

Democrats will vote for this legislation. So I hope we will keep that in mind. Let us not delay just for the sake of delay. Let us look at the substance, let us work on it in a responsible way, and then let us move forward because we know it needs to be done and because we know in the end it is going to pass.

Let me just make a couple of points. This legislation will increase accountability. It places added responsibilities where it needs to be, on those who want to either create a new mandate or increase costs of an existing one. In order to do that, they are going to have to get an estimate of the cost of the new requirement to both State and local governments and the private sector. I want to emphasize this also includes a way, hopefully, to help control the unfunded mandates on the private sector.

There has been some suggestion that maybe small business might not be benefit by this or might not be all for it. The National Federation of Independent Businesses put out a letter on January 3 on behalf of 600,000 members of the NFIB, which really represents the small businessmen and women in my State, and said they support this legislation unreservedly, and it is going to be one of their top-rated votes. So the private-sector small businesses want this. I think they want it not only as businessmen and women, but just as individuals and Americans. They know this needs to be done.

So there will be the cost estimates, and then there will be an opportunity to waive the requirements by a simple majority. We can debate that point, and I feel we probably will, on whether or not these requirements can go into effect or not.

I believe this will lead to more informed decisions. Some allegation has been made—intended, I think, as criticism—that this might once again slow down moving some legislation. I have never seen the Senate worry about slowing things down. We are the saucer under the hot cup to cool it down. A little more information, a little more deliberation before we put another mandate on the American people, public or private, seems to me something we should be doing.

The American people want it, and every State in every region, regardless of philosophy, even. A lot of the biggest supporters of this legislation are Democrats, liberal Democrats. Elected mayors and county commissioners have to wrestle with this. They have to find a way to pay for it. So, therefore, this is something that is long overdue. I hope the Senate, in its great deliberative fashion, will make sure that all of the details are analyzed, but in good time will move it forward. I believe it will provide relief for State and local taxpayers.

More and more and more, the Federal Government has dumped requirements on States that Governors, like the distinguished Senator in the chair, the former Governor of Missouri, has had

to deal with. He knows the extra costs that were put on the taxpayers of Missouri, not by the Missouri Legislature, but by the Federal Government, telling that State: You have to do this and, by the way, good luck finding the way to pay for it as best you can—not a few thousand dollars, but millions of dollars on every State, big and small, rich and poor.

My poor State of Mississippi struggles to deal with these federally unfunded mandates. The Governor of our State, Gov. Kirk Fordice, has pleaded for relief and for flexibility to allow innovation to occur at the State level. They can do it better. They can save money, and they can give relief to the taxpayers. Also, that is true at the local level. I have had to wrestle in the past as a Congressman and Senator with these Federal mandates that have been dumped on poor, small cities, requirements that say: You must do this; you must clean up that; you must provide this service. And in communities sometimes where you have 70 to 80 percent minorities, they just cannot pay for it. So they have said: We want to do it for safety purposes or environmental purposes, but we do not have the money. Help us.

So I think, at the Federal level, a cost analysis will allow us to see what the cost is going to be and require us, if it is in the national interest, if it is in the interest of safety or environmental considerations nationwide, to step up to the lick log and pay for it. Give them safe drinking water, but help them pay for it. Or, if we are not going to pay for it, do not dump it on them. We make criminals out of the elected officials, literally criminals. Good men and women are saying: I cannot do this. We worry about how we attract good people in office. It is things like unfunded mandates that drive them out. You get a local insurance agent or local homebuilder. Do you think he or she will want to continue to deal with these Federal mandates and the tax increases that are required by them?

If we really want to give taxpayers some tax relief in a painless way, this is the way to do it, by giving them the opportunity to make more decisions on their own without Federal mandates and without increased local and State taxes.

So, Mr. President, I am very pleased that S. 1, the first bill of the year that was introduced, is the Unfunded Mandate Reform Act of 1995.

I commend all that have been involved with it. I think we are going to have good legislation. The risks are small, and the benefits could be great. I hope that early next week, we will move to conclusion.

Mr. President, seeing the distinguished Senator from California on the floor, I yield at this time.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from California is recognized.

Mrs. BOXER. Mr. President, I have time reserved at approximately 9:30. So

if the majority whip would like to continue, I am perfectly pleased.

