

chairman of the committee, and I anticipate the arrival very shortly of the distinguished Senator from Montana, the comanager of the bill.

Mr. President, at the conclusion of the session last night, the Senate gave unanimous consent to a list of amendments. They are printed in today's RECORD, and the managers are very anxious to work with Members to resolve these amendments. I think several of them can be accepted. At this time, I cannot predict whether or not there will be further rollcall votes other than final passage associated with this bill.

The leadership is quite anxious to finish this bill today, and I indicate to all Members a willingness to deal with these amendments, and I am hopeful that Members will shortly come to the floor to work with us.

Mr. CHAFEE. Mr. President, I wish to echo what the distinguished Senator from Virginia has said. We are here to do business. The shop is open. If people have amendments, bring them on over. We are working on several now to resolve them. But others who have problems, now is the time.

The schedule is such that between now and 11:30 there is time for discussion and debate. There will be no votes before 11:30. At 11:30, we have a chance to vote. I would like to see us move to final passage and vote then. But if not, at 12 o'clock, we go back on the cloture motion. And the vote on that, as I understand, is at 2 o'clock. At the conclusion of that vote, if we have not finished this bill, we will be back on it again. But I know the leadership is very anxious to get this over with because there is a host of other measures with which they want to deal.

So I say to all within listening and viewing distance, come over, bring your amendments and let us dispose of them.

Mr. WARNER. Mr. President, for the ready reference of Senators, the list of amendments adopted by unanimous consent last night appears on page 2 of today's Calendar of Business.

Mr. President, seeing no Senator seeking recognition, I suggest the absence of a quorum.

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Mr. COVERDELL). The absence of a quorum having been suggested, the clerk will call the roll.

The assistant legislative clerk proceeded to call the roll.

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 President, I ask unanimous consent that the order for the quorum call be rescinded.

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

Mr. FRIST. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that I be permitted to speak as in morning business for a period of not more than 10 minutes.

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

HELP FOR THE FARMERS

Mr. FRIST. Mr. President, during the most recent recess, I had the privilege

of meeting with 36 farmers, who make up an agriculture advisory board from across the State of Tennessee. We actually met in Knoxville, TN. The women and men on that board are real farmers, not just representatives of farmers, but people who personally earn their living on a farm.

One gentleman, exhausted from the dawn-to-dusk pace of a farm in early summer, told my staff quite candidly that he simply would not have time to meet with a Senator unless it turned out to be a rainy day. That kind of humble feedback is in itself an important reason for us in the U.S. Senate, as elected representatives, to go home and talk to real people. Some members of this agriculture board from the western part of my State could not join me at that meeting because that very day they were struggling with the floodwaters that were destroying and threatening to destroy their crops. Nothing—nothing—could have served to make the need for Federal disaster relief more concrete and more real for me than the voice of a good man on the phone near panic over the rising waters.

It was a fascinating day. When I had asked these 30 farmers to tell me what they would like their duly elected Senator to know today about agriculture, they were forthright and firm in their advice and their counsel. On two points they were very clear. Sam Worley of Hampshire, TN, said:

We want a smaller Federal Government that thinks not short term but long term.

He went on and expressed that they wanted to be treated fairly in the spending reductions that they expect and that they know are necessary for the long-term health of this country for that next generation.

These hard-working Tennesseans resent the media portraying them as parasites. They are willing to sacrifice, each and every one, as long as all Americans do, to balance the budget. They shuddered when I shared with them the fact that a child born today acquires an \$18,000 share in the Federal debt—a share of the Federal debt that they will be expected to pay the interest on over the course of a lifetime. They made it very clear to me that they are ready to do their part, as long as we do not try to balance the budget on the backs of the farmers.

What else did these men and women have to tell me? They are frustrated with the perverse incentives of our welfare system. Mike Vaught of Lacassas, TN, told me of being unable to find an overseer to live on his farm because he could not provide the cable TV that was available in the public housing just miles away. They are frustrated with the intrusive Federal agencies that often act at cross purposes with each other. The Environmental Protection Agency orders action that the Soil Conservation Service prohibits. Jimmy Shellabarger of Jackson, TN, told me that he is frustrated by the huge fines for minor infractions of complicated

rules. David Robinson of Jonesboro said,

We are tired of being held to expensive standards of production when our global competitors are allowed to ignore these same standards.

