under the 180-day marketing exclusivity provision. Before we change the law, let us have a serious re-examination of whether to retain the 180-day marketing exclusivity in its current form both in terms of the length of the exclusivity period and whether the rewards for successful invalidity and non-infringement challenges should be treated identically.

I urge my colleagues, as well as consumer organizations and pharmaceutical purchasers such as insurers and self-insured businesses to reflect upon what I have said on this subject today.

This is an area in which I think we would be wise to reject Senator SCHUMER's argument that all we are doing with this legislation is restoring the integrity of the old Hatch-Waxman Act. But why should we be governed by the world of 1984 when, for example, the best selling drugs in this country have increased sales by a factor of 10? Why should the value of the marketing exclusivity reward increase in direct proportion?

On a number of occasions, I have commended Senator SCHUMER and Senator MCCAIN for moving their legislation forward, even if the bill that came out of the HELP Committee does not resemble very closely their bill, and I still have problems with the floor vehicle as I have laid out in some detail. I commend them again today.

I hope to return to the floor before this debate ends to offer a few suggestions for a more comprehensive approach to reforming the Drug Price Competition and Patent Term Restoration Act.

This in no way minimizes the importance of he matters that are the subject of the pending legislation, because they are important areas. I do not believe, however, that these are the most important issues we can address.

Rather than focusing on how best to bring the law back to the old days of 1984, as Senator SCHUMER suggests, I want to discuss ways to modify the law to help usher in a new era of drug discovery while, at the same time, increasing patient access to the latest medicines.

Mr. President, I yield the floor.

ORDER OF PROCEDURE

Mr. REID. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that following disposition of H.R. 5121, the legislative branch appropriations bill, Rockefeller amendment No. 4316 be agreed to, and the motion to reconsider be laid on the table.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Is there objection?

Without objection, it is so ordered.

Mr. REID. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that immediately following action on adoption of the Rockefeller amendment, the Senate proceed to the consideration of the conference report to accompany H.R. 3763, the Corporate and Auditing Accountability, Responsibility, and Transparency Act of 2002, and that it be considered under the following limitations: That there be a time limitation of 2 hours equally divided and controlled between the chair and ranking member of the committee or their designees; that upon the use or yielding back of time, without further intervening action or debate, the Senate proceed to vote on adoption of the conference report.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Is there objection?

Without objection, it is so ordered.

LEGISLATIVE BRANCH APPROPRIATIONS ACT, 2003—Resumed

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Under the previous order, the Senate will proceed to vote on H.R. 5121, the Legislative Branch Appropriations Act.

Mr. REID. Mr. President, I ask for the yeas and nays on the legislative branch appropriations bill.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Is there a sufficient second?

There is a sufficient second.

The question is on agreeing to the conference report. The clerk will call the roll.

The legislative clerk called the roll.

Mr. NICKLES. I announce that the Senator from North Carolina (Mr. HELMS) is necessarily absent.

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Mrs. CARNAHAN). Are there any other Senators in the Chamber desiring to vote?

The result was announced—yeas 85, nays 14, as follows:

[Rollcall Vote No. 191 Leg.]

YEAS — 85

Akaka	Durbin	McConnell
Allen	Edwards	Mikulski
Baucus	Feingold	Miller
Bennett	Feinstein	Murkowski
Biden	Frist	Murray
Bingaman	Graham	Nelson (FL)
Bond	Grassley	Nelson (NE)
Boxer	Gregg	Nickles
Breaux	Hagel	Reed
Burns	Harkin	Reid
Byrd	Hatch	Rockefeller
Campbell	Hollings	Santorum
Cantwell	Hutchinson	Sarbanes
Carnahan	Hutchison	Schumer
Carper	Inouye	Sessions
Chafee	Jeffords	Shelby
Cleland	Johnson	Smith (OR)
Clinton	Kennedy	Snowe
Cochran	Kerry	Specter
Collins	Kohl	Stabenow
Corzine	Kyl	Stevens
Craig	Landrieu	Thompson
Crapo	Leahy	Thurmond
Daschle	Levin	Torricelli
Dayton	Lieberman	Warner
DeWine	Lincoln	Wellstone
Dodd	Lott	Wyden
Domenici	Lugar	
Dorgan	McCain	

NAYS — 14

Allard	Ensign	Roberts
Bayh	Enzi	Smith (NH)
Brownback	Fitzgerald	Thomas
Bunning	Gramm	Voinovich
Conrad	Inhofe	

NOT VOTING—1

Helms

The bill (H.R. 5121) was passed, as follows:

(The bill will be printed in a future edition of the RECORD.)

Mr. DURBIN. Madam President, I move to reconsider the vote.

Mr. REID. I move to lay that motion on the table.

The motion to lay on the table was agreed to.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Under the previous order, the Senate insists on its amendments and requests a conference with the House on the disagreeing votes of the two Houses.

The PRESIDING OFFICER appointed Mr. DURBIN, Mr. JOHNSON, Mr. REED of Rhode Island, Mr. BYRD, Mr. BENNETT, Mr. STEVENS, and Mr. COCHRAN conferees on the part of the Senate.

GREATER ACCESS TO AFFORDABLE PHARMACEUTICALS ACT OF 2001—Continued

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Under the previous order, the Senate will resume consideration of S. 812. The Rockefeller amendment No. 4316 is agreed to, and the motion to reconsider that vote is laid on the table.

The amendment (No. 4316) was agreed to.

SARBANES-OXLEY ACT OF 2002—CONFERENCE REPORT

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Under the previous order, the Senate will proceed to the consideration of the conference report to acompany H.R. 3763, which the clerk will report.

The legislative clerk read as follows:

The committee of conference on the disagreeing votes of the two Houses on the amendment of the Senate to the bill (H.R. 3763), to protect investors by improving the accuracy and reliability of corporate disclosures made pursuant to the securities laws, and for other purposes, having met, have agreed that the House recede from its disagreement to the amendment of the Senate, and agree to the same with an amendment, and the Senate agree to the same, signed by a majority of the conferees on the part of both Houses.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senate will proceed to the consideration of the conference report.

(The report is printed in the House proceedings of the RECORD of July 24, 2002.)

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Nevada is recognized.

Mr. REID. Madam President, I suggest the absence of a quorum and ask that the time not be charged against either manager.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection, it is so ordered. The clerk will call the roll.

The legislative clerk proceeded to call the roll.

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

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

Mr. SARBANES. Madam President, parliamentary inquiry of the Chair: What is pending before the Senate?

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The debate on the conference report is limited to 2 hours equally divided.

Mr. SARBANES. So there is 1 hour on each side.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator is correct.

Mr. SARBANES. Madam President, I yield myself 10 minutes.

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

Mr. SARBANES. Madam President, I am very pleased that we are now considering the conference report on the Public Company Accounting Reform and Investor Protection Act of 2002. The Senate approved this legislation on July 15 on a 97–0 vote. Conferees were named promptly both here and in the House, and the conference committee immediately went to work.

Agreement was reached yesterday in the early evening, about 7 o'clock, by the conference committee, and the House took up the conference report this morning and acted on it earlier in the day. The vote, I believe, was 422—3.

The conference report has now come over to us, and obviously, under our procedures, it is our turn to proceed to consider it.

This legislation establishes a carefully constructed statutory framework to deal with the numerous conflicts of interest that in recent years have undermined the integrity of our capital markets and betrayed the trust of millions of investors.

I say to my colleagues that in every one of its central provisions, the conference report closely tracks or parallels the provisions in the Senate bill for which, as I indicated earlier, all the Members present at the time, 97 of us, voted only a short time ago.

This legislation establishes a strong independent accounting oversight board, thereby bringing to an end the system of self-regulation in the accounting profession which, regrettably, has not only failed to protect investors, as we have seen in recent months, but which has in effect abused the confidence in the markets, whose integrity investors have taken almost as an article of faith.

This legislation reflects the extraordinary efforts of many colleagues on both sides of the Capitol. I want especially to recognize and express my deep gratitude to Senators DODD and CORZINE who early on introduced legislation that in many respects serves as the basis for titles 1 and 2 of this legislation.

On the House side, Congressman LAFALCE introduced comprehensive legislation on which we drew.

I also wish to acknowledge the many important contributions that my Republican colleague, Senator ENZI, made at every step in the process. Senator ENZI had legislation of his own, but in addition we worked very closely in the course of developing this legislation. Again and again I was struck by the thoughtfulness and reasonableness of his proposals for improving in the legislation. While in the end not all of them were included in the legislation, a significant number are, and I thank him very much for all his contributions.

Before addressing the major provisions of the legislation, let me make very clear that it applies exclusively to public companies—that is, to companies registered with the Securities and Exchange Commission. It is not applicable to provide companies, who make up the vast majority of companies across the country.

This legislation prohibits accounting firms from providing certain specified consulting services if they are also the auditors of the company. In our considered judgment, there are certain consulting services which inherently carry with them significant conflicts of interest. Auditors, in effect, find themselves in the position of auditing their own work. They may be acting as management of the company, for instance, on personnel matters when, as the outside auditor, they were supposed to be standing one step removed from the company as the outside auditor. This is the reasoning behind the prohibition.

What has happened in recent years is that the fees earned from the consulting work have dwarfed the fees earned from the auditors, which inevitably leads to concerns that punches may be pulled on the audit to accommodate the significant and remunerative involvement on the consulting side. Certain enumerated consulting practices are therefore not allowed, with the exception that a case-by-case exemption can be obtained from the oversight board that this legislation establishes.

The auditor can engage in the balance of consulting services with the pre-approval of the audit committee of the corporation. And of course an auditor can engage in whatever consulting services the firm and the corporation agree upon so long as the firm is not also acting as the corporation's auditor.

The bill sets significantly higher standards for corporate responsibility governance. It requires public companies to have independent audit committees and also enhances the role of the audit committee, which will have responsibility for hiring and firing the auditors and setting their compensation.

The legislation requires full and prompt disclosure of stock sales by company executives. Senator CARNAHAN added an important provision to the bill, requiring electronic filing with respect to such sales. That requirement would take effect in a year's time, to allow time for the necessary systems to be put in place; once in place it will assure prompt and accurate disclosure of these very significant transactions.

The legislation places limits on loans by corporations to their executive officers. It sets certain requirements for disclosure with respect to special purpose entities, which were used by some corporations that have run into such serious difficulty in recent months. It seeks to address the statement of pro forma earnings, in order to assure a more complete and accurate picture of a public company's financial position.

It also addresses the conflicts of interests that arise for stock analysts to whom investors look for impartial research-based advice about stocks. Unfortunately, many of these analysts are under pressure to promote stocks in which their broker-dealer firms may have an investment banking interest; on the one hand they are supposed to give unbiased advice to potential purchasers of stock, whether to buy or sell, but at the same time the firm of which they are a part is interested in developing a business relationship with the company on which the analyst is passing judgment. It has been sobering to discover that analysts have been formally recommending certain stocks to the investing public, while at the same time discussing them contemptuously among themselves. We have had too many demonstrations of this occurring.

The legislation includes provisions to protect analysts against retaliation, in cases where a negative recommendation may invite retaliation. Furthermore, the bill authorizes significant increases in funding for the Securities and Exchange Commission, which for the first time in many years will give it something close to the funding resources it needs.

There are also extensive criminal penalties contained in this legislation. These were initially included in legislation reported by the Judiciary Committee, which Senator LEAHY offered as an amendment to the bill. The House then passed its own bill with respect to criminal penalties, a separate standing bill, which in many instances doubled or even tripled the penalties in the Leahy proposal as it came to the floor, and the Leahy proposals were further supplemented by an amendment from Senators BIDEN and HATCH and another from Senator LOTT.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator has consumed 10 minutes.

Mr. SARBANES. I yield myself 4 additional minutes.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator has that right.

Mr. SARBANES. These provisions, among other things, require the CEOs and CFOs to certify their company's financial statements under penalty of potentially severe punishments.