Mr. LOTT. In the spirit of what I just said, I do not want to overtalk an issue, I think this legislation speaks so loudly for itself, so I think I will stop at this point.

I suggest the absence of a quorum.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will call the roll.

The assistant legislative clerk proceeded to call the roll.

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

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

Mrs. BOXER. Mr. President, I want to make sure about the time situation. My understanding is that I control the time until 9:45, is that correct?

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator has 15 minutes.

THE CALIFORNIA FLOOD

Mrs. BOXER. Mr. President, I have not spoken yet on the floor regarding the disaster that has hit my State of California. Senator FEINSTEIN was on this floor and brought the Senate up-to-date a couple of days ago. I would like to do the same, and then I would like to speak about another very urgent issue regarding safety at reproductive health care clinics. I see that Senator FEINGOLD has joined me, and he will be participating in that particular discussion.

Mr. President, 34 counties have been declared State disaster areas and 24 counties have been declared Federal disaster areas, and we expect others to be added shortly. I do not think I have to tell my colleagues that the people in California have, once again, been struck by Mother Nature in a very difficult way.

We live in a very magnificent State. We treasure it and we prize its beauty—its rivers, ocean, mountains, streams, creeks, forests, and deserts. And because we are such a magnificent State, we just have to put up with our share of natural disasters. I want to say, once again, to my colleagues how appreciative Californians are for the swift relief we got from the Clinton administration, backed in a very bipartisan way by this Congress, and we are rebuilding. Now we have people thrown out of their homes because of ravaging floods. The power of that water—someone described it as a 500-year occasion in some parts of the State—is just overwhelming.

What we know is that we have a little break in the weather right now. I am very anxious to get on a plane and go back and see for myself exactly what damage will last after this flood and what we need to do. But today I merely want to bring you up-to-date. Santa Barbara has reported \$20 million in damage, and Sacramento reports at least \$50 million in damage. The FEMA

emergency phone number is 1-800-462-9029. I say that in case we have any Californians who need to hear that number. The reason that number is important is, if you have damage, you call there and you are eligible for short-term emergency assistance, such as transportation and housing, and longer term registration if you need a loan up to \$200,000, if your home has been lost and its value is that high.

The loans are made to people who cannot qualify at banks, and the interest rate will be about 4 percent. If you can qualify at a bank, the interest rate will be about 8 percent. I want to thank the Clinton administration for acting so swiftly. James Lee Witt, the Director of FEMA, unfortunately, has become a familiar figure in our State. He is an extraordinary man. He happened to be there during this disaster and has remained there. We are getting ready for what is to come. I urge my colleagues to please help us as we would help you in a similar situation, indeed as we have helped you in a similar situation.

UNFUNDED MANDATES

Mrs. BOXER. Mr. President, we are debating the unfunded mandates bill. I voted it out of the Budget Committee. I am very much in agreement with the thrust of the bill. I served in local government and we had some mandates I never could understand.

So I am very hopeful that the bill, in its final form, will be good for my State of California. And I want to make it clear, if I think it is good for the people of my State, I will be very proud to vote for the bill. But if I see that the bill takes some twists and turns and ignores, for example, the biggest unfunded mandate we face, which is services to illegal immigrants, then I am going to have a lot of trouble voting for the bill. Therefore, I look forward to the debate.

We know that this bill on the issue of unfunded mandates will make a big difference in the way we fund State and local government. But no matter how fast or slowly we move this bill—and there is a push to move this bill fast because it is in the Contract With America and therefore there is a push to move it fast—there is something that is happening right now that we have to address.

REPRODUCTIVE HEALTH CARE CLINIC VIOLENCE

Mrs. BOXER. The unfunded mandates bill will have an impact way down the road, maybe a year or more out. But I want to talk about a problem that is happening now. We have reproductive health care clinics all across this great land and right now we have some very brave people working in those reproductive health care clinics.

Why do I say "brave?" I do not think any of us could know the feeling that some of these folks have when they

leave their house: Will there be a stalker standing outside their house as they go to work to do a legal, legitimate job that helps many people? Do they have to wear a bulletproof vest—many doctors do—and will that vest be enough to save their lives?

