

citizens. These realities challenge us to move forward together in the best interest of all people living with HIV and all Americans. And that is what Senator KASSEBAUM and I have attempted to do.

The compromise in this legislation acknowledges that the HIV epidemic has expanded its reach. But we have not forgotten its roots. While new faces and new places are affected, the epidemic rages on in the areas of the country hit hardest and longest.

The pain and suffering of individuals and families with HIV is real, widespread, and growing. All community-based organizations, cities, and States need additional support from the Federal Government to meet the needs of those they serve.

This legislation represents a compromise, and like most compromises, it is not perfect and it will not please everyone. But on balance, it is a good bill—and its enactment will benefit all people living with HIV everywhere in the Nation.

We have sought common ground. We have listened to those on the frontlines. And we have attempted to support their efforts, not tie their hands. The Senate put aside political, geographic, and institutional differences to face this important challenge squarely and successfully.

Although the resources fall short of meeting the growing need, the act is working. It has provided life-saving care and support for hundreds of thousands of individuals and families affected by HIV and AIDS.

The act is about more than Federal funds and health care services. It is also about the caring American tradition of reaching out to people who are suffering and in need of help. Ryan White would be proud of what is taking place in his name. His example, and the hard work of so many others, are bringing help and hope to our American family with AIDS.

Since the beginning, the CARE Act has been a model of bipartisan cooperation and effective Federal leadership. Today that tradition continues and 64 Senators joined Chairman KASSEBAUM and me in presenting this bill to the Senate—and 96 Senators supported its passage. It does not get much clearer than that.

This is an important day for people living with HIV and AIDS and all Americans. We must do more to provide care and support for those trapped in the epidemic's path. And with this legislation, we will.

Mrs. KASSEBAUM addressed the Chair.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Kansas.

Mrs. KASSEBAUM. Mr. President, I will just add in support of what the ranking member of the Labor and Human Resources Committee, Senator KENNEDY, has said in acknowledging the support of the leaders, both the majority leader and the minority leader in the Senate, who have been instru-

mental in helping us move forward with this legislation and final passage.

Mr. President, I am pleased that the Senate has just concluded its action on the Ryan White CARE Reauthorization Act of 1995. As a result of this act, many individuals and families in this country who suffer from the HIV virus will continue to receive compassionate treatment and support services.

As you know, I have not been alone in my support for this legislation. I wish to thank my 65 Senate colleagues who are cosponsors of this legislation. In particular, the ranking member on the Committee on Labor and Human Resources, Senator KENNEDY, has been instrumental in the development and eventual passage of the reauthorization bill.

The development of this legislation has been difficult at times, requiring the personal commitment of many individuals from various organizations. Without mentioning each, I wish to acknowledge their efforts.

Finally, I thank Labor Committee staff who developed and helped orchestrate the passage of this act. In particular, I wish to acknowledge the dedication of Michael Iskowitz and Seth Kelbourne on Senator KENNEDY's staff and Doctors Marty Ross and James Wade on my own staff.

MORNING BUSINESS

Mrs. KASSEBAUM. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that there now be a period for morning business, not to exceed 45 minutes, with Senators permitted to speak for up to 5 minutes each.

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

Mr. LEAHY addressed the Chair.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Vermont [Mr. LEAHY] is recognized.

SHOULD THERE BE FEDERAL FARM PROGRAMS

Mr. LEAHY. Mr. President, for the past decade most of the debate on farm programs has centered around the question of "how much should we spend on farm programs?" Now the debate has shifted to whether there should be any programs that provide benefits to farmers. I take the floor today to address this issue.

Let me begin my statement by asking three questions, giving three quick answers, and then explaining why I have come to these conclusions.

Question: Do the historic justifications for farm programs make sense today?

Answer: No.

Question: Should there be any Federal program in which tax dollars are transferred to farmers?

Answer: Yes.

Question: Should farm programs be phased out or continued?

Answer: The next month will decide.

Let us start with the third question—to which I answered, "the next month

will decide." It is the heart of this question that the Senate must face this year.

There are two tests that farm programs must meet to merit continued funding.

