

MR. REID. Madam President, I ask that S. 1766 be read for a second time, and then I would object at this time to any further proceedings.

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. The clerk will read the bill for the second time.

The assistant legislative clerk read as follows:

A bill (S. 1766) to provide for the energy security of the Nation, and for other purposes.

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. Objection having been heard, the bill will be placed on the calendar.

MR. REID. Madam President, I suggest the absence of a quorum.

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. The clerk will call the roll.

The assistant legislative clerk proceeded to call the roll.

MR. THOMAS. Madam President, I ask unanimous consent that the order for the quorum call be rescinded.

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. Without objection, it is so ordered.

RESERVATION OF LEADER TIME

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. Under previous order, leadership time is reserved.

MORNING BUSINESS

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. Under the previous order, there will now be a period for the transaction of morning business, with Senators permitted to speak therein for up to 10 minutes each.

The Senator from Wyoming.

SENIORS MENTAL HEALTH ACCESS IMPROVEMENT ACT OF 2001

MR. THOMAS. Madam President, I rise today to make a few comments on a bill introduced earlier this week and about which I have not had a chance to talk. I introduced it along with Senator LINCOLN of Arkansas. It is called the Seniors Mental Health Access Improvement Act of 2001.

I am very happy to have had an opportunity to introduce this bill. It is important legislation, particularly for seniors living in rural areas. The bill is designed to provide more opportunities for seniors under Medicare to have professional assistance in areas where often there are shortages of providers, and this is designed to help that situation.

It permits mental health counselors and marriage and family therapists to bill Medicare for their services, and it pays them at the rate of clinical social workers.

It is particularly important in rural States, such as my State of Wyoming, where often there is a shortage of mental health providers, and so it requires a good deal of travel. On the other hand, there are trained social workers who are prepared to provide these services if they have an opportunity to do

it under the Medicare Program. That is what this bill does.

Currently, there are Medicare limitations on the types of mental health providers. Rural seniors are often forced to travel a good distance to take advantage of those services. Mental health counselors and marriage and family therapists are often the only mental health providers in a community. They have the same training and education as clinical social workers. Social workers have been recognized by Medicare for 10 years.

Seniors, of course, do have higher rates of suicide and depression than other populations. Therefore, it is very evident that this change is needed. We need to recognize the qualifications of these providers and ensure that seniors do have access to them.

The majority of Wyoming communities are mental health professional shortage areas and probably will continue to be that way for some time. Because Medicare recognizes a limited number of mental health providers, Wyoming seniors have access to 537 providers, 247 social workers, and 121 psychiatrists.

This bill will double the number of available Medicare mental health providers. Seventy-five percent of 518 national designated mental health professional shortage areas are in rural areas. Again, not a surprise.

One-fifth of rural counties have no mental health services of any kind.

Frontier counties, of course, as they are designated in terms of mental health providers, are in even more dire straits.

Ninety-five percent do not have psychiatrists, 68 percent do not have psychologists, and 78 percent do not have social workers.

I am proud to be an author of this bill, along with Senator LINCOLN. I hope we will make some progress as soon as possible. It will perhaps not be this year, I imagine, but it will be as we move on into Medicare reform, which I think we will certainly undertake next year.

DEFENSE APPROPRIATIONS

MR. THOMAS. Mr. President, I want to make a comment or two about the subject we are going to debate this morning. It seems to me certainly there is nothing more important for us to undertake than the matter of appropriations for defense. I think the Senate needs to be responsive to the President's request for defense funding in not adding non-defense spending to this Defense appropriations bill.

Our men and women in the military are overseas defending this country, and we must support them. This appropriations bill, as other appropriations bills, obviously should have been passed back in August or September, the end of the fiscal year. We have gone 2 months now without increasing those dollars. So I hope we can move forward, and I hope we do not hold this bill hos-

tage to some kind of fairly unrelated spending. We ought to get right to it and do what the President has asked us to do.

