

certainly we ought to review it and look at it.

As I said earlier, unless I am totally wrong, we ought to take another look at the Executive order signed by President Johnson and see if it has been distorted, magnified, or whatever. The goal should be nondiscrimination. That was the original intent of it. We ought to look at the Small Business Administration 8(a) program. It has been abused, no doubt about it. A lot of people have made a lot of money by finding someone in a minority group to sort of front for the effort. I do not believe that is right. I do not believe that is fair. So we have asked for hearings. We will be reviewing this process, hopefully, on a bipartisan basis, not only in the Senate but in the House. I assume there will be further discussion of this as we come to the floor with a tax bill that has been reported out by the Senate Finance Committee, which takes a step, I believe, in the right direction toward eliminating preferences.

Mr. SIMON addressed the Chair.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Illinois.

AFFIRMATIVE ACTION

Mr. SIMON. Mr. President, I hope we can work out some bipartisan efforts here on this issue, but let me add that there is a lot of talk attacking affirmative action that is just nonsense. I see Senator DOLE nodding that he is in agreement.

Affirmative action can be a very good thing. It is like religion—it can be abused. It does not mean religion is wrong. But regarding affirmative action, if there is a company that hires 1,000 people and they all happen to be white males, I do not think we ought to have to prove that there is some discrimination. We ought to be able to say to that company that there ought to be some diversity. You ought not to have to lower your standards at all. But there ought to be some minorities, there ought to be some disabled people and some women in your work force.

The case at hand—and I have to say I do not remember all of the details—but a high school which has a majority of minority students there in the business section of that high school had nine teachers, all of whom happened to be white.

They had to reduce the number of teachers. The two teachers who had the least amount of seniority both happened to be hired the same day. One was white and one was black. That school made a decision on the basis of race that they felt it was important to have minority representation in the business section of this school.

I am not saying that their decision was necessarily right, but I think it is an understandable decision and I think the situation has been distorted. I think there are times when there should be some agreement.

I dealt with a city in Illinois that had some civil rights violence. It was 40 percent black. They did not have a sin-

gle black on the police force or the fire department. We worked out an agreement that the next person they would hire would be someone who was African-American. I think that just makes sense. We did not say, "Lower the quality," or anything. That is affirmative action. I think it makes sense.

I am sure BOB DOLE, Senator FAIRCLOTH, Senator BAUCUS, like PAUL SIMON, you try to have some diversity in your office. You do not lower standards.

Two of the lawyers in my office are Jayne Jerkins and Carlos Angulo. I will put them up against any staff members in the U.S. Senate. One happens to be African-American; one happens to be Hispanic-American. They are just quality people.

But I have consciously in my office tried to have some diversity. And I think that is a healthy thing. That is affirmative action. It does not mean you lower standards or anything else.

So I think before we do too much attacking of affirmative action, let us recognize it can be a very good thing. Can it be abused? Yes, like any good things can be abused. But we should seek, as part of the American ideal, that we are going to have opportunities here for all Americans. I think that has to continue.

Mr. DOLE addressed the Chair.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Kansas.

Mr. DOLE. Mr. President, I thank my colleague from Illinois. I know of his feelings in this area.

I think, in fact, we want to do the same thing he has already suggested through nondiscrimination and penalties for discrimination. I mean, if you discriminate there ought to be punishment.

Al Shanker of the American Federation of Teachers came out against the Justice Department's position on the Piscataway case. In fact, he has written a column about it. There was not any evidence of any discrimination by the school board. Next time, it could be a black person, a black woman or black man, who may lose their job.

So that is why I say if somebody discriminates, to me that is one thing. If somebody has 1,000 white males, as the Senator from Illinois suggested, and there were good Asian, Hispanic, and black applicants, there ought to be at least some presumption or some evidence that someone may have discriminated, and we ought to go after that person if there is any evidence.

We are talking about the same result. We may have a different way of approaching it.

But I think, in any case, when we have had laws on the books for 10, 15, 20, 25, 30 years around here, it might be time to go back and take a look to see what has worked, what has not worked, see if they have worked at all, or if they have been misused or abused, taken advantage of by some people who may not have been in any of those special groups. That has happened, too.

