

Ironically, we had talked about delaying this announcement until September, but at the suggestion of Senator HAGEL, we decided Wednesday morning to make the announcement before we left for the August break. I think we had four members of the press in the gallery to cover the initial announcement of this year-and-a-half long effort. And of course by 5 or 6 o'clock that afternoon, we had heard the news of what happened in Minneapolis, which heightened the country's awareness of a problem that was well-known to those of us looking into this over the years.

This should never have happened in the United States. We have been successful over the years because we have understood the relationship of strong infrastructure systems, wastewater treatment systems, highways, bridges, and transit systems, to our ability to grow economically. Of course, some of the major efforts that have increased the prosperity of our country have been big ideas in infrastructure. Certainly the interstate highway system, under Dwight Eisenhower, is a classic example of a project that dramatically improved the economy of our Nation more than 50 years ago.

At any rate, there are a number of examples, and I hope my colleagues will look at this critically important legislation we have presented for their consideration. We look forward to further examining how better to deal with the large problems facing us when we reconvene this fall. As many of my colleagues may know, a \$1 billion investment, whether public or private money, would generate as many as 40,000 jobs. So, in addition to addressing major deficiencies in our infrastructure, it will also spur economic development and provide needed work for those in the construction fields and trades.

Again, this is an important issue, and one that is unfortunately receiving more attention than it would otherwise, except for the tragedy in Minnesota. In my home State of Connecticut, we went through a similar tragedy, as my colleague from Rhode Island may recall, on Route 95 along the Mianus River, the corridor running through his State and mine, down to Florida. A whole section of that road in western Connecticut collapsed. Four people lost their lives on that day when the Mianus River bridge fell. So we relate to and understand what has happened in Minnesota.

Again, our invitation is to take a look at this. It is an idea, a big idea, a large idea, creatively financed to be able to do something serious about this growing problem. It is a problem we are going to be hearing more and more about if we fail to take the necessary steps to improve this infrastructure. We must work to construct what needs to be constructed and put our feet back on the ground.

I thank my colleagues.

I am going to make some unanimous consent requests here.

UNANIMOUS-CONSENT REQUEST— H.R. 327

Mr. DODD. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the Veterans' Affairs Committee be discharged from further consideration of H.R. 327 and the Senate then proceed to its immediate consideration.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Is there objection?

Mr. THUNE. Reserving the right to object, the Senator from Connecticut is going to put forward a number of unanimous-consent requests. Because of the lateness of the hour, we have a number of Members on our side who, on many of these unanimous-consent requests that he will propound, have concerns about those, and so they have not been cleared on this side. I am going to object to this and to some of the others he will be putting forward.

I object.

UNANIMOUS-CONSENT REQUEST— H.R. 1538

Mr. DODD. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that if the Senate receives the message from the House on H.R. 1538, the Wounded Warrior bill, with a request for a conference, the Senate agree to the request and the Chair be authorized to appoint conferees.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Is there objection?

Mr. THUNE. Reserving the right to object on this, this bill passed the Senate by unanimous consent. This is something everybody on our side supports. It includes a pay raise for members of our military. But again, until such time as we receive this message from the House—at that time, I guess I will ask the majority to renew that request. Until that happens, I object.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Objection is heard.

UNANIMOUS-CONSENT REQUEST— S. 1257

Mr. DODD. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that at a time to be determined by the majority leader, following consultation with the Republican leader, the Senate proceed to the consideration of Calendar No. 257, S. 1257, a bill to provide the District of Columbia a voting seat and the State of Utah an additional seat in the House of Representatives.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Is there objection?

Mr. THUNE. I object.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Objection is heard.

UNANIMOUS-CONSENT REQUEST— H.R. 3159

Mr. DODD. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that when the Senate receives from the House H.R. 3159, the Dwell Time Act, the bill be considered as having been read three times,

passed, and the motion to reconsider be laid on the table without intervening action or debate.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Is there objection?

Mr. THUNE. I object.

UNANIMOUS-CONSENT REQUEST— S. 742

Mr. DODD. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the Senate proceed to the immediate consideration of Calendar No. 321, S. 742, that the committee-reported amendment be considered and agreed to, the bill as amended be read a third time, passed, and the motion to reconsider be laid on the table and any statements be printed in the RECORD as if read.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Is there objection?

Mr. THUNE. I object.

