

As previously announced, there will be no rollcall votes on Monday, but Members should be here Monday to offer amendments on Amtrak if they so desire.

MEASURES PLACED ON THE CALENDAR—S. 2233, S. 2234, H.R. 505, H.R. 3963

Mr. REID. Mr. President, it is my understanding there are four bills at the desk due for a second reading.

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. The clerk will read the titles of the bills for the second time.

The legislative clerk read as follows:

A bill (S. 2233) to provide a permanent deduction for State and local general sales taxes.

A bill (S. 2234) to amend the Internal Revenue Code of 1986 to extend the deduction for qualified tuition and related expenses.

A bill (H.R. 505) to express the policy of the United States regarding the United States relationship with native Hawaiians and to provide a process for the recognition by the United States of the native Hawaiian governing entity.

A bill (H.R. 3963) to amend Title XXI of the Social Security Act to extend and improve the Children's Health Insurance Program, and for other purposes.

Mr. REID. Mr. President, I object to any further proceedings with respect to these bills, and I do so en bloc.

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. Objection is heard.

The bills will be placed on the calendar.

PASSENGER RAIL INVESTMENT AND IMPROVEMENT ACT OF 2007

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. Under the previous order, the Senate will resume consideration of S. 294, which the clerk will report.

The legislative clerk read as follows:

A bill (S. 294) to reauthorize Amtrak, and for other purposes.

Pending:

Lautenberg (for Carper) amendment No. 3454 (to amendment No. 3452), of a perfecting nature.

Allard amendment No. 3455, to strike the provisions repealing Amtrak's self-sufficiency requirements.

CLOTURE MOTION

Mr. REID. Mr. President, I send a cloture motion to the desk.

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. The cloture motion having been presented under rule XXII, the Chair directs the clerk to read the motion.

The legislative clerk read as follows:

CLOTURE MOTION

We, the undersigned Senators, in accordance with the provisions of rule XXII of the Standing Rules of the Senate, hereby move to bring to a close debate on Calendar No. 158, S. 294, AMTRAK Reauthorization.

Frank R. Lautenberg, Trent Lott, Joe Lieberman, Benjamin L. Cardin, S. Whitehouse, Robert Menendez, Daniel K. Inouye, Susan M. Collins, Mike Crapo, Larry E. Craig, John Warner, Byron L. Dorgan, Gordon H. Smith, Max Baucus, Bill Nelson, Robert P. Casey, Jr., Harry Reid.

Mr. REID. Mr. President, normally we waive the reading of the names, but I thought it was so refreshing to hear a cloture motion with Democrats and Republicans on it that I wanted to hear them. I am almost anxious to have the clerk do it again, but I think that is sufficient.

I ask unanimous consent that the vote on the motion to invoke cloture on S. 294 occur on Tuesday, October 30 at a time determined by the majority leader—I will certainly consult with the Republican leader—and that the mandatory quorum rule under rule XXII be waived.

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

Mr. REID. I now ask unanimous consent that Members have until 3:30 p.m. Monday to file any germane first-degree amendments to S. 294.

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

Mr. REID. Mr. President, I note 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. LAUTENBERG. 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. LAUTENBERG. Mr. President, with cloture filed, we are hopeful we will be able to move with dispatch to the support and approval of S. 294, the Amtrak bill.

I wish to start this morning by thanking our colleague and my cosponsor and longtime Amtrak supporter, Senator TRENT LOTT, for the opportunity to work together to move this bill along. His support is essential, and I know he is pleased with the progress we have made this morning up to this point. Today is our third day on the bill. Yesterday we made very good progress. We were able to work through a number of amendments, some of which we were able to agree to and some of which we disposed of with votes. Now, this morning, cloture has been filed, which should put us on a schedule to finish this bill early next week. It is very important that we do so for the future of America's transportation systems.

Whether it is to reduce congestion on our roads or at our airports, or to reduce greenhouse gas emissions that puts us at risk of global warming—our society and our world—or to give people another safe mode of transportation during an emergency, rail is critical. We cannot neglect the contribution it makes in the event of a calamity or disaster, whether it comes from a terrorist attack or from an erratic act of nature such as a storm or forest fires, and all of the things we see that call at times for evacuation.

