

time in excess of his leader time. Is it the intent that be charged against the time he had under his control under the previous order, or is that time outside that previous order?

Mr. DASCHLE. Mr. President, I ask that 10 minutes of the time that I consumed be applied against the Democratic morning business time.

The PRESIDENT pro tempore. The Senator has consumed more than that time. He wishes to have 10 minutes of that time counted against that time?

Mr. DASCHLE. Correct.

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

#### MORNING BUSINESS

The PRESIDENT pro tempore. Under the previous order, there will be a period for the transaction of morning business for statements only for up to 90 minutes; the first half of that time under the control of the Democratic leader or his designee—that is now 35 minutes—and the second half under the control of the majority leader or his designee.

Who seeks time?

The Senator from Nevada.

#### ORDER OF PROCEDURE

Mr. REID. On behalf of Senator DASCHLE, we yield 15 minutes to Senator STABENOW and 10 minutes to Senator HARKIN.

The PRESIDENT pro tempore. Senator STABENOW is recognized for 15 minutes.

#### LOWERING THE COST OF MEDICINE

Ms. STABENOW. Mr. President, first I commend our Democratic leader for an outstanding vision of what we should be doing to do right by America. His eloquence this morning certainly speaks to every single person in Michigan and what we care about, the priorities and values that we have, and certainly it speaks to the sense of urgency that I believe we need to get something done for the people we represent in this wonderful country. We need to do right by America.

There is something wrong when we have provided funding for health care in Iraq for a broad, universal health care system, yet we cannot focus on health care at home for over 44 million people and focus on the costs of prescription drugs or make sure there is a real Medicare bill that works. There is something wrong with this picture. It is truly time for us to do right by America. That is our job.

I speak today specifically about a topic that I frequently think about on the floor of the Senate that needs to have a sense of urgency about it as we come to the end of this week. We will not be in session in August. We will come back only for a few weeks in the fall. There is a sense of urgency at

home about the need to lower the cost of medicine, the access to prescription drugs in this country.

I rise to express great concern today because at this very moment the Senate HELP Committee was supposed to be marking up a bill that hopefully would lead to the safe importation of FDA-approved prescription drugs from Canada and other countries where it can be done safely. But, once again, the markup has been delayed. I am deeply concerned that with the number of legislative days winding down, we will not see a bill coming from committee to the floor of the Senate any time this year.

We know the prices of prescription drugs continue to rise and continue to place a tremendous burden not only on our seniors but on everyone who uses medicine on a regular basis.

We have a strong bipartisan bill that we put together to allow the reimportation of prescription drugs. It has been carefully discussed and deliberated. There is no reason that Americans should not benefit from the passage of this new law so we can have access to safe, FDA-approved drugs that come from FDA-inspected facilities in other countries. In fact, Sav-Rx, one of the companies that is offering a Medicare drug card now, is even promoting reimportation as part of their marketing.

As reported in Tuesday's Washington Post, the company's Web site reads:

Sav-Rx is giving you the opportunity to save an additional 20%-30% on your mail order prescriptions through the use of our Canadian Mail Order Pharmacy.

This is one of our Medicare cards that is using a Canadian mail order pharmacy.

I have to say I am more concerned about mail order or Internet sales—particularly Internet sales—where we do not have the safeguards, or may not know where the prescriptions are coming from, rather than what our bill does, which is allow the local pharmacist in Michigan or the pharmacist in any other State to do business with the pharmacist across the border in a safe, FDA-approved way, with a closed supply chain that brings the medicine from one place to another so we know where it comes from and we can assure its safety.

But here we have one of those providing a Medicare card to seniors who are using right now a Canadian mail order pharmacy as part of this process. Yet we can't get the support to pass a bill that would guarantee this process is available for everyone through the local pharmacy—one pharmacy to another—and which is done in the safest possible way. We don't have regulations right now that mirror what we have in our bill in terms of promoting the safety of reimportation of prescription drugs.

If we are going to continue to see mail order and Internet sales, we certainly need to address the issues that we have addressed in our bill to make sure this process is safe.

