

to table amendment No. 303. The yeas and nays have been ordered. The clerk will call the roll.

The legislative clerk called the roll.

Mr. FITZGERALD (when his name was called). Present.

Mr. REID. I announce that the Senator from New Jersey (Mr. LAUTENBERG) is necessarily absent.

I also announce that the Senator from Louisiana (Ms. LANDRIEU) is absent attending a funeral.

I further announce that, if present and voting, the Senator from New Jersey (Mr. LAUTENBERG) and the Senator from Louisiana (Ms. LANDRIEU) would each vote "no."

The result was announced—yeas 52, nays 45, as follows:

[Rollcall Vote No. 101 Leg.]

YEAS—52

Abraham	Frist	Murkowski
Allard	Gorton	Nickles
Ashcroft	Gramm	Roberts
Bennett	Grams	Roth
Bond	Grassley	Santorum
Brownback	Gregg	Sessions
Bunning	Hagel	Shelby
Burns	Hatch	Smith (NH)
Campbell	Helms	Smith (OR)
Chafee	Hutchinson	Snowe
Cochran	Hutchison	Stevens
Collins	Inhofe	Thomas
Coverdell	Kyl	Thompson
Craig	Lott	Thurmond
Crapo	Lugar	Voinovich
DeWine	Mack	Warner
Domenici	McCain	
Enzi	McConnell	

NAYS—45

Akaka	Edwards	Lieberman
Baucus	Feingold	Lincoln
Bayh	Feinstein	Mikulski
Biden	Graham	Moynihan
Bingaman	Harkin	Murray
Boxer	Hollings	Reed
Breaux	Inouye	Reid
Bryan	Jeffords	Robb
Byrd	Johnson	Rockefeller
Cleland	Kennedy	Sarbanes
Conrad	Kerrey	Schumer
Daschle	Kerry	Specter
Dodd	Kohl	Torricelli
Dorgan	Leahy	Wellstone
Durbin	Levin	Wyden

ANSWERED "PRESENT"—1

Fitzgerald

NOT VOTING—2

Landrieu Lautenberg

The motion was agreed to.

Mr. GRAMM. Mr. President, I move to reconsider the vote.

Mr. SARBANES. I move to lay that motion on the table.

The motion to table was agreed to.

Mr. BUNNING. Mr. President, I rise today in support of S. 900, which will modernize our financial services laws.

If our financial industries are going to be able to compete in the world market in the next century, we must modernize our depression-era banking laws.

The next century is almost here. We all talk about a Y2K problem. What about the antique banking law problem? Entering the new century with antiquated banking laws would be foolhardy. We have to reform our financial service system.

Most of the financial services and bank laws that are on the books today are based on the Glass-Steagall Act, legislation passed in 1935, over 60 years ago!

The world has changed a great deal since then, and it is going to change further and faster as we move into the 21st century. We need to update our outdated laws to account for this change and to give flexibility to American companies.

At the same time, we must make sure that any bill we pass treats all the segments of the financial industry fairly, and that there is a level playing field for all of the groups involved.

If history is any indication, any new law we pass will be with us for a long time, so we had better get it right.

We've been working to get it right for a long time. Eleven years ago, when I was a member of the House Banking Committee, we were able to report a financial services modernization bill to the floor.

Last year the House passed a bill and the Senate was able to pass a bill out of committee.

As a Member of the House last year, I supported the bill that passed by one vote in the House. It wasn't perfect. There were things I would have liked to change.

But I believed at the time that we couldn't allow the search for perfection to block real progress.

That's even more true this year.

We can talk about banking reform—and negotiate issues—for another twelve years—and we won't ever be able to make everyone totally happy.

There are too many competing interests and too much complexity is involved in the rapidly changing financial services industry for us ever to find a regulatory framework that will completely satisfy all of the players involved.

It's not going to happen.

At some point, we just have to do the best we can and move ahead. I'm convinced we have reached that point now—we should pass this bill.

Fortunately, the bill our committee approved this year is even better than the bills we considered last year. Chairman GRAMM and his staff did a good job—the committee did a good job.

It is time to move ahead.

We should pass a clean bill quickly and send a message to the other body that we are serious about financial services reform.

This bill has many important provisions. And I'm not going to talk about them all, but I would like to mention one issue in particular.

The one issue my bankers bring up every time they come to visit is Community Reinvestment Act or CRA reform.

I am very pleased the chairman has agreed to put CRA provisions in the bill and that we were able to pass Senator SHELBY's amendment in committee that will provide CRA relief, especially to small banks in my State and across the Nation.