He has indicated what we did in the \$40 billion in September is available. He has indicated when they need more money, whether it be for defense or domestic terrorism, he will request more money. So I certainly hope we do not spend a great deal of time trying to add more dollars to Defense appropriations than what the President had asked. He has made it quite clear he intends to veto it if it is that way. I think that would be a real disadvantage to us all and to the people we are intending to assist.

I look forward to being able to deal with that, to come up with something we can pass through the Senate and the House, get to the President, and that we can support the President in this area of defense. I think we find ourselves sometimes talking about spending money when there is not a plan yet to use it. Domestic security is one of those things. We have seen meetings where they are working together and Governor Ridge has said when we get the plan we will ask for the money that is necessary if it is not now in the \$20 billion. So to go ahead and sort of put the money out there before those who are managing the program have had an opportunity to decide how that money can best be used is a mistake. I hope we do not do that.

I suggest the absence of a quorum.

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. The clerk will call the roll.

The assistant legislative clerk proceeded to call the roll.

MR. JOHNSON. Madam President, I ask unanimous consent that the order for the quorum call be rescinded.

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. Without objection, it is so ordered.

MR. JOHNSON. I ask unanimous consent to speak in morning business.

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. Without objection, it is so ordered.

SUPPORT THE ENERGY BILL AND THE RENEWABLE FUELS STANDARD

MR. JOHNSON. Mr. President, I rise in strong support of the comprehensive energy bill that is being introduced today.

As we all know, there has been a great deal of discussion this year about the nation's energy situation. The increasing volatility in gasoline and diesel prices and the growing tension in the world from the terrorist attacks have affected all of us. There is a clear need for energy policies that ensure long term planning, homeland security, fuel diversity and a focus on new technologies.

To this end, I am very pleased that a comprehensive energy bill has been introduced in the Senate by my South Dakota colleague, Senator TOM

DASCHLE. The bill is the result of many months of hard work by the Majority Leader and the chairmen of the committees of jurisdiction, including Senator JEFF BINGAMAN, the chairman of the Energy Committee, of which I am a member. We have listened to the concerns of both those who run our energy systems and our constituents in crafting the legislation. The result is a balanced and thorough product that addresses most of the major segments of the energy system and looks ahead to the needs of future.

The bill covers a number of important areas, including incentives to increase oil and gas production and the nation's supplies of traditional fuels, streamlining of electricity systems and regulations, important environmental and conservation measures, and provisions to increase efficiency of vehicles and appliances.

One of the key provisions in the bill is the inclusion of a renewable fuels standard. Earlier this year, I introduced a bill with Senator CHUCK HAGEL of Nebraska, the Renewable Fuels for Energy Security Act of 2001, S. 1006, to ensure future growth for ethanol and biodiesel through the creation of a new renewable fuels content standard in all motor fuel produced and used in the U.S. I am pleased the framework of this bill is included in the comprehensive energy legislation.

Today, ethanol and biodiesel comprise less than one percent of all transportation fuel in the United States. 1.8 billion gallons is currently produced in the U.S. The energy bill's language would require that five billions gallons of transportation fuel be comprised of renewable fuel by 2012—nearly a tripling of the current ethanol and renewable fuel production.

There are great benefits of ethanol and renewable fuels for the environment and the economies of rural communities. We have many ethanol plants in South Dakota and more are being planned. These farmer-owned ethanol plants in South Dakota, and in neighboring states, demonstrate the hard work and commitment to serve a growing market for clean domestic fuels.

Based on current projections, construction of new plants will generate \$900 million in capital investment and tens of thousands of construction jobs all across rural America. For corn farmers, the price of corn is expected to rise between 20-30 cents per bushel. Farmers will have the opportunity to invest in these ethanol plants to capture a greater piece of the value-added profitability.

Combine this with the provisions of the energy bill and the potential economic impact for South Dakota is enormous.

Today, an important but under-emphasized future is biodiesel, which is cheaply produced from excess soybean oil. We all know that soybean prices are hovering near historic lows. Biodiesel production is small but has been growing steadily. A renewable fuel

standard would greatly increase the prospects for bioproduction and benefit soybean farmers from South Dakota and other states around the Nation.

