

This technical corrections bill will make it possible to continue work on over 500 projects that were stymied for various reasons. It is going to put a billion dollars into our economy, and it will provide tens of thousands of jobs. Senator INHOFE and I are very grateful that—even though this was not an easy week and this bill took so many twists and turns and we had to work our way through many issues—we have arrived at the point where it passed.

Let me say how much I enjoyed working with my staff and the staff of Senator INHOFE. I am going to read the names of those who deserve to be recognized and thanked. From my staff are Bettina Porier, Kathy Dedrick, Tyler Rushforth, Jeff Rosato, Erik Olsen, Paul Ordal, and the rest of my staff. We do work as a team.

I thank Senator INHOFE's staff, and I am sure there are more to be thanked, but the ones I worked with closely are, of course, Andy Wheeler, chief over there, Ruth Van Mark, James O'Keefe, and Alex Herrgott. We are so grateful to you for being close to us, staying close to us, letting us know when there were problems. We appreciate that.

I say to the majority leader, Senator REID, how much I appreciated his interest in this bill. He really helped us. Bob Herbert, of his staff, Ron Wynch, and Mike Castellano—we had technical issues and legal issues and they were there.

If I am leaving anyone out, please know it is not my intention. So many others helped us.

Mr. CARPER. Will the Senator yield for a moment?

Mrs. BOXER. Yes.

Mr. CARPER. The Senator is leaving herself out and Senator INHOFE. On behalf of all of us who have been anxious for this day—to see this technical corrections bill put together and have the result we have had, I thank the Senator for dealing with the competing forces and getting the job done. Someone said it was ugly, but it is beautiful in the end. It is going to be good for the folks in all of our States. We worked together in a bipartisan way, and I am grateful for that.

Mrs. BOXER. I thank the Senator. Senator CARPER, from Delaware, is one of the senior members on the committee, whom we love working with. He is part of our team. We have a great committee. It is why I like to be a legislator.

I want to say, in closing, to floor staff, all of you here, thank you for your patience. You have to answer questions. The pages have to be available to us. You all let us know what is going on and whether we are doing it right or wrong. Of course, in particular, I thank Lula, Tim, and Dave. Without the three of you, we could not have gotten this done.

Yes, sometimes when you get to this point, it is a little like making sausage—that is what they say about how a bill becomes a law; it is not a pretty thing. But we got it done. The most

important thing is all of the people who helped us from the outside groups—I thank them—such as the construction industry, the construction workers, the transit district operators, the sand and gravel people. You know who you are. You made the point that we should not bog this bill down, that we should get it going.

I am delighted we had a victory here with the Water Resources Development Act. We are pleased. Up and coming, we are going to have a markup in a couple of weeks, and then we will get to global warming. I don't know how that will end, but I know it is going to be very exciting. We hope everybody will participate in that debate.

Is the Senator from Virginia going to speak?

I will yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Virginia is recognized.

(The remarks of Mr. WARNER are printed in today's RECORD under "Morning Business".)

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

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will call the roll.

The assistant 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. TESTER). Without objection, it is so ordered.

REPUBLICAN FILIBUSTERS

Mr. DURBIN. Mr. President, today the Senate had a historic moment. We passed a bill that has been long awaited across America—one that was read about and heard about. It finally passed this afternoon. It was a bill called the technical corrections bill.

It was a bill that changed and corrected the punctuation and references in a highway bill we enacted several years ago. It was not that historic. In fact, it is fairly routine. You see, after you pass a bill that affects the whole United States and billions of dollars, sometimes, on reflection, you find some of the facts were wrong, some of the words were wrong; and you have to clean it up. And so a technical corrections bill is very common around here. It happens to correct mistakes, to make sure things are done well and done accurately. It is the kind of bill that historically would pass without any debate whatsoever. Many times it would pass by a voice vote late at night when no one is here because there is so little controversy attached to it.

So despite what I said at the outset, it is not that historic. But what made this process historic, and we are researching this, but we believe for the first time in the history of the Senate, the Republicans initiated not one but two filibusters on our effort to pass this technical corrections bill.

We brought this bill to the floor a week ago today, asked that it pass, and

then faced a filibuster from the Republicans. That filibuster was broken on Monday, with a 93-to-1 vote, and then a second filibuster had to be initiated by the Republicans before we could finally pass the bill today.

