

Agriculture appropriations bill being discussed today.

My friends from the Northeast have worked hard to boost prices above market clearing levels by creating a regional compact for their farmers. Now that the compact is implemented and operating, we need a timely, comprehensive economic analysis by the Office of Management and Budget of the marketing and pricing of milk within the six State compact and surrounding areas. The pricing of milk is an extremely complex issue. Artificially manipulating the marketing and pricing of milk will have major impacts on other regions of the United States, like Wisconsin.

Their proposal to raise prices for farmers has worked well and that cost is being passed on to consumers. A recently released study announced that Massachusetts consumers will pay an additional \$25 million for their milk over the next 12 months. The print media has reported that consumers are paying \$.27 a gallon more per gallon of milk in the compact area. We need to analyze the impact this price increase has not only on government purchases of dairy products for lunch programs, but also the impact on low-income families that spend more of their income on food and dairy products.

Although the program only regulates class I milk, other classes will be impacted by the economic signals encouraging Northeast dairy farmers to overproduce. What happens to that excess fluid or manufacturing milk that will be produced in the Northeast and forced to find a new processing plant outside the compact area? Again, the print media has reported that distressed raw milk has moved out of the Northeast to plants in Ohio and as far away as Wisconsin and Minnesota. Ohio plants reportedly were paying \$8.00 per cwt. delivered milk filling all manufacturing plants to capacity in that State. That excess supply of milk added to the overproduction that occurred in the United States further exasperating record low price paid to farms this summer.

Finally, the study should consider a cost/benefit analysis for each State participating in the compact. For example, Massachusetts has only about 300 dairy farms, roughly 10 percent of New England total, while its consumers pay half of the aggregate total consumer costs.

I encourage the Office of Management and Budget to take a serious look at the issue.

RESOURCE CONSERVATION AND DEVELOPMENT

Mrs. MURRAY. Mr. President, the conference report (105-252) on Department of Agriculture appropriations includes \$34.4 million for resource conservation and development [RC&D]. The conferees note that this increase in funding is not specifically earmarked for any initiative but should be used for approved RC&D Councils waiting for funding. I agree that the Natural Resource Conservation Service

[NRCS] should prioritize funding for newly approved RC&D Councils. These councils provide much needed assistance to watersheds and conservation districts seeking to maximize the environmental benefits of their conservation programs. RC&D Councils should be funded. RC&D is a very important program for protection and prudent development of our Nation's natural resource base. Working through local RC&D Councils, this program helps enhance our ability to meet economic objectives within the context of a wise and sustainable use of our natural resources. In Washington State, a State rich in natural resources, RC&D offers the chance to meet the challenges of threatened resources in the face of demands for continued economic development.

Mr. BUMPERS. Mr. President, I agree with the Senator from Washington. The purpose of the RC&D program is to encourage and improve the capability of State and local units of government and local nonprofit organizations in rural areas to plan, develop, and carry out programs for resource conservation and development. The NRCS also helps coordinate available Federal, State, and local programs to ensure adequate protection of natural resources while promoting sound development practices. Funding of the RC&D Councils is an important priority for the NRCS, as correctly emphasized by the conferees, and I urge the NRCS to not overlook opportunities to enhance the efforts of the RC&D Councils in a manner complimentary and consistent with these stated objectives.

Mr. WYDEN. Mr. President, I would like to join my colleagues in expressing support for the important work of RC&D Councils as well as opportunities to enhance these efforts. I urge the NRCS to seek avenues that maximize the beneficial conservation and environmental purposes of RC&D activities.

Mr. COCHRAN. Mr. President, as provided by the unanimous-consent agreement taking up this appropriations conference report, there are 20 minutes equally divided available for further discussion of the conference report. I have had some indication that there may be one or two Senators who may wish to comment. Pending their arrival on the floor, 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. COCHRAN. 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. COCHRAN. Mr. President, I have been advised by the staff that hotlines have been sent out to Members on both sides, and we have no indication that any other Senator wants to come and speak on the subject of the conference report.

Therefore, I am authorized by the distinguished ranking member to yield back all time remaining on the conference report on both sides of the aisle, and I now so do.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection, the conference report is agreed to.

The conference report was agreed to.

MORNING BUSINESS

Mr. COCHRAN. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that there now be a period for morning business until 6:30 p.m. within which Senators may be permitted to speak for up to 5 minutes each.