We provide a $776 million authorization for the SEC. I want to spend a minute on this point, because it is very important. The Senate Appropriations Committee is now working on an appropriation that would contain $750 million for the SEC. It is urgent that we provide adequate funding for the Commission, whose responsibilities have expanded as the volume of market activity has grown, but whose funding has lagged. Clearly, the Commission must have the resources necessary to ensure a decisive and expeditious response to the scandals we have seen in

recent months, and to minimize the likelihood that we will see others in the future.

I must underscore this point. The Commission has been underfunded, and the result has been understaffing, high staff turnover and low morale as the Commission seeks to carry out its work. The SEC must be in a position to address immediately the problems of inadequate staff resources and inadequate pay.

At the moment, the SEC cannot offer its attorneys and accountants the same level of salary and benefits that their counterparts receive at the five Federal bank regulatory agencies. Talented and dedicated staff attorneys and accountants can increase their compensation by as much as one-third simply by moving to another agency. This is an intolerable situation. Pay parity has been authorized and now must be funded; this legislation specifically provide the necessary funding.

In addition, the authorization provides funding that will enable the Commission to upgrade its technical capacities, its computer systems, and it provides significant resources so that the Commission can augment its staff of attorneys, accountants and examiners at a time when they are needed to address a very heavy workload burden.

As an aside, I mention that this morning the committee reported to the Senate four nominees to bring the Securities and Exchange Commission to its full complement of five members. I very much hope we will be able to approve them next week so that they will be able to take their positions before the August recess. If we do, the Commission will be at full strength. They will all be in place and ready to do the job, and I think that is highly desirable.

In closing, let me say that I believe this conference report reflects our best efforts to deal with issues which we know to be numerous and complex. Throughout the process, we have worked together carefully on these issues. We have sought advice from the most distinguished and experienced practitioners in the field. We held 10 hearings in March with some of the very best experts in the country as our witnesses. We have consulted extensively, and I hope my colleagues will agree in good faith and across party lines. Our vision has been broad, our purpose steady. I think our approach has been reasonable.

We will send to the President legislation establishing a solid statutory framework for the reforms we know are urgently needed.

Our markets have benefited beyond measure from the statutory framework that created the SEC nearly 70 years ago. Indeed, I think we have had a tendency to take that for granted. Those markets have been a very significant economic asset for the United States, and an integral part of our economic strength. This legislation will serve to complement and reinforce that framework, which has served us well, and I believe it will stand the test of time.

Our markets, which have the reputation of being the fairest, the most efficient, the most transparent in the world, have suffered greatly in recent times, so much so that they seem to have lost the confidence of our investors. It is our purpose, with this legislation and through other actions that will have to be taken by the regulatory agencies and by the private sector, to see that once again our capital markets deserve the enviable reputation for fairness, efficiency, and transparency that they have enjoyed through the years.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Texas.

Mr. GRAMM. Madam President, I yield myself such time as I may consume.

I want to begin with some thankyous and congratulations. First, I want to congratulate Senator SARBANES on this bill, and I want to make note that in a very difficult period, where so many were trying to point the finger of blame, when it seemed almost every day that people were clamoring to make the strongest statement they could make to get the sound bite on television, Senator SARBANES could have taken that same route in the Banking Committee. We are the committee that has jurisdiction over the issues that had been at the very heart of our recent concerns in the capital markets.

However, Senator SARBANES did not take that route. I congratulate him. He not only brought good reflection on himself, but he helped raise the esteem that the Banking Committee is held in and reflected well on the Senate. We had hearings but we were focusing on what could be done to fix the problem. As a result, those hearings were the most productive that were held. They contributed to bringing us to where we are.

Now let me make it clear, from the very beginning there has been a broad consensus, and a very deep consensus, on 90 percent of the issues in this bill. One of my frustrations in this debate—and when you are debating something as high profile as this is, there are frustrations. I am not complaining—as my wife says whenever I complain about this job, not only did nobody force you to take it, but a lot of good people worked hard to keep you from getting it—I am not complaining, but part of our problem has been that the media has wanted to present this as a debate that had to do with how tough people were being, to the exclusion, often, in my opinion, of how reasonable we need to be.

We have before the Senate a bill that is clearly an improvement over the status quo. I don't care how disappointed you are in any one provision—and on several provisions I am very disappointed. No matter how disappointed a Member is, this is an improvement over the status quo, and for two reasons. One is obvious. That is, we needed stiffer criminal penalties. And, second, we needed to create an independently funded and an independently operating accounting oversight board so that we could deal with ethics questions in a framework that will promote high ethical standards, in the framework of independence. In addition, we desperately needed to have an independently funded FASB.

I would just say as an aside, Madam President, over the years I have agreed with FASB in some of their decisions; I have disagreed with FASB on some of their decisions. However, I am proud to be able to say today I have never taken the position that Congress ought to override FASB. As incomprehensible as some of their rulings have been to my way of thinking, having Congress vote on accounting standards is a very dangerous thing.

Some of our colleagues want to vote on the whole issue of expensing stock options. Wherever you come down on that issue, having Congress vote on accounting standards is very dangerous, very counterproductive. I hope that will not happen. Certainly, I am not going to vote to impose accounting standards on this board. We want FASB to set accounting standards. We want to be sure they have the independence that is necessary to allow them to do it.

In those areas there has never been a disagreement on this bill. The disagreements that have occurred have had to do with the perception of individual Members as to what was practical, what was workable, what was desirable. The one view I have always subscribed to, and I would have to say given my period of service in public life I am more convinced of it than ever, is that Thomas Jefferson was right when he said good men—he would say good people today, of course—good men with the same information are prone to have different opinions.

There is a natural tendency in the human mind to think, if people disagree with you, that either, A, they don't know what they are talking about; or B, they don't have good intentions. I subscribe to the Jefferson thesis.

The areas where I disagree with the bill are pretty straightforward. First of all, I believe there is a very real problem in auditor independence. If I were a member of this new accounting oversight board that we are going to put into place and I had to vote on the nine prohibited areas that are written into law in the bill, I would want to study them in detail. I might very well support all nine of them. I do not believe they should be written into law.

The advantages of letting the board set these standards—it seems to me that there are three:

No. 1, the board is going to have more time and more expertise than we have and is likely to do a better job.

No. 2, if we make a mistake and we write it into law, it is hard to fix things that are written into law. As Alan Greenspan has said, if Glass-Steagall, Depression-era banking legislation, had been a regulation, it clearly would have been changed by the 1950s. We did not change it until 1999. It took a long time to change it.

Finally, and probably of greatest importance, there is a natural tendency when we are talking about the problem in an era where we are all reading about Enron and WorldCom and the huge companies, to forget this law will apply to 16,254 companies. Many of these companies are quite small. One of the advantages of allowing the accounting oversight board to set out prohibitions on auditors performing other services in regulation, instead of prescribing them in law, is that the board can find a system whereby they can recognize what is practical in dealing with smaller companies and how that might differ from what is practical for General Motors.

An example that has come to my mind is one where I am operating a small public company, stock traded on an exchange or on Nasdaq, and I employ an accounting firm that has a CPA who basically does my auditing. He is in Houston. I am trying to hire a new bookkeeper in my company. I have three candidates. When my auditor is in town auditing my books, I say: I have these three candidates. I majored in physics in college, and I don't know anything about accounting. Could you interview these three bookkeepers and tell me who you think would be best?

Under this bill, that would be illegal. That would be providing a personnel service. It is prohibited for my auditor to provide that service for me as well.

For General Motors, should your auditor be providing a personnel service? My guess is they probably should not. But for this small company in College Station, Texas, what this prohibition ultimately will do is force them to do one of three things: In all probability, they will hire the bookkeeper without ever getting the advice of a CPA; No. 2, they can hire another CPA to interview these three candidates for a bookkeeper and pay them; No. 3, they can file for a waiver through the SEC and through the board. Each option is a worse choice from those available to such a small company today, and a worse choice for its shareholders.

The bill allows a waiver on an individual company by company basis. I rejoice that is the case. I personally believe we should have given the board, with the agreement of the SEC, the ability to grant blanket waivers based on the circumstances of classes of individual companies.

For example, if you have already granted 1,000 waivers where companies have applied for a waiver for a certain requirement based on their size, their location, practicality, the cost, whatever, at that point shouldn't the board be able to say: We have established this principle, and if your company meets these conditions, you are granted the waiver? Then, all they have to do is prove they meet the conditions.

My concern—and who knows, maybe this will be true, maybe it will not. The problem is we are legislating. We don't know. We can't look into the future. My concern is that by not granting them the ability to provide blanket waivers we are going to force a lot of smaller companies to hire lawyers and lobbyists to come to Washington to petition the SEC and the board. My concern is that this is going to use up their time and use up the resources of companies.

There is another side of this story and that is the concern that blanket waivers could be used to get around the intent of the law. How do you deal with that? How do you find a happy balance? It is not an easy question. I would have to say I believe we have imposed a one-size-fits-all regimentation that is going to be difficult to deal with—not impossible to deal with, but I think it is going to be difficult.

Another problem I have is that we have in this bill an accounting oversight board. Its members are not elected officials. They are not appointed in the sense that they are not Government officials. They will have the ability to make decisions that will affect the livelihood of Americans who are in the accounting profession. They will literally have the ability to say to a CPA: We are taking your license away and you can never practice again in providing accounting services to a publicly traded company.

Clearly, there are cases where that is justified. Clearly, there are cases where people ought to be fined and, clearly, there are cases where people ought to be put in prison. But I think when you are taking people's livelihoods, they ought to have an opportunity to appeal to the Federal district court where they live.

I think there ought to be a burden on them to make their case, and obviously the court is going to take into account that this board, that was duly constituted, made a decision. But I think that is an opportunity that people ought to have that they do not have under this bill.

I am also concerned about litigation. During the whole Clinton administration, there was only one bill where we overrode the President's veto, and that was a bill having to do with private securities litigation reform. We had a massive number of predatory strike suits where people filed lawsuits against companies. They almost always settled out of court. We had one law firm that filed the lion's share of the lawsuits. And the chief lawyer in that company said, in effect, ''It is wonderful to practice law where you don't have clients.''

That was a mistake when he said that, but he said it.

We took action to try to eliminate or minimize this abuse. In doing so, we codified a 1991 Supreme Court decision that addressed what happens if you think you have been wronged. We are not talking about criminal activity. We are not talking about SEC enforcement. We are not talking about the Justice Department. We are talking about civil disputes that people have. Under that law, in codifying what the 1991 Supreme Court decision said, we said that within a year after you believe you have been wronged, you have to file your lawsuit, and within 3 years after the event happens, you have to file your lawsuit.

One of the things this bill does, which I oppose, is it raises that to 2 years and 5 years, respectively. I would say that if there were evidence that people were not getting these lawsuits filed because of a lack of time, that under the circumstances I think that increasing the statute of limitations would have been justified. But as we have looked at the data, the mean average lawsuit is filed 11 days after the injury is discovered. Something like 90 percent of the lawsuits are filed in the first 6 months. It seems to me that this provision and other provisions of the bill that expand the ability of people to sue may have a positive effect in making people pay attention to their business, but we all know, based on our legal system, that it is going to be abused and that very heavy costs are going to be imposed on the private sector of the economy as litigation costs ultimately are added to the cost of the product that is produced and reduced from the stock value held by shareholders.

I could go on and on. There are other people who want to speak. We are under a time limit. But let me sum up.

I thought about this long and hard, and as I thought about this bill, I had to weigh, Does it do more good than harm? I have concluded that it does. It does less good than it could have done; it does more harm than it should have done—we could have corrected these things—but, quite frankly, in the environment we were in it was impossible. In the environment we were in, where everything was judged on some concept of being tough rather than on practicality and workability, it was impossible for us to come back and deal with these problems.

Finally, in the timeframe that we all faced in conference, we never really got around to discussing the practical kinds of things that do not seem important when you are writing law but seem very important 2 or 5 years later when you are implementing it.

Having said all that, I cannot stand up here and argue that this bill has worsened the status quo. This bill is better than the status quo for two reasons. No. 1, change needs to be made and criminal penalties need to be raised. These independent boards need to be established, and 90 percent of this bill, in my opinion, clearly represents a step in the right direction.

