

their Medicare. So millions of disabled Americans remain dependent on cash assistance from the Federal Government simply because they can't work and keep Medicaid at the same time.

Last year, I wrote to President Clinton urging a remedy to the situation. I am proud to be an original cosponsor of the Work Incentives Improvement Act. This bill allows Americans with disabilities to enter the workforce without losing their health coverage under Medicaid or Medicare. Even if disabled people are working in full-time jobs with health benefits, they will be able to buy their Medicaid coverage for medical expenses that their regular insurance does not cover.

In addition, the Work Incentives Improvement Act sets up a new system called Ticket to Work, to provide better job training and placement services for the disabled. The Work Incentives Improvement Act will enable disabled Americans to pursue self-sufficiency, to achieve independence, and to contribute in meaningful ways to our economy. It is certainly an idea whose time has come. That is why over 70 Senators have signed on as cosponsors.

Unfortunately, the Senate has not had the chance to vote on this important legislation. The reason I am on the floor today, as well as others who I hope will be coming to the floor, is to urge Senate Majority Leader TRENT LOTT to bring the Work Incentives Improvement Act to the Senate floor for a vote soon. No one should have to choose between a job and their health. By preserving Federal health benefits for disabled workers, we can avoid the Catch-22 and, most importantly, we can help the disabled to live full and healthy lives.

Mr. President, I yield the floor, and I suggest the absence of a quorum.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will call the roll.

The legislative assistant proceeded to call the roll.

Mr. GRAMS. 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 President, I ask unanimous consent that the order for the quorum call be rescinded.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. GRAMS. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that I be allowed to speak for up to 25 minutes in morning business.

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

(The remarks of Mr. GRAMS pertaining to the introduction of S. 1102, S. 1103, S. 1104 are located in today's RECORD under "Statements on Introduced Bills and Joint Resolutions.")

Mr. GRAMS. I yield the floor and I suggest the absence of a quorum.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will call the roll.

The legislative assistant called the roll.

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

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

CRISIS IN THE FARM ECONOMY

Mr. CONRAD. Mr. President, I rise today to talk about the continuing crisis in the farm economy. I have just been home the weekend before last. Everywhere I went in my State, people were saying to me: Senator, something has to be done. We are facing a crisis in rural America. The prices we are getting for things continues to be at very low levels—in fact, we have the lowest prices in 53 years—and at the same time everything we buy is going up. That is putting us in a cost/price squeeze that is truly strangling American farmers.

The result is going to be devastating unless there is a response. Last year, the Federal Government did respond with a \$6 billion program of disaster assistance that made a significant difference in rural America. About half of that money went for a support, a supplement that gave farmers some assistance when prices were collapsing. There was also a second major element for a disaster program, natural disasters around the country that had dramatically reduced farm income. That program made a significant difference.

Those same conditions continue this year. Prices again are at very low levels, and we have seen natural disasters once again strike rural America. In fact, we now know to deliver on the promise we made last year on a disaster program is going to require more money than we appropriated. We appropriated about \$3 billion for that purpose. We now know delivery on the program we passed is going to cost another \$1.5 billion, because the signup of agricultural producers that is now completed indicates to us there are far more who are eligible than we thought when we wrote the program. That is, of course, because we were faced with a moving target. We were faced with additional natural disasters that deepened and worsened and made more farmers eligible.

I believe we need that \$1.5 billion to keep the promise made last year and another \$2.8 billion that will be necessary to give the same kind of income support we provided last year, about a 50-percent AMTA supplemental.

Why are these necessary? What is happening out there so those of us who represent farm country come to our colleagues and talk about a crisis in rural America? Perhaps the best way of showing what has happened is this chart that shows what has happened, over a 53-year period, to farm prices. As we can see, with spring wheat and barley prices from 1946 to 1999, we are now at the lowest level for barley and wheat prices in 53 years. That is the hard reality our farmers are coping with, the lowest prices in 53 years. We know that earlier this year hog prices fell to 8 cents a pound. It costs 40 cents a pound to produce a hog.

