

safety net for American farmers, we instead find ourselves fighting to address a bill the farming community nearly overwhelmingly desires.

As of late, farmers in the Pacific Northwest have found themselves in this same game far too often. At the same time the Administration sends officials out to Washington state claiming to provide solutions to these serious issues, regulators under the Clinton-Gore watch are working to eliminate the water, transportation infrastructure, chemicals, and in general the tools necessary for farmers to continue their livelihood.

Last week, the Washington Association of Wheat Growers made the 3,000 mile trip to Washington, DC to encourage me to support the crop insurance reform we were supposed to address today. At a time when check books barely balance, fuel prices are outrageously high, while commodity prices are low, these folks asked for our help. Unfortunately today, these proud and previously profitable growers must wait. They must wait for several folks on the other side of the aisle to make a political monster of crop insurance before they can receive this desired reform.

Mr. President, when the Risk Management for the 21st Century Act finally comes before us here in the Senate, I will support the efforts of Senators ROBERTS and KERREY, of the Senate Agriculture Committee, and of those voices in rural America who demand crop insurance reform.

RISK MANAGEMENT FOR THE 21ST CENTURY ACT

Mr. LUGAR. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the Senate now proceed to Calendar No. 464, S. 2251, the crop insurance bill, and that it be considered under the following agreement: First, an amendment to be offered by the managers, limited to 10 minutes and not subject to second-degree amendments, and no budget points of order be in order prior to the disposition of the managers' amendment, and for the purposes of complying with section 204 of H. Con. Res. 68, the bill, as amended by the managers' amendment, be considered as the committee reported bill.

Parenthetically, the amendment offered by the distinguished Senators from New York and New Jersey would be a part of that managers' amendment.

Mr. SCHUMER. Mr. President, will the Senator yield?

Mr. LUGAR. Yes.

Mr. SCHUMER. I first thank the Senator on behalf of myself and the Senators from New Jersey, Rhode Island, all of us, as well as the other members of the committee. This is an extremely important amendment to all of us. I ask the Senator, will the Senate in the conference do everything it can to keep the language and the amount of money we have agreed to?

Mr. LUGAR. I am sure the Senate will argue the merits of the Senators' suggestions as well as the rest of the managers' amendment, and whatever else transpires, with vigor.

Mr. SCHUMER. I thank the Senator, again, for understanding our particular problems with agriculture in the Northeast. As the Senator may remember, last fall when disaster struck, we were unable to protect our farmers. Being allowed to be included in the crop insurance program for specialty crops such as fruits and vegetables is extremely important. We are very appreciative of those efforts that were made.

I yield to the Senator from New Jersey.

Mr. TORRICELLI. Mr. President, I thank the chairman. I am certain he understands many of us believe that the long, slow erosion of the agricultural community in the Northeast must come to an end. Those who are engaged in specialty crops and other products in New York, New Jersey, Rhode Island, Connecticut, Massachusetts, and other States have suffered very badly in recent years.

I think the agreement we have come to is of some real note. That is, this isn't simply an agricultural crop insurance program; it is now a national program. For the first time in my experience, we have reached across the Nation's borders, coast to coast, and designed a program that can work for every State. This is a very important moment for the State of New Jersey and preserving those farms that remain. I am grateful and very much appreciate his commitment to fight vigorously in conference so that the Senate provisions prevail. I thank the Senator.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Rhode Island is recognized.

Mr. REED. Mr. President, I commend the Senator from New York and the Senator from New Jersey for their great efforts. I thank the chairman. As my colleague so well expressed, there is a tendency to not realize or understand that the Northeast part of the United States has a significant farming industry. We learned that the hard way, in some respects, last fall when we discovered our farmers were in desperate straits because of drought, loss of crops, and environmental conditions that affected them. Today, we are recognizing their standing along with farmers throughout this country, and not only their need but their eligibility now for Federal assistance in times of need. I thank the chairman for his efforts, and I thank my colleagues for working so hard on this.

I yield the floor.

Mr. LUGAR. I thank the Senators from New York, New Jersey, and Rhode Island for their leadership.

Mr. President, can we lock in that part of it?

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Has the Senator completed his unanimous consent request?

Mr. LUGAR. No. This is a portion of it. The request is the managers' amendment be offered.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Is there objection?

Without objection, it is so ordered.

Mr. LUGAR. Mr. President, let me proceed.

I further ask unanimous consent that a relevant amendment by the distinguished Senator from Wisconsin, Mr. KOHL, with a time limit of 30 minutes be entertained, and that a statement by Senator KENNEDY of Massachusetts be permitted for not to exceed 30 minutes; that a sense-of-the-Senate amendment be offered by the distinguished Senator from Minnesota, Mr. WELLSTONE, and that one relevant amendment be offered by Senator WELLSTONE.

May I inquire of the Senator if he would permit us to have a 30-minute time limit for each of these two amendments?

Mr. WELLSTONE. First of all, on the time, I have to decide on the second amendment. On the first amendment, it is not my wish to go on and on, but I would not agree to 30 minutes. There were 2,500 to 3,000 farmers, and 500 came from Minnesota. I would like to commend them for the Rally for Rural America, and call on Congress to take some action to deal with the crisis in our rural communities. I don't think I can give justice to what they did in 30 minutes. Other Senators would like to speak as well. I would not agree to only 30 minutes.

The second point I wish to make is that these are agriculture-related amendments. I wish to make sure that is acceptable to my colleague.

Mr. LUGAR. The request that we made to the Chair is that they be relevant to the legislation before us.

Mr. WELLSTONE. I will object to the whole agreement because these amendments are agriculture-related. I don't think they would necessarily be ruled relevant to crop insurance. I can do the sense-of-the-Senate amendment within an hour, I think, basically recognizing and congratulating people for coming and talking about our commitment to take some action. I might not even do a second amendment. Certainly, they are agriculture-related. There isn't anybody in the world who would say that the sense-of-the-Senate is not agriculture-related, dealing with the price crisis. But I thought that would be acceptable. If it technically has to be relevant to crop insurance, that would be out of order. If it is out of order, I will not agree.

Mr. LUGAR. I have to respond to the Senator, on behalf of our leader, Senator LOTT, that it needs to be relevant to the legislation. The Chair might be asked to rule on that or might not be asked to rule on that. I understand the Senator, and I am attempting to be accommodative. The importance of what he has to say is obvious. But if the Senator could achieve both of his objectives within an hour of time, perhaps we could proceed on that basis.

Mr. WELLSTONE. I would be pleased to achieve the objective within an hour of time. I can do that. I am not trying to hold up the bill. I think I can do that. I am not going to agree if I am going to be ruled out of order. Maybe we can proceed on that basis.

Mr. LUGAR. I pledge to the Senator not to raise a point of order. To reiterate, I ask unanimous consent that we have a Kohl amendment with a limit of 30 minutes; a Kennedy statement with a limit of 30 minutes; and the Senator from Minnesota, with a total of 1 hour for either a statement or an amendment, or a motion, as the case may be.

