

Prices plunged. And again, June 12, just a month ago, another 165,000 tons. Look what happened to prices; a steep decline as more foreign sugar was brought in, that benefited whom? Benefited the refiners because they were getting more sugar to process through their plants, more throughput, more activity, more profit.

I do not begrudge them and their profit. But let us look at what is happening with respect to the throughput of the refiners, because the Gregg amendment is misnamed. It ought to be called the "refiners benefit bill." That is really what we are talking about. You are picking sides in an economic fight and you are saying we want to give the refiners more than they are getting now.

Let us look at what the throughput has been through cane refiners' plants in the last 10 years—1985-86 to 1995-96.

Back in 1986-87, we were looking at 5.3 million short tons. Had a bad year in 1987-88. Then we went to 5.4 million short tons. Went up to 5.9 million—that is the peak—in 1990-91. Then we saw some pulling back. But in 1995-96 we see a record for the refiners in terms of throughput, 6.4 million short tons—6.4 million short tons. And yet what do we have before us? The refiners benefit bill. They have just had record throughput. That is the amount of product going through their plants. They just had a record year.

Well, throughput alone does not tell you what the refiners are experiencing. You have to look at the difference between the raw sugar price and the refined sugar price. That will tell you, combined with throughput, how well our refiner friends are doing.

What do we find when we look at that? Well, it is very, very interesting—very interesting, indeed. This chart shows from 1990 to 1996 raw sugar prices. That is in red. I hope there is nothing in the way of their seeing exactly what has happened to raw sugar prices.

They have been stable for 10 years. This awful program that is gouging consumers has provided them with stable prices for 10 years. Name anything else that people buy in this country that has been stable for 10 years. Tell me one thing that has been stable for 10 years. But sugar prices, raw sugar prices have been stable. I wish I could say the same thing for refined sugar because refined sugar, you can see, starting in 1995, took off like a scalded cat. Refined sugar prices jumped, and jumped dramatically at the same time raw sugar prices were falling. Raw sugar prices were falling; refined sugar prices were skyrocketing. I have already shown you the record throughput for refiners in 1995-96. And yet what we have before us is a refiners benefit bill. That is the Gregg amendment.

Why should we be passing a refiners benefit bill when they have just had the biggest throughput in their history and, No. 2, the best margins—the best margins—that you can find in the last 10 years?

Mr. President, what has happened, I believe, is very clear. This is a transparent argument. The refiners want to continue to make more money by refining cheap sugar from the world market. This amendment not only breaks the promises of reliability, certainty, and reduced Government interference in agriculture that was made to American farmers only 4 months ago, but it is bad policy that would send shock waves through a domestic industry, a domestic industry that produces tens of thousands of jobs in this country.

I hope my colleagues will join me in soundly rejecting the Gregg amendment.

Let me just conclude by saying this is, again, not like the typical industry. Senator GREGG refers to the computer industry, and says there is no Government involvement there. He is right. That is a whole different ball game than the worldwide sugar industry, where every single major producing country has a program. Every single one of them aggressively supports their producers. If we are to abandon ours, the results will be very, very clear.

No. 1, we have seen what has happened in the past in terms of prices. Prices will skyrocket. That is undeniable. The world price the Senator refers to as 15 percent of the market is a dump market. It has no relationship to supply/demand relations in the world. The vast majority of sugar moves under contract in the world. So that dump market and its so-called world price is not a world price at all, it is a dump price. That is what people get for sugar produced above and beyond their contractual requirements. If you take away the program you are going to get exactly what we saw the last two times: Prices skyrocket. So consumers are not going to be helped, they are going to be hurt.

No. 2, the processors in this country, beet processors and cane processors, are going to be hurt. I have already shown all the plants that have closed in 1994, 1995, and 1996. A lot of plants have closed. Only one refiner but a lot of processing plants have closed. So those folks would be hurt. When they are hurt the farmers are hurt because the farmers are directly tied with those processing facilities. All of a sudden, if you yank out from U.S. producers any support, what you have done is changed the balance of power in these world markets.