But, second—and this may sound like strange logic but I think it is important. I think to understand American government you have to understand it. The American people expect Congress to respond to a problem. We may not know the answer. We may not have perfect knowledge. But they expect us to try to do something about it. That in and of itself is an argument to which we should respond.

I would argue—being a conservative, as everyone engaged in this debate knows—I would argue we need to be careful. But in the end this bill is an improvement on the status quo. It could have been better. There are changes that could have been made that were not. But in the end, I cannot argue that this bill should not pass, should not become law. The President is going to sign the bill, and clearly he should.

I do believe we will have to come back after the fact and we will have to correct some of these issues. I think as time goes on we will see we may not have done enough in one area. Maybe we went overboard in another area. But the Congress will meet again, people will be paid to do this work, and I am confident that it will be done.

So let me conclude on this thought. I believe the marketplace has gone a long way toward solving this problem. I think the New York Stock Exchange action was excellent. Once again, they are proving that they are a great institution. As I have often said about the New York Stock Exchange, I feel as if I am standing on holy ground at the New York Stock Exchange.

Every boardroom is different from what it was before this crisis started. No one sitting on a board, corporate board or an audit committee, will ever be the same. No auditors will ever look at their task the way they did before all of this started, at least for a very long time. or at least for a very long time.

One of the advantages of having structure is when they forget, the structure won't forget. I totally agree with that. I think this represents a complement to it.

There is much in here I would have done differently. But in the end, I think this is a response that people can say the Government did hear, the Government did care, and Congress did try to fix it. I don't doubt that there are mistakes in here. I think I could name some, if asked to. But, on the whole, this is a response that was aimed at the problem. People went about it in a reasonable manner.

Certainly, the authors of this bill intended to do as good a job as they could do.

I again want to congratulate Senator SARBANES. I also want to thank him, looking back now at how quickly the conference went. I know people were unhappy when we had this period when the floor was tied up, and there were numerous amendments people wanted to add to the bill. But I think, given how the whole thing played out, it worked out from that point of view pretty much right.

If people on Wall Street are listening to the debate and trying to figure out whether they should be concerned about this bill, I think they can rightly feel that this bill could have been much worse. I think if people had wanted to be irresponsible, this is a bill on which they could have been irresponsible and almost anything would have passed on the floor of the Senate.

I think given where we are on this bill that it is a testament to the fact that our system works pretty well.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Mr. EDWARDS). Who yields time?

Mr. GRAMM. Mr. President, I yield 12 minutes to the Senator from Wyoming.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Wyoming.

Mr. ENZI. Thank you, Mr. President.

I am here today to speak in support of the conference report to the accounting reform bill. I will be encouraging all Senators to vote for the conference report.

This is earthshaking legislation that has been done with tremendous speed. It had to be earthshaking because we are trying to counteract the tremors from the volcanic action of the mountaintop being blown off such companies as Enron, WorldCom, Global Crossing, and others. Those collapses have set up a series of tremors across this country.

Congress is not the one to solve all the problems. But as Senator GRAMM just mentioned, we are expected to work at solving all of the problems. We have put in a huge effort on this bill, and it will make a difference.

While we have been working, the stock market has been going through some tremendous gyrations. I think some of those reactions in the stock market were to see how carefully we would consider and resolve this issue. I believe, the stock market was worried that we would overreact. The market watched to see if Congress would keep adding and adding things, until we destroyed the whole system. They can now see that did not happen—Congress acted responsibly. We took a long and tough look at the problem and reacted, but we did not overreact. At the same time corporations across the country have been making sure they did not have the kinds of problems brought to light in a few of these companies.

''Corporations'' should not be a bad word in this country. This country was built on business.

I always like to mention that it was primarily built on small business—small businesses that grew up, in many cases, but nevertheless ideas that started out as a small business.

We have to keep our focus on those small businesses, and make sure they are able to continue to operate in the climate that we have in the United States and under the laws that we pass.

I am pleased to say that the actions we took in this bill provide some assurance to small businesses and small accounting firms that they can continue to operate the way they have in the past.

We have given encouragement to the States not to run out and apply the same types of laws. I hope the States are paying attention because they will ruin a very good thing if they destroy small business. Keep the eye on small business, and we will continue to have big business.

Corporations have been checking what has been going on in their firms to a greater extent than they have ever before. Boards, CEOs, CFOs, and audit committees have been checking to see if they have the kinds of problems that brought down these other companies.

It is much like when there is a plane crash. Right after a plane crash is probably the safest time in the world to fly because everybody checks their equipment ever so much more carefully to make sure that the kind of defects that may have caused other problems will not happen to them. And the effect lasts for a long time afterwards.

Corporations have been checking their books. They have begun changing procedures. Some of the changes they have made have resulted in restatements. They have paid a price for doing restatements. But they have done the right thing by doing a restatement, and they should be recognized for that. I mentioned speed before. The Senate is not designed for speed. We started out slow. We held 10 hearings. We looked at the issues very carefully, everybody resolved in writing their own ideas.

One of the tough things about legislating is putting it down in writing. The concepts are so easy, but the details are so tough.

There are a number of people who drafted bills on this—both in the House and in the Senate. On this side, Senator GRAMM and I drafted a bill. Senator CORZINE and Senator DODD introduced a bill. Of course, Senator SARBANES had the overreaching bill, and I believe his benefited a little bit from having copies of both the House and Senate bills on which to build his bill. I compliment him for the way he took ideas from all of these different approaches.

Again, it shows the value of legislating by a wide variety of people. You get a wide variety of viewpoints, which actually provides some insights into areas that a person might not have thought about.

But, at any rate, we concluded the hearings, and we merged the bill. This came to committee the week before the Fourth of July. It passed out of committee in one day. It came to the floor of this body just 2 weeks ago. And now, it has already been conferenced, and come back to us for final passage. Part of that is a result of the atmosphere we are in, and the need for action. Timing can be everything on a bill. But part of it is because of the concentration of people who worked on this.

This legislation is a response to problems highlighted by the recent corporation failures of Enron, WorldCom, and others. It does send a clear signal to corporate America that executives can no longer abuse the trust their shareholders place in them without severe consequences.

This legislation builds a strong and independent board to oversee the accounting industry. It will eliminate the climate of self-regulation that has historically guided accounting.

However, I would like to make one point clear. I believe that, overall, accountants take their responsibilities very seriously. They did before, and they do now. We have the best system in the world. What we are doing with this is to maintain that we have the best system in the world. Most accountants are honest and hard working. They work for the benefit of the investors with probably the same percentage of exceptions as other professions.

This legislation will also provide for strong disciplinary action against executives who break the law. No longer will they be disciplined with a slap on the wrist. The bill recognizes that executives who destroy the dreams of investors by irresponsible and unethical behavior will be given the severe punishment they deserve.

I also want to again thank Senator SARBANES and Senator GRAMM for their leadership on this issue. They both have worked tirelessly the past few months to get this bill finished in a timely manner. I particularly appreciate some of the insights Senator GRAMM gave me as he worked on this bill in more detail than most people ever achieve. It is his standard, and he carried that out again this time, which did resolve a number of the problems. I want to congratulate Senator SARBANES, and thank him for the way he conducted the hearings. A lot of people do not realize that the Chairman of a committee usually gets to pick most of the witnesses, and the ranking member gets to pick a few of the witnesses.

As we went through these 10 hearings, I couldn't find any witnesses that I wouldn't have picked were I given the selection. There were some very qualified people who testified. Some of them were even accountants. I did appreciate that. I apologize for asking some questions of them but it was such a great opportunity for me. My staff noticed that when the camera focused in on the person giving the answer, the wedge of people behind them were all asleep.

So what we dealt with is not the kind of thing that Americans get really excited about. It is far too detailed for us to get too excited about it. For accountants, these kinds of discussions are almost like watching ESPN.

Senator SARBANES did continue to meet with me and other Members and continued to make changes that improved the bill. There was a wide variety of Senators who worked on this bill. I have mentioned Senators DODD and CORZINE and GRAMM. Senator EDWARDS worked with me on one provision that is in this bill to make sure that not only accountants, analysts, CEOs, CFOs, Boards and audit committees were addressed under this bill, but lawyers have some responsibility, too.

I find it very exciting we are going to make lawyers have a code of ethics when they are dealing with the Securities and Exchange Commission, and that they are going to have an obligation to report things when they find them. I know that causes some consternation among some attorneys, but I think it will make, overall, the same kind of improvements we are expecting from everybody else.

Senators ALLEN, GREGG, BAUCUS, GRASSLEY, and KENNEDY all worked on some provisions that we don't talk about too much; again, it is in the detail area, but it has to do with the blackout period when you are dealing with pension and other stock sales by executives. I know the intense hours it took to come up with a solution that would work. And if you have that many people agreeing on it, there is probably a good chance it will work.

Again, I congratulate all those people for their constraint in limiting their ideas to what needed to be done for this bill. A lot of ideas were floating around here on lots of things we can with corporations and executives that people want to have fixed, but this bill did maintain some real constraint to stay on topic.

I do believe the conference report is an improved bill from the one that passed the Senate. Again, I appreciate Senator SARBANES working with me to make some of the changes about which I spoke.

One change we made changes the implication that not all nonaudited services should be presumed illegal. The bill has been changed to clearly allow the audit committee to make that determination without the law implying that it is illegal.

In addition, he made some changes dealing with the testing of internal compliance. I believe the new language more clearly represents the true role of auditors. One of the problems we dealt with throughout this process is educating Members on exactly what the role of an auditor is. I believe the new language represents that realization, and I thank the chairman for making the change.

There is another important change in the provision dealing with corporate loans. The provision would still prohibit corporate executives from reaping millions of dollars in loans from their companies, but the new language also realizes that executives need to use things such as credit cards to conduct their business. So this section is a vast improvement.

Another item I would like to comment on is the understanding that insurance companies, many times, have audits they must file with their State regulators. It would be burdensome and expensive to require these companies to hire a separate auditing firm to perform this responsibility. That problem was also recognized, and the needed changes were made.

However, I also understand that due to the time constraints, a report will not be filed with the bill. I think this will pose a series of problems because we will not be defining what the authors actually intended with certain sections of the bill and allowing the same written discourse that there would be on the bill. I think this may especially cause problems with the extraordinary number of regulations that are going to have to be written to implement the bill.

As the ranking member of the subcommittee with jurisdiction over the Securities and Exchange Commission, I do intend to work closely with the Commission to ensure that the new regulations are consistent with what I see as congressional intent. I will work with others to make sure these regulations conform.

I ask the ranking member, could I have an additional 3 minutes?

Mr. GRAMM. Sure.

Mr. President, I yield an additional 3 minutes to the Senator from Wyoming.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Wyoming.

Mr. ENZI. I thank the Senator.

Mr. President, some of the issues that did not come up in this bill dealt with FASB. We did something marvelous for FASB. We made sure of its independence. One way we made sure of its independence, besides citing in the law, was to make sure FASB has independent funding. They will not have to come to Congress with a budget. And they will not have to go to corporate America for funding. They will get independent funding to be able to do the job they need to do. That will inhibit us from trying to change what they are doing in setting accounting standards.

I am pleased to state that we have taken a look at the things they are working on right now. They are working on four issues that are extremely important to make sure what happened with other companies will not happen again.

I have to tell you, in those four things they have listed as a priority, one of them is not stock options and what to do with them. They do need to address that, but I certainly hope that Congress does not decide that what we see as a problem does supersede other problems that may have caused collapses such as Enron's.

So I hope we will not get in a position of dictating now to FASB what they should be working on, and in what order, and to what degree, or, worse yet, just going ahead and passing accounting standards on our own.

With respect to section 302, the conference recognizes that results presented in financial statements often necessarily require accompanying disclosures in order to apprise investors of

the company's true financial condition and results of operations. The supplemental information contained in these additional disclosures increases transparency for investors. Accordingly, the relevant officers must certify that the financial statements together with the disclosures contained in the periodic report, taken as a whole, are appropriate and fairly represent, in all material respects, the operations and financial condition of the issuer.