Mr. WELLSTONE. This would be for a sense-of-the-Senate amendment. If it could be in the agreement that there could be 1 hour and there would not be objection to it—

Mr. LUGAR. All right. Three elements: the sense of the Senate for 1 hour, the Kohl amendment for 30 minutes, and the Kennedy statement for 30 minutes.

Mr. President, these would be the only permissible amendments.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Is there objection?

Without objection, it is so ordered.

Mr. LUGAR. Mr. President, further, I ask unanimous consent that these amendments have equal division of time and be considered in the usual form, and that no motions to commit or recommit the bill be in order, and following disposition of the above amendments, or the yielding back of time, the bill be advanced to third reading.

I further ask consent that following third reading of the bill, the Senate proceed to the House companion bill, H.R. 2559, and all after the enacting clause be stricken, the text of S. 2551, as amended, if amended, be inserted, the bill be advanced to third reading, and passage occur, all without any intervening action or debate.

Mr. DASCHLE. Mr. President, reserving the right to object, and I shall not, let me thank all Senators for their cooperation and for their willingness to work with the leadership to accommodate the many concerns that have existed on both sides.

Let me say briefly, however, for the record, this is yet another example of the minority again cooperating with the majority and denying ourselves the right to offer nonrelevant amendments first, that is nonagricultural amendments, or any other amendments that are nonrelevant, and limiting ourselves to relevant amendments to this particular bill. We are doing it as a result of the urgency that I think everyone understands about this matter, and we are doing it in an effort to try to accelerate consideration of this bill and also ultimately come to a conclusion. It is an abrogation of the rights of all Senators to again be asked that they preclude the consideration of any nonrelevant amendments.

We will do it again in this case. But I think that, at some point, the Senate

has to be the Senate, where Senators have the right to offer amendments regardless of subject matter. Again, in this case, I appreciate the cooperation of everybody. I hope we don't continue in the Senate what I think is a dangerous pattern—that we limit Senators in such a narrow way, as we are doing in this case. We are doing it for good reason, but I hope we can find ways in which to allow Senators to express themselves and be full participants in debate on other matters and other vehicles.

I certainly don't object. I commend the chairman for getting this agreement.

Mr. LUGAR. Mr. President, before I ask for the ruling, let me ask the leave of my colleagues and that Senator JEFFORDS be recognized for 30 minutes on an amendment on our side. I have just been advised that the Senator may have an amendment.

Mr. DASCHLE. Mr. President, I ask if the amendment is relevant.

Mr. LUGAR. The amendment would be relevant.

Mr. DASCHLE. I have no objection.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Is there objection to the unanimous consent request?

Without objection, it is so ordered.

Mr. LUGAR. Mr. President, finally I ask unanimous consent that following passage of the bill, the Senate insist on its amendments and request a conference with the House.

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

Mr. LUGAR. Mr. President, I am advised by the distinguished minority leader that, of course, I will be in a position to name conferees on our side, and he also will be in a position to do so.

My hope would be, as I am certain it is his, that we could proceed to conference with the House as rapidly as possible.

Mr. President, I thank the Chair.

I thank the distinguished minority leader and all Senators who have helped us in this.

We are now prepared to offer the managers' amendment;

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will report the bill.

The assistant legislative clerk read as follows:

A bill (S. 2251) to amend the Federal Crop Insurance Act to improve crop insurance coverage, to provide agricultural producers with choices to manage risk, and for other purposes.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Indiana.

AMENDMENT NO. 2887

Mr. LUGAR. Mr. President, I send the managers' amendment to the desk.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will report.

The assistant legislative clerk read as follows:

The Senator from Indiana [Mr. LUGAR] for himself, Mr. HARKIN, Mr. ROBERTS, and Mr. KERREY, proposes an amendment numbered 2887.

Mr. LUGAR. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that reading of the amendment be dispensed with.

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

(The text of the amendment is printed in today's RECORD under "Amendments Submitted.")

Mr. LUGAR. Mr. President, I know of no debate on the managers' amendment. I ask the Chair to pose the question.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Time is yielded.

The question is on agreeing to the amendment.

The amendment (No. 2887) was agreed to.

Mr. LUGAR. I thank the Chair.

The bill is now open for the amendments that have been designated in the unanimous consent agreement.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from North Dakota.

Mr. CONRAD. Mr. President, I rise to strongly endorse the crop insurance bill that is before us. It is a product of a bipartisan effort.

I especially want to congratulate my colleague, Senator KERREY of Nebraska, who has labored hard and long in order to produce this result. Senator ROBERTS of Kansas is a cosponsor. We are all indebted to them for their leadership on this issue because this bill brings a new measure of stability to rural America. From the Northeast, to the great heartland, to the South, this bill is going to make a difference in the lives of farmers who we know are too hard pressed.

For those who are listening, crop prices are the lowest they have been in 50 years. We have just had a rally on the Mall that went on for 2 days with thousands of participants from all over America with farmers telling us they simply have to have help or they are going to go under in unprecedented numbers. That is the message that has been delivered.

Our first response is the crop insurance reform bill—to say we are ready to help and this Congress is prepared to respond.

I also want to thank my colleague, Senator GRASSLEY, a member of the Budget Committee and the Agriculture Committee, who joined me on the Budget Committee to reserve the funds so that this bill could go forward. We achieved \$6 billion in funding last year for crop insurance reform. That is what this bill provides. This bill reforms crop insurance by making coverage more affordable, by fixing an unintended consequence of our effort to reform crop insurance in 1994 that unfairly lowered coverage for producers facing unexpected circumstances with repeated natural disasters.

It requires USDA to implement new quality adjustment procedures. It eases qualification for noninsured crop disaster assistance. It provides for the development of improved specialty crop policies and brings livestock into the crop insurance system.

This bill also provides a pilot program to test an alternative risk management approach.

With respect to the question of multiple years of disaster, let me explain, in brief, the problem.

In areas of the country that have experienced multiple years of disasters, under the current crop insurance law, the formula under which they recover damages is dramatically altered by repeated years of disaster. This legislation offered by our colleagues, Senator KERREY, Senator ROBERTS, and a number of other of us on a bipartisan basis, addresses that problem. I am grateful for it.

My State has been affected by multiple years of disaster. I pray that our time of suffering is over. But other States may have a similar experience. They shouldn't have to suffer unduly. Crop insurance should work for them. That reform is included in this bill. We can be proud of it.

I want to respond, if I can, to an editorial that was in the Washington Post this morning. That editorial, which makes the assertion that crop insurance promotes production on marginal acres, or so-called "environmentally sensitive lands," requires a response.

I believe the facts do not support that claim. I believe the Washington Post in their editorial is precisely wrong about the effect of crop insurance. The fact is meaningful crop insurance did not exist until 1994. Has crop acreage increased in that period? Let us review the record because I think the facts speak in direct contradiction to the fundamental assertion in the Washington Post editorial.

This chart shows the number of acres being planted in this country from 1996 to 1999. One can see the blue bar. Those are the acres farmed. You can see the acreage hasn't expanded. The acreage has been reduced under an expanding crop insurance program.

The fundamental assertion by the editorial writers in the Washington Post is wrong. They may assert, well, it is not fair to look at just acres planted and acres taken out of production. You have to look at insured acres.