To put these prices into some perspective, these are per bushel. We are down to a price per bushel of \$2.60 to \$2.70 for wheat. I know a bushel does

not mean a lot to many people in our very urban society today, but a bushel of wheat weighs 56 pounds. So farmers are getting 5 cents a pound—actually something less than 5 cents a pound—for the product they produce. There is no way you can make it when you are getting 5 cents a pound for a product that costs at least 10 cents a pound to produce. But that is what is happening to farmers.

Let me go to the next chart that shows what is happening to wheat prices received by farmers in relationship to cost. This green line shows the cost of production in 1997. You can see it is just about \$5 a bushel. That is the cost. That is the best estimate of what it costs across the country to produce a bushel of wheat, just above \$5. You can see the last time farmers were getting above \$5 was back in 1996. Since that time, in 1997, it was far below the cost of production, and it has done nothing but get worse through 1998 and on into 1999. We are far below the cost of production. As I indicated, we are running, down here at \$2.60 a bushel. The cost of production is over \$5. It is no wonder farmers are saying we desperately need a Federal response.

Why is it a Federal responsibility? For the entire history of the United States, we have recognized the special role of agriculture. We have recognized it is subject to dramatic swings in both production and prices, because, first of all, it is a product that depends on the weather, and the weather is very unpredictable, as we have seen across the country for year after year after year. On top of that, we are subjected to dramatic price swings. In the last several years, we have been influenced by the collapse in Asia; we lost one of our biggest customers. We have also seen a financial collapse in Russia. Of course, Russia was a key customer of the United States. Those two things have had a dramatic and adverse impact on price. You can see it here—prices down, down, down—and the cost of production staying up. That has put our farmers at an extreme disadvantage.

While farmers are paying more but receiving less, it is not surprising, then, they find themselves in a cost/price squeeze. This green line shows the prices farmers paid for various inputs. As you can see, the prices farmers had been paying had been going up rather steadily. They have actually leveled off in the last 3 years. But look at what the prices that farmers have been receiving look like. That is this red line. We can see it peaked right at the time we passed the 1996 farm bill.

The 1996 farm bill changed everything. It said, instead of adjusting what Government provides by way of assistance when prices fall, we will no longer do that. The new farm bill said we are going to have fixed payments that are sharply reduced year after year no matter what happens to prices.

Here is the pattern we see: the prices farmers pay for goods they use to produce products going up; the prices

they receive going down dramatically. The result is this enormous gap between what they are able to buy for, what they have to pay to receive goods, and what they are able to get when they sell their goods. This dramatic gap, this chasm now, between the prices farmers pay for what they have to buy and what they get for what they sell has opened up into such a large difference that literally tens of thousands of farm families are threatened.

It would be one thing if the United States was alone in this world, if we did not have competitors to worry about, but we do have competitors. The Europeans are our chief competitors, and it is very interesting to see what they are doing.

At the very time when we have dramatically cut support for farmers, cut support at the very time they are in the greatest need, because the gap between what they pay for and what they get has opened up in such a very serious way, we have cut dramatically the level of support we provide our farmers. In the last farm bill, we cut in half the support we provide our farmers. If we look at what our competitors, the Europeans, are doing, we see quite a different pattern.

Our European competitors are spending far more than we are to support their farmers. If we go back to 1996, we can see the red bar is what Europe is spending in direct support; the yellow bar is what we are spending. We can see the pattern all through 1997, 1998, 1999, the year 2000—and these are projections for 2001 and 2002—that our competitors are providing much more support to their producers than we are providing ours.

I conclude by saying we have a crisis in rural America. It requires a Federal response. I hope very much before this year has concluded that we have said farming is important in this country, that we understand it is in crisis, and that we are prepared to respond.

I thank the Chair, and I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Mr. ROBERTS). The time between 12 noon and 12:30 p.m. shall be under the control of the distinguished Senator from Utah, Mr. BENNETT. The Senator is recognized.

SUSPEND BOMBING IN KOSOVO

Mr. BENNETT. Mr. President, I rise to call for a suspension of the bombing in Kosovo, not because of anything Milosevic has done, such as the release of three American servicemen; not because of differing opinions within NATO, such as those currently being expressed by the Italians and the Germans; not because of the inadvertent damage done to accidental targets, such as the Chinese Embassy; and not because of any personal animus or distrust of any individuals in this administration. No; I oppose continuation of the bombing in Kosovo because it has not worked. It is not working and

shows no signs of working in the future.

