

with her dolls. Natalyia has been in foster care since November 2001. The average length of time a child spends in foster care is over 2 years.

Most foster children entered into State custody because their parents were either unable or unwilling to care for them. Not only are children separated from parents, but in many cases, siblings are separated when they are placed in foster care. Terron and Montrell are two brothers in the Louisiana foster care system who would like to be adopted together.

Terron is a handsome, happy 8-year-old in the third grade who is placed in the same foster home with his younger brother, Montrell. Both boys would like to be adopted together, because they share a close bond. Terron responds positively to structure, love, and consistency. He is a caring child who has enjoyed living in a two-parent family. He enjoys soccer, baseball, fishing and any outdoor activity. He wants his new family to know that he likes to eat spaghetti, macaroni, and rice-aroni. Terron would benefit from a two-parent family that can provide structure as well as stimulation.

Montrell is Terron's brother. He is a very sweet, friendly, and open young boy who responds well to structure and consistency. He is very bonded to his older brother and with time and nurturance can adjust to a new environment. Montrell is a first grader. School is a challenge for him but with patience and redirection, he responds well. Montrell's overall health is good and he is basically a happy little boy. He enjoys riding his bicycle and playing outside. Montrell and Terron would benefit from a 2-parent family that can provide structure as well as stimulation.

Over half the children in foster care are 10 years of age or older and have more difficulty being adopted. These children are just waiting to flourish with the right parent's guidance. Kody and Ronnie are two brothers who are above the age of 10 years old and are waiting in the Louisiana foster care system for a "forever family."

Kody is a cute, very active and outgoing, blonde haired, hazel eyed, 13-year-old boy. He enjoys football, skateboarding, fourwheeling, and playing video games. He also loves horses. He is a sixth grader who enjoys science and reading. Kody would like to be an entertainer when he grows up, such as an actor, a comedian, or a rapper. He would like to be in the same home as his brother, Ronnie.

Ronnie is Kody's brother. He is an 11-year-old boy who resembles his brother. Ronnie loves both playing and watching football. He likes to play video games and board games, horses, and going fishing. He is a fourth grader who likes math and science. He would like to be a policeman when he grows up, so that he could rescue people. He would also like to own a toy company, so that he could invent new video games. He wants a family who would

care about him. He is very close to his brother Kody and wishes to remain in contact with him.

I could stand here every day for the next month and talk about each child who needs to be adopted out of foster care. The bottom line is that each of these children, from one day old to 22 years old, needs permanency. They all need a loving, nurturing family that will help them to grow, bring out their unique personalities, and transform them into confident and happy adults.

On National Adoption Day, I have faith that this can be done and we must continue to be the catalyst. The miracle of adoption cannot be explained, but the loving parents that are holding their children for the first time today are living examples of how dreams can be realized. As an adoptive mother myself, I find that words cannot adequately explain the miracle of adoption. I can only take a moment to offer my most humble thanks, gratitude, and appreciation to all those across the Nation who have given their Saturday to help find waiting children safe and loving homes.

Let us continue to remember that when National Adoption Month and Day end there are still thousands of children like Natalyia, Montrell, Terron, Kody, and Ronnie who need that sense of permanency. I challenge Congress to make these children their first priority and to help them to finally realize that dream. Please support our resolution.

Mr. SALAZAR. Mr. President, 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. 384) was agreed to.

The preamble was agreed to.

The resolution, with its preamble, reads as follows:

S. RES. 384

Whereas there are approximately 514,000 children in the foster care system in the United States, approximately 115,000 of whom are waiting for families to adopt them;

Whereas 52 percent of the children in foster care are age 10 or younger;

Whereas the average length of time a child spends in foster care is over 2 years;

Whereas, for many foster children, the wait for a loving family in which they are nurtured, comforted, and protected seems endless;

Whereas the number of youth who "age out" of foster care by reaching adulthood without being placed in a permanent home has increased by 41 percent since 1998, and nearly 25,000 foster youth age out every year;

Whereas every day loving and nurturing families are strengthened and expanded when committed and dedicated individuals make an important difference in the life of a child through adoption;