So I hope we can discuss this in a very reasonable way, because it is a very, very touchy subject. In the past, you know, if you had two equally qualified people, you used to flip a coin. One might be black, one might Asian; or one Hispanic, one white. You would say, "Well, somebody has to go." You flipped a coin. And we have done a lot of that. I think we can all look back at the time we flipped coins. Sometimes we won; sometimes we lost.

In any event, it is a very important debate. There has been a lot of statements made that I think go over the edge; probably some from each side that go over the edge. That is not my purpose. I hope that, as we delve into this on the committee level, we will have a good discussion and maybe get some better results.

I yield the floor.

Mr. BAUCUS addressed the Chair.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Chair recognizes the Senator from Montana.

Mr. BAUCUS. Mr. President, what is the pending business?

The PRESIDING OFFICER. H.R. 889 is the pending business.

Mr. BAUCUS. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent to speak as if in morning business for not to exceed 10 minutes.

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

DOUG SWINGLEY WINS THE IDITAROD TRAIL SLED DOG RACE

Mr. BAUCUS. Mr. President, let me read from a story that appeared on today's AP wire:

A quiet "yahoo" was the first thing Montana musher Doug Swingley uttered when he arrived at Nome, winning the Iditarod Trail Sled Dog Race in record time. Swingley is the first non-Alaskan winner of the race in 23 years.

Well, today, many Montanans are echoing that "yahoo" heard up north.

We are saying yahoo for Doug Swingley and the hard work, determination and endurance that helped him win.

We are saying yahoo for the family and friends—particularly his wife Nelda—who backed Doug up and helped him get to where he is today.

And we are even saying yahoo for Doug's lead dog, Elmer, and what is almost certainly the fastest team of sled dogs in the world.

They have all made Montana proud. And to Doug, his family and his friends, we say congratulations.

Yet I doubt there is a yahoo to be heard anywhere in the State of Alaska today. And that includes my good friends and colleagues from Alaska, Senators STEVENS and MURKOWSKI.

But I would urge them to not take this loss too hard. It is never easy to keep up with Montana. Perhaps all those cold, dark Alaska winters have just slowed the Alaska mushers down. And maybe, if Alaska wants to stay competitive in future Iditarods, they

should send their mushers to Montana to train. After all, it is warmer. But we usually have plenty of snow. And the sun even shines.

Despite this loss, Senators STEVENS, MURKOWSKI and the people of Alaska can be justly proud of the rich tradition and sporting heritage of the Iditarod and their home State.

THE LADY GRIZ OF THE UNIVERSITY OF MONTANA

Mr. BAUCUS. Mr. President, on a related subject, this is a great week for Montana sports enthusiasts. First, Doug Swingley won the Iditarod Dog Sled Race, and tomorrow night the Lady Griz of the University of Montana will be playing in the opening round of the NCAA's Women's Final Four Tournament being held in San Diego.

I have been watching the Lady Griz's trek to March madness. At the beginning of the season, we all had high hopes for them. But they have far surpassed what many of us expected of them—and believe me—we Montanans have high expectations for our sports teams.

This group of tough Montana and Pacific Northwest women have shown that they have the grit and the discipline to be national champions.

Just last weekend, I saw them win their final Big Sky season game against their cross-State archrivals, the Montana State University Lady-Bobcats. It was a great game, I sat down in the front row, right next to the floor, I enjoyed very much. Both teams played very well.

And now that the Lady Griz have prevailed and won the Big Sky title, all Montanans join together in wishing their coach Robin Selvig the best of luck as they represent Montana at the NCAA tournament. Robin has built a great program that stresses hard work, excellent academics and discipline—all Montana values that we treasure.

With the tough inside play of Jodi Hinrichs and the outside shooting skills of Kristy Langton and Skyla Sisco, teams from all over the country will be facing a tough challenge from the Big Sky State. Win or lose, we are all very proud of them. And we look forward to seeing them in the final four and hopefully as national champions.

Mr. President, I yield the floor.

MORRELL RETIREES

Mr. DASCHLE. Mr. President, last month, Republicans in the House of Representatives marked the first 50 days of their efforts to pass the Contract With America. Notably missing from their speeches was any mention of progress in the fight to enact health reform.

