action.

(2) EXCEPTION.—If there is an aspect of a civil action brought for a vaccine-related injury or death to which a Federal rule of law under title XXI of the Public Health Service Act does not apply, then this title or otherwise applicable law (as determined under this title) will apply to such aspect of such action.

(b) SMALLPOX VACCINE INJURY.—

(1) IN GENERAL.—To the extent that part C of title II of the Public Health Service Act establishes a Federal rule of law applicable to a civil action brought for a smallpox vaccine-related injury or death—

(A) this title shall not affect the application of the rule of law to such an action; and

(B) any rule of law prescribed by this title in conflict with a rule of law of such part C shall not apply to such action.

(2) EXCEPTION.—If there is an aspect of a civil action brought for a smallpox vaccine-related injury or death to which a Federal rule of law under part C of title II of the Public Health Service Act does not apply, then this title or otherwise applicable law (as determined under this title) will apply to such aspect of such action.

(c) OTHER FEDERAL LAW.—Except as provided in this section, nothing in this title shall be deemed to affect any defense available, or any limitation on liability that applies to, a defendant in a health care lawsuit or action under any other provision of Federal law.

SEC. __11. STATE FLEXIBILITY AND PROTECTION OF STATES' RIGHTS.

(a) HEALTH CARE LAWSUITS.—The provisions governing health care lawsuits set forth in this title shall preempt, subject to subsections (b) and (c), State law to the extent that State law prevents the application of any provisions of law established by or under this title. The provisions governing health care lawsuits set forth in this title supersede chapter 171 of title 28, United States Code, to the extent that such chapter—

(1) provides for a greater amount of damages or contingent fees, a longer period in which a health care lawsuit may be commenced, or a reduced applicability or scope of periodic payment of future damages, than provided in this title; or

(2) prohibits the introduction of evidence regarding collateral source benefits.

(b) PREEMPTION OF CERTAIN STATE LAWS.—No provision of this title shall be construed to preempt any State law (whether effective before, on, or after the date of the enactment of this title) that specifies a particular monetary amount of compensatory or punitive damages (or the total amount of damages) that may be awarded in a health care lawsuit, regardless of whether such monetary amount is greater or lesser than is provided for under this title, notwithstanding section __05(a).

(c) PROTECTION OF STATE'S RIGHTS AND OTHER LAWS.—

(1) IN GENERAL.—Any issue that is not governed by a provision of law established by or under this title (including the State standards of negligence) shall be governed by otherwise applicable Federal or State law.

(2) RULE OF CONSTRUCTION.—Nothing in this title shall be construed to—

(A) preempt or supersede any Federal or State law that imposes greater procedural or substantive protections for a health care provider or health care institution from liability, loss, or damages than those provided by this title;

(B) preempt or supercede any State law that permits and provides for the enforcement of any arbitration agreement related to a health care liability claim whether enacted prior to or after the date of enactment of this title;

(C) create a cause of action that is not otherwise available under Federal or State law; or

(D) affect the scope of preemption of any other Federal law.

SEC. __12. APPLICABILITY; EFFECTIVE DATE.

This title shall apply to any health care lawsuit brought in a Federal or State court, or subject to an alternative dispute resolution system, that is initiated on or after the date of the enactment of this title, except that any health care lawsuit arising from an injury occurring prior to the date of enactment of this title shall be governed by the applicable statute of limitations provisions in effect at the time the injury occurred.

SA 3674. Mr. GREGG submitted an amendment intended to be proposed by him to the bill H.R. 2419, to provide for the continuation of agricultural programs through fiscal year 2012, and for other purposes; which was ordered to lie on the table; as follows:

At the appropriate place, insert the following:

SEC. _____. DISCHARGES OF INDEBTEDNESS ON PRINCIPAL RESIDENCE EXCLUDED FROM GROSS INCOME.

(a) IN GENERAL.—Paragraph (1) of section 108(a) is amended by striking ''or'' at the end of subparagraph (C), by striking the period at the end of subparagraph (D) and inserting '', or'', and by inserting after subparagraph (D) the following new subparagraph:

''(E) the indebtedness is qualified principal residence indebtedness which is discharged before January 1, 2010.''.

(b) SPECIAL RULES RELATING TO QUALIFIED PRINCIPAL RESIDENCE INDEBTEDNESS.—Section 108 is amended by adding at the end the following new subsection:

''(h) SPECIAL RULES RELATING TO QUALIFIED PRINCIPAL RESIDENCE INDEBTEDNESS.—

''(1) BASIS REDUCTION.—The amount excluded from gross income by reason of subsection (a)(1)(E) shall be applied to reduce (but not below zero) the basis of the principal residence of the taxpayer.

''(2) QUALIFIED PRINCIPAL RESIDENCE INDEBTEDNESS.—For purposes of this section, the term 'qualified principal residence indebtedness' means acquisition indebtedness (within the meaning of section 163(h)(3)(B)).

''(3) EXCEPTION FOR CERTAIN DISCHARGES NOT RELATED TO TAXPAYER'S FINANCIAL CONDITION.—Subsection (a)(1)(E) shall not apply to the discharge of a loan if the discharge is on account of services performed for the lender or any other factor not directly related to a decline in the value of the residence or to the financial condition of the taxpayer.

''(4) ORDERING RULE.—If any loan is discharged, in whole or in part, and only a portion of such loan is qualified principal residence indebtedness, subsection (a)(1)(E) shall apply only to so much of the amount discharged as exceeds the amount of the loan (as determined immediately before such discharge) which is not qualified principal residence indebtedness.

''(5) PRINCIPAL RESIDENCE.—For purposes of this subsection, the term 'principal residence' has the same meaning as when used in section 121.''.

(c) COORDINATION.—

(1) Subparagraph (A) of section 108(a)(2) is amended by striking ''and (D)'' and inserting ''(D), and (E)''.

(2) Paragraph (2) of section 108(a) is amended by adding at the end the following new subparagraph:

''(C) PRINCIPAL RESIDENCE EXCLUSION TAKES PRECEDENCE OVER INSOLVENCY EXCLUSION UNLESS ELECTED OTHERWISE.—Paragraph (1)(B) shall not apply to a discharge to which paragraph (1)(E) applies unless the taxpayer elects to apply paragraph (1)(B) in lieu of paragraph (1)(E).''.

(d) EFFECTIVE DATE.—The amendments made by this section shall apply to discharges of indebtedness on or after January 1, 2007.

SA 3675. Mr. GREGG submitted an amendment intended to be proposed to amendment SA 3500 proposed by Mr. HARKIN (for himself, Mr. CHAMBLISS, Mr. BAUCUS, and Mr. GRASSLEY) to the bill H.R. 2419, to provide for the continuation of agricultural programs through fiscal year 2012, and for other purposes; which was ordered to lie on the table; as follows:

Beginning on page 1363, strike line 7 and all that follows through page 1395, line 19 and insert the following:

Subtitle A—Individuals With Disabilities Education Trust Fund

SEC. 12101. ASSISTANCE FOR EDUCATING INDIVIDUALS WITH DISABILITIES.

The Trade Act of 1974 (19 U.S.C. 2101 et seq.) is amended by adding at the end the following:

"TITLE IX—ASSISTANCE FOR EDUCATING INDIVIDUALS WITH DISABILITIES

"SEC. 901. INDIVIDUALS WITH DISABILITIES EDUCATION TRUST FUND.

''(a) CREATION OF TRUST FUND.—There is established in the Treasury of the United States a trust fund to be known as the 'Individuals with Disabilities Education Trust Fund', consisting of such amounts as may be appropriated or credited to such Trust Fund as provided in this section.

''(b) TRANSFER TO TRUST FUND.—

''(1) IN GENERAL.—There are appropriated to the Individuals with Disabilities Education Trust Fund amounts equivalent to 3.34 percent of the amounts received in the general fund of the Treasury of the United States during fiscal years 2008 through 2012 attributable to the duties collected on articles entered, or withdrawn from warehouse, for consumption under the Harmonized Tariff Schedule of the United States.

''(2) AMOUNTS BASED ON ESTIMATES.—The amounts appropriated under this section shall be transferred at least monthly from the general fund of the Treasury of the United States to the Individuals with Disabilities Education Trust Fund on the basis of estimates made by the Secretary of the Treasury. Proper adjustments shall be made in the amounts subsequently transferred to the extent prior estimates were in excess of or less than the amounts required to be transferred.