Our bill, by authorizing \$2 billion a year for Amtrak in the States over the

next 6 years, will make all of that much easier for America to deal with the problem of a decaying infrastructure. It provides funding for Amtrak's capital needs as well as State grants for passenger rail.

While Amtrak had record ridership and revenues last year, our bill requires changes at Amtrak to make sure these funds will help the railroad to continue moving in the right direction. It would require Amtrak to reform its operations, to reduce its Federal operating subsidy by over 40 percent over the life of the bill.

We worked very hard to forge this bipartisan compromise plan. Last Congress, our plan was approved by the Senate as an amendment to the budget bill by a vote of 93 to 6. I hope that early next week we will get a strong vote in support of our bill so we can be one step closer to making it law.

I note 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. BOND. 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.

AMENDMENTS NOS. 3467, 3468, 3469, AND 3470 EN BLOC

Mr. BOND. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent to temporarily set aside the pending amendment and call up amendments Nos. 3467, 3468, 3469, and 3470 en bloc, on behalf of Senator DEMINT.

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

The clerk will report.

The Senator from Missouri [Mr. Bond], for Mr. DEMINT, proposes amendments numbered 3467, 3468, 3469, and 3470 en bloc.

The amendments are as follows:

AMENDMENT NO. 3467

(Purpose: To require Amtrak to disclose the Federal subsidy of every ticket sold for transportation on Amtrak)

At the end of title II, add the following:

SEC. 224. DISCLOSURE OF PER PASSENGER FEDERAL SUBSIDIES.

Amtrak shall publicly disclose all the costs incurred for each Amtrak route that are subsidized by the Federal Government, including costs for maintenance, depreciation, and operations. The specific per-passenger Federal subsidy on each route shall be displayed on every ticket purchased for that route and on Amtrak's publicly accessible website.

AMENDMENT NO. 3468

(Purpose: To increase competition in the American rail system by allowing any qualified rail operator or transportation company to compete for passenger rail service)

On page 33, strike line 22 and all that follows through page 34, line 5, and insert the following:

“(1) any qualified rail operator or transportation company

AMENDMENT NO. 3469

(Purpose: To clarify the level of detail to be included in the modern financial accounting and reporting system required under section 203)

On page 15, line 21, strike "(b)" and insert the following:

(b) CATEGORIZATION OF REVENUES AND EXPENSES.—

(1) IN GENERAL.—In carrying out subsection (a), the Amtrak Board of Directors shall separately categorize routes, assigned revenues, and attributable expenses by type of service, including long distance routes, State-sponsored routes, commuter contract routes, and Northeast Corridor routes.

(2) NORTHEAST CORRIDOR.—Amtrak revenues generated by freight and commuter railroads operating on the Northeast Corridor shall be separately listed to include the charges per car mile assessed by Amtrak to other freight and commuter railroad entities.

(3) FIXED OVERHEAD EXPENSES.—Fixed overhead expenses that are not directly assigned or attributed to any route (or group of routes) shall be listed separately by line item and expense category.

(c)

AMENDMENT NO. 3470

(Purpose: To require the Performance Improvement Plan to address reaching financial solvency by eliminating routes and services that do not make a profit)

On page 31, strike line 21 and insert the following:

"(7) reaching financial solvency by eliminating routes and services that do not make a profit; and

Mr. BOND. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that those amendments be temporarily set aside.

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

AMENDMENT NO. 3464

Mr. BOND. Mr. President, I call up amendment No. 3464, which is at the desk.

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. The clerk will report.

The legislative clerk read as follows: The Senator from Missouri [Mr. BOND] proposes an amendment numbered 3464.

Mr. BOND. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that reading of the amendment be dispensed with.

(Purpose: To amend section 24101 of title 49, United States Code, to clarify Amtrak's mission)

On page 10, between lines 12 and 13, insert the following:

SEC. 200. MISSION.

Section 24101 is amended by striking subsection (c) and inserting the following:

"(c) MISSION.—

"(1) IN GENERAL.—The mission of Amtrak is to provide efficient and effective intercity passenger mobility in those travel markets in which passenger rail offers a trip-time and service quality competitive or complementary travel option consistent with the goal of continual reduction in Federal operating subsidies required to provide such service.

