

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

Mrs. FEINSTEIN. Madam President, I ask that the Interior bill be reported.

#### CONCLUSION OF MORNING BUSINESS

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Morning business is closed.

#### DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR, ENVIRONMENT, AND RELATED AGENCIES APPROPRIATIONS ACT, 2010

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Under the previous order, the Senate will resume consideration of H.R. 2996, which the clerk will report.

The assistant legislative clerk read as follows:

A bill (H.R. 2996) making appropriations for the Department of the Interior, environment, and related agencies for the fiscal year ending September 30, 2010, and for other purposes.

#### Pending:

Feinstein modified amendment No. 2460, to support the participation of the Smithsonian Institution in activities under the Civil Rights History Project Act of 2009.

Carper amendment No. 2456, to require the Administrator of the Environmental Protection Agency to conduct a study on black carbon emissions.

Mrs. FEINSTEIN. Madam President, it is my understanding we are now on the bill and that the time until 12 o'clock noon will be equally divided. At noon, there will be a vote on the Feinstein amendment. So the floor is now open. I hope individuals who have amendments will come to the floor and that we will be able to offer those amendments and debate them as soon as possible.

I yield the floor and note the absence of a quorum.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will call the roll.

The assistant legislative clerk proceeded to call the roll.

Mrs. FEINSTEIN. Madam President, I ask unanimous consent that the order for the quorum call be rescinded.

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

Mrs. FEINSTEIN. Madam President, I ask unanimous consent that the time in a quorum call be equally divided between both sides.

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

Mrs. FEINSTEIN. I note the absence of a quorum.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will call the roll.

The assistant legislative clerk proceeded to call the roll.

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 Madam President, I ask unanimous consent that the order for the quorum call be rescinded.

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

Mr. BROWN. Madam President, I ask unanimous consent to speak as in morning business for up to 5 minutes.

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

#### HEALTH CARE

Mr. BROWN. Madam President, I have come to the Senate floor pretty much every day since the start of the session—for the last couple of months—sharing letters from Ohioans about health care. I just did a big townhall meeting in Cleveland yesterday and I did one in Columbus, Cincinnati, Youngstown, and I have done other meetings in Dayton and Cambridge and other places. But my office gets dozens—hundreds, really, a week—of letters from people who oftentimes were very pleased and satisfied with their health insurance, and then when they got particularly sick, they found out they lost their health insurance coverage.

I just want to read a couple of letters my office has received in the last couple of weeks or so.

James, from Hancock County, in northwest Ohio—in Findlay—writes:

When my kidneys began to fail, I was forced to leave my job as an engineer for an electronics company. I went on dialysis for several years and eventually had a transplant. I currently have health care because of my wife's employment. In trying to find a new job, I've had employers tell me my pre-existing conditions could drive up their health costs and that they could find other workers without health issues. I, and other people with chronic health problems, will never find good paying jobs with benefits. Please, I want to work and contribute to society. I didn't choose to get sick.

Several things are happening with James in this letter. First of all, we are outlining the whole idea of preexisting conditions. As the Presiding Officer from New York State knows, insurance companies will no longer be allowed to deny care for a preexisting condition or discriminate based on gender, disability, or geography. Companies will not be able to put a lifetime or annual cap on coverage.

The second thing is that this legislation will help those small businesses that too often have one employee who is very expensive so that the small business will see its premiums jacked up so high they often have to cancel their insurance and then their other employees lose their insurance coverage. Our legislation will help those small businesses while eliminating these but through insurance company reforms, and then a public option, will help to enforce those rules.

Robert from Columbus writes:

Last year, I lost my job and, as a result, my wife, teenage son, and I needed to pick up private health insurance. After researching various companies, we applied to one insurer. My son and I were accepted, but my wife was rejected. Her sin? A preexisting condition. During a previous job while insured, she was diagnosed with mild and treatable high blood pressure. She had one office visit and one prescription a couple of years ago and she gets turned down today.

How absurd, Madam President, that someone with a very treatable pre-existing health care problem—high blood pressure, but not a problem so

chronic that she missed work or spent time in hospitals and all that, but a very treatable condition—was denied care as a result of this preexisting condition and then couldn't get coverage that her husband and her teenage son could get. Our legislation again, through these insurance company reforms, would make sure that doesn't happen.

Let me share one more letter because I know Senator ALEXANDER and Senator FEINSTEIN are going to call a vote in a minute. Georgene from Cuyahoga County, in the Cleveland area, writes:

My 52 year old sister inherited muscular dystrophy and has been on total disability for a few years. She's also had double knee replacement and hip replacement surgeries. Due to her condition, she's fallen several times and damaged her knees. The doctor recommended she get her leg amputated and fit with a prosthetic. Her husband's insurance covers her and approved the amputation surgery but is now denying her the prosthetic and wheelchair. They had to file for bankruptcy due mainly because of medical bills and now live in a small apartment. I could go on with personal stories from my own life or extended family, but you get the picture.

Madam President, this simply happens too much, where people such as Georgene have not been well served by the system. They have insurance, and they were relatively happy with it, but it has now become inadequate. Insurance isn't real insurance, it is not adequate insurance, if people get so sick or have such high costs that they get excluded from their insurance.

What happens too many times is bankruptcy. The most common cause for bankruptcy in this country is because of huge health care costs. The most common situation among those who declare bankruptcy is because of health care costs, and the most common situation is among people who have insurance but their insurance simply doesn't cover everything. Their expenses are such that their insurance gets canceled and they end up in bankruptcy.

Madam President, I again urge my colleagues to look seriously at this bill as we move forward—the bill that came out of the Health, Education, Labor and Pension Committee, as it merges with the bill coming out of the Finance Committee—in the next week or two to get this bill to the President's desk this fall. In my State alone, 390 people every single day are losing their insurance. And for people around here trying to delay this, it is simply wrong. We need to move, not hurriedly, but at a steady pace to get this bill to the President's desk this fall.

Madam President, I yield the floor, and I thank Senator FEINSTEIN and Senator ALEXANDER.

Mrs. FEINSTEIN. Madam President, I ask unanimous consent that once the Senate reconvenes at 2:15 today, it then stand in recess subject to the call of the Chair.

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