Ms. COLLINS. Mr. President, I rise today to bid farewell and to express my gratitude to Senator MEL MARTINEZ as he retires from service in the U.S. Senate. During his time here, he established an admirable reputation for hard work, dedication to his State and our Nation, and a commitment to principles.

I have had the privilege of working with Senator MARTINEZ as a member of the Armed Services Committee and its Seapower Subcommittee. In addition, we worked together on the Special Committee on Aging, where he has served as ranking member.

Working with Senator MARTINEZ has always been rewarding. This has been especially true on the Armed Services Committee, where he brings to bear on defense issues both detailed knowledge and long-range vision. On the Seapower Subcommittee, he has been a strong ally in keeping our Navy pre-eminent and has been a highly effective advocate for continuing the DDG–1000 program, the next generation of destroyers.

Senator MARTINEZ's work on the Special Committee on Aging continued his long record of shaping policies important to seniors in Florida and throughout America. From local government to his service as Secretary of Housing and Urban Development and in the Senate, he has been a strong voice for ensuring that all Americans live longer, healthier, and more productive lives.

But the greatest legacy MEL MARTINEZ leaves the Senate is his inspiring life story. Born in Cuba, he arrived in America at age 15. He earned his undergraduate and law degrees from Florida State University, and went on to practice law for 25 years. He demonstrates the highest qualities of our nation of immigrants, of the opportunities America provides, and of the character and determination of those who come to our shores. His desire to continue to work for expanded freedoms to the people of Cuba exemplifies his character and principles. I join my colleagues in wishing him and his family well, and in looking forward to many more contributions to the public good from this man of many gifts and accomplishments.

Mr. MCCAIN. Mr. President, today I rise to recognize and thank my colleague and friend from Florida, MEL MARTINEZ, for his service to this country and to wish him luck in the years to come. I am proud and humbled to have had the chance to work with MEL over the last few years on some of the most difficult and trying issues of our time and I will miss his honesty, heart and dedication when he leaves the Senate this week.

While many of my Senate colleagues are familiar with MEL's inspiring personal story I feel that it is important for the American people to know that MEL MARTINEZ's life has personified the American dream and teaches us what we can all accomplish through hard work, a love of God and country and true dedication to a higher cause. MEL came to the U.S. in the 1960s as a young Cuban immigrant and became the first Cuban-American to serve in a Presidential Cabinet, as Secretary of Housing and Urban Development, and then the first Cuban-American U.S. Senator.

As a freshman Senator, MEL didn't shy away from the tough issues—he did not sit back and let others tackle the tough, controversial tasks—he dove in head first. Personally, the most memorable example of MEL's courageous work is his support of comprehensive immigration reform.

The 2006 and 2007 immigration debates were difficult times in the U.S. Senate. We had both political parties and an American public divided on an issue that I still believe will define the future of our country for generations to come. For many, it would have been tempting to sit on the sidelines, take the safe votes, keep your head down and just wait for this one to pass, but not MEL MARTINEZ. He took his strong personal convictions and put them in to action. We spent many hours together, working in a bipartisan fashion to try to reach an agreement that could be acceptable to both sides of the aisle and ensure the security of our Nation. Every day, MEL MARTINEZ was in the trenches, on the floor, working to improve the bill, working to reach a bipartisan compromise and working for a better future for our country and our children.

I also had the pleasure of traveling with MEL to the Republic of Georgia where he met with Georgian leaders and spoke openly about the importance of United States support for freedom in all countries, both those distant and close to our shores. MEL spoke with conviction due to his early childhood spent in a country controlled by a repressive dictator.

Many in this Chamber will fondly recall MEL's leadership in the Senate and his work for the State of Florida. I will remember my friend, his courageous leadership on the tough issues and his willingness to put the future of our Nation before his own self interest.

CONCLUSION OF MORNING BUSINESS

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Morning business is closed.

TRAVEL PROMOTION ACT OF 2009

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Under the previous order, the Senate will resume consideration of S. 1023, which the clerk will report.

The assistant legislative clerk read as follows:

A bill (S. 1023) to establish a nonprofit corporation to communicate United States entry policies and otherwise promote leisure, business, and scholarly travel to the United States.

Pending:

Reid (for Dorgan/Rockefeller) amendment No. 1347, of a perfecting nature.

Reid amendment No. 1348 (to amendment No. 1347), to change the enactment date.

Reid amendment No. 1349 (to the language proposed to be stricken by amendment No. 1347), to change the enactment date.

Reid amendment No. 1350 (to amendment No. 1349), of a perfecting nature.

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Mr. CASEY). The Senator from North Dakota.

