

Candace Chin, and Laura Roubicek are three people I want to thank.

That is 60 individuals I have mentioned. There may be others I have missed. If I have missed them, I apologize, but I want them to know that all of us, regardless of political persuasion or ideology, thank them, and millions of Americans ought to as well because we never would have achieved this conference report, been able to write this bill, had it not been for these 60 individuals and many more like them.

I have not mentioned the individuals on the outside that worked on this, the NAACP, the National Association of Secretaries of State, the AFL-CIO, the various disability groups. There are literally hundreds of people who are involved in this journey over the last year and a half to produce this conference report. I know normally we do not take as much time to talk about all of this, but I think Senator McCONNELL and I—and not because it is a pride of authorship, but we think we have done something very historically significant. We are changing America. We are changing the way America is going to be choosing its leadership. We want everyone to participate in this country. It is a source of significant embarrassment to me that there are individuals who cannot participate.

I served in the Peace Corps in Latin America back in the 1960s. So I am asked periodically to go and observe elections, particularly in Latin America, because I know the language and have knowledge of the area. I cannot say how moving it is to watch some of these desperately poor countries where the people who lack any formal education, or have very little of it, will literally stand in line all day, walk miles through blistering and difficult weather, intimidation, fear of literally being killed if they show up, and they vote. They look to us as a beacon of what it means as a free people to be able to choose who represents us, from the most insignificant office on the municipal or town level to the Presidency of the United States. The idea that each and every one of us can be a part of making those choices, and the fact that only 50 percent of our eligible population does so, ought to be a source of collective shame. While this bill is not going to eradicate all of that, when we consider how hard some people fight to be free, how blessed we are as a people and how little is asked of us to participate in the process which has historically distinguished us as a people, our sincere hope today, as we vote tomorrow on this bill, is we have made it easier for people to meet that obligation and made it more difficult for those who would like to scam it in some way. But the most important thing this legislation does is to make it easier for people to make that choice.

So all of those who have been involved in this have my profound sense of gratitude, and I am very confident that sense of gratitude is going to be expressed by millions of people for

years to come because of what we have done in the wake of a tragedy in the year 2000, on November 7. We have responded to it with this legislation. Not in every sense, but on some of the core questions, this Congress has stepped up to the plate and responded to those issues. The leadership and Members of the other body, as well as the leadership here, can rightfully claim a proud moment when this bill passes the Senate tomorrow and President Bush signs this legislation as the permanent law of our land.

BUSINESS OF THE CONGRESS

Mr. DODD. Mr. President, my friend from Kentucky, in the opening of his remarks, talked about this Congress not being terribly successful. I would take some issue with that. This Senate has been successful, as I look down the list I have of more than three pages of legislation going back to the use of force resolution after September 11, responses to terrorist attacks, the Patriot Act, the airport security, Defense authorizations, homeland defense, antiterrorism bills, terrorism insurance—we are still working on the conference—access to affordable pharmaceuticals, prescription drugs, reimportation, patients' bill of rights. Again, conference reports have not been reached, but this Senate has had extensive debates where all sides have been heard on these matters.

I mentioned in the election reform bill more than 40 amendments were considered on the floor. With all due respect to the other body these days, it is not uncommon for legislation to be considered where only one or two amendments may be offered. It is regrettable we have not been able to reach agreement between the other body and this body on some of these matters, but the Senate over this last Congress has responded to incredible and unprecedented difficulties in this generation. In the wake of September 11, the anthrax attack, and the tremendous pressures that put on this institution, I am as disappointed as anyone that we do not have a prescription drug benefit, that we don't have a Patients' Bill of Rights, that we don't have a minimum wage, that we are not responding to the unemployment requests.

That is not because this Senate has not wanted to step up, time after time. I am proud to be a Daschle Democrat. I hear people suggesting that as a moniker of derision. Many think TOM DASCHLE has done a remarkable job in being the majority leader. It is disappointing we have not been able to do on the other matters what we were able to get done on the election reform, but that is not the fault of the majority leader.