''(c) ADMINISTRATION.—

''(1) REPORTS.—The Secretary of the Treasury shall be the trustee of the Individuals with Disabilities Education Trust Fund and shall submit an annual report to Congress each year on the financial condition and the results of the operations of such Trust Fund during the preceding fiscal year and on its expected condition and operations during the 5 fiscal years succeeding such fiscal year. Such report shall be printed as a House document of the session of Congress to which the report is made.

''(2) INVESTMENT.—

''(A) IN GENERAL.—The Secretary of the Treasury shall invest such portion of the Individuals with Disabilities Education Trust Fund as is not in his judgment required to meet current withdrawals. Such investments may be made only in interest bearing obligations of the United States. For such purpose, such obligations may be acquired—

''(i) on original issue at the issue price, or

''(ii) by purchase of outstanding obligations at the market price.

''(B) SALE OF OBLIGATIONS.—Any obligation acquired by the Individuals with Disabilities Education Trust Fund may be sold by the Secretary of the Treasury at the market price.

''(C) INTEREST ON CERTAIN PROCEEDS.—The interest on, and the proceeds from the sale or redemption of, any obligations held in the Individuals with Disabilities Education Trust Fund shall be credited to and form a part of such Trust Fund.

''(d) EXPENDITURES FROM TRUST FUND.—Amounts in the Individuals with Disabilities Education Trust Fund shall be available to the Secretary of Education to carry out part B of the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (20 U.S.C. 1411 et seq.).''.

SA 3676. Mr. DURBIN (for Mrs. FEINSTEIN (for herself and Mrs. HUTCHISON)) proposed an amendment to the bill S. 597, to extend the special postage stamp for breast cancer research for 4 years; as follows:

In section 1, in the section heading, strike ''**2-YEAR**'' and insert ''**4-YEAR**''.

In section 1, strike ''2009'' and insert ''2011''.

SA 3677. Mr. DURBIN (for Mr. MENENDEZ) proposed an amendment to the resolution S. Res. 299, recognizing the religious and historical significance of the festival of Diwali; as follows:

On page 2, strike lines 4 and 5 and insert the following:

(2) in observance of Diwali, the festival of lights, expresses its deepest respect for Indian Americans and the Indian diaspora throughout the world on this significant occasion.

SA 3678. Mr. DURBIN (for Mrs. FEINSTEIN) proposed an amendment to the bill S. 597, to extend the special postage stamp for breast cancer research for 4 years; as follows:

Amend the title so as to read: ''To extend the special postage stamp for breast cancer research for 4 years.''.

AUTHORITY FOR COMMITTEES TO MEET

COMMITTEE ON BANKING, HOUSING, AND URBAN AFFAIRS

Mr. HARKIN. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the Committee on Banking, Housing, and Urban Affairs be authorized to meet during the session of the Senate on November 14, 2007, at 10:30 a.m., in order to conduct a hearing entitled ''Shareholder Rights and Proxy Access.''

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

COMMITTEE ON BANKING, HOUSING, AND URBAN AFFAIRS

Mr. HARKIN. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the Committee on Banking, Housing, and Urban Affairs be authorized to meet during the session of the Senate on November 14, 2007, at 2 p.m., in order to conduct a hearing entitled ''Sovereign Wealth Fund Acquisitions and Other Foreign Government Investments in the U.S.: Assessing the Economic and National Security Implications.''

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

COMMITTEE ON COMMERCE, SCIENCE, AND TRANSPORTATION

Mr. HARKIN. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the Committee on Commerce, Science, and Transportation be authorized to meet during the session of the Senate on Wednesday, November 14, 2007, at 10 a.m., in room 253 of the Russell Senate Office Building, in order to conduct a hearing.

The hearing will focus on the need to improve the U.S. Global Change Research Program, which is responsible for coordinating and directing Federal climate change research. It will also address the need for improved communication of climate information to decision makers.

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

COMMITTEE ON ENERGY AND NATURAL RESOURCES

Mr. HARKIN. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the Committee on Energy and Natural Resources be authorized to meet during the session of the Senate on Wednesday, November 14, 2007, at 10 a.m., in room SD–366 of the Dirksen Senate Office Building, in order to conduct a hearing.

The purpose of the hearing is to receive testimony on the Global Nuclear Energy Partnership as it relates to U.S. policy on nuclear fuel management.

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

COMMITTEE ON FINANCE

Mr. HARKIN, Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the Committee on Finance be authorized to meet during the session of the Senate on Wednesday, November 14, 2007, at 10 a.m., in room 215 of the Dirksen Senate Office Building, to hear testimony on ''Federal Estate Tax: Uncertainty in Planning Under the Current Law.''

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

COMMITTEE ON HEALTH, EDUCATION, LABOR, AND PENSIONS

Mr. HARKIN. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the Committee on Health, Education, Labor, and Pensions be authorized to meet in executive session during the session of the Senate on Wednesday, November 14, 2007 at 9:30 a.m. in room 430 of the Dirksen Senate Office Building.

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

COMMITTEE ON HOMELAND SECURITY AND GOVERNMENTAL AFFAIRS

Mr. HARKIN. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the Committee on Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs be authorized to meet during the session of the Senate on Wednesday, November 14, 2007, at 10 a.m. in order to conduct a business meeting to consider pending committee business.

Agenda

Legislation

S. 2324, Inspector General Reform Act of 2007; S. 2292, National Bombing Prevention Act of 2007; S. 1667, a bill to establish a pilot program for the expedited disposal of Federal real property; S. 1000, Telework Enhancement Act of 2007; S. 2321, E-Government Reauthorization Act of 2007; H.R. 390, Preservation of Records of Servitude, Emancipation, and Post-Civil War Reconstruction Act; and H.R. 3571, a bill to amend the Congressional Accountability Act of 1995 to permit individuals who have served as employees of the Office of Compliance to serve as Executive Director, Deputy Executive Director, or General Counsel of the Office, and to permit individuals appointed to such positions to serve one additional term.

Nominations

Robert D. Jamison, Under Secretary for National Protection and Programs, U.S. Department of Homeland Security; Wiley Ross Ashley III, Assistant

Administrator, Federal Emergency Management Agency, U.S. Department of Homeland Security; and the Honorable Ellen C. Williams, Member, Postal Board of Governors.

Postal Naming Bills

S. 2174, a bill to designate the facility of the United States Postal Service located at 175 South Monroe Street in Tiffin, Ohio, as the ''Paul E. Gillmor Post Office Building;'' H.R. 2089, a bill to designate the facility of the United States Postal Service located at 701 Loyola Avenue in New Orleans, Louisiana, as the ''Louisiana Armed Services Veterans Post Office;'' H.R. 3297, a bill to designate the facility of the United States Postal Service located at 950 West Trenton Avenue in Morrisville, Pennsylvania, as the ''Nate DeTample Post Office Building;'' H.R. 3308, a bill to designate the facility of the United States Postal Service located at 216 East Main Street in Atwood, Indiana, as the ''Lance Corporal David K. Fribley Post Office;'' H.R. 3530, a bill to designate the facility of the United States Postal Service located at 1400 Highway 41 North in Inverness, Florida, as the ''Chief Warrant Officer Aaron Weaver Post Office Building;'' H.R. 2276, a bill to designate the facility of the United States Postal Service located at 203 North Main Street in Vassar, Michigan, as the ''Corporal Christopher E. Esckelson Post Office Building;'' H.R. 3325, a bill to designate the facility of the United States Postal Service located at 235 Mountain Road in Suffield, Connecticut, as the ''Corporal Stephen R. Bixler Post Office;'' S. 2110, a bill to designate the facility of the United States Postal Service located at 427 North Street in Taft, California, as the ''Larry S. Pierce Post Office;'' H.R. 3382, a bill to designate the facility of the United States Postal Service located at 200 North William Street in Goldsboro, North Carolina, as the ''Philip A. Baddour Sr. Post Office;'' S. 2290, a bill to designate the facility of the United States Postal Service located at 16731 Santa Ana Avenue in Fontana, California, as the ''Beatrice E. Watson Post Office Building;'' S. 2272, a bill to designate the facility of the United States Postal Service known as the Southpark Station in Alexandria, Louisiana, as the ''John 'Marty' Thiels Southpark Station;'' H.R. 3446, a bill to designate the facility of the United States Postal Service located at 202 East Michigan Avenue in Marshall, Michigan, as the ''Michael W. Schragg Post Office Building;'' S. 2150/H.R. 3572, a bill to designate the facility of the United States Postal Service located at 4320 Blue Parkway in Kansas City, Missouri, as the ''Wallace S. Hartsfield Post Office Building;'' S. 2107/H.R. 3307, a bill to designate the facility of the United States Postal Service located at 570 Broadway in Bayonne, New Jersey, as the ''Dennis P. Collins Post Office Building;'' H.R. 3518, a bill to designate the facility of the United States Postal Service located at 1430 South Highway 29 in Cantonment, Florida, as the ''Charles H. Hendrix Post Office Building.''

