

If people do not like what happened in conference, it can be filibustered.

An important jobs bill—a bill that will help American workers and businesses—is being held hostage to election year politics. If we really care about keeping good jobs in this country, we need to send the job training legislation to conference—and then to the President to become law.

I owe my constituents more than this. I think we all do. We owe the American people an open legislative process, a process they expect and deserve from us. This is not just an academic question of Senate rules and procedures. A bill that would help put Americans back to work or find better jobs now lies in legislative limbo.

I was reminded just how important job training is to the lives of our workers and the strength of our businesses and communities during a conference held in Wyoming this summer. In June, I attended the Wyoming Summit on Workforce Development. This was a conference designed to teach people how to bring business and jobs to Wyoming. In Wyoming, a lot of our people are leaving the State to find better jobs elsewhere. We know that we have to create the kind of good jobs with good futures that will keep our people in Wyoming. To do that, Wyoming needs workers with skills the new, global economy calls for.

One of the speakers at the summit was a consultant, Robert Ady, who advises companies where they should relocate or open new operations. According to Mr. Ady, a key location factor for a light manufacturing business is the presence of a qualified workforce. Whether a company decides to open a plant in Cheyenne or China depends upon a qualified local workforce. A skilled workforce can make the difference between success and failure in the new, global economy. It makes the difference for our workers, for our companies, for Wyoming and for the United States as a whole.

Almost 200 business participants from around the State attended the Wyoming Summit on Workforce Development. For Wyoming, having 200 business people in one place at one time is a real accomplishment. It showed the need and commitment our businesses have to workforce development. These 200 business participants—most from small companies—represented at least 200 opportunities for Wyoming workers and communities. They are looking to us to put the tools in place to keep the American dream alive in communities across Wyoming and the rest of the country.

There is an American dream. It is to have a family, have a nice home, and have a good job to support that home and family. Prior to my coming to the Senate, my wife and I owned a small chain of shoe stores. As a small business owner, I saw firsthand the impact that job training can have on achieving the dream. We had an employee—a Vietnam veteran—who went through a

workforce training course and ended up managing and then buying two stores from us. He's an example of what you can do with effective job training if you teach workers to dream at the same time.

We have to give workers—and businesses—the tools to turn the dream into reality. Job training under the Workforce Investment Act can turn the dream into reality for millions of American workers. By blocking legislation that improves job training, my colleagues on the other side of the aisle are blocking the pathway to new and better jobs for American workers. They are blocking the pathway to prosperity for American families and American businesses.

The job-training bill, known as the Workforce Investment Act, is a central part of a combination of federal education and training programs that provide lifelong learning for the workforce of today and tomorrow. The job-training bill, together with the Carl D. Perkins Vocational and Technical Education Improvement Act when I recently introduced, and the Higher Education Act offer the resources that are needed to help prepare students of all ages for jobs in high-wage and high-skill occupations. In this technology driven global economy, everyone is a student who must adapt to changing workforce needs by continuing to pursue their education. In turn, Congress must ensure that education and job training are connected to the needs of business, including small businesses, now and into the future.

I conclude by urging my colleagues on the other side of the aisle—in fact, I urge the Democratic leader to lead—to allow the appointment of conferees to the job training legislation known as the Workforce Investment Act. The cost of this obstruction is the loss of important legislative efforts that will be felt by American people as it harms the integrity of the legislative process itself.

I hope our bipartisan efforts on the bill can continue. I hope regular order is restored to the appointment of conferees so we can craft the final version of this legislation and get 900,000 people back to work. If we really want to keep good jobs in this country, the Democrats would agree to send this important bill to conference. Our workers and our businesses deserve this bill. They deserve more than this election year political obstruction. They deserve the tools needed to keep American workers and businesses the best in the world.

Mr. President, how much time is left before the next action?

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. There is 7 seconds.

Mr. ENZI. Mr. President, I suggest the absence of a quorum.

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. The clerk will call the roll.

The legislative clerk proceeded to call the roll.

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

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

Mr. DORGAN. Mr. President, are we in morning business?

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. The time has expired for morning business.

