



United States
of America

Congressional Record

PROCEEDINGS AND DEBATES OF THE 107th CONGRESS, SECOND SESSION

Vol. 148

WASHINGTON, WEDNESDAY, JULY 24, 2002

No. 102

Senate

The Senate met at 10 a.m. and was called to order by the Honorable E. BENJAMIN NELSON, a Senator from the State of Nebraska.

PRAYER

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

Gracious God, whose patience lasts even when ours is tested, we praise You for this new day. Thank You for giving the Senators courage to battle for truth as they see it, deal with differences, and keep the unity of fellow patriots. The very nature of our system can foster party spirit. Help us maintain mutual esteem and trust without which nothing can be accomplished. Thank You for being the unseen but powerful Presence in this chamber. Keep us open to You and respectful of each other. Bear on our hearts the words of Thomas Jefferson after the contentious election of 1800: "The greatest good we can do our country is to heal its party divisions and make them one people." We dedicate ourselves to remember this today and throughout this election year.

At 3:40 p.m. today we will remember the sacrifice in the line of duty of Officer Jacob J. Chestnut and Detective John M. Gibson. Continue to bless their families. Help us to express our gratitude to the officers who serve in Congress with such faithfulness. You are our Lord and Saviour. Amen.

PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

The Honorable E. BENJAMIN NELSON 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 assistant legislative clerk read the following letter:

U.S. SENATE,
PRESIDENT PRO TEMPORE,
Washington, DC, July 24, 2002.

To the Senate:

Under the provisions of rule I, paragraph 3, of the Standing Rules of the Senate, I hereby appoint the Honorable E. BENJAMIN NELSON, a Senator from the State of Nebraska, to perform the duties of the Chair.

ROBERT C. BYRD,
President pro tempore.

Mr. NELSON of Nebraska 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. Mr. President, today will be a very busy day, which will begin with morning business until 11 a.m. The first half of the time is under the control of Senator DASCHLE, which time has been given to the Senator from Michigan, Ms. STABENOW. The second half of the time is under the control of the Republican leader or his designee.

At 11 o'clock, the Senate will resume consideration of the prescription drug bill, with 2 hours of debate in relation to the Hagel second-degree amendment.

At 1 p.m., the Senate will resume consideration of the supplemental conference report, with 30 minutes of debate prior to a 1:30 p.m. rollcall vote on adoption of the report.

Following disposition of that conference report, there will be 5 minutes of debate, equally divided on each side, on the Hagel amendment, followed by a vote in relation to that amendment.

At 3:40, as has been announced in the prayer by the Chaplain, we will remember the deaths of Officer Chestnut and Detective Gibson.

Following the vote on Hagel, we will go then to an amendment to be offered by Senator ROCKEFELLER. We expect to finish that fairly quickly and then go to another amendment or two today. The leader expects to work toward completing the bill this week.

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 11 a.m., with Senators permitted to speak therein for up to 10 minutes each.

The first half of the time shall be under the control of the majority leader or his designee. The second half of the time shall be under the control of the Republican leader or his designee.

The Senator from Minnesota is recognized.

(Ms. STABENOW assumed the Chair.)

MINNESOTA NEEDS DISASTER RELIEF

Mr. WELLSTONE. Madam President, I am joined by Senator DAYTON from Minnesota and the occupant of the Chair. We come to the floor this morning because we want to communicate a respectful, sincere, and honest message to each and every one of our colleagues.

It has been my experience in the Senate over the past 12 years that sometimes you just have to fight for people—not with acrimony, but you have to fight for people. In Minnesota, 17

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



Printed on recycled paper.

S7243

counties have been declared Federal disaster areas due to tremendous floods last month. As a result, Northwest Minnesota, a rich agricultural region, has been devastated. According to the Minnesota Farm Service Agency at least \$370 billion in damage to the agriculture sector has been caused, due to these floods. We tried to include disaster relief in the supplemental bill. Unfortunately we could not do it because the administration said don't even try, no way. While there is some help for the Federal Emergency Management Agency, which is important, FEMA cannot help the farmers and the Small Business Administration cannot help the farmers.

This is a case of "there but for the grace of God go I." I said this to my colleagues yesterday, and I want to say it again today. I have never voted against disaster relief assistance for anybody in the country, be it a hurricane, tornado, fire, drought, or flooding. If, God forbid, it happens to others, we want to help.

This administration has said no to any emergency disaster assistance for agriculture. The President has said any emergency assistance for agriculture must come out of the farm bill. The farm bill is about loan rates, dairy, conservation and fair prices for farmers. The farm bill is about economic assistance, not natural disasters.

So our message today is this: We are going to look at every appropriations bill, and if any appropriations bill comes out on the floor and there is assistance for fire or any other emergency that has happened—be it for Arizona, or for flooding in Texas, or anywhere else—we will slow up that bill. In fact, we will stop that bill if we need to until we get the commitment that there will be the funding for emergency disaster assistance for the farmers in Minnesota, or for the farmers in Nebraska, for the people we represent.