Senator SHELBY's amendment will exempt 154 small banks in Kentucky from Federal CRA burdens.

These banks have always invested in the community. That is where their

business is. A bank in Clinton, Kentucky does not lend in Louisville or Lexington, it lends in Clinton.

I have a letter from Robert Black, president and CEO of the Clinton Bank. Mr. Black says: "We were using good CRA practices long before the burdensome regulation was passed. This regulation is now requiring much of our time preparing documentation and placing pins in a map just to prove that we made loans in every community."

I should mention that Clinton, Kentucky was not named after Bill Clinton.

I would also like to read a passage from a letter from E.L. Williams, president of the Citizens Deposit Bank of Arlington, in Arlington Kentucky.

Mr. Williams states: "In our opinion, the time and money afforded to CRA compliance in small banks could be used to a much greater advantage, such as lending and assisting the low to moderate income population for which the CRA was originally implemented."

These small banks will lend in their own communities with or without CRA. They don't need Federal regulators breathing down their necks to make sure they are doing what they would be doing anyway.

I would personally like to see even greater reform of CRA—across the board—but our small banks really need and deserve relief and this bill provides it.

In closing, Mr. President, I repeat that this bill is not perfect. But it is a dramatic improvement over the antique financial laws we are operating under now and it is a dramatic improvement over the Sarbanes substitute.

We must enter the 21st century ready to compete and this bill will make that possible.

It is a good bill—I urge my colleagues to support it.

THE VERY BAD DEBT BOXSCORE

Mr. HELMS. Mr. President, at the close of business yesterday, Tuesday, May 4, 1999, the federal debt stood at \$5,563,049,386,516.94 (Five trillion, five hundred sixty-three billion, forty-nine million, three hundred eighty-six thousand, five hundred sixteen dollars and ninety-four cents).

One year ago, May 4, 1998, the federal debt stood at \$5,477,263,000,000 (Five trillion, four hundred seventy-seven billion, two hundred sixty-three million).

Five years ago, May 4, 1994, the federal debt stood at \$4,572,995,000,000 (Four trillion, five hundred seventy-two billion, nine hundred ninety-five million).

Ten years ago, May 4, 1989, the federal debt stood at \$2,770,422,000,000 (Two trillion, seven hundred seventy billion, four hundred twenty-two million).

Fifteen years ago, May 4, 1984, the federal debt stood at \$1,489,259,000,000 (One trillion, four hundred eighty-nine billion, two hundred fifty-nine million)

which reflects a debt increase of more than \$4 trillion—\$4,073,790,386,516.94 (Four trillion, seventy-three billion, seven hundred ninety million, three hundred eighty-six thousand, five hundred sixteen dollars and ninety-four cents) during the past 15 years.

CINCO DE MAYO

Mr. DOMENICI. Mr. President, today, May 5, or "Cinco de Mayo," marks an important holiday for Mexicans and Mexican-Americans alike, and it will be observed with celebrations and festivities across the United States. Contrary to a popular misconception, Cinco de Mayo does not commemorate Mexico's independence from Spain. That holiday is celebrated on September 16. Instead, Cinco de Mayo marks the victory in 1862 of the Mexican army over a larger, better armed and better trained invading French army at La Batalla de Puebla.

After gaining independence in 1821, Mexico endured a series of set backs while trying to establish a republic. By the late 1850s, Mexico was in the grips of a severe economic crisis, and the treasury was bankrupt. In 1861, President Benito Juarez placed a moratorium halting payments on foreign debt. Since much of Mexico's debt was owed to France, Napoleon III responded by invading Mexico. After landing in the port of Veracruz, the French army, which was considered the finest military force of the period, expected to march through the country and easily capture the capital, Mexico City. However, a small Mexican army, under the command of General Ignacio Zaragoza, mounted a strong defense at the town of Pueblo and routed the invading force.

The stunning victory was short-lived, though. The French returned with reinforcements and were able to defeat Mexican forces the following year. But they were only able to control Mexico for four years, and President Juarez regained power in 1867.

Although, in the end, La Batalla de Puebla had little lasting military significance, it was, culturally, a watershed event for the fledgling nation, and for Latin America as a whole. After seeing Europe's best army routed by a hastily gathered and largely untrained Mexican defense, European leaders became more wary of exerting military force in the Americas. Europe never sent another invading force to the Americas after this episode.

The victory at Puebla also instilled a great sense of pride and patriotism in the people of Mexico. They proved their military mettle to themselves and the world, and their government, led by President Juarez, secured legitimacy in the eyes of other nations.