Let's do that. This chart, again, is from 1996 through 1999. Again, the acres that are insured are the blue bars. You can see that we are down from 1996. We have not had an increase. The acres insured are down.

One has to ask this question: If farmers are taking acreage out of production, are they taking out their most productive acres? Is that what they would do? I don't think so. I think just the opposite would occur.

As farmers take acres out of production, they would take out their most marginal acres. They would take out those acres that are most environmentally sensitive. That is the record.

I wish our friends who write editorials down at the Washington Post knew a little more about agriculture because I frequently find them in error, but they are never in doubt.

I say to my friends that they need to get out in the heartland of America. They need to get out of Washington. They need to get outside the beltway to find out what is really going on in agricultural America because over and over, as I read their editorials, they have almost no relationship to the reality of what the people I represent are experiencing.

We had a breakthrough today in terms of an agreement with our colleagues from the Northeast. The fact is they had an unfair result in the disaster bill of last year. I acknowledge that. I regret that occurred. I can say my own State has been dealt with generously in disaster programs. We had a horrible disaster in 1997. We had the worst winter storm in 50 years, the most massive flood in 500 years, and the largest mass evacuation of American cities since the civil war. This Congress responded generously to the needs of the people I represent. I will be forever in the debt of my colleagues.

When similar disasters hit the Northeast last year, they were not dealt with as generously. I think we must all acknowledge that. Hopefully, this is a step toward recognizing the very real economic hurt that occurred there.

I conclude by thanking the chairman and the ranking member of our committee. Especially, I direct my comments to the chairman. This is not a bill he favored. He had an alternative approach. But he graciously allowed Members to debate and discuss in the committee. He was eminently fair in the consideration of this bill in the committee. When his side did not prevail, he was a gentleman, and he has come out on the floor of this Senate to help pass the final product of a democratic process.

I thank the chairman very much for his fairness and also his patience. His patience is quite remarkable as we fight and joust about issues that matter an awful lot to Senators as individuals representing different parts of the country, many from States in very deep financial trouble.

Let me finish by again thanking my colleagues, Senator ROBERTS of Kansas and Senator KERREY of Nebraska, for truly outstanding leadership in bringing this reform bill to the floor. I urge my colleagues to support it. I think it is something of which they can be proud.

I thank the Chair.

Mr. ROBERTS. Mr. President, first I thank my good friend and colleague for his very kind comments, and I associate myself with his remarks, most especially with regard to the editorial that appeared in the Washington Post. I think he set the record straight.

I indicated in my earlier remarks there were some provisions of this bill I would like to outline, and I would like to do so at present as a coauthor of the legislation. I said at that particular time we spent a great deal of time—by "we," I mean Senator KERREY, I, and our staff—sitting down

with producers and our farmers and ranchers and virtually every interest group that has a remote interest in this bill.

They told us to do the following things:

One, to make a higher level of coverage more affordable;

Two, to provide an equal subsidy for both yield and revenue insurance products;

Three, to develop steps to address the problems associated with a lack of production history for beginning farmers and concerns that an adequate policy does not exist to address the multiple years of disasters.

They also told us to try to create new and expanded crop insurance policies for specialty crops and improvements in the Noninsured Assistance Program which covers many of the specialty crops.

They warned of some increased emphasis in specialty crop policy research and development;

Major changes in the Federal Crop Insurance Corporation board of directors, certainly with more farmer input;

To streamline and to remove the roadblocks and the product approval process;

And to take significant steps to address fraud and abuse in the program.

As I indicated earlier when I went through this list, I think we have done that. I believe, and it is my hope, that the bill now before the Senate does accomplish those goals.

Let me go over specifically what is included in this bill. We made higher levels of coverage more affordable so we will, hopefully, avoid calls for disaster assistance in the future. In my earlier remarks, I tried to emphasize to Senators that once we have national comprehensive risk management available to producers, hopefully we will not get into the expenditures we have had in the past with annual disaster bills.

We made the adjustments to the APH to address multiple years of disaster.

We made significant changes to the Noninsured Assistance Program, including the elimination of the area trigger. Now that is a rather complex description of a problem that is of tremendous concern to the specialty crop producer. That was the No. 1 complaint we heard from producers who use this program.

We provided \$150 million in pilot program funding to create pilots to develop new policies, especially for specialty crops.

We provided \$20 million per year in new funding to provide research grants to develop new risk management strategies for specialty crops.

We changed the membership at the corporation's board of directors to include, as I mentioned before: Four farmers from geographic regions to be selected by the Secretary of Agriculture, one member active in the crop insurance industry, one member with reinsurance expertise, and then the Under Secretary for Farm and Foreign

Agricultural Services, the Under Secretary for Rural Development, and the chief economist at the Department of Agriculture.

We have streamlined the product approval process and set deadlines by which decisions must be made on new policies that are submitted for approval. We allow companies to charge minimal fees to other companies selling their products in order to allow the recovery of research and development costs. This should also encourage expanded policy development which is a very important goal of the bill.

I also thank my colleagues from the Northeast in reaching an accommodation to address their concerns. We have had a considerable discussion here. They have released their hold on the bill. However, I will have printed in the RECORD the provisions for specialty crops with which we worked so long and hard.

I pay special credit to Mr. SANTORUM, the distinguished Senator from Pennsylvania. Senator SANTORUM obviously came to us after the conference bill was passed during the last session of Congress and said: Look, this is not adequate.

He didn't say that; he said it in a little stronger language. He said: If we are truly going to have a national program, we have to address the concerns of the Northeast.

We heard Senator SANTORUM. We paid a great deal of attention to specialty crop producers, not only in Pennsylvania but all throughout the Northeast. We put together, as I certainly tried to indicate in my previous remarks, a plan where we really reached out. I thank Senator SANTORUM for all of his advice, his counsel, his expertise, and that of his staff. This particular provision for specialty crops would not have happened had we not had his input, advice, and counsel.

I ask unanimous consent to have printed in the RECORD these provisions, with the understanding that Senator SANTORUM should receive full credit.

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

PROVISIONS FOR SPECIALTY CROPS

NONINSURED ASSISTANCE PROGRAM (NAP)

Removes the NAP area trigger, the number one complaint of specialty crop producers.

Allows different varieties of the same crop to be combined as one.

Reduces the 35 percent prevented planting requirement to 15 percent.

Establishes a mechanism by which producers growing a new crop can get coverage.

ADDITIONAL ITEMS OF INTEREST

Allows pilots to be conducted on state, regional, and national basis.

Allows nursery and greenhouse crops to be eligible for risk management activities pilot.

Allows grants to be made on a competitive basis for the research and development of specialty crops.

Provides \$20 million per year for partnerships to be developed with appropriate public and private entities to develop risk management and marketing options for specialty crops.

Sales closing date for obtaining coverage for a specialty crop cannot expire before the end of the 120 day period beginning on the date of the final release of materials from RMA.

Corporation and specialty crops coordinator are to conduct studies regarding the feasibility of developing new policies for specialty crops.

Section requiring study to determine steps that can be taken to provide adequate coverage and improve participation in states with participation percentages well below the national average.

Drastically improve the product approval process so that new policy proposals do not languish for months at RMA waiting for approval.