Who have you helped? You have helped our foreign competitors. The Gregg amendment is great if you represent a foreign country and you produce sugar. They would look forward to the day the United States pulls the plug on its producers and its processors. They are just waiting for the opportunity to come in and take over this industry, take the jobs, take the economic growth, and take the economic opportunity.

American farmers who produce sugar are the most efficient in the world. We are ready to compete head to head with

anybody at any time. But what our producers are not prepared to do is to take on not only the farmers of another country but the governments of other countries. That is not a fair fight. And our Government should not abandon our producers and our processors, helping foreign governments, foreign producers, foreign processors against the refiners of this country. That is what this amendment is really about. I hope this Chamber will do as it has done before and reject the Gregg amendment and reject it in a resounding way.

I yield the floor.

Mr. KENNEDY addressed the Chair.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Massachusetts.

PERSONAL RESPONSIBILITY, WORK OPPORTUNITY, AND MEDICAID RESTRUCTURING ACT OF 1996

Mr. KENNEDY. Mr. President, I thank my colleagues, our managers, for indicating when might be an appropriate time to speak on an issue, the underlying issue, which is welfare reform in a way not to interfere with debate on the agricultural appropriations bill. I will take that opportunity now, to speak on this underlying measure, which the Senate will address tomorrow.

There will be a series of amendments. I offered amendments dealing with the children of legal immigrants and also to provide, if we are going to go into these rather draconian measures in cutting off help and assistance to these children, to another amendment, which has been described in the RECORD earlier today, to help and assist the local counties and communities where they are going to have a particular burden, trying to implement the provisions to terminate help, assistance to poor children.

I have a fuller explanation on that. I will not take the time of the Senate on those measures, which are more fully explained in the RECORD earlier today. I will address the overall issue which is before us, and that is the proposal placed on the Senate agenda, which we will vote on tomorrow, under the title of the welfare reform.

Mr. President, in putting forward this legislation, I believe the Republican majority is asking us to codify extremism and call it virtue. Their plan will condemn millions of American children to poverty as the price for the misguided Republican revolution. If children could vote, this Republican plan to slash welfare would be as dead as the Republican plan to slash Medicare. In fact, the driving force behind this attack on children is not welfare reform at all. It is the desperate Republican need to find some way, any way, to pay for their tax breaks for wealthy.

Honest welfare reform is long overdue. The current system is broken. Major change is needed. I support honest reforms that end welfare as a way

of life and make it a waystation to work. But honest reform does not produce anywhere near the massive savings needed to pay for the Republican tax breaks. Child care costs money. Job training and education cost money. And our Republican friends have absolutely no interest in real reform if it costs money.

The proposal before us is not welfare reform. It is nothing more than legislative snake oil, and it is the wrong medicine for what ails us as a Nation. Real welfare reform is about protecting children and putting people to work, not putting on a show. But that is what this is—theater, pure and simple; a glaring and callous example of just how low the Republican majority will go, even if it comes at the expense of millions of American children.

For the Republican majority, this bill may be child's play, but they are playing with real children's lives and real children's futures. This bad bill is Robin Hood in reverse, robbing poor children to pay for tax breaks for rich Republicans.

Since the Republican takeover of Congress, our colleagues have brought us many poison pills wrapped in the rhetoric of reform. But this may well be the most cruel and extreme measure of the entire Republican revolution—because it inflicts so much harm on so many children. In fact, it pushes back 60 years of social progress.

In 1935, Congress made a bold pledge to the elderly and the children of our communities that this rich Nation would not let them sink into poverty. It was a sign of what we stood for as a nation. Republicans may consider destroying this covenant as a virtue—but Bishop Weakland of Milwaukee has called it “a moral blemish on the Earth's most affluent society.” I could not agree more.