The bombing has been of no help to the Kosovars, hundreds of thousands of whom have lost their homes, their neighbors, their children and perhaps even their lives while the bombing has gone on. It has been of no help to the Albanians or the Macedonians who have seen hundreds of thousands of refugees flood cross the borders into their ill-equipped countries. It has been of no help to NATO, an alliance that has seen its military stocks drawn down to dangerously low levels with no effect on the atrocities going on in the killing fields. And the bombing has been of no help to our relationships with nations outside of NATO, particularly Russia and China, who have vigorously opposed our decision to proceed.

Again, in short, the bombing has not worked, even though we have persisted for a longer time than we bombed in Desert Storm. My call for suspending the bombing comes from the modern wisdom that says: If at first you don't succeed, try something else.

There are those, including my colleagues on the Senate floor, commentators and columnists for whom I have the utmost respect, who say we cannot even consider suspension of the bombing. We are at war, they say; we must press on to victory. Anything else would be dishonorable, and on a practical geopolitical level, would send the wrong signal to others who might choose to confront us in the future.

Such language is often called Churchillian, echoing the electrifying rhetoric of the indomitable prime minister speaking in the darkest days of World War II.

No one has a higher regard for the magnificent rhetoric and the deeds of Winston Churchill than I, but, to me, the mantra, "Because we're in, we have to win," is more suitable for a bumper sticker than it is for Winston Churchill.

Let me take you to a Churchillian episode that I think applies here, and it comes not from the darkest days of World War II but World War I.

Those who remember their history will remember that Winston Churchill fell into great disregard during World War I as a result of his sponsorship of the Dardanelles operation. He was removed from any position of responsibility. But because he was still an officer in the British Army, he agreed, indeed sought for, the opportunity to go to the front in France. And so, as Major Churchill, he went to the front, and unlike most British officers of the time, he really went to the front. He went all the way to the front lines and saw for himself over a period of time the horrors and the futility of trench warfare. He saw it firsthand, and he came away convinced that it was not working.

When he returned to England, he became Minister of Munitions and put his full support and strength behind searching for an alternative. If you

will, he put aside the patriotic rhetoric of his time and sought for a policy that would work. William Manchester, in his biography of Churchill called the "Last Line," refers to Churchill as the father of the tank. It was Winston Churchill who caught the vision of the fact that you could do something different and created the modern tank, or created the prototype of what became the modern tank, and revolutionized warfare, eliminating the failures of trench warfare.

If at first you don't succeed, try something else. The legacy of Winston Churchill was that he was willing to try something else when he saw the reality of the failure on the ground. I think, frankly, that is the Churchillian example we should seek to follow now: Suspend the bombing and try something else.

There are many suggestions on the table. The one, of course, we hear the most these days is send in the ground troops. To those who urge this, I ask, as I asked when the bombing was proposed in the first place: Will it work? Will it accomplish our goals? And with that question, we get the next obvious question: What are our goals?

When Secretary Madeleine Albright made the case for the bombing to the Senators in the Capitol, she told us if we did not bomb, the following would happen: First, there would be brutal atrocities and ethnic cleansing throughout all of Kosovo with tens of thousands of people being slaughtered and hundreds of thousands driven from their homes.

Second, she said there will be a flood of refugees across the borders into neighboring countries, swamping their already fragile economies.

Third, she said there will be splits within NATO. This alliance will be torn apart by disagreements.

And finally, she said Milosevic will strengthen his hand on his local political situation.

That was 8 weeks ago. Now, 8 weeks later, the bombing has failed to prevent any of those results. All four of them have taken place—the ethnic cleansing and the brutality and the atrocities have gone on; the refugees have appeared across the borders; NATO is split with arguments going on among its top leaders; and Milosevic has been strengthened as the leader, martyr, hero, if you will, of the Yugoslavs. We have not achieved a single goal that the bombing set out to accomplish. I come back to the same question: What are our new goals?

As best I can understand them, from the various statements that have been made, one list of the new goals would be as follows: No. 1, removal of all Serbian influence in Kosovo; No. 2, a return of the Kosovars physically to their land; No. 3, a rebuilding of their homes and villages; and No. 4, an international police force in there for an indefinitely long period of time to guarantee that their homes will always be protected.