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

COMMITTEE ON VETERANS' AFFAIRS

Mr. HARKIN. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the Committee on Veterans' Affairs be authorized to meet during the session of the Senate on Wednesday, November 14, 2007, in order to conduct a markup of pending legislation. Immediately following the conclusion of the markup, the Committee will conduct a hearing on the nomination of Michael W. Hager, of Virginia, to be an Assistant Secretary of Veterans Affairs, Human Resources and Management. The committee will meet in room SD–562 of the Dirksen Senate Office Building beginning at 9:30 a.m.

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

PERMANENT SUBCOMMITTEE ON INVESTIGATIONS

Mr. HARKIN. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the Permanent Subcommittee on Investigations of the Committee on Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs be authorized to meet during the session of the Senate on Wednesday, November 14, 2007, at 2:30 p.m., in order to conduct a hearing entitled, ''Medicaid Providers That Cheat on Their Taxes and What Can Be Done About It.''

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

SUBCOMMITTEE ON HUMAN RIGHTS AND THE LAW

Mr. HARKIN. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the Senate Committee on the Judiciary, Subcommittee on Human Rights and the Law, be authorized to meet in order to conduct a hearing entitled ''No Safe Haven: Accountability for Human Rights Violators in the United States'' on Wednesday, November 14, 2007, at 10 a.m. in room SD–266 of the Dirksen Senate Office Building.

Witness list

Panel I: Sigal P. Mandelker, Deputy Assistant Attorney General, Criminal Division, U.S. Department of Justice, Washington, DC, and Marcy M. Forman, Director of Office of Investigations, Immigration and Customs Enforcement, U.S. Department of Homeland Security, Washington, DC.

Panel II: David Scheffer, Mayer Brown/Robert A. Helman Professor of Law, Northwestern University School of Law, Chicago, IL; Pamela Merchant, Executive Director, Center for Justice and Accountability, San Francisco, CA; and Juan Romagoza Arce, Executive Director, La Clínica del Pueblo, Washington, DC.

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

PRIVILEGES OF THE FLOOR

Mr. HATCH. I ask unanimous consent that Jesse Baker, a Federal Government detailee, be granted the privileges of the floor for the remainder of this session.

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

BREAST CANCER RESEARCH STAMP EXTENSION

Mr. DURBIN. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the Senate proceed to the immediate consideration of Calendar No. 473, S. 597.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will report the bill by title.

The legislative clerk read as follows:

A bill (S. 597) to extend the special postage stamp for breast cancer research for 2 years.

There being no objection, the Senate proceeded to consider the bill.

Mr. DURBIN. I ask unanimous consent that the amendment at the desk be considered and agreed to, the bill, as amended, be read a third time, passed, the motion to reconsider be laid on the table, and that any statements be printed in the RECORD.

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

The amendment (No. 3676) was agreed to, as follows:

(Purpose: To extend the special postage stamp for breast cancer research for 4 years)

In section 1, in the section heading, strike ''**2-YEAR**'' and insert ''**4-YEAR**''.

In section 1, strike ''2009'' and insert ''2011''.

Mr. DURBIN. I ask that the title amendment be agreed to.

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

The title amendment (No. 3678) was agreed to, as follows:

Amend the title so as to read: ''To extend the special postage stamp for breast cancer research for 4 years.''.

The bill (S. 597), as amended, was ordered to be engrossed for a third reading, was read the third time, and passed, as follows:

S. 597

Be it enacted by the Senate and House of Representatives of the United States of America in Congress assembled,

SECTION 1. 4-YEAR EXTENSION OF POSTAGE STAMP FOR BREAST CANCER RESEARCH.

Section 414(h) of title 39, United States Code, is amended by striking ''2007'' and inserting ''2011''.

RECOGNIZING THE FESTIVAL OF DIWALI

Mr. DURBIN. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the Judiciary Committee be discharged from further consideration of S. Res. 299 and the Senate then proceed to its immediate consideration.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection, it is so ordered. The clerk will report the resolution by title.

The legislative clerk read as follows:

A resolution (S. Res. 299) recognizing the religious and historical significance of the festival of Diwali.

There being no objection, the Senate proceeded to consider the resolution.

Mr. DURBIN. I ask unanimous consent that the amendment at the desk be considered and agreed to, the resolution, as amended, be agreed to, the preamble be agreed to, the motions to reconsider be laid on the table, and any statements be printed in the RECORD.

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

The amendment (No. 3677) was agreed to, as follows:

On page 2, strike lines 4 and 5 and insert the following:

(2) in observance of Diwali, the festival of lights, expresses its deepest respect for Indian Americans and the Indian diaspora throughout the world on this significant occasion.

The resolution (S. Res. 299), as amended, was agreed to.

The preamble was agreed to.

The resolution, as amended, with its preamble, reads as follows:

S. RES. 299

Whereas Diwali, a festival of great significance to Indian Americans and South Asian Americans, is celebrated annually by Hindus, Sikhs, and Jains throughout the United States;

Whereas there are nearly 2,000,000 Hindus in the United States, approximately 1,250,000 of which are of Indian and South Asian origin;

Whereas the word ''Diwali'' is a shortened version of the Sanskrit term ''Deepavali'', which means ''a row of lamps'';

Whereas Diwali is a festival of lights, during which celebrants light small oil lamps, place them around the home, and pray for health, knowledge, and peace;

Whereas celebrants of Diwali believe that the rows of lamps symbolize the light within the individual that rids the soul of the darkness of ignorance;

Whereas Diwali falls on the last day of the last month in the lunar calendar and is celebrated as a day of thanksgiving and the beginning of the new year for many Hindus;

Whereas for Hindus, Diwali is a celebration of the victory of good over evil;

Whereas for Sikhs, Diwali is feted as the day that the sixth founding Sikh Guru, or revered teacher, Guru Hargobind, was released from captivity by the Mughal Emperor Jehangir; and

Whereas for Jains, Diwali marks the anniversary of the attainment of moksha, or liberation, by Mahavira, the last of the Tirthankaras (the great teachers of Jain dharma), at the end of his life in 527 B.C.: Now, therefore, be it

Resolved, That the Senate—

(1) recognizes the religious and historical significance of the festival of Diwali; and

(2) in observance of Diwali, the festival of lights, expresses its deepest respect for Indian Americans and the Indian diaspora throughout the world on this significant occasion.

INTERNATIONAL COMMISSION ON THE CONSERVATION OF ATLANTIC TUNAS

Mr. DURBIN. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the Commerce Committee be discharged from further consideration of S. Res. 368 and the Senate then proceed to its immediate consideration.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection, it is so ordered. The clerk will report the resolution by title.

The legislative clerk read as follows:

A resolution (S. Res. 368) expressing the sense of the Senate that, at the 20th Regular Meeting of the International Commission on the Conservation of Atlantic Tunas, the United States should pursue a moratorium on the eastern Atlantic and Mediterranean bluefin tuna fishery to ensure control of the fishery and further facilitate recovery of the stock, pursue strengthened conservation and management measures to facilitate the recovery of the Atlantic bluefin tuna, and seek a review of compliance by all Nations with the International Commission for the Conservation of Atlantic Tunas' conservation and management recommendation for Atlantic bluefin tuna and other species, and for other purposes.

There being no objection, the Senate proceeded to consider the resolution.

Mr. DURBIN. I ask unanimous consent that the resolution be agreed to, the preamble be agreed to, the motions to reconsider be laid on the table, and any statements be printed in the RECORD.