For those following this from the outside, I am afraid I might have lost some of them. But what it boiled down to was that the Republican minority was determined that we would burn 1 week of Senate activity on a bill that should have taken 5 minutes. They were determined that we would have a succession of rollcall votes on a bill which by and large had no controversy. There was one little issue that could have been resolved quickly, perhaps in an hour, in a good-faith debate with a vote. They stretched it out for a week.

Why are we in this stall? Why do the Republicans want to slow us down? It is part of a strategy. Republican filibusters this Congress, as of today, went up to 66; 66 Republican filibusters this Congress and still counting. Is that a lot? Historically, the Senate has never had more than 57 filibusters in any 2-year period. We have had 66 in a matter of a year and 3 or 4 months. So they are about to break all records with filibusters in an attempt to slow down the Senate. They can't even come to a bipartisan agreement on a technical corrections bill. The Republicans insist on these filibuster rollcalls on a technical corrections bill. Why?

First, they want to slow the Senate down as much as possible so we don't act on issues that really count. They don't want us to take up an energy bill to talk about energy tax credits so that we can expand renewable sources of energy. They don't want us to take up a bill to deal with children's health insurance, a bill vetoed twice by President Bush, which would provide health care protection for many children not poor enough to qualify for Medicaid, not fortunate enough to have parents with health insurance. They don't want us to take up important legislation dealing with the state of our economy, legislation to extend unemployment benefits to the millions of Americans who are out of work. Those numbers are reaching modern records. We know many of these families are struggling to find a job. We want to extend benefits so these people can feed their families while they are looking for work. Republicans don't want us to take up that legislation. So they keep throwing filibusters in our path, slowing down the Senate, making sure the Senate never gets to the issues that are critically important. Whether it is funding our schools or paying for health care, taking care of unemployed workers, providing money for medical research, trying to bring down the high cost of gasoline, the high cost of health care and college, they continue to throw filibusters in our path.

GOP is shorthand for the Republican Party. It technically used to stand for Grand Old Party. The Republicans in the Senate have created a new GOP.

They want the Senate to be a "Graveyard of Progress." They don't want us to take up this legislation. They don't want us to take up these issues. They don't want to see any change. They don't want to see any progress. That is why their message at this point is so empty. All they can do is say no, no to the issues that really count with American families.

Eventually the American people will speak, in November, in an election. They will decide whether this Republican approach of filibusters and stopping progress and stopping change is what they want to see or whether they want to bring to the Senate new people who can start moving this country forward. Eventually the American people have the last word. I am sorry we have virtually wasted a week and the time of this great institution with more Republican filibusters. But it is their strategy; it is their plan. It is the way they address the serious issues facing America.

WORLD FOOD CRISIS

Mr. DURBIN. Mr. President, I fear we are on the brink of a major humanitarian crisis around the world. Food prices are rising beyond the reach of people in countries as disparate and far apart as Haiti, Egypt, and Thailand. Food prices and their increase have led to demonstrations, sometimes even violent demonstrations in many parts of the world, creating real threats to the stability of those countries. As many as 33 countries face a growing risk of hunger and social unrest that is caused when people are hungry and frightened about their future. Quite simply, I am concerned that we are steps away from a world food crisis, a crisis that could have a dramatic impact on some of the world's poorest nations.

The other week, World Bank President Robert Zoellick warned:

For countries where food comprises about half to three-quarters of consumption, there is no margin for survival.

In the United States, the poorest 20 percent, the poorest one-fifth of our population, spends about 16 percent of their income on food. It is a lot compared to many of us. But in the poorest nations, those families spend more than half of what they earn to feed themselves. In Nigeria, families spend an average of 73 percent of the money they earn on food; in Vietnam, 65 percent. Even as food prices soar, humanitarian aid has been forced to scale back. In Cambodia, the World Food Program, which is largely sustained and supported by the United States, has suspended a feeding program for 500,000 schoolchildren because of food shortages. Rising food prices mean hunger, and with hunger and no real hope of ending it come panic, desperation, and, ultimately civil unrest.

At any given time, chronic hunger threatens the welfare of an estimated 850 million people in the world.