Time is not neutral. People need help now. We intend to make the Senate address this issue. I yield to my colleague from Minnesota.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The junior Senator from Minnesota is recognized.

Mr. DAYTON. Madam President, I thank the Senator for graciously taking the Chair so Senator NELSON could join with the Senator from Minnesota and myself. I know the Senator from Michigan, who is presiding, has strong support for this disaster assistance as well. I want to say to my colleague and friend, the senior Senator from Minnesota, I am proud to stand with him today, and I am proud to follow his leadership on this disaster assistance legislation.

The Senator and I both serve on the Senate Agriculture Committee, along with our colleague from Nebraska. The Senate Agriculture bill had disaster assistance funding in it. The House and the administration would not agree to the inclusion of disaster assistance in the package, which came out of the

conference committee and was enacted into law.

As the Senator said, it is imperative that the Senate and the House and the administration join together, given what happened in Minnesota, with 17 counties declared a disaster area because of excessive flooding in June. During a recent visit, I saw whole fields of crops underwater—giant lakes created by torrential rains one week, and again the week following. It is hard to see people, many of whom lost their crops last year, struggling again this year.

I asked Secretary of Agriculture Veneman last week in a committee hearing: Where is this money that is purportedly available in the legislation that was passed for disaster aid? And she could not identify any.

I join with my colleague in saying we must have this assistance. The Senate did it right in its version of the Farm bill. Unfortunately, the House and the administration have blocked disaster aid. We have to try again because farmers are going under if we do not.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Nebraska.

Mr. NELSON of Nebraska. I thank my distinguished colleague from Michigan for exchanging positions for a moment so I have an opportunity to make a statement about the importance of having disaster relief in the soonest possible timeframe.

Over the last several years in developing a farm policy, we have gone from virtually no help to a new farm program that is designed to help get agriculture on its feet, but it is designed to do that in a time when we would expect normal conditions. It is not designed to take care of disaster situations we are facing today for the livestock industry in particular.

If we are not able to step forward at this time, take care of this situation, and provide hope for the livestock industry in our country, particularly those that are experiencing severe drought, as in the case of Nebraska and the Midwestern States, many of those farmers and ranchers are going to divest themselves of their herds. They are going to cut down the size of their herds. They are going to sell off their breeding stock to survive under these terrible conditions. They are not going to be able to rebuild those herds overnight. It will take years to rebuild.

There is no coverage in the Crop Insurance Program for parched pastures that today will not sustain the grazing of our cattle. There is no support in the farm bill for those farmers and ranchers who are experiencing the losses on the livestock side. For those in this body who are looking for offsets, which is important in the Senate, they are looking for money. To go after the farm bill and the funding for building agriculture and take that money now to support the livestock industry is not the way to go. What we need to do is recognize that this is an emergency sit-

uation like other emergencies and it is a disaster that must, in fact, be addressed right now.

Many of the people who voted for the last four or five disaster programs without requiring any kind of an offset are today saying: If we do it today, we have to find an offset. It is because today we have a farm bill, and they found the source of dollars. That is the only reason I think they are looking at that program.

Robbing Peter to pay Paul at the present time will mean that both Peter and Paul will not make it. What we need to do is face this as a reality so that the farmers in Nebraska and the farmers all across our country, those who are selling their livestock, will know there is help on the way; that they can be sustained; that they are not going to have to sell off their herds.

As we look at this downward spiral, the spinoff problems are consequential. In addition to having smaller herds, there will be less cattle to eat corn. In a bumper crop year, there will be more corn, and therefore that will depress the price of corn.

This is not a situation without consequences to those outside interests. It will harm the smaller communities that depend on agricultural income for their very existence. We must, in fact, act now and not make this a partisan or political football to kick back and forth. We must, in fact, step forward now and recognize the urgency of this situation and not hold the farmers and ranchers of the livestock industry hostage while others are playing partisan politics.

I thank the Senators from Minnesota and other colleagues who are looking forward to having an emergency aid package, recognizing this disaster at the soonest possible time.

I yield the floor. I thank the Chair.

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. The Senator from Michigan.

Ms. STABENOW. Mr. President, we are playing revolving chairs today. It is a pleasure to be in the Chamber with you. I indicate to my colleagues—the Senator from Nebraska and my colleagues from Minnesota—that I completely understand and support what they are fighting for and join them in that fight.

We also have had in northern and western Michigan disasters that happened as late as this spring where we have seen our cherry crop wiped out because of extremely hot weather, in the nineties, and then immediately going into freezing temperatures. We have seen our orchards literally wiped out in terms of the ability to produce cherries and other crops.

When this happens to our farmers, it is critical we step forward in a bipartisan way and do everything we can to support them to get through this year, to get through these disasters.

PRESCRIPTION DRUG BENEFIT

Ms. STABENOW. Mr. President, I rise today, as I have now for many