Mr. DORGAN. Mr. President, this legislation is now in the 30 hours postcloture period. We had a cloture vote late yesterday afternoon, and I believe the 30 hours postcloture will expire sometime later this afternoon, at 4 o'clock or 4:30 or so.

Let me again explain what we are trying to do in this legislation. This is reasonably simple. In all of the partisan dust that is created in this country, I think this is one of the few pieces of legislation that has broad bipartisan support. We have, I believe, 53 cosponsors for this bill—Republicans and Democrats—and the proposition is very simple.

First of all, we have lost a lot of jobs in this country. We are in the deepest recession since the Great Depression, and a whole lot of folks have lost their jobs. This is a bill to try to create more jobs. But it is a bill that especially addresses a problem that has been created in the last 8 or 9 years.

Since the year 2000, here are a couple numbers. Since the year 2000, there are 56 million more people living on this planet who are taking international trips. Let me say that again. This is a big planet with billions of people living on it. By the way, half of them have never made a phone call. Half live on less than $2 a day. But on this big planet there are people who travel internationally, and there are 56 million more international travelers right now than there were 9 years ago. But there are 633,000 fewer international travelers visiting the United States than visited our country 9 years ago.

Why is that the case? And why is it important? Well, it is important for a number of reasons. It is important because international travelers—I am talking about overseas travelers—on average spend about $4,500 per person per trip. Their travel supports a lot of jobs in the tourism industry. It supports jobs in every State in our country. So it is important for that reason—it creates jobs.

But it is important for another reason as well. When people come here from other parts of the world and see America and experience the culture and the character of our country, they leave, almost inevitably, with a very positive impression of this country of ours.

So for two reasons this is important. We have fewer international visitors—633,000 fewer—per year than we had 9 years ago, even at a time when 56 million more people are traveling around the globe for overseas visits.

I described yesterday what other countries are doing. Other countries

are saying: We understand that international travel and tourism creates jobs. So other countries are reaching out with promotions. Japan, Italy, France, India, England—you name it—they all have aggressive promotions around the world, to say: Come to our country. Come see the Eiffel Tower. See the wonders of France. See the beauty of Ireland. Come to India and experience the interesting culture of India. All of these countries are doing very aggressive international promotion for the international traveler, to say: Come to our country.

Something happened in the year 2001. Obviously, on 9/11 we had a terrorist attack—a devastating terrorist attack. As a result of that, our country tightened up on visas. We made it more difficult to come to our country. At the same time as we tightened up on visas, those who did want to come often had to wait for long periods of time, and they waited in long lines in order to get a visa. Then with respect to the Iraq war and other policies, people became upset with our country. So the result has been a substantial decrease in international travelers coming to our country.

The purpose of this legislation is very simple. It is called the Travel Promotion Act of 2009, but it establishes a public sector/private sector partnership to begin promoting international travel again to the United States of America.

This is one of the few pieces of legislation that actually saves the government money. The Congressional Budget Office scores it as a $425 million in reduction in the Federal budget deficit over the coming 10 years. So this is not something that expands the deficit. This reduces the Federal budget deficit—that's No. 1. No. 2, it is bipartisan. A fairly large number of Democrats and Republicans have joined together to say: We want to do this. The vote on the cloture motion yesterday was 80–19. No. 3, organizations such as the U.S. Chamber of Commerce and others have weighed in saying this is very important for us to do. Other countries are engaged in this kind of promotion for their countries and we need to do it for ours.

So I, along with my colleagues, have authored this legislation. In the previous Congress, as chairman of the subcommittee that deals with these tourism issues, I authored the legislation. My colleagues, Senator ENSIGN, Senator KLOBUCHAR, Senator REID, and many others, Republicans and Democrats, have joined in the legislation that would create an opportunity for this country to compete internationally for international tourism and travel.

Mr. President, we will, I think, for the next 5 or 6 hours, stand at parade rest listening to people talk about what they want to talk about on the floor of the Senate, and it is a procedure that is a bit Byzantine. Most people would not understand the procedure. On something as noncontroversial as this, as widely supported by Republicans and Democrats, something that actually reduces the Federal budget deficit and extends our ability to create jobs in this country, we got 80 Senators to vote for cloture, which meant we had to file a cloture motion. That meant 2 days intervened because it takes 2 days to have a cloture motion ripen. Then we got cloture with 80 votes. Now we stand at parade rest until sometime around 4:30 this afternoon because 30 hours—if the minority insists—30 hours has to expire. At the end of 30 hours postcloture, then we will, presumably, have a vote on the legislation.

I am pleased to work with my colleagues, Republicans and Democrats. This legislation is the right thing to do right now. At a time when this is an increasingly smaller planet, an increasingly smaller world in which we live, I think it is important for our country to reach out to the rest of the world. Doing so is in our self-interest because it creates jobs and expands our economy. But it is also in our self-interest because what we have created in this country is quite extraordinary.