I ask unanimous consent to have the Bishop's full statement printed in the RECORD.

There being no objection, the statement was ordered to be printed in the RECORD, as follows:

[From the Washington Post, July 4, 1996]

WISCONSIN WORKS: BREAKING A COVENANT

(By Rembert G. Weakland, OSB)

Catholics in Wisconsin have been in the trenches serving the needy since the Daughters of Charity began their work with the poor of Milwaukee in 1843. I and my family relied on welfare to survive in the 1930s. So it comes naturally for me to consider the implications of Wisconsin's proposal for welfare reform, known as Wisconsin Works or “W-2.” Certainly the Catholic bishops and others in the church who grapple with the needs of the poor agree that the current welfare system is in need of major reform. Both the U.S. Catholic Conference and the Wisconsin Catholic Conference have said so. Both have challenged the status quo. Both have offered constructive proposals for helping the poor more effectively.

Yet as I reflect on the W-2 proposal in light of my experience and the tenets of Catholic social teaching, I remain convinced of the need for the community to guarantee a “safety net” for the poor, especially children. Accordingly, though the W-2 proposal

has merit in important respects, it would be a mistake for the president and Congress to embrace comprehensive legislation or requests from individual states, even my own, that withdraw this guarantee.

Catholic social teaching holds that the poor, especially children, have a moral claim on the resources of the community to secure the necessities of life. For more than 60 years, our society has recognized this claim with a covenant that ensures a minimal level of assistance for food, clothing and shelter to poor children and their families. Millions of children have relied on that covenant since the 1930s. In Wisconsin, more than 120,000 children rely on Aid to Families With Dependent Children (AFDC) today.

People of goodwill can argue over the need to modify AFDC so it better serves that purpose. But it is patently unjust for a society as affluent as ours to nullify that covenant.

Unfortunately, as enacted, the Wisconsin Works program does just that. The enabling statute for the W-2 proposal specifically states no one is entitled to W-2 services, even who are eligible to receive them.

It is one thing to change the rules of the welfare system. It is quite another thing to say, “Even if you play by the new rules, society will not help you.” This is not welfare reform but welfare repeal. Such a message may be politically attractive in this election year; it is not morally justifiable.

Even if one accepts the premise that the W-2 program offers poor families help in return for work, this premise collapses if the help is not provided. The president and Congress must insist that W-2, indeed any welfare reform proposal, serve all who are eligible.

Critics of the welfare system allege that public assistance undermines personal responsibility. This generalizes about poor families when we should strive to take a more personal view.

In the first place, the children of the poor did not choose their families. We should not afflict these children with hunger in order to infuse their parents with virtue.

Additionally, we cannot judge a person's failure to work in isolation from larger forces. My experience from our work with the U.S. bishops' pastoral letter on economic justice impressed on me the truth that poor families are especially vulnerable to economic downturns triggered by national or international events.

Nor can prosperous states ensure full employment. Even in states, like Wisconsin, that enjoy healthy economies and relatively low unemployment, not all who want to work can earn a family wage. So long as this is the case, it is unwise and unjust for the federal government to abandon its commitment to the poor. Our covenant with needy children must remain the responsibility of the entire American family.

Moreover, this critique of welfare ignores the fact that rights and responsibilities are not mutually exclusive but complementary. In the context of welfare policy, a right to work is grounded in a responsibility to support a family. This is relevant when assessing another aspect of W-2.

According to our state's own projections, 75 percent of the families now on AFDC will be assigned to W-2 work slots that provide less than a full-time worker earns at the minimum wage. Accordingly, the responsibility of these parents to care for their children must be supported when necessary by a safety net adequate to meet the family's basic needs.

Finally, the president and Congress must recognize that they cannot repeal the assurance of public assistance in Wisconsin without making it a national policy. Once such a repeal is granted to a single state, others

will seek similar license. The poor will lose their safety net by degrees as surely as if Congress and the president repealed it all at once. Such an outcome would be a tragedy for the poor and a moral blemish on the earth's most affluent society.