UNANIMOUS-CONSENT REQUEST— S. 1785

Mr. DODD. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the Senate proceed to the immediate consideration of Calendar No. 320, S. 1785, that the committee-reported amendment be considered and agreed to, the bill be read a third time, passed, the motion to reconsider be laid on the table, and any statements be printed in the RECORD.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Is there objection?

Mr. THUNE. I object.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Objection is heard.

UNANIMOUS-CONSENT REQUEST— S. 558

Mr. DODD. Last, Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the Senate proceed to the immediate consideration of Calendar No. 93, S. 558, that the amendment at the desk be considered and agreed to, the committee-reported substitute as amended be agreed to, the bill, as amended, be read a third time, passed, the motion to reconsider be laid on the table, and that any statements relating thereto be printed in the RECORD with no intervening action or debate.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Is there objection?

Mr. THUNE. I object.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Objection is heard.

Mr. DODD. 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. MCCONNELL. I ask unanimous consent that the order for the quorum call be rescinded.

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

SIX POINT PLAN

Mr. MCCONNELL. Mr. President, 7 months ago I opened this session by reminding myself and my colleagues that

the work we do and the way we do it will be judged not only by the voters but by history.

Future generations are not likely to remember our names, but they will inherit the laws that we pass, the problems we ignore, and the solutions we leave behind. So I rise tonight to take stock of how we have done, to offer an honest assessment of our work, and to propose a course of correction.

When the gavel fell in January, a new party had taken over. It had a simple six-point plan of action involving a list of items that were thought to have popular support. As the majority whip put it last fall, Democrats did not want to overpromise, so they came up with a list that was concise, understandable, and attainable.

He added that if the Democrats were fortunate enough to win the majority, they would be judged primarily on their ability to deliver on those six legislative goals. So by the majority's own standard, our report card should begin with a so-called 6 for '06. They have had more than a half a year to enact them, and so it is fair to ask: How have they done?

We started with lobby reform. As an early gesture of the bipartisanship I hoped would mark this session, I cosponsored the bill along with the majority leader. But less than 2 weeks into the session, the majority decided to cut off debate. It forced an early vote on an unfinished bill, and it failed. After Republicans were allowed to add a vital amendment that protected the grassroots organizations from burdensome oversight, we voted again, and the bill passed easily 96 to 2.

Minimum wage was next. Republicans supported an increase that included tax relief for the business owners who would have to pay for it. At first the majority balked. They wanted a bill without any tax relief, without any Republican input. It failed. But when they finally agreed to cooperate by including tax relief for small businesses, the bill sailed through by a vote of 94 to 3. Four weeks, two accomplishments, a good start.

Then we turned to the 9/11 bill, and here the tide began to turn. Republicans supported this bill from the start. We saw it as a welcome opportunity to strengthen security, but the majority rejected our efforts to improve it with amendments, and then weakened the bill by inserting a dangerous provision at the insistence of their labor union supporters.

They wanted to give airport security workers at U.S. airports veto power over the Government's rapid response plan to a terrorist attack. It was an absurd request.

Congress rejected a similar provision 5 years earlier on the grounds that it threatened national security. The President promised to veto it this time around as well. The bill ended up passing the Senate, and the provision was ultimately stripped in conference. But by refusing input at the start, both

parties would have to wait until just last week to finish this important bill, and the centerpiece of the Democratic plan for improving national security would sit on the shelf literally for months.

Now, there is a pattern here. When the majority has agreed to let Republicans participate and shape legislation, we have achieved good bipartisan results. When they have blocked that cooperation, they have failed. But just like a fly that keeps slamming its head into the same windowpane trying to get outside, the Democratic majority has spent most of the year since those small, early gestures at cooperation trying and failing to advance its agenda by insisting on the path of political advantage.

The problem took root early on. Soon after the 9/11 bill came the first attempt to set a timetable for withdrawing U.S. troops from Iraq. Our Democratic friends knew it had no chance of passing the Senate, let alone being signed into law.

Two weeks earlier, they had forced a vote on the Petraeus plan for securing Baghdad and lost. The President had made clear his opposition to timelines, and Republicans insisted that Congress should not be in the business of literally micromanaging a war.

Yet our friends on the other side persisted anyway, and the first timeline vote failed. It was followed by 14 more political messaging votes on the war, votes that promised to have no practical impact on our military conduct. The Senate would spend 2 months debating legislation that in every case was bound to fail. For the entire spring and summer, the majority insisted on political votes, culminating in the theatrical crescendo of an all-night debate that even Democrats admitted was a stunt.

