

relate to his students from the farm because he too was a farmer. For more than a decade Mel taught them about how our government works and invested in their lives. He helped broaden the horizons of those students and opened their eyes to new subjects and to new ideas. Upon learning of his passing, one of his former students said, "There was no better social studies and government teacher than Melvin Minor."

After teaching government for 15 years, Mel decided to try his own hand at governing and he campaigned for a seat in the Kansas State Legislature. He was elected and he served Kansans in the 114th District in the Kansas House of Representatives for the 14 years to follow.

We all know that to serve in public office takes a great commitment from your family, but especially from your spouse. For the Minor family running for office was a team effort. Mel and Carolyn made a great team—such a team that, in fact, Carolyn served as his campaign manager and treasurer.

I had the privilege of getting to know Mel when I served as a State senator and our terms overlapped for 6 years. Even though we were of different political parties, we had a lot in common because it was about our love for Kansas and interest in rural issues that brought us together.

He was such a strong advocate for rural Kansas and the special way of life we enjoy in small communities across our State. As a farmer Mel was especially interested in agriculture policy and stood up for the best interests of Kansas farmers and ranchers.

As a longtime Kansas resident, Mel was well known and respected throughout our State but especially there in Central Kansas where he was very active in the community of Stafford. He was a member of the Stafford United Methodist Church and served on the board of directors of the St. John National Bank, the Zenith COOP, and the Stafford District Hospital.

He was also dedicated to making sure all Kansans have access to a quality education and served on the Stafford Board of Education.

During his time on the school board, he met another strong advocate for education, Ruth Teichman. After getting to know Ruth and witnessing her dedication to Kansans, Mel encouraged her to run for the State senate. Here it was a Democrat encouraging a Republican to run. It took 8 years of prodding, but he finally convinced her, and she served Kansans for 12 years in the Kansas Senate.

Ruth remembers Mel as someone who was never without a smile and someone who simply enjoyed life and spending time with people. Even when things were not going his way, he was known for saying "the sun will come out tomorrow" and took all of life in stride.

His family and friends described him as someone to whom others went for advice and counsel. He was known for

his integrity, hard-working spirit, and dedication to the work at hand—whether as a teacher, a farmer, or a legislator.

One of his former colleagues in the house, Dennis McKinney of Greensburg, eventually rose to become the minority leader in the Kansas House of Representatives and considered Mel his mentor when he began his political career. He remembers Mel as someone who always lived out the biblical command to care for those with the greatest needs. From the patients at Larned State Hospital to the youth in the juvenile justice system, Mel was always looking for ways to serve his fellow Kansans and improve their lives.

Dennis McKinney also remembers that Mel Minor had a great sense of humor. Dennis recalled one time when the two of them were the only two Democrats voting in favor of an appropriations bill in the Republican-controlled house of representatives. Dennis was sitting behind Mel at the time and leaned forward to tell him that he felt a little bit awkward. Mel looked around the chamber, and with a glint in his eye told Dennis he did not see anyone in the chamber registered to vote in his district. He said he was not concerned about the pressure from his colleagues but was more concerned about doing what was right for the people who voted him into office.

Mel lived each day to its fullest, and his commitment to his fellow man serves as an example for all of us.

I extend, on behalf of Senator ROBERTS and me, our sympathies to his two daughters Gayle and Mary Jo and to his grandchildren Abby, Katie, and Barrett. I know they loved him dearly. He loved them dearly. He will miss them and they will miss him very much.

I ask my colleagues and Kansans to remember the Minor family in your thoughts and your prayers as they face these days ahead.

Mr. President, I yield the floor.

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. The Senator from Kansas.

Mr. ROBERTS. Mr. President, I thank my colleague from Kansas for his wonderful eulogy to a wonderful man, a teacher, a State legislator, and just a very nice individual. I thank the Senator for that excellent eulogy. We will miss him.

FOOD LABELING

Mr. ROBERTS. Mr. President, I understand that the distinguished chairperson of the sometimes powerful Senate Agriculture Committee will be on the floor to lock in amendment No. 965 by Senator SANDERS.

I rise in opposition to that amendment. The amendment would allow States to require—let me emphasize the word, "require"—that any food, beverage, or other product be labeled if it contains a genetically engineered ingredient.