One can appreciate the burden of difficult choices in an election year.

Nonetheless, the short-term political outlook of the candidate must not cloud the moral vision of the leader. America's 60-year covenant with its poor children and those who nurture them must remain unbroken.

Mr. KENNEDY. Mr. President, let me just mention a few points:

For more than 60 years, our society has recognized this claim with a covenant that ensures a minimal level of assistance for food, clothing, and shelter for poor children and their families. Millions of children have relied on that covenant since the 1930's. In Wisconsin, more than 120,000 children rely on aid to families with dependent children today.

People of good will can argue over the need to modify AFDC so it better serves that purpose. But it is patently unjust for a society as affluent as ours to nullify that covenant.

And that is what this measure does.

In the first place, the children of the poor did not choose their families. We should not afflict these children with hunger in order to infuse their parents with virtue.

And then he continues:

Even in States like Wisconsin which enjoy healthy economies and relatively low unemployment, not all who want to work can earn a family wage. So long as this is the case, it is unwise and unjust for the Federal Government to abandon its commitment to the poor. Our covenant with the needy children must remain the responsibility of the entire American family.

And the last full paragraph:

One can appreciate the burden of difficult choices in an election year. Nonetheless, the short-term political outlook of the candidate must not cloud the moral vision of the leader. America's 60-year-old covenant with its poor children and those who nurture them must remain unbroken.

Mr. President, I divert for a moment to two other articles that have been quoted to some extent during the course of the debate on this welfare reform: George Will's article about “Women and Children First?” I quote a paragraph:

Furthermore, there is hardly an individual or industry in America that is not in some sense “in the wagon,” receiving some Federal subvention. If everyone gets out, the wagon may rocket along. But no one is proposing that. Instead, welfare reform may give a whole new meaning to the phrase “women and children first.”

Effectively, what is included in this, women and children first, they are the ones whose interests end up on the chopping blocks. When most think of the women and children first, every young student who has read through history probably thinks of the *Titanic*, where women and children were first. Mr. Will's excellent article and commentary on this welfare debate suggests, I believe, that the women and children first will have an entirely new and different meaning.

Then today there is in the New York Times an article by David Ellwood,

who has been a very thoughtful both commentator and policymaker on the issues of welfare reform and has written extensively about it. Those who have had the opportunity to hear him or listen to him testify can attest to his strong commitment to altering and changing the current system and trying to find ways to do it effectively, and also to protect the interests of the most vulnerable in our society.

He points out in his excellent article in the Times today, Monday, July 22, "Welfare Reform in Name Only":

States would get block grants to use for welfare and work programs. But the grants for child care, job training, workfare, cash assistance combined would amount to less than \$15 per poor child per week in poor Southern States, like Mississippi and Arkansas. Moving people from welfare to work is hard. On \$15 a week—whom are we kidding?

As the article points out, on \$15 a week, you are talking about providing the basic elements of life: roof over the head of the child, clothes for the child, food for the child, as well as for the training of the child, child care for the child—for \$15 a week. We see other examples.

Instead of 88 cents per meal, it will be down to 66 cents per meal per child. Mr. President, \$26 billion will be taken out of nutrition programs for children and put on to the other side of the ledger for tax benefits and breaks for wealthy individuals. It makes no sense.

Mr. President, nearly 14 million poor children live in America. Each night, 100,000 of them sleep on the streets, scared and homeless. Their faces are pressed against the windows of our glitter and affluence, and Congress is about to pull down the shade.

It may be fashionable in some quarters these days to demonize families on welfare, to pretend that poor people are lazy and don't care about their children.

Listen to just one story I heard recently from a middle-class suburban woman. She tried hard to keep the family together, but she finally fled when her husband badly beat her and her son, and smashing a chair over her son's head, repeatedly kicking him in the ribs and in the face. She left everything behind.