Finally, La Batalla de Puebla asserted the right of people living in former European colonies to self determination and national sovereignty, and it unified all the citizens of Mexico, from landowners to laborers, in a com-

mon cause. It marks the point when people stopped seeing themselves as subjects of monarchy in a distant land or restricted their loyalty to a particular state or region, but instead viewed themselves as citizens of a new nation, a nation united under the green, white and red colors of the Mexican flag.

Much has been said in recent years about the "commercialization" of Cinco de Mayo, and it is true that importance of this holiday often has been overlooked. However, to most Mexican-Americans, or Chicanos, Cinco de Mayo has a special meaning. Many scholars believe La Batalla de Puebla produced the first military hero from the American Southwestern region in General Ignacio Zaragoza, who was born in Texas. The holiday has long been a lesson in overcoming great odds through determination and unity. Today, Cinco de Mayo is an occasion for people of Mexican descent to come together to express pride in their history, and I encourage all Americans to enjoy this opportunity to celebrate and appreciate the contributions of Mexican culture.

RUMORS OF NURSING HOME BANKRUPTCY

Mr. GRASSLEY. Mr. President, I serve as chairman of the Senate Aging Subcommittee and I feel a necessity to inform my colleagues about the issue of rumors about the pending bankruptcy of some nursing home chains in the United States.

There are reports in the press, and in discussions with my colleagues I have received information, indicating that one and possibly two large nursing home chains may be facing bankruptcy in the near future. That has an economic side and it has a human side. I will speak first about the human side.

Should one or both of these nursing home chains go bankrupt, we would have an immediate challenge to ensure the continued care of somewhere between 35,000 residents, on the one hand, and 70,000, on the other, in these respective homes where they are currently under care. This would be a significant task. Nursing home residents are frail and are not easily moved. Moving them runs the risk of causing "transfer trauma," a condition that can result in death. Therefore, it is critical that we keep focused on preventing avoidable harm and take precautions to prevent this from happening.

I have introduced legislation to ensure that the quality of patient care is monitored if there would be bankruptcy. My legislation requires the appointment of an ombudsman to act as an advocate for the patient. This change will ensure that bankruptcy judges are fully aware of all the facts when they guide a health care provider through the process of bankruptcy. Prior to a chapter 11 filing, or immediately thereafter, the debtor employs a health care crisis consultant to help

it in its reorganization effort. The first step is usually cutting costs. Sometimes this step may result in a lower quality of care for the patients who live there. The appointment, then, of an ombudsman, should balance the interests between the creditor and the patient. These interests need balancing because the court-appointed officials owe fiduciary duties to creditors and the estate but not necessarily to the patients.

There will be occasions which illustrate that what may be in the best interest of creditors may not always be consistent with the patients' best interest. The trustee's interest, for example, is to maximize the amount of the estate to pay off the creditors. The more assets the trustee disburses, the more his payment will be. On the other hand, the ombudsman for the patient is designed to ensure continued quality of care at least above some minimum standards. Such quality of care standards currently exist throughout the health care environment, from the health care facility itself to State standards and even Federal standards that were adopted in 1987.

I would like to have my colleagues consider the following excerpt from the Los Angeles Times on September 28, 1997, which describes the unconscionable, pathetic, and traumatizing consequences of a sudden nursing home closing because of bankruptcy:

It could not be determined Saturday how many more elderly or chronically ill patients may be affected by the health care company's financial problems. Those at the Reseda Care Center in the San Fernando Valley, including a 106-year-old woman, were rolled into the streets late Friday in wheelchairs and on hospital beds, bundled in blankets as relatives scurried to gather up clothes and other personal belongings.

The presence of an ombudsman should help prevent a recurrence of instances similar to what I just described, where trustees quickly close health care facilities without notifying appropriate state and federal agencies and without notifying the bankruptcy court.

I began discussions with the Health Care Financing Administration at the beginning of April to urge them to take seriously the rumors we were hearing about possible nursing home bankruptcies and to encourage them to make preparations. I called for contingency plans that would prepare, well in advance, for the daunting challenges bankruptcies would pose to various federal and state agencies. HCFA briefed the staff of the Aging Committee, as well as staff from the Finance Committee and Budget Committee. While the HCFA staff appreciated the severity and size of the problem of ensuring resident safety in the event of a bankruptcy, they did not have a plan—or even a plan for a plan.

I wrote to the HCFA Administrator urging her to take the effort very seriously, to keep at the planning and to stay in touch with my office. Only on April 28th did I hear from her office