Mr. DORGAN. I ask unanimous consent to speak for 8 minutes in morning business.

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

REIMPORTATION OF DRUGS

Mr. DORGAN. Mr. President, I rise to discuss the issue of the reimportation of prescription drugs. I do that because we have a very short time remaining in this Congress. We actually began last evening with a couple of votes. I read this morning that the majority leader would like to finish by October 8. There are very few days in which to advance some of these issues. The issue of reimportation of prescription drugs is a very important issue.

We pay the highest prices in the world for prescription drugs. Many of my constituents who live in North Dakota go across the line and purchase identical prescription drugs, FDA-approved prescription drugs from Canada, the same pill put in the same bottle made by the same company sold in Canada and the U.S. The difference is price. One example is Lipitor, a very popular cholesterol-lowering drug. If you buy Lipitor in Canada, it is \$1.01 per tablet. If you buy it 5 miles south of the Canadian border, it is \$1.82 per tablet, nearly double the price for the American consumer. That is the case with drug after drug, when you compare.

A group of us—Senator MCCAIN, myself, and many others—has been working on reimportation legislation that would allow more than just personal use reimportation to come across from Canada, and I have talked to Senator FRIST at great length about this issue.

On March 11 of this year, about midnight, when we were in session that evening dealing with the budget, Senator FRIST and I reached agreement. He put in the RECORD that he would announce that in consultation with the chairman of the Senate Committee on Health, Education, Labor, and Pensions, along with Senator DORGAN, Senator STABENOW, Senator MCCAIN, Senator COCHRAN, and others, that the Senate would begin a process for developing proposals that would allow for the safe reimportation of FDA-approved prescription drugs. Now we face the time period when, nearing the end of the session, we have not yet had that vote. There is a bill at the desk that was passed by the House of Representatives. That is one possibility. The other would be bipartisan legislation Senators MCCAIN, STABENOW, others, and I

have introduced. Still other opportunities might be an amendment to another bill.

The reason I take the floor at this moment is in this morning's Congressional Quarterly, it says:

It appears increasingly unlikely that the Senate will vote this year on legislation that would allow Americans to import prescription drugs from abroad, despite wide public support for the idea.

An aide to [Senate] Majority Leader Bill Frist . . . said Tuesday that consensus on permitting the practice remained elusive and that the issue could get swamped by more pressing issues leading up to Election Day.

That was from the majority leader's aide.

Senator GRASSLEY was quoted as saying that Senator FRIST, the majority leader, "is intentionally keeping drug reimportation off the Senate floor because it would pass by a wide margin." That is a direct quote from Senator GRASSLEY.

I have spoken at great length with Senator FRIST about this issue. I know others have different views and they have their own interests. But I believe there has been a commitment for us to at least try to have votes on reimportation. Some of us feel very strongly about it. It is not partisan because we have Republicans and Democrats who have joined on a bipartisan piece of legislation.

It is my hope that in the coming days we will find a way either to take the bill that is at the Senate desk, which is a bipartisan House-passed bill allowing for the reimportation of prescription drugs, or alternatively to have an opportunity to vote on the bipartisan legislation we have developed here in the Senate.

I have said many times, my own view is that the pharmaceutical industry is a big industry. They do a lot of good. They produce lifesaving medicines. But miracle medicines offer no miracles to those who can't afford them. It is unfair that we pay the highest prices in the world for prescription drugs.

I believe one way to begin putting downward pressure on prices is to let the market system work. The market system would do for our country just as it does in Europe where they have something called parallel trading. Parallel trading means that for approved prescription drugs, if you are in Germany and want to buy a prescription drug from Spain, that is not a problem, you can do that. If you are in France and want to buy a prescription drug from Italy, that is not a problem. The parallel trading plan works in Europe, works for the safety of the European consumer.

Why should the American consumer not be able to purchase or why shouldn't pharmacists from our country not be able to purchase an FDA-approved drug from a licensed pharmacist in Canada? That is the absurdity of all this. A pharmacist from Grand Forks, ND, cannot go to that one-room pharmacy in Emerson, Canada, a licensed pharmacy in Emerson, and purchase

that Lipitor at a savings and pass the savings along to the American consumer.