She and her son fled to her parents' home, but the husband found them there. She tried to work, but her husband always found her, threatening both her and her employers. She and her son finally took refuge in a shelter. With no other choice, she turned to AFDC. As she told me:

The support I received from AFDC enabled me to get out, move on to heal myself and my son, and create a new life. It cost the Government a little over \$400 a month for 6 months—less than the cost of a modest funeral. Investing in family safety and support seems like the kind of investment this country should protect. Cutting off this lifeline means that the futures of our children are definitely at stake. Let me tell you in all seriousness, these cuts are deadly.

It is true that some cuts never heal, and these cuts, I believe, in this meas-

ure are deadly: Close to \$60 billion in harsh, extreme, and unjustifiable cuts over the next 6 years.

The reality is that this Nation's safety net is fragile and fraying. The Republican response is to rip even more holes in the safety net and require millions more children to fend for themselves. No terrorist could possibly do so much harm to our country.

Nearly half of the Republican savings are from the Food Stamp Program—\$28 billion in cuts, affecting 14 million children. By the year 2002, the Republican proposal would provide poor children in America only 65 cents a meal, just about enough to buy a soft drink.

We know that hungry children are more susceptible to sickness and early death. We know that malnutrition retards growth and delays brain development.

We just had, a year ago, the publication of the Carnegie Commission talking about what happens to a child's brain during the early formative years unless there is sufficient nutrition benefits to that child. It slows their whole ability to achieve academically and emotionally, and it works to their long-term disadvantage.

In short, hungry children can't learn. They are twice as likely to be absent from school and four times as likely to be unable to study.

The Republican revolution says, "Let them eat cake." I say it's the wrong priority for Congress and the wrong priority for America.

Our colleagues attempt to justify this outrage by claiming food stamps are fraught with waste, fraud, and abuse, but the Republican plan has virtually nothing to do with ending the abuses. That is the interesting point. They make the case we ought to cut back this program because there is abuse and fraud in these programs. But 70 percent of the cuts come directly at programs aimed at families with children. Only 2 percent of the cuts are aimed at waste, fraud, and abuse.

The real fraud, waste, and abuse is the scheme to take food from the mouths of children in the guise of welfare reform. The Republican plan also targets children's health care. To be sure, the Republican leadership bowed to the inevitable and dropped their draconian Medicaid provisions from this bill to avoid a certain Presidential veto. But this bill still jeopardizes health care for millions of mothers and children.

We know under Medicaid, 18 million children receive Medicaid and about 75 percent of those children's parents are working—playing by the rules and working. Under the program that was proposed, you would have seen anywhere from 5 to 8 million of those children completely dropped from Medicaid if that had moved forward. What we are talking about now is the alleged welfare reform provisions.

Women will not get the prenatal care they need under this particular program. The 4 million women included

would have coverage under this program. They will not get the prenatal care they need. Adolescents will not get the help to avoid pregnancy and stay in school. Injuries and preventable illnesses will now become life-threatening, for example, when they could have been easily treated. Sick children can't learn, and sick parents can't work.

Children with disabilities are also attacked under the proposal. Mr. President, 300,000 children with serious disabilities—mental retardation, tuberculosis, autism, head injuries, arthritis—would lose the direct guaranteed assistance that they have under the Supplemental Security Income Program.

When Democratic Senators proposed that States be required, or at least given the option, of offering vouchers after the time limit to provide children with necessities, such as diapers, clothes, cribs, medicine and school supplies, the Republicans said a resounding no. Why? Because "enough is enough," they say. "It's time to go cold turkey," they say, even if this bill is the real turkey.

Enough is enough. Enough of the back-room deals with high-paid corporate lobbyists. Enough of dismantling commitments to children and families who desperately need help. Enough of cruelty called charity.