Indeed, this issue was not even mentioned in the House Contract With America, nor was health reform among the priority bills introduced by Repub-

licans in either the House or Senate leadership.

Meanwhile, in this first 100 days, another group of citizens in my home State was learning, personally and painfully, why we need to continue the fight for health reform.

The 3,300 retirees of John Morrell & Co., a South Dakota meat packing firm, learned this January that the firm was ending all retiree health coverage.

Many of these retirees and their families had worked for Morrell all of their adult lives.

On January 24, Morrell retirees received a simple, yet unexpected, letter stating that their health insurance plan was being terminated, effective midnight, January 31, 1995—only a week later.

The benefits being terminated, the letter said, included all hospital, major medical, and prescription drug coverage, Medicare supplemental insurance, vision care, and life insurance coverage.

For those retirees under 65, this action poses a particular problem. While Morrell gave them the option of paying for their own coverage for up to 1 year, few can afford the \$500 monthly premium for a couple. And many cannot purchase coverage at any price, because of preexisting conditions like diabetes or heart disease.

Medicare beneficiaries would have to buy expensive supplemental insurance on their own.

Morrell's decision was all the more painful to the retirees because it was so unexpected. These retirees believed they worked for a fair company; that a fair day's work resulted in a fair day's pay. They found out the hard way that the company they had helped to build had turned its back on them.

They also found out that the court system was not sympathetic to their cause: The Eighth Circuit Court of Appeals ruled in favor of the company's decision. The union is now planning to appeal the decision to the Supreme Court.

Sadly, some of the retirees will not live long enough for a possible reversal.

And, if medical expenses eat up their income and assets, some Morrell retirees might be forced to resort to welfare.

All will struggle financially and emotionally to accept the change in benefits that they counted on for life.

A recent edition of the Sioux Falls Argus Leader recounted the stories of several Morrell retirees and their families.

One 26-year veteran of Morrell is legally blind, has diabetes and arthritis, takes heart medication, and wears a hearing aid. His \$300 monthly pension from Morrell will not even cover the prescription drugs he needs. He fears the financial burden of high medical costs will force him and his wife to sell their home.

Another retiree gave up \$130 from his monthly Morrell pension so his wife

could get health insurance. He now has cancer and glaucoma, and his monthly prescription costs are \$800. His wife's monthly drug costs are \$200. His monthly pension from Morrell, after 30 years service, is about \$300.

Finally, a retiree who had a kidney transplant and recently had a leg amputated, figures that he can pay for the company-offered insurance coverage for the year it is available. After that he is not sure what he will do to pay the \$1,000 monthly cost for antirejection drugs, which Medicare doesn't cover.

Mr. President, the stories go on and on.

They describe proud people who worry that high medical costs will impoverish them or force them to rely on their children for financial help.

They are stories about loyal employees who each day will live in fear of illness and injury because they have no health insurance.

Unfortunately, this is not an isolated situation. What happened to Morrell workers could happen to any of the 14 million retired workers who believe they and their families have lifelong health insurance coverage through their employers.

As companies look for ways to reduce their health care costs, they will no doubt look at drastic reductions in, or outright elimination of, retiree health care benefits.

That just is not the way it should be in this country.

We all like to think that, if we work hard and play by the rules, we will be rewarded, especially in our old age.

Sadly, when it comes to our health care system, this is often not the case.

I was disappointed that the 103d Congress was unable to pass comprehensive health reform, because many of the proposals we were considering would have addressed the problem the Morrell retirees now face.

A union official recently said, "I wish that Harry and Louise could see what's happened to the people at Morrell."

I could not agree more. The problems we talked about in last year's health reform debate have not gone away simply because that session of Congress has ended.

The Morrell retiree situation is a painful reminder of that fact.

As I recently indicated in a letter to the majority leader, I remain committed to working with all of our colleagues to craft legislation that will address the serious problems of the health care system that plague American families and businesses.

I will also be offering in the next few weeks a bill that will deal directly with the problem that Morrell and other retirees face.

I hope that those who have blocked and delayed health reform will at least support the effort to ensure that our Nation's retirees get a fair day's wage from a fair day's work.