We talk a lot about the forces of extremists and terrorists and fundamentalists, how destabilizing they are with their acts of violence in countries where they kill innocent people. But I have to say, if this world food crisis continues unabated, the instability of terrorism may pale in comparison.

In Thailand, local farmers are reporting theft of their rice crops, as supplies from other countries are going down and prices are going up dramatically. Protests have turned violent in many places. In Yemen, food prices have doubled in recent months. Protests and riots there left at least 12 people dead. Protests in Cameroon earlier this year killed more than two dozen people and led to desperate attempts by the Government to raise wages and reduce customs duties on food products. Rioters in Burkina Faso looted stores and burned Government buildings. The Prime Minister of Haiti was forced to resign following days of deadly violence over rising food prices. Last weekend, a U.N. peacekeeper transporting food for his unit was dragged from his vehicle and shot execution style in the Haitian capital by protesters.

The risk of unrest is even more troubling in areas such as Darfur, where the World Food Program is feeding up to 3 million people a day. This is a humanitarian time bomb which threatens to explode at any moment.

I have seen food aid programs operate overseas, and they can make a big difference. I saw one program when I traveled to a slum in Nairobi, Kenya. It is a slum of lean-to homes where more than 600,000 people live. It is called Kibera. If you saw the movie "The Constant Gardener," much of it was filmed in the slum of Kibera in Nairobi, Kenya. Some people think up to 1 million people live there from time to time, some 600,000. Nobody even knows.

When you visit there, there are people as far as the eye can see—kids playing in the streets, in the filth, in railway yards, everywhere.

But when I visited there, there was a scene that was almost hard to believe. It was near the holiday season. The local schools were on vacation, but they asked the students to come back to greet this Senator who was coming from America. About 40 or 50 children put on their uniforms, left their vacation time at home, to come back to school. It wasn't to see me; believe me. It was because they promised them that if they would come back to school that day, they would feed them. The feeding program in that little school is part of what is known as the McGovern-Dole school feeding program, named after two former great Senators who served from South Dakota and Kansas.

I saw the way that food program worked. There was a noon lunch which consisted of a pot of boiling cereal. It looked a lot like oatmeal or some form of porridge. They ladled it into plastic cups. The kids stood in line like they

were at Baskin Robbins in Springfield, IL, hoping to get a double-dip ice cream cone. They were so excited to get something to eat. It was the only meal they were going to have that day. They were willing to put up with this politician, wear their uniforms, come in from vacation, on the chance they could fill that cup. They stood there and waited, just to get one meal.

The World Food Program has issued an extraordinary emergency appeal because food programs like that one in Kenya may not last. There is a shortfall of some \$500 million in food programs across the world. Considering the high cost of food and fuel prices to transport it, the shortfall is no surprise. But it requires immediate action. The U.S. contribution to the World Food Program is important because it doesn't just feed hungry kids. It tells the world who we are.

Right now there are people who are not our friends, who are in fact our enemies, who are advertising against the United States. On television sets and other places around the world, there is an image of America that is not even close to the truth. They suggest that we are warmongers and selfish people. We are not.

We have to prove to the world again that our values count, and we will stand behind them. This global food crisis is the kind of challenge that gives us our opportunity.

It also is important to quell the growing security concerns attached with a global food crisis. Senators JOHN KERRY and JOE BIDEN joined me today in sending a letter to President Bush urging him to support additional funding for food aid in the fiscal year 2008 supplemental appropriations bill. The President is going to come to us shortly and ask for \$108 billion to continue the war in Iraq and in Afghanistan. He will tell us this is an emergency. The world food crisis is also an emergency. It is one we should deal with. If we are really focused on stability and peace in Iraq, we should not ignore the fact that the shortages of food and hunger around the world can lead to instability in many other places.

As a first step, the Department of Agriculture has committed to providing \$200 million in emergency food assistance through the Bill Emerson humanitarian trust. Bill Emerson, former Republican Congressman from the Boothill area of Missouri, was a fine fellow. I got to know him when I served in the House. He really cared about children and feeding people. So \$200 million in his name is certainly money well spent.

Moving forward, though, we have to understand that is not enough. We are going to need to add more to make sure this crisis doesn't occur.

We can share our bountiful harvest. We can help the poorest people in the world. We can demonstrate in that way the finest elements of the American spirit.