

do come here so it is easier to come here.

I would note I just read a story in the Arizona papers today that talked about the passport requirements from Mexico and Canada. They have been in effect for Mexico, but they are newly instituted with respect to Canada. As a result, theme parks in New York State, for example, had noted their activity from Canada was down somewhat. They attributed it to soggy weather, the state of the economy, and the additional passport requirement. I am sure all of these are factors.

So I suspect the statistics my colleague from North Dakota was citing were accurate statistics, as were, obviously, the ones I cited from the Department of Commerce.

The bottom line point I was trying to make is that we have a lot of people who come to this country. We make a lot of money from them. We want to encourage that, to be sure. But I did not think we were encouraging it when we put a \$10 fee on every visa for foreign tourists, and that we might want to—if we had that money available, or if we wanted to attract more visitors, the better way to do it would be to make our ports of entry and the other facilities by which people access entry to the United States more accommodating to them. Those were reasons I believed made this legislation unnecessary and unwise.

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. KYL. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the order for the quorum call be rescinded.

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

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Mr. KYL. Mr. President, we can proceed to the recess.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection, the Senate will stand in recess until 4 p.m., pursuant to the previous order.

Thereupon, the Senate, at 2:59 p.m., recessed until 4 p.m. and reassembled when called to order by the Presiding Officer (Mr. BURRIS).

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Connecticut is recognized.

Mr. LIEBERMAN. Mr. President, I suggest the absence of a quorum and ask that the time that expires be equally charged to both sides.

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

Mr. LIEBERMAN. I thank the Chair.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will call the roll.

The legislative clerk proceeded to call the roll.

Mr. DORGAN. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the order for the quorum call be rescinded.

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

TRAVEL PROMOTION ACT OF 2009— Continued

Mr. DORGAN. Mr. President, my understanding is that there is some time divided on the issue of the vote on the Travel Promotion Act, and let me take as much time as I may consume of that time.

Earlier today, Senator KYL and I had a discussion on the floor about some statistics and numbers about tourism and travel. I don't want him to try to win a debate we are not having because there ought not to be a difference with respect to a set of facts. So let me just recite the facts.

I said this morning that on this big-old planet of ours, people are traveling more. That is a fact. Tens of millions of people are traveling around the world for international tourism purposes, and that is very beneficial to the areas where they arrive and do their touring. On average, an overseas traveler who comes to the United States spends \$4,500. It is a very lucrative market to try to attract tourists from overseas to come to our country.

The dilemma is this: While more people are traveling all around the globe, and while Japan and Europe, while India and South America and many other countries and continents are aggressively advertising, asking people to come to their country, promoting their country's interests—I have mentioned France, Italy, Germany, India, China, and so on—all of them engaged in travel promotion saying: Come to our country, enjoy our country, come and see our country, travel to our country. It is a relentless bit of promotion by other countries, and they are very successful.

The fact is, more people have been traveling around the globe in international tourism, but we have had a reduction of 633,000 people coming to this country as compared to 9 years ago. Go back to the year 2000 and take a look at how many overseas travelers came to this country to see America and then fast forward to 2009. There are over half a million fewer people coming to our country.

This legislation we are going to vote on is very simple. It says: Let's have a private-public sector partnership that promotes America as a destination for international tourism.

In our earlier discussion, Senator KYL said we should be dealing with the entry process that many have complained about. The fact is, we are dealing with that. I have held hearings on that. We have substantially changed the waiting time for trying to get a visa to come to the United States. Yes, there were long lines, long waits, and much of that has been solved and reduced substantially. In fact, the State Department says that 90 percent of the consular posts have visa wait times of less than 30 days for students and business travelers, just as an example. We are making progress in those areas.

But we should not, in my judgment, allow this issue of promotion of foreign

and international travel be the province of other countries and not us. We ought to be involved. We ought to say to people: You are welcome to come to this country. I showed some of the newspaper reports in recent years that suggest to people: You are not welcome in America. Travel to America? No thanks. Too much of a hassle. In fact, after the terrible tragedy of 9/11/2001, we were not encouraging people to come to this country at all. In fact, we were suggesting that we were worried about people coming into this country. We wanted to make sure we were not allowing terrorists in, so we didn't exactly have the welcome mat out.

This legislation now, 8 years later, says: Let's put the welcome mat out to say, you know what, you want to compete for international tourism? So do we. You want to go see the Eiffel Tower? Well, that is fine. How about coming to see the Empire State Building, Theodore Roosevelt National Park, Old Faithful, Yellowstone, Las Vegas, the Pembina Gorge. How about coming to America to understand the culture of America, the values, the character of America.

One of the things we understand is that when people come here to travel across the United States, they leave, having traveled in this country, with an unbelievably good impression about what America is. We know that because there has been a great deal of polling to understand it. So in addition to creating a very substantial number of jobs at a time when people have lost their jobs—and by the way, tourism and promotion of tourism, especially with overseas travelers who spend a lot of money when they come to this country, promotes a substantial number of jobs. In addition to that, it promotes dramatic good will all around the world about this country of ours.

So this legislation is very simple. It is bipartisan at a time when not very much is bipartisan. It actually saves money. At a time when there is concern about spending money, this reduces the budget deficit. It doesn't increase it; this actually reduces the budget deficit. At the same time, it will create hundreds of thousands of new jobs. So how about that—a piece of legislation that is bipartisan, with Republicans and Democrats cosponsoring it and bringing it to the floor, it saves money rather than adds to the budget deficit, and it produces hundreds of thousands of jobs going forward. It seems to me this makes good sense for this Congress.

I am expecting this afternoon—with the help of my colleagues Senator ENSIGN, Senator KLOBUCHAR, Senator REID, and so many others who have worked on this legislation, I am hoping we will get a very strong vote, get it to the House of Representatives, and get it signed by the President so we can put a lot of people to work in this country as well as incentivize people to come to this country to see what it is about, and that is an awfully good thing, in my judgment.