

I hope today that we can deal with a farm bill and send the appropriate message to American agriculture. But yesterday, I think Robert Shapiro, the president of the Progressive Policy Institute, which is a centrist Democrat leadership council arm, said it very clearly: The President's budget is not about dollars; it is about politics. He said we are now in a political season, and the President did this for politics. The politics that is being played on the floor of the U.S. Senate right now may be good for one party or another, but it is not good for American agriculture.

So, Mr. President, pick up the phone and call your people here in the Senate and say let us get an agriculture bill so that the Secretary of Agriculture does not have to deal with the kind of draconian things that he may be forced to do to send a shock wave through American agriculture by implementation of the 1949 farm policy. That is not good government. That is not the kind of government we need to deal with.

So I hope we can arrive at a solution this afternoon. But, Mr. President, in closing, because I know our time is up here at about 12:30, I am told that there are now 240-plus amendments filed at the desk on the Lugar-Leahy-Craig alternative bipartisan farm bill. That sends a very simple message to me. There is not going to be a farm bill today. It is impossible to deal with it after 6½ months of intensive extensive hearings before the Senate Agriculture Committee when American agriculture, almost per organization, said do not simply reinstate farm policy, but reform it and clean it up. And that is what we have done in trying to build this.

I am not sure where we go from here. I hope we can get the 60 votes this afternoon so that we can move forward and get the 1996 work done before our President is off campaigning on 1997 budgets that do not balance while he is President, assuming he might get elected another term. I find it very interesting that his own people are now saying it is not policy; it is all politics. Well, we knew that. He knows that. But it is a very dangerous kind of politics, a very dangerous kind of politics for American agriculture.

Historically, Mr. President, we have always crafted a bipartisan farm bill. I see the Senator from North Dakota on the floor. He has talked about that. I have worked with him. I have worked with other Senators on the floor to craft a bipartisan approach to farm policy. I hope that is what we can accomplish this afternoon before the political season gets so hot that we cannot get any work done.

If that is the case, we probably lose. But someone else loses, and that is the American farmer and American agriculture.

Mr. PRYOR addressed the Chair.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Arkansas is recognized.

Mr. PRYOR. Mr. President, I thank the Chair for recognizing me.

Mr. President, I am stunned listening to my good friend from Idaho talk about the politics of the season. If talking about the politics surrounding the vote this afternoon on a bill that the U.S. Senate Agriculture Committee has never had hearings on, has never passed, when the other party has frozen this side of the aisle totally out of any negotiations relative to meeting our commitment to an agriculture bill for the farmers of this country—they come forward with something known as the freedom-to-farm bill. The freedom-to-farm bill, Mr. President, frankly, is a bill that the farmers in France should love. Our competitors overseas should love the freedom-to-farm bill because what it is going to mean is that our farmers are going to be unable to compete in the international and world markets. This bill spells doom for the farmers of America. It spells doom for the agriculture programs in our country that are the envy of the world.

Mr. President, I cannot believe that my friend from Idaho is talking about the politics of the moment when it is his party that has prevented a real debate on the 1996 agriculture bill to take place. This bill was written by budgeteers. It was not written by the Agriculture Committee in the House or in the Senate. It was written by the budget committees, Mr. President. My friend from Idaho knows that.

Mr. DORGAN. Mr. President, will the Senator yield for a question?

Mr. PRYOR. Yes.

Mr. DORGAN. Mr. President, I ask the Senator from Arkansas if we find ourselves in the circumstance that for the first time in history the farm bill was stuck in the budget reconciliation bill last year. So there was no farm bill debate on the floor of the Senate. It was supposed to happen last year, but it did not happen.

I think that it probably is not very important to talk about what happened yesterday. The question is, what happens today and what happens tomorrow? The issue for us is, what about the future of family farming in this country? Will we have family farmers in the future or not? Will we simply have giant agri-factories farming from California to Maine? Do we care about the future of family farmers, or do we not? Is that not the real issue before us?