Moreover, the enactment of renewable fuel standards would greatly increase the Nation's energy security. Greater usage of renewable fuels would displace the level of foreign oil that we currently use. During these difficult times it is imperative that we find ways to improve our Nation's energy security and reduce our overwhelming dependence on foreign oil. A renewable fuel standard would go a long way toward achieving this critically important goal.

The House has passed an energy bill without any provisions for renewable fuel standard. Moreover, I believe the other body looks backward by focusing too heavily on simple tax breaks for traditional fuel supplies without enough encouragement for new technologies. Where there are agriculturally based fuels, wind energy, and so on, we adequately provide for it in this Senate legislation. The House bill sets us on track for continued heavy reliance on imported petroleum from unstable nations all around the world.

I believe the Senate bill that is now introduced achieves the right balance for the Nation's future. I commend Senator DASCHLE AND SENATOR BINGAMAN for their efforts and I look forward to debate this coming year on this critical piece of legislation which directs our attention not only to energy needs of every kind in our Nation but to the energy independence and energy security that during these troubling times we all understand now more profoundly than ever is so badly needed.

ORDER OF PROCEDURE

Mr. REID. I ask unanimous consent that at 11:40 a.m. today the Senate proceed to executive session to consider Calendar No. 584, Harris Hartz, to be United States Circuit Court Judge; that the Senate immediately vote on confirmation of the nomination; and immediately following the disposition of the nomination, calendar Nos. 585 and 588 be confirmed; that any statements on the above nominations appear at the appropriate place in the RECORD; and upon the disposition of the above nominations, the President be immediately notified of the Senate's action and the Senate return to legislative session.

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. Without objection, it is so ordered.

Mr. REID. Madam President, as in executive session, I ask for the yeas and nays on Calendar No. 584.

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. Is there a sufficient second?

There is a sufficient second.

The yeas and nays were ordered.

Mr. REID. I suggest the absence of a quorum.

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. The clerk will call the roll.

The assistant legislative clerk proceeded to call the roll.

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

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. Without objection, it is so ordered.

DEFENSE APPROPRIATIONS

Mr. REID. Madam President, in a short period of time we will take up the Defense appropriations bill. This is a bill the Chair and the ranking member, Senators INOUYE and STEVENS, have been working on as partners. A better term would be cochairs. They work so well together and have for so many years. They worked hard to get the bill to the point where it now is. We also have the full committee chair, Senator BYRD, who has worked very hard on this, with his counterpart, also, Senator STEVENS, to get to the point where the bill is.

One of the—and I am sorry to say this—controversial aspects of this legislation deals with something Senator BYRD has called homeland security. There will be efforts to strike this provision because it costs too much money, according to some, even though Governor Ridge, the homeland security czar, has stated that we need hundreds of millions of dollars for the things he has already recognized need to be done.

If we, in our mind's eye, fix the headlines of newspapers in recent weeks—Smallpox threat; subsequent headline: Cost of smallpox vaccinations more than originally anticipated; yesterday's headlines across the country: Osama bin Laden and the terrorists have recognized that they have what is called a dirty nuclear weapon, maybe—I hope we will be in a position to do something about this. That is what Senator BYRD has tried to do. That is what this legislation is all about, dealing with some of the things I mentioned, headlines around the country indicating we need to do something about homeland security.

Two of our Senators have been attacked with anthrax: Senator DASCHLE and Senator LEAHY. As we speak, we are trying to work with Senator LEAHY's letter to find out what should be done with that.

I hope when this legislation comes before us, which will be very soon, we will recognize we will have problems with anthrax and other biological agents such as smallpox, that our ports are unsafe and our nuclear plants are unsafe. Local government is really being hurt as a result of their spending all this money. So I hope we do something to keep that in the bill.

I see the majority leader has come to the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Mr. NELSON of Florida). The Senate majority leader.

Mr. DASCHLE. Mr. President, I compliment the distinguished assistant Democratic leader for his comments