

known as the national drug czar. When did his nomination come to us from the President of the United States? Way back in June, over 5 months ago. Finally, on October 10, the Senate Judiciary Committee held a hearing on John Walters. It lasted over 3 hours. It was very complete. Following the hearing, Mr. Walters answered over 100 written followup questions, including questions from Members who were not on the committee itself.

Finally, on November 8 the committee reported out John Walters by a vote of 14 to 5, but we understand that his nomination cannot be brought up for us to debate and then vote because there are holds being placed on his nomination by unnamed Democratic Senators.

I am calling upon the majority leader today to bring this nomination to the Senate. If there are objections to its consideration, let those who object stand up and voice their objection and explain to us why they object, even to the consideration of the nomination of an individual who, as I say, has been pending now for over 5 months and is the last person to complete the composition of the President's Cabinet.

There is another reason to try to conclude this matter, because the Office of Drug Control Policy is one of the central parts of our Government that deals with drug trafficking around the world. Drug trafficking is one of the ways in which terrorists who we are fighting finance their terrorist activities. For the life of me, I cannot see how someone would stand in the way of the confirmation of a person who is in line to help fight this way of funding terrorism around the world.

We are supposed to be pulling out all of the stops to fight terrorism. Apparently, it is all except for one thing, and that is their financing because we have some political problem with confirming the drug czar.

Let me give a couple of examples. Afghanistan grossed an estimated \$180 billion in the drug trade last year. The Taliban generates an estimated \$50 million in annual revenue from heroin trafficking. The Taliban, which of course has been harboring Osama bin Laden, has overseen the world's greatest growth in poppy plant cultivation as well as heroin production and trafficking.

According to the State Department, Afghanistan's poppy plant cultivation area has quadrupled since 1990. Just 2 weeks ago, the Wall Street Journal reported that an Italian Government official stated that Osama bin Laden's al-Qaida terrorist network is funded through trafficking.

The bottom line is, if we are really going to pull out all the stops in fighting terrorism, we have to cut off their financing, and that includes their drug trafficking. One of the best ways of doing that is ensuring the office we have set up to do that is headed by the President's nomination; namely, John Walters. Yet we cannot get this nomi-

nation before the Senate for confirmation.

John Walters has over 15 years of experience in drug prevention, beginning in the middle 1980s. He served with the Office of National Drug Control Policy for a total of 4 years in the 1989 to 1993 period. In his hearings, he made it very clear he would execute the policies of the President, which have been widely hailed as necessary for us not only to deal with the problems of drug use in the United States but to cut off the sources of drugs which, among other things, fund the terrorists. So I urge my colleagues, and I urge the majority leader, it is time to confirm John Walters as Director of the Office of National Drug Control Policy. Let us not delay this any longer. There apparently is no excuse in terms of time because the majority leader pointed out this morning we apparently have time to consider other matters. So let us finish the confirmation process for the President's Cabinet before we conclude our work in the first full year of the Bush administration. It seems to me that is only fair. It is good policy, and it would help us in fighting the war on drugs.

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Mrs. CLINTON). The Senator from Arkansas.

Mrs. LINCOLN. Madam President, I ask unanimous consent that Senator HELMS from North Carolina and Senator CLELAND from Georgia be added as cosponsors to S. 1278, the United States Independent Film and Television Production Incentive Act of 2001.

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

UNITED STATES INDEPENDENT FILM AND TELEVISION PRODUCTION INCENTIVE ACT OF 2001

Mrs. LINCOLN. Madam President, this is a bill I introduced awhile back. It is a good way to reinvest in America, looking at our films that have gone offshore because of the incredible incentives that other nations are giving them. We want to keep our film industry in the United States. We want to keep the jobs in the United States, and that is why we introduced this bill in order to direct the incentives according to the jobs that are created. We are hoping we can move this bill along, and we are delighted to have two more cosponsors.

RAILROAD RETIREMENT REFORM

Mrs. LINCOLN. Madam President, I came to the Chamber after listening to several of my colleagues earlier this morning. The majority leader, Senator DASCHLE, was visiting with Senator DURBIN about some of the important legislation we could be considering in these last couple of weeks in the Senate that would really be good for the American people.