Mr. ROBERTS. Mr. President, this legislation also establishes monetary penalties. If we are worried about fraud and abuse, we have penalties up to \$10,000 and potential disbarment from the program and all USDA programs for any producer, any agent, any loss adjuster, or approved insurance provider who is found to have defrauded the program.

These provisions in terms of fraud and abuse are strong; they are clear. Those who attempt to defraud the program and taxpayers will be punished.

Every year, our producers put the seed in the ground and they believe if the good Lord is willing and the creeks don't rise or we don't have a drought, they will produce a crop. When the events do occur, they must have the tools to manage these risks.

I ask unanimous consent to have printed in the RECORD a letter signed by 23 different farm and commodity organizations, agricultural lending organizations, and organizations associated with the insurance industry who support the bill.

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

MARCH 20, 2000.

Hon. PAT ROBERTS,
U.S. Senate,
Washington, DC.

DEAR SENATOR ROBERTS: As organizations representing farm, lending, and insurance industries, we are writing to strongly urge that the Senate pass the recently reported Senate Agriculture Committee crop insurance risk management bill. The reported bill has strong bipartisan support and includes the risk management ideas of many senators representing farmers with differing risk management needs.

Through hard work, farm-state representatives on the House and Senate Budget Committees persuaded Congress to include \$6 billion in funding for risk management in the current Congressional budget resolution. The House of Representatives passed H.R. 2559 on September 29, 1999 by voice vote. The Senate needs to pass a crop insurance risk management bill before the next budget resolution is written or those funds will be unused.

For several years the agriculture community has been promised and desperately needs an improved crop insurance risk management program. We endorse prompt consideration and passage of the crop insurance bill and oppose efforts to make major changes or slow its consideration.

Sincerely,

American Association of Crop Insurers
American Bankers Association

American Farm Bureau Federation
American Feed Industry Association
American Nursery and Landscape Association
American Soybean Association
Crop Insurance Research Bureau
Farm Credit Council
Independent Community Bankers Association
Independent Insurance Agents of America
National Association of Crop Insurance Agents
National Association of Wheat Growers
National Barley Growers Association
National Corn Growers Association
National Farmers Union
National Grain Sorghum Producers
National Pork Producers Council
National Sunflower Association
National Association of Professional Insurance Agents
Rural Community Insurance Services
Society of American Florists
U.S. Canola Association.

Mr. ROBERTS. Our lending organizations and all of the groups and commodity organizations have spoken loudly. They have all continually expressed the need to improve the risk management tools available to our producers. I believe this legislation does accomplish this goal. I am proud of this bill. It is a strong bill. It is a fair bill. It improves the program for both the taxpayers and our farmers and ranchers. It shows us that despite all of the differences we sometimes have on both sides of the aisle, as some of my colleagues have already said, we can listen to our constituents; we can take their ideas; we can work in a bipartisan manner to improve the programs available to America's farmers and ranchers.

After hundreds of hours of discussion and deliberations, I believe we have achieved the strongest bill possible. I urge my colleagues to support this legislation in behalf of their constituents.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Minnesota.

AMENDMENT NO. 2888

(Purpose: To express the sense of Congress regarding the Rally for Rural America and the rural crisis)

Mr. WELLSTONE. Mr. President, I send an amendment to the desk and ask for its immediate consideration.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will report.

The bill clerk read as follows:

The Senator from Minnesota [Mr. WELLSTONE] proposes an amendment numbered 2888.

Mr. WELLSTONE. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that reading of the amendment be dispensed with.

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

The amendment is as follows:

On page 92, strike lines 7 through 13 and insert the following:

TITLE IV—MISCELLANEOUS PROVISIONS
SEC. 401. SENSE OF CONGRESS ON RALLY FOR RURAL AMERICA AND RURAL CRISIS.

(a) FINDINGS.—Congress finds that—

(1) on March 20-21, 2000, thousands of rural citizens, working families, and those representing the environmental and religious

communities traveled to Washington, D.C., to participate in the Rally for Rural America;

(2) a broad coalition of over 30 farm, environmental, and labor organizations that are concerned that rural America has been left behind during this time of prosperity participated in organizing the Rally for Rural America;

(3) although the majority of America has reaped the benefits of the strong economy, rural Americans are facing their toughest times in recent memory;

(4) the record low prices on farms and ranches of the United States have rippled throughout rural America causing rural communities to face numerous challenges, including—

(A) a depressed farm economy;

(B) an escalation of mergers and acquisitions;

(C) a loss of businesses and jobs on rural main street;

(D) erosion of health care and education;

(E) a decline in infrastructure;

(F) a reduction of capital investments; and

(G) a loss of independent family farmers;

(5) the Rally for Rural America urged Congress to reform the Federal Agriculture Improvement and Reform Act of 1996 (Public Law 104-127) to formulate rural policies in a manner that will alleviate the agricultural price crisis, ensure fair and open markets, and encourage fair trade;

(6) thousands of rural citizens have advocated farm policies that include—

(A) a strong safety net for all agricultural producers;

(B) competitive markets;

(C) an investment in rural education and health care;

(D) protection of natural resources for the next generation;

(E) a safe and secure food supply;

(F) revitalization of our farm families and rural communities; and

(G) fair and equitable implementation of government programs;

(7) because agricultural commodity prices are so far below the costs of production, eventually family farmers will no longer be able to pay their bills or provide for their families;

(8) anti-competitive practices and concentration are a cause of concern for American agriculture;

(9) rural America needs a fair and well reasoned farm policy, not unpredictable and inequitable disaster payments;

(10) disaster payments do not provide for real, meaningful change; and

(11) the economic conditions and pressures in rural America require real change.

(b) SENSE OF CONGRESS.—It is the sense of Congress that—

(1) the participants in the Rally for Rural America are commended and their pleas have been heard; and

(2) Congress should respond with a clear and strong message to the participants and rural families that Congress is committed to giving the crisis in agriculture, and all of rural America, its full attention by reforming rural policies in a manner that will—

(A) alleviate the agricultural price crisis;

(B) ensure competitive markets;

(C) invest in rural education and health care;

(D) protect our natural resources for future generations; and

(E) ensure a safe and secure food supply for all.

TITLE V—EFFECTIVE DATES; TERMINATION OF AUTHORITY

SEC. 501. EFFECTIVE DATES.

(a) IN GENERAL.—Except as provided in subsections (b) and (c)(2) and section 502(a),

this Act and the amendments made by this Act take effect on the date of enactment of this Act.

On page 93, line 10, strike “SEC. 402.” and insert “SEC. 502.”.

Mr. WELLSTONE. Mr. President, I thank my distinguished colleagues, the Senator from Kansas and the Senator from Nebraska, and I also thank the Senator from Indiana, for this legislation. I think this is a terribly important piece of legislation. I think this is good legislation. So I say to my colleague from Kansas, I thank him for his excellent piece of legislation.

Both Senator KERREY and I thank the chairman for having this legislation on the floor. It is substantive and important, and I thank him for his work.

