



United States
of America

Congressional Record

PROCEEDINGS AND DEBATES OF THE 107th CONGRESS, SECOND SESSION

Vol. 148

WASHINGTON, MONDAY, MAY 20, 2002

No. 65

Senate

The Senate met at 1 p.m. and was called to order by the Honorable BLANCHE L. LINCOLN, a Senator from the State of Arkansas.

PRAYER

The Chaplain, Dr. Lloyd John Ogilvie, offered the following prayer:

Julian of Norwich in the 15th century prayed,

"God of Your goodness, give me Yourself, for You are sufficient for me . . . If I were to ask anything less I should always be in want, for in You alone do I have all."

Father, in this quiet moment we seek the ultimate joy of life: We simply come to abide in Your presence. We would not interrupt what You have to say to us with chatter. More than anything that You can provide us—we need You. Make us as ready to listen as we are to talk. You have created us for communion with You. We thank You for speaking to us in our souls. Now we hear what You have been seeking to tell us: We are loved, forgiven, and cherished by You. You have plans for us: A personal will for each of us and a will for our Nation. Bless the Senators now as they wait on You. Inspire the rest of us to follow their leadership as far as they follow You. We open our minds and hearts to receive You—our Lord, Saviour, Peace, and Power. Amen.

PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

The Honorable BLANCHE L. LINCOLN led the Pledge of Allegiance, as follows:

I pledge allegiance to the Flag of the United States of America, and to the Republic for which it stands, one nation under God, indivisible, with liberty and justice for all.

APPOINTMENT OF ACTING PRESIDENT PRO TEMPORE

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will please read a communication to the Senate from the President pro tempore (Mr. BYRD).

The legislative clerk read the following letter:

U.S. SENATE,
PRESIDENT PRO TEMPORE,
Washington, DC, May 20, 2002.

To the Senate:

Under the provisions of rule I, paragraph 3, of the Standing Rules of the Senate, I hereby appoint the Honorable BLANCHE L. LINCOLN, a Senator from the State of Arkansas, to perform the duties of the Chair.

ROBERT C. BYRD,
President pro tempore.

Mrs. LINCOLN thereupon assumed the chair as Acting President pro tempore.

RECOGNITION OF THE ACTING MAJORITY LEADER

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. The Senator from Nevada is recognized.

SCHEDULE

Mr. REID. Madam President, you will announce shortly that we will be in a period of morning business until 2 o'clock today. The first one-half hour will be under the control of Senator DORGAN, and the second one-half hour will be under the control of the Republican leader or his designee. At 2 p.m. today, we are going to resume consideration of the trade act. There are no rollcall votes scheduled today. The next rollcall vote will occur tomorrow at about 11 a.m. on the cloture motion on the steel amendment to the trade act. There are numerous amendments pending, and others will be filed today. Of course, the leader has indicated that he is going to file cloture tomorrow on the bill itself.

Senators who have amendments to be offered should do so. We are going to do our very best to work out arrangements so we can have as many votes as possible prior to the cloture vote which will take place on Wednesday sometime.

There is a lot of work to do on this trade bill. The leader wants to finish it

this week. We have been on it for a week. It is very possible that we could have some long days this week. There is some talk that the chairman of the Committee on Appropriations, Senator BYRD, is going to be able to mark up the supplemental appropriations bill. The House has not acted on it yet. It is my understanding they are going to take this matter to the Committee on Rules and rule on it to see if they can get it over to us sometime late Wednesday.

This will be a very busy week, especially with the Memorial Day 1-week recess facing us in a few days.

RESERVATION OF LEADER TIME

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. Under the 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 not to extend beyond the hour of 2 p.m. with Senators permitted to speak therein for up to 10 minutes each.

Under the previous order, the first half of the time shall be under the control of the Senator from North Dakota, Mr. DORGAN, or his designee.

The Senator from North Dakota.

THE NEW HOMESTEAD ECONOMIC OPPORTUNITY ACT

Mr. DORGAN. Madam President, I will not be taking the full half hour. So the Senator from Nevada, if he wishes to make comments, might want to make comments following mine.

It was 140 years ago today that the original Homestead Act was signed into law. I want to comment for a moment about that act and about legislation that was introduced in the Congress.

● This "bullet" symbol identifies statements or insertions which are not spoken by a Member of the Senate on the floor.



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Here is a copy of the stamp that was issued in 1962—a postage stamp commemorating the original Homestead Act. A sod house from North Dakota was commemorated on that postage stamp.

President Lincoln signed the Homestead Act into law. The purpose of that was to encourage people who wanted to seek new opportunity to populate the middle part of our country—the heartland of our country. And people did go to the heartland of America.

My great-grandmother, a Norwegian immigrant who lost her husband to a heart attack, along with her six children, got on a train and went to Hettinger County, ND, and pitched a tent. She raised her family, built a home, started a farm, and ran a family farm.

That courageous Norwegian immigrant widow did what many Americans did. They just made an opportunity out of something that was there for them—the Homestead Act.

Then she had a son. That son had a daughter and that daughter had me. And that is how I came from Hettinger County, ND.

A lot of Americans have a similar story in their background about how they are living in this country.

But the Homestead Act was successful in moving people out to start farms, ranches, and small communities in this country.