I also believe the conferees contemplate that the Board will have discretion to contract or outsource certain tasks to be undertaken pursuant to this legislation and the regulations promulgated under the Act. The Board may outsource functions which can be done more efficiently by existing and established organization. An exercise of discretion in this manner does not absolve the Board of responsibility for the proper execution of the contracted or outsourced tasks.

I also believe that the Conferees expect that the Board and the standard setting body will deem investment companies registered under Section 8 of the Investment Company Act of 1940 to be a class of issuers for purposes of establishing the fees pursuant to this section, and that investment companies as a class will pay a fee rate that is consistent with the reduced risk they pose to investors when compared to an individual company. Audits of investment companies are substantially less complex than audits of corporate entities. The failure to treat investment companies as a separate class of issuers would result in investment companies paying a disproportionate level of fees.

In addition, I believe we need to be clear with respect to the area of foreign issuers and their coverage under the bill's broad definitions. While foreign issuers can be listed and traded in the U.S. if they agree to conform to GAAP and New York Stock Exchange rules, the SEC historically has permitted the home country of the issuer to implement corporate governance standards. Foreign issuers are not part of the current problems being seen in the U.S. capital markets, and I do not believe it was the intent of the conferees to export U.S. standards disregarding the sovereignty of other countries as well as their regulators.

I also realize inconsistencies appear in sections 302 and 906. The SEC is required to complete rulemaking within 30 days after the date of enactment with regard to CEO certification under section 302. However, section 906 suggests that certification would be required upon enactment, thus the penalties would go into effect before the certification requirement is completed through the rulemaking process. I believe it was the intent of the Conferees that the penalties under section 906 should not become effective until the rulemaking process is finalized.

Under the conference report, section 3(a) gives the SEC wide authority to enact implementing regulations that are ''necessary or appropriate in the public interest.'' I believe it is the intent of the conferees to permit the Commission wide latitude in using their rulemaking authority to deal with technical matters such as the scope of the definitions and their applicability to foreign issuers. I would encourage the SEC to use its authority to make the act as workable as possible consistent with longstanding SEC interpretations.

Finally, I not only thank the Senators I have been able to work with on this, but I also thank the staffs. I thank particularly Katherine McGuire, my legislative director, and Mike Thompson, who handles my banking issues. I also thank Kristi Sansonetti, who works on all of my legal issues, and Ilyse Schuman, who played a very important role in the blackout pension period.

I thank, on Senator SARBANES's staff, Steve Harris, Marty Gruenberg, Steve Kroll, Dean Shahinian, Lynsey Graham, and Vince Meehan.

I thank, on Senator GRAMM's staff, Wayne Abernathy, Linda Lord, who is probably one of the most knowledgeable lawyers in this area I have ever encountered, Michelle Jackson and Stacie Thomas.

And, on Senator DODD's staff, I thank Alex Sternhell.

America will never know all the work these people have done on this bill, the hours they have spent on it, daytime and nighttime. I have seen them working in the early morning hours on this, and that is after spending the previous night working on it. They have just spent incredible time on this.

There is some incredible expertise among these people. Without their help, we would have never gotten to this point. So I thank all of them.

I thank the chairman and Senator GRAMM and all the others who have had a part in this. It is time we adopt this bill.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Maryland.

Mr. SARBANES. Mr. President, let me first say, I think Senator ENZI has been extremely gracious in recognizing the extraordinary contribution that has been made by the staff as we have formulated this legislation. I appreciate him doing that. I certainly associate myself with his remarks about the dedication and the perseverance and the extraordinarily high level of competence that is brought to this matter by staff on both sides of the aisle—committee staff and personal staff.

Mr. President, I yield 10 minutes to the Senator from New Jersey.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from New Jersey.

Mr. CORZINE. Mr. President, I am honored today to stand before the Senate to express my strong support and appreciation for the conference report that I suspect, within an hour or so, we will adopt, and, hopefully, unanimously, as we did the original bill that came out of the Senate.

I think it is historic. I think it is truly critical in bringing about the kind of important reforms that will make a real difference to our financial system, not just today but I think as a standard it will be very much an important part of the structure of our financial system for decades to come.

I have said often, since we have talked about this legislation, that it really does, in my mind, fill a large gap that has been missing in our securities laws that were written 70 years ago. I think it very well may be the most important step we will have taken in that interim period, to make sure we have a measured but strong securities and reporting structure in our Nation that makes for the depth and breadth and beauty and effectiveness of our financial markets.

This legislation, as has been noted, comprehensively deals with reform of our accounting profession, enhances corporate accountability, improves transparency, moderates conflicts in a number of parts of our financial world, deals with the transparency of corporate financial statements, strengthens the SEC, tightens penalties and more securely sets the law, and ultimately, I believe, will restore the trust, the needed trust, and investor confidence in the integrity of America's capital markets.

This was an absolutely necessary step at this time in our Nation's history. There has been an enormous betrayal of trust, demonstrated, certainly, by the headlines and the litany of corporate abuses. Let me say, it goes deeper than just the headlines. There have been 1,100 corporate earnings restatements in the last 4 years. There is a basic loss of more than just the simple sense of trust that people get from the headlines. It is hard for people to make investment decisions when they don't have good facts, good numbers, and the ability to draw good conclusions about where the investor dollar should go.

It has led to a misallocation of capital. And there was a serious need for people to have reform in this area because this betrayal really went at the heart of why people were employees of various firms, why investors put their trust in investing in companies, and why the American system, which so relies on trust, has been called into question with respect to the integrity of our financial markets in recent days.

It is an extraordinary step. I am pleased to have been a part of it.

I see the chairman just left the Chamber. I want to take a few moments to make sure he knows how strongly I feel about the leadership he played. For those who were not a part of this measured process that Chairman SARBANES put forward—I have said this to him personally—the 10 hearings we had were the moral equivalent of a graduate finance program. I

suspect that very few times in congressional history have we seen the breakdown in the detail and presentation of sophisticated information, complicated topics, presented with the security and integrity that were presented in our hearings that led to the creation of this legislation. He did an incredible job of putting together a bill.

I get a little nervous when I hear people say this was a rush to justice, a rush to an answer. This was one of the most thoughtful and measured programs of review put in place before the legislation was written that absolutely could ever have been conceived. He deserves enormous credit for making sure we were thoughtful in the process.

Like Senator ENZI, I compliment all the staffs who were involved in this. This was an incredible effort on all of their parts. From the bottom of my heart—and I am sure all those others who were involved in this process—I truly appreciate the thoughtfulness and care they all gave to it.

I also would be remiss if I did not mention Senator DODD for his great help in originally putting together our initiatives with regard to accounting reform, corporate oversight, and resourcing the SEC, which I think are fundamental parts of the legislation. We feel good about that. I think Senator DODD has taken an extraordinary step in leadership.

Once again, I say to the Senator from Wyoming, this is about making America better. It is fundamentally about doing the right thing at the right time. His leadership on that, to make sure we stayed constrained, as he says, thoughtful, and measured about how we addressed the problem, has been most appropriate, and I have appreciated the opportunity to work with him. I compliment him for that effort.

I would say the same about the Presiding Officer. The addition of a number of the amendments that have come, particularly with regard to bringing in the responsibility that is associated with lawyering in America, as important as it is for accountants and CFOs and CEOs, I think was an important step. There has been a lot of really great effort here.

Now that the chairman is back in the Chamber, I want to say again, this is a classic example of quality leadership, of thoughtful leadership, and getting to a result that will make a difference in the lives of Americans in the years ahead.

This is a little more personal for me because for the 5 years before I came here, I was a CEO. Sometimes you want to hide from that moniker these days since it is not so popular. I think these days about the words of Andy Grove, who said that he was ashamed and embarrassed by some of the actions and many of the actions that are associated with the abuse we have seen. I stand with Andy Grove on that.

This is not one of our prouder moments in our financial system. But what does make me proud is that we could work together in a bipartisan way to come to a thoughtful, measured response that will make a difference, that really will move our securities laws in a direction that will give the American people confidence in how they read an income statement, when they look at a balance sheet and when they judge where they want to work, that they will have the necessary information.

I am not going to go into detail on the bill. Senator SARBANES and Senator ENZI did that. It is a great piece of legislation. I don't think it went too far at all. In fact, I think it is about spot on. I am sure there will be things we will need to review in time, tweak with, but this is a good set of initiatives which will make a difference in America's financial system.

When we address these issues, it does beg to recognize that there are additional tasks that need to be addressed. I heard the chairman talk about it is not good enough to authorize; we have to appropriate the funds to go with the necessary obligations we put on the SEC; we need to make sure our new advisory board actually has the resources. I think we do. But their independence, their ability to function, will come because they have the resources. The same as the SEC; we have to do our job in the second part of this to make sure those resources are available.

We do need to make sure the SEC Commissioners are in place so that we can have a credible process of looking at enforcement and review of laws and making sure that as we structure the SEC in the days going forward, we have the best of minds brought to bear there. I hope we can vote on these Commissioners very quickly.

For myself—I know there are differences of views about this—there are other unmet items on the agenda. Not necessarily do they apply to this bill, but in my view we should, as a nation, deal with the stock options issue. I don't think Congress should write the accounting rules, but I believe to recognize that stock options are an expense is relatively self-evident to those who have operated in business. They are used as a substitute for compensation. Compensation is an expense. That is why you see Chairman Greenspan and all of what I think is the critical weight of those who have observed on this issue speaking out that this is an issue that needs to be addressed. The Bermuda registry of companies, derivatives regulation are also issues.

Could I have 1 additional minute?

Mr. SARBANES. I yield an additional minute.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator may continue.

Mr. CORZINE. We need to address these issues. There are missing gaps in other parts of our oversight of our securities markets and financial markets that need to be addressed.

Finally, I believe there is a gaping hole in our oversight of what our investors and employees and the public need to see addressed, and that is pension reform. I know working their way through Congress right now are a number of initiatives on it. Fewer than 50 percent of Americans have pensions. We have a major need to address this. We should pull it together in as thoughtful a way as Chairman Sarbanes has led our Senate to this conclusion, led this debate to a positive conclusion. I hope we will address that in the future. So, once again, I express my great gratitude to all those involved. I particularly thank Chairman SARBANES for his strong leadership.

Mr. SARBANES. Mr. President, I thank the able Senator from New Jersey for his kind and gracious remarks about my efforts. I underscore the enormously valuable contribution that Senator CORZINE made to the development not only of this legislation but all of the work that has come before the committee. He brought a perspective and perception here that were extremely important, enabling us to work through some difficult issues. I appreciate that.

I yield 7 minutes to the Senator from Vermont, chairman of the Judiciary Committee.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Vermont is recognized.

Mr. LEAHY. Mr. President, I thank the chairman. The Senator from California wishes 1 minute. I yield 1 minute to her.

Mrs. BOXER. Mr. President, I came to the floor to give my deepest thanks to Senator SARBANES and Senator LEAHY for leading us in just the way we needed to be led toward a tough, fair reform that would lead to confidence in our financial system. I also thank Senator ENZI for his work.

I was a stockbroker years ago, decades ago, and in those days the big accounting firms were known for their integrity, and CEOs were highly respected. That check and balance was lost along the way and it must be restored.

I believe this bill will do it and our people will, once again, have trust and confidence in our financial system. They will know when they read an annual report and it is signed off on by an accounting firm that it means what it says and says what it means. That will bring the stock market back into balance. It will not happen tomorrow. This isn't magic legislation. But over time confidence will be restored and our economy will be on solid footing once again. I thank my friends.

Mr. LEAHY. Mr. President, I thank Chairman SARBANES for his leadership on this impressive bill and on the conference agreement. The then-Congressman SARBANES was one of the first people I met when I came to Washington as an elected Member of this body. We have been friends from that time forward. I have been so pleased to work with him.

I am proud that the conference agreement includes and adopts the provisions of the Leahy-McCain amendment,

which the Senate adopted by a 97-to-0 vote—again, with the strong help and support of the Senator from Maryland.

These provisions are nearly identical to the Corporate and Criminal Fraud Accountability Act, which I introduced with Majority Leader DASCHLE and others in February. It was reported unanimously by the Senate Judiciary Committee in April.