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

The resolution (S. Res. 368) was agreed to.

The preamble was agreed to.

The resolution, with its preamble, reads as follows:

S. RES. 368

Whereas Atlantic bluefin tuna are a valuable commercial and recreational fishery of the United States and many other countries;

Whereas the International Convention for the Conservation of Atlantic Tunas entered into force on March 21, 1969;

Whereas the Convention established the International Commission for the Conservation of Atlantic Tunas to coordinate international research and develop, implement, and enforce compliance of the conservation and management recommendations on the Atlantic bluefin tuna and other highly migratory species in the Atlantic Ocean and the adjacent seas, including the Mediterranean Sea;

Whereas in 1974, the Commission adopted its first conservation and management recommendation to ensure the sustainability of Atlantic bluefin tuna throughout the Atlantic Ocean and Mediterranean Sea, while allowing for the maximum sustainable catch for food and other purposes;

Whereas in 1981, for management purposes, the Commission adopted a working hypothesis of 2 Atlantic bluefin tuna stocks, with 1 occurring west of 45 degrees west longitude (hereinafter referred to as the ''western Atlantic stock'') and the other occurring east of 45 degrees west longitude (hereinafter referred to as the ''eastern Atlantic and Mediterranean stock'');

Whereas, despite scientific recommendations intended to maintain bluefin tuna populations at levels that will permit the maximum sustainable yield and ensure the future of the stocks, the total allowable catch quotas have been consistently set at levels significantly higher than the recommended levels for the eastern Atlantic and Mediterranean stock;

Whereas despite the establishment by the Commission of fishing quotas based on total allowable catch levels for the eastern Atlantic and Mediterranean bluefin tuna fishery that exceed scientific recommendations, compliance with such quotas by parties to the Convention that harvest that stock has been extremely poor, most recently with harvests exceeding such total allowable catch levels by more than 50 percent for each of the last 4 years;

Whereas insufficient data reporting in combination with unreliable national catch statistics has frequently undermined efforts by the Commission to assign quota overharvests to specific countries;

Whereas the failure of many Commission members fishing east of 45 degrees west longitude to comply with other Commission recommendations to conserve and control the overfished eastern Atlantic and Mediterranean bluefin tuna stock has been an ongoing problem;

Whereas the Commission's Standing Committee on Research and Statistics noted in its 2006 report that the fishing mortality rate for the eastern Atlantic and Mediterranean stock may be more than 3 times the level that would permit the stock to stabilize at the maximum sustainable catch level, and continuing to fish at the level of recent years ''is expected to drive the spawning biomass to a very low level'' giving ''rise to a high risk of fishery and stock collapse'';

Whereas the Standing Committee has recommended that the annual harvest levels for eastern Atlantic and Mediterranean bluefin tuna be reduced from 32,000 metric tons to approximately 15,000 metric tons to halt decline of the resource and initiate rebuilding, and the United States supported this recommendation at the 2006 Commission meeting;

Whereas in 2006, the Commission adopted the ''Recommendation by ICCAT to Establish a Multi-Annual Recovery Plan for Bluefin Tuna in the eastern Atlantic and Mediterranean'' containing a wide range of management, monitoring, and control measures designed to facilitate the recovery of the eastern Atlantic and Mediterranean bluefin tuna stock;

Whereas the Recovery Plan is inadequate and allows overfishing and stock decline to continue, and initial information indicates that implementation of the plan in 2007 by many eastern Atlantic and Mediterranean bluefin tuna harvesting countries has been poor;

Whereas since 1981, the Commission has adopted additional and more restrictive conservation and management recommendations for the western Atlantic bluefin tuna stock, and these recommendations have been implemented by Nations fishing west of 45 degrees west longitude, including the United States;

Whereas despite adopting, fully implementing, and complying with a science-based rebuilding program for the western Atlantic bluefin tuna stock by countries fishing west of 45 degrees west longitude, catches and catch rates remain very low;

Whereas many scientists believe that mixing occurs between the western Atlantic bluefin tuna stock and the eastern Atlantic and Mediterranean stock, and as such, poor management and noncompliance with recommendations for one stock are likely to have an adverse effect on the other stock; and

Whereas additional research on stock mixing will improve the understanding of the relationship between eastern and western bluefin tuna stocks and other fisheries, which will assist in the conservation, recovery, and management of the species throughout its range: Now, therefore, be it

Resolved, That it is the sense of the Senate that the United States delegation to the 20th Regular Meeting of the International Commission for the Conservation of Atlantic Tunas, should—

(1) seek the adoption of a harvesting moratorium, which includes appropriate mechanisms to ensure compliance, on the eastern Atlantic and Mediterranean bluefin tuna fishery of sufficient duration to begin the process of stock recovery and allow for the

development and implementation of an effective program of monitoring and control on the fishery when the moratorium ends;

(2) seek to strengthen the conservation and management of the eastern Atlantic and Mediterranean bluefin tuna by making recommendations to halt the decline of the stock and begin to rebuild it;

(3) reevaluate the implementation, effectiveness, and relevance of the Commission recommendation entitled ''Recommendation by ICCAT to Establish a Multi-Annual Recovery Plan for Bluefin Tuna in the eastern Atlantic and Mediterranean'' (Recommendation 06–05), and seek from Commission members that have failed to fully implement the terms of the recommendations detailed justification for their lack of compliance;

(4) pursue a review and assessment of compliance with conservation and management measures adopted by the Commission and in effect for the 2006 eastern Atlantic and Mediterranean bluefin tuna fishery, occurring east of 45 degrees west longitude, and other fisheries that are subject to the jurisdiction of the Commission, including data collection and reporting requirements;

(5) seek to address noncompliance by parties to the Convention with such measures through appropriate actions, including, as appropriate, deducting a portion of a future quota for a party to compensate for such party exceeding its quota in prior years; and

(6) pursue additional research on the relationship between the western Atlantic and eastern Atlantic and Mediterranean bluefin tuna stocks and the extent to which the populations intermingle.

RECOGNIZING AND THANKING MILITARY FAMILIES

Mr. DURBIN. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the Senate now proceed to the consideration of S. Res. 378, which was submitted earlier today.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will report the resolution by title.

The legislative clerk read as follows:

A resolution (S. Res. 378) recognizing and thanking all military families for the tremendous sacrifices and contributions they have made to the Nation.

There being no objection, the Senate proceeded to consider the resolution.

Mr. DURBIN. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent the resolution be agreed to, the preamble be agreed to, and the motions to reconsider be laid upon the table.

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

The resolution (S. Res. 378) was agreed to.

The preamble was agreed to.

The resolution, with its preamble, reads as follows:

S. RES. 378

Whereas there are currently more than 3,000,000 immediate family members of individuals serving in the Armed Forces;

Whereas these family members bear the most immediate and profound burden of the absence of their loved ones during the performance of their duties;

Whereas these families have been the bedrock of support and strength for our Nation's Armed Forces for over 230 years;

Whereas military families serve this country with an equal amount of dedication and patriotism as their loved ones who are fighting for the United States;

Whereas the families of servicemembers—whether in the regular components of the Armed Forces, the Reserve, or the National Guard—feel enormous amounts of pride, love, and trepidation during the absence of their loved ones;

Whereas it is essential that the Nation recognize the contributions made by military families and celebrate their strength; and

Whereas the Senate stands in humble respect of the sacrifice made by our military families: Now, therefore, be it

Resolved, That the Senate—

(1) honors the families of members of the Armed Forces and recognizes that they too share in the burden of protecting the Nation;

(2) urges the people of the United States to join with the Senate in thanking military families for their tremendous sacrifice on behalf of the Nation; and

(3) recognizes with great appreciation the contributions made by military families in providing the essential personal support that our Nation's warriors need.

FEED AMERICA THURSDAY

Mr. DURBIN. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the Senate now proceed to the consideration of S. Res. 379, which was submitted earlier today.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will report the resolution by title.

The legislative clerk read as follows:

A resolution (S. Res. 379) designating Thursday, November 15, 2007, as ''Feed America Thursday.''

There being no objection, the Senate proceeded to consider the resolution.

Mr. HATCH. Mr. President, I wish to speak regarding an effort that, in recent years, has received the support of many of us in the Senate. ''Feed America Thursday'' is an effort, promoted by a number of charitable organizations, aimed at fostering our Nation's spirit of selflessness and sacrifice in order to help those in need.

