



United States
of America

Congressional Record

PROCEEDINGS AND DEBATES OF THE 106th CONGRESS, FIRST SESSION

Vol. 145

WASHINGTON, TUESDAY, APRIL 13, 1999

No. 50

Senate

The Senate met at 11:30 a.m. and was called to order by the President pro tempore [Mr. THURMOND].

PRAYER

The Chaplain, Dr. Lloyd John Ogilvie, offered the following prayer:

Lord of creation, You have written Your signature in the bursting beauty of this magnificent spring morning in our Nation's Capital. The breathtaking splendor of blossoms blankets the city with fairyland wonder. The daffodils and crocus have opened to express Your glory. Now, Lord, tune our hearts to join with all nature in singing Your praise.

We thank You for the rebirth of hope that comes with this season of renewal. You remind us, "Behold, I make all things new!" As the seeds and bulbs have germinated in the earth, so You have prepared us to burst forth in newness of life. We forget the former things and claim Your new beginning for us. Help us to accept Your forgiveness and be giving and forgiving people. Clean out the hurting memories of our hearts so that we may be open communicators of Your vibrant, creative spirit as we tackle problems and grasp the possibilities of this day for our beloved Nation's future. By Your power. Amen.

RECOGNITION OF THE ACTING MAJORITY LEADER

The PRESIDENT pro tempore. The able Senator from Alabama is recognized.

Mr. SESSIONS. I thank the Chair. On behalf of the majority leader, I would like to make a few announcements.

SCHEDULE

Mr. SESSIONS. This morning, the Senate will be in a period of morning business until 12:30 p.m. Following morning business, the Senate will recess until 2:15 p.m. to allow the weekly party caucuses to meet, and upon re-

convening at 2:15 p.m. the Senate will begin immediate consideration of the appointment of conferees with respect to the budget resolution. Therefore, Members should expect rollcall votes during today's session of the Senate.

The leader has also expressed his intent to consider the budget conference report this week, with the hope of a final vote on that important legislation by Thursday.

MORNING BUSINESS

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Mr. ENZI). Under the previous order, there will now be a period for the transaction of morning business.

MEASURE PLACED ON CALENDAR—S. 767

Mr. SESSIONS. I understand there is a bill at the desk due for its second reading.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will report.

The legislative assistant (John Merlino) read as follows:

A bill (S. 767) to amend the Internal Revenue Code of 1986 to provide a 2-month extension for the due date for filing a tax return for any member of a uniformed service on a tour of duty outside the United States for a period which includes the normal due date of such filing.

Mr. SESSIONS. I object to further reading of this bill at this time.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Objection is heard. The bill will be placed on the calendar.

Mr. SESSIONS. I thank my colleagues for their attention.

(The remarks of Mr. SESSIONS pertaining to the introduction of S. 768 are located in today's RECORD under "Statements on Introduced Bills and Joint Resolutions.")

OSHA RESPONSIVENESS HEARING

Mr. SESSIONS. Mr. President, I also will take just a moment to express my

personal appreciation to the Chair for chairing a very important subcommittee hearing this morning on OSHA, hearing at that meeting from an individual from Alabama, Mr. Ron Hayes, whose son tragically was killed in a workplace accident and who has made it his personal cause to confront the problems in OSHA, to make sure that agency is responsive to real needs and is really working to improve the workplace and make it safer and not just be involved in bureaucratic paperwork. It was an extraordinary hearing into a very important matter that can protect the lives and health of many people in the workplace and at the same time reduce bureaucracy and paperwork.

I Thank the Senator for his efforts.

Mr. President, I suggest the absence of a quorum.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will call the roll.

The legislative clerk proceeded to call the roll.

Mr. THOMAS. 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. THOMAS. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent to proceed for 10 minutes.

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

AGRICULTURE

Mr. THOMAS. Mr. President, I will take a moment to talk a little bit about agriculture.

As the President knows, agriculture is a most important element in Wyoming's economy and to Wyoming's culture. During this past week, I had a chance to visit with many people in Wyoming who are very concerned about agriculture and agricultural markets or the lack thereof. So I want to talk a little bit about my vision of the things we are doing and can be

• This "bullet" symbol identifies statements or insertions which are not spoken by a Member of the Senate on the floor.



Printed on recycled paper.

S3613

doing in Congress with respect to agriculture in this country.

Certainly our purpose ought to be to strengthen markets so the price for agricultural products is enhanced and so family farmers and family ranchers are able to make a reasonable return on their investment and on their time.

We have had a tough year in agriculture, in crops, and in livestock, and many of us have been working for some time to find some of the things that are appropriate for the Government to do to strengthen the agricultural sector.

One of them, of course, is trade and the idea of reducing the unilateral sanctions we have had in place around the world. Many times in the past, countries such as Pakistan, when they set off the bomb and so on, we immediately then did not trade with them. We have changed some of those unilateral sanctions. They are not useful for any other reason than to penalize our own markets.