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

THE VERY BAD DEBT BOXSCORE

Mr. HELMS. Mr. President, at the close of business yesterday, Tuesday, October 28, 1997, the Federal debt stood at \$5,429,321,910,123.66 (Five trillion, four hundred twenty-nine billion, three hundred twenty-one million, nine hundred ten thousand, one hundred twenty-three dollars and sixty-six cents).

One year ago, October 28, 1996, the Federal debt stood at \$5,233,941,000,000 (Five trillion, two hundred thirty-three billion, nine hundred forty-one million).

Five years ago, October 28, 1992, the Federal debt stood at \$4,065,988,000,000 (Four trillion, sixty-five billion, nine hundred eighty-eight million).

Ten years ago, October 28, 1987, the Federal debt stood at \$2,385,891,000,000 (Two trillion, three hundred eighty-five billion, eight hundred ninety-one million).

Fifteen years ago, October 28, 1982, the Federal debt stood at \$1,142,243,000,000 (One trillion, one hundred forty-two billion, two hundred forty-three million) which reflects a debt increase of more than \$4 trillion—\$4,287,078,910,123.66 (Four trillion, two hundred eighty-seven billion, seventy-eight million, nine hundred ten thousand, one hundred twenty-three dollars and sixty-six cents) during the past 15 years.

NGAWANG CHOEPHEL

Mr. LEAHY. Mr. President, I regret that I must again bring to the Senate's attention the situation of imprisoned Tibetan music and dance scholar, Ngawang Choephel. I had hoped that Chinese authorities would have recognized by now the grave mistake they made in sentencing him to 18 years in prison.

In 1995, Mr. Choephel was in Tibet making a documentary film of traditional Tibetan music and dance when he was detained by Chinese authorities. After being held incommunicado for 15 months without access to his family or independent legal counsel, Mr. Choephel was sentenced to 18 years in

prison for violating the State Security Law. It was insinuated that he was paid by the U.S. Government to spy on behalf of the Dalai Lama. No evidence to support such a claim has ever been produced. The 16 hours of film Mr. Choephel sent to India during the first weeks of his project simply contain footage of the traditional music and dance he said he had gone to document.

Persistent inquiries to Chinese authorities regarding Mr. Choephel's whereabouts and the condition of his health have produced little information. I wrote to the head of the Chinese Communist Party soon after Mr. Choephel's detention and received no reply. I raised his case personally in meetings with President Jiang Zemin and other Chinese officials last November in Beijing and received no reply. I have written to President Jiang since then to urge his personal intervention in this case and received no reply. I am just one of many who have sought information about Mr. Choephel to no avail. As of today we have no information as to where Mr. Choephel is being held, or even if he is still alive.

This is an outrageous situation. A former Fulbright Scholar has been deprived of 18 years of his life as a result of spurious charges by a government that will not even reveal his whereabouts. I have urged the White House to raise Mr. Choephel's case with President Jiang. I plan to do the same. If President Jiang is interested in fostering closer ties with the United States, he could make no gesture more meaningful than ordering his release.

Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that excerpts from an article entitled "Who Is Invited to the Banquet?" by Jeff Kaufman of the Rutland Daily Herald be printed in the RECORD.

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

[From the Rutland Daily Herald, Oct. 23, 1997]

WHO IS INVITED TO THE BANQUET?—TIBETAN FROM VERMONT REMAINS IN CHINESE PRISON
(By Jeff Kaufman)

In a few weeks, the Clinton administration will welcome Chinese President Jiang Zemin on his first state visit to the United States. Champagne, smiles, encouraging words and a good dose of pomp and circumstance will be broadcast, not just to Americans, but around the world. Sidebar statements about human and workers' rights will be drowned out by televised images that will instantly convey the central message of such a historic meeting: The leaders of the world's most powerful countries are celebrating joint ventures and common purpose.

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Anonymity for political prisoners is a tyrant's ally, so here is a name and a story to personalize the kind of cruelty imposed by China's prison archipelago. This individual case may be not be typical in that it involves a young man who left the safety of America to travel to his native Tibet, but it is all too typical in its show of intolerance, judicial abuse and lack of regard for basic standards of human rights.

Tibetan exile and Fulbright scholar Ngawang Choepal came to this country at the age of 27 to study ethnomusicology at Middlebury College in 1993. In the summer of 1995, he returned to Tibet to film a documen-

tary about traditional Tibetan music and dance. Sixteen hours of video were sent to friends in the West; they show beautiful images and sounds of a great culture, but no military installations, no political protests, not a critical word against China.