Mr. ROBERTS. If the Senator will yield, I thank the distinguished Senator from Minnesota. I know we are going through a very difficult time in farm country. This is something we have tried to do for almost 20 years, and I think it is the strongest bill possible, and I thank him very much for his comments.

Mr. WELLSTONE. I thank the Senator for his work.

Mr. President, I want to go through this amendment. This is a sense-of-the-Congress resolution on the Rally for Rural America, the rally about the rural crisis that just took place in Washington, DC. Let me simply talk about what happened.

Starting Sunday night, we started out with a wonderful prayer service, an ecumenical service. It was nourishing. The church was packed here in the city just a few blocks away from the Senate. There were some beautiful words that were uttered, but in particular I remember one of the ministers. She said, “We have taken the culture out of agriculture.” I thought a lot about that. I think that is the reason why so many people came to the Nation’s Capital, because for many of our family farmers this could very well be their last bus ride here.

We had from around the country, I don’t want to exaggerate because that does not do justice to people, but I guess somewhere around 2,500, 3,000 people, many of them family farmers. From the State of Minnesota, we had close to 500 people here, most of them family farmers. I point out to my colleagues, this was an unusual gathering. This was a historic gathering. This is probably the most family farmers who have come to the Nation’s Capital, I would say, in the last 20 or 25 years, at least from the State of Minnesota.

I want my colleagues to also know that most of these farmers came by bus. They did not come by jet. They didn’t have the money to come by jet. They came by bus. Many of them are elderly. A good number of them came with their grandchildren. They came to Washington, DC, for two reasons.

First of all, they came to the Nation’s Capital to try to have a conversation with America, to make sure

people in the country know what is happening. I think one of the challenges for us is that, with all the news about the booming stock market and the booming economy, the vast majority of people in the country have not a clue what is happening to family farmers. I do not think they have a clue. This is a good country and we have a lot of good people in our country. We have good people in the Senate and the House. I hope, and I think the farmers really hope, this gathering in the Nation’s Capital will bring out the goodness in us.

Right now what we have, and I am not even going to talk about all the statistics, record low income. We have record low prices. We have, as I said yesterday, many broken dreams and broken lives and broken families. I am talking about people who were good managers of the land. I am talking about people who work 19 hours a day. But the fact is—and I say this to my colleagues—time is not on the side of many family farmers in my State and many other States. They are simply going to go under. We are going to lose many of our producers. We could lose as many as another 2,000 family farmers in Minnesota this year.

People came to the Nation’s Capital to say: We call upon you to respond to the needs, circumstances and concerns of our lives. What this sense of the Congress says is that the participants in the Rally for Rural America are commended and that their pleas have been heard.

I think people should be commended for coming from such a long distance away and sacrificing so much to be here. They would not have come here, except they are hoping we can make some changes that will help them and their families, not only family farmers but our rural communities.

The Congress should respond with a clear and strong message to the participants, rural families, that Congress is committed to giving the crisis in agriculture and all America its full attention by reforming rural policies in a manner that will: No. 1, alleviate the agricultural price crisis; No. 2, ensure competitive markets; No. 3, invest in rural education and health care; No. 4, protect our Nation’s resources for future generations; and, No. 5, ensure a safe and secure food supply.

I say to my colleagues, I worded this in such a way that leaves plenty of room for different interpretations as to how to accomplish these goals. We do not all agree. I understand that.

The Senator from Indiana, the chairman of the committee, is someone—I have said it to my own family members, I have said it to people in Minnesota—for whom I have the most respect. It is the truth. I say it; I mean it. I would not say it to my own children if I did not mean it. We do not agree on the Freedom to Farm bill, which I call the Freedom to Fail bill. But this sense-of-the-Congress resolution is broad in its interpretation. It is

just an effort on my part, as a Senator from Minnesota, to say to all the people who came: I acknowledge the fact that you came. It is not as if you come here and we do not go to work to try to do something. This bill is an effort to try to respond.

But it is but only one piece. For my own part, I believe we must respond to the price crisis. People cannot—they will not—be able to survive right now unless there is some income stabilization, unless there is some safety net, unless there is some way they can have some leverage to get a decent price in the marketplace. That is the missing piece of Freedom to Farm or Freedom to Fail. Flexibility is good. But that has not worked, and I see it every day in every community that I am in. I do not want to just keep visiting with people and listening to good people and caring about good people without trying to get the Senate on record that we are going to take some action. That is part of what this resolution is about.

We can have the debate about what kind of changes we could make that would provide some real help for family farmers, that would enable family farmers to get a decent price, that would provide some income for families, what kind of steps we could take that will put some free enterprise back into the food industry and deal with all the concentration of power.

For my own part, I do think there is a very strong correlation between three and four firms dominating 60 to 70 percent of the market, and family farmers not getting a decent price. I find it puzzling. I find it more than puzzling. I find it to be an outrage that so many of our producers are facing extinction but the packers and the big grain companies are doing well—in some cases receiving record profits. The gap, the farm/retail spread grows wider and wider, and the gap between what people pay at the grocery store and what the farmers get for what they produce grows wider and wider.

I am saying we have to have more competitive markets. I am saying we want to make a commitment to sustainable agriculture.

I did not say in this resolution, although I think it is terribly important and I know Senator CONRAD would be the first one to talk about this, that we need to have a fair trade policy. More than anything else, I come to the floor of the Senate wanting to acknowledge the presence of close to 3,000 farmers and people from rural America. They were here yesterday in the pouring rain under a tent on the Capitol mall. People came to speak out for themselves. They came to meet with Representatives and Senators. They did not come because they have some party strategy. They did not come because they had a particular partisan orientation. They are thinking about their own families and their own communities.

I wish to say on the floor of the Senate, because I am lucky enough to get a chance to speak on the floor of the

Senate and these farmers cannot speak on the floor of the Senate, there is an economic convulsion taking place in agriculture today.

Many wonderful people are being spit out of the economy. Too many lives are being shattered. The health and the vitality of our communities in rural North Dakota or Minnesota or any of the other heartland States is not based upon the number of acres farmed or the number of animals someone owns, but the number of family farmers who live in these communities.

Whether we are talking about dairy farmers or corn growers or wheat growers or livestock producers, it is an absolutely intolerable situation—a situation from which we cannot turn our gaze away.

For me to summarize, the findings talk about thousands of rural citizens and families and the religious communities coming to Washington to participate in the rally. The religious communities' voice was wonderful.

The findings talk about a broad coalition of over 30 farm, environmental, and labor organizations that are concerned that rural America has been left behind during this time of prosperity that participated in organizing the Rally for Rural America. I thank the AFL-CIO for being here. I thank Bernie Brommer, the president of the Minnesota AFL-CIO, for being here. I thank Jerry Macaffey from AFSCME for speaking at the rally. I congratulate them for being here. The amendment makes the point that although the majority of America is reaping the benefits of a strong economy, rural America is facing the toughest times.

The findings in this amendment talk about the record low prices on the farms and the ranches, and the way in which they have rippled throughout rural America, causing rural communities to face all kinds of challenges: A depressed farm economy, an escalation of the mergers and the acquisitions, a loss of businesses and jobs on Main Street, an erosion of health care and education, a decline in infrastructure, and a loss of independent family farmers.