We are pushing for stronger enforcement of trade agreements, particularly in NAFTA, for example, where we need to make sure that they are being administered properly, that goods are not being dumped, that goods are not coming in from another country through, in this case, the member of NAFTA that benefited from that, and working to reduce unfair trade barriers which have existed and continue to exist around the world in interesting places, such as the European Union, where the President has just been. These are the kinds of things that seem to me to be totally unfair, where we open our markets to others and, in return, we have market barriers.

I am very pleased with what is happening with regard to the negotiations with China. I am not pleased with all the things that happen in China, of course, but in terms of the WTO negotiations, we find, for example, that we are going to make some arrangements to reduce the 40-percent to probably 10-percent tariff on our meat. That will be a very good forward move.

I am hopeful we can find a way to get the largest potential customer in the world into the WTO so that not only will it open markets but we do not have to deal unilaterally with someone; if we have an agreement, then there is the World Trade Organization to enforce those agreements.

We are talking about the tax relief for agriculture. We had income averaging last year, which is very good because the income of the farmers and ranchers varies very much. We have a proposition to have farm accounts which allow farmers to put the money into sort of an IRA for a period of time and draw it out before they pay taxes on it so that they tend to level out in income.

Estate tax relief: I hope that is one of the things we talk about when we deal with the tax reform—estate tax relief. Currently legislation is there to do that.

Meat labeling: I think we need to have, as we have proposed it here—and will again—meat labeling so that we know what the products are and so buyers, when they go to the grocery store, can determine whether the product is domestic. They need to have an opportunity to do that.

Also, grading: USDA grades are for domestic products, and will be used that way. Again, current legislation is pending.

One of the problems of the livestock industry has been, allegedly—and I agree with it—the concentration of packers. We have the latest figures, and I heard that about four packers kill about 87 percent of the product, which would cause you to think that there may be some legislation on pricing. And we need to do that.

We met with the Attorney General and asked that we, again, take a look at the potential of monopoly activities that may be there and do something about the concentration of packers. If they find again that there is nothing illegal being done, as they have in the past, it seems to me that we ought to take a look at the underlying legislation, the Packers and Stockyards Act, to see if, in fact, that needs to be changed. We need to have more competition. Things like owning the cattle, for example, and then using their own cattle instead of going into the market, which can manipulate the price—that fact, that there is buying without reporting the market price. That is something we need to do.

We are trying to change the inspections for interstate shipment of meat so that State inspections will suffice. We think that will help the market a great deal.

Certainly, in the crop area we need to look at NAFTA to make sure that there is not dumping of wheat and other products in this country. We need to take a look at the Crop Insurance Program, which I think has not worked that satisfactorily, to move the Freedom to Farm, and some of the things that are included in that.

Mr. President, I just think that there are a number of things that need to be done. We have some unique issues, of course, in the West where in a great many of our States—in my State of Wyoming 50 percent, and in the case of Nevada, 87 percent—the land belongs to the Federal Government. Much of the land is grazed. Livestock grazes on much of the land. We need to make that accessible so we can have multiple use of those renewable resources. We need to do something about the permit program so that they are not difficult. It isn't necessary, in my view, to have an environmental impact statement on every unchanged renewal of the grazing permits.

So these are some of the changes that need to be done. I don't think agriculture is looking for subsidies, or looking for a farm program. But they are looking for an opportunity to have the markets—an opportunity to go into

the marketplace and get prices that are, in fact, reflective of the costs that go into the product.

This is a basic industry to our country. There will be changes made, of course, as time goes by. There have been tremendous changes in agriculture over the last 50 years. The family farmers are getting larger. They are more mechanized and more efficient. They are also much more expensive. And much more investment is required. When you have a great deal of investment, of course, when you have several years of bad prices, it makes it very, very difficult, which also leads to the need probably for some additional lending capacity and some additional assistance in lending because of the 2 years that we have had.

So, Mr. President, I hope that as we come back in after this recess people will be more aware of the difficulty in agriculture, and that we can address ourselves to the many opportunities that we have to strengthen those markets and to provide more healthy and vigorous agriculture.

I thank you, Mr. President, for the time.

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. GORTON. 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. GORTON. Mr. President, are we still in morning business?

The PRESIDING OFFICER. We are.

KOSOVO

Mr. GORTON. Mr. President, on the Tuesday before the recess, I voted against authorizing the air war in Yugoslavia. I did so because it seemed to me that the goal was a goal not worthy enough, not grave enough to begin what amounts to a war, even though under the President's leadership it has only been half a war.

Our goals were to be permitted to send young American men and women into the midst of a 600-year-old civil strife in order to enforce an agreement that neither side wished. I also voted against that proposition, because it did not seem to me that the means were sufficient to gain even this questionable end. I voted against it, because it did not seem to me that the administration began to foresee the terrible consequences that would ensue if, and as President Milosevic has, accelerated his expulsion of Kosovars from their own homeland, or the refugee problem with which we would be faced. In other words, there were no contingency plans.

At this point, almost 3 weeks later, all of those negative consequences have transpired. We are in the midst of an air war. The air war has not been successful. It is being fought apparently