First they spoke about the railroad retirement reform package, which was mentioned by Senator KYL. I think it

is absolutely essential we bring up this issue. Last week, when I was in Arkansas celebrating Thanksgiving, I was approached by an older woman who said: Why in the world has this not been done?

This legislation has passed the House twice by incredibly large margins. The last time it was 384 to 33. There are 75 Members of the Senate who are cosponsors of this issue. We have the railroad industry, the union members, the workers in agreement. It is absolutely practical and realistic that we should bring up this issue and move it forward because it is going to benefit everybody, and that is what our job is, to bring up legislation that everyone has worked on, that we have come to some agreement on, that we have the majority of individuals in both bodies excited about and willing to move forward.

So I applaud the majority leader for bringing up this issue. I think the time is right. I think the work has been done. The debate has been had. People have worked out this issue, and we should be moving forward. We should be productive for the American people and particularly for those in the railroad industry and those who are retired. I applaud the majority leader for his efforts, as well as the other Members of this body, and encourage him to move forward with it. This is something we can do and something we should do before we leave, and I hope we will.

FREEDOM TO FARM

Mrs. LINCOLN. One of the other issues that was brought up by my colleagues earlier was the issue of our agricultural policy in this country, which, in my opinion, in the last 4 years has been less than what our farmers deserve. It is time now to give them some predictability and some understanding of where their Government is going to be for them.

It has been said the only constant is change, and that certainly has been true with our national farm policy. For the last 4 years or better, farmers—certainly Arkansas farmers—have harvested their crops without knowing if they would be able to afford to plant another crop in the following growing season. They had no predictability, no understanding of whether their Government was going to be for them.

As they looked at what was happening in the global economy with the fact that the European Union was consuming well over 80 percent of export subsidies worldwide, they said they were not competing with other farmers across the globe.

Our farmers are competing with other governments. Where has their Government been in terms of a solid agricultural policy they can depend on, particularly when they go to their financial institutions to get the backing they need to put seed in the ground?

Of course, many remember that Congress passed the Freedom to Farm Act

back in 1996. For farmers in Arkansas, Freedom to Farm has been a disaster because they depended too much on the ability to be able to negotiate trade. We put our farmers in a position where, as we said we were going to ratchet down the Government support and the Government safety net, were they going to have to depend on the market.

We gave them flexibility. Flexibility was great, but flexibility without the backbone in trade does them no good, particularly in a time when we are seeing record lows in commodity prices.

Farmers are getting paid right now the same they were being paid in the early 1940s, and yet their input costs are the highest they have ever been. They are making the same they were in 1940 when a combine probably cost them about \$15,000 to \$25,000, and now they are paying anywhere from \$180,000 to \$200,000 for a combine.

Arkansas farmers and farmers around the country have been in limbo year after year, waiting for Congress to pass emergency spending bills. The existing farm policy is absolutely inadequate. A farmer cannot just go to the banker and say, I think Congress is going to provide us an emergency spending bill this year so you need to make sure you go ahead and give me that loan and maybe wait for another 9 to 12 months to find out whether or not it will be backed by the Government.

As has the senior member of the Senate Agriculture Committee, I have worked with my colleagues on that committee to write a bill this year, to get out of the Agriculture Committee a good, positive, and comprehensive bill to address the needs of our farmers. I have been increasingly concerned and dismayed as the Senate rushes to complete its business by the end of the year that farmers again will be left behind. That is why, again, I was so proud to see the majority leader come to the floor today to say we are going to take up a farm bill on the Senate floor.

The Senate Agriculture Committee, under the leadership of Chairman HARKIN, has done its work to come up with a good bill that is comprehensive, that will provide the safety net, as well as far-reaching, new, and innovative issues we need in a farm bill. They have done their job. We will bring it up on the floor.

The House has done their job in passing a bill. We can compromise on these bills because they have been created in a way that they have many similarities. We can get a bill to the desk of the President this year so our farmers, once again, do not have to go into the new year with the uncertainty and the complete unpredictability of not knowing where their Government will be.