Even when Democrats asked for a look back provision—to provide help if the worst predictions materialize and this bill actually becomes the disaster we predict for children—the Republican majority said, "stop overreacting". To them I say, tell that to the countless families who are looking for a chance not a check—a chance for their children to reach for the American dream.

Stripped down—this is the Republican plan they call welfare reform—no resources, no guarantees, no vouchers, no look back, no regrets. It does not get much more extreme than that.

As George Will said in his article,

No child in America asked to be here. Each was summoned into existence by the acts of adults. And no child is going to be spiritually improved by being collateral damage in a bombardment of severities targeted at adults who may or may not deserve more severe treatment.

The comments I am making this evening, Mr. President, are from Mr. George Will, David Ellwood, and Bishop Weakland, who has been one of the most thoughtful of the bishops in terms of children's interests and children's rights. They all have reached the same conclusion, Mr. President, about this measure in terms of its harshness and its retreat from a fundamental sense of decency and caring for the neediest in our society, and that is poor children in our society.

But the Republican majority tells us not to worry. They say the welfare miracles of Wisconsin and Michigan demonstrate that block grants and deep cuts really work. But the facts show this is far from the truth.

It takes money to reform welfare. In Wisconsin, after major changes in the

State welfare program, administrative costs rose 72 percent. Wisconsin Governor Thompson himself said that for welfare reform to be successful, "It will cost more up front to transfer the welfare system than many expect."

For welfare reform to succeed, it also takes jobs. Wisconsin and Michigan learned this lesson the hard way. In Wisconsin, a trucking company praised by Governor Thompson and Presidential candidate Bob Dole for hiring welfare recipients, laid off 45 employees this week, including the welfare workers. It was a business slowdown they said.

In Michigan, only one-fifth of former general relief recipients have found jobs. The majority of beneficiaries have become even more destitute.

So it goes when social experiments go wrong. The Republican majority is prepared to push welfare families off the cliff in the hope that they'll learn to fly. And what happens if they fall? Nearly 9 million children, who make up the majority of AFDC recipients, will pay the price. Nine million children, and the majority of AFDC recipients will pay the price. And as a society, so will we.

This is not just theory—the Congressional Budget Office agrees. They recently issued a preliminary assessment of the Republican legislation. And like last year, they said it will not work. According to their study, most States will not even attempt to implement the legislation's work requirements, because putting people to work is too expensive. In fact, the report says States will fall \$13 billion short of the mark, and simply throw up their hands.

Nevertheless, the Republicans continue to defy the facts.

We have had, as I mentioned, church leaders, conservative columnists, those who have spoken and written about the various welfare reform programs with extraordinary credibility—the Congressional Budget Office taking the particular relevant facts—all reaching the same conclusion, that this is going to be an extraordinary disaster in its impact on poor children. Like last year, they said it will not work. Nevertheless, the majority continues to defy the facts.

They insist that this legislation is about putting people to work. Trust us, they say. That is not acceptable.

As Catholic Charities USA said in a recent letter: "The welfare proposal reflects ignorance and prejudice far more than the experience of this nation's poorest working and welfare families."

In the final analysis, that is what this legislation is about—ignorance and prejudice. The American people know that pulling the rug out from under struggling families is wrong. Denying health care for sick or disabled children is wrong. Keeping families trapped in poverty and violence is wrong. Condemning homeless children to cold grates is wrong.

Perhaps the greatest irony of all is now on display, as America hosts the

Olympic Games. We justifiably take pride in being the best in a variety of different events. We may well win a fist full of golds in Atlanta, but America is not winning any medals when it comes to caring for our children.

The United States has more children living in poverty and spends less of its wealth on children than 16 out of the 18 industrial countries in the world. The United States has a larger gap between rich and poor children than any other industrial nation in the world. Children in the United States are 1.6 times more likely to be poor than Canadian children, 2 times more likely to be poor than British children, and 3 times more likely to be poor than French or German children.