The Presiding Officer helped get this through the Judiciary Committee. The Leahy-McCain amendment provides new crimes with tough criminal penalties to restore accountability and transparency in our markets. It accomplishes this in three ways: No. 1. It punishes criminals who commit corporate fraud. No. 2. It preserves evidence that can prove corporate fraud. No. 3. It protects victims of corporate fraud.

As a former prosecutor, I know nothing focuses one's attention on the question of morality like seeing steel bars closing on them for a number of years because of what they did.

The conference report includes a tough new crime of securities fraud which will cover any scheme or artifice to defraud investors. We added the longer jail term of the other body.

There are three key provisions of the Senate-passed bill that were not in the recently passed House bill but are now in the conference agreement. I think they are truly an essential part of a comprehensive reform measure. First, we extend the statute of limitations in securities fraud cases. In many of the State pension funds cases, the current short statute has barred fraud victims from seeking recovery for Enron's misdeeds in 1997 and 1998. For example, Washington State's policemen, firefighters, and teachers were blocked from recovery of nearly $50 million in Enron investments by the short statute of limitations. That is why the last two SEC Chairmen—one a Republican and the other a Democrat—endorsed a longer short statute of limitations to provide victims with a fair chance to recoup their losses.

Secondly, we include meaningful protections for corporate whistleblowers, as passed by the Senate. We learned from Sherron Watkins of Enron that these corporate insiders are the key witnesses that need to be encouraged to report fraud and help prove it in court. Enron wanted to silence her as a whistleblower because Texas law would allow them to do it. Look what they were doing on this chart. There is no way we could have known about this without that kind of a whistleblower. Look at this. They had all these hidden corporations—Jedi, Kenobi, Chewco, Big Doe—I guess they must have had ''little doe''—Yosemite, Cactus, Ponderosa, Raptor, Braveheart. I think they were probably watching too many old reruns when they put this together. The fact is, they were hiding hundreds of millions of dollars of stockholders' money in their pension funds. The provisions Senator GRASSLEY and I worked out in Judiciary Committee make sure whistleblowers are protected.

Third, we include new anti-shredding crimes and the requirement that corporate audit documents be preserved for 5 years with a 10 year maximum penalty for willful violations. Prosecutors cannot prove their cases without evidence. As the Andersen case showed, instead of just incorporating the loopholes from existing crimes and raising the penalties, we need tough new provisions that will make sure key documents do not get shredded in the first place.

It only takes a minute to warm up the shredder, but it can take years for prosecutors and victims to prove a case.

The conference report also maintains almost identical provisions to those authored by Senator BIDEN and approved unanimously by the Senate. These include enhanced criminal penalties for pension fraud, mail fraud, wire fraud, and a new crime for certifying false financial reports. As chairman of the Judiciary's Subcommittee on Crime and Drugs, Senator BIDEN deserves praise for his leadership of these issues.

It is time for action—decisive and comprehensive reforms that will restore confidence and accountability in our public markets for the millions of Americans whose economic security is threatened by corporate greed.

We cannot stop greed, but we can keep greed from succeeding.

We have seized this moment to make a good beginning to fashion protections for corporate fraud victims, preserve evidence of corporate crimes and hold corporate wrongdoers accountable. We have much to do to help repair the breaches of trust that have so shattered confidence in our markets and market information. We have made a good start today toward restoring that confidence but more will be needed. In addition we will need swift and strong enforcement actions and good faith administration of the reform set forth in our conference report. Our conference is concluding but our work is just beginning.

Again, I thank the Senator from Maryland.

Mr. SARBANES. Mr. President, I thank the Senator from Vermont. I underscore again how important his contributions were. The Senate Judiciary Committee reported out a bill without opposition in the committee. That is something which accompanied this legislation.

I yield 4 minutes to the Senator from South Dakota, and then it is my intention to go to the Senator from North Carolina.

Mr. JOHNSON. Mr. President, most of all I thank him for his extraordinary leadership on the development of this landmark legislation. I think it is fair to say this is the most critically important piece of investor protection legislation since the Securities Act of 1933 or the Securities Exchange Act of 1934.

This comes on the heels of the disclosure of corporate corruption that has been endemic in recent months, where we have witnessed lost jobs, lost savings, lost pensions, and ultimately lost confidence worldwide in America's capital markets.

There is an urgency that strong legislation be passed by this body and the Congress to restore confidence—restore both the perception and the reality of integrity in our capital markets.

This legislation is strong legislation. That is why it has been applauded by editorial writers from the east coast to the west coast. Senator SARBANES has been the subject of much congratulatory observation on the part of so many. This comes on the heels of, frankly, much weaker legislation that had been passed previously in the House of Representatives, the other body.

By passing a strong Senate bill, we were able to go to conference. I am proud to have served on that conference committee and to craft legislation there that goes in the direction of the Senate rather than in the direction of the other body and gives this Nation strong securities legislation. It provides a stiff penalty for corporate wrongdoing, creates a strong oversight board to ensure that corporate audits are done properly, and that the books, in fact, are not cooked. It imposes tough new corporate responsibility standards and implements control over stock analysts' conflicts of interest, so they are not making a fortune while advising their clients to invest. It requires public companies to quickly and accurately disclose financial information. It ensures that the Securities and Exchange Commission has the resources to accomplish its mission of regulating the securities markets.

These important provisions will ensure that America's financial markets remain efficient and transparent and the envy of the world. It will benefit average people who may not have had enough information to make informed decisions in the past and certainly could not have possibly known that the books were cooked, that the audits were incorrect, and that corruption was running rife. They had no way of knowing that.

This will turn that around. This is not the last word, but this is a critically important step in the right direction to returning integrity to our markets. We can observe, having come through this horrible experience in recent months of disclosure after disclosure of corruption having taken place, a recognition that free market economies can only work when there is a cop on the beat. Free market economies can only work when there are fair, well-enforced, and strictly enforced rules. A free market economy without rules, without a cop on the beat, is not an economy that will ever work at all.

This goes a long way, I believe, to reviving confidence in America's economic future. It goes a long way to restoring the fairness and transparency

so that people may make their investments—and investments may go up, and they may go down, but they can know when they make those investments, they are making those investments based on true and accurate analysis and not on bogus numbers that some audit firm on the take has been willing to put forward as the truth when, in fact, they are not the truth.

Again, the whole Nation owes a great deal of gratitude to Chairman SARBANES and to the Senate, in this case, for what I am confident is going to be an overwhelming vote in favor of this legislation.

I yield the floor.

Mr. SARBANES. Mr. President, I yield 6 minutes to the Senator from North Carolina.

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Mr. CORZINE). The Senator from North Carolina.

Mr. EDWARDS. Mr. President, I thank, along with all my colleagues, Senator SARBANES for the extraordinary work he has done on this bill. We are proud of him. America appreciates very much what he and others who have worked with him have done.

I also thank Senator ENZI, who is in the Chamber, and Senator CORZINE, who is presiding, for the work they have done with me on what I think is an important part of this legislation which, in addition to corporate CEOs and accountants, is holding the lawyers involved in these transactions responsible and accountable; that if they see something wrong occurring, they should do something about it—report it to their client, to the corporation, report it to the CEO, the chief legal officer and, if necessary, report it to the board.

In Congress, we are doing what needs to be done and stepping to the plate with regard to corporate responsibility. That is in striking contrast to what is going on in my home State right now.

At a time when Americans are demanding more corporate responsibility, when Congress is stepping up and doing what needs to be done, the President has gone to North Carolina today to ask for less corporate responsibility, to make it easier on insurance companies and to make it harder on victims.

The President is in North Carolina today proposing some of the smallest limits that have ever been proposed for families who have suffered tragedies, serious problems, as a result of poor medical care at a time when medical malpractice insurance premiums constitute way less than 1 percent, substantially less than 1 percent, of medical care costs in this country.

The President is holding a roundtable, as I speak, on this subject. I would like to see how many victims of medical negligence, of medical malpractice, people who have been devastated and their lives devastated, are participating in this roundtable. I know these people. For many years I have represented them. I have been in their homes. I have been in homes and spent time with families whose child will never walk, who have been blinded for life, who have been crippled for life, who have suffered injuries from which they will never recover.

These children blinded for life, crippled for life, severely injured for life—there is a description in the HHS report on which the President is relying which talks about when juries find they have been hurt and award money to them, they describe it as ''winning the lottery ticket.'' The parents of a child who has been blinded for life, the parents of a child who will never walk, rest assured they do not believe they have the winning lottery ticket.

My question is: How many of those people are the President talking to when he is in North Carolina today? The next time he comes back to North Carolina, we invite him to talk to some of those people because those are the ordinary Americans to whom he should be talking. Those are the people who are going to be impacted. The children who have suffered serious injuries are the ones who are going to have the greatest impact and have their rights taken away by what the President is proposing.

Unfortunately, listening to ordinary people is not what this administration does. They have done it time and time again. It is stunning, but it is sad and consistent. When this administration has a choice between protecting the rights of big companies, big insurance companies versus the rights of ordinary people, they choose the big insurance company, the big companies every single time. They have been dragged kicking and screaming to do something about corporate responsibility, which we are doing in the Congress.

On the Patients' Bill of Rights, on which Senator KENNEDY, Senator MCCAIN, and I have worked so hard, they have consistently sided with the big HMOs, which is why we do not have a Patients' Bill of Rights in this country.

On prescription drugs, when we tried to do something about the cost of prescription drugs on the floor of the Senate, this administration consistently sided with the big drug companies. When it comes to the environment, this administration has weakened clean air laws that protect the air for our children and consistently sided with the big energy companies that are polluting our air.

Today the President adds to that list, in going to the State of North Carolina, the big insurance companies. This President loves to talk about compassion. My question to him is: Where is his compassion for the victims?

Mr. President, I yield the floor.

Mr. BAYH. Mr. President, I rise today in support of the accounting reform and corporate responsibility conference agreement. I do so, because I believe very strongly that it is in the best interests of America at this critical time in our history.

I believe it goes way beyond mere accounting issues. What we are agreeing to today deals with the financial security of millions of individual investors across this country, the security of their pensions, their 401(k) programs, and their other investments for the future of their children and their grandchildren.

What we are talking about today involves the very vitality of our economy, the amount of investment that will take place in the economy, the number of jobs that will be created, and the vitality of farms. It involves the standing of AMERICA in the international economy, whether we will continue to be a safe haven for investments from those abroad, attracting the capital that helps us build a strong foundation for America's economy.

More than anything else, this bill embodies the basic values upon which this has been based. It clearly answers the question: Will we continue to encourage those virtues that have always characterized America and will our Nation continue to be the land of opportunity based upon hard work, honesty, and playing by the rules or, will we be perceived as the land of opportunity based upon deceit. I believe that the right answer, based upon traditional values and virtues, is embodied in the accounting reform and corporate responsibility bill.

I congratulate our colleagues, Senators SARBANES, DODD, CORZINE and ENZI. They demonstrated leadership and foresight in this issue.

Since the tragedies of 9/11, our country has been involved in twin struggles: One, the physical national security of this country; and, second, getting this economy moving again to ensure the economic security of Americans across this country. There are parallels between these two challenges. Both occurred as a result of unexpected tragedies but have presented us with opportunities to make this an even better, stronger, more secure Nation. Both involve breaking the political gridlock and the bureaucratic inertia that all too often make progress in this Capitol difficult. And both involve striking the right balance between individual freedom and liberty on the one hand, that we cherish, and collective security, which makes individual liberty meaningful, on the other.

Let me conclude where I began. This issue goes a long way beyond mere accounting issues. It goes a long way beyond economic policy. It goes to the very heart of who we are, what we stand for as a people, and the kind of values we cherish in the United States of America. This will protect individual investors. It will help to ensure the integrity of our economy. But more than anything else, it will ensure that those Americans who have embraced our tradition with virtues, who have worked hard and saved their money, who have played by the rules, and are honest are able to get ahead in this society.

It will send a loud and clear signal to those who practice corporate fraud that they do not have an avenue to success in this country. That does not embody the best values of America. I strongly support the accounting reform and corporate responsibility conference agreement. I urge my colleagues to enact this important legislation.