The Senate must pass this bill before we adjourn for the year because it is imperative, as the farmers go into this next planting season, they have something they can bank on, one with a solid safety net that ensures not only the financial viability of our farmers

but also the viability of local bankers, merchants, seed dealers, fertilizer dealers, implement dealers, and rural institutions that depend on the stability our farmers provide.

The Senate bill also provided much needed funding for rural development and nutrition programs for disadvantaged families to help those parts of our Nation where the needs are the greatest. An unbelievable conservation title helps in new and innovative ways, placing the resources and efforts into proven conservation practices that our farmers know they can use to mitigate those marginal lands on which it is more costly to produce. It includes funding for research and development to ensure that America remains a technological and economic powerhouse in the coming century. It provides funding for forestry, biofuel development, and credit financing programs to guarantee sound farm financing.

The economy in this great Nation is in a delicate state. There is nothing that we can do here that will guarantee we will not go into a recession. But there is one thing we can do that will absolutely guarantee a recession. We have seen it in our history's past. That is that we allow the rural economy to collapse. If that rural economy collapses, we will be assured not only of a recession but much greater problems in our economy in coming years.

I applaud the majority leader for bringing up the issues on which we have worked. We have worked out the details. It will be of great assistance to the American people, particularly in rural America. As we begin with a farm bill that will be a great stimulus package to rural America, we can also work out the details of an economic stimulus package that will be comprehensive in helping workers in transition and also provide the tax relief that industries need, particularly small businesses, to be able to grow and thrive and increase a growing economy.

I hope that in the several days we have ahead of us and the work there is yet to be done we can continue along the road that the majority leader has paved for us in putting out these issues, that we can get some agreement that will be beneficial to the American people, and that we can all go home at the end of these 2 weeks to a holiday and know we have done our very best. That is what we owe to the people.

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. THOMAS. Madam President, I ask unanimous consent the order for the quorum call be dispensed with.

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

Mr. THOMAS. I ask unanimous consent to speak for 5 minutes.

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

THE SENATE AGENDA

Mr. THOMAS. Madam President, I have listened this morning to the conversations on the floor. I think it is appropriate that we have had some discussion about what we are going to do in the remaining time before us. I hope we can come to a little more of a cooperative understanding of what our agenda should be in the next 2 weeks. What are the things that are most important? What are the things we ought to have as our priorities?

Obviously, we have to finish the appropriations, and we have only sent about half of those to the White House. So that is something we must do. Obviously, there is difficulty in trying to complete the work on the Defense appropriations.

It seems to me it is also important that we have a stimulus package. However, having been on the Finance Committee and sat through all the talk about it, we expanded it far beyond where anyone would suggest these were stimulus programs. I suppose you could expect that to happen. We are at the end of a session. We are at a time when, because of the terrorist attacks, emergencies have arisen that must be addressed. But now we find that everyone who has ever had a thought about where we ought to be spending more money wants to do it. I think we have to be a little more thoughtful about where we are.

We started out with a budget that we agreed upon. I think it was about \$660-some billion. Then that was changed at the request of the President some time ago to \$686 billion. In addition to that, of course, we have had another \$40 billion, and another \$5 billion, and agreed to guarantee another \$10 billion. So we have spent a great deal of money. I think we have ought to give some thought as to what our priorities are to be at this point.

It is my belief we could come up with a stimulus package that would deal with the needs of unemployment and some of the medical needs there. I think we could do something that is rather limited in terms of accelerated depreciation that would cause businesses to create jobs, which is what we want to do. We do not need to spend \$120 billion simply because we have an excuse to spend.

So I am hopeful that we can get together on a stimulus package. The majority leader said this morning the Republicans refuse to meet. That is not the case at all. The Republicans are not willing to have the Appropriations Committee be part of that meeting because it is a Finance Committee responsibility. That is where we ought to be; there is no question about that.

I hope we can take a little time now to say what our priorities should be. We need a little vision, just over 2 weeks. It ought not to be too difficult to decide what it is that we need to get done and step aside from some of these other questions.

We are talking about a farm bill. I am on the Agriculture Committee and