What seems to have happened here is that at some point in February, after the minimum wage vote, the political left put a hand on the steering wheel, and the unfortunate result was that nearly 5 months would pass before a single item on the 6 for '06 agenda would become law, and even that had to be tacked on to a must-pass emergency spending bill that the Democrats had been slow-rolling for months.

Now it was during those early months that an alternative, harder edged, 6 for '06 agenda seemed to emerge. Indeed, the biggest Senate fights this year have not been over the original 6 for '06 at all. They revolved around the policy proposals of the far left. Fortunately, Republicans have held together to keep these bad ideas from becoming law.

For example, they wanted to eliminate secret ballot elections from union drives. They wanted to spend valuable floor time on a nonbinding resolution about the Attorney General, despite weeks of print and television interviews on the topic already.

They wanted to revive the so-called fairness doctrine, a kind of Federal

speech code that was abolished more than two decades ago because it violates the first amendment. They even proposed closing the terrorist detention facility at Guantanamo Bay and sending the inmates to the States.

Then there were the politically motivated investigations which, between the House and Senate, break down to about six hearings a day since the first day of the session. Some seemed to see a plot being hatched behind every filing cabinet in Washington. Others seem ready to hold a White House sofa in contempt for bad fabric. And, of course, there was the endless political grandstanding on Iraq that I have already mentioned.

Now, predictably, this alternative agenda went nowhere. In the effort to get both, they ended up with neither. Editorial writers started to grumble about the lack of achievement. The public took note, too, sending the new Congress's approval ratings to new subterranean lows.

The lesson that emerged was clear. Politics yields headlines; cooperation yields results.

Republicans warned the other side about the consequences of unilateralism early on. We argued for months that the majority had been engaged in a months-long power play by invoking cloture with astonishing frequency. My staff commissioned a CRS study on the issue and found that the majority was on pace to shatter the record for cloture filings in a single Congress.

Yet the cloture stories that started to appear argued that record cloture filings were somehow the fault of the Republicans, as if we had forced the majority to try to cut off debate. This was classic spin, as anyone who has been in the Senate for more than a week will tell you. The majority knows that more than 40 cloture votes in 6 months is not a sign of minority obstruction. It is a sign of a majority that does not like the rules.

The opportunity costs of this failed strategy have been immense. Because it has refused to cooperate with the other side, the majority hasn't brought a single piece of legislation to the floor that would reduce the income tax burden on working Americans. The Senate has not done a thing to address entitlements, despite a looming financial catastrophe. It has done nothing to address the rising cost of health care. Only 1 appropriations bill out of 12 has passed the Senate, and none has been signed into law.

On the first day of the session, the majority whip said the American people had put Democrats in the majority to find solutions, not to play to a draw with nothing to show for it. Yet at times over the last 7 months those words have seemed quaint. The Democratic majority had the right idea early on. It made an early mistake, in my opinion, by succumbing to a round-the-clock political campaign. As any sailor knows, a small deviation at the

start takes you far off course over time.

Over the last week, we have seen some conspicuous signs of bipartisan cooperation, including tonight, when the majority chose the road of cooperation to fix a gap in our national intelligence before we left for the August recess. Americans are grateful to the majority for joining us on this critical issue. Under the leadership of my friend the majority leader, Congress has acted on the sound principle that cooperation is a better recipe for success than confrontation and political theater. All of us should be glad about that.

We have seen that we can accomplish good things by working together and cooperating on legislation that Americans support. Politics certainly has its place, but it doesn't steer this ship, at least it shouldn't. There is simply too much to be done, and we have seen the results when it does.

So I would not offer a grade for this Congress. Others have already done that. But I will say that at the beginning of this session, I staked my party to a pledge: When faced with an urgent issue, we would act. When faced with a problem, we would seek solutions, not mere political advantage. That pledge still stands. We have seen what we can do. We have actually seen it tonight. And we have reason to hope we will see it still.

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. REID. I ask unanimous consent that the order for the quorum call be rescinded.

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

IRAQ

Mr. REID. Mr. President, last week the Iraqi people celebrated a very rare triumph, they won a soccer game. But their celebration had nothing to do with decreased violence, improved distribution of water, electricity or other basic necessities or, of course, political reconciliation. It was a soccer game. Iraqis were celebrating their victory in the Asian Cup soccer championship, as well they should. But even during this rare moment of joy, political realities could not be ignored. After his game-winning shot, team captain Younis Mahmoud told reporters he would not be returning to his home country, and he hoped that the American forces would leave Iraq quickly.