These farmers also asked for tax relief. This may surprise some of my colleagues across the aisle, but the tax relief that they asked me for, that they spoke about, was a cut in the capital gains tax rate. These are mainly middle-class Tennesseans. Some have experienced or been very close to bankruptcy, riding the roller coaster of commodity prices. But they fully understand what seems to elude so many of my colleagues, that a cut in the capital gains tax rate is critical to middle-income Americans; that it will stimulate the economy to the benefit of everyone in America.

In closing, I want to tell you what James Wooden of South Pittsburg, TN, said. He said, "I am going to talk to you just like we do under the shade tree." I will remember those words of James Wooden when the 700-page farm bill, full of Washington lingo, comes by my way. We all need to go out under the shade tree and listen to the people across this country and let the people, firsthand, tell us what they know.

Mr. President, I yield the floor and suggest the absence of a quorum.

Mr. DOLE. Will the Senator withhold?

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Chair recognizes the majority leader.

NATIONAL HIGHWAY SYSTEM DESIGNATION ACT

The Senate continued with the consideration of the bill.

Mr. DOLE. Mr. President, first I want to remind my colleagues the two managers are here on the highway bill and have been here since 9:30 and would very much like to complete action on this bill by noon today because at noon we have 2 hours of debate on the Foster nomination and then another vote. And then hopefully after that we would go to securities litigation legislation.

I have just talked with Virginia Senator, Senator WARNER. Maybe many of these amendments will never be called up, but it will be helpful if our colleagues on either side will let the managers know. If we are not going to call up the amendments or if you have an amendment, it would certainly be better to offer it at 10:30 in the morning rather than 10:30 tonight. The reason we are here every night until 10 o'clock, 11 o'clock, is because people will not cooperate during the daytime. They are the same ones who complain in the evening after 7 or 8 o'clock. So I would tell my colleagues, if you have an amendment, the managers are here.

Mr. WARNER. Mr. President, if I might say to the distinguished leader, half of these amendments are not matters related to the bill. They are not matters either the Senator from Montana nor I can really settle out because

other chairmen and ranking members of other committees are involved in the subject of the amendments.

It seems to me it takes a good deal of work to get these things done by persons other than the managers of the pending bill.

Mr. DOLE. I note the presence of the distinguished chairman of the committee, Senator CHAFEE. There are a number of amendments under the jurisdiction of the Commerce Committee, Energy Committee, whatever. As the Senator from Virginia has pointed out, they are not under the jurisdiction of the committee that has the bill on the floor.

In any event, I know many of my colleagues may have conflicts at this moment because there are amendments here by Senator BOXER, three by Senator EXON, one by Senator FORD, Senator HATFIELD, Senator KERRY, Senator LAUTENBERG, Senator NICKLES, Senator MCCAIN, Senator SARBANES, Senator SMITH, Senator STEVENS, and Senator MURKOWSKI. We would hope whoever is willing to come to the floor would do so. If they do not intend to offer their amendments, if they would notify the managers on either side then we can move on because we do have a lot of legislation we will finish before the July 4 recess begins. It is up to our colleagues when that may happen.

Mr. WARNER. Mr. President, I might inform the leader Senator HATFIELD has just withdrawn his amendment.

Mr. DOLE. We are making progress.

Mr. WARNER. Now we are making progress.

Mr. DOLE. Now can we have a bit from the other side?

Mr. BAUCUS. I might say to the leader, in response to his question, that means automatically one or two others are dropped. Automatically, too, that means others are dropped.

Mr. DOLE. I think that means Senator MCCAIN's amendment will disappear.

Mr. BAUCUS. Also another one on this side, too, will not be offered as a consequence of that last development.

Mr. DOLE. We are making progress as we speak.

Mr. BAUCUS. Maybe the Senator could find another one that has the same ripple effect?

Mr. DOLE. Could I ask, will there be any of these other amendments requiring rollcall votes?

Mr. WARNER. Mr. President, I say to the distinguished leader and others, at this present time the managers of the bill do not know of a request for a rollcall vote other than final passage.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Chair recognizes the Senator from Rhode Island.

