

“(E) AUTHORITY TO PREVENT EVASIONS.—The Director may issue interpretations, regulations, or orders that the Director determines necessary to administer and carry out the purpose and prevent evasions of this paragraph, including a determination that, notwithstanding the form of a transaction, the transaction would in substance result in a company acquiring control of a savings association.

“(F) PRESERVATION OF AUTHORITY FOR FAMILY TRUSTS.—Subparagraphs (A) and (B) do not apply with respect to any trust that becomes a savings and loan holding company with respect to a savings association, if—

“(i) not less than 85 percent of the beneficial ownership interests in the trust are continuously owned, directly or indirectly, by or for the benefit of members of the same family, or their spouses, who are lineal descendants of common ancestors who controlled, directly or indirectly, such savings association on May 4, 1999, or a subsequent date, pursuant to an application pending before the Office on or before May 4, 1999; and

“(ii) at the time at which such trust becomes a savings and loan holding company, such ancestors or lineal descendants, or spouses of such descendants, have directly or indirectly controlled the savings association continuously since May 4, 1999, or a subsequent date, pursuant to an application pending before the Office on or before May 4, 1999.”.

(b) CONFORMING AMENDMENT.—Section 10(o)(5)(E) of the Home Owners' Loan Act (15 U.S.C. 1467a(o)(5)(E)) is amended by striking “, except subparagraph (B)” and inserting “or (c)(9)(A)(ii)”.

SEC. 602. OPTIONAL CONVERSION OF FEDERAL SAVINGS ASSOCIATIONS.

Section 5(i) of the Home Owners' Loan Act (12 U.S.C. 1464(i)) is amended by adding at the end the following new paragraph:

“(5) CONVERSION TO NATIONAL BANK.—Notwithstanding any other provision of law, any Federal savings association chartered and in operation prior to the date of enactment of the Financial Services Modernization Act of 1999, with branches in one or more States, may convert, at its option, with the approval of the Comptroller of the Currency, into one or more National banks, each of which may encompass one or more of the branches of the Federal savings association in one or more States; but only if the resulting National bank or banks will meet any and all financial, management, and capital requirements applicable to National banks.”.

TITLE VII—ATM FEE REFORM

SEC. 701. SHORT TITLE.

This title may be cited as the “ATM Fee Reform Act of 1999”.

SEC. 702. ELECTRONIC FUND TRANSFER FEE DISCLOSURES AT ANY HOST ATM.

Section 904(d) of the Electronic Fund Transfer Act (15 U.S.C. 1693b(d)) is amended by adding at the end the following:

“(3) FEE DISCLOSURES AT AUTOMATED TELLER MACHINES.—

“(A) IN GENERAL.—The regulations prescribed under paragraph (1) shall require any automated teller machine operator who imposes a fee on any consumer for providing host transfer services to such consumer to provide notice in accordance with subparagraph (B) to the consumer (at the time the service is provided) of—

“(i) the fact that a fee is imposed by such operator for providing the service; and

“(ii) the amount of any such fee.

“(B) NOTICE REQUIREMENTS.—

“(i) ON THE MACHINE.—The notice required under clause (i) of subparagraph (A) with respect to any fee described in such subparagraph shall be posted in a prominent and conspicuous location on or at the automated

teller machine at which the electronic fund transfer is initiated by the consumer; and

“(ii) ON THE SCREEN.—The notice required under clauses (i) and (ii) of subparagraph (A) with respect to any fee described in such subparagraph shall appear on the screen of the automated teller machine, or on a paper notice issued from such machine, after the transaction is initiated and before the consumer is irrevocably committed to completing the transaction.

“(C) PROHIBITION ON FEES NOT PROPERLY DISCLOSED AND EXPLICITLY ASSUMED BY CONSUMER.—No fee may be imposed by any automated teller machine operator in connection with any electronic fund transfer initiated by a consumer for which a notice is required under subparagraph (A), unless—

“(i) the consumer receives such notice in accordance with subparagraph (B); and

“(ii) the consumer elects to continue in the manner necessary to effect the transaction after receiving such notice.

“(D) DEFINITIONS.—For purposes of this paragraph, the following definitions shall apply:

“(i) ELECTRONIC FUND TRANSFER.—The term ‘electronic fund transfer’ includes a transaction which involves a balance inquiry initiated by a consumer in the same manner as an electronic fund transfer, whether or not the consumer initiates a transfer of funds in the course of the transaction.

“(ii) AUTOMATED TELLER MACHINE OPERATOR.—The term ‘automated teller machine operator’ means any person who—

“(I) operates an automated teller machine at which consumers initiate electronic fund transfers; and

“(II) is not the financial institution which holds the account of such consumer from which the transfer is made.

“(iii) HOST TRANSFER SERVICES.—The term ‘host transfer services’ means any electronic fund transfer made by an automated teller machine operator in connection with a transaction initiated by a consumer at an automated teller machine operated by such operator.”.