This is all about numbers, as usual. The opposition is all about numbers. It is about the \$17 billion annually that the drug companies stand to profit from the new Medicare law versus the \$5 billion cost that American consumers can save per month from reimporting prescription drugs from Canada or allowing the local pharmacists in America to do business with the pharmacists in Canada.

It is about requiring our seniors to go through this complicated process under Medicare to attempt to get a discount through a Medicare card that would set up much more to profit the drug companies than to profit the seniors. It is about a process that we are forcing people to go through to try to get help. It is complicated. There are multiple cards. The prices can change every 7 days. The discounted drugs can change every 7 days.

We heard testimony on Monday from Dr. McClellan in charge of the Center for Medicare. What we are hearing is this massive effort of spending money to market and try to explain to people this complicated process. Why do we have this complicated process? Because it benefits the pharmaceutical companies. It doesn't allow Medicare to negotiate group prices to get the best deal for people. So we have this complicated, costly process going on to guarantee that the profits of the industry are protected.

On the other hand, all we need to do is bring to the floor this bipartisan bill that would allow our local pharmacists to do business safely with pharmacists in Canada and other countries. We could drop prices in half immediately for consumers. We would save over \$5 billion a month for consumers. We would truly begin to address the stories we hear all the time—it is happening; they are not just stories—of people who are choosing between food and medicine, paying their electric bill or paying their rent. We don't make up those stories. It is happening every day, and I am sure it is happening right now as I am speaking. We can fix that, too.

If the HELP Committee brought up a bill, had a meeting and voted this bill out today, we would have on the floor a means for us to be able to work together to adopt a bill that works, is safe, and lowers prices. But instead one more time this is delayed—delayed, delayed. Unfortunately, folks can't delay their bills. When they go to the pharmacy to get their medicine, they can't say: I would be happy to pay you but nothing is happening in Congress yet. The President won't support lowering prices. So I can't afford to pay this right now. Can you wait? Can I pay it next year when they finally get around to fixing this, maybe? People can't do that when they go into the pharmacy. They have to pay for their medicine.

There is a sense of urgency which they feel that, unfortunately, is not felt in this body, or by the leadership. Those of us who have been working

across the aisle to get something done certainly feel it, but leadership does not. Unfortunately, the White House does not.

What we see is a continual unwillingness to schedule a bill, to bring it out, to give us an opportunity to vote and to get this done in the Senate.

We have legislation, S. 2328, the Pharmaceutical Market Access and Drug Safety Act, that is widely supported. It has been crafted carefully by Senate leaders on both sides of the aisle. It will work. It will guarantee that we put in place the safe precautions we need and that will allow us to finally be able to address the issue of lowering prices.

There are many concerns that I and my colleagues have about the bill before the HELP Committee. I will not go into all the specifics at this time, except to say we feel confident that the legislation we have introduced would fix the concerns and the problems, and that we can work together to get this done in the right way.

I am deeply concerned that right now seniors of this country are being asked to wade through Medicare card after Medicare card trying to find out whether there is anything that can be done for them in terms of lowering prices. They are wading through all the other complexities of the Medicare bill. We are not taking action as we could on something that would immediately make a difference.

I go back to what our Democratic leader spoke about so eloquently this morning. Senator DASCHLE spoke about doing right by America.

How is it that there is a sense of urgency here to be providing funds to make sure those in Iraq have access to health care? Certainly we want them to have access to health care. But what about us? What about doing right by America as well? What about taking just a portion of the funds we are spending abroad to build roads and schools and create health care systems and use that here at home to help Americans who are desperate about being able to afford the medicine they need?

I might also say that this is directly related to the health insurance premiums our small businesses and large businesses are paying in America. We know that about half the cost increases on health care premiums comes from the explosion of prescription drug prices.

When we pass the reimportation bill that we are coming forward with in a bipartisan way, we not only help our seniors who need our help and the disabled and their families and workers, we are helping businesses be able to lower prices. We are helping universities that have medical schools to be able to allow their pharmacies to do business with those across the border in a safe way. We are helping the local hospitals be able to lower their costs which in turn helps them lower the cost of health care and health insurance premiums.

Just one proposal has very broad implications to bring down prices and make sure we are addressing one of the fastest rising components of health insurance for businesses in our country.