Mr. CHAFEE. Mr. President, I agree with the analysis of the distinguished Senator from Virginia. We are making some progress.

We would appreciate your sticking around a little longer, though. We have just disposed of three in 30 seconds. It is like a house of cards. If we pull one

card out, perhaps the whole thing will come collapsing down and we will finish. In any event, we are striving. We will call on these individual Senators to see if they are satisfied.

I think the point the managers make here is a very valid one. These amendments, many of them, do not involve this committee. They involve other committees. And we are caught in a crossfire here. The Commerce Committee or the Energy Committee—they have nothing to do with us. I do not even know why they are on this bill.

Mr. WARNER. Mr. President, there are a number of them relating to the Banking Committee. As such, I know Senator D'AMATO has been trying to be very helpful on it. Other committee chairmen are working together with their ranking members. It is most unusual.

Mr. DOLE. Perhaps—perhaps we can, if our colleagues do not object, then we can go to third reading, say at 11:30? That would be one way too expedite the process. We have indicated to one of our colleagues, the eldest, there may not be any votes until 11:30. But that does not mean we should not proceed. I think we are making progress and I want to congratulate the managers. I do believe I can see some of these may be tied together. Some may not have any—some may be more related to the next bill than this bill, as I understand it. Some that do not want the other bill to come up.

In the meantime, while we are waiting for our colleagues to come, I know there must be a rush on the subway as I speak. They are all heading for the floor at the same time.

Mr. President, while we are waiting additional action on this bill, I suggest the absence of a quorum.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will call the roll.

The legislative clerk proceeded to call the roll.

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

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Mr. FAIRCLOTH). Without objection, it is so ordered.

Mr. WARNER. The managers wish to thank Senators. We are making considerable progress. I would like to make a report, together with my distinguished colleague.

On the horizon is the opportunity perhaps to vote final passage at about 11:30, or at such time thereafter, or before 12, as the leadership of the Senate may designate.

But to bring Senators up to date, referring to page 2 of today's calendar, the amendments pending from last night by the Senator from California, Mrs. BOXER, are withdrawn; Senator CHAFEE withdrawn; Senator FORD, we have reason to believe that is going to be withdrawn; Senator HATFIELD, withdrawn; Senator KERRY, we have reason to believe that will be withdrawn; Senator LAUTENBERG has resolved his amendment. We have reason to believe

Senator NICKLES' amendment will be withdrawn. Senator MCCAIN has been resolved.

That leaves Senator SARBANES, and Senator SMITH is very close to reconciliation. Senator CHAFEE is working on that with Senator SMITH. There still remains an amendment by Senators STEVENS and MURKOWSKI, the Senators from Alaska, but we are hopeful that that matter can be resolved. It relates to the Committee on Energy, of which Senator MURKOWSKI is the chairman. We hope that can be resolved. Neither of the managers of the pending bill have any dealings with that.

Mr. BAUCUS addressed the Chair.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Montana.

Mr. BAUCUS. Mr. President, I would like to join in commending Senators who have worked out resolutions of amendments. The Senator from Virginia has done an admirable job, a wonderful job talking with Senators and working out resolutions.

On the Democratic side, we are about finished. Senator EXON has three amendments. I hope, because those are Commerce Committee amendments, that the chairman of the Commerce Committee and his staff can work out agreements with Senator EXON. Senator EXON is on the floor now ready to proceed with his amendments. I hope that those can be worked out. We are very close to final passage. Very close. I expect we can finish this bill before noon.

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

Mr. EXON. I thank the Chair, and I thank the managers of the bill. While the dialog was just briefly going on between the two managers, I have received information we have clearance for the second Exon amendment now on both sides of the aisle. I will take those in order.

Mr. WARNER. Mr. President, the Senator from Nebraska is correct. On the second amendment, clearance has been arranged.

AMENDMENT NO. 1462

(Purpose: To increase safety where the rails meet the roads)

Mr. EXON. Mr. President, I send an amendment to the desk and ask for its immediate consideration.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will report the amendment.

The bill clerk read as follows:

The Senator from Nebraska [Mr. EXON] proposes an amendment numbered 1462.

