

ban on Federal funding of abortions is weakened in the Senate bill compared to the House.

As I speak today, the Senate bill is being written behind closed doors by the majority leader and others. If their final product includes anything less than the House-passed ban, the critical vote for pro-life Senators will be their vote on cloture on the motion to proceed. Why? Because if the motion to proceed is successful, it will end, in my opinion, any chance to match the House bill's ban on using Federal funds to fund abortion. It is the way the Senate works, according to its rules. Sixty votes would be needed to change the bill once a motion to proceed passes. Let me repeat: 60 votes would be needed to change the bill once a motion to proceed passes. We all know, regrettably, that there are not 60 Senators who would support the House provision that bans Federal funding for abortions; therefore, we would lack the votes to close the door on Federal funding of abortions if this bill proceeds to the floor with a weakened approach.

The ban on Federal funding of abortions must be a part of the Senate bill before debate is allowed to proceed. Don't be fooled by the claims that the motion to proceed to the bill is a first step in improving the bill; it will be the final say for the pro-life community.

I applaud my colleagues on both sides of the aisle who have declared they will accept nothing less than a complete separation between Federal funds and abortion services. I wish to express unequivocally, I stand firmly with them. If we are presented with a weakened ban on Federal funding of abortion compared to the House version, we must vote against cloture on the motion to proceed to the bill. In my judgment, this point should be nonnegotiable.

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 Madam President, I ask unanimous consent that the order for the quorum call be rescinded.

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

CONCLUSION OF MORNING BUSINESS

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Morning business is closed.

MILITARY CONSTRUCTION, VETERANS AFFAIRS, AND RELATED AGENCIES APPROPRIATIONS ACT, 2010

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Under the previous order, the Senate will resume consideration of H.R. 3082, which the clerk will report by title.

The assistant legislative clerk read as follows:

A bill (H.R. 3082) making appropriations for military construction, the Department of

Veterans Affairs, and related agencies for the fiscal year ending September 30, 2010, and for other purposes.

Pending:

Johnson/Hutchison amendment No. 2730, in the nature of a substitute.

Udall (NM) amendment No. 2737 (to amendment No. 2730), to make available from Medical Services, \$150,000,000 for homeless veterans comprehensive service programs.

Johnson amendment No. 2733 (to amendment No. 2730), to increase by \$50,000,000 the amount available for the Department of Veterans Affairs for minor construction projects for the purpose of converting unused Department of Veterans Affairs structures into housing with supportive services for homeless veterans, and to provide an offset.

Franken/Johnson amendment No. 2745 (to amendment No. 2730), to ensure that \$5,000,000 is available for a study to assess the feasibility and advisability of using service dogs for the treatment or rehabilitation of veterans with physical or mental injuries or disabilities.

Inouye amendment No. 2754 (to amendment No. 2730), to permit \$68,500,000, as requested by the Missile Defense Agency of the Department of Defense, to be used for the construction of a test facility to support the Phased Adaptive Approach for missile defense in Europe, with an offset.

Coburn amendment No. 2757 (to amendment No. 2730), to require public disclosure of certain reports.

Durbin amendment No. 2759 (to amendment No. 2730), to enhance the ability of the Department of Veterans Affairs to recruit and retain health care administrators and providers in underserved rural areas.

Durbin amendment No. 2760 (to amendment No. 2730), to designate the North Chicago Veterans Affairs Medical Center, Illinois, as the "Captain James A. Lovell Federal Health Care Center".

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from South Dakota.

Mr. JOHNSON. Madam President, I look forward to making progress on the MILCON-VA bill today so we can reach agreement on a finite list of amendments and vote on them next Monday, followed by final passage of the bill. I wish we were in that position today, but since that is not possible, I hope we can at least arrive at a roadmap to final passage next week.

This bill is too important to our military troops and their families and to our Nation's veterans to allow it to become caught up in petty politics. We do not need grandstanding on this bill or message amendments or delaying tactics driven by a political agenda. We just need to get the job done and get this bill to the President.

We will be working throughout the day to try to clear and dispose of non-controversial amendments and to try to come up with a short, finite list of amendments that can be voted on next Monday so we can clear the way for final passage of the bill that same day.

I know the leaders and the cloakrooms, as well as the committee staff, are working hard to clear amendments. I hope we will be at a point to dispose of some of those amendments soon.

I do not need to remind my colleagues that tomorrow is Veterans Day. If we cannot complete this bill today, let us at least return home with a plan to finish the bill next Monday.

Madam President, I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Nebraska.

AMENDMENT NO. 2752 TO AMENDMENT NO. 2730

Mr. JOHANNNS. Madam President, I ask unanimous consent that the pending amendment, if there is one, be set aside and that amendment No. 2752 be called up.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Is there objection?

Without objection, it is so ordered.

The clerk will report the amendment.

The assistant legislative clerk read as follows:

The Senator from Nebraska [Mr. JOHANNNS] proposes an amendment numbered 2752 to amendment No. 2730.

Mr. JOHANNNS. Madam President, I ask unanimous consent that reading of the amendment be dispensed with.

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

The amendment is as follows:

(Purpose: Prohibiting use of funds to fund the Association of Community Organizations for Reform Now (ACORN))

On page 60, after line 24, insert the following:

SEC. 6. None of the funds made available under this Act may be distributed to the Association of Community Organizations for Reform Now (ACORN) or its subsidiaries.

Mr. JOHANNNS. Madam President, this is an amendment I have offered on several appropriations bills. Each time, it has passed with overwhelming bipartisan support. Additionally, the continuing resolution includes similar language. But, of course, the CR runs out on December 18.

We need to continue passing this amendment; therefore, I need to continue to offer it. It basically says we are blocking all Federal funding under this bill to ACORN. I do have a piece of legislation pending that would take care of this across the Federal system, but that has not come to a vote yet. So I am offering today this amendment on ACORN. This amendment will continue to protect taxpayer dollars.

I do want to indicate to the manager of the bill that, of course, I am happy to work with my colleagues on a voice vote whenever the appropriate time arises for that to occur.

With that, Madam President, I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Alaska.

HONORING OUR ARMED FORCES

Mr. BEGICH. Madam President, I rise today on the eve of Veterans Day to honor all those who have and are now serving to protect our freedoms, especially the service men and women of my State who have such a vital role in our Nation's defense.

At trouble spots across the world—from Afghanistan to Korea, Iraq to Kosovo—Alaskan servicemembers are on the front lines.

Today, I welcome the opportunity to praise Alaska's service men and women, their families who are such a key part of our communities, and the thousands of veterans who have chosen to live in the 49th State.