

a lot of time on a horse. So I know what the life of a farmer and a rancher is all about. But this legislation on the farm bill, Mr. President, is much more to America than just about these farmers and ranchers. Yes, it is important to stand up for them and for them to have champions here on the floor of the Senate, both on the Democratic side as well as on the Republican side. That is why it should not be even close as an issue in terms of us getting to a 60-vote margin tomorrow. It ought to be done easily because we ought to be champions for these people.

But it is more than about the farmers and ranchers in America. It is about a lot of other things. It is about making sure we embrace the clean energy economy of the 21st century. Nowhere in America is there more excitement and enthusiasm than there is in rural America today about how rural America will help us pioneer our way to energy independence the same as with Brazil, a Third World country, through a 20-year dedication to the cause of energy independence, to become energy independent. There is no reason why we in America cannot do the same thing if we put our minds to it and we have the courage to put the right policies in place. And rural America will play a very significant role in creating that energy independence.

This legislation we have brought to the floor of the Senate from both committees, the Finance Committee as well as from the Agriculture Committee, makes a very significant step in the right direction of getting us off the addiction of foreign oil and opening a new opportunity for energy security for America. When I look at the issue of energy, yes, we will be debating and be having votes on the issue of Iraq tomorrow, but part of why we are involved in these issues in the Middle East is because of the fact that oil has been a driver in our foreign policy. We ought not to let that ever happen again in America. We ought not to let oil be a driver in our foreign policy.

So as we embrace this ethic of a clean energy economy for the 21st century, that is part of what is at the heart of the farm bill in title IX. As we look at dealing with the environmental security of our globe, of this planet, that also is at the heart of this legislation. When we look at creating a new economic opportunity, a new tomorrow for rural America, that is also in this legislation.

But it goes beyond energy. It also deals with nutrition. We need to keep reminding the people who are critical of this farm bill that they are wrong because they are aiming at the wrong parts. They aim at the 14 percent of the bill that creates the support, the safety net for farmers and ranchers who are out there in the fields, but we have to recognize that it is almost 67 percent of the money that is set forth in this bill that goes into all the nutrition programs. Those nutrition programs help our children make sure they have the

food in their stomachs to be able to learn while they are in school. Those nutrition programs are the ones that help the most vulnerable here in America.

It goes beyond nutrition. It also deals with the issue of conservation and how we take care of our land and water. This bill is a very important step and makes a very important statement in making sure we help take care of the crown jewels of America with the best stewards of our land and water.

So if you are a champion of the farmers and ranchers of this country, you are going to vote yes on cloture on this bill tomorrow. If you are a champion for the new clean energy economy, you are going to vote yes on this cloture motion tomorrow. If you are a champion of taking care of those who are most in need, the most vulnerable in America in our nutrition programs, you are going to vote yes on this cloture motion tomorrow. If you are a champion and a fighter in protecting our land and water, then you will vote yes on this cloture motion tomorrow. Because it is only by getting to yes on this cloture motion tomorrow, with 60 votes, that we can then create the orderly process that can have us consider amendments that will improve this farm bill and get it across the finish line and then moving forward with the rest of the process to get it to the President's desk for signature.

Mr. President, tonight, I urge my colleagues to think about their vote tomorrow, and I ask them to vote yes on this very important motion that will come before us.

#### MORNING BUSINESS

Mr. SALAZAR. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that there now be a period of morning business, with Senators permitted to speak therein for up to 10 minutes each.

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

#### PASSAGE OF HEAD START CONFERENCE REPORT

Mr. REID. Mr. President, I am pleased to speak today about the conference report for the Improving Head Start for School Readiness Act of 2007.

I appreciate the efforts of Chairman KENNEDY, as well as Senators ENZI, DODD and ALEXANDER, for working together to lead this effort.

This bipartisan legislation reauthorizes the Head Start program, something the Congress has not done since 1998.

In 1965, President Johnson launched a summer program for low-income children and their families called Project Head Start.

The program's mission was simple: to prepare low-income, preschool-aged children for success in school.

Today, Head Start serves children and their families in urban and rural areas across the United States.

Since its inception, more than 20 million children and families have benefited from the Head Start program.

Nevada's eight centers range from a Head Start and Early Head Start Center in rural Ely, to larger, more urban centers in Reno and Las Vegas, to a Tribal Head Start center in Gardnerville.

Each of these programs is unique, because they focus on the needs of children and their families in the communities they serve.

Today, more than 40 years since its inception, Head Start provides comprehensive early education and health services to almost 1 million low-income preschool children to help them prepare for and succeed in school.

Unfortunately, this is only a fraction of the number of children that could benefit from Head Start services.

In Nevada alone, nearly 10,000 3- and 4-year-olds are eligible for Head Start programs. But, last year, only about one quarter of those eligible were able to participate.

This legislation will expand access and eligibility for low-income children and families, which will open the doors to Head Start to tens of thousands of children in Nevada and across America.

The bill also makes a number of other important changes to the Head Start program.

It gives children the tools they need to start school by aligning Head Start standards and services with State and local school standards and requiring new research-based standards and assessments.

And, to ensure that Head Start programs are serving children as effectively as possible, the bill requires greater accountability through improved governance and recompetition for poor performing Head Start centers.

Finally, the bill strengthens the Head Start workforce by setting new education and training goals for Head Start teachers and curriculum specialists.

With proven and lasting results, Head Start is a wise investment in our future.

I urge all of my colleagues to join me in supporting this important legislation.

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

• Mr. DODD. Mr. President, I rise to celebrate the passage of the Improving Head Start for School Readiness Act to reauthorize the Head Start program yesterday. This legislation is a great accomplishment for the Congress and improves opportunities for nearly a million young children and their families. Head Start represents our understanding that our children must be a top priority. While as children represent one quarter of our population, they represent 100 percent of our future.

I would like to thank Senators KENNEDY, ENZI and ALEXANDER for their