SEC. 703. DISCLOSURE OF POSSIBLE FEES TO CONSUMERS WHEN ATM CARD IS ISSUED.

Section 905(a) of the Electronic Fund Transfer Act (15 U.S.C. 1693c(a)) is amended—

(1) by striking “and” at the end of paragraph (8);

(2) by striking the period at the end of paragraph (9) and inserting “; and”; and

(3) by inserting after paragraph (9) the following:

“(10) a notice to the consumer that a fee may be imposed by—

“(A) an automated teller machine operator (as defined in section 904(d)(3)(D)(ii)) if the consumer initiates a transfer from an automated teller machine which is not operated by the person issuing the card or other means of access; and

“(B) any national, regional, or local network utilized to effect the transaction.”.

SEC. 704. FEASIBILITY STUDY.

(a) IN GENERAL.—The Comptroller General of the United States shall conduct a study of the feasibility of requiring, in connection with any electronic and transfer initiated by a consumer through the use of an automated teller machine—

(1) a notice to be provided to the consumer before the consumer is irrevocably committed to completing the transaction, which clearly states the amount of any fee which will be imposed upon the consummation of the transaction by—

(A) any automated teller machine operator (as defined in section 904(d)(2)(D)(ii) of the Electronic Fund Transfer Act) involved in the transaction;

(B) the financial institution holding the account of the consumer;

(C) any national, regional, or local network utilized to effect the transaction; and

(D) any other party involved in the transfer; and

(2) the consumer to elect to consummate the transaction after receiving the notice described in paragraph (1).

(b) FACTORS TO BE CONSIDERED.—In conducting the study required under subsection (a) with regard to the notice requirement described in such subsection, the Comptroller General shall consider the following factors:

(1) The availability of appropriate technology.

(2) Implementation and operating costs.

(3) The competitive impact any such notice requirement would have on various sizes and types of institutions, if implemented.

(4) The period of time which would be reasonable for implementing any such notice requirement.

(5) The extent to which consumers would benefit from any such notice requirement.

(6) Any other factor the Comptroller General determines to be appropriate in analyzing the feasibility of imposing any such notice requirement.

(c) REPORT TO CONGRESS.—Before the end of the 6-month period beginning on the date of the enactment of this Act, the Comptroller General shall submit a report to the Congress containing—

(1) the findings and conclusions of the Comptroller General in connection with the study required under subsection (a); and

(2) the recommendation of the Comptroller General with regard to the question of whether a notice requirement described in subsection (a) should be implemented and, if so, how such requirement should be implemented.

SEC. 705. NO LIABILITY IF POSTED NOTICES ARE DAMAGED.

Section 910 of the Electronic Fund Transfer Act (15 U.S.C. 1693h) is amended by adding at the end the following new subsection:

“(d) EXCEPTION FOR DAMAGED NOTICES.—If the notice required to be posted pursuant to section 904(d)(3)(B)(i) by an automated teller machine operator has been posted by such operator in compliance with such section and the notice is subsequently removed, damaged, or altered by any person other than the operator of the automated teller machine, the operator shall have no liability under this section for failure to comply with section 904(d)(3)(B)(i).”.

ORDERS FOR TUESDAY, MAY 11,
1999

Mr. ROBERTS. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that when the Senate completes its business today, it stand in adjournment until the hour of 9:30 a.m. on Tuesday, May 11. I further ask consent that on Tuesday, immediately following the prayer, the routine requests through the morning hour be granted, the time for the two leaders be reserved for their use later in the day, and the Senate then proceed to S. 254, the juvenile justice bill, for debate only until 12 noon.

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

Mr. ROBERTS. I ask consent the Senate stand in recess from the hour of 12:30 p.m. until 2:15 p.m. for the weekly policy conferences to meet.

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

Mr. ROBERTS. I ask unanimous consent that Members have until 2 p.m. today in order to introduce legislation and submit statements for the RECORD.

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

PROGRAM

Mr. ROBERTS. For the information of all Senators, the Senate will begin debate on the juvenile justice bill at 9:30. Amendments are expected to that legislation, and therefore rollcall votes can be expected during tomorrow afternoon's session of the Senate. As always, Members will be notified accordingly as any votes are ordered with respect to this legislation.

Members who intend to offer amendments to the juvenile justice bill are encouraged to work with the chairman and the ranking member to schedule a time to come to the floor to debate those amendments.

ORDER FOR ADJOURNMENT UNTIL 9:30 A.M. TOMORROW

Mr. ROBERTS. If there is no further business to come before the Senate, I now ask unanimous consent that the Senate stand in adjournment under the previous order, following the remarks of Senator CONRAD.

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

Mr. ROBERTS. 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. CONRAD. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent the order for the quorum call be rescinded.