The purpose for this resolution: "To express the sense of Congress regarding the Rally for Rural America and the rural crisis" is to thank people for being here and to talk about and make it clear that we will, in fact, respond with a clear and strong message to the participants, that we are committed to dealing with this crisis, that we are committed to giving it our full attention, in a manner that will alleviate the agricultural price crisis, that will ensure competitive markets, that will lead to an investment in rural education and health care, protect our natural resources, and ensure a safe and secure food supply.

If, in fact, we continue to lose our producers, and if, in fact, we go the trend of an increasingly corporatized, industrialized agriculture, it will be a transition that our country will deeply regret.

I think this is very important for America. I tell you, my heart and soul goes out to the people who were here. I hope there will be good support for this sense-of-the-Senate amendment to this very good piece of legislation.

I reserve the remainder of my time.

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Mr. SESSIONS). Who yields time in opposition? The Senator from North Dakota.

Mr. DORGAN. Mr. President, let me begin by thanking the Senator from Kansas, Mr. ROBERTS; Senator KERREY from Nebraska; my colleague, Senator CONRAD from North Dakota, and others, for their excellent work in bringing this legislation to the floor of the Senate. It is my intention to support this legislation.

I also say that I think the sense-of-the-Senate resolution offered by the Senator from Minnesota, Mr. WELLSTONE, is certainly thoughtful and worthy of support, as well.

I, too, join him in saying to my colleague, Senator LUGAR, that I have always believed he is a major contributor to most every public debate in this Senate, especially on foreign policy, and a range of other things. But it is true, we disagree on farm policy from time to time. We recently had an exchange of letters about that disagreement. But that does not, in any way, diminish my respect for him as a leader and a legislator.

My fervent hope is at some point I could reach over and reach out to Senator LUGAR and convince him that we need to—tomorrow or Thursday—start a series of hearings and change the farm bill. But I do not expect that will be the case. He will certainly explain his position on these issues in an articulate way soon.

But let me describe some of my feelings about where we are. Let me start with this: I say to my friend from Minnesota, this morning for breakfast I had something called Cream of Wheat. I do not know how many servings of Cream of Wheat are served in America every morning or every year but a lot of them.

Cream of Wheat, if you want to know the origin of it, just for fun—I notice the Presiding Officer is hanging on my every word here—came from Grand Forks, ND, in the year 1893. A little old mill called the Diamond Mills was not doing very well. They had a scientist who was sort of moving around and trying to figure out what he could do with various parts of the grain. He used what are called the middlings of wheat, and he concocted what he called a "breakfast porridge."

So a man named Tom Amidon from Grand Forks, ND, in 1893, concocted what he called "breakfast porridge" with the middlings from wheat, and it is what is called Cream of Wheat. It is what I ate for breakfast this morning.

Cream of Wheat comes from the wheat fields in North Dakota and other places in the country. A farmer gases a tractor, buys the seed, plants the seed, and does all the work to produce this

wheat. Then it is ground up. Among that grinding you get some middlings. Somebody produces breakfast food with those middlings.

Cream of Wheat does not come from Grand Forks, ND. I must say with disappointment. Cream of Wheat is owned by Nabisco Company. It happens to be produced in my colleague's home State of Minnesota. The middlings, the wheat, the Cream of Wheat, the jobs, do not belong to the folks that gas the tractor and plant the seed and harvest the grain. No, that is not the way it works in agriculture.

Our farmers go out and plant a crop—corn, wheat, barley—and then someone comes along and buys it. They take a look at that kernel and say: You know what we ought to do. We ought to puff that up and then put it in a bright-colored box, and we will take that wheat and call it puffed wheat. Guess what that costs. Go to the grocery store and buy puffed wheat, puffed rice. They puff it; they shred it; they crisp it; they manipulate it in a hundred different ways and send it to the grocery store shelf in bright-colored boxes.

The farmer gets a pittance for that grain because the farmer is told that grain does not have any value anymore. At the grocery store shelf it costs a fortune because now it has been puffed. So the puff is apparently more valuable than the grain that is produced out of the ground from the tireless work of a family farmer.

That describes part of the problem in this system of ours. We had a couple thousand people come to town, as the Senator from Minnesota described. They are the ones who could afford to come. I am sure it was a struggle for many of them.

Folks from my State—400 of them—got on buses, seven buses. I think they will have traveled close to 6 days—they are still on a bus, I am sure—traveling to Washington and back to North Dakota.

The fellow from just west of Valley City would not have been among them because he stood up at a meeting I had some while ago, and his chin began to tremble, and he had tears in his eyes—a big, husky guy with a beard. He said his granddad farmed his farm; his dad farmed his farm; and he farmed it for 23 years. Then his chin began to tremble, and he said: But I can't do it anymore. I'm being forced off the farm.

You could see that for him it was not about dollars and cents; it was the loss of a dream—a broken heart and broken dreams. I am sure he did not come out here because he is not farming anymore and could not afford it. He is probably struggling, after 23 years on a farm, trying to find something else to do—another job to try to make some income.

He made a point, as so many farmers do, that he was a good farmer. He did not waste money. He did not go to town on weekend nights. He did not buy new clothes. He told the kids they could not afford a new pair of jeans for

school because they did not have the money.

He said: This isn't my fault. Collapsed prices are not my fault. Bad trade agreements are not my fault. Monopolies that press their boots down on the chests of family farmers are not my fault.

He was right about that. He didn't cause these problems. Somewhere in the crevice between mathematics and virtue rests a blindness that somehow refuses to recognize value and values. We tend to think of all of this in the context of economics and numbers, not understanding, apparently, that family farmers produce something more than a crop.

Yes, a farmer produces wheat in the fields of North Dakota. That family living on a farm also produces a social product that most economists and most others believe has no value whatsoever in our country, a social product called community, called family values, called part of our culture that all of us understand, an environment that is good, a neighborhood that is free of crime, a lifestyle in which neighbors help one another.

When Ernest had a heart attack at harvest time in my hometown, his neighbors took the crop off the field. Why? Because they were competitors? No, because they were neighbors. That is a social product, but economists say it has no value.

The Europeans say it has value. In fact, in the trade negotiations between Europe and the United States, they say they want something called multifunctionality considered. Our trade people scratch their heads and say: What on Earth are you talking about, multifunctionality? The Europeans say: This is an important element of farming that you are missing when you just look at the hard numbers. What is missing is community, values, a certain culture we want to retain and sustain in our future. Our trade negotiators just can't understand that. They say: We don't understand that. This is all about dollars and cents. This is about markets.

My point is, family farms produce more than just grain. They produce something very important for this country. It is a social product that this country ought to want to retain and keep.

There are a series of things we must do to respond to the urgent needs of family farmers. We must repair a safety net that does not now provide the kind of assistance family farmers need when prices collapse. Family farmers can't make it across the valley when prices collapse without some kind of safety net to bridge that valley. That is No. 1.

No. 2, we must have better trade agreements. Family farmers cannot compete with one arm tied behind their backs. It is not fair. The Canadian trade agreement wasn't fair to our family farmers. It sold out family farmers' interests. I regret to say that,

but I can bring data to the floor released yesterday that demonstrates that was the case.