This is not about politics. It is about policy and who cares about the future of family farmers.

Mr. PRYOR. I will answer my friend from North Dakota by saying that just a few months ago, I went before our farm bureau organization down in Arkansas. I spent about an hour and a half visiting with them. They begged me and they pled with me to oppose the Freedom to Farm Act. Now, suddenly, they have made a reversal. They say, "Well, maybe it is the best we can do."

Mr. President, I do not think it is the best we can do. I think that we can do better. I think that we can go back and

draft at least an extension of the farm bill of the past 5 years and extend it for a year and make certain that we do not make the gargantuan mistakes that we are likely to make today by enacting the Freedom to Farm Act.

Mr. President, I think the appointed hour has arrived, and I therefore yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Who seeks recognition?

Mr. CRAIG addressed the Chair.

Mr. FORD. The time has expired.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Idaho.

Mr. CRAIG. I would note the absence of a quorum.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will call the roll.

The legislative clerk proceeded to call the roll.

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

The VICE PRESIDENT. Without objection, it is so ordered.

ADMINISTRATION OF OATH TO RON WYDEN, SENATOR FROM OREGON

The VICE PRESIDENT. The Chair lays before the Senate the certificate of election of the Honorable RON WYDEN as a Senator from the State of Oregon.

Without objection, it will be placed on file and the certificate of election will be deemed to have been read and printed in the RECORD.

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

CERTIFICATE OF ELECTION FOR UNEXPIRED TERM, UNITED STATES SENATOR, STATE OF OREGON, SECOND POSITION

To the President of the Senate of the United States:

This is to certify that on the 30th day of January, 1996, Ron Wyden was duly chosen by the qualified electors of the State of Oregon a Senator from said State to represent said State in the Senate of the United States for the unexpired term, ending at noon on the 3rd day of January, 1999, to fill the vacancy in the representation from said State in the Senate of the United States caused by the resignation of Bob Packwood.

Witness: His excellency our Governor, John Kitzhaber and our seal hereto affixed at Salem, Oregon this 2nd day of February, in the year of our Lord 1996.

By the governor:

JOHN A. KITZHABER,
Governor.
PHIL KEISLING,
Secretary of State.

The VICE PRESIDENT. If the Senator-elect will present himself at the desk, the Chair will administer the oath of office as required by the Constitution and prescribed by law.

Mr. WYDEN of Oregon, escorted by Mr. HATFIELD of Oregon, advanced to the desk of the Vice President; the oath, prescribed by law, was administered to him by the Vice President; and he subscribed to the oath in the official Oath Book.

[Applause, Senators rising.]

The VICE PRESIDENT. The minority leader.

Mr. DASCHLE. Mr. President, I will be very brief. While Senator WYDEN greets his new colleagues, let me just say how much we appreciate his presence and how delighted we are he has now joined our ranks. My wife, Linda, and I want to congratulate his wife, Laurie Wyden, and his children, Lilly Wyden and Adam Wyden, as they celebrate their father's victory, as well.

We are very enthusiastic about the opportunity to serve with Senator WYDEN. We look forward to a long and productive career for him in the Senate.

Let me thank him for all of his good service in the years he has already served in the House of Representatives, and let me again express our enthusiasm and our congratulations to him personally.

Let me also congratulate the State of Oregon for the fine way with which it conducted the campaign. They may have set a new marker for the rest of us and yet another example of democracy at its finest. We will look with great interest as other States experiment with mail-in balloting. If it will produce the same result as the result in Oregon, let me say, I enthusiastically endorse it.

[Applause, laughter.]

The VICE PRESIDENT. The senior Senator from Oregon.

Mr. HATFIELD. Mr. President, I am not going to be quite as brief. Last week, Oregonians chose RON WYDEN as their new U.S. Senator in a special vote-by-mail election. This was a closely contested election with RON WYDEN prevailing with 48 percent of the vote.