One-hundred forty years later, this is what is happening to our country. You will notice that in the middle of our country—in the heartland of America—we are being systematically and relentlessly depopulated once again. As you will see, North Dakota has a substantial loss of population in almost all of its rural counties. In North Dakota, the chart shows what is happening. Ninety-one percent of our counties are suffering from substantial out-migration: Montana, 54 percent; South Dakota, 73 percent; and, Nebraska, 66 percent.

There is this relentless depopulation of the central part of our country.

Some wring their hands, gnash their teeth, and ask what they can do, and say perhaps nothing. I happen to think we can do something.

Last March, the Bismarck Tribune ran an Associated Press story talking about the cycle of what is happening in many of these States, from North Dakota to Texas. Schools are closing. Farmers are giving up. Young people are moving out, leaving behind the elderly in communities struggling to keep their names on the map.

The latest census number shows dozens of counties in South Dakota, North Dakota, Missouri, Nebraska, Kansas, and Illinois have lost people in the 1990s. The question is, What, if anything, can we do about that?

I have introduced a piece of legislation here in the Congress with my colleague Senator HAGEL from Nebraska. Very simply, our legislation is similar to the Homestead Act of 140 years ago,

except we don't have land to give away anymore. So we say to people who would move in and stay in these local areas that are rural by nature and which have been losing population, here are the reasons for you to stay. There are incentives for you to stay.

Much of the country aspires to have what they have in many of these rural counties and local communities: good places in which to live, great places to raise a family, good neighborhoods, safe streets, strong schools and other things that people aspire to have. Yet we are trying to recreate that in other areas of the country, even as we are losing it in the heartland.

Again, the question is, What can we do about that? Senator HAGEL and I have introduced a piece of legislation called the New Homestead Economic Opportunity Act.

It says to people, if you live and work in these out-migration counties after you graduate from college, we will forgive part of your college loan.

We will provide a tax credit for a home purchased by individuals living in these counties that are suffering from out-migration.

We will protect home values by allowing losses in home value to be deducted from your Federal income tax. In many of these small towns, when you build a home, it is worth less immediately after it is built than the cost of construction.

We will establish Individual Homestead Accounts to help build savings and increase access to credit if you are living in one of these rural counties.

Then there are business incentives as well. Say you create or keep a business in one of these rural counties losing population. States can offer investment tax credits for newly constructed buildings and accelerated depreciation for equipment purchases. There are a whole series of things that represent business incentives, either to stay there and start a business or come there and create a business.

The New Homestead Economic Opportunity Act also recognizes in order to be successful in starting or keeping business in rural areas, you have to have venture capital. Our legislation would establish a national venture capital fund in order to do that.

The National Association of Counties has endorsed the New Homestead Economic Opportunity Act, saying:

As you are aware, some of America's rural counties are facing critical hurdles . . . many rural counties are experiencing an out-migration of youth to more urbanized areas of the country due to a lack of economic opportunities . . . Your legislation is a good attempt to ameliorate this out-migration from rural America and we fully support your efforts.

The same is true with many other organizations. I will put up a chart showing just a few of them: The National Telecommunications Cooperative Association, the North Dakota Association of Builders, the North Dakota Association of Realtors, bank groups, credit unions, and more.

The question for this Congress is, Will we do something about what is happening to rural areas in the heartland of our country?

When America's cities were suffering a crisis and inner-city blight, America went right to work. It put on its work clothes and said: All right, we're going to help America's cities, we're going to do a model cities program and an urban renewal program, and we will not allow our cities to fail.

I supported that. Good for us. The fact is, many of our big cities have turned around completely, and they now have economic life and vitality. The question for the Congress and the country is, Will we do something to restore economic opportunity in the heartland of this country? I hope we will.

So I wanted, on the 140th anniversary today of the original Homestead Act, to point out there is a new Homestead Act that has been introduced in Congress by Senator HAGEL and myself. And we have done that for a very important reason. We hope our colleagues will join us in allowing us to move that piece of legislation in this Congress.

CUBA

Mr. DORGAN. Madam President, I want to say a word on another matter, if I might, about a speech given by President Bush this morning.

President Bush, this morning, gave another speech about Cuba and said: No, our 40 years of embargo against Cuba really work. We want to continue this embargo. And we want to get even tougher now.

The President is going to Florida this evening for a \$25,000-per-person fundraiser. I suspect there is a lot of politics and probably very little policy in this speech. But let me say this: I do not think it does anything to hurt Fidel Castro to continue an embargo that has failed for 40 years.

An embargo that punishes Americans for traveling in Cuba, an embargo that makes it impossible, and now difficult, for our farmers to sell into Cuba, is not an embargo, in my judgment, that represents this country's best policy interests. It does not make any sense for me to embrace policies that don't allow Fidel Castro to ever miss a meal. He has never missed breakfast, lunch, supper, or dinner because of these embargoes. It is just poor, sick, and hungry people in Cuba who have been injured by these policies.

This 40-year embargo is at odds with everything else we are doing. We say, let's trade with Communist China. Why? Because China is a Communist country, yes. But trading with them will actually open up opportunities and bring democracy to China more quickly. We say, let's do that same thing with Vietnam. Yes, it is a Communist country, but engaging with Vietnam will have more impact than not engaging.

If that is the case, why is that not the case with Cuba? The answer is, of