First, will continued farm program funding mean more food for the hungry; and second, will continued farm program funding mean better management of our natural resources.

Unfortunately the jury is still out on whether the 1995 farm bill will meet these two tests.

Why? First, because some farm groups have proposed taking food from the needy to subsidize wealthy farmers. Second, because some farm groups are trying to repeal a decade of legislation that has brought harmony between agricultural and environmental policies.

Let me make my position clear—very clear. If farm programs become the enemy of the hungry and the environment, I will not support them. Indeed, I will join those on the floor who want to dismantle them.

Now a few words of background.

TIMES CHANGE

A long time could be spent explaining why farm programs need to be changed. It comes down to this. When the Agricultural Act of 1949 was written, 42 percent of rural Americans were farmers and farmers were 15 percent of the U.S. population. Rural Americans were generally poorer than most Americans. An income support program that helped farmers, helped rural America. Today farmers are only 2 percent of the American population and the average farmer is wealthier than the average American.

At one time regulations that required farmers to idle land also helped stabilize some food prices. By and large, there is now very little consumer benefit from the land idling aspects of farm programs. Today land retirement programs function only to control the budgetary costs of the program.

Farm programs are no longer an effective means to promote economic growth in rural America. Farm programs no longer stabilize consumer prices.

NEEDY REQUIRE ALLIES

The other primary justification for the farm programs, has been that they were part of the political arrangement that provided political support for feeding programs. Urban Congressmen supported farm programs in return for rural support of nutrition programs. While every program should stand on its own merits, in a democracy, the needy require allies more than anyone else. Even an unholy alliance makes sense if it helps us to meet our moral obligation to end hunger in America.

Unfortunately earlier this year, during the Senate Budget Committee's consideration of the budget resolution, the farm groups united in an effort to cut nutrition programs in order to increase farm program payments. If this

effort produces a major shift from nutrition to farm programs, I will not be able to support farm programs.

UNIQUE NATURAL RESOURCE CHALLENGES

So, should there be any Federal program in which tax dollars are transferred to farmers?

The answer is yes—for two reasons.

First, because farmers face unique problems with natural disasters.

Second, because farmers have a unique role in meeting widely held national natural resource objectives.

First, farmers face unique problems with natural disasters. Droughts, floods, and disease cause catastrophic losses that can bankrupt even the most efficient farmer. Without Government assistance, the private sector cannot provide adequate and affordable insurance to help farmers manage production risk. Thus, a subsidized crop insurance program makes sense.

Second, farmers play a unique role in managing our natural resources. Farms and grazing lands make up 50 percent of the continental United States. It is impossible to successfully regulate such a vast area, even if one wanted to—which I do not. To successfully address natural resource management on private lands, farmers must be part of the solution. The taxpayers are willing to pay farmers to protect drinking water, preserve lakes and rivers, and to be stewards of the soil.

In the 1985 and 1990 farm bills, farm programs were harmonized with environmental objectives. For example, no longer were farmers paid to destroy wetlands. Instead, farm programs began to protect wetlands.

Today some farm groups favor destroying this harmony. They even go so far as to say that farm conservation should only be funded if there is money left after farm subsidies and exports subsidies are paid for.

This may make sense to a farmer or a grain exporter. It does not make sense to the public. There is no reason a farmer should be richer than a machine shop owner. There is no reason that the taxpayer should help huge grain exporters control market shares.

So this is the time for testing.

Will farm programs become just another special interest trying to take the last few dollars from the Federal Government before the bank goes broke?

Will farmers accept the challenge of living up to their historic responsibility of feeding the poor and gradually transform farm programs into natural resource management programs?

Wallace Stevens once wrote:

After the final "no" there comes a "yes,"
And on that "yes" the future of the world depends. . . .

The next month will decide whether the final answer will be a "yes" on which the farmer and the taxpayer can depend.

I am somewhat dismayed to see the pattern that has grown up over the past decade so suddenly become shattered. This pattern farmers, con-

sumers, and environmentalists working together on the farm bill. Each realized that they would not get every single thing they wanted, but working together, they would better represent the interest of farmers, ranchers, environmentalists, consumers, the hungry, and those who could afford to buy food in this country.