Mr. KERRY. Mr. President, I strongly support the Sarbanes-Oxley Act of 2002 because it will help end the corporate abuses that in recent months have plagued our economy and will help restore confidence in our economy. I would like to take this opportunity to express my appreciation for the efforts that Senator PAUL SARBANES, Chairman of the Senate Banking, Housing and Urban Affairs Committee, has made to develop and enact this important legislation. As a former member of the Banking Committee, I know how difficult it is to respond quickly to recent events that affected our capital markets. However, Senator SARBANES has put together a coalition which led to a unanimous vote in support of his bill in the Senate, and the provisions of which is the base text for this conference report.

The United States must stand for the fairest, most transparent and efficient financial markets in the world. However, the trust and confidence of the American people in their financial markets have been dangerously eroded by the emergence of serious accounting irregularities by some companies and possible fraudulent actions by companies like WorldCom, Inc., Enron, Arthur Andersen and others. Some investment banks have been charged with publicly recommending stocks for public purchase that their own analysts regarded as junk.

The shocking malfeasance by these businesses and accounting firms has put a strain on the growth of our economy. The misconduct by a few senior executives has cost the jobs of hardworking Americans, including 17,000 at WorldCom and thousands more at companies accused of similar wrongdoing. The lack of faith in our financial markets contributed to an overall decline in stock values and has caused grave losses to individual investors and pension funds. For example, the losses to the California Public Employees Retirement System from the recent WorldCom disclosures total more than $580 million.

The conference report creates a new Public Company Accounting Oversight Board to oversee the auditing of companies that are subject to the federal securities laws. The Board will establish auditing, quality control, and ethical standards for accounting firms. The conference report restricts accounting firms from providing a number of non-audit services to its audit clients to preserve the firm's independence. It also requires accounting firms to change the lead or coordinating partners for a company every five years.

The conference report requires CEOs to certify their financial statements or face up to 20 years in prison for falsifying information on reports. It keeps executives from obtaining corporate loans that are not available to outsiders. It requires public companies to provide periodic reports to the SEC on off-balance transactions, arrangements, obligations and other relationships that may have a material current or future effect on the company's financial condition. It requires directors, officers and 10 percent equity holders to report their purchases and sales of company securities within two days of the transaction.

I am pleased that the conference report includes the Corporate Fraud and Criminal Fraud Accountability Act which will provide for criminal prosecution and enhanced penalties of persons who defraud investors in publicly traded securities or alter or destroy evidence in Federal investigations. It will also prohibit debts incurred in violation of securities fraud laws from being discharged in bankruptcy and protect whistle blowers who report fraud against retaliation by their employers.

The conference report requires the SEC to adopt rules to foster greater public confidence in securities research including: protecting the objectivity and independence of stock analysts who publish research intended for the public by prohibiting the pre-publication clearance of such research or recommendations by investment banking or other staff not directly responsible for investment research; disclosing whether the public company being analyzed has been a client of the analyst's firm and what services the firm provided; limiting the supervision of research analysts to officials not engaged in investment banking activities; protecting securities analysts from retaliation by investment banking staff.

The provisions included in this legislation will help restore confidence in our capital markets and in turn will help provide for future economic growth. It is an important first step, not a last. Mr. President, I am pleased to support the Conference Report and will continue to look for ways to improve investor confidence in our financial markets.

Mr. SCHUMER. Mr. President, everyone knows that New York City is the financial capital of the world. Yet as we continue to rebuild our city in light of the tragic events of September 11, we are now faced with the devastating effects of depressed markets and unsure investors, who are once again victims. With more than half of American households investing in the markets, we're all affected by a crisis in investor confidence.

I can't think of a more appropriate time than the present for the Senate to debate legislation to restore dwindling investor confidence and bring sound footing back to our financial markets. Isn't it ironic? Just a few weeks ago, the headlines read ''Sarbanes bill dead'' or ''Accounting Reform Fading.''

In the wake of recent revelations about WorldCom and just 2 days ago Merck, corporate corruption has reached an all-time high; we are now at a new level of corporate corruption. We've reached a new low and the question every member of the Senate must be asking is: ''Where does it end?''

Buzzwords like ''accounting fraud,'' ''corporate corruption,'' ''Restatements,'' ''Cooking the books,'' are being bandied about in the press, in the coffee shops, at the dinner tables across America. Just this weekend at the Taste of Buffalo, people came up to me and said ''Throw 'em in jail, Chuck!'' They were talking about the Ken Lay's, Bernard Ebers', the Andrew Fasdow's of the corporate world. White collar criminals who ran giant corporations and used tricky gimmicks to rob investors of not only their hard money but also their confidence in the strongest and fairest markets in the world. * * * They are the investment giants: Enron, Arthur Andersen, Adelphia, CMS Energy, Reliant Resources, Dynergy, Tyco International, and now Xerox and WorldCom. A mere handful of our nations top companies who have gone under as a result of misrepresented earnings and poor management. In less than a years time, these so-called investment giants through the great gift of deceit and tricky accounting practices have reduced themselves to mere shells of their former existence.

As a result, their use of tricky gimmicks to hide the real picture and literally milk the system dry have caused investors around the globe to question integrity of our nations markets, which are supposed to be the strongest and most resilient because they are perceived as the most open, most transparent markets in the world. Up until now, the United States had been a magnet for foreign investment. Yet, the selfish, greedy actions of a small few have led to a steady and precipitous drop in foreign investment in our financial markets.

It is no secret that greed played a major role in our markets rapid decline and slow demise. The heads of these entities stole millions, some billions of dollars from investors, and it is now time that we make them pay for their actions.

I commend the NASDAQ and the New York Stock Exchange for their announcements of new, tough corporate governance standards. The New York markets have taken the first steps to correct corporate corruption, and now it is our turn to find the right balance in light of these unsteady markets and times.

So what is the right balance? The right balance is one that will not only offer strict corporate governance laws, protect the average investor from being swindled out of his or her hard earned savings by a fast-talking, wheeling and dealing broker, but will

also severely punish those individuals who intentionally mislead investors with faulty practices. That is why I am introducing the following amendments to the Public Company Accounting Reform and Investor Protection Act of 2002 to further limit the ability of company execs from personally manipulating and rigging the system for their personal benefit and interest.

The first amendment prohibits companies from issuing personal loans to company executives as seen with Worldcom, whose CEO received more than $300,000 in loans from the technology giant. Instead, CEOs will have to go to the bank, just like everyone else, to acquire a loan; which, will reduce the risk of CEOs ability to use company funds for personal purposes.

The second amendment requires company execs to forfeit any and all bonuses and additional compensation if their restatements occur along with criminal liability.

It is my hope that by revealing the few bad apples at the bottom of the barrel, and punishing these individuals for their immoral behavior, we can save the rest of the industry and restore confidence in our markets.

The legislation pending before us will make it harder for companies to lie about their assets. Thats the least we can do in re-establishing public confidence in corporate America. Our common purpose today is to ensure that the Enron's, the Tyco's, and the WorldCom's never happen again.

Now is the time for us to act. It is the least we can do to shore up the investing public's confidence in our markets.

Mr. WELLSTONE. Mr. President, 2 years ago it was pretty lonely being in favor of the auditor independence reforms that then-SEC Chairman Arthur Levitt said were necessary to guard against unprecedented accounting scandals. I am proud that I was one of the few who thought Chairman Levitt was going in the right direction. Unfortunately it took the implosion of several multi-billion dollar firms, and a loss of tens of thousands of jobs and hundreds of billions of dollars in investor equity, to prove that he was right. Now America's capital markets have been shaken by a dramatic loss in investor confidence, threatening the economic recovery.

But today, Congress has acted. I rise today in strong support of the Public Company Accounting Reform and Investor Protection Act conference report. I commend the Senator from Maryland, the Chairman of the Banking Committee for putting together significant, structural reform of corporate governance and auditor independence and for defending it in conference.

And I am heartened that the President and the House leadership have finally agreed to comprehensive reform instead of mere half-measures and tough rhetoric.

This bill holds the bad actors accountable for their fraud and deception. But the legislation goes much further, as it should, because the problem goes much deeper. We are faced with more than the wrong doing of individual executives, we are faced with a crisis in confidence in American capital markets and American business.

This conference report retains the strong Senate reforms virtually intact. It bars an auditor from offering audit services and other consulting services to the same client. It says publically traded companies must change the partner in charge of the audit every five years. It strengthens oversight of accountants, by establishing an independent board to set and enforce standards. And it enhances disclosure. This alone is real reform. But the bill does more. It makes corporate executives more accountable to their shareholders. It makes investment analysts more accountable to the public. And it's bill contains strong penalties for corporate wrong-doers.

All and all, this legislation lets the sunshine back into the smoke-filled corporate board rooms so that insiders have harder time cheating the outsiders. It is structural reform that restores checks and balances that will protect against fraud, deception, and reckless carelessness.

We need to restore America's faith in corporate America. It has gone beyond individual wrong doing. The system hides and encourages corruption. Today the Congress passes strong reform. Now I call on the President to make enactment and enforcement of this new law a priority.

Mr. BOND. Mr. President, last night, the conference committee released its final report on comprehensive accounting reform and corporate governance legislation. The reaction of our financial markets confirms that this legislation is absolutely necessary to help restore integrity and confidence to our free market system and our investment community.

However, in our rush to enact broad reforms, we may be damaging the economic framework for small companies to reach our capital markets. In the long term, the reforms will make our economy stronger. In the short term, we will be creating complete chaos for small publicly traded companies and companies trying to gain the capital for growth through stock offerings.

I am extremely disappointed in the conferees' decision not to recognize this fact and provide the Securities and Exchange Commission and the proposed Public Company Accounting Oversight Board with greater flexibility in dealing with small firms. Small business has been the driving force of our economy for well over a decade. The high hurdles in the legislation are necessary for large, conglomerate companies but they may be a trip wire for our small business entrepreneurial community.

Mr. SARBANES. Mr. President, I note that the Congress, in the Enhanced Review of Periodic Disclosures section in the Sarbanes-Oxley Act, provides for regular and systematic reviews by the Securities and Exchange Commission of the periodic reports filed by public companies that are listed on a national securities exchange or on Nasdaq. The section requires that there be some review of issuers' disclosures at least once every three years. The bill identifies factors which the Commission should consider in scheduling reviews, including the issuer's capitalization, stock price volatility and restatements of earnings. We expect the Commission to exercise its discretion to determine the appropriate level and scope of review for each company's reports in the furtherance of the protection of investors and the public interest.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Who yields time?

Mr. SARBANES. Mr. President, may I ask what the time situation is?

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Maryland has 15 minutes 10 seconds. The Senator from Wyoming has 21 minutes 30 seconds.

Mr. SARBANES. I yield 3 minutes to the Senator from New York.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from New York.

Mr. SCHUMER. I thank the Chair.

Mr. President, this is an extremely important day for our capital markets, for our country, and for the future of our economy. As we all know, capitalism has its ups and downs and works in ups and downs, and there have been periods throughout our history—I can think of the S&L crisis a decade ago—where things get off track, out of control. It is our job as Government not to interfere with entrepreneurial vigor, not to create such regulation that they become a straitjacketed company, but at the time when the markets show that things have gotten off track, it is our job to help put them back on track.

There is a bottom line principle here: If investors, whether throughout the United States or the rest of the world, do not believe companies are on the level, they will not invest. Unfortunately, the revelations of the last year have given people the view that they are not on the level. That it is not the same for them in terms of even information as it is for somebody at the top, that the information they may be getting may be wrong or distorted far beyond what they normally would in the world. So this bill puts that back.

I think it is a carefully balanced bill. There are some changes in it. There are some changes not in it that I would like to have seen, but the perfect should not be the enemy of the good. It is a good bill, a fine bill. In fact, when the agreement was reached, the Dow Jones went up 400 points. I do not think it was coincidental. Whether it be CEOs of large companies or individual investors, the public is saying to us, make it right. Look at the abuses that occurred in the past and make sure they cannot occur again, and do it

in a careful way that keeps our markets fluid, liquid, deep, and important. I think this bill does it.