This is not a circumstance where we would promote travel to America for one destination. It is travel to America to see all of this great country in its grandeur. There is so much to see and experience here, and we know from polls that have been done with international travelers that when people come to this country and travel here and experience what exists in our country and understand the character and the culture of our country, they leave with an unbelievably positive attitude about the United States. That is an awfully good thing, it seems to me.

So, again, this is a bipartisan bill that will save the Federal Government money; reduce the Federal budget deficit; combine the best ideas of Republicans and Democrats; and had 80 votes for cloture. I hope we have at least that on final passage. And perhaps we will start off this work period of September and October on a pretty positive note, stepping forward together to say, Let's do something that strengthens our country.

Mr. President, I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Arizona.

Mr. KYL. Mr. President, the United States is a very popular tourist destination. According to the Department of Commerce, foreign travel here reached record highs in the year 2008—an increase of 16 percent over the previous record set in 2007. So our tourism industry is booming. People from all over the world want to visit our cities and see our sights. Almost every State and community has tourism promotion programs that are very robust which help to accommodate that desire for foreign travelers to come here. So I am a bit baffled by the legislation that is pending before us.

The Tourism Protection Act, in my view, is both unnecessary and the wrong approach to attracting visitors from abroad. The bill would create yet another government-affiliated office of tourism. Why do we need that? The Department of Commerce already has a tourism office and private sector businesses and other entities already have the demonstrated capability to promote tourism. According to the companies and lobbyists who are pushing this bill, they already are. So why spend almost $100 million a year for a new and unnecessary Federal entity to market and research travel and tourism? Research tourism? What is there to research? I wonder if this is one of the reasons why the American people have a lot of questions about the capability of their representatives here in Washington to do the right thing.

The bill would impose a new $10 fee on foreign visitors. Now there is a way to attract more visitors: Charge them for coming here. Maybe we need that research after all. Of course, imposing a new user fee or tax on nearly every foreign visitor is hardly a route to promoting new tourism. Obviously, we should avoid creating impediments to tourism if your first goal is to attract more tourists. The tax actually could hinder visits by families. For those families who do visit, every dollar they have to spend paying the Federal Government is one less dollar they can spend on American businesses, on our local communities, on the restaurants and shops and hotels and cab rides, and so on. The $10 fee may not sound like much, but for a family of five, that is fifty bucks to promote tourism.

We all agree that tourism boosts our economy in numerous ways and is vital to our economic recovery. Nobody has to lecture me about tourism. My State of Arizona relies a great deal on tourism for our economy, and it is a wonderful destination place for folks to visit. I don't think we need—the Federal Government—to take another bite out of our tourism dollars.

I am also concerned about the inevitable retaliatory effect of this legislation. Senator DEMINT wrote an op-ed in the Washington Post on Monday and pointed out that the European Union and other governments have said that if we impose a tax on foreign visitors, they will follow suit and impose a reciprocal tax on American visitors to their countries. That is not a very good idea either, is it? Do we want to pass legislation that will lead to new travel fees on Americans?

Instead of creating an additional government tourism office, I think we should work to fund the actual Federal responsibilities we have that relate to visitors coming to our country such as upgrading or adding infrastructure at our ports and making visa service improvements. There are always improvements we can make in this regard. The easier we can make it for tourists to come here, the more likely they will come.

So if we want to spend $100 million, for example, to make it more attractive for tourists to enter the United

States, there are plenty of ways to do it that relate directly to our responsibilities. We don't have to create another redundant office of tourism and charge the tourists to fund it.

At a time when much of the world is experiencing economic hardship, we should support policies that make tourism in the United States more attractive, not more costly. That is why I believe this legislation is misguided, unnecessary and, in the end, harmful.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from North Dakota.

Mr. DORGAN. Mr. President, perhaps while my colleague is on the floor, I think it would be useful to at least discuss a couple of things that are apparently in disagreement.

The issue of a $10 fee that could be used in a public and private sector partnership, again, supported by the Chamber of Commerce and all of the organizations that want to support this country as a destination for international tourism—let me put on the board a chart that shows the fees our U.S. travelers currently pay to visit the visa waiver countries. They charge us fees. We are talking about a $10 fee to people from these countries—$10. Here is what we are charged if we go to France: a $51 fee, Americans going to France. We don't propose that here. We can see that in Spain, $14; the Czech Republic, $27. They are going to retaliate? They already charge the American traveler a fee when we come and go, and we are talking about a $10 fee that would allow our country to promote our country as a destination just as their countries are doing. We are not even in the competition.