Today, Congressman WYDEN becomes Senator WYDEN. He brings with him almost 16 years of service to Oregon in the House of Representatives and, more important, he brings a keen intellect and an understanding of the important issues facing our State. He also possesses a very gifted and able staff, which I am confident will make the transition from the House of Representatives to the Senate swiftly and with competence.

Senator WYDEN has proven that he is dedicated to the people of Oregon. After spending 2 months campaigning across the State, he has now an even better understanding of the unique, independent spirit that typifies the citizens of our State. My overall goal throughout my entire tenure in the Senate is to improve the quality of life for all Oregonians. This is a goal I know is shared by Oregon's new Senator.

Oregon's independent traditions have often placed our State at the cutting edge of democracy. In 1902, voters created the initiative and referendum. This process allows citizens to propose new laws or change in the State's constitution through an election-ballot measure. This change allowed a sharing of power between the State legislature and the electorate.

From 1902 to 1994, voters put 272 initiatives on the ballot, of which 95 passed and became law. This was a historic change in the political process, and soon many other States followed.

Ninety years later, Oregon continues to take the lead in democratic innovations. The special election for the U.S. Senate in which RON WYDEN was elected was conducted entirely by mail. From the primary to the general, Oregon became the first State to conduct a mail-only election to fill a Federal vacancy. This experiment in democracy was a dramatic success. Sixty-six percent of Oregon's 1.8 million registered voters cast ballots in the general election. By comparison, a 1993 Texas Senate race only saw a 21-percent turnout. By anybody's count, voting by mail has dramatic, positive impact on voter participation.

Voter turnout has reached dismal proportions in this country. People have become disenchanted with the entire political system, and they are declining to become involved. A recent national survey by the Washington Post, Harvard University, and the Kaiser Family Foundation, found a widespread contempt for Government and political leaders. When asked how often do you trust the Government in Washington to do the right thing, only 25 percent responded that they trust the Government a majority of the time.

This conclusion paints a grim picture of the democratic future of this country, and restoring public trust in Government is the greatest challenge confronting each of us who holds elected office. With politicians ranking below dog-catchers in public opinion polls, steps need to be taken to improve the public's perception of our profession.

It is my commitment to restoring public confidence in the political system that undergirds my support for measures that increase voter participation. Citizens will continue to hold our institutions in ill repute as long as they remain disillusioned with the system. It is when people become a part of the process, when they have a stake in the outcome, do they begin to understand and trust their Government.

Oregon's experience in voting by mail was a success because it broadened the base of political participation. The same principle undergirds our support for the national voter registration, commonly known as motor-voter. That became law during the 103d Congress, and the law provides national uniformity in access to the electoral process by allowing voter registration through the mail and at government agencies and at departments of motor vehicles throughout the country. But Oregon preceded this national law. Oregon was one of the first States to experiment with motor-voter, and the success we experienced in the laboratory of our State convinced me that our innovation was worthy of trial on the na-

tional level. Motor-voter has increased access to the voter registration process. That increased access has benefited both political parties, not one over the other.

The editorial board of the Washington Post yesterday declared that Oregon's experiment in vote-by-mail elections was a success. The editorial continued stating "a State with a long-standing reformist tradition may thus have pointed the way toward expanded political participation and at a moment when voters are so widely described as fed up with (and indifferent to) politics."

Increasing the number of those who take part in the electoral process is critical to ensuring the vitality of democracy. The greatness of our Republic was founded on and rooted in a broad base of voter participation.

We are the Government of the people, by the people, and for the people, and if the people cease to participate, then our system is in danger.

So I take this occasion to congratulate RON WYDEN in his victory and Oregon with experimenting with a new innovation.

[Applause.]

Mr. DOLE. Mr. President, with the oath of office just administered, RON WYDEN becomes the 1,827th person to have served in the U.S. Senate. And on behalf of Senate Republicans, I welcome our newest colleague to the Chamber, and I welcome the many Oregonians who join us in the gallery for this occasion.