Whereas a recent survey conducted by the Dave Thomas Foundation for Adoption demonstrated that though "Americans overwhelmingly support the concept of adoption,

and in particular foster care adoption . . . foster care adoptions have not increased significantly over the past five years";

Whereas, while 3 in 10 Americans have considered adoption, a majority of Americans have misperceptions about the process of adopting children from foster care and the children who are eligible for adoption;

Whereas 71 percent of those who have considered adoption consider adopting children from foster care above other forms of adoption;

Whereas 45 percent of Americans believe that children enter the foster care system because of juvenile delinquency, when in reality the vast majority of children who have entered the foster care system were victims of neglect, abandonment, or abuse;

Whereas 46 percent of Americans believe that foster care adoption is expensive, when in reality there is no substantial cost for adopting from foster care and financial support is available to adoptive parents after the adoption is finalized;

Whereas both National Adoption Day and National Adoption Month occur in November;

Whereas National Adoption Day is a collective national effort to find permanent, loving families for children in the foster care system;

Whereas, since the first National Adoption Day in 2000, nearly 17,000 children have joined forever families during National Adoption Day;

Whereas, in 2006, adoptions were finalized for over 3,300 children through more than 250 National Adoption Day events in all 50 States, the District of Columbia, and Puerto Rico; and

Whereas, on October 31, 2007, the President proclaimed November 2007 as National Adoption Month, and National Adoption Day is on November 17, 2007: Now, therefore, be it

Resolved, That the Senate—

(1) supports the goals and ideals of National Adoption Day and National Adoption Month;

(2) recognizes that every child should have a permanent and loving family; and

(3) encourages the citizens of the United States to consider adoption during the month of November and all throughout the year.

MEASURE READ THE FIRST TIME—S. 2363

Mr. SALAZAR. Mr. President, I understand there is a bill at the desk, and I ask for its first reading.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will read the title of the bill for the first time.

The assistant legislative clerk read as follows:

A bill (S. 2363) making appropriations for military construction, the Department of Veterans Affairs, and related agencies for the fiscal year ending September 30, 2008, and for other purposes.

Mr. SALAZAR. Mr. President, I now ask for a second reading, and in order to place the bill on the calendar under the provisions of rule XIV, I object to my own request.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Objection is heard. The bill will be read for the second time on the next legislative day.

Mrs. HUTCHISON. Mr. President, for S. 2363, the report accompanying this bill is the Statement of Managers as

printed in the conference report to accompany H.R. 3043 as Division B, Military Construction and Veterans Affairs and Related Agencies Appropriations Act, 2008.

ORDERS FOR FRIDAY, NOVEMBER
16, 2007

Mr. SALAZAR. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that when the Senate completes its business today, it stand adjourned until 8:30 a.m., Friday, November 16; that on Friday, following the prayer and pledge, the Journal of proceedings be approved to date, the morning hour be deemed expired, the time for the two leaders reserved for their use later in the day; that there then be a period of debate of 1 hour prior to the first cloture vote to be equally divided and controlled between the two leaders or their designees and as previously ordered; provided that Senator HARKIN be recognized for up to 10 minutes of the majority's time; that Members have until 9 a.m. to file any germane second-degree amendments.

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

ORDER FOR ADJOURNMENT

Mr. SALAZAR. Mr. President, if there is no further business today, I now ask that the Senate stand adjourned under the previous order following the remarks of the Senator from South Dakota, Mr. THUNE.

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

The Senator from South Dakota.

THE FARM BILL

Mr. THUNE. Mr. President, I want to take the opportunity to kind of make a little assessment of where we are with regard to the farm bill. I have listened throughout the course of the day as Members have come over and accusations have flown back and forth about why we are not making any progress on the farm bill.

Frankly, it is unfortunate because we have a lot of farmers, the people who are actually out there working the land, raising the food that feeds our country and a good part of the world, who are depending upon the Senate to act.

We have heard from farm organizations, as I am sure most Senators have, about the importance of getting this farm bill passed so they know what the policies are going to be, what the rules are going to be, what the programs are going to be as they begin to make decisions about the 2008 planting season.

As I have listened to all the debate as it has gone back and forth, I have heard a lot of my colleagues, and my colleague from Colorado who is a valued member of the Ag Committee—we worked closely on the renewable energy provisions in the bill, and I think we produced a very good bill out of the Ag Committee.