According to the Department of Agriculture's most recent numbers, roughly 35 million Americans, including 12 million children, live in households that do not have an adequate supply of food. As I have said in the past, it is simply inexcusable that, in the most prosperous nation on Earth, so many children go to bed hungry at night. While there are often disputes as to how we should address these problems, I believe there are steps that every American can take to help those in need.

The leaders and participants in ''Feed America Thursday'' encourage all Americans to sacrifice two meals on the Thursday before Thanksgiving Day and to donate the money they would have used for food to a charity or religious organization of their choice. The charities and churches, in turn, are encouraged to use these funds to feed the hungry.

Today, as I have in previous Congresses, I introduced a resolution that would designate this Thursday, November 15, 2007, as ''Feed America Thursday.'' I urge my Senate colleagues and every American to join me in feeding the hungry and affirming the values that make our Nation great.

Mr. DURBIN. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the resolution be agreed to, the preamble be agreed to, and the motions to reconsider be laid upon the table.

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

The resolution (S. Res. 379) was agreed to.

The preamble was agreed to.

The resolution, with its preamble, reads as follows:

S. RES. 379

Whereas Thanksgiving Day celebrates the spirit of selfless giving and an appreciation for family and friends;

Whereas the spirit of Thanksgiving Day is a virtue upon which the Nation was founded;

Whereas, according to the Department of Agriculture, roughly 35,000,000 people in the United States, including 12,000,000 children, continue to live in households that do not have an adequate supply of food; and

Whereas selfless sacrifice breeds a genuine spirit of thanksgiving, both affirming and restoring fundamental principles in our society: Now, therefore, be it

Resolved, That the Senate—

(1) designates Thursday, November 15, 2007, as ''Feed America Thursday''; and

(2) encourages the people of the United States to sacrifice 2 meals on Thursday, November 15, 2007, and to donate the money that they would have spent on food to a religious or charitable organization of their choice for the purpose of feeding the hungry.

RECOGNIZING HOSTELLING INTERNATIONAL USA

Mr. DURBIN. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the Senate now proceed to the consideration of S. Res. 380, submitted earlier today.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will report the resolution by title.

The legislative clerk read as follows:

A resolution (S. Res. 380) recognizing Hostelling International USA for 75 years of service to intercultural understanding and to youth travel.

There being no objection, the Senate proceeded to consider the resolution.

Mr. STEVENS. Mr. President, I offer today a resolution recognizing Hostelling International USA for 75 years of service to intercultural understanding and to youth travel.

Hostelling USA was established in 1934 to promote hostelling in the United States. Since it is founding, it has hosted over 22 million visitors in its 70 hostels across the country, including Alaska.

Hostelling is a unique and affordable way travelers can see our country, while making lifelong friends and contacts.

I congratulate Hostelling International USA for 75 years of service and hope my colleagues will join me in passing this resolution.

Mr. DURBIN. I ask unanimous consent the resolution be agreed to, the preamble be agreed to, and the motion to reconsider be laid upon the table.

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

The resolution (S. Res. 380) was agreed to.

The preamble was agreed to.

The resolution, with its preamble, reads as follows:

S. RES. 380

Whereas travel promotes awareness and knowledge of peoples, places, and cultures;

Whereas hostelling is educational travel, local and global, using hostels and other programs to facilitate interaction among travelers and with local communities;

Whereas hostels are simple, safe, shared accommodations that promote community and cooperation among users and introduce young people of limited means to travel;

Whereas Hostelling International USA (HI-USA) is a nonprofit educational organization established in 1934 as American Youth Hostels to promote hostelling in the United States;

Whereas, since its founding, HI-USA has provided in its hostels more than 22,000,000 overnight stays to visitors from the United States and more than 150 countries worldwide;

Whereas today HI-USA has a network of 70 hostels in areas of cultural, historic, and recreational interest, often in partnership with public, private, and other nonprofit organizations, that annually hosts nearly 1,000,000 overnights stays by both domestic and foreign travelers;

Whereas HI-USA today offers programs through its hostels and local chapters that promote the appreciation of local culture and environment, while facilitating the discovery of both world and self, to more than 65,000 participants annually;

Whereas HI-USA has made a unique and notable contribution to intercultural understanding in the United States and worldwide, especially among youth: Now, therefore, be it

Resolved, That the Senate—

(1) congratulates Hostelling International USA on its 75 years of service; and

(2) commends Hostelling International USA for its contributions to intercultural exchange and its leadership in the field of youth travel.

COMMEMORATING THE LIVES OF THE MARYKNOLL SISTERS

Mr. DURBIN. I ask unanimous consent that the Senate proceed to the immediate consideration of S. Res. 381 submitted earlier today.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will report the resolution by title.

The legislative clerk read as follows:

A resolution (S. Res. 381) remembering and commemorating the lives and work of Maryknoll Sisters Maura Clarke and Ita Ford, Ursuline Sister Dorothy Kazel, and Cleveland Lay Mission Team Member Jean Donovan, who were executed by members of the Armed Forces of El Salvador on December 2, 1980.

There being no objection, the Senate proceeded to consider the resolution.

Mr. DURBIN. I ask unanimous consent to be added as a cosponsor of this measure.

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

Mr. FEINGOLD. Mr. President, I am grateful to my colleagues for joining me in passing a resolution which remembers the lives of four American women who continue to be a source of great inspiration.

Mr. President, on December 2, 1980, two Maryknoll Sisters, Maura Clarke and Ita Ford, Ursuline Sister Dorothy Kazel, and Cleveland Team lay missionary Jean Donovan were brutally violated and murdered by members of the Salvadoran National Guard. We do not wish to revisit the events of those difficult times in Central America with this resolution. We wish to remember and honor the love and dedication these women of faith showed to those they came to serve.

Two years ago, on the December 2 anniversary of the brutal deaths of these four American women, several 25th anniversary events were held in the United States including one at Milwaukee's Saint Therese Church in my home State of Wisconsin. I was pleased that the House passed a resolution honoring the lives of the four missionaries in the year of the 25th anniversary. Unfortunately, one or more members of this body anonymously blocked the Senate from passing a similar resolution to commemorate the 25th anniversary of the murder of these nuns. Along with my cosponsors, I am pleased that the Senate is now appropriately honoring these women with the passage of this resolution.

Mr. President, remembering these women is a very personal and moving thing for those who actually knew them, but it is also truly powerful for those who have only learned of them after their deaths. I had the opportunity several years ago to meet many of their family members and have become well aware of one of the churchwomen, Sister Ita Ford, through my chief of staff and her aunt, Jean Reardon Baumann, who was a dear friend of Ita's from their childhood together in Brooklyn, New York.

I would like to share with my colleagues a letter Sister Ita Ford wrote to her niece in August of 1980:

Dear Jennifer, the odds that this note will arrive for your birthday are poor, but know I'm with you in spirit as you celebrate 16 big ones. I hope it's a special day for you. I want to say something to you and I wish I were there to talk to you because sometimes letters don't get across all the meaning and feeling. But, I'll give it a try anyway.

First of all, I love you and care about you and how you are. I'm sure you know that. That holds if you're an angel or a goof-off, a genius or a jerk. A lot of that is up to you, and what you decide to do with your life. What I want to say . . . some of it isn't too jolly birthday talk, but it's real. . . . Yesterday I stood looking down at a 16-year-old who had been killed a few hours earlier. I know a lot of kids even younger who are dead. This is a terrible time in El Salvador for youth. A lot of idealism and commitment is getting snuffed out here now. The reasons why so many people are being killed are quite complicated, yet there are some clear, simple strands. One is that many people have found a meaning to life, to sacrifice, to struggle, and even to death. And whether their life span is 16 years, 60 or 90, for them, their life has had a purpose. In many ways, they are fortunate people.

Brooklyn is not passing through the drama of El Salvador, but some things hold true wherever one is, and at whatever age. What I'm saying is, I hope you come to find that which gives life a deep meaning for you . . . something worth living for, maybe even worth dying for . . . something that energizes you, enthuses you, enables you to keep moving ahead. I can't tell you what it might be—that's for you to find, to choose, to love. I can just encourage you to start looking, and support you in the search. Maybe this sounds weird and off-the-wall, and maybe, no one else will talk to you like this, but then, too, I'm seeing and living things that others around you aren't. . . . I want to say to you: don't waste the gifts and opportunities you have to make yourself and other people happy. . . . I hope this doesn't sound like some kind of a sermon because I don't mean it that way. Rather, it's something you learn here, and I want to share it with you. In fact, it's my birthday present to you. If it doesn't make sense right at this moment, keep this and read it sometime from now. Maybe it will be clearer . . .