The thing I wanted to ask my colleague about is, he talked about international tourism. I wonder if we disagree on this: There is a very big difference between the classification of international tourists and overseas travelers, travelers from foreign countries abroad. International tourists include Mexico and Canada—and by the way, the research that the Senator seems to diminish tells us a lot about this information. On average, a visitor from Mexico and Canada to the United States on a trip is going to spend around $900. On average, a visitor to this country from a foreign country overseas is going to spend about $4,500, a pretty big difference in terms of visiting Arizona or North Dakota and spending that kind of money.

But I wonder if we have a disagreement with this: All of the data tells us that in the last 9 years, global travel has increased by 56 million more people moving around the globe doing international tourism travel, and that during the same time, the United States has actually had 633,000 fewer overseas visitors than 9 years ago. Do we disagree on that? Because my colleague from Arizona seemed to suggest that everything is at a record high. That is not the case. It is not the case. Overseas travel from people coming to this country is down. It is down at a time when overseas travel is booming all around the rest of the world and we have over a half a million people a year fewer coming to this country. Do we disagree on that?

Mr. KYL. Mr. President, I say to my colleague two things. First, the statistics I quoted were for the last 2 years, 2007 and 2008. I don't have the statistics for I believe he said 10 years ago.

Mr. DORGAN. I am also talking about a different classification. I am talking about overseas travel. The statistics my colleague quoted I believe are statistics that include Mexican and Canadian travel to the United States. Obviously those are contiguous countries. We have a lot of people moving in and out. But I am talking about overseas travel. The official numbers on overseas travel I believe are that we have 633,000 fewer people coming to this country from overseas for tourism than existed 9 years ago. Do you subscribe to that?

Mr. KYL. Mr. President, I say to my colleague I was not specifically referring to Canada and Mexico. I didn't even mention those two countries by name. I would be happy to get the source of the statistical information I presented, provide that to my colleague so we can make a comparison.

The other point I would make with regard to fees, I am not doing anything except reporting the news, which is that countries abroad say if we propose this fee, they will reciprocate. The fact that some of them already impose a fee may mean they are going to increase their fee, and that is obviously not a good thing. It seems to me any fee that any of the countries imposes gets us into a little bit of a bidding war. Are we going to try to attract tourism from other countries by raising fees on the tourists who come here? I don't think that is a very good policy. If those countries want to have a fee, I don't think it is very smart for them to have it, but I can't affect that, except by trying to ensure that they don't have a reason to reciprocate against the United States if we impose a fee.

Mr. DORGAN. Mr. President, I would simply say, it is not a matter of reciprocating against us; they already impose these fees on American travelers. Our determination to impose a minor fee—$10 for an international traveler from a visa waiver country when they use the ESTA system once every two years, not every visit—it seems to me to suggest is much less than other countries charge US travelers. And the Senator described an op-ed piece by my colleague Senator DEMINT which, in my judgment, is full of misinformation, full of it.

By the way, I am sending the Washington Post a response to it today. But, look: International travel. My friend from Arizona talked about research. The Commerce Department research shows that in the first quarter of this year, there was a 10-percent decrease in international travel to this country. That is the official data from the Commerce Department. So it is not the case that tourism is at a record high, that we are setting all of these records; and it is the case, in my judgment, based on empirical data and research, that we have far fewer overseas visitors coming to this country now than we did 9 years ago.

I am telling my colleague something that relates, in my judgment, to substantial lost opportunity for a number of reasons: jobs we should have that we don't have; and second, an awfully good impression about this great country of ours by people who come here and visit it.

I think my colleague will agree with me that post 9/11, there were a lot of things done that suggested to people around the world that it is going to take you a while to get to the United States because you are not very welcome there. It is going to take a long time to get a visa. You are going to wait a long time.

By the way, I have something I wanted to show my colleague. This is all 2008 material, by the way, but there were headlines such as these: The Sydney Morning Herald, Sydney, Australia: ''Coming to America Isn't Easy.'' The Guardian, United Kingdom: ''America: More Hassle Than It's Worth?'' The Sunday Times in London: ''Travel to America? No Thanks.''

There is something missing here that we ought to be concerned about because my friend from Arizona represents a State that has a lot of tourism and a lot of jobs related to tourism. Virtually every State in this country will benefit from being able to promote America's grandeur and opportunity for people to come here and travel here, and we are not even in the game.

Mr. KYL. Mr. President, if I could interrupt my colleague for 1 moment to make a quick point and then I will have to leave the floor. I think the headlines my colleague reads are an important part of this debate. That is why I made the point that if we are going to concentrate on trying to attract more people to our shores, there are a lot of things we can do to take the hassle out of traveling that do directly relate to our responsibilities at our ports of entry, our visa system, and other things we can do to take that hassle out of traveling to the United States that are our responsibility and that we should do. I would put those responsibilities ahead of fancy brochures and advertising campaigns to try to tell people it could be nice to come to the United States when there are other ways we can make our shores more attractive to them.

