

Mr. COCHRAN. Mr. President, we have heard this described as a historic moment. My friend from Iowa, Mr. HARKIN—we have served together on the Agriculture Committee and have worked closely on appropriations and other issues—he has described this as a “historic moment.” I think we can all agree on that, but that is about all we do agree on in regards to this issue.

I think we just have to come out and say it: This Patient Protection and Affordable Care Act is controversial. It sounds like it is just what the doctor ordered, until you look at it closely. If you look at it closely, doctors are not favorably impressed with it. Neither are the taxpayers, especially those who earn less than \$200,000 a year, they are not impressed with it.

Another issue that is troubling is Senator DORGAN’s amendment on the reimportation of drugs. The Food and Drug Administration has concerns about the safety of the reimportation of drugs.

If the Senate tries to ignore these and other serious concerns about the bill before the Senate, it will be an act of hope over reality. It will be an act which this Senator cannot support.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The majority leader.

UNANIMOUS CONSENT AGREEMENT—H.R. 3590

Mr. REID. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that immediately after the opening of the Senate tomorrow, Tuesday, December 15, and following the leader time, the Senate resume consideration of H.R. 3590, and there then be a period of 5 hours of debate, with the time divided as follows: 2 hours equally divided between Senators BAUCUS and CRAPO or their designees and 2 hours equally divided between Senators DORGAN and LAUTENBERG or their designees, and 1 hour under the control of the Republican leader or his designee or designees; that during this debate time, it be in order for Senator BAUCUS to offer a side-by-side amendment to the Crapo motion to commit; and Senator LAUTENBERG be recognized to offer amendment No. 3156 as a side-by-side to the Dorgan-McCain amendment No. 2793, as modified; that no further amendments or motions be in order during the pendency of this agreement, except as noted in this agreement; that upon the use or yielding back of all time, the Senate then proceed to vote in relation to the aforementioned amendments and motion in this order: Baucus, Crapo, Lautenberg, and Dorgan, with each subject to an affirmative 60-vote threshold, and that if they achieve that threshold, then they be agreed to and the motion to reconsider be laid upon the table; that if they do not achieve that threshold, they be withdrawn; further, that the cloture motion with respect to the Crapo motion be withdrawn; provided further that upon disposition of the above-referenced amendments and mo-

tion, the next two Senators to be recognized to offer a motion and amendment be Senator HUTCHISON to offer a motion to commit regarding taxes and implementation and Senator SANDERS to offer amendment No. 2837; that no amendments be in order to the Hutchison motion or the Sanders amendment; that upon their disposition, the majority leader be recognized.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Is there objection?

Mr. McCONNELL. Mr. President, reserving the right to object, and I am not going to object, I would just want to confirm with the majority leader our understanding that even though it is not locked in in this consent agreement, we anticipate voting on both the Hutchison amendment and the Sanders amendment.

Mr. REID. Yes. And I say to my friend, either vote on them or have some kind of procedural motion.

Mr. McCONNELL. Yes.

Mr. REID. Which I have no idea what it would be at this stage. But the answer is yes.

I would also say, I have spoken to the Senator’s floor staff, and, as I indicated to the Republican leader, we have to be at the White House for a while tomorrow afternoon—we will give the Republican leader that time—for which we will probably have to be in recess because the whole caucus is called to go down there. But it is my desire to make sure we finish this tomorrow. I think that is to everyone’s interest. That is what we are doing here, with 5 hours.

Mr. McCONNELL. Would that include both SANDERS and HUTCHISON?

Mr. REID. No. No. As I explained, again, to floor staff, I would like those to be offered tomorrow, but I think we would have a pretty good day’s work if we have 5 hours of debate and then those four votes we have playing out.

Mr. McCONNELL. During the time that Democratic Senators are at the White House, would we be in recess or would we be allowed to—

Mr. REID. Yes. I think we should be in recess.

Mr. McCONNELL. Do you have any idea how long that meeting is going to be?

Mr. REID. The meeting is scheduled for 1 hour and 10 minutes.

Mr. McCONNELL. And at what time is it?

Mr. REID. I think it is at 1:30.

So, Mr. President, I am glad we finally got the balancing back and forth, unanimous consent request finally settled on these matters.

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

The Senator from Illinois.

HEALTH CARE REFORM

Mr. BURRIS. Mr. President, I rise, of course, to speak on the health care legislation.

The Senate is the greatest deliberative body this world has ever known.

Since the inception of this body, its Members have practiced and perfected the art of compromise. It has been said that politics is the art of the possible—and this Chamber is teeming with experienced legislators who know how to work with Members of both parties to forge a more perfect bill. This means that individual Senators must inevitably give ground in the interest of achieving legislation that is built on consensus.

As a body of lawmakers—and particularly as a Democratic Party—we have compromised throughout our history to bring about the greatest legislative achievements this Nation has known. In the process, this Senate has made the country better.

Today, we find ourselves debating a measure that could overhaul the entire American health care system. We stand at this point after nearly 100 years of discussion and deliberation, stretching from Teddy Roosevelt to Barack Obama.

What has defined us across that century is our commitment as a party to the fundamental pillars of health care, all of which have been echoed in this recent debate. These values served us well in 1935, when the Senate took up a proposal called Social Security. History recalls that debate was fierce. It was not without struggle and was not without compromise. But in the end, we achieved one of the greatest, most enduring public policy successes in American history.

Thirty years later, these very same values led this party and this Senate to take up a bill known as the Medicare Act. Again, that fight was not easy, and compromise was necessary to realize our vision. But, once again, this body and this party brought historic change to America.

These hard-fought programs have been the valued cornerstone of our domestic policy for generations. They define the way we legislate and underlie the principle that this government’s chief responsibility is to its citizens.

Today, a new generation of Americans and a new Congress find ourselves in the midst of another historic debate.

Earlier this year, a new President was swept into office, full of energy and ideas, and armed with a clear mandate to bring real reform to a health care system that was badly broken. So, once again, we took up the task of fighting for a more perfect health care system.

Americans all over the country, struggling and suffering, many in personal health crises, have looked to us. There is urgency there, and this body needs to act.

Those who need help the most need that help now.

So let’s pass this health care reform legislation, but let’s also do it right. Let’s not pass something just to pass something.

Everyone in this room is a legislator. We approach our responsibilities with the knowledge that our most optimistic ideas must often be tempered