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

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

The amendment is as follows:

At the appropriate place in the bill insert the following:

SEC. . SHORT TITLE.

This amendment may be cited as the "Federal Highway and Railroad Grade Crossing Safety Act of 1995".

SEC.—INTELLIGENT VEHICLE-HIGHWAY SYSTEMS.

(a) IN GENERAL.—In implementing the Intelligent Vehicle-Highway Systems Act of 1991 (23 U.S.C. 307 note), the Secretary of Transportation shall ensure that the National Intelligent Vehicle-Highway System Program addresses, in a comprehensive and coordinated manner, the use of intelligent vehicle-highway technologies to promote safety at railroad-highway grade crossings. The Secretary of Transportation shall ensure that two or more operational tests funded under such Act shall promote highway traffic safety and railroad safety.

SEC.—STATE HIGHWAY SAFETY MANAGEMENT SYSTEMS.

(a) AMENDMENT OF REGULATIONS.—The Secretary of Transportation shall conduct a rulemaking proceeding to amend the regulations under section 500.407 of title 23, Code of Federal Regulations to require that each highway safety management system developed, established, and implemented by a State shall, among countermeasures and priorities established under subsection (b)(2) of that section—

(1) include public railroad-highway grade-crossing closure plans that are aimed at eliminating high-risk or redundant crossings (as defined by the Secretary);

(2) include railroad-highway grade-crossing policies that limit the creation of new at-grade crossings for vehicle or pedestrian traffic, recreational use, or any other purpose; and

(3) include plans for State policies, programs, and resources to further reduce death and injury at high-risk railroad-highway grade crossings.

(b) DEADLINE.—The Secretary of Transportation shall complete the rulemaking proceeding described in subsection (a) and prescribe the required amended regulations, not later than one year after the date of enactment of this Act.

SEC. . VIOLATION OF GRADE-CROSSING LAWS AND REGULATIONS.

(a) FEDERAL REGULATIONS.—Section 31311 of title 49, United States Code, is amended by adding at the end the following new subsection:

“(h) GRADE-CROSSING VIOLATIONS.—

“(1) SANCTIONS.—The Secretary shall issue regulations establishing sanctions and penalties relating to violations, by persons operating commercial motor vehicles, of laws and regulations pertaining to railroad-highway grade crossings.

“(2) MINIMUM REQUIREMENTS.—Regulations issued under paragraph (1) shall, at a minimum, require that—

“(A) the penalty for a single violation shall not be less than a 60-day disqualification of the driver's commercial driver's license; and

“(B) any employer that knowingly allows, permits, authorizes, or requires an employee to operate a commercial motor vehicle in violation of such a law or regulation shall be subject to a civil penalty of not more than \$10,000.”

(b) DEADLINE.—The initial regulations required under section 31310(h) of title 49, United States Code, shall be issued not later than one year after the date of enactment of this Act.

(c) STATE REGULATIONS.—Section 31311(a) of title 49, United States Code, is amended by adding at the end the following new paragraph:

“(18) GRADE-CROSSING REGULATIONS.—The State shall adopt and enforce regulations prescribed by the Secretary under section 31310(h) of this title.”

SEC. . SAFETY ENFORCEMENT.

(a) COOPERATION BETWEEN FEDERAL AND STATE AGENCIES.—The National Highway

Traffic Safety Administration, and the Office of Motor Carriers within the Federal Highway Administration, shall on a continuing basis cooperate and work with the National Association of Governors' Highway Safety Representatives, the Commercial Vehicle Safety Alliance, and Operation Lifesaver, Inc., to improve compliance with and enforcement of laws and regulations pertaining to railroad-highway grade crossings.

(b) REPORT.—The Secretary of Transportation shall submit a report to Congress by January 1, 1996, indicating (1) how the Department worked with the above mentioned entities to improve the awareness of the highway and commercial vehicle safety and law enforcement communities of regulations and safety challenges at railroad-highway grade crossings, and (2) how resources are being allocated to better address these challenges and enforce such regulations.

SEC. . CROSSING ELIMINATION; STATEWIDE CROSSING FREEZE.