So as I promised my colleague, I will get the source of the information I quoted with regard to the statistical information demonstrating more travel in the last few years and then we can have a further conversation about that.

Mr. DORGAN. Mr. President, I respect my colleague's views. I would only say this: The evidence is clear and

it is not debatable that fewer people are coming to this country from overseas than did 9 years ago. In my judgment, we ought to be concerned about that and do something about that by encouraging them. Yes, let's deal with the wait times on visas. We are working on that and we have made some progress on that. But it is also the case that if while India and France and Japan and China and others are engaged in very substantial promotional campaigns that say ''come to our country; come and see what we have,'' and if while they are doing that with aggressive promotion we are sitting back and saying, ''Well, we are not going to say anything much; we don't have a promotional campaign encouraging people to come to America,'' in my judgment, we lose that opportunity.

Advertising works; I don't care whether it is a television commercial or a promotion. All I am saying is don't diminish that, because promoting travel to the United States can work, but deciding we are not going to promote anything I know does not work. In fact, in this past decade, we have been in a circumstance where after 9/11, it was pretty clear that we were going to make it much more difficult for people to come to this country, and did. Then we went through a period of the Iraq war and other things when a lot of people were pretty upset, so we saw a very substantial reduction in the amount of tourism coming to this country from overseas.

Again, I am knowledgeable about the op-ed piece that was written in the Washington Post described by my colleague.

I am just telling you that there will be a response to that because much of that had no basis in fact. So all I hope is that the 80 Senators who supported this yesterday will continue to support the notion of creating jobs in this country, on a bipartisan basis, with a piece of legislation that actually reduces the Federal budget deficit. What a novel thing that is.

Again, I have respect for those who disagree, but I don't want there to be disagreement about the facts. We do research in the Commerce Department on who is coming to our country and how many. That is valuable research. Let's take advantage of that and understand what it says.

Overseas travel across the planet is up, up, up, way up, and to this country, it is down. There is something wrong with that, something unhealthy about it. We can change that. That is what this legislation is. It is an attempt to change it.

Let me quote Mark Twain. I probably should do this every time I speak on the floor because I am always trying to sell something. In this case, it is bipartisan legislation that I think advantages this country.

I will say this again. Mark Twain was asked once if he would engage in a debate being scheduled. He answered, ''Yes, as long as I can take the negative side.'' When asked why would he take the negative side when he didn't even know the subject matter, he said, ''The negative side will take no preparation.''

I understand it is easier to write a big-old op-ed whacking away at things than it is to construct something that has merit and will advance this country's interests. I believe this bill has merit, and so do the 79 other Senators who supported this legislation yesterday. Later this afternoon, I look forward to passing this legislation through the full Senate.

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. BURRIS. 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. BURRIS. Mr. President, I wish to speak on the issue of travel that is before the Senate this morning.

We live in a world divided. International tension, mistrust, even wars too often separate nation from nation. But every 2 years, 10,000 athletes from more than 200 countries come together to celebrate the human spirit. They meet in competition, arriving on the world stage from all five inhabited continents.

Each of these five continents is represented by a single color circle, a ring entwined with four others to form the familiar symbol worn by every Olympic athlete.

The Olympic and Paralympic Games are a powerful force for world unity and a boon to any city that hosts them. In 2016, the summer games will bring millions of dollars and international spotlight to one of four world cities. Selected by the U.S. Olympic Committee from a broad field of candidate cities, Chicago is one of only four finalists for the 2016 Olympics, along with Madrid, Rio de Janeiro, and Tokyo. The International Olympic Committee will make their final selection in October. That is in the coming month. We must work hard to bring the Olympics back to the United States of America.

There is no greater honor than representing your country on the world stage. I am convinced there is no greater world city than Chicago.

As President Obama and I both can attest, Chicago is a diverse and inclusive city. Situated on the banks of beautiful Lake Michigan, it is the jewel of the Midwest. Chicago has always been a global leader in culture, architecture, commerce, sports, and even cuisine, if you like a good meal.

The Olympic spirit is alive and well in Chicago. The Chicago 2016 Committee recognized the importance of the games and renewing old friendships around the world, as well as establishing new ones. This ideal—and the value of ''friendship through sport''—is at the heart of the city's Olympic bid. It is a beautiful city, and I am proud to call it home. It showcases much of what makes this country so great. That is why it is an ideal site for the Olympic and Paralympic Games.