I want to pay a great deal of tribute to our chairman, Senator SARBANES, and to so many others who made this bill a reality. With the passage of this bill, we can tell investors, while we have not cleared up every problem, and perhaps we will come back and address this later—I think we will have to in a couple areas—we have certainly made things better.

A few weeks ago, Washington looked as if it was dithering in the face of crisis, but today we proudly act in a bipartisan way to restore faith in our markets, the deepest, strongest, and best markets in the world.

I dare say, I know there are some who are against any change or any regulation, but our markets will be stronger tomorrow than they were this morning when this bill passes the House, the Senate, and is signed by the President.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Who yields time?

Mr. SARBANES. Mr. President, we are down quite far in our time. Senator DODD, who wishes to speak, is at a memorial service. I suggest if the other side could use some of its time, it would be helpful in balancing this out. I ask unanimous consent that while we are trying to work this out the time not be charged to either party, and I suggest the absence of a quorum.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will call the roll.

The legislative clerk proceeded to call the roll.

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

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

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

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

Mr. SARBANES. Mr. President, I yield 8 minutes to the distinguished Senator from Connecticut.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Connecticut.

Mr. DODD. Mr. President, when we opened the conference on this legislation a week or so ago, I said my hope was the passage of this bill would be quick, decisive, and unanimous. Two out of three is not bad. We got quick and decisive and almost unanimous. Our colleague from Texas, and our friend, was unable to support the final product for reasons he has already explained.

I thought we did an excellent job in moving as quickly as we did. I believe passage of the legislation and the quick and decisive manner and nearly unanimous way we achieved the result and overwhelming support of the Senate and the House fulfill a responsibility of Congress to protect investors. There is more work to be done, but we have begun a significant part of the journey. In fact, we traveled a great distance down the road in fulfilling a congressional responsibility in responding to the events that began to unfold, at least to the public's awareness, last October. And the story is not yet complete. We do not know the final results.

I have a few minutes in which to share some thoughts. I am going to move quickly to share comments. I begin by commending my colleague from Maryland, the chairman of the Banking Committee, for the tremendous job he has done. I said yesterday, any students of the Congress of the United States who want to seek out good examples of how a legislative product can be developed, nurtured, analyzed, discussed, debated, and finally passed, this is about as good an example as I have seen in recent years of how one ought to proceed. Certainly the hearings we held in the Banking Committee I don't recall attracting much attention. I don't recall a single one of the 12 hearings we held appearing on the nightly news or being lead stories on some of the 24-hour news stations.

I recall a great many hearings where people sat there, raised their right hand, and took the fifth amendment. That got a lot of attention. The 12 hearings held in the Banking Committee of the Senate, where we went through the deliberate, slow, ponderous process of actually listening to people who had something to say about what ought to be done to clean up this mess, never made it on the nightly news that I am aware of.

I commend again my friend and colleague with whom I have enjoyed my service in the Congress of the United States for more than a quarter of a century. We have sat next to each other for a good part of that time in both the House and in this Chamber. I sit next to him on the Foreign Affairs Committee and on the Banking Committee. If I could make the choice and it would not be determined by seniority, I would make him my choice for seatmate. I have great respect for him and admire him immensely. He has proven the value of having PAUL SARBANES as a Member of this body.

I also point out the Presiding Officer, one of the most junior Members of this Chamber, who provided an incredible, invaluable support and source of ideas, guidance. Rarely does a new Member play such an important role on such an important piece of legislation. Of any Member who was involved in this process, MIKE ENZI of Wyoming and others all would agree, in any history written of the development of the bill, the role of a freshman Senator from the State of New Jersey named JON CORZINE needs to be talked about. He played a very important role. We would not be here without him. I tip my hat to him and to MIKE ENZI, the only Member of this Chamber who actually knew something at a practical level about what it was to be an accountant and what life was like in the trenches.

For the staff and others who worked on this legislation, this was not the most popular idea in the world. Had it not been for unfolding events, I am not sure we would have developed that kind of support. I will love to one day tell my daughter, who is only an infant, that it was the power of our persuasion which convinced a majority here to go along.

Not many understood the value, the substantive value, of this bill. MIKE ENZI did, a number of others did, there were many in the House who did, but an awful lot of people, even as late as a week ago, were suggesting maybe this bill was a bad idea, and that it would not go anywhere, and it shouldn't go anywhere; we ought to spend another couple of months thinking about it.

Those notices were not a month old, or 2 months old; that was 5 or 6 day ago. I understand it was the public's demand that we respond to this that had an awful lot to do with the support we garnered. That is all right. I never argue about how you get support around here as long as you get it in the end. We got it in the end, and that is the important news.

The fact is, we are about to vote overwhelmingly to support a very critical piece of legislation. I am confident, as he has already indicated, that the President will sign this bill into law. We are already seeing markets respond, not entirely because of this, but certainly in no small measure because of the events that have unfolded and the parts Congress played.

The chairman of the committee has talked about part of the bill. There are very important pieces, including the auditor independence. The board will be revolutionary in how it operates. Someone pointed out today, a lot of what the regulators do will determine the value of what we have written legislatively. I am confident that will be the case.

Having FASB now be compensated for and paid for from public money and not relying on the largess and generosity of the accounting industry to receive compensation will make a significant difference in establishing accounting rules and procedures. Certainly having prohibitions against those going from the industry, working for the clients for whom they have done audits, will have a beneficial effect on slowing down this not only appearance of conflict, but certainly the conflicts of interest that have occurred too often.

There are many other parts of the bill, including corporate penalties, that were crafted by our colleague from Vermont and other Members of the Judiciary Committee, that deserve a great deal of credit for their contribution to this process. The leadership,

Senator DASCHLE, certainly for insisting we move as rapidly as we did to get the product done in committee and get it on the floor of the Senate, understanding how important this issue would be to the shareholder interests and pensioners and to others who depend upon a solid, strong economy for their well-being—certainly their contribution is extremely important as well.

We have seen the economy begin to do a bit better. I don't think our work is done, despite the accomplishments in this legislation. My hope would be that before this Senate adjourns in a week and a half from now, we might deal with the pension issue. I don't know if that will be possible. I know there are a lot of other issues that need to be considered. My hope is if we are not able to do that in the next week and a half, we will come back soon after we reconvene in September.

I sit on the Health, Education, Labor, and Pensions Committee with the presiding officer who is interested in that committee. My hope is that we can deal with the pension reform matters that are necessary, as well, for adoption by this Congress before the 107th Congress adjourns.

Again, I commend all those involved. I thank Alex Sternhill of my office, Steve Harris, Marty Gruenberg, all the Members who worked with the chairman's committee and the full committee of the Senate Banking Committee, and those on the minority side, as well, who played an extremely important role.

While he disagreed with the final outcome of the bill, the Senator from Texas and I have had a great relationship over these many years we have served together. I have always enjoyed being on his side. He is a tough opponent, but when we worked together we have done some pretty good work around here and passed some pretty good bills.

He is leaving and I believe the Senate will be less vibrant an institution because of his absence. It is important that this place be a place of ideas for debate to occur, and the Senator from Texas has always made that kind of contribution.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The time of the Senator has expired.

Mr. DODD. Hang on. I am commending him. He is going to give me more time.

Mr. GRAMM. The Senator can have all the time he wants.

Mr. DODD. Mr. President, I have learned after more than 20 years that if you want the minority to give you a little more time, start complementing them. It is amazing. Egos are alive and well in the Senate.

I am going to miss him. He is not done. We have more work, obviously, in the remaining weeks, but this may be one of the last major bills the Banking Committee considers. I don't know what life holds for him down the road, but the good Lord is not done with him yet.

I look forward to your vibrancy, your ideas, and your passion in whatever role you decide to assume in the next part of your life, and thank you for the tremendous work you have given to the committee and this body through your service.

I thank again the chairman and other members of the committee for contributing to what may be one of the most important pieces of legislation this body will consider in the 107th Congress and one of the most important in the area of financial services in many, many decades.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Who yields time?

Mr. GRAMM. Mr. President, how much time do we have?

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Texas has 14 minutes.

Mr. GRAMM. We were going to shoot for about 4:30 so I may yield some of it back, depending on who comes over.

Let me, first, thank my dear colleague, Senator DODD, for his kind comments. I have enjoyed working with him over the years. I very much appreciate the comments he made.

I want to say something about my staff. A famous philosopher once said: In no way can you get a keener insight into the true nature of a leader than by looking at the people by whom he surrounds himself.

I would always be happy to have anybody judge me by Linda Lord and by Wayne Abernathy. It is amazing how much impact staffers have on the Senate. I am blessed in this area to have two of the best staff people who have ever served any Senator in the history of this country. On most issues on which I worked with Linda Lord, she knows more about this subject than anybody, and generally more than everybody else combined. In working with her, I see that the Lord was a great discriminator; he gave some people incredible ability and most of us he gave relatively few, in the way of talents. I thank her for the great job she has done.

I thank Wayne Abernathy. In the years I was chairman of the Banking Committee, Wayne Abernathy was chairman of the Banking Committee. In the day-to-day work, he has made an incredible contribution. If there is an unfairness to it, it is that I have gotten credit for all the good work that they have done, and I am grateful for that.

I reserve the remainder of my time.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Who yields time?

Mr. SARBANES. How much time do I have remaining?

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator has 3 minutes remaining.

Mr. SARBANES. I yield 1 minute to the Senator from Minnesota.

Mr. WELLSTONE. I thank the Senator from Maryland. I thank him forhis great leadership and the other Senators working on this. I can only say this in 1 minute: I remember when Arthur Levitt came by several years ago to talk with me about the need for audit independence. Senator SARBANES and others have made that possible. Many people took their savings, converted it to stock, and thought it would be there for their children or grandchildren. Many people had 401(k)s they were counting on. All of this has eroded in value. Investors do not have the confidence in the economy. I think the key is to make the structural change and make sure people can count on the independent audits, that no one is cooking their books. This is the best of government oversight. I am very proud to support this legislation.

Once again, I thank the chair of the Banking Committee for exceptional leadership.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Maryland.

Mr. SARBANES. Mr. President, as Senator GRAMM was speaking earlier I was thinking to myself that he really was exemplifying on the floor of the Senate the sort of dialog we went through in the committee. As he was making an argument about auditor independence, I was thinking that is really a very reasonable argument and one to which we really paid attention. I want to give the counterargument, and then make a concluding comment about the terrific work of the staff on this bill.

Senator GRAMM has suggested that the conference report should be changed to give the SEC or the Oversight Board authority to grant broad categorical exemptions from the list of non-audit services that Section 201 of the bill prohibits registered public accounting firms to provide to public company audit clients.

Such a change, in my view, would weaken one of the fundamental objectives of the conference report: to draw a bright line around a limited list of non-audit services that accounting firms may not provide to public company audit clients because their doing so creates a fundamental conflict of interest for the accounting firms.

This limited list is based on a set of simple principles:

A public company auditor, in order to be independent, should not audit its own work (as it would if it provided internal audit outsourcing services, financial information systems design, appraisal or valuation services, actuarial services, or bookkeeping services to an audit client).

A public company auditor should not function as part of management or as an employee of the audit client (as it would if it provided human resources services such as recruiting, hiring, and designing compensation packages for the officers, directors, and managers of an audit client).

A public company auditor, to be independent, should not act as an advocate of its audit client (as it would if it provided legal and expert services to an audit client in judicial or regulatory proceedings.)

A public company auditor should not be a promoter of the company's stock or other financial interests (as it would be if it served as a broker-dealer, investment adviser, or investment banker for the company).

I want to emphasize that Section 201 does not bar accounting firms from offering consulting services. It simply requires that they not offer certain consulting services to public companies for which they wish to serve as ''independent auditor.'' An accounting firm is free to offer any services it wants to any public companies it does not audit (or to any private companies). It also may engage in any non-audit service, including tax services, that is not on the list for an audit client if the activity is approved in advance by the audit committee of the public company.

