

tax dollars are being misused or wasted.

I think we have entered a time in American history where the line between Government and free enterprise has become muddled more than ever. During good times and bad—but particularly during times such as today—the American system of capitalism and free enterprise should not be manipulated for the benefit of insiders. We expect the people who are setting policy to be independent and above that kind of action.

I will note that the reports concerning how the AIG bailout was handled remain unchallenged. This is what the report is indicating: that Mr. Paulson, who was Secretary of the Treasury and who had been the CEO of Goldman Sachs, was in and out of a meeting—a very important meeting—involving the insurance company AIG. Also, in that meeting, as I recall, was Mr. Kashkari, Mr. Paulson's assistant, who was also from Goldman Sachs. But who else was in that meeting? The chairman of the board of Goldman Sachs—the current, immediate chairman at that time—and they were talking about an insurance company, AIG, and they decided to pump \$80 billion into that company. Now we have pumped in \$170 billion. Of course, we now know that of the money that went to AIG, \$20 billion went to Goldman Sachs.

So these are the kinds of things that are causing me great difficulty. I am a lawyer. I know how things are supposed to work. When you ask for money, you raise your hand under oath. People ought to be asking you questions. If you are in bankruptcy, you have to be cross-examined by lawyers. The judge gets to ask questions. You have to submit certified financial statements before you get money. We cannot just allow a handful of people to meet in secret, decide we are in an emergency, and pass out hundreds of billions of dollars without the kind of accountability that I think is necessary.

I will say to my colleagues in the Senate, that when we passed the TARP bill, I opposed it, and I said it was far too much a grant of power to one man—the Secretary of the Treasury—to allocate money that Congress should be appropriating. I raised that point, and it was one of my top objections. I believe history has shown the language in that bill was even more broad than we thought. Because, originally, we were told the money would be used to buy toxic mortgages from banks that were in trouble. That is what Mr. Paulson told us. That is what everybody thought they were voting on—except the language was much broader than that, if anybody took the time to read it.

As soon as he got the money, within a week or so, he had decided not to buy toxic assets but to buy stock in the banks. He bought stock in the banks. Then, pretty soon, he was buying stock

in an insurance company—AIG—pumping half the money into one insurance company, and \$40 billion of the money that went into AIG went to foreign banks to pay the claims those banks had against AIG, as it did with other banks. We, the taxpayers, became the guarantor of an insurance company's responsibilities, which was never discussed with the Senate, the House or the American people. They just did it.

The amount of money they committed was tremendous—I believe \$170 billion; whereas, the Federal highway budget for the whole United States is just \$40 billion, and the education budget for the United States, the Federal Government, is \$100 billion.

I don't like this process. I am seeing too many stories such as this one involving Mr. Friedman, and it is time for Congress to get serious about it. I hope the Obama administration will stand and be counted. Mr. Friedman came in, I believe, under the Bush administration, so I am not being partisan. But it is time for the Obama administration to take a stand too. Mr. Geithner was in the middle of most of this; he helped write the proposal and was, what many called, the brains behind the Paulson proposal—the \$700 billion bailout.

This is a continuing problem in both administrations. It is time for Congress to reassert its constitutional responsibility to monitor the purse and to not allow money to be distributed in these kinds of sums without direct approval of the people through their elected representatives.

I thank the Chair, I yield the floor, and I 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. DODD. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent the order for the quorum call be rescinded.

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

CONCLUSION OF MORNING BUSINESS

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. Morning business is closed.

CREDIT CARDHOLDERS' BILL OF RIGHTS ACT OF 2009

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. Under the previous order, the Senate will proceed to the consideration of H.R. 627, which the clerk will report.

The assistant legislative clerk read as follows:

A bill (H.R. 627) to amend the Truth in Lending Act to establish fair and transparent practices relating to the extension of credit under an open end consumer credit plan, and for other purposes.

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

Mr. DODD. Mr. President, this is the Credit Card Accountability, Responsibility, and Disclosure Act. That is what we are going to talk about over the next few days, about credit cards, about interest rates, penalty fees, and other matters.

Let me call up the amendment.

AMENDMENT NO. 1058

(Purpose: In the nature of a substitute)

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. The clerk will report.

The assistant legislative clerk read as follows:

The Senator from Connecticut [Mr. DODD], for himself and Mr. SHELBY, proposes an amendment numbered 1058.

Mr. DODD. I ask unanimous consent the reading of the amendment be dispensed with.

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

(The amendment is printed in today's RECORD under "Text of Amendments.")

Mr. DODD. For the purpose of my colleagues, this is the substitute amendment that Senator SHELBY and I have worked on over the last number of days. I want to begin by expressing, first, my gratitude to the majority leader, Senator REID, for his leadership and support in the effort to get this matter to the point we are this afternoon. Of course I express my gratitude to Senator SHELBY and his staff as well as my own staff, who worked all through the weekend to try to resolve outstanding differences to bring us to the point where we have the bipartisan proposal to offer reform of the credit card laws in our country that most Americans do not need much of a speech about. Many times we are involved in a discussion and we are informing the public for the first time about a problem, or at least a very limited number of people are aware of it. In this case, the public is probably more aware than many about problems with interest rates and fees and penalties and the like. Every single day people go through this. This afternoon I want to talk about this bill. I want to tell my colleagues what is in this credit card reform bill.

I thank the Presiding Officer, a member of the Banking Committee, along with other members of the committee who worked with us over the last number of weeks to try to complete a product here that can enjoy, I hope, as we go through this over the next day or two, broad bipartisan support.

Let me take, if I can, the next few minutes and talk about the bill specifically, what the provisions are and why we have worked so hard to pull this bill together.

This is not a new issue for me. I have been at credit card reform issues for actually more than 20 years. In the past I have not succeeded, candidly, reforming the credit card laws of our Nation. But in light of what has occurred over the last number of months and years, I think there is a greater indication of the need to step up and create