The setting, a great victory for the Iraqi soccer team. Their hero, their captain, says: I am not going home. I am not returning to Iraq, and I want the Americans out.

His words reflect the overwhelming sentiment of the Iraqi people whose hopes he carried on his shoulders. A recent poll showed that 70 percent of Iraqis think American forces make them less safe.

President Bush said 2 weeks ago, the war in Iraq has invited guests, and we would leave if asked. They are asking, we are not going.

Yesterday was a day without water in Baghdad. It was 115 degrees. There was no water because there was insufficient electric generation for water filtration and distribution of water. This was the sixth day in a row with virtually no water in the capital city, this huge metropolitan area, no water. People are drinking water when they can, but it is contaminated, and they are getting sick. Four dead American soldiers yesterday.

Meanwhile new evidence emerges by the day. Prime Minister al-Maliki is utterly failing to achieve the political reconciliation the country so desperately needs. Even worse, there is no evidence he is even trying.

Next month the administration will deliver a progress report on Iraq to us, the Congress of the United States. We, of course, will take that report seriously, but it has been clear for some time that this war and President Bush's troop escalation is a tragic failure. General Petraeus, whom we hear so much about, has said time and time again, the war cannot be won militarily. Many of our colleagues on the other side of the aisle have said for months that September would be the turning point, that in September, if meaningful progress has not been made, they will finally work with us to reach a responsible end to the war.

When we come back in September, the eyes of the world will be on those Republicans who made September their month to draw a line in the sand. I hope they would back their words up with action. Democrats have done everything we can do. All Democrats, we have done everything we can do. We need some help from the Republicans to change the course of that intractable civil war, costing the American people about \$350 to \$360 million every day. We need to finally take a stand together, Democrats and Republicans, to deliver a responsible end to the war that the American people demand and deserve and turn our military focus to the grave and growing threats we face throughout the world that have been ignored by this administration for far too long.

LEGISLATIVE ACCOMPLISHMENTS

Mr. REID. Mr. President, my friend, the distinguished Republican leader, came to the floor, talked about a number of things tonight. I wish to approach things in a little different direction. I wish to talk about what we have accomplished in these short 7 months. We have worked hard. We have worked long, hard hours, something that hasn't been done for a long time in this body. Let's talk about the bills we have sent to the President of the United States that we have passed.

Minimum wage. We hear a lot about minimum wage, but minimum wage is

not for kids flipping hamburgers at McDonald's. Sixty percent of the people who draw the minimum wage are women. For over half those women, that is the only money they get for themselves and their families.

I am glad we passed the minimum wage. After 10 years, we have given this legislation the attention it deserves. It is an issue that deals with women. It does. But also it is an issue that deals with people of color. The majority of the people who draw the minimum wage are people of color. We did the right thing. It is important legislation, and it is now the law.

A short time ago, we finished a vote on terrorism. On 9/11, it was an act of terror that killed over 3,000 Americans. President Bush went to Ground Zero on a number of occasions, but it was thought we should take a look at what really happened on 9/11. What could we do to better prepare for similar attacks? What went wrong? Why weren't we prepared?

So we asked—we Democrats asked—for months and months—that went well into more than 2 years—why don't we have an investigation to find out what went wrong? This was fought by the President. Finally, after an outcry from the survivors of the 9/11 victims and people all over this country, we were able to get a bipartisan commission to study 9/11. Even though the President opposed it, we finally were able to get this done.

They recommended we do certain things to make us safer. They made their recommendations, sent them to the White House, sent them to Congress, and we begged the President to implement these recommendations. They were not implemented. The 9/11 Commissioners came back and graded the President on how he had done—Fs and Ds on everything.

This Congress, in these short 7 months, has passed legislation that implements the 9/11 Commission recommendations. There was a signing ceremony today at the White House. That is now the law. It is going to make our country much safer. The problem is, it is 3 years behind schedule.

We, as Democrats, recognize we had elections last November. There was tremendous turnover. People never believed Democrats would take control of the Senate. There was some talk they would take over the House. The Senate was never thought to be a body that we would take over. We did.

Why did we take over the Senate? We have nine new Democratic Senators, one of whom is presiding over the Senate tonight. Those nine Democratic Senators campaigned on a number of issues. But the one issue they campaigned on all over this country is to do something about the culture of corruption in Washington.

Why were the nine new Democrats concerned? For the first time in 131 years, someone working in the White House was indicted. Scooter Libby has