

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will call the roll.

The assistant legislative clerk proceeded to call the roll.

Mr. DOMENICI. 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 President, I ask unanimous consent that the order for the quorum call be rescinded.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. DOMENICI. Mr. President, parliamentary inquiry. Is time allotted for speeches this morning?

The PRESIDING OFFICER. We are in morning business until 2 o'clock, the time to be equally divided between the leaders.

PRIVILEGE OF THE FLOOR

Mr. DOMENICI. Mr. President, first I ask unanimous consent that Dr. Randy Hyer, a fellow in my office, have floor privileges for the purpose of the introduction of a bill this morning.

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

(The remarks of Mr. DOMENICI pertaining to the introduction of S. 1898 are located in today's RECORD under "Statements on Introduced Bills and Joint Resolutions.")

Mr. ROCKEFELLER addressed the Chair.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from West Virginia.

Mr. ROCKEFELLER. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent to take such time as I will require for a statement. It should not last more than 10 minutes.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator has that right. We are operating under an order that will carry us to other matters at 2 o'clock.

THE SENATE'S UNFINISHED BUSINESS

Mr. ROCKEFELLER. Mr. President, I thought this would be a good time to remind my colleagues of the unfinished business that is still waiting to get done.

As we head toward the Fourth of July and another recess, we also need to remember that the days to take action in Congress are running out. It is not only late June, we also have very few days of legislative session left.

Will this be the Congress remembered only for what it did not get done? Will this be the Congress that spent all of its time and millions of taxpayers' dollars only on camera-filled hearing rooms to learn about the White House Travel Office and to turn every pebble over on Whitewater?

Instead, this should be a Congress capable of doing something about the day-to-day struggles of hard-working Americans. But to produce, we need some basic steps taken. The calendar needs to be pulled out, votes scheduled, final agreements reached, and work completed.

I think of three actions that will help millions of Americans, including West Virginians.

No. 1, it is time to wrap up the Kennedy-Kassebaum health insurance bill. Members from the other side of the aisle are determined to include something called medical savings accounts. I might add that I hear absolutely no clamor for MSA's from constituents, beyond employers that are thinking about using this device as a substitute for the health insurance they now subsidize for employees.

But the key point is that the heart of Kennedy-Kassebaum involves changes that will make sure insurance is there for people when they really need it. When they need coverage for the very illness or condition that is now labeled a pre-existing condition. When they need coverage, but have to change jobs and now find their insurance canceled.

These are the changes that affect millions of Americans, and many, many West Virginians. This is the work we need to get done before this session of Congress runs out.

No. 2, this Congress still has the time to enact welfare reform. This is an area begging for reason and common sense. No one is going to get exactly their way on something as complicated and contentious as changing the welfare system. But it is not hard to figure out what Americans expect from us. They want to know that welfare is not a haven for avoiding work, responsibility, and the rules that most hard-working citizens play by.

The Democratic leader has just laid out another detailed plan, known as Work First Two, that reflects exactly what we need to do on welfare reform. It is a tough, no-nonsense plan to require adults to work or prepare for work. It does not make a point of punishing innocent children, who have done nothing wrong.

It is time to move away from politics, rigid positions, and posturing on welfare reform. The President has proven he will not sign a bill just because of its label. We should not waste any more time on legislation that belongs to one faction or simply rubber-stamps what some Governors have asked for. We need to work out our differences, and produce the bill that will turn welfare into a last-resort—for the sake of poor families and the hard-working taxpayers who want reform.

Finally, I find it shameful that this Congress has still not been able to enact an increase in the minimum wage. And I want to elaborate some on this subject, because it is so important to the people of my State.

A few weeks ago, the Washington Post ran an article telling us that the CEOs of major companies got a 23-percent raise in their compensation in 1995. According to the consulting firm of Pearl Myers & Partners, the average salary of a CEO was \$991,300 with the remaining in stock options and bonuses. Twenty years ago, the top CEO earned about 40 times as much as the typical worker. Today, that same CEO earns 190 times as much.