The conference report does authorize the new Oversight Board, on a case-by-case basis, to exempt any person, issuer, public accounting firm, or transaction from the prohibition on the provision of non-audit services to the extent that such exemption is necessary or appropriate in the public interest and is consistent with the protection of investors.

The exemptive authority provided the Board is intentionally narrow to apply to individual cases where the application of the statutory requirement would impose some extraordinary hardship or circumstance that would merit an exemption consistent with the protection of the public interest and the protection of investors.

But the fundamental presumption of the provision is that these non-audit services, by their very nature, present a conflict of interest for an accounting firm if provided to a public company audit client.

Arthur Andersen was conflicted because it served Enron as both an auditor and a consultant, and for two years it also served as Enron's internal auditor, essentially auditing its own work. Enron was Andersen's largest client, and in 2000 Andersen earned $27 million in consulting fees from the company ($25 million in audit fees).

In its oversight hearing earlier this year on the failure of Superior Bank in Hinsdale, Illinois, the Senate Banking Committee learned first-hand the risks associated with allowing accounting firms to audit their own work. In that case, the accounting firm audited and certified a valuation of risky residual assets calculated according to a methodology it had provided as a consultant. The valuation was excessive and led to the failure of the institution.

The SEC's recent actions against one of the large public accounting firms (KPMG) in an enforcement case illustrates the danger of allowing an accounting firm to serve as a broker dealer, investment advisor, or investment banker for a public company audit client (Porta Systems). In that case, the accounting firm set up an affiliate and the affiliate provided ''turn around'' services to the issuer, including functioning as the president of the company. There would have been no need for an SEC action if the non-audit service were simply prohibited.

The inherent conflict created by these consulting services has been exacerbated by their rapid growth in the last 15 years. According to the SEC, 55 percent of the average revenue of the big five accounting firms came from accounting and auditing services in 1988. Twenty-two percent of the average revenue came from management consulting services. By 1999, those figures had fallen to 31 percent for accounting and auditing services, and risen to 50 percent for management consulting services. Recent data reported to the SEC showed on average public accounting firms' non-audit fees comprised 73 percent of their total fees, or $2.69 in non-audit fees for every $1.00 in audit fees.

A number of the most knowledgeable and thoughtful witnesses who testified before the Senate Banking Committee in the hearings held in preparation for this legislation argued that the growth in the non-audit consulting business done by the large accounting firms for their audit clients has so compromised the independence of the audits that a complete prohibition on the provision of consulting services by accounting firms to their public audit clients is required. Perhaps the strongest advocates of this view have been the managers of large pension funds who are entrusted with people's retirement savings.

For example, the California Public Employees' Retirement System (CalPERS), manages pension and health benefits for more than 1.3 million members and has aggregate holdings totaling almost $150 billion. According to CalPERS CEO, James E. Burton:

> the inherent conflicts created when an external auditor is simultaneously receiving fees from a company for non-audit work cannot be remedied by anything less than a bright-line ban. An accounting firm should be an auditor or a consultant, but not both to the same client.

John Biggs is CEO of Teachers Insurance and Annuity Association College Retirement Equities Fund (TIAA-CREF), the largest private pension system in the world, which manages approximately $275 billion in pension assets for over 2 million participants in the education and research community. Mr. Biggs was also a member of the last Public Oversight Board. He told the Committee that:

> TIAA-CREF does not allow our public audit firm to provide any consulting services to us, and our policy even bars our auditor from providing tax services.

The conference report chose not to follow the approach of imposing a complete prohibition on the provision of non-audit services to audit clients. Instead it chose the approach of identifying the non-audit services which by their very nature pose a conflict of interest and should be prohibited. Among those supporting this approach are former Comptroller General Charles Bowsher, former SEC Chairman Arthur Levitt, and former Federal Reserve Board Chairman Paul Volcker.

The argument is made that small companies, in particular, may be burdened by this requirement and that the SEC should have broad authority to grant categorical exemptions. It is even argued that so many companies would seek case-by-case exemptions that the SEC would become overwhelmed and would be unable to process the exemptions in a timely manner.

The point is that if the provision of a non-audit service to a public company audit client creates a conflict of interest for the accounting firm that non-audit service should be prohibited, whether the public company is large or small. Investors rely on the audit in making their investment decisions, and the independence of the audit should not be compromised by the provision of the non-audit service. If a legitimate exceptional hardship is imposed, then the Oversight Board would have the authority to grant case-by-case exemptions.

The present Comptroller General, David Walker, issued a particularly strong statement in support of the approach to auditor independence taken in the bill conference report I would like to quote:

> I believe that legislation that will provide a framework and guidance for the SEC to use in setting independence standards for public company audits is needed. History has shown that the AICPA [American Institute of Certified Public Accountants] and the SEC have failed to update their independence standards in a timely fashion and that past updates have not adequately protected the public's interests. In addition, the accounting profession has placed too much emphasis on growing non-audit fees and not enough emphasis on modernizing the auditing profession for the 21st century environment. Congress is the proper body to promulgate a framework for the SEC to use in connection with independence related regulatory and enforcement actions in order to help ensure confidence in financial reporting and safeguard investors and the public's interests. The independence provision [of the bill] . . . strikes a reasoned and reasonable balance that will enable auditors to perform a range of non-audit services for their audit clients and an unlimited range of non-audit services for their non-audit clients. . . . In my opinion, the time to act on independence legislation is now.

This auditor independence provision is at the very center of this legislation. It goes to the public trust granted to public accounting firms by our securities laws which require comprehensive financial statements that must be prepared, in the words of the Securities Act of 1933, by ''an independent public or certified accountant.''

The statutory independent audit requirement has two sides, a private franchise and a public trust. It grants a franchise to the nation's public accountants—their services, and only their services—must be secured before an issuer of securities can go to market, have the securities listed on the nation's stock exchanges, or comply

with the reporting requirements of the securities laws. This is a source of significant private benefit.

But the franchise is conditional. It comes in return for the CPA's assumption of a public duty and obligation. As a unanimous Supreme Court noted nearly 20 years ago:

In certifying the public reports that collectively depict a corporation's financial status, the independent auditor assumes a public responsibility. . . . [That auditor] owes ultimate allegiance to the corporation's creditors and stockholders, as well as to the investing public. This ''public watchdog'' function demands that the accountant maintain total independence from the client at all times and requires complete fidelity to the public trust.

We must cut the chord between the audit and the consulting services which by their very nature undermine the independence of the audit. We must break this culture that exists, and to do that we need a bright line. In my view granting broad exemption authority to the Oversight Board or the SEC to permit these non-audit services would undermine the separation the conference report is intended to establish.

I wanted to underscore the fact that there was a very reasoned, intense discussion of these issues. There is reason on both sides. I thought the Senator made a very strong statement. I wanted to give the counterstatement here.

I share Senator DODD's view about this exchange of ideas and its importance to the functioning of this institution. The Senator from Texas has certainly made an important contribution in that regard.

I wish to take a moment to recognize the terrific work of the staff. Senator GRAMM referred to Wayne Abernathy and Linda Lord, and of course Mike Thompson and Katherine McGuire of Senator ENZI's staff; Laura Ayoud of the legislative counsel who worked day and night to put this thing in legislative language; the staff of the Banking Committee led by Steve Harris, Dean Shahinian, Steve Kroll, Lynsey Graham, Vincent Meehan, Sarah Kline, Judy Keenan, Jesse Jacobs, Craig Davis, Marty Gruenberg, Gary Gensler, and, as I said, all led so ably by Steve Harris.

We had the very able staff of the Senators on the committee: Alex Sternhell, Naomi Camper, Jon Berger, Jimmy Williams, Catherine Cruz Wojtasik, Leslie Wooley, Margaret Simmons, Matt Young, Roger Hollingsworth, and Matt Pippin.

I thank again all my colleagues who participated. I think I recognized most of them in the course of the day, and I want to say just a word about Chairman OXLEY and Congressman LAFALCE on the House side, who made it possible for us to work through this conference and with whom we have worked so cooperatively on so many issues that have come before our committee.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The time of the Senator has expired. Who yields time?

Mr. SARBANES. How much time is remaining?

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Maryland is without time. There are 12 minutes for the Senator from Texas.

Mr. GRAMM. Mr. President, we have reached the hour that we set for a vote. I am ready to yield back the 12 minutes and have the vote proceed.

I reiterate that this is a bill that was fraught with danger in the environment that we were in. Literally anything could have passed. I think, by a combination of good work and some good fortune, that has not been the case. We have a vehicle before us that I think will be complicated. It will be difficult to implement.

I think we will probably change it in the future. But I think in terms of our ability to prosper under the bill, and for the economy to survive not only the illness but the prescription of the doctor in this case, I think it is doable.

I yield the remainder of our time.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The question is on agreeing to the conference report.

Mr. SARBANES. Mr. President, I ask for the yeas and nays.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Is there a sufficient second?

There is a sufficient second.

The clerk will call the roll.

The assistant legislative clerk called the roll.

Mr. NICKLES. I announce that the Senator from North Carolina (Mr. HELMS) is necessarily absent.

I further announce that if present and voting the Senator from North Carolina (Mr. HELMS) would vote ''yea.''

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Are there any other Senators in the Chamber desiring to vote?

The result was announced—yeas 99, nays 0, as follows:

[Rollcall Vote No. 192 Leg.]

YEAS—99

Akaka	Dorgan	Lugar
Allard	Durbin	McCain
Allen	Edwards	McConnell
Baucus	Ensign	Mikulski
Bayh	Enzi	Miller
Bennett	Feingold	Murkowski
Biden	Feinstein	Murray
Bingaman	Fitzgerald	Nelson (FL)
Bond	Frist	Nelson (NE)
Boxer	Graham	Nickles
Breaux	Gramm	Reed
Brownback	Grassley	Reid
Bunning	Gregg	Roberts
Burns	Hagel	Rockefeller
Byrd	Harkin	Santorum
Campbell	Hatch	Sarbanes
Cantwell	Hollings	Schumer
Carnahan	Hutchinson	Sessions
Carper	Hutchison	Shelby
Chafee	Inhofe	Smith (NH)
Cleland	Inouye	Smith (OR)
Clinton	Jeffords	Snowe
Cochran	Johnson	Specter
Collins	Kennedy	Stabenow
Conrad	Kerry	Stevens
Corzine	Kohl	Thomas
Craig	Kyl	Thompson
Crapo	Landrieu	Thurmond
Daschle	Leahy	Torricelli
Dayton	Levin	Voinovich
DeWine	Lieberman	Warner
Dodd	Lincoln	Wellstone
Domenici	Lott	Wyden

NOT VOTING—1

Helms

The conference report was agreed to.

Mr. SARBANES. Mr. President, I move to reconsider the vote.

Mr. DASCHLE. I move to lay that motion on the table.

The motion to lay on the table was agreed to.

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

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Mr. DAYTON). 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 PRESIDING OFFICER (Ms. CANTWELL). Without objection, it is so ordered.

ORDER OF PROCEDURE

Mr. REID. Madam President, I ask unanimous consent that immediately after the cloture vote on the nomination of Julia Smith Gibbons, all time postcloture be considered used, and that on Monday, July 29, at 5:30 p.m., the Senate proceed to executive session to vote on the nomination of Julia Smith Gibbons, to be a U.S. circuit judge; that upon confirmation, the President be immediately notified of the Senate's action and that the Senate return to legislative session; further, that on Friday, July 26, immediately following the cloture vote on the nomination, the Senate return to legislative session and resume consideration of S. 812; that Senator GREGG or his designee be recognized to offer a second-degree amendment; that during Friday's session, there be up to 3 hours for debate with respect to the amendment, with the time equally divided and controlled between Senators KENNEDY and GREGG or their designees; and that whenever the Senate resumes consideration of S. 812, the Gregg or designee amendment remain debatable.

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

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

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

UNANIMOUS CONSENT AGREEMENT— EXECUTIVE CALENDAR

Mr. REID. Madam President, we have spent considerable time this evening in a quorum call, but in spite of that, we have had a very productive legislative day. We have passed the conference report on corporate governance; the Appropriations Committee this afternoon reported the final four bills out of the