A very happy birthday to you and much, much love,

ITA.

From that one letter alone, I am sure that others will understand the kind of people these women were, and the impact they continue to have on us all.

I also want to thank, in particular, my friend from Massachusetts Congressman JIM MCGOVERN and his staff who have led the efforts in Congress to appropriately remember these four courageous American women who dedicated their lives to their faith and to the service of others.

Mr. DURBIN. I ask unanimous consent that the resolution be agreed to, the preamble be agreed to, the motions to reconsider be laid upon the table en bloc, and that any statements relating thereto be printed in the RECORD.

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

The resolution (S. Res. 381) was agreed to.

The preamble was agreed to.

The resolution, with its preamble, reads as follows:

S. RES. 381

Whereas on December 2, 1980, four churchwomen from the United States, Maryknoll Sisters Maura Clarke and Ita Ford, Ursuline Sister Dorothy Kazel, and Cleveland Lay Mission Team Member Jean Donovan, were violated and executed by members of the National Guard of El Salvador;

Whereas in 1980, Maryknoll Sisters Maura Clarke and Ita Ford were working in the parish of the Church of San Juan Bautista in Chalatenango, El Salvador, providing food, transportation, and other assistance to refugees, and Ursuline Sister Dorothy Kazel and Cleveland Lay Mission Team Member Jean Donovan were working in the parish of the Church of the Immaculate Conception in La Libertad, El Salvador, providing assistance and support to refugees and other victims of violence;

Whereas these four churchwomen from the United States dedicated their lives to working with the poor of El Salvador, especially women and children left homeless, displaced, and destitute by the civil war in El Salvador;

Whereas these four churchwomen from the United States were among the more than 70,000 civilians who were murdered during the course of the civil war in El Salvador;

Whereas on May 23 and May 24, 1984, five members of the National Guard of El Salvador, Subsergeant Luis Antonio Colindres Aleman, Daniel Canales Ramirez, Carlos Joaquin Contreras Palacios, Francisco Orlando Contreras Recinos, and Jose Roberto Moreno Canjura, were found guilty by the El

Salvador courts of the executions of these four churchwomen from the United States and were sentenced to 30 years in prison, marking the first time in El Salvador history in which a member of the Armed Forces of El Salvador was convicted of murder by an El Salvador judge;

Whereas the United Nations Commission on the Truth for El Salvador was established under the terms of the historic January 1992 Peace Accords that ended 12 years of civil war in El Salvador and was charged to investigate and report to the El Salvador people on human rights crimes committed by all sides during the course of the civil war;

Whereas in March 1993, the United Nations Commission on the Truth for El Salvador found that the execution of these four churchwomen from the United States was planned, that Subsergeant Luis Antonio Colindres Aleman carried out orders from a superior to execute them, that then Colonel Carlos Eugenio Vides Casanova, then Director-General of the National Guard and his cousin, Lieutenant Colonel Oscar Edgardo Casanova Vejar, then Commander of the Zacatecoluca military detachment where the murders were committed, and other military personnel knew that members of the National Guard had committed the murders pursuant to orders of a superior, and that the subsequent coverup of the facts adversely affected the judicial investigation into the murders of the churchwomen;

Whereas the United Nations Commission on the Truth for El Salvador determined that General Jose Guillermo Garcia, then Minister of Defense, made no serious effort to conduct a thorough investigation of responsibility for the murders of these four churchwomen from the United States;

Whereas the families of these four churchwomen from the United States continue their efforts to determine the full truth surrounding the murders of their loved ones, appreciate the cooperation of United States Government agencies in disclosing and providing documents relevant to the murders of the churchwomen, and pursue requests to release to the family members the few remaining undisclosed documents and reports pertaining to the case;

Whereas the families of these four churchwomen from the United States appreciate the ability of those harmed by violence to bring suit against El Salvador military officers in United States courts under the Torture Victim Protection Act of 1991 (28 U.S.C. 1350 note);

Whereas the lives of these four churchwomen from the United States have, for the past 27 years, served as inspiration for and continue to inspire Salvadorans, Americans, and people throughout the world to answer the call to service and to pursue lives dedicated to addressing the needs and aspirations of the poor, the vulnerable, and the disadvantaged, especially among women and children;

Whereas the lives of these four churchwomen from the United States have also inspired numerous books, plays, films, music, religious events, and cultural events;

Whereas schools, libraries, research centers, spiritual centers, health clinics, women's and children's programs in the United States and in El Salvador have been named after or dedicated to Sisters Maura Clarke, Ita Ford, Dorothy Kazel, and lay missionary Jean Donovan;

Whereas the Maryknoll Sisters, headquartered in Ossining, New York, the Ursuline Sisters, headquartered in Cleveland, Ohio, numerous religious task forces in the United States, and the Salvadoran and international religious communities based in El Salvador annually commemorate the lives and martyrdom of these four churchwomen from the United States;

Whereas the historic January 1992 Peace Accords ended 12 years of civil war in El Salvador and have allowed the Government and the people of El Salvador to achieve significant progress in creating and strengthening democratic, political, economic, and social institutions in El Salvador; and

Whereas December 2, 2007, marks the 27th anniversary of the deaths of these four spiritual, courageous, and generous churchwomen from the United States: Now, therefore, be it

Resolved, That the Senate—

(1) remembers and commemorates the lives and work of Sisters Maura Clarke, Ita Ford, and Dorothy Kazel and lay missionary Jean Donovan;

(2) extends sympathy and support for the families, friends, and religious communities of these four churchwomen from the United States;

(3) continues to find inspiration in the lives and work of these four churchwomen from the United States;

(4) calls upon the people of the United States and religious congregations to participate in local, national, and international events commemorating the 27th anniversary of the martyrdom of these four churchwomen from the United States;

(5) recognizes that while progress has been made in El Salvador during the post-civil war period, the work begun by these four churchwomen from the United States remains unfinished and social and economic hardships persist among many sectors of El Salvador society; and

(6) calls upon the President, the Secretary of State, the Administrator of the United States Agency for International Development, and the heads of other United States Government agencies to continue to support and collaborate with the Government of El Salvador and with private sector, nongovernmental, regional, international, and religious organizations in their efforts to reduce poverty and hunger and to promote educational opportunity, health care, and social equity for the people of El Salvador.

WORLD DIABETES DAY

Mr. DURBIN. I ask unanimous consent that the Senate proceed to the immediate consideration of S. Res. 382 submitted earlier today.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will report the resolution by title.

The legislative clerk read as follows:

A resolution (S. Res. 382) supporting the goals and ideals of World Diabetes Day.

There being no objection, the Senate proceeded to consider the resolution.

Ms. STABENOW. Mr. President, today I was pleased to introduce a Senate resolution recognizing November 14 as World Diabetes Day. I am also pleased to be joined by my colleagues, Senators PETE DOMENICI and FRANK LAUTENBERG. Established in 1991 by the World Health Organization and the International Diabetes Federation, this day has been recognized annually as World Diabetes Day.

Through World Diabetes Day, advocates worldwide can coordinate diabetes awareness activities and create a sense of urgency about this devastating disease. In almost every nation, diabetes is on the rise. In the United States, diabetes is the sixth leading cause of death by disease. Globally, diabetes is fourth.

Diabetes currently affects 246 million people worldwide and is projected to affect 380 million by 2025. Last year, the United Nations passed landmark Resolution 61/225 recognizing diabetes as a chronic, debilitating, and costly disease.

Each year, over 3.7 million people die due to diabetes. An even greater number die from cardiovascular disease exacerbated by diabetes-related lipid disorders. Every 10 seconds, two people develop diabetes and one person dies from diabetes-related causes.

The prevalence of diabetes is increasing in Michigan—from 5.3 percent to 7.9 percent over the past 10 years. There are 1.3 million Michiganians who have diabetes or are prediabetic. Michigan has the seventh highest rate of diabetes in the Nation, and diabetes costs our State's economy $6 billion a year in health costs and lost productivity. Diabetes is the sixth leading cause of death in Michigan and the fourth leading cause of death among African-American females in Michigan.