(a) STATEMENT OF POLICY.—

(1) Railroad-highway grade crossings present inherent hazards to the safety of railroad operations and to the safety of persons using those crossings. It is in the public interest—

(A) to eliminate redundant and high risk railroad-highway grade crossings; and

(B) to limit the creation of new crossings to the minimum necessary to provide for the reasonable mobility of the American people and their property, including emergency access.

(2) Elimination of redundant and high-risk railroad-highway grade crossings is necessary to permit optimum use of available funds to improve the safety of remaining crossings, including funds provided under Federal law.

(3) Effective programs to reduce the number of unneeded railroad-highway grade crossings, and to close those crossings that cannot be made reasonably safe (due to reasons of topography, angles of intersection, etc.), require the partnership of Federal, State, and local officials and agencies, and affected railroads.

(4) Promotion of a balanced national transportation system requires that highway planning specifically take into consideration the interface between highways and the national railroad system.

(b) PARTNERSHIP AND OVERSIGHT.—The Secretary shall foster a partnership among Federal, State, and local transportation officials and agencies to reduce the number of railroad-highway grade crossings and to improve safety at remaining crossings. The Secretary shall make provision for periodic review to ensure that each State (including State subdivisions and local governments) is making substantial, continued progress toward achievement of the purposes of this section.

(c) CROSSING FREEZE.—If, upon review, and after opportunity for a hearing, the Secretary determines that a State or political subdivision thereof has failed to make substantial, continued progress toward achievement of the purposes of this section, then the Secretary shall impose a limit on the maximum number of public railroad-highway grade crossings in that State. The limitation imposed by the Secretary under this subsection shall remain in effect until the State demonstrates compliance with the requirements of this section. In addition, the Secretary may, for a period of not more than 3 years after such a determination, require compliance with specific numeric targets for net reductions in the number of railroad-highway grade crossings (including specification of hazard categories with which such crossings are associated).

(d) REGULATIONS.—The Secretary shall issue such regulations as may be necessary to carry out this section.

Mr. EXON. Mr. President, I appreciate the cooperation of the two managers. I have been trying to work with them to move this expeditiously ahead. I think we have made some great progress overnight. At least two of the amendments that were in question have now been resolved.

The first amendment that I have just offered is the Federal highway-railroad grade-crossing safety amendment. This legislation builds on the important work already done by the U.S. Senate. The provisions in this amendment should be familiar and are familiar to the Senate, and it is noncontroversial.

Mr. President, I am pleased to offer the Federal highway and railroad grade crossing safety amendment. This legislation builds on important work already done by the U.S. Senate. The provisions in this amendment should be familiar to the Senate and noncontroversial.

Most deaths and injuries which occur in the rail industry are as a result of trespassers and motorist violation of railroad grade crossing laws. About 600 people a year die as a result of railroad crossing accidents and about 600 people a year die as a result of trespassing on railroad property. An automobile and a train collide once about every 90 minutes in the United States. In 1992 approximately 2,500 people were either killed or seriously injured as a result of railroad grade crossing accidents.

This is one area of death and injury which is almost entirely preventable. The amendment I offer is meant to complement landmark rail safety legislation approved last year as part of the so-called Swift Rail Act, named in honor of former House Chairman Al Swift.

As the former chairman of the Senate Surface Transportation Subcommittee, I chaired a number of hearings on railroad and grade crossing safety. Those hearings indicated that although significant progress has been made in reducing the number of rail related deaths, there is still room for improvement, especially when it comes to grade crossing safety. Unfortunately, in the past, jurisdictional disputes with the House of Representatives got in the way of a number of important Senate grade crossing safety initiatives. Now that the House of Representatives has been reorganized, I am hopeful that good ideas will not be slain by the sword of jurisdiction.

States and local governments must be encouraged to enforce their laws against grade crossing violations and must be encouraged to finally close crossings. The split jurisdiction between the Federal Highway Administration, The Federal Rail Administration, States, local governments, and railroads has led to a gridlock of responsibility. This amendment helps shatter that gridlock.

It is time to make the places where rails meet roads safer for rail workers, drivers, and pedestrians.

This amendment should be very familiar to the Senate. Its provisions are

taken from legislation unanimously approved by the Senate last year.