We know from study after study, town meeting after town meeting back

home, that wages for most other Americans are stagnant and that most workers have every reason to feel insecure about their income, their jobs, and their health insurance. The people who work 8 hours every day, making products and providing needed services, deserve a living wage. They should not be left behind. The gap between the rich and the poor continues to polarize the country into the haves and have-nots, and that is downright un-American.

As others have already said, whatever economic tide that is rising seems to be lifting a lot of yachts, and not much that carries the rest of Americans. Working families today are making less than they did 20 years ago. Look at what has happened to a single worker over those 20 years. He or she has watched the collapse of communism, voted in four Presidential elections, seen computers become a part of every day life, and watched the stock market rise over 5,000 points. For the worker relying on the minimum wage, his or her most recent paycheck is worth less than the first one in purchasing power.

And some wonder why hard-working American families feel left out of the American dream? The stagnation of wages over the past 20 years is obvious to parents struggling to pay their bills.

Mr. President, I ask my colleagues who still do not support a minimum wage increase to listen to this: When adjusted for inflation, the current Federal minimum wage of \$4.25 an hour is worth 27 percent less to workers and their families than that amount in 1979. Measured in 1979 dollars, the minimum wage is only worth \$3.10 an hour. A minimum wage worker earns \$8,840 a year. This is not a living wage, in fact, it is barely a sustainable wage. Even with an expanded earned income tax credit, earning \$4.25 an hour does not lift a family out of poverty.

No matter what the opponents say, minimum wage earners are not a collection of teen-age burger-flippers. Sixty-nine percent of all minimum wage earners are adults over the age of 21. Women make up 60 percent of all minimum wage workers and are usually a single parent trying to keep their families together. These workers are playing by the rules, paying rent, utility bills, health care premiums, food and clothing for their families. They are working long and hard hours, and they do not want to slip into welfare and dependency.

They deserve our admiration, our respect, and they deserve a raise.

In my home State of West Virginia, over 100,000 workers would get a raise if we pass the Democratic amendment to raise minimum wage to \$5.15. Almost 24 percent of West Virginia's work force would benefit from an increase in the minimum wage—about one out of four workers.

Let me share the story of just one woman in West Virginia. When her husband was injured in the mines and denied disability coverage, she went to

work to support her family. The only job she could find was a minimum wage job at a lumber yard located miles away from her home. The work was hard, and after 9 months she broke her ankle on the job. Her family income last year was only \$8,500. While on workers compensation, the section where she worked at the lumber yard closed and her job was eliminated. Now, both of her teenage sons are working to help support the family. Imagine trying to support a family of four on such a small income. But this woman just wants another job as soon as her physician allows her to go back to work.

This West Virginian deserves a raise—and if we raise the minimum wage to \$5.15, and her family gets their full earned income tax credit, they will be lifted out of poverty.

It is a sad day in America when we do not help a West Virginia family that works hard to raise their children above the poverty line.

We in Congress have the ability to bring badly needed relief to this family and about 12 million workers in America. We should come together in a spirit of decency and common sense, restore some glimmer of hope for these families, and raise the Federal minimum wage.

The minimum wage has not been raised for 4 years, but the prices of everything else, from rent to food has gone up each and every year. Raising the minimum wage is essential to help families and reinforce the fundamental American values of hard work and self-sufficiency.

And we all know that solely raising the minimum wage is not the silver bullet that will erase the gross inequity between the haves and have nots. Nor, will this act alone restore the economic vitality of working Americans that deserve so much more from the society they contribute to. But it is a simple, important, obvious step in the right direction to reward and encourage work. It tells hard-working American families that we value their right to a decent life.

Mr. President, it is long past the time when the U.S. Senate should get the chance to vote for an increase that is shamefully overdue.

I conclude by reminding everyone listening how little time there is left to get anything done that is relevant, meaningful, and helpful to hard-working Americans. But there is still the time to take three basic, important steps that deal directly with what weighs on the minds and shoulders of families in West Virginia, in Mississippi, from California to North Carolina.

The bipartisan Kennedy-Kassebaum bill—a bill with the most basic health insurance reforms should get settled and enacted, now, this week, immediately.