NAFTA was unfair and GATT was unfair to our family farmers. I will be happy to come and speak at great length about that, but I won't today.

We must have a better safety net, better trade policies, and action against monopolies. Farmers ought not to have to market upstream when they are selling fat steers into a circumstance where just several companies control 80 percent of the steer slaughter. The same is true in every direction a farmer looks. If you want to put the grain on a railroad someplace, guess what. You will put your grain on a railroad that is a monopoly in most cases. The railroad will say to you: Here is what we charge. If you don't like it, tough luck.

Just as an example, if you have a carload of wheat in Bismarck, ND, and you will ship to Minneapolis, you will be charged \$2,300 to ship it from Bismarck to Minneapolis. Ship the same carload of wheat from Minneapolis to Chicago, about the same distance, and you are charged \$1,000. Why are North Dakota farmers charged more than double to ship a carload of wheat about the same distance? Because there is no competition in North Dakota on that line. Between Minneapolis and Chicago, there is. That is called monopoly pricing, and it is unfair to family farmers.

The fourth thing we need to do is fix crop insurance. That is what this does. That is why I am here supporting it. I know that is a long introduction to get to my support. I will be very brief to say that I think this legislation has a lot to commend itself to the Senate. This is a good piece of legislation—perfect, no, but good.

Here is what it does. It makes crop insurance more affordable at buy-up coverage levels that are most useful to farmers. It addresses the problem of multiyear losses, which has been a very difficult problem for North Dakota farmers, and their impact on insurance coverages. It makes an important financial commitment to crop insurance expansion, research and development, education and outreach—issues that are particularly important to specialty crop communities. It authorizes a pilot program for livestock. It improves the Noninsured Crop Disaster Assistance Program.

This is a good bill. I know my colleagues have struggled mightily to produce this legislation. This bill comes to the floor with bipartisan support, Republicans and Democrats supporting it. I am pleased to support it and to commend all those who have helped bring this to the floor and who will support it in the Senate. It is but one step in a series of steps we must take to try to give family farmers some help.

Those 400 North Dakotans who are on 7 buses now on the highways going back to North Dakota could well have

been elsewhere this week. In most cases, in ordinary years, they would have been in the machine shed and they would have been working on their tractor, working on their farm equipment, repairing, replacing, renovating, greasing, changing the oil, getting all ready for spring. That is what farmers do. Farmers only can farm if they have hope. In most cases, these families live out on the farmsteads because they love that way of life.

The only way any of us could understand this is if we were to take our income each year. We have a salary in the Senate; we know what we are going to get each month. Wouldn't it be interesting if all Members of the Senate could let their income rest on certain things that are outside their control and have no certainty of income. Perhaps let your income rest on the question of whether it rains enough or too much, whether insects come to the Midwest, whether crop disease surfaces, whether there is a hail cloud that shows up or a funnel cloud that shows up in late August before harvest. If perhaps if we had that risk of income, we would be able to understand better, as all Members of the Senate, what family farmers face.

It is a very unusual, risky proposition that family farmers face every single year, with many elements in the determination of what kind of income they get that are completely outside of their control. That is why this is different. The enterprise of farming is different. Thomas Jefferson said it in words I cannot nearly match. But family farming is different. It is critically important to the future of this country. It is much more than just economics, finance, or math. It is a social product produced on our family farms in this country that contributes mightily to the character of this country as well. That is why this is an important piece of legislation. I hope it is but a first small step in a journey we can make together to improve the opportunities for family farmers in our country.

I think the amendment offered by my colleague from Minnesota, which is a sense-of-the-Senate amendment commending those who came to Washington, DC, this week, is an appropriate amendment. I hope the Senate will agree to that amendment as well. I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Minnesota.

Mr. WELLSTONE. Mr. President, I thank the Senator from North Dakota.

I do want to point out that there are two parts to this sense-of-the-Senate amendment. One part is to thank the farmers and others for being here. The second part is to put us on record and say we will respond and, in particular, we will respond to the price crisis. We are going to talk about how to ensure competitive markets. For my part, I think that means strong antitrust action. We are going to invest. We are going to understand that in the discus-

sion about education and health care—these are rural issues as well—we are talking about sustainable agriculture. We will make a commitment to responding.

This is only a sense-of-the-Senate amendment. However, I don't view it as just being symbolic. I think it would be great to have a strong vote. I want it to be a bipartisan vote. I would love to see us work on the additional pieces Senator DORGAN and I have talked about together, as Democrats and Republicans. I pray—I don't use that word very often on the floor of the Senate—that we will make some changes so our producers, our family farmers, will have a fighting chance to earn a decent living so they can give their children the care they know they need and deserve.

This is thanking these farmers, but it is also putting the Senate on record that we, in fact, are going to respond. That is the second part. That is an important part.

Yes, it is just a sense of the Senate, but I will be coming back over and over again talking about the sense of the Senate with my own ideas about how we can make a difference. Other Senators may have different ideas. I just want us to address it. I don't want us to put family farmers in Minnesota or North Dakota or Indiana, or anywhere, in parentheses or in brackets and act as though this isn't happening.

I don't want us to turn our gaze away from them. I don't want there to be an inaction. That is the why of this.

Mr. DORGAN. If the Senator will yield, I didn't realize I was speaking on Senator WELLSTONE's time. I ask the chairman if the Senator needs more time, I am sure he will be accommodating. I appreciate the generous opportunity.

Mr. WELLSTONE. I was very pleased to have the Senator speak.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The time has expired.

The Senator from Indiana.

Mr. LUGAR. Mr. President, let me say that I appreciate very much the words of the Senator from Minnesota. I think his tribute to the farmers who came is certainly appropriate and very moving. The Senator has obviously worked to make certain that meeting was constructively successful. I assure the Senator that the voices in the meeting have been heard and, clearly, we were prepared to move on this legislation. But it is a part of the action that we must take to provide a stronger safety net. I feel that we will do so today. I am confident we will move this bill appropriately.

Very clearly, there is much more we need to do. I say to the Senator from Minnesota and my colleague from North Dakota that I know from the income on my own farm last year that it was down. It was down the year before from the year before that. I suspect I am one of the few Members who keeps the books, who tries to settle with the family members. I understand prices

and difficulties. I am looking at this from the standpoint of a 604-acre farm, and that is not untypical of many farms in my State and the Senator's State. Our problems are profound but not beyond solution. I look forward to working with the Senator.

At this moment, I am prepared to say on our side we accept the amendment, and we certainly want to see it approved by acclamation. Before I make a further comment on that, may I take a moment to say that I am hopeful that the distinguished Senator from Massachusetts, Mr. KENNEDY, is approaching the floor, and likewise, the Senator from Wisconsin, Mr. KOHL, who have statements or amendments for which time has been provided, so we might proceed.

I have received word from the majority leader that he proposes that any rollcall votes that might occur with reference to this legislation happen tomorrow morning. At some point, he will be offering a unanimous consent request or make an announcement that would be appropriate on that point. So I am hopeful we will have further debate soon. But for the moment I commend the Senator and I indicate support on our side. I hope his amendment will be taken by acclamation and with praise.