When it comes to our children, America should go for the gold.

Mr. President, not that just assigning resources, money, on this is necessarily the answer to all the problems. But it is a pretty good reflection of where the Nation's priorities are. When the bell tolls tomorrow afternoon on that measure that is going to cut back \$27 billion out of children's feeding programs, to move that payment from 88 cents to 65 cents, that is going to be a really clear indication about where the majority believes this Nation's priorities are—to use those savings for tax breaks for the wealthy individuals of this country. That is wrong. We should all take some time to think about what kind of country we want and about what we are doing to children, to ourselves and the Nation. Surely we can do better than this bad bill.

Mr. President, I yield the floor. I see our two floor managers. I appreciate their courtesy.

Mr. COCHRAN addressed the Chair.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Mississippi.

AGRICULTURE, RURAL DEVELOPMENT, FOOD AND DRUG ADMINISTRATION, AND RELATED AGENCIES APPROPRIATIONS ACT FOR FISCAL YEAR 1997

The Senate continued with the consideration of the bill.

CURRENT EFFORTS TO PROTECT SALMON HABITAT

Mr. KEMPTHORNE. Mr. President, I rise to take note and compliment the Natural Resources Conservation Service's current efforts to encourage and provide technical assistance to private landowners who have salmon habitat on their property. In coordination with the Northwest Power Planning Council's plan for fish and wildlife protection, and other Federal agencies, the NRCS is working with conservation districts across Idaho, Oregon and Washington to assist local property owners on basin-wide and watershed specific plans to protect and restore habitat for dwindling runs for coho salmon, steelhead, sea-run cutthroat, and many chinook salmon runs.

These efforts have been widely popular in my home State, in particular in

the Clearwater and Lemhi Valleys where local landowners appreciate having the support to take the initiative to preserve this important cultural and economic resource. Conservation districts have proven to be a most effective method to successfully involve all important local stakeholders in a mutually acceptable way.

Mr. President, it is my intention to commit the Senate to exploring in future legislation the ways in which we might better foster this growing partnership. Would the chairman of the subcommittee agree that this is the sort of incentive approach that merits further consideration?

Mr. COCHRAN. Mr. President, the committee agrees that this is the sort of cooperative, incentive-based relationship that should be fostered in order to protect natural resources, as is the goal of the Natural Resources Conservation Service.

YELLOWSTAR THISTLE CONTROL

Mr. KEMPTHORNE. Mr. President, I rise to clarify this Congress' commitment to research that will develop controls for noxious weeds that are problems across this country. In particular, I would like to highlight research being done with the Agricultural Research Service to control yellowstar thistle.

Yellowstar thistle is a problem across the West. Over 5 million acres across the western United States are currently infested with this noxious weed. Scientists at the University of Idaho tell me that it costs an average of \$1 per acre in lost production and costs to control this weed. It doesn't take a rocket scientist to figure out that we're talking about \$5 million lost annually across the West.

Mr. CRAIG. Mr. President, I concur with the remarks of Senator KEMPTHORNE. In addition, I understand that, currently, it is nearly impossible to eradicate yellowstar thistle once it has infected the narrow, arid canyon lands of the West, and in particular, the canyons of the Clearwater, Snake and Salmon Rivers of my home State.

Mr. President, it is my understanding that the research to control this weed is reaching a critical stage, where practical biological controls should be available for public use within the next few years. Is it the intention of this bill to fund research with direct and immediate practical applications for the agricultural industry?

Mr. COCHRAN. The Senator is correct.

Mr. KEMPTHORNE. I also noted that the committee specifically directed the ARS to continue funding the Albany, CA yellowstar thistle initiative. Is it the intention of the committee that the ARS continue current yellowstar thistle research contracts associated with that program, including the research efforts with the University of Idaho?

Mr. COCHRAN. Yes, it is.

Mr. JOHNSTON. Mr. President, I would like to engage in a colloquy with