You will find some who want to shatter that kind of coalition, who want to grab their own special interests immediately, almost on "The devil take the hind most." Well, that is not going to happen because some are going to stand up and speak for the "high" most.

I yield the floor.

Mr. THOMAS addressed the Chair.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Wyoming.

WELFARE REFORM

Mr. THOMAS. Mr. President, we had arranged, prior to this morning, for the freshman focus to have some time during morning business. Now we have that opportunity. I would like to take that time that was allocated.

As you know, there are some unique insights that are brought to this body by people who are elected, those who have just come through an election who, I think, are perhaps more attuned and more aware of what the electorate, at least in our view, was talking about.

So the purpose of our freshman focus has been to bring that sort of insight to this body. And, frankly, I think we are a little more impatient. We would like to see things move a little faster than the "blinding speed" we have encountered over the past 6 months. We want to talk a little about fundamental change.

The issue that will come before us soon, hopefully, will be that of welfare reform—one of the fundamental changes that obviously needs to be made. I think it is fair to say that, for whatever reason, over the last 25 to 30 years, there has not been a willingness on the part of the Congress to really take a look at fundamental change, to take a look at programs to see, in fact, if they are effective in terms of carrying out the purpose of the statutes; whether or not they are efficient in terms of providing results for the dollars that have been spent; or whether the delivery system has worked well; whether or not there is an opportunity to bring programs, Government, and decisions closer to people by involving the States. Rather, we have had this growth of Federal Government without much consideration of alternatives.

We will soon be entering into the year 2000, a new century. We need to ask ourselves what kind of a government do we want to pass on to our kids and grandkids with respect to spending and with respect to the budget? We will be considering, in the next 2 months, an increase in the debt of \$5 trillion. We will be asking ourselves what are the priorities? What should the Federal

Government be doing with what is inevitably a finite amount of money? We will have entitlements to the extent that, in 5 years, we will have nothing to spend except in the entitlement programs. I do not think we want to find ourselves there.

So we have an opportunity now to look at some fundamental change. We have done that, I think. I must say that my observation is generally that the folks on the other side of the aisle have resisted almost everything that has come up here. Always there is this idea that, yes, we are for it, whether it be unfunded mandates, line-item veto, or balanced budget. But when we get into it, we find that there is an effort to maintain the status quo. That is frustrating. I think it is frustrating for us, and I clearly believe it is frustrating for the voters in this last election.

It seems to me that one of the measurements of good Government is whether there is a response—if there is a response to public outcry for change. And I think there has been. So we find ourselves now, I think, with the opportunity to take a look at welfare, to look at a program that everyone agrees is useful, and that we should help people who need help to get back into work and back into the private sector.

But let me share just one frustration. We seem to be engaged in a little bit of a game here of perception. Each time we talk about how do we do something better, the argument goes on back to whether you are going to do it or not. You know, we talk about Medicare. There is not a soul that I know of in here who does not want to continue and strengthen Medicare. The choice is not doing away with Medicare or not funding Medicare. The choice is how do you do it? The same is true with welfare. Nobody wants to do away with the opportunity to help people who need it, but we need to find a way to do it in such a way that there are incentives to move off of the program and get back into the private sector, where there are restrictions and limits to the cost, and to develop programs that have some flexibility.

Certainly, our needs in Wyoming are different from those of my friend from Pennsylvania. That is what we are seeking to do.

So, Mr. President, we have strong feelings about it—I suppose no stronger than anyone else—simply because we are freshmen. But maybe we do feel a little of the frustration a little more easily. Maybe we grow impatient a little more easily, and sort of suffer from the movement here. In any event, I think we have great opportunities.

One of the Senators who has done more work in this, I think, than most anyone I know and is very knowledgeable, is the Senator from Pennsylvania. I am glad to see him here on the floor.

WELFARE REFORM

Mr. SANTORUM. I thank the Senator from Wyoming for his comments and again for his leadership in bringing the freshmen to the floor on a regular basis