"(2) PERFORMANCE MEASUREMENT.—All measurements of Amtrak performance, including decisions on whether, and to what extent, to provide operating subsidies, shall be based on the Amtrak's ability to carry out the mission described in paragraph (1)."

On page 33, line 3, strike "may" and insert "shall".

Mr. BOND. Mr. President, I rise to offer an amendment to S. 294, the Am-

trak reauthorization bill. I applaud the authors of the bill for their hard work in putting this legislation together. As one who hopes to see a robust, efficient passenger rail service, I have long been a supporter and rider on Amtrak. As Governor of Missouri, I started the State support of Amtrak to run trains between Kansas City and St. Louis. As I have watched Amtrak over the years, I have been increasingly concerned about the rising costs and relatively stagnating ridership. As I look at this bill, I do not believe it includes all the needed reforms that are crucial to the success of Amtrak.

While there are many positive aspects of the bill, the fundamental problem with Amtrak is that it has no clearly defined mission. Is it supposed to provide only those services where it can make a profit? Is it supposed to supplement air service in specific markets regardless of cost? Is it supposed to serve rural markets regardless of cost? Is it supposed to provide tourist travel regardless of cost? All of these have been held out from time to time as reasons to subsidize Amtrak and as excuses for why it should not be held accountable for the effective use of the taxpayers' money. However, those are empty excuses. The money continues to flow out, and I believe strong reforms are necessary.

While Amtrak's revenue, ridership, and cash operating loss numbers improved this year, this improved financial performance reflects labor costs held low by the absence of a labor settlement. Once a settlement is reached, Amtrak's costs will jump up, reflecting the pay raises that have largely been deferred during the past 7 years during which time there has not been a labor contract.

Amtrak has made no significant progress in restructuring its operations to become less reliant on Federal funds. The pace of Amtrak's reform savings has slowed from \$61 million in fiscal year 2006 to a planned \$46 million in fiscal year 2008. There is little chance Amtrak will achieve anywhere near the \$500 million in annual reform savings it promised when it adopted its 2005 plan.

GAO reports consistently cite that Amtrak has lost the focus of its statutory mandate to be operated and managed as a for-profit company.

Just last year, over 10 percent of Amtrak's operating subsidy was spent on food and beverages and a like amount subsidized first-class service. There is no critical public purpose associated with such expenditures. Yet there are some who assume they are OK because that is what Amtrak has always done.

S. 294, I regret to say, will not change this deplorable system. While section 208 would have FRA and Amtrak develop performance metrics, there is no clear statement of Amtrak's mission on which to base these metrics.

After 36 years, we should not miss the opportunity to finally and clearly state Amtrak's mission. It is for that

reason that I offer as an amendment to S. 294 the establishment of Amtrak's mission. That mission should be:

To provide efficient and effective intercity passenger rail mobility in those travel markets where passenger rail offers a trip-time and service quality competitive travel option consistent with the goal of continual reduction in Federal operating subsidies required to provide service.

With this mission clearly established, then FRA and Amtrak can establish meaningful performance measures that hold Amtrak accountable for accomplishing that mission. Obviously, meaningful benchmarks will help both Amtrak and those of us in Congress measure its efforts at reform. In fact, failure to meet benchmarks will be a good reason to lessen or terminate these excessive subsidies.

My colleagues may say that the bill contains benchmark reforms under section 208, Metrics and Standards. The section reads:

Within 180 days . . . develop new or improve existing metrics and minimum standards for measuring the performance and service quality of intercity passenger train operations, including cost recovery, on-time performance and minutes of delay, ridership, on-board services, stations, facilities, equipment, and other services. Such metrics, at a minimum, shall include the percentage of avoidable and fully allocated operating costs covered by passenger revenues on each route, ridership per train mile operated, measures of on-time performance and delays incurred by intercity passenger rail.

Exactly what reforms are contained within these metrics and standards? There is no mission, no goals, and no benchmarks for operating subsidies and, as I said, quite frankly, no reform.