Provisions taken from the railroad safety bill unanimously approved by the Senate in 1994 consist of provisions dropped from the final Swift Rail Act because they were outside the jurisdiction of the House Energy and Commerce Committee.

These provisions require that grade crossing safety be made part of at least two intelligent vehicle highway systems projects; ensure that States include grade crossing closure and safety enhancement plans in their highway safety management plans; stiffen penalties for truck violations of grade crossing safety laws and encourage cooperation between State and Federal authorities on grade crossing safety.

Finally, the amendment gives the Secretary power—but only as a last resort—to impose a statewide freeze on grade crossings where a State has failed to make substantial, continued progress toward crossing reduction and improvement.

Mr. President, with the amendment, the Senate can vote to save lives. Again, this amendment should be non-controversial and simply represents unfinished business from last year.

I say to the managers of the bill that we have agreed to strike the two provisions that your committee had objection to, and we are going simply with the proposition that was originally cleared by the Commerce Committee.

Mr. WARNER. Mr. President, we accept the amendment.

Mr. BAUCUS. Mr. President, before accepting the amendment, I would like to commend the Senator from Nebraska. About 600 people a year die at railroad crossings. It seems to me we in Congress have an obligation to do what we can do to reduce that number.

The Senator from Nebraska came up with an ingenious idea to reduce the deaths. All the Members are indebted to him for his efforts. I commend the Senator.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The question is on agreeing to the amendment.

The amendment (No. 1462) was agreed to.

Mr. EXON. Mr. President, I move to reconsider the vote by which the amendment was agreed to.

Mr. WARNER. I move to lay that motion on the table.

The motion to lay on the table was agreed to.

AMENDMENT NO. 1463

Mr. EXON. Mr. President, I send an amendment to the desk and ask for its immediate consideration.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will report the amendment.

The bill clerk read as follows:

The Senator from Nebraska [Mr. EXON] proposes an amendment numbered 1463.

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

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

The amendment is as follows:

At the appropriate place in the bill add the following:

SEC. . TRUCK LENGTH AND THE NORTH AMERICAN FREE TRADE AGREEMENT.

Any Federal regulatory standard for single trailer length issued pursuant to negotiations and procedures authorized under the North American Free Trade Agreement, shall not exceed fifty-three feet.

Mr. EXON. Mr. President, the Exon truck-length amendment is a very simple and straightforward provision. It only applies to Federal regulations on length issued pursuant to the North American Free-Trade Agreement.

Last year, I chaired a hearing on this issue. Pursuant to the NAFTA agreement, the governments of Mexico, Canada, and the United States of America are negotiating the harmonization of traffic safety laws. The Senate has been very concerned about these negotiations and following the approval of NAFTA approved a resolution expressing the sense of the Senate that these negotiations should bring Canadian and Mexican traffic safety up to United States levels, not to lower United States standards. I am pleased to report that the Clinton administration expressed their desire to involve Congress in the adoption of any new safety rules arising out of these negotiations.

Since the Federal Government maintains no single trailer length standard, there is a risk that a future administration could use the NAFTA negotiations to increase lengths beyond the generally accepted 53-foot standard. If the administration sets a single trailer length standard pursuant to NAFTA negotiations, that exceeds 53 feet, congressional action would be necessary to implement the longer Federal standard.

The amendment does not restrict State action.

The amendment does not affect Federal legislative action.

The amendment does not affect Federal regulatory action not related to the North American Free-Trade Agreement.

The amendment is consistent with the intent of the Reigle-Exon NAFTA-truck safety resolution approved by the Senate following the approval of NAFTA and in no way disrupts the long combination vehicle freeze Senator LAUTENBURG and I authored as part of ISTEA.

I ask my colleagues to adopt this narrow amendment which will preserve congressional discretion over truck safety and the NAFTA.

This does not affect truck lengths at all, as far as normal processes are concerned. What this amendment would do is to prevent the administration, through any real or imagined parts of the NAFTA agreement, to increase truck lengths unilaterally without any consideration at all by the Congress. I think this is a safety matter, but it is very narrowly drawn and has been cleared by, as far as I know, all participants who have an interest in this matter.