Welfare reform, drawing on plans from both sides of the aisle, should get worked out, put into final legislative

form, and sent to the President in a form that he can sign in good conscience—in a form that will make welfare dependency something to avoid and work something expected.

An increase in the minimum wage, the most basic and decent step we can take for millions of Americans who are doing everything possible to work, avoid welfare, and be productive citizens.

If my colleagues want to continue endless hearings on what fascinates them about 1600 Pennsylvania Avenue, so be it. But just a little time, some modest leadership, and some amount of attention to the calendar must go into producing something for the people who are waiting for action that makes a difference in their lives.

Mr. LEAHY addressed the Chair.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Vermont is recognized.

A TRIBUTE TO BOB DOLE

Mr. LEAHY. Mr. President, in my 22 years here in the Senate, I have had a chance to witness many historic events in this Chamber. When I leave the Senate, I hope to write a book about some of these.

One of the truly historic events was a speech given by our former majority leader, the senior Senator from Kansas, Senator Dole. I think, Mr. President, that there will be historians who read the RECORD of that event; but in reading the RECORD they will read only the words. They will not really see the event. I would like to add, for those historians who may read that, that at the time Senator Dole gave his speech, most of the Republicans and most of the Democrats were on the floor.

As the Presiding Officer knows, when Senators speak, even though we may all be on the floor, oftentimes we do not listen. This was an exception. Every single Senator on the floor listened, and listened carefully. They heard a speech that was vintage Bob Dole—plain, to the point, with flashes of the humor that we know so well. Even when he was corrected by the then distinguished Presiding Officer, the President pro tempore, when the President pro tempore spoke of his around-the-clock filibuster, Senator Dole ad libbed, “And that is why you are not often invited to be an after dinner speaker.”

There is far more than just humor in that there is real affection from Senators of both parties—affection for a man who earned it. He earned it as one of the finest Senators I have had a chance to serve with. I have been here with great majority leaders, such as Senator Mansfield, Senator BYRD, Senator Baker, Senator Mitchell and, of course, Senator Dole. I was thinking how good it was to be in a Senate led by Senator Dole on the Republican side and Senator DASCHLE on the Democratic side. It is not just his leadership, but his role as a U.S. Senator that earned him respect and affection from both sides of the aisle.

I began serving on the same committee with Bob Dole when I came here as a junior member of the Agriculture Committee. I watched how he worked with Hubert Humphrey and George McGovern, as well as key members on the Republican side, on nutrition matters—school lunch, school breakfast, and food stamps. After Senator McGovern and Senator Humphrey were gone, it fell on me to pick up our side of the aisle on that.

Throughout the years, there were a number of Dole-Leahy and Leahy-Dole amendments on nutrition that passed. I have worked with him on major farm bills. This last one was the Dole-Leahy-Lugar farm bill in the Senate.

When Senator Dole was ready to leave the Senate, I went to see him, and I spoke to him and told him that it had been a privilege to work with him and that there were an awful lot of people who were fed—hungry Americans—because of legislation we were able to work on together.

It certainly was not just me, by any means. I think of another giant in the Senate, PAT MOYNIHAN, who stood in the well of the Senate, with Senators milling around, and had a conversation with Senator Dole. It was in the early 1980's when we thought the reform of Social Security was dead. Senator MOYNIHAN said to Senator Dole, “Let us try one more time.” And because the two of them worked first on what was best for the country—not necessarily what was best for each other's political future or the future of the parties—and they worked in a non-partisan fashion, they saved Social Security. It required two Senators of that stature, with respect on both sides of the aisle, to do it, and Senators who were willing to put everything else aside.

So much will be written during this year, and each of our parties will support our nominee for President. No matter which way the Presidential election comes out, the country should understand that it benefited by Senator Dole being in the Senate. I say this as a Member of the other party. I hope that all Senators, Republicans and Democrats, will realize that the Senate itself is bigger than any one of us. We owe a duty not just to our political fortunes, but to the U.S. Senate and to help be the conscience of this great Nation. We have to work together, first and foremost, for what is best for the Nation, not each other.

I salute the good Senator, my good friend, Senator Bob Dole, and I will miss him here in the Senate.

I yield the floor.

Mr. President, 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.

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

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