Mr. WELLSTONE. Mr. President, if I may respond to my colleague for a moment, first of all, I thank him for the words. I will ask for the yeas and nays. I do want to have a vote on this amendment. My request will be if the majority leader wants to do it tomorrow—I was trying to come out and help facilitate this—I wonder whether or not we could at least have 2 minutes to summarize before the vote. I hope that will be the case.

I ask for the yeas and nays on this amendment.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Is there a sufficient second?

There is a sufficient second.

The yeas and nays were ordered.

Mr. LUGAR. Mr. President, I ask that the vote on the amendment be postponed until tomorrow. My understanding is that the majority leader will be prepared to add provisions for the debate the Senator has suggested—perhaps 2 minutes to a side—and I will offer assurance to the Senator that I will make that recommendation to the leader.

Mr. WELLSTONE. Mr. President, the Senator's word is good enough for me.

Mr. LUGAR. I thank the Chair.

Mr. President, 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. LUGAR. 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. LUGAR. Mr. President, I have been advised that in our colloquy obtaining unanimous consent we indicated that additional language from

Senators LEAHY, TORRICELLI, SCHUMER, ROCKEFELLER, REED, and KENNEDY would be made part of the managers' amendment. Apparently, some further editorial work needs to be done to incorporate that language in the managers' amendment. I ask unanimous consent that we have an opportunity and the right to add the language that fulfills the obligation we made.

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

Mr. LUGAR. This will tidy up the housekeeping regarding the managers' amendment.

I mention for the record, according to the Congressional Budget Office, the managers' amendment before us brings the crop insurance bill into compliance with the budget resolution in that spending in the bill is below \$6 billion.

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

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will call the roll.

The senior assistant bill clerk proceeded to call the roll.

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

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

The Senator from Utah is recognized.

Mr. HATCH. I thank the Chair.
(The remarks of Mr. HATCH pertaining to the introduction of S. 2270 are located in today's RECORD under "Statements on Introduced Bills and Joint Resolutions.")

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

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

RISK MANAGEMENT FOR THE 21ST CENTURY—Continued

Mr. KENNEDY. Mr. President, I support this legislation. The crop insurance bill before us today provides \$1.5 billion over each of the next 4 years to support the Nation's farmers, and they clearly deserve this assistance. Hard-working farmers across the Nation deserve to live with dignity. Federal assistance is justified to protect them when the harsh weather destroys their crops or volatile markets undervalue their produce.

I hope in the coming weeks the Senate will also have an opportunity to address a related urgent need. I am talking about hunger and the inadequacy of the current Food Stamp Program. The problem is that the program's reach in curbing hunger among working families has weakened over time. It is unacceptable for children and working families to go hungry in America today. The latest research is clear, and it calls for our urgent action.

The General Accounting Office reports that "children's participation in the Food Stamp Program has dropped more sharply than the number of children living in poverty, indicating a growing gap between need and assistance."

Census and state food stamp data show that between 1995 and 1998, while the number of poor people fell by almost 2 million, the number of food stamp beneficiaries fell by over 7 million, leaving millions more poor people without food stamps.

The Department of Agriculture reports that 10.5 million U.S. households experienced some degree of food insecurity in 1998, and 1 or more people went hungry in 3.7 million of these households.

The Tufts University Center on Hunger and Poverty in Massachusetts reports that a third of children living in immigrant households with food stamp cuts were experiencing moderate to severe hunger.

With Project Bread in Massachusetts, the Center on Hunger and Poverty also coauthored an extraordinary study of Child Hunger in Massachusetts about a year ago. It was cosponsored by Ralph Martin, who was a Republican district attorney in Suffolk County, and Congressman Joseph Kennedy. They did extensive studies in Massachusetts in a wide variety of communities—some of our older cities, some of our more prosperous cities with pockets of extraordinary poverty, and then in a number of the rural areas. It is an absolutely superb report. Rather than putting the whole report in the RECORD, I will raise it throughout the discussions of hunger to come. Dr. Larry Brown directs the Center on Hunger and Poverty, and as I think most of us who have worked on the hunger issue over the years know, he has had an extraordinary career, been an invaluable resource for this Nation in terms of finding hunger and being constructive and positive in helping us deal with that issue in a constructive way.

One in five American children is poor in today's America. The Center on Budget and Policy Priorities reports that while the total number of children who are poor has declined, the intensity of poverty among those children who are left behind has increased, and one of the reasons poor children are poorer is that their access to food stamps is diminishing.

The U.S. Conference of Mayors reports that demand for emergency food assistance increased 18 percent during 1999. This is the largest increase since 1992. Limited resources meant that 21 percent of requests for food were unmet. In addition, 67 percent of the adults requesting emergency food assistance in the Nation's cities were employed.

Especially in this time of recent economic prosperity and record budget surpluses, we must do more to protect working families across the Nation who need food. America's farmers have a long and proud tradition of service to the Nation, and their hard work produces an abundance of foodstuffs. Surely we can ensure that this abundance is used in a way that no one in America goes hungry.

I know the issue of hunger is of deep concern to the chairman and the rank-

ing member of the Agriculture Committee, who oversee the Nation's antihunger efforts. For \$500 million a year, we could provide modest hunger relief for low-income families. These additional resources should be allocated to the Food Stamp Program, as bipartisan coalitions in both the House and the Senate have proposed in the Hunger Relief Act that many of us support.

Our proposal makes four long overdue improvements in the Food Stamp Program. It authorizes States to use their own TANF rules to determine which vehicles families may own to get to work themselves and safely transport their children to school—enormously important, a very modest recommendation, but very important.

Second, for families forced to spend over 50 percent of income on shelter, it increases the present shelter deduction and indexes it to inflation—incredibly important. The cost of housing, particularly in the older communities, has gone right up through the roof and because the shelter deduction is capped, families who must pay high shelter costs are helped less and less by the Food Stamp Program. This is a very modest recommendation to increase the cap and index it to inflation.

Third, the bill restores eligibility to vulnerable legal immigrants. We all know the history in terms of the moving of immigrants off the Food Stamp Program as part of welfare reform. I never believed it made a great deal of sense at that time, nor do I think it still makes a great deal of sense. We have been trying to work for restoration of food stamp benefits to legal immigrants since they were imposed.

Legal immigrants are going to be American citizens. They are people who have abided by the rules in order to come here. The reason they have immigrated is primarily because they have members of their families who are here. That is the overwhelming reason for it. So they are going to be American citizens. To deprive people, particularly children—although we made limited progress in that in recent years—who are otherwise going to be American citizens never seemed, to me, to be a wise policy. We seek appropriate restoration in this legislation.

It also increases Federal support for emergency food pantries and soup kitchens. I think the excellent research from the Conference of Mayors is a powerful justification for those modest recommendations.

The Congressional Budget Office estimates together these steps will cost about \$2.5 billion over 5 years, benefiting over a million children and working adults. Nearly 1,200 national, State, and local organizations, representing concerned citizens in all 50 States, have urged Congress to pass the legislation.

I hope we can enact this important hunger relief measure this year. Families living in hunger across the country need and deserve our help. I am hopeful