Mr. WARNER. Mr. President, indeed, we have endeavored to clear this amendment, but we have just been notified that a Senator has interposed an objection to the amendment. Perhaps given that objection, the Senator from Nebraska might wish to expand his explanation of this amendment in the hopes that that expanded explanation might meet the objections of the Senator who has interposed it.

Mr. EXON. I thank my friend. I will be glad to expand on it a little bit further and maybe satisfy the concerns of all in this particular area.

We have so many last-minute objections by so many people that I do not know who they are. It has been very difficult to kill these rats when they keep coming out of the hay bin.

I repeat again, we have had in the Commerce Committee and in the committee of jurisdiction on this particular piece of legislation various studies and indepth hearings all aimed at safety, safety on the highways of America. There is a discussion ongoing right now as to whether or not we should increase by law the length and the width of trucks traveling on our highways.

Generally speaking, this is a matter that has been split. The Commerce Committee has been generally recognized to have jurisdiction over truck lengths. The committee that is headed by the two distinguished managers of this bill have always had jurisdiction over the width. I cannot go into an explanation of why one committee has length and the other committee has width. That is too complicated a matter for me to understand, and I cannot explain it because I do not know the reason for it myself.

But we are not changing any of that, and we are not changing any lengths of trucks in this amendment. All that we are saying in this amendment—very clearly defined—is that the administration, under the authority granted the administration in the NAFTA agreement, cannot automatically extend the lengths of trucks over and beyond what is the law of the land at the present time.

There is some indication that in order to facilitate the movement and to make it easier for some of the Mexican trucks to enter the United States, the administration might have the authority, under the terms of NAFTA, to supersede the laws presently in place in the United States with regard to lengths of trucks.

All this narrowly defined amendment does is it writes into law and snatches away that part of the law that some might interpret as authority for the administration unilaterally, without any consultation with the Congress, let alone laws, unilaterally to authorize longer trucks on our highways under NAFTA that would otherwise be prohibited. That is a simple, straightforward explanation. With that, I do not know what the objection would be. If there is an objection, I would be glad to attempt to address it.

Mr. WARNER. An objection will be interposed, and we will discuss the objection with the Senator from Nebraska.

At this time, I ask unanimous consent that the pending amendment be temporarily laid aside, such that the managers can continue with other amendments.

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

Mr. WARNER. Mr. President, the managers are continuing to make steady progress. We retain our hope that we can vote on final passage before 12 noon. I urge those very few Senators—it is down to two or three Senators now that would require further reconciliation of their views.

Mr. President, on a personal matter, if I might make a few remarks. I commend the chairman of the Environment and Public Works Committee. Twenty-five years ago, I first met the then Governor of Rhode Island. In 1969, we formed a team in the Department of the Navy where he, as Secretary, and I, as principal deputy and Under Secretary, undertook a task at the height of the Vietnam war to give leadership to the Department of the Navy and to participate in other activities in the Department of Defense.

Now, 25 years later, we are still together. I do not say this with regret, but I do note that he is still the boss and I am still the first deputy, so not much has changed in a quarter of a century. There sits a man that has always stepped forward to lead in this country, be it in the time of war, as he did in World War II, as a marine fighting in the Pacific, and then being recalled back to duty during the Korean conflict, as a captain, company commander, and then as Governor. And now as a U.S. Senator, he has distinguished himself as a public servant. He is greatly respected in the U.S. Senate, as well as in his own State. It is a privilege for me to once again be in partnership, but as always, No. 2.

I thank the Chair.

Mr. CHAFEE. Mr. President, I thank the distinguished Senator from Virginia for his generous remarks. He is right that in our long-time friendship we have worked together. It has not been a one-two relationship. It has been a partnership. He and I worked together in the Defense Department starting in January 1969 in the Navy, as Secretary and Under Secretary, and we were in those posts together for 3½ years.

The distinguished Senator from Virginia then became Secretary of the Navy and went on after that to head the bicentennial commission, was elected to the U.S. Senate in 1978, and he has served here with great distinction. So it is indeed a marvelous friendship and association that we have had together. And now on the Environment Committee, where he is handling this legislation so effectively, doing such an excellent job as chairman of the subcommittee dealing with this type of legislation.