Nonetheless, Chinese authorities arrested Ngawang Choepal in Lhasa's Shigatse market in September 1995. He was incarcerated for 15 months without being allowed to meet his family, independent legal counsel, or American representatives. Sen. Patrick Leahy visited Beijing in November 1996 and appealed directly to President Jiang Zemin on behalf of Ngawang. That plea was at first followed by a vague promise to examine the case. A month later, Chinese authorities convicted Ngawang Choepal of espionage and providing information "to the Dalai Lama clique's government-in-exile and to an organization of a certain foreign country."

The sentence imposed was stunningly severe: 18 years in prison. Eighteen years in a Chinese jail for videotaping people dancing to old Tibetan songs.

The Chinese government has ignored assurances from the United States that Ngawang Choepal is just a non-political music student, several congressional resolutions in his support, pleas from his family and a number of worldwide letter-writing campaigns.

In fact, the international Campaign for Tibet reports that the American Embassy in Beijing is not even certain in what prison Ngawang is being held.

Ngawang Choepal's case is tragic on its own very personal terms and as a reflection of a much wider Chinese decision to wipe out all opposition no matter how benign and no matter how inadvertent.

Such an outrageous violation of human rights should be a serious obstacle to productive relations between the United States and China (it certainly would be if the offending country had less trade potential).

Sadly, President Clinton and in essence our whole country will soon host the man who is responsible for locking up Ngawang Choepal and who could instantly set him free. When President Jiang Zemin visits America later this month, he'll be toasted, feasted, and courted by businesses and lobbyists. Ngawang Choepal's voice will not pass through the thick stone walls that he faces every day.

Who will speak out for him and thousands like him?

It should be our president and secretary of state using the impressive clout of the United States. Soon we will see what this country really stands for.

DEATH OF FORMER SENATE PRESS GALLERY SUPERINTENDENT DON C. WOMACK

Mr. BYRD. Mr. President, I was saddened to learn that Don C. Womack, who served as superintendent of the U.S. Senate Press Gallery from 1973 to 1981, died of cancer Thursday morning at his home in Arlington at the age of 87.

Don was born in Danville, Virginia August 22, 1910. He moved to the Washington Area in 1935, and attended the Corcoran School of Art and George Washington University. He managed a string of movie theaters in Northern Virginia before taking a job as staff assistant in the House of Representatives Periodical Press Gallery in 1948, beginning a 33-year career as a press liaison on Capitol Hill.

Don began working in the Senate Press Gallery in 1951. He briefly left to serve as superintendent of the House Periodical Gallery in 1954 and 1955,

then returned to the Senate to be deputy superintendent, and continued in that capacity until his promotion in 1973.

Don became superintendent of the Senate gallery during a tumultuous time—the beginning of the Watergate hearings. He weathered the storm, and received a commendation from the Standing Committee of Correspondents, the governing body of the Congressional press galleries, for his handling of the hearings.

During his tenure as superintendent, Don presided over press coverage of the Senate during such major events as the end of the Vietnam War, the Panama Canal Treaties debates, and the ABSCAM hearings. He assisted with media arrangements for the Republican and Democratic Conventions and the Presidential Inaugurals from 1948 to 1988. He was a tremendous help to Senators, staff members and the members of the press.

A Southern gentleman with a quick wit and warm sense of humor, Don was one of the true characters to roam the halls of Congress. He was beloved by reporters and Senators alike for his storytelling, his affable nature, and his seemingly endless repertoire of jokes. He will be greatly missed.

My deepest sympathy goes out to his wife, Mary Womack; his two daughters, Kay Duda of Alexandria and Patricia Fair of Eatontown, New Jersey; his five grandchildren; eleven great grandchildren, and his great-great grandson.

MESSAGES FROM THE PRESIDENT

REPORT OF ACHIEVEMENTS IN AERONAUTICS AND SPACE FOR FISCAL YEAR 1996—MESSAGE FROM THE PRESIDENT—PM 75

The PRESIDING OFFICER laid before the Senate the following message from the President of the United States, together with an accompanying report; which was referred to the Committee on Commerce, Science, and Transportation.

To the Congress of the United States:

I am pleased to transmit this report on the Nation's achievements in aeronautics and space during fiscal year (FY) 1996, as required under section 206 of the National Aeronautics and Space Act of 1958, as amended (42 U.S.C. 2476). Aeronautics and space activities in FY 1996 involved 14 contributing departments and agencies of the Federal Government.

A wide variety of aeronautics and space developments took place during FY 1996. The Administration issued an integrated National Space Policy, consolidating a number of previous policy directives into a singular, coherent vision of the future for the civil, commercial, and national security space sectors. The Administration also issued a formal policy on the future management and use of the U.S. Global Positioning System.