Under the Senate rules, Senator WYDEN is now our most junior member—ranking 100th in seniority. That is exactly the same position Senator HATFIELD from Oregon found himself in when he came to the Senate 29 years ago last month.

And I think most of my colleagues would agree with Senator HATFIELD, who said recently that when he came to this Chamber, he thought the seniority system was a bit silly. But the longer he stayed here, the more sense it made.

I know that Senator WYDEN has a great deal of respect for Senator HATFIELD, and no doubt about it, there is no better guide in explaining the Senate rules, procedures, and traditions—many of which are very different from the House, where Senator WYDEN served for the past 15 years.

One of the differences is that in the House there are limits on how long Members can speak, while there is no such limit in the Senate. Senator THURMOND holds the record, speaking on one occasion for 24 hours and 18 minutes. And I would suggest to Senator WYDEN that is one record he might not want to break—especially with all his family and friends present today.

Another tradition here is that for the past many decades, Senators have written their name in the drawer of the desks we are assigned here on the floor.

The desk I occupy, for instance, has served as the desk of the Republican leader for over half a century. In fact, the first Republican leader to sign this

desk was Senator Charles McNary of Oregon.

Senator WYDEN's desk also has a long history. And I note that the last 13 Senators to have occupied it were Republicans, and hope that some of that heritage will rub off on Senator WYDEN.

Finally, let me admit that it is no secret that Senate Republicans were hoping for different results in Oregon's very close election.

But I take heart in the fact that even though Senator WYDEN is the 47th Democrat Senator, he is also the fourth Senator in this Chamber to have been born in Kansas, and certainly that will help him a lot here.

Senators KASSEBAUM, SPECTER, and myself welcome you to the Kansas caucus, Senator WYDEN, and we will get back to you later about the time and place of our next meeting.

[Applause.]

RECESS

The VICE PRESIDENT. The Senate will stand in recess until 2:15 p.m.

Thereupon, the Senate, at 12:53 p.m., recessed until 2:15 p.m.; whereupon, the Senate reassembled when called to order by the Presiding Officer [Mr. COATS].

Mr. PRESSLER. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent to speak as in morning business.

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

THE FARM BILL

Mr. PRESSLER. Mr. President, I support the freedom-to-farm concept. Most farmers in South Dakota that I have talked to want the freedom-to-farm concept.

The Senate is in a filibuster situation, although the word "filibuster" is not being used. We are not being allowed to proceed to the farm bill by the Democrats. We must produce 60 votes in order to proceed. We apparently do not have 60 votes, at least not up to this point.

People should understand that many of us want to pass a farm bill. If we were permitted to proceed to the bill, we could then start offering amendments and begin discussion. However, the other side is not allowing the farm bill to come up.

Mr. President, I urge my colleagues to consider supporting S. 1541, the Agricultural Market Transition Act. Should cloture not be invoked on S. 1541, I urge my colleagues to support the compromise offered by the Senators from Idaho and Vermont, Senator CRAIG and Senator LEAHY. Their amendment incorporates all of S. 1541 and includes a number of other reforms. If we do not have the Freedom to Farm Act, we could have the Leahy-Craig substitute, which has the freedom to farm but includes a number of reforms.

Mr. President, I was recently back home in South Dakota and spent time

talking to farmers about what needs to be accomplished in future farm programs. The message was loud and clear: flexibility, certainty, and less Government involvement. Both S. 1541 and the Craig-Leahy compromise would provide all of those things.

Mr. President, S. 1541 would provide greater economic stability to producers. Producers in South Dakota are telling me not to extend the 1990 farm bill, and by all means do not let the underlying 1949 act be the operative act for 1996. After careful review, many producers say, support S. 1541.

There will be a lot of unwarranted criticism expressed over S. 1541. Those opposed to the bill say we need a permanent safety net for farmers. I say there is nothing permanent about Federal farm policy. The past farm bills were not permanent. All generally covered periods of 4 or 5 years.