So I thank my long-time friend—I will not say “old” friend, but “long-time” friend—for the joys that we have had together and the joint achievements that I believe we have accomplished.

Mr. WARNER. Mr. President, I thank my good friend and colleague. I hope we have many more years working together here in the U.S. Senate.

I note the presence on the floor of the Senator from Maine. I extend to him an apology. On two occasions I have indicated the clearance of the Senator's amendment. But subsequent thereto, objections arose. I believe it is now resolved, and I would appreciate if the Senator from Maine could advise the managers. The Senator from Virginia will continue to ascertain the status of the Senator's amendment. I am hopeful that it can be resolved. I thank the Senator from Maine, however, for his patience on this matter.

I suggest the absence of a quorum.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will call the roll.

The bill clerk proceeded to call the roll.

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

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

Mr. COHEN. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that I be allowed to proceed as in morning business.

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

The Senator from Maine is recognized.

THE NOMINATION OF DR. HENRY FOSTER

Mr. COHEN. Mr. President, I would like to offer a few comments on the nomination of Dr. Foster to be Surgeon General. We are going to have further debate this afternoon. We are going to have one more rollcall vote in terms of whether or not the proceedings should come to a close and a vote take place on Dr. Foster.

I must say that this is one of those issues which has really galvanized the American people, those who are interested in this issue. We have letters and calls pouring into our offices from those who are strongly in favor, and those who are equally determined to oppose his nomination. The rhetoric is hot. It is, in fact, intemperate. I think the passion of the letters finds its voice right here in the U.S. Senate. That voice, at times, is angry, raw, and even ugly.

Mr. President, the charge has been made that we are sacrificing Dr. Foster on the altar of right-wing radicalism. I must say that there have been a number of good and decent people who have found their integrity and character shredded on the altar of left-wing liberalism. That is one of the problems that I see taking place in this Chamber and elsewhere. There seems to be a double standard on display, what we might call a case of situational ethics.

What comes to mind is the debate that took place when Ronald Reagan, for example, nominated Robert Bork to be a member of the Supreme Court. I recall that debate very well. Judge Bork's writings were plucked from the past. Those writings were provocative. He was, in fact, a provocative professor who challenged conventional wisdom. He disagreed with the rationale that was found and articulated in *Roe versus Wade*. He found no right of privacy lurking or hidden in the penumbra of the Constitution.

What took place with Bob Bork is that he was demonized. It was charged that he would take us back to the boneyard of conservatism, to the dark ages, maybe even to hell itself. I say that by virtue of a photograph that I remember that was on the cover of *Time* magazine.

It was a portrait, a photograph, of Robert Bork with his judicial robes on looking much like a cape. Of course, he had the beard. There was a red glow to the entire cover. And one could almost see the hint of horns emerging from the top of his head. One would have thought that Mephistopheles himself was about to be appointed to the Court, would corrupt the Court, would rip up the Constitution and shred our rights of privacy.

I might point out, sometime thereafter Judge Ruth Bader Ginsburg, who actually was endorsed by Robert Bork, also found fault with the Court's reasoning in *Roe v. Wade*. She said the Court had reached the right result but for the wrong reason. Yet we did not hear much criticism coming from the left, the liberal element in our society, at that time.

I mention that because I think we are reaching a point in the confirmation process in which it is going to be very difficult to have good and decent people willing to step forward and subject themselves to the confirmation process. My own friend, John Tower—I think what took place in this Chamber against John Tower was a disgrace. I saw a good man who had his character shredded by allegations and innuendo and false charges. He was so bloodied up that the critics said, “He has been too damaged to be a successful Secretary of Defense. President Bush, why don't you just cut him down from that tree that he is swinging from and take him back to Texas?” So we saw another challenge to an individual which I felt was unwarranted.

How many Republican nominees were rejected because of membership at all-white clubs? It did not matter that they were not racist. It did not matter that they had employed blacks or Hispanics or other minorities in their businesses or even in their homes. If they were members or had memberships in an all-white club, that was enough to bring down their nomination.

The same rule, however, was not applied when it came to people like Webster Hubbell, who also belonged to an