For athletes, world-class training facilities and event locations would be very close together, allowing for convenience and ease.

For visitors, outstanding public transportation and modern infrastructure would make all events readily accessible and easy to attend.

For residents of the city and people across the United States, Chicago would shine on the world stage and millions of dollars would pour in from across the globe.

Especially if we pass S. 1023, promoting travel to the United States and relaying better information to visitors, Chicago will be the clear choice of the International Olympic Committee in October.

This important legislation, known as the Travel Promotion Act of 2009, would create a not-for-profit corporation, as well as a government Office of Travel Promotion. These organizations would work together to encourage business, leisure, and scholarly travel to the United States, restoring important components of our struggling economy.

Travel and tourism, which generates as much as $1.3 trillion in the United States every year, have been on the decline since 2001, although those same industries have grown in many other countries. We must act swiftly to protect the 8.3 million American jobs that are directly related to travel and tourism. This means welcoming more overseas visitors each year—visitors who already pour $142 billion into the United States on an annual basis. An increase in international tourism would increase the profile of Chicago's Olympic bid.

The 2016 Olympics, in turn, would generate even more international tourism in Illinois and across the country. S. 1023 would help this massive influx of visitors travel to the United States with ease. This would create jobs, increase tax revenue, and build stronger relationships across the globe.

There are few international spectacles as singular and as inspiring as the Olympic and Paralympic Games. There are very few of those. A force for unity in a world divided, these competitions have the power to bring us together as one people, celebrating the human spirit with one voice.

I urge my colleagues to join Senator DORGAN and Senator ENSIGN in supporting S. 1023. I thank Leader REID for his leadership on this important issue.

This legislation would help to bring visitors from all over the world to the United States, and it would help bring the 2016 Olympic games to Chicago, IL.

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. ENSIGN. 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. ENSIGN. Mr. President, I rise today to talk about the bill Senator DORGAN and I have sponsored, the Travel Promotion Act of 2009, an important piece of legislation to create jobs in the United States.

My home State of Nevada is No. 2 now in unemployment. Clark County, which is where Las Vegas is located, has one of the highest unemployment rates of any county in the United States, over 14 percent now.

Jobs are something we desperately need in my home State of Nevada and obviously across the United States. Tourism, when you package it all together, is the No. 1 industry in the United States. We are one of the countries in the world that does not sell itself to the rest of the world for people to come. It seems to make sense to me that if a company advertises to bring people in, if convention authorities around this country advertise for people to come in, it would make sense for the United States of America, as a country, to advertise to bring people to the United States. As a benefit to that, everywhere in the United States can benefit.

If we are advertising to come see Yosemite or the Grand Canyon or the incredible beaches we have on our east and west coasts, or the incredible changes we see in the Northeast, or places such as Lake Tahoe in my home State that we share with California, or Hawaii or the vastness of Alaska, wherever we are advertising, the incredible cities we have such as New York, Las Vegas, with culture, cuisine, and entertainment, or the history we have in Washington, DC, or the fabulous places in cities such as Chicago, when we advertise those cities, if somebody comes from overseas to visit the United States, there are many other places they will visit along the way within the United States. It will not be just one location where foreign travelers will come here to visit. There will be a ripple effect.

For instance, if you are visiting the Grand Canyon, my home city of Las Vegas is the gateway to the Grand Canyon. Even though it is located in Arizona, most people go through the Grand Canyon to go to Las Vegas. If you go to Yosemite, you can go through San Francisco and the whole wine country and take a trip up through there.

The one thing we know about overseas travelers is when they come to the United States, they spend about $4,500. Mr. President, $4,500 is a lot of money to kick into our economy. That money creates jobs. Those jobs that are created have a ripple effect with other jobs being created. Somebody who is employed in the tourism industry, whether it is a theme park, a restaurant, or a hotel, has to buy other products. They have to visit the dentist. A lot of them have animals and visit their local veterinarians. They buy houses which supports the construction industry. There are ripple effects. So when we are creating a job in the tourism industry, we are creating other jobs outside the tourism industry.

The nice thing about the Travel Promotion Act Senator DORGAN and I have proposed is that this bill will create jobs without adding to the deficit. In fact, it will raise money for the Treasury. It will actually have a positive effect on the deficit. Of the concerns I heard when I was home over August, that is one of the biggest concerns people have—the amount of government spending.

The way we do this is two things are taken into account. Right now countries that have a visa waiver program, we will charge those visitors, instead of $131 that it takes on average to have a visa, we are only going to charge them $10. But that $10 fee will go into paying for this Travel Promotion Act for us to be able to advertize. That money will be matched by the private sector. This will be run by the private sector, not by the government. So we will have experts who understand marketing who will be able to sell our country.