Mr. President, this is a very, very, serious issue. And it has nothing to do with how one views the issue of reproductive rights. I happen to be someone who believes in the right to choose, a constitutionally guaranteed right, and until it is outlawed or changed it will remain so.

I introduced a resolution. My two prime sponsors are here, Senator FEINGOLD and Senator MURRAY; and another very important sponsor, OLYMPIA SNOWE, Senator SNOWE, is from the other side of the aisle. We have been pushing to get a vote on this resolution because, while we debate unfunded mandates that will take effect years into the future, right now, this minute, people feel like sitting ducks in clinics in rural and urban communities across this country. That is wrong.

We passed the Freedom of Access to Clinic Entrances Act. That bill says that it is a crime to injure or to harm anyone because they happen to work or volunteer at a clinic. There are approximately 900 clinics in the United States providing reproductive health services. But the violence continues every day. We have seen the brutal shootings of innocent people in Massachusetts and the shooting at a health care clinic in Virginia. Organizations monitoring this violence have recorded over 130 incidents of violence or harassment last year.

I have a bill. We are trying to get that bill brought up as a freestanding bill. It is a sense-of-the-Senate resolution and it calls on the Attorney General to fully enforce the law and take any further necessary measures to protect persons seeking to provide or obtain, or assist in providing or obtaining, reproductive health services from violent attack. There should be no argument about this.

I hope that the majority will clear this bill. We have been working to get it cleared on a bipartisan basis for the last 3 days. One day, "Oh, yes, it is going to be cleared"; the next day, "Oh, it is going to be cleared."

Everyone on our side has no objection. We need to send a signal to the people who work in these clinics that we care. President Clinton sent a directive to the Attorney General. She is working on this problem. We need to add our voice. This is not a criticism of the Attorney General. It is a push to make sure that President Clinton's directive is carried out.

I hope, by the end of this day, we will have this bill before the U.S. Senate for a vote and we will add our voice.

I yield at this time to my colleague and friend, Senator FEINGOLD.

Mr. FEINGOLD addressed the Chair.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Wisconsin.

Mr. FEINGOLD. Mr. President, I rise very briefly to praise and thank the Senator from California for her leadership on this issue. I am very, very pleased to be a cosponsor of the resolution and the amendment which is very straightforward.

I appreciate the language. It expresses the sense of the Senate that the Attorney General should take strong action to protect reproductive health care clinics.

There is really nothing else to be said, other than that the Senate should pass the resolution authored by the Senator from California. This must be done immediately, and if this Federal Government does not express that view, it is a sign of a Government that no longer can really protect the people of this country.

I think that this demands swift action in this body. There are many issues that can be disputed; some obviously should be ones we ought to take a lot of time on. I think we have a couple of them right now. The unfunded mandates bill is very complicated; the balanced budget amendment, amending the Constitution. These require the deliberative skills of the U.S. Senate, but this does not.

I cannot believe there is any Member of this body on either side of the aisles who believes the Federal Government should do anything but be very aggressive in stopping this violence. Just this past August, during debate over the VA-HUD appropriations bill, Senator LAUTENBERG offered, and I cosponsored, a similar amendment in the wake of the shooting of a clinic doctor and his escort in Pensacola, FL. However, at that time as now, I believe that the resolve of the Senate in the matter of clinic violence is clear. Ninety-eight Members of the Senate voted to condemn the shootings in Pensacola last August, and indeed, to condemn the use of deadly force as a means of protest. That is why I ask all of my colleagues to show their strong and united support today and lift any objections to the unanimous consent that this item come up at this time.

There are two reasons that I would like to add. The first is that the type of violence that is involved in these incidents is not truly random violence. It is random, perhaps, as to where it occurs and at what time, but it is not just one troubled individual for whatever personal reason who decides they want to kill somebody. This is the type of violence that is driven by an organized effort to deprive people of their reproductive rights and to intimidate them from exercising those rights. That is very different. The tactics of some individuals who oppose abortion access have escalated. As Ellen Goodman, a syndicated columnist who lives in Boston said in her column, the literal "line of fire" is coming closer to home. She writes, "First doctors, then escorts, now receptionists. First Wichita, then Pensacola, now Brookline."