Now, that is how it is described most-ly in this debate: a genetically engi-

neered ingredient. I think it would be more accurately called modern science to feed a very troubled and hungry world.

We already have policies and procedures, I would tell my colleagues, in place at the Food and Drug Administration to address labeling of foods that are derived from modern biotechnology. The U.S. standards ensure that all labels for all foods are truthful and are not misleading to the public.

FDA has a scientifically based review process to evaluate all food products.

The Food and Drug Administration states:

FDA has no basis for concluding that bioengineered foods are different from other foods in any meaningful or uniform way, or that, as a class, foods developed by the new techniques present any or greater safety concern than foods developed by traditional plant breeding.

The FDA reviews products and determines that they are safe. I think we need to trust the science of their review and allow this process to work.

The amendment by Senator SANDERS would result in additional costs to food producers, and that is going to come right back to consumers. The FDA has determined that approved biotech crops are not materially different than conventional crops and therefore do not require segregation from conventional crops.

The only difference—if you have a bioengineered product, and let's say you come from Africa, one of the countries over there that continually has a very difficult time trying to feed themselves—the only difference is if you use a bioengineered product that makes that crop more resistant to heat or to rain or to a particular insect that is causing a lot of problems—you have a choice: You can have a crop or you can have no crop or you can have perhaps a crop with a pesticide or you can have a bioengineered product that is perfectly safe.

Furthermore, a change in policy would place additional costs on farmers by potentially requiring them to segregate crops and change their equipment. It would also be very problematic for grain processing facilities. I know some fail to recognize—and I know many criticize—the importance of biotechnology or criticize the safety of the product. I just say, let science be the judge. Each product goes through extensive tests to ensure safety to both human health and the environment.

There are different views, of course, on farming, and some of my colleagues in the Senate believe we should focus on those that only farm a few acres—the small family farmer; somebody about 5 foot 3 inches from Vermont—and then grow organic crops and sell them to the local farmers market. There is nothing wrong with that. I encourage that. There is nothing wrong with organic farming, and there is certainly nothing wrong with regard to farmers who farm less acres. God bless them.

However, if we are going to supply enough food for this growing population around the world—9 billion more people in the next several decades—we need agriculture of all types, and that includes organic and conventional and biotech crops. The more nations we can help to feed and bring economic prosperity, the more stable the world will become. That is good for our families, our Nation, and the world, and the world's stability. We can only do that through commonsense policies based on sound science that will allow our producers to do what they need to do to get the job done.

My colleagues—and I see the distinguished chairperson. I will conclude in just about 30 seconds. I am glad she is here. I will just say to my colleagues in the Senate that we should not be putting on lab coats individually and taking action on this amendment. We have a clear scientifically based review process that works. If we pass this amendment, probably in Vermont, California, you will have a requirement; some other States may or may not; in Kansas we will not, and so our State legislature would have no need of putting on lab coats.

At any rate, the FDA has guidance for voluntary labeling, and companies can choose to voluntarily label food and products if their customers want it, if they demand it. Let the consumer decide.

I urge my colleagues to reject this amendment.

I yield back.

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. The Senator from Michigan.

ORDER OF PROCEDURE

Ms. STABENOW. Mr. President, now that the circuit court nomination vote has been scheduled for later this afternoon, I ask unanimous consent that at 10:30 a.m. the Senate resume consideration of S. 954, the farm bill; that there be 2 minutes equally divided prior to a vote in relation to the Sanders amendment No. 965, as provided under the previous order; finally, following the confirmation vote at 2 p.m., the Senate resume legislative session and consideration of S. 954.

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. Without objection, it is so ordered.

Ms. STABENOW. Mr. President, I suggest the absence of a quorum.

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. The clerk will call the roll.

The legislative clerk proceeded to call the roll.

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

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. Without objection, it is so ordered.

AGRICULTURE REFORM, FOOD, AND JOBS ACT OF 2013

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. Under the previous order, the

Senate will resume consideration of S. 954, which the clerk will report.

The legislative clerk read as follows:

A bill (S. 954) to reauthorize agricultural programs through 2018.

Pending:

Stabenow (for LEAHY) amendment No. 998, to establish a pilot program for gigabit Internet projects in rural areas.

Sanders/Begich amendment No. 965, to permit States to require that any food, beverage, or other edible product offered for sale have a label on indicating that the food, beverage, or other edible product contains a genetically engineered ingredient.