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

CONTINUING AGRICULTURE CRISIS

Mr. CONRAD. Mr. President, I rise today to again talk about the continuing agriculture crisis that is facing America's farmers. I spent this weekend in North Dakota. I spoke at the annual graduation of the North Dakota State School of Science and then at North Dakota State University's graduation on Saturday morning. On Friday, I went to an event we call Marketplace For Kids, which we hold every year, in which children from a large part of North Dakota come in and show the things they have been working on—inventions, creative ideas that they have had.

In these three sets of events I ran into literally hundreds of North Dakota farm families. Without exception they told me, Senator, unless there is a Federal response and unless it comes quickly, literally thousands of us are going to be forced off the land this spring.

This is a crisis as deep and as serious as any I have seen in my 13 years now

representing North Dakota in the Senate. We have had quite a string of crises: in 1988–1989, the worst drought since the 1930s; in 1997, the worst flood in 500 years that devastated the town of Grand Forks, ND; and now this continuing agriculture crisis, as a result of, really, three factors. One is the collapse of farm prices. The second is incredibly bad weather over the last 5 years—overly wet conditions. In fact, as I flew over North Dakota, it looked like Lake Agassiz, which existed thousands of years ago, was reforming, because everywhere I looked, as I flew in a light plane over half of North Dakota, flying from east to west, all I saw was water everywhere. It was really stunning to see it. Then, of course, we have been hit by bad policy: A farm bill that has reductions in support from Government no matter what happens to farm prices, very steep reductions that are included in that policy; and, of course, a trade policy that left us vulnerable to incredible increases in imports from Canada traded on an unfair basis.

This stew that is being cooked is increasingly hard to choke down for our farmers. This is a recent headline, April 4, in the Bismarck Tribune, my hometown newspaper. The headline is: "Farm Families Forced To Cancel Health Insurance." In the story they talk about Clint Jacobs, a 30-year-old farmer, who raises 200 head of cattle near Amidon, ND. That is out in western North Dakota. He and his wife and their 1½-year-old daughter were paying \$550 every 3 months for health insurance and they had \$1,000 deductible. They had to drop their health insurance.

This is a story that is repeated every day across North Dakota, and I am sure in other farm belt States as well, as we cope with the lowest prices in 52 years—the lowest prices in 52 years. These farm families, with incredibly hard-working, decent, honest people, are having to dump their health insurance in a bid to survive financially. This really is not right.

As I traveled across my State this weekend, farm families came to me, bankers came to me with a very consistent message: You have to respond and you have to respond quickly, because this is a set of facts that is going to suck thousands of us down.

This article I was referring to says that 26 out of 82 farmers and ranchers who were surveyed had dropped health insurance to make ends meet. The survey was done by the Lutheran Disaster Response of Lutheran Social Services in North Dakota. As one person said, if you have four or five bad years and you tighten the belt every time, health insurance gets to be one of the things that is cut.

That is what is happening today in my State. Patients are skipping preventive care, such as checkups and mammograms. Some doctors and other health care providers are not getting paid.

In a sidebar story by the Associated Press, their farm writer says: Facing a dim agriculture forecast this year, farmers can now prepare for financial cutbacks. A Purdue University extension specialist who offers financial advice to struggling farmers in Indiana said families must determine what they can do without.

That is exactly what is happening in North Dakota. Maybe there are some who are listening and saying that we have had to do that in our life, we have had to cut back when times are tough, we have had to consider what you can do without; so what.

This is not a typical downturn. This goes far beyond what somebody can fairly plan for—the lowest prices in 52 years; 5 years of the worst weather on record; as a result, an outbreak of disease unprecedented in our State's history.

In over 100 years, we have never seen an outbreak of disease like we are coping with now. Scab, a fungus that breaks out when there are overly wet conditions, dramatically reduced production, with prices, as I indicated, the lowest they have been in 52 years. What a double whammy. On top of it, to have a farm bill passed—and it does not matter what farm prices are—that is slashing Government support for producers at the very time our chief competitors are spending more.

The Europeans, who are our chief competitors and who we were supposed to be convincing to cut their subsidies by cutting ours, did they decide to follow suit? Absolutely not. They have decided to spend more, and they are already spending \$50 billion a year to support their farmers. We are spending \$5 billion. That is not a fair fight.

Our farmers are ready to take on anybody anytime anywhere. They are ready to compete. They are ready to take on the farmers of France and Germany and England, and all the rest, but they are not prepared to take on, in addition to the farmers from those countries, the governments of those countries. They are not prepared to take on the French Government, the German Government, and the British Government, as well as the farmers from those countries. That is not a fair fight.

Yet, that is what we have said to our farmers: You go out there and you take on the French farmers and, while you are at it, take on the French Government as well. You go out there and compete against the German farmer, and while you are at it, take on the German Government as well.

That is not a fair fight. We have to put tools in the hands of our farmers so they have a chance to fight back. If we do not, we will wake up sometime soon and find that tens of thousands of farm families have been forced off the land and have been destroyed financially. That is what is happening in my State each and every day. Good people, honest people are being destroyed. The question is, Are we going to stand and