I am proud of the election reform bill. I am proud of a lot of other things done in this Senate over the last number of months before we adjourn. I am disappointed we were not able to reach

agreement on some of the other matters. The fault of that lies elsewhere.

I wanted to not let the afternoon close without this Senator expressing his strong feelings about some of the other matters that the American public desperately need. I did not engage in the debate earlier today about the economic conditions of our country, but it is what people are asking about as I go throughout my State, and other parts of the country. People are very worried about where we are headed economically. They are worried about the quality of education. They are worried about whether jobs will be there. They want to hear us engaging in ideas that will advance how we can improve the quality of education, extend health care benefits to people. They want to get a sense we are on their side. They know we cannot do it all ourselves. It takes cooperation between private and other governmental sectors, but they want to know we care as much about what they struggle with to make ends meet, to provide for families and provide for their future.

I think it is regrettable we will spend the last remaining days with people flying around the country attending fundraising events when we could be working on some of the economic problems afflicting people in this country. We see the deficits mounting again after the great hope the surpluses were going to provide, surpluses from the previous administration. It is sad we have come to this in our country. We ought to get our priorities straight and get back on the economic issues. The American people expect nothing less.

If we wonder why people do not participate as often as we would like in the election process, some has to do with people being too lazy. An awful lot has to do with people wondering whether the things they worry most about are even being considered by the people they elect to public office. People do not think of themselves as Democrats or Republicans every day. They think of themselves as being citizens of the country: Parents, children, neighbors, coworkers. That is how they define themselves. They want to know their elected representatives, regardless of party, are keeping their interests in mind.

This is a republic. They do not get the chance to vote. If 280 million Americans could be packed in the Chambers, the agenda would change. It would be about health care, it would be about prescription drugs, about a minimum wage, and improving the quality of elementary and secondary education. If they could stand here collectively, that is what they would ask us to do—to be leaders on those questions, to become forces in visions for improving the quality of life for people in the country.

That is what Senator DASCHLE has tried to do over the past 2 years in the wake and midst of all the other problems we face. I commend him for it, HARRY REID, BYRON DORGAN, and other

Members of the leadership here. I understand as well it is not easy for TRENT LOTT and DON NICKLES, the leadership on the other side.

My hope is when we come back here in January we get about the business of grappling with the underlying questions. We spent a lot of time on Iraq and the other questions. The American people want to know why we cannot spend a few days talking about the issues they worry most about. When they get up in the morning and they go to bed at night, they worry and they sit around talking about how they will lick these issues. They would like to know we would spend at least as much time on those questions as some of the other issues.

Mr. BURNS. Mr. President, I rise today to support the hard work of the conferees on the election reform conference report. I did not hesitate to vote against S. 565 because it unfairly disadvantaged rural States and did not fix the most grievous flaws with the current system. I am pleased to report that significant improvements have been made from the original bill, and I support this attempt to give greater integrity to the electoral process.

We can now ensure that the ballots from our servicemen and women overseas are properly handled. Their ballots cannot be refused based on early submission, and each will bear a postmark in order to avoid recent election debacles from occurring again.

All States will receive a minimum grant award, with the potential to apply for additional funds, an improvement over the Senate-passed version, which would have disadvantaged rural States with a solely competitive grant program. Most importantly, this report identifies remedies for election fraud. States may purge any individuals who do not vote in two consecutive Federal elections and are unresponsive to follow-up by State officials. We must clean up our voter rolls, and this provision gives States the vehicle to do so, should they choose to use it. This is by no means a perfect report, but I am sufficiently convinced that we have taken great strides to better our voting process.

ORDER OF PROCEDURE

Mr. DODD. I ask unanimous consent tomorrow's cloture vote be vitiated and that the Senate proceed to the consideration of S. Res. 304 immediately upon the disposition of H.R. 5010, the Defense appropriations bill. I further ask unanimous consent that tomorrow's order with respect to the election reform conference report, H.R. 3295, commence at 11:40 a.m. and tomorrow's order with respect to the Defense appropriations conference report commence at 2:15 p.m., with all other provisions of the above-mentioned orders remaining in effect.

I am told this is cleared by the minority as well.