But there are 21 of us, 21 Senators on the Ag Committee, 21 members out of 100 Senators who serve on the Senate Ag Committee. We came out with a bill that we think makes a lot of sense. It was a balanced bill. It addressed the important issue of providing support for production agriculture for our farmers. It had a good strong conservation title that extends and expands in some ways the Conservation Reserve Program, the Wetlands Reserve Program, the Grassland Reserve Program, a number of conservation programs that are important to the way we manage our lands in this country and provide good environmental stewardship.

It had, of course, a good strong energy title which I worked on a lot, along with a number of my colleagues on the committee, including the Senator from Colorado and the Senator from Nebraska, Mr. NELSON.

We put together what I think is a good, strong energy title that provides incentives for cellulosic ethanol production. It also had a disaster title, something that we have not had for some time in the farm bill, that provides a backstop against those years when you have weather-related disasters and we have had to come to the Congress and try to get political support for disaster relief.

Oftentimes it has been problematic there. This puts in place a contingency fund, an emergency fund, for those years in which our producers are not able to raise a crop for some reason, in most cases because of the weather.

It has, of course, as my colleague from Colorado mentioned, about 67 percent of the money in the bill going into the nutrition title, which funds many of the programs that help people across the country, whether that is the Food Stamp Program, a WIC program, all of those programs that provide support and food for people who need it.

So it is, as we would say, a balanced bill, a bill that was debated back and forth. There were a lot of amendments offered. We spent a day and a half in the markup. But as I said, what is important to note about that is there are only 21 Members of the Senate on the Senate Ag Committee. That means there are 79 Members of this body who have not had any input in this process up to this point.

Well, when the bill was brought to the floor last week on Monday, which is now 9, going on 10 days ago, the assumption was at that point those Members of the Senate who have not served as members of the Ag Committee may have a chance to get their priorities addressed in this farm bill, to offer amendments they think can improve it.

In many cases a farm bill reflects regional priorities. Different people around the country look at these issues very differently. It obviously has a national priority as well. But I think it is fair to say that a lot of Members of the Senate would want to come down here and offer amendments.

In fact, a number of amendments were filed, some 200-plus, almost 300 amendments. Now I, for one, would like to see an agreement reached between our leaders that would end this bickering and this standoff and get us to where we can process some of these amendments and get them voted on so that we can move toward final consideration of this bill, which I noted earlier is so important to farmers across this country.

But what happened very early on in that process was the leader, the majority leader, did what they in Washington in the Senate called "filling the tree." By that, for those who are not familiar with Washington speak, it essentially means it prevents others from offering amendments. All of the amendments that can be offered have been offered. The leader filled the tree and for the past 9 days now has precluded the opportunity for other Members of the Senate, those other 79 Members of the Senate who do not serve on the Ag Committee, to be able to come down and offer amendments they think would ultimately improve the bill.

What is significant about that is it is not unprecedented. It has been done. They said it was done when the Republicans controlled the Senate. I am sure it was—I do not believe very successfully because I do not think it is a tactic or a procedure that lends itself to the nature of this institution or how it works. The Senate is unique in all the world. It is the world's greatest deliberative body. We really value the opportunity to come and amend the bill that is brought to the floor of the Senate, which is generally open to amendment.

So when the tree gets filled and amendments are blocked from consideration, it essentially shuts down the process that the Senate normally uses to consider and amend bills and ultimately vote on bills.

So where are we today? We are almost 2 weeks into this now, and we have yet to vote on a single amendment. We have not had one vote on an amendment to the farm bill after now having it on the floor for almost 2 weeks.

I have to say, for those who would like to offer amendments and have those amendments voted on, it has been very frustrating. My own view is that we are not going to be able to debate 200 or 300 amendments, but we ought to be able to narrow that down, and our leaders could go about that process. But you cannot even do that when the tree is filled. You cannot even consider and vote on any amendments.

So here we are. A farm bill is something that we do every 5 or 6 years in the Congress. I was associated with the last one in 2002 as a Member of the House of Representatives, a member of the Ag Committee. In that particular bill, which was 5 years ago, we set policies that carried us to the end of the fiscal year 2007, which ended on September 30 of this year. And we now