

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

Appropriations Committee. We will consider them, and we will accept those that we can accept. We hope we will be able to have the full cooperation of all Senators in that respect.

MORNING BUSINESS

Mr. COCHRAN. Madam President, since there is not much time left between now and the weekly luncheons both sides have planned for today, it is my suggestion that we go into a period for morning business so Senators can speak if they choose to between now and 12:30 p.m.—I think is the time for the luncheons to begin—and then we can come back in at 2:15 p.m. and resume consideration of the bill at that time.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Nevada.

Mr. REID. Madam President, I think this is wise. We have two of the most senior Members of the Senate who are managing this bill. It has been said, and I will say it again, we are doing everything we can on this side to limit amendments. There are people who have amendments, and we want them to be able to offer them to this most important piece of legislation.

We just finished a leadership meeting, and those there who had a number of amendments indicated they would be willing to agree to short time agreements on them. I think it is something on which we can move forward.

I know Senator BYRD has a statement that is—I won't say long, but it is weighty. I think it would be better if we came back after the break and let him begin his statement. Personally, I want to be here to do that. I would agree to be in morning business until 12:30 p.m. with the time evenly divided, and come back at 2:15 p.m. If it is all right with Senator COCHRAN, Senator BYRD can have the floor at 2:15 p.m.

Mr. COCHRAN. That is certainly fine with me, and I join with the Senator in making that request. I ask unanimous consent that the Senate be in a period for morning business until the hour of 12:30 p.m.

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

Mr. REID. Madam President, I suggest the absence of a quorum.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will call the roll.

The journal clerk proceeded to call the roll.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. In my capacity as a Senator from Alaska, I ask the quorum call be rescinded.

Without objection, it is so ordered.

RECESS

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Under the previous order, the hour of 12:30 having arrived, the Senate will stand in recess until the hour of 2:15 p.m.

Thereupon, the Senate, at 12:30 p.m., recessed until 2:16 p.m. and reassembled when called to order by the Presiding Officer (Mr. SUNUNU).

DEPARTMENT OF HOMELAND SECURITY APPROPRIATIONS ACT, 2005—Resumed

The PRESIDING OFFICER. For the information of the Senate, under a previous order, following the adjournment of the Senate yesterday, H.R. 5005, making supplemental appropriations, was received from the House and considered passed by the Senate.

Also for the information of the Senate, all after the enacting clause of H.R. 4567, the Homeland Security appropriations bill, has been stricken. The text of S. 2537 has been inserted in lieu thereof and considered original text for the purpose of further amendments, and no points of order have been waived.

The Senator from Mississippi.

Mr. COCHRAN. Mr. President, I am very pleased to present this appropriations bill to the Senate. It is the culmination of a lot of hard work by all of the members of our subcommittee, as we conducted hearings to review the proposed budget from the Department of Homeland Security, and as we listened to those who have responsibilities for managing the various directorates and other agencies and activities that come within the ambit of the responsibilities of the Homeland Security Department.

We learned a lot in the hearings. We learned about new procedures that were being developed and deployed. We learned about new technologies that were being explored. In the bioterrorism area, we were learning about the research that is being done to make our capacity more sophisticated and capable of protecting the health and safety of all Americans from attacks in that area.

We have been challenged as we have never been challenged before to look again carefully at how we go about protecting the citizens of our great country. The experience of September 11, of course, stays in our mind as something that is unthinkable. The fact that it did happen is still unbelievable, and we realize that we have the responsibility—representatives of the people of this country serving in Congress today—to try to get it right so that kind of thing can't happen again.

We are blessed to be served in the administration by people such as Tom Ridge, the new Secretary of the Department of Homeland Security. The President recommended this new Department be created. The Congress responded. The Governmental Affairs Committee, on which I served at that time, dealt with the challenge of the legal framework of defining the responsibilities of a new department and what activities would come under the Department. We brought together under this one Department 22 different Federal agencies, or at least parts of 22 different agencies. Some, such as the U.S. Coast Guard, were transferred underneath the jurisdictional responsibility of the Department to help make our effort more coherent, more effectively

and efficiently managed, and to achieve the goal of making our country safer and more secure for the citizens who live in the United States. I think we have made great progress.

This bill specifically provides funding of \$33.1 billion for the Department of Homeland Security for this next fiscal year, 2005. This is the second appropriations bill to fund the Department which began its operations short of a year and a half ago. The new Department has made substantial progress to merge the agency functions and the employees who were transferred under its responsibilities and to undertake its new duties to better secure and more effectively protect our great Nation.

We also have seen a new system put in place called the US VISIT Program to screen visaholders and to stop potential terrorists and those who may be dangerous, because they have committed crimes in the past, from entering our country to start with. US VISIT, through biometrics and other new innovations, has already identified, apprehended, or arrested more than 400 individuals. Through the science and technology directorate, the Department has aggressively moved forward on the successful testing of the first commercial portal monitors and handheld radiological identifiers to detect the smuggling of materials which could be used to build weapons of mass destruction. Federal air marshals have been deployed. State-of-the-art technologies have been introduced, and cockpit doors have been modified to increase the safety of air travel.

I know there can be criticism leveled at the efforts of the Transportation Security Administration which has been the agency identified with the responsibility for overseeing aviation security and many other areas of responsibility. But let me remind Senators—and this is contained in our committee report—I invite the attention of the Senate to the report, on page 31, where we talk about aviation security. My good friend, the distinguished Senator from West Virginia, mentioned people who might bring in bombs or material that can be used as explosives to blow up planes and otherwise harm us.

The Transportation Security Administration aviation security account [in this legislation] provides for Federal aviation security by employing the most efficient screening of all passengers and baggage, deployment of onsite law enforcement, continuation of a uniform set of background requirements for airport and airline personnel, deployment of the most current explosive detection technology, and creation of a model workplace.

The aviation security activities include funding for Federal and private contract passenger and baggage screeners, including personnel compensation and benefits, training, and human resource services; passenger checkpoint support; air cargo security; procurement and maintenance of explosive detection systems; and checkpoint support.

I suggest that the \$4,386,083,000 for aviation security contained in this bill is designed to meet the needs we have for improved and safer air travel, working with the airlines who are spending