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

Mr. DODD. I yield back all the remaining time on the conference report.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection, the time is yielded back.

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

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

ONE-YEAR ANNIVERSARY OF SENATE ANTHRAX ATTACK

Mr. DASCHLE. Mr. President, one year ago today, a letter containing about two grams of anthrax was opened in my office. My staff, Senator FEINGOLD's staff, and the law enforcement and medical personnel who responded to the incident were suddenly thrown into a world of frightening uncertainty.

Twenty-eight people tested positive for exposure to multiple lethal doses of anthrax, and about 45 others were presumed to be significantly exposed.

They endured 100 to 120 days of antibiotics and the fear and anxiety that accompany the largest bioterrorist attack on U.S. soil. All the while, they continued to come to work and do their jobs—jobs that included trying to protect the rest of America from a similar fate.

Of course, the effects of this attacks were felt well beyond my office. Hundreds of others from the immediate area were placed on preventive antibiotics. House and Senate office buildings were closed for several days, and the Hart building was closed for 3 months.

Every member and employee of the Senate was affected, and I must say it was an inspiration to see how well our community pulled together to ensure that the Senate continued to address the business of the country.

In retrospect, we were very lucky. We knew exactly when and where people had been exposed, which gave us an advantage that others did not have—the opportunity to provide those who were exposed with immediate preventive care. And while there were some terrifying times, no one in the Senate community died as a result of their exposure to anthrax.

Sadly, others were not so lucky. Robert Stevens and Ernesto Blanco had no idea they had been exposed to anthrax when they fell ill. October 5 is the anniversary that Ernesto Blanco remembers; October 5 is the day his co-worker, Robert Stevens, died.

Next week America's postal workers will mark two more tragic anniversaries: October 21 is the day Thomas L. Morris, Jr. died of inhalation anthrax, and his colleague Joseph P. Curseen, Jr. succumbed the following day.

Because it was not yet understood that the deadly bacteria could escape

through envelopes, Mary Morris, Celeste Curseen, and their families and friends have endured a terribly painful year.

Thomas Morris, Joseph Curseen, and all of America's postal workers continued to work even when they knew they could risk for exposure to anthrax or other biological or chemical agents. Postal workers accept those and other risks every day, and for their courage and dedication, they deserve a nation's gratitude.

Those who knew and loved Kathy Nguyen and Ottillie Lundgren have their own anniversaries approaching: October 31 and November 17. Exactly how these women were exposed remains a sad mystery.

Still others, including Ernesto Blanco, LeRoy Richmond, and Naomi Wallace, survived the disease. But many of them are suffering from debilitating often painful long-term health effects. They have no anniversary to mark the end of their ordeal, for it is ongoing.

All of these people, like the first responders and Senate employees exposed to anthrax, were innocent victims.

My staff and I feel a special kinship with the families of those who died and with those who continue to struggle with their health. On their behalf, and on behalf of the entire Senate, I extend our deepest sympathy to those to who lost friends and loved ones and our very best wishes for a full recovery to those who survived the disease.

What else shall we offer these families? They need more than our sympathy. They—and all Americans—need our absolute resolve to ensure that our country does everything it reasonably can to prevent and address the bioterrorist threat, so that others do not suffer what they have suffered. As tragic as the anthrax attacks of last fall were, they could have been much worse, and we must prepare ourselves for and defend against the possibility of far greater threats.

We must be vigilant in our effort to identify and neutralize terrorist cells. We must develop better ways to detect chemical and biological agents in the air, water, and food supplies. We must develop better vaccines. We must develop better treatments for those who are exposed to deadly viruses, bacteria, and agents. And we must develop better coordination between the various public health, intelligence and other government entities responsible for addressing the bioterrorist threat.

The victims and their families also need and deserve to know that the perpetrator or perpetrators of these terrible crimes will be brought to justice. We are all frustrated by the fact that the person or persons responsible are still out there, capable of striking again. This is a complex case, and I know the FBI has focused many resources on it. I am hopeful they will soon be in a position to bring the case to a successful close.

One year ago today, an anthrax-laden letter was opened in my office.