

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

or bad or what, the fact that the President of the United States was put under oath sent a clear message to the people of this country. No President is above the law, neither then nor now. It is time for this President and this Vice President to be put under oath. What happened 1 year and 7 days ago is unconscionable, unprecedented, harmful, dangerous to the security of our country.

The President of the United States could have solved this in 24 hours by calling in every one of his top senior officials, have them sign a piece of paper, have them swear under oath that they did not do this and had nothing to do with this. We could have solved it in 24 hours, but the President of the United States dismissed this. He sort of pooch-pooched the whole thing, smiled about it, and said, I don't think we will catch whoever did this.

Where is the sense of outrage by this President and Vice President that two senior officials would so brazenly, with such calculation, expose the cover, expose the person in the CIA with assets around the world, giving human intelligence to our CIA which we need so desperately in our war against terrorism.

I task the Senate this morning, as I will every day, to call upon the President and the Vice President and to call upon the special prosecutor to put the President and Vice President under oath. If this is not resolved, America will become weaker, less secure, and more vulnerable. We cannot allow that to happen to this country.

The people who exposed Valerie Plame are guilty of violating a law and they should be punished to the full extent of that law. That sends the signal to any other administration, be it Democrat or Republican, that this kind of treachery, this kind of violation of our laws, will not be permitted under any administration.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Nevada.

Mr. REID. Mr. President, how much time do we have remaining on our side?

The PRESIDING OFFICER. There is 11 minutes remaining.

THE SENATE SCHEDULE

Mr. REID. Mr. President, I would like to direct a question through the Chair to the distinguished Senator from Illinois, who is on the floor.

Will the Senator from Illinois comment on the Senate schedule? We wasted a week, as the Senator may recall, on class action, where nothing was done. Then we spent a week on the marriage amendment when everyone knew, before it started, there were not enough votes. And then so far this week we spent yesterday on a judge. Nothing happened on that. The rest of the day we spent on a free-trade agreement with Morocco, where the actual time on that bill has been less than an hour and a half on actual speeches

given. Even though there was 20 hours allotted, we were willing to yield back our time from early on in that debate. Now we are told we are still not going to go to legislative session, that we are going to work on more judges even though we have approved almost a record number of judges.

I ask my friend, does the Senator from Illinois think it is important we deal with other issues people in Illinois and Nevada talk to us about, such as doing an appropriations bill for homeland security or moving to something that is important to the people of Nevada, and that is maybe consider raising the minimum wage?

These are just a couple thoughts that come to the mind of the Senator from Nevada. Will the Senator from Illinois comment?

Mr. DURBIN. Mr. President, I would say, in response to my colleague from Nevada, I have had a number of jobs in my lifetime, and we are fortunate we are on salary on this job because if our pay depended on what we did and what we produced, we would not be drawing a paycheck around here for weeks at a time. We waste so much time on the floor of the Senate, it is hard to imagine.

We spent a whole week on a class action bill that went nowhere. Then we spent a better part of a week on a constitutional amendment on same-sex marriage that went nowhere. Now we are about to waste a third week in a row.

At the same time, I think there are 12 appropriations bills that have not been considered. During this period of time, we had notification from Secretary Ridge at the Department of Homeland Security and our FBI Director that America was going to face an attack. Most Americans stood up and took notice, as they should, and called our offices and said: What should we do? And we said: Lead your lives. Keep your eyes open.

But it is clear what we should do. Take a look at this Calendar. Right on the back of our Senate Calendar, the lead items are the Homeland Security appropriations bills. These are multi-billion-dollar bills that will appropriate money to give to State and local governments as well as Federal agencies to make America safer—sitting on the Calendar for a month, without even being considered.

We will take a break, at the end of this week, for 6 weeks. We will be gone. We will come back, and they will still be sitting on the Calendar. God forbid anything happens in America. We are not going to do anything to deal with them.

Then you page through this Calendar and find bills waiting for action dealing with security at nuclear powerplants, security at ports across America, security at chemical plants, security on rail lines. If we paid any attention to Secretary Ridge, as we should, and Director Mueller, we would be meeting today with Senators on the Senate

floor passing this legislation. Instead, we are killing time. We are doing nothing.

Now, it is hard to explain why this do-nothing Congress is wasting time when it should be, in fact, doing things to make America safer. I do not understand why the leaders in this Congress cannot pick up the very Calendar they print every day, turn to the back page and read the top line: homeland security. Pretty clear: homeland security. Yet we have not passed this legislation.

Mr. REID. Mr. President, I will direct another question through the Chair to my friend from Illinois.

I am not proud of this, but the State of Nevada is the least insured State for medical care in the country. We lead the Nation in uninsured. But there are 44 million people in America who have no health insurance. Even if we did not pass legislation dealing with the calamities facing American families because of no health insurance, don't you think we could talk about it? Don't you think we could bring something up?

For example, I know the Senator from Illinois has worked on this, the Senator from North Dakota has been a leader on this, as has been the Senator from Michigan, Ms. STABENOW: How about making it easy on the American people by allowing us to buy the same drugs we pay a fortune for here in America cheaper from the country just north of us, Canada? Wouldn't that be a good thing to work on?

Mr. DURBIN. Mr. President, I say, in response to the Senator from Nevada, he obviously does not understand the world as the folks across the aisle from us see it. They believe that families across America get up every morning and want to know whether the latest constitutional amendment has passed. They think that is what families do—rush to the television set, turn it on, and say quickly: Honey, did they pass a constitutional amendment?

That is not what I find. What I find at home is that families get together and say: I hope we can keep our job. I hope, for goodness' sake, that next year health insurance doesn't cost as much as it did last year and cover less.

That is the reality. That is the reality of life for families across America. So you wonder if those of us elected to the Senate really represent America and are listening to American families and businesses and labor unions, who tell us time and time again: The cost of health insurance is killing us. Why don't you do something?

Instead, the leadership in the Senate, in this do-nothing Congress, comes forward and says: We are going to blow off 3 days on the floor of the U.S. Senate debating a constitutional amendment about same-sex marriage.

Well, my wife and I have been married for 37 years. We believe in traditional marriage. But, for goodness' sake, why do you need to amend the