This year, the World Diabetes Day campaign will focus on the message that no child should die of diabetes.'' I take this goal very seriously. As a member of the Agriculture Committee, I am committed to ensuring our children have healthy options in their school meals. And I am working with Senator DOMENICI on reauthorizing the Special Diabetes Program.

We can no longer ignore the growing incidence of diabetes. Instead, let us draw worldwide attention to prevention, access, and treatment.

Finally, I am pleased to have letters of support from diabetes advocacy organizations. I ask unanimous consent that they be printed in the RECORD.

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

INTERNATIONAL DIABETES FEDERATION,
Brussels, Belgium, November 11, 2007.

Hon. DEBBIE STABENOW,
Hart Senate Office Building, Washington, DC.

Hon. PETE DOMENICI,
Hart Senate Office Building, Washington, DC.

DEAR U.S. SENATOR STABENOW AND U.S. SENATOR DOMENICI: The International Diabetes Federation (IDF), an over 50–year old worldwide alliance of over 200 diabetes associations in more than 160 countries, is pleased to endorse H. Con. Res. 211, your resolution supporting the goals and ideals of World Diabetes Day.

Established by the World Health Organization and International Diabetes Federation in 1991, World Diabetes Day has been commemorated annually on November 14th. World Diabetes Day has succeeded in elevating and coordinating diabetes advocacy globally. Further, it is especially meaningful for the international diabetes advocacy community that on December 20, 2006, the General Assembly of the United Nations passed a landmark Resolution recognizing diabetes as a chronic, debilitating and costly disease.

Cities and nations all over the world are holding events to celebrate World Diabetes

Day. For example, in Egypt, the well-known Bibliotheca Alexandrina (Library of Alexandria) will light up in blue on November 14th. And, La Federación Mexicana de Diabetes (Mexican Diabetes Federation) has planned a series of events throughout Mexico to mark this year's World Diabetes Day, including a diabetes awareness week in Jalisco, walks in Mexico City and Guanajuato, and activities for children and adolescents in Chihuahua.

Senators Stabenow and Domenici, we share your particular enthusiasm that the 2007 Campaign's theme focuses on raising awareness of diabetes in children and adolescents, who face unique challenges when diagnosed with diabetes. The campaign aims, among other objectives, to firmly establish the message that ''no child should die of diabetes''.

Thank you for your leadership on this important global health awareness campaign, Senators Stabenow and Domenici.

Sincerely,

MARTIN SILINK.

AMERICAN DIABETES ASSOCIATION,
November 14, 2007.

Sen. DEBBIE STABENOW,
Hart Senate Office Building,
Washington, DC.
Sen. PETE DOMENICI,
Hart Senate Office Building,
Washington, DC.

DEAR SENATORS: On behalf of the 20.8 million children and adults living with diabetes in the Unites States, the American Diabetes Association is pleased to endorse your resolution supporting the goals and ideals of World Diabetes Day. This important day has succeeded in elevating and coordinating diabetes education and advocacy around the world and we applaud your leadership in bringing congressional attention to it.

Established by the World Health Organization and International Diabetes Federation in 1991, World Diabetes Day has been commemorated annually on November 14th. On December 20, 2006, the General Assembly of the United Nations passed a landmark Resolution recognizing diabetes as a chronic, debilitating and costly disease, and designating World Diabetes Day as a United Nations Day to be observed every year starting this year.

As you know, Diabetes is a lifelong chronic disease that has become a health problem of epidemic proportions around the globe. More than 240 million people worldwide are living with diabetes. This number is expected to exceed 350 million in less than 20 years if action is not taken. Diabetes is the fifth highest cause of disease-related death, killing more than 2.9 million people from diabetes-related complications annually, greater than 600 people each day in our own country. In fact, every 10 seconds a person dies of diabetes-related causes—including heart disease, stroke, blindness, kidney disease and amputations.

Children are not spared from this global epidemic, with its debilitating and life-threatening complications. The theme of this year's World Diabetes Day campaign is 'Diabetes in Children and Adolescents.' Type 1 diabetes is growing by 3% per year in children and adolescents, and at an alarming 5% per year among pre-school children. Type 2 diabetes was once seen as a disease of adults. Today, this type of diabetes is growing at alarming rates in children and adolescents. In the United States, it is estimated that type 2 diabetes represents between 8 and 45% of new-onset diabetes cases in children depending on geographic location. Early diagnosis and early education are crucial to reducing complications and saving lives.

Senator Stabenow and Senator Domenici, we share your enthusiasm that the 2007 Campaign's theme focuses on raising awareness of diabetes in children and adolescents, who face unique challenges when diagnosed with diabetes. Passage of this resolution will send a powerful message about the seriousness of this disease and help to alleviate the human, economic and social burden of diabetes.

Thank you, again, for your leadership on this important global health awareness campaign. In this, and in other diabetes issues, the American Diabetes Association stands ready to support your efforts.

Sincerely,

HUNTER LIMBAUGH,
Chair, National Advocacy Committee.

Mr. DURBIN. I ask unanimous consent that the resolution be agreed to, the preamble be agreed to, the motions to reconsider be laid upon the table en bloc, and that any statements relating thereto be printed in the RECORD.

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

The resolution (S. Res. 382) was agreed to.

The preamble was agreed to.

The resolution, with its preamble, reads as follows:

S. RES. 382

Whereas the World Health Organization and the International Diabetes Federation established World Diabetes Day in 1991 with the aim of coordinating diabetes advocacy worldwide;

Whereas World Diabetes Day is celebrated annually on November 14;

Whereas, on December 20, 2006, the General Assembly of the United Nations passed a landmark resolution recognizing diabetes as a chronic, debilitating, and costly disease;

Whereas the resolution designates World Diabetes Day as a United Nations Day to be observed every year starting in 2007 in order to raise global awareness of diabetes;

Whereas the theme of the 2007 United Nations World Diabetes Day campaign focuses on raising awareness of diabetes in children and adolescents, who face unique challenges when diagnosed with diabetes;

Whereas the United Nations campaign aims, among other objectives, to firmly establish the message that no child should die of diabetes;

Whereas the global diabetes epidemic has devastating effects on families, societies, and national economies;

Whereas diabetes is the 4th leading cause of death by disease in the world, and is the 6th leading cause of death in the United States;

Whereas diabetes is a leading cause of blindness, kidney failure, amputation, heart attack, and stroke;

Whereas in almost every country the incidence of diabetes is increasing, growing from an estimated 30,000,000 people worldwide in 1985 to an estimated 245,000,000 people in 2007, and to 380,000,000 by 2025, as reported by the International Diabetes Federation;

Whereas diabetes is one of the most common chronic childhood diseases;

Whereas diabetes can strike children at any age, and when diagnosed in young people the risk of developing life-threatening complications at an early age increases and life expectancy is shortened by, on average, 10 to 20 years;

Whereas new figures from the International Diabetes Federation's Diabetes Atlas suggest that more than 70,000 children develop type 1 diabetes each year and 440,000 children worldwide under the age of 14 now live with type 1 diabetes;

Whereas recent data indicate that 1 out of every 3 children born in the United States will develop diabetes during their lifetime, including 1 out of every 2 children from ethnic minority groups;

Whereas in low- and middle-income countries, many children with diabetes die because they are diagnosed late or misdiagnosed or because insulin is unaffordable, unavailable, or in short supply;

Whereas the incidence of type 2 diabetes, which was previously rare in children, is rising at alarming rates, with more than 200 children a day developing this form of diabetes;

Whereas obesity is a major contributor to type 2 diabetes;

Whereas according to the International Obesity Task Force of the International Association for the Study of Obesity, 155,000,000 school-age children worldwide are overweight, representing at least 1 out of every 10 school-age children;

Whereas at least 30,000,000 of those overweight children are classified as obese, accounting for at least 2 percent of the world's children between the ages of 5 and 17 years of age;

Whereas research has shown conclusively that type 2 diabetes can be prevented or significantly delayed through healthy weight maintenance and regular physical activity;

Whereas adopting a lifestyle high in physical activity and adopting a low-sugar, low-fat diet can successfully prevent the onset of obesity and diabetes among school-age children;

Whereas diabetes is costly, with the world estimated to spend at least $232,000,000,000 in 2007 and over $302,500,000,000 by 2025 to treat and prevent diabetes and its complications;

Whereas world treatment costs for diabetes are growing more quickly than the world population;

Whereas diabetes threatens to subvert global economic advancement by both straining government budgets worldwide (with the cost of diabetes-related disability payments, pensions, social and medical service costs, and lost revenue) and burdening private health insurers and employers with spiraling health care costs;

Whereas by 2025 the largest increases in diabetes prevalence will take place in developing countries, whose economies are less able to support increased expenditures to provide for those with the disease and engage in effective prevention efforts; and

Whereas the economic impact of diabetes threatens to undermine the achievement of the United Nation's Millennium Development Goals for developing countries: Now, therefore, be it

Resolved, That the Senate supports the goals and ideals of World Diabetes Day.