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. Under the previous order, there is now 2 minutes of debate prior to a vote in relation to amendment No. 965 offered by the Senator from Vermont, Mr. SANDERS. The time is equally divided.

The Senator from Vermont.

Mr. SANDERS. Mr. President, I wanted to thank Senators BEGICH, BLUMENTHAL, BENNET, and MERKLEY for cosponsoring this amendment, as well as support from many environmental and food organizations all over this country. The concept we are talking about today is a fairly commonsense and nonradical idea. All over the world, in the European Union, in many other countries, dozens and dozens of countries, people are able to look at the food they are buying and determine through labeling whether that product contains genetically modified organisms.

That is the issue. In the State of Vermont our legislature voted overwhelmingly for labeling. The State Senate in Connecticut, by an almost unanimous vote, did the same. All over this country States are considering this issue.

One of the concerns that arises when a State goes forward is large biotech companies such as Monsanto suggest that States do not have the constitutional right to go forward; that they are preempting Federal authority. This bill makes it very clear that States can go forward. I would appreciate my colleagues' support for it.

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. The Senator from Michigan.

Ms. STABENOW. First, Mr. President, before discussing the amendment, I think it is important to note that this is not germane to the farm bill. Food labeling is properly subject to the jurisdiction of the HELP Committee; therefore, Senator HARKIN opposes the amendment.

While I appreciate very much the advocacy of Senator SANDERS on so many different issues, I do believe this particular amendment would interfere with the FDA's science-based process to determine what food labeling is necessary for consumers. It is also important to note that around the world now we are seeing genetically modified crops that have the ability to resist crop disease and improve nutritional content and survive drought conditions.

In many developing countries we see wonderful work being done by foundations such as the Gates Foundation and others that are using new techniques to be able to feed hungry people. I believe we must rely on the FDA's science-based examination before we make conclusions about food ingredients derived from genetically modified foods. They currently do not require special labeling because they have determined that food content of these ingredients does not materially differ from their conventional counterparts. I would urge a "no" vote.

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. The question is on agreeing to the amendment.

Ms. STABENOW. Mr. President, I ask for the yeas and nays.

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. Is there a sufficient second?

There is a sufficient second.

The clerk will call the roll.

The legislative clerk called the roll.

Mr. DURBIN. I announce that the Senator from New Jersey (Mr. LAUTENBERG) is necessarily absent.

Mr. CORNYN. The following Senator is necessarily absent: the Senator from Arizona (Mr. FLAKE).

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. Are there any other Senators in the Chamber desiring to vote?

The result was announced—yeas 27, nays 71, as follows:

[Rollcall Vote No. 135 Leg.]
YEAS—27

Begich	King	Reid
Bennet	Leahy	Rockefeller
Blumenthal	Manchin	Sanders
Boxer	Merkley	Schatz
Cantwell	Mikulski	Schumer
Cardin	Murkowski	Tester
Feinstein	Murphy	Udall (NM)
Heinrich	Murray	Whitehouse
Hirono	Reed	Wyden

NAYS—71

Alexander	Enzi	McCaskill
Ayotte	Fischer	McConnell
Baldwin	Franken	Menendez
Barrasso	Gillibrand	Moran
Baucus	Graham	Nelson
Blunt	Grassley	Paul
Boozman	Hagan	Portman
Brown	Harkin	Pryor
Burr	Hatch	Risch
Carper	Heitkamp	Roberts
Casey	Heller	Rubio
Chambliss	Hoeben	Scott
Coats	Inhofe	Sessions
Coburn	Isakson	Shaheen
Cochran	Johanns	Shelby
Collins	Johnson (SD)	Stabenow
Coons	Johnson (WI)	Thune
Corker	Kaine	Toomey
Cornyn	Kirk	Udall (CO)
Cowan	Klobuchar	Vitter
Crapo	Landrieu	Warner
Cruz	Lee	Warren
Donnelly	Levin	Wicker
Durbin	McCain	

NOT VOTING—2

Flake
Lautenberg

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. Under the previous order requiring 60 votes for the adoption of this amendment, the amendment is rejected.

Mr. COCHRAN. Mr. President, I move to reconsider the vote.

Ms. STABENOW. I move to lay that motion on the table.

The motion to lay on the table was agreed to.