We want to change the law to allow that to happen so that pharmacists and licensed distributors can access FDA-approved drugs that are sold in every other country in the world at a lower price and bring them back and allow the savings to be passed along to the American consumer. Ultimately, what it will mean is a repricing of those drugs in our country. The market system will force a repricing and a lowering of prescription drugs prices. That is the goal, and that is what the result would be if the market system is allowed to work.

Again, we are only talking about FDA-approved drugs. We are not talking about anything other than FDA-approved drugs that were produced in FDA-inspected plants, sold by a licensed distributor and pharmacist in Canada and/or the United States.

That is the issue. I came to the Senate floor only because I saw the statement this morning by Senator FRIST's staff suggesting that maybe this won't get done. Again, I refer the majority leader to March 11, the statement in the CONGRESSIONAL RECORD in which the majority leader said: The Senate will begin a process for developing proposals that would allow for the safe reimportation of FDA-approved drugs, not "maybe" but that would allow for the reimportation. The fact is, I feel there is a commitment here, and my hope is that commitment will be kept in the coming couple of weeks as we work to finish our work in this Congress.

We have a lot to do. There is a lot of politics running around this Chamber. My hope is that on big issues and important issues, we can decide we want to do the right thing and engage on issues that are important to this country and important to the American people.

I yield the floor.

CONCLUSION OF MORNING BUSINESS

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. Morning business is closed.

DEPARTMENT OF HOMELAND SECURITY APPROPRIATIONS ACT, 2005

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. Under the previous order, the Senate will proceed to the consideration of H.R. 4567, which the clerk will report.

The journal clerk read as follows:

A bill (H.R. 4567) making appropriations for the Department of Homeland Security for the fiscal year ending September 30, 2005, and for other purposes.

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. The Senator from Mississippi.

Mr. COCHRAN. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the following Appropriations Committee staff mem-

bers and detailees be granted the privilege of the floor during the consideration of the fiscal year 2005 Homeland Security appropriations bill and any votes that may occur in relation thereto: Less Spivey, Carol Cribbs, Kimberly Nelson, James Hayes, Avery Forbes, Brian Glackin, Chip Walgren, Scott Nance, Alexa Sewell, Peter Edge, and Sean MacKenzie.

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Ms. MURKOWSKI). Without objection, it is so ordered.

Mr. COCHRAN. Madam President, we are now on the Homeland Security appropriations bill for the next fiscal year, 2005.

For the information of Senators, this morning the President signed the supplemental appropriations bill the Senate passed last night. The President had requested a supplemental for the Disaster Relief Fund of the Federal Emergency Management Agency. Because of the pressure on that fund, the Agency would have run out of money this morning if the Congress had not acted in response to the President's request on yesterday.

The House acted and the Senate approved the supplemental appropriations bill for the Department. So I am happy to make that report to the Senate. There was some discussion of that issue last night, and I appreciate the cooperation and the support of the Senate in taking the action we did.

We are now prepared to consider the full year appropriations bill for the Department of Homeland Security.

We have some opening statements we will make. Senator BYRD is the senior Democratic member of this subcommittee, as well as the full committee of the Appropriations Committee. He has a statement he wishes to make.

After opening statements are made, we will be happy to consider any amendments Senators wish to offer. We hope to be able to complete action on this bill as soon as reasonably possible. By the end of the week would be great, if we could accomplish that. But if not, I think we will have the support of the leader and the chairman of the full committee to continue to work on this bill until we do finish it.

It is a matter of great importance that these agencies and this Department know what the funding levels are going to be for the fiscal year that begins very soon, October 1. We certainly need to take action in a timely way for orderly planning for the use of those funds that are appropriated by the Congress for this important work.

Protecting our homeland is a very important—there is no more important action by the Federal Government, in my opinion. So I hope we can consider this bill with a sense of serious deliberation and work hard to complete action in a timely fashion.

I appreciate very much the cooperation of Senators who are letting us know about suggestions they have for changes in our bill as reported by the