We have a bipartisan bill before the Senate that is endorsed by the AARP, Families USA, the Alliance for Retired Americans, numerous senior, consumer groups, and health groups. I am deeply troubled by the fact it will be very difficult to bring this bill before the Senate and pass it before we break on Friday. This debate has gone on far too long.

As I have indicated, this can help business and individuals with the high cost of health care. It is time to get it done. We have the greatest country in the world. Give us a chance to make this change and we can help every American have access to the medicine they need. We can take an important step forward in doing right by America.

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Mr. GRAHAM of South Carolina). The Senator from Iowa.

Mr. HARKIN. How much time do I have in morning business?

The PRESIDING OFFICER. There is 10 minutes.

#### LEAK INVESTIGATION

Mr. HARKIN. Mr. President, it has now been 1 year and 1 week, 1 year and 7 days since senior White House officials leaked the identity of a clandestine officer of the CIA, Valerie Plame, to Washington journalists. According to the Washington Post, there were two senior White House officials who called a number of reporters—at last count, maybe six—to reveal the name of Valerie Plame as being a covert CIA agent. Of course, only one reporter sought to publish that—was Mr. Novak—in one of his columns.

This criminal act was a brazen act of revenge and retaliation to punish Ms. Plame's husband, who dared to question one of the administration's key justifications for invading Iraq.

One year and 7 days and nothing has been done, nothing.

Here is what the White House had to say yesterday, July 20. Deputy Attorney General James Comey said:

We take issues of classified information very, very seriously. As you know, we have prosecuted or sought administrative sanctions against any number of people throughout the years for mishandling of classified information.

Say again? After they exposed Valerie Plame, what happened? It took 6 months from the time of the leak of the Plame matter for Attorney General Ashcroft to recuse himself. Not until December 30 was a special prosecutor appointed. The President and Vice President have never appeared to take this leaking of her name and her identity very seriously—or even seriously.

In his only public statement about this leak, here is what the President said:

I don't know if we are going to find out the senior administration official. Now, this is a

large administration, and there's a lot of senior officials. I don't have any idea.

That was George W. Bush, October 7, 2003.

If you look at the video of this, he is smiling when he says it. He has kind of a smirk on his face. Does that sound like a matter being taken very seriously? One year and 1 week later we are still awaiting any sign that prosecutions or even sanctions will be brought against anyone in this matter.

This dismissive attitude on the part of the President and the Vice President is not acceptable. We are not talking about a Washington game of gotcha. We are talking about a calculated act of betrayal and treachery against our Nation. A clandestine officer of the CIA was brazenly exposed by a couple of senior White House officials who somehow got access to this information. Who gave them access? Who in the CIA or the National Security Council gave her name to these White House officials? How did they come by it? She was a very deep undercover agent.

This betrayal has real consequences in terms of the national security of the United States. This single act by the White House has undermined the clandestine capabilities of the CIA. It has damaged our national security. It has weakened our country. In this respect, the Valerie Plame incident fits a much broader pattern, a pattern of actions by this administration that have made our Nation weaker, less secure, more vulnerable to terrorist attacks.

Don't take my word for it, take the word of some former CIA people. Here is Larry Johnson, former CIA analyst and State Department employee:

For this administration to run on a security platform and allow people in the administration to compromise the security of intelligence assets, I think is unconscionable.

And here is James Marcinkowski, former CIA operations officer:

The deliberate exposure and identification of Ambassador Wilson's wife, by our government, was unprecedented, unnecessary, harmful and dangerous.

Yes, the leaking of Valerie Plame's name weakened our country, made us less secure, more vulnerable to future attacks.

Almost 4 years ago, when President Bush was running for election, he went around the country raising his right hand, saying I swear to restore honesty and integrity to the White House.

It is time for Mr. Bush and Mr. CHENEY to raise their right hands again and to take an oath to tell the truth, the whole truth, and nothing but the truth regarding the Valerie Plame incident and what they know and what they have done to find out who exposed her name.

We had an example of this a few years ago when a President of the United States was put under oath and was filmed. We sat in the Senate and we looked at that film on video monitors during the impeachment of former President Bill Clinton. Regardless of how you felt about the impeachment, whether you thought it was good