Mr. President, S. 1541 would provide a 7-year plan. Unless economic conditions warrant an earlier revisitation of Federal farm policy, we will no doubt be putting together a new farm bill in 2002. So S. 1541 does not eliminate the real safety net for farmers, which, frankly, is the Congress itself. Those people who say there will be no farm programs after 7 years simply are not shooting straight. Past farm bills never carried assurance of future farm products except for 1938 and 1949 Agricultural Acts.

Mr. President, let me summarize my position. Congress should pass a farm bill now. We are ready to act. It is my recommendation if we cannot adopt the freedom-to-farm bill, we should adopt the Leahy-Craig substitute, which is the freedom-to-farm bill with amendments. We cannot even adopt amendments to that since there is basically a filibuster going on here. We have to produce 60 votes in order to proceed.

I implore my colleagues to let us proceed on the farm bill, offer amendments, as we have in the past in good faith here, in a bipartisan way. Let us amend the Craig-Leahy substitute. We are ready to go.

Our farmers are ready to go to the fields soon to plant. They are making their plans with their bankers now. They need certainty.

Federal Reserve Board Chairman Alan Greenspan and others have estimated that commodity prices in the next 5 years will be very high because of demand in China and other demand overseas. The biggest farm bill we could adopt is probably a balanced budget, because if we have a balanced budget we will have low-interest rates for farmers and businessmen. We also will have a stable dollar for international trade. I believe we can have a booming agriculture for the next 5 years if we have a balanced budget and if we move toward the concepts in freedom to farm.

Mr. President, our farmers want flexibility—that is to be able to plant new crops and different crops. If we

continue to go with a regulated Government system, the Department of Agriculture defines which crops must be planted. Indeed, it is true that wheat and corn are probably best suited to much of our soil. But who is to say that some new crop might not be experimented with and might come forth.

It is said if we have the Freedom to Farm Act that, after 7 years, the farmers will be left on their own. That is not necessarily true. Just like with a 5-year farm bill, the Congress does something new afterward. If the Congress in 7 years finds that the farmers are in need of it, they can pass a farm bill. They can even reinstitute the present farm bill if they wish. So that is not a good argument.

In talking to my farmers in South Dakota, they like freedom to farm. My farmers like the concept of flexibility of crops. The farmers in South Dakota like the concept of doing away with all the paperwork and Government regulation that has built up around this program.

There are those who would say we should not abolish the 1938 and 1949 Agricultural Acts. I disagree. It is time to abolish those acts because they are obsolete. Now is the time for forward thinking reforms. We should not be in a position of carrying forward outdated and ineffective 50-year-old farm policies as the basis for agricultural planning in the 21st century.

Opponents of S. 1541 want to extend existing farm policy for 1 or 2 years. Mr. President, the one thing my producers have made abundantly clear is they do not want the Federal Government telling them what they can or cannot plant, and making other decisions for them. They want, and deserve, full flexibility. An extension of existing policy means that Government will continue to dictate farming practices. This simply is unacceptable.

Under S. 1541, producers would have greater planting flexibility. Producers would have the opportunity to respond to market conditions. This is vital for their economic survival. Opportunities would be endless. Producers would not lose payments if they decided to plant new and innovative crops.

Mr. President, S. 1541 is supported by the South Dakota Farm Bureau, the South Dakota Corn Growers, and many farmers throughout South Dakota. They see great opportunities for them in their operations. A recent study by the Food and Agricultural Policy Research Institute showed that S. 1541 would bring higher prices for corn, soybeans, and all livestock over the next 10 years. Current high prices for wheat also would be maintained.

Under S. 1541, net farm income is estimated to increase from \$38 to \$50.4 billion in 10 years. In addition, farm program payments would be reduced from \$6.4 billion in 1995 to \$5.04 billion in 2005. In short, S. 1541 would increase farm incomes while lowering farm program costs to our taxpayers. That is a great deal.