Mr. President, this is a job-producing bill. It is going to be something that benefits all across America, and it is going to do it without hurting the deficit. It is exactly the kind of legislation we need right now. Oh, by the way, Americans are calling for us to be bipartisan, and this is a bipartisan bill.

Senator DORGAN and I and many other people have worked on this legislation. I thank the majority leader, Senator REID, from my home State, for bringing this legislation to the floor and really pushing for it. Obviously, it is important to our State because we have a tourism-driven economy in our State, but it is important to the entire country. It is not just a Nevada-specific bill; this is important to the entire country.

I have a few charts here to show some of what we have seen from other countries.

After 9/11, we made some changes in our immigration laws and things like that, and these are some of the headlines from around the world. This one says: ''Coming to America isn't easy.'' Another one: ''America—more hassle than it's worth?'' In London: ''Travel to America? No thanks.'' There is a perception out there that folks aren't welcome from overseas ever since 9/11. Part of the money that is going to be spent in this bill is going to say that America has the welcome mat out. We want folks to come and experience America. We want not only their tourist dollars, but we want them to come to experience America because we know from studies that anyone who comes to America has a more positive view of America, and America needs friends in the world today. We need more people thinking good things about America instead of bad things. Instead of those who want to create harm, we want to create good will, and the more visitors we get coming to the United States, the more good will we can create in the world.

What this next chart shows is that there have been 58 million new visitors—international or overseas travelers. Unfortunately, we haven't gotten our share of those since the year 2000. That means there was $182 billion in lost visitor spending and almost $30 billion in tax revenues for the United States. That is not local tax revenue, that is just Federal tax revenues. Almost 250,000 fewer jobs have been created because we lost these visitors. So there is a travel gap between 2001 and 2008. This is the actual arrivals. This is what would have happened if we could have captured a small percentage of the new international travelers who are out there.

Some have argued that the European Union will counter if we put a fee on travelers coming to the United States, that they will put a fee on folks going to their countries. Well, guess what, they already have those fees, as a matter of fact, everything from the Czech Republic charging $27, to Denmark, $61, up to the UK charging $100.

By the way, this is the amount of money they spend on advertising in their countries—anywhere from $8 million to $89 million—and they get a return on their investment. They get a return because they know if they advertise folks will actually come.

Folks have talked about this being a cost to the government. There is no cost to this bill. It actually raises money. It actually is not a cost to the taxpayer. There is $425 million in deficit reduction over the next 10 years, with as much as $4 billion minimum in new economic stimulus per year. Next, there is $321 million in new Federal tax revenue per year and about 40,000 new U.S. jobs in the first year alone. Those are jobs we can definitely use in the United States.

This chart shows the return on investment. Entry/departure fee from Spain, $14. They spent $120 million in 2005. They had an increase in international arrivals by 20 percent going into their country. The UK spent $90 million and had an increase of 26 percent. You can see down the line that there is a return on investment. That is what we are saying here in using a public-private partnership. Let's have a return. Let's actually attract people to the United States.

I would make the argument that the United States has more incredible places to see than any other country in the world. We have a great product to sell, we just have to sell it. We actually have to tell people why to come to the United States, show them the incredible places.

These are just a few of the ads we have seen around the world.

This is one from India. ''One special reason to visit India in 2009,'' it says. ''Any time is a good time to visit the Land of Taj, but there is no time like now.''

This is one of the many from Australia. I think all of us have seen ads about Australia. ''Arrived with a thousand things on our minds; departed without a care in the world.'' Another from Australia which obviously features the great diving they have. Just the visual image makes you say: I think I would like to go there. I think I would like to experience that on my next vacation.

This is Ireland, a nice simple map of Ireland talking about all the various things they have, from golf and the St. Patrick's center to other places to visit in Ireland. It gives a nice visual image.

Well, there are not only brochures but television advertising, the Internet, and all kinds of ways to get into a person's mind about why they would want to come and visit someplace, and all we are saying is we need to do this for the United States. There are so many incredible places we have here to visit that selling is not going to be the problem, it is just going to be making the effort.

So, Mr. President, I believe this is legislation that is worth doing. Some folks have come down here to say we don't need to do this because we already have a lot of travelers coming to the United States as it is. International travel to the United States, they say, is up. Well, the problem is, when you measure international travel coming from Mexico and Canada, that may be up, but they only spend about $900 each visit when they come here. Overseas travelers spend about $4,500 each visit when they come here, and that travel is down in the United States. It is down significantly compared to the rest of the world. So this is legislation that we need to go after those overseas travelers who have money to spend. This is something that can benefit States all across America. It will benefit the Federal Treasury, and it will create jobs.