ORDERS FOR THURSDAY, NOVEMBER 15, 2007

Mr. DURBIN. I ask unanimous consent that when the Senate completes its business today, it stand adjourned until 9:30 a.m., Thursday, November 15; that on Thursday, following the prayer and pledge, the Journal of proceedings be approved to date, the morning hour deemed expired, the time for the two leaders reserved for their use later in the day; that there then be a period of morning business for 60 minutes, with Senators permitted to speak therein for up to 10 minutes each and the time equally divided and controlled, with Senator FEINGOLD recognized first for up to 15 minutes; that then the Republicans control the next 30 minutes; that

following that time, the majority control the final 15 minutes of morning business; that at the close of morning business, the Senate then resume consideration of H.R. 2419, the farm bill.

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

PROGRAM

Mr. DURBIN. As a reminder to Members, cloture was filed on the Harkin substitute amendment on H.R. 2419. All germane amendments must be timely filed by 1 p.m. tomorrow; however, Members do not need to refile any germane amendments already filed.

ORDER FOR ADJOURNMENT

Mr. DURBIN. I now ask that following the remarks of Senator DOLE, the Senate stand adjourned under the previous order.

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

Mr. DURBIN. Pending the arrival of Senator DOLE, I suggest the absence of a quorum.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will call the roll.

The legislative clerk proceeded to call the roll.

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

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

HUNGER AND NUTRITION

Mrs. DOLE. Mr. President, in America—the land of prosperity and plenty, some people have the misconception that hunger plagues only faraway, undeveloped nations. The reality is that hunger is a silent enemy lurking within 1 in 10 U.S. households.

In my home State of North Carolina alone, nearly 1 million of our 8.8 million residents are struggling with food insecurity issues. In recent years, once-thriving North Carolina towns have been economically crippled by the shutting of textile mills and furniture factories. People have lost their jobs and sometimes their ability to put food on the table.

I know this scenario is not unique to North Carolina, as many American manufacturing jobs have moved overseas. While many folks are finding new employment, these days a steady income does not necessarily provide for three square meals a day. Hunger and food insecurity are far too prevalent, but I think Washington Post columnist David Broder hit the nail on the head when he wrote:

> America has some problems that defy solution. This one does not. It just needs caring people and a caring government, working together.

I certainly agree. The battle to end hunger in our country is a campaign that cannot be won in months or even a few years, but it is a victory within reach.

To this end, I strongly support what the nutrition title of the farm bill strives to accomplish. I commend my colleagues on the Senate Agriculture Committee for putting together a package that helps address the hunger and nutrition needs of Americans of all ages. For example, with regard to the Food Stamp Program, this bill seeks to responsibly address concerns of fraud, waste, and abuse in the system and help ensure that it serves those who truly need assistance.

I am also pleased that the nutrition title expands the Fresh Fruit and Vegetable Program to all 50 States. This program encourages healthy eating habits in schoolchildren and helps combat childhood obesity. According to a recent Duke University report, in the last 25 years, the rate of obesity has doubled for children ages 6 to 11, and has tripled for teens.

Today, about 10 percent of 2- to 5-year-olds and 15 percent of 6- to 19-year-olds are overweight. In North Carolina, where childhood obesity rates have been higher than national averages, I am very proud that nearly 1.4 million children are enrolled this school year in the Fresh Fruit and Vegetable Program. This certainly is a positive way to help combat the childhood obesity problem.

Furthermore, I am pleased this bill will allow schools participating in the School Lunch Program to use geographic preference when purchasing fruits and vegetables. This is especially good news in North Carolina where our farmers produce a wide variety of nutritious fruits and vegetables.

I also welcome a provision in the nutrition title that makes permanent the exclusion of combat zone pay from eligibility determinations in the Food and Nutrition Program. More than 157,700 servicemembers from North Carolina have deployed to Iraq and Afghanistan, and their families, who are sacrificing greatly, should not become ineligible because the head of household receives extra income for serving in harm's way.

Additionally, I am pleased that the nutrition title expands the use of electronic benefit transfer at farmers' markets. As in other States, in North Carolina's rural areas the poverty rate tends to be higher, and there is limited access to grocery stores that participate in the Food and Nutrition Program. Our State prides itself on having some of the finest farmers' markets around, and allowing the use of EBT will provide needier individuals access to these healthy, homegrown foods.

Likewise, this bill also increases funding for the Senior Farmers' Market Nutrition Program, which helps low-income seniors, and it continues and extends the Commodity Supplemental Food Program to more low-income individuals.

While I am encouraged by these hunger and nutrition components, there is still more we can and should accomplish in this farm bill to help those in need.

One area where I have focused my efforts is gleaning, where excess crops that would otherwise be thrown out are taken from farms, packinghouses, and warehouses, and distributed to the needy.

It is staggering—really staggering—that each year in this country 96 billion pounds of good, nutritious food, including that at the farm and retail level, is left over or thrown away. Gleaning helps eliminate this waste. It helps the farmer because he does not have to haul off or plow under crops that do not meet exact specifications of grocery chains. And it certainly helps the hungry by giving them nutritious, fresh foods.

Last month, in Harnett County, NC, I gleaned sweet potatoes with volunteers from the hunger relief organization the Society of St. Andrew. One of the single largest concerns for groups such as this wonderful organization is transportation—how to actually get food from the farm, for example, to those in need. According to the Society of St. Andrew, the increase in fuel costs has made food transport particularly challenging. They say today it costs 30 percent more to hire a truck to move food than it did 2 years ago.

To help address this problem, I am putting forward my bill, the Hunger Relief Trucking Tax Credit, as an amendment to this legislation. My measure would change the Tax Code to give transportation companies tax incentives for volunteering trucks to transfer gleaned food. Specifically, my bill would create a 25-cent tax credit for each mile that food is transported for hunger relief efforts by a donated truck and driver. This bill would provide a little extra encouragement for trucking companies to donate space in their vehicles to help more food reach more hungry people.

Additionally, I am proud to join my colleague Senator LAUTENBERG as a cosponsor of an amendment that helps fight hunger in our communities by combining food rescue with job training, thus teaching unemployed and homeless adults the skills needed to work in the food service industry.

The FEED Program, which stands for Food Employment Empowerment and Development, will support community kitchens around the country with much needed resources to help collect rescued food and provide meals to the hungry. Successful FEED-type programs already exist. For example, in Charlotte, NC, the Community Culinary School recruits students from social service agencies, homeless shelters, halfway houses, and work release programs. And just around the corner from the U.S. Capitol, students are hard at work in the DC Central Kitchen's culinary job training class. This is a model program, which began in 1990, and it is always, to me, a great privilege to visit the kitchen and meet with the individuals who have faced adversity but are now on track for a career in the food service industry.

While I do have a number of concerns about the farm bill and its impact on North Carolina agriculture, I welcome this bill's hunger and nutrition focus. Particularly with Thanksgiving just 1 week away, let us remember our 35 million fellow Americans who are struggling to have enough to eat. With the addition of the Hunger Relief Trucking Tax Credit and the FEED Program provision, this farm bill can go even further to responsibly lend a helping hand to those in need.

Mr. President, I yield the floor.

ADJOURNMENT UNTIL 9:30 A.M. TOMORROW

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Under the previous order, the Senate stands adjourned until 9:30 a.m. tomorrow.

Thereupon, the Senate, at 7:17 p.m., adjourned until Thursday, November 15, 2007, at 9:30 a.m.