There are a lot of good things about this legislation, and I think that is why you will see a good, strong bipartisan vote when the final vote tally is taken about 4:30 today.

So I would encourage people to take a good, hard look at this. At a time when we need jobs—jobs, jobs, jobs—this is a bill that can help deliver some of those jobs.

RECESS

Mr. ENSIGN. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that we recess until 2:15 p.m. as under the previous order.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Under the previous order, the Senate stands in recess until 2:15 p.m.

Thereupon, the Senate, at 12:24 p.m., recessed until 2:15 p.m. and reassembled when called to order by the Presiding Officer (Mr. CARDIN).

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Arkansas.

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

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection, it is so ordered. The Senator from Oklahoma is recognized.

TRAVEL PROMOTIONS ACT OF 2009—Continued

Mr. COBURN. Mr. President, we are going through a travel and tourism bill. I know my leader is coming to say some words on the Senate floor, but I had a couple questions the authors of the bill have not answered satisfactorily. One is they create a new corporation for travel promotion and they create a new travel and advisory board, but there is already a travel and advisory board within the Commerce Department. There is nothing in this bill that eliminates this duplicative function that is already there. If, in fact, the intent of the bill is to promote, as they say it is, travel and tourism, one of the things we do not want to do is have duplicative agencies doing exactly the same thing, wasting the taxpayers' money. It is about $67 million that will go down the drain if, in fact, we do not eliminate the duplicative section of this bill.

The second point I would make is you are going to spend $12 million a year just on this one advisory board. The third point I will make refers to a letter from the European Union noticing that the visa fees we plan on placing with this bill will cause a negative reaction from them and a reciprocal institution of visa fees through the European Union.

I make those points and hope the authors of the bill will answer, for the American people, the $67 million waste in this bill that is going to occur if they do not eliminate programs that are already out there for which they are creating duplicate agencies.

I yield the floor and ask unanimous consent to have the letter printed in the RECORD.

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

JUNE 18, 2009.

Hon. HILLARY RODHAM CLINTON,
Secretary of State, Department of State, Washington, DC.

DEAR MADAM SECRETARY, As you are most certainly aware, the U.S. Travel Promotion Act is currently under consideration in Congress (S.1023). On 16 June 2009, the Senate voted 90:3 for the bill to proceed and a final vote is expected any day now. If this bill were to enter into force, DHS would be required to ask travellers to the U.S. upon their application for an Electronic (System for) Travel Authorization (ESTA) to pay at least $10 which would be used to finance a Travel Promotion Fund as well as the operational costs of ESTA.

We are concerned that this draft legislation is not compatible with our common goal to facilitate transatlantic trade and travel. We believe it would constitute a step backwards in our joint endeavour to ease transatlantic mobility. This fee is likely to discourage the use of ESTA well in advance of travel, thereby undermining the security objectives of the system. Moreover, it risks being perceived as a visa fee in disguise and would lead to calls for the European Commission to re-examine the issue of whether the ESTA is tantamount to a visa or not, with potentially negative implications on reciprocal visa-free travel between the EU and the U.S. Besides, taxing foreign travellers to promote tourism seems peculiar and public perceptions might lead to less, not more travel to the U.S.

We understand that the Administration also has concerns with this bill. We would therefore urge you to make your formal position known to Congress, so as to avoid the passing of legislation which may unnecessarily deter legitimate transatlantic travel for business and tourism.

We thank you for your consideration and look forward to further strengthening transatlantic relations in the years to come.

Sincerely,

PETR KOLÁŘ,
Ambassador, Czech Republic.

JOHN BRUTON,
Ambassador, European Commission.

PONTUS F JÄRBORG,
Chargé d'Affaires a.i., Sweden.

Mr. COBURN. I suggest the absence of a quorum.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Will the Senator withhold his suggestion?

Mr. COBURN. I will.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Republican leader is recognized.

PRESIDENTIAL ADDRESS

Mr. MCCONNELL. Mr. President, as we all know, the President will be here tonight, and he will get a warm reception, as Presidents always do when they address the Nation from the Capitol. It is a short trip from 1600 Pennsylvania Avenue, but it is always meaningful whenever a President from either political party speaks to a joint session. So we welcome him.

He picked a good topic. Americans are extremely skeptical about the health care proposals the administration and Democrats in Congress have been talking about over the past several months. And they are understandably baffled by some of the arguments that have been used to promote them.

Americans don't understand how a massive expansion of government will lower costs, as the administration claims. They don't understand how $500 billion in cuts to Medicare won't affect the millions of seniors who depend on it. Americans don't understand how they'll be able to keep the health plans they have if government is allowed to undermine the private market. And they don't understand why the administration doesn't seem to be listening to these and many other concerns.