If the authorizers were truly offering operating metrics, they would have year-over-year improvement on metrics applied on a route-by-route business line or corporate basis on some of the following:

Operating ratio—operating revenues relative to operating costs, excluding depreciation to measure improvements in cost recovery; two, cash operating loss—would measure revenue expense improvements; three, savings from reform initiative—while the operating loss includes these savings, monitoring these savings allows for tracking the implementation of structural reform improvements; four, cash operating loss for passenger mile—an overall efficiency measure; five, labor productivity—passenger mile per employee; and finally, six, equipment reliability—percent of units out of service.

The other thing missing from Amtrak oversight has been real teeth. So I propose changing the language in section 210 from being permissive, which says the FRA "may" withhold grants from trains that don't measure up, to being mandatory, to say that FRA "shall" withhold grants from trains that don't measure up.

Today, the Secretary of Transportation has the ability to discontinue service on specific routes, but none have been proposed for elimination because perhaps there is no mission

statement for Amtrak on which to make a determination for closure.

This measure I propose does not push Amtrak off the cliff, but it recognizes we cannot afford for Amtrak to be all things to all people. It requires Amtrak to take a degree of responsibility that has been lacking in the use of the taxpayers' money. It would require Amtrak to improve efficiency and effectiveness of its service, to reduce the demands it makes of our taxpayers, including, where appropriate, recognizing that passenger rail is not the best option in all places.

Mr. President, I yield the floor.

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. The Senator from New Jersey.

Mr. LAUTENBERG. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the period for morning business be delayed until we finish this discussion.

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

Mr. LAUTENBERG. Mr. President, I wish to respond to Senator BOND's amendment, but I first ask the Senator from Missouri whether the delay he experienced this morning was due to congestion on the highways?

Mr. BOND. Mr. President, that is what we all live with, I assure my friend from New Jersey.

Mr. LAUTENBERG. I just wanted to see whether there was any personal direct experience with congestion on the roads. I don't think there is a city or a town in this country, a highway that doesn't experience incredible pressure from its expanded use; will the Senator agree?

Mr. BOND. Mr. President, I agree with that. Of course, I would agree in some areas there are no rail lines available to relieve that congestion. While many metropolitan areas do have rail lines, they are definitely an efficient alternative. In many areas of the country, people do not have rail service, existing rails. So rails cannot solve all of our transportation congestion problems.

Mr. LAUTENBERG. I thank the distinguished Senator from Missouri for his suggestion that we expand rail service all across this country.

Mr. BOND. I didn't say that, no.

Mr. LAUTENBERG. That was the interpretation. The Senator said there wasn't rail service available in lots of places. I take the positive side of that statement and say let's get on with our task of providing service.

While I appreciate the Senator's perspective, I believe there is no need for this amendment. It covers some of the same debate we have already voted on as part of the discussion. This amendment establishes a new mission for Amtrak and sets a new standard by which Amtrak and operating subsidies for Amtrak services should be judged. While I can agree with the general principles of the mission statement, it largely covers issues already contained in existing Federal law related to Amtrak and is, therefore, redundant.

We have seen Amtrak getting expanded use, but we have to look at what has happened in our society, what the conditions are that have put so much pressure on Amtrak. When we look at the growth in population alone, since Amtrak became a quasi-government corporation, the population of this country has expanded by 100 million people in barely over 35 years. It was never thought that our aviation system would be so strained because of inadequate infrastructure, and whatever the reasons, that it cannot be relied upon. One out of four flights is late, appointments are missed, crowding is standard, our highways are jammed. Maybe in some parts of the country we don't see the congestion we see in many of the metropolitan areas. But highways are notoriously slow-moving now because of expanded traffic.

So Amtrak has been under the same pressure. And thank goodness we have Amtrak in existence. We have seen more rapid service from Amtrak and more riders—over 26 million passengers in the last year. So when we look at Amtrak's performance, we have to consider under what conditions it operates. I think it is fair to say that Amtrak was never financed at the level it should have been to be an up-to-date, modern railroad in this country.

I have had the opportunity, as we know, to ride one of the French trains, TGV, in which a trip of just over 200 miles from Paris to Brussels, where our NATO headquarters exists, is 1 hour 20 minutes. If anything similar to that could ever be achieved with Amtrak, we would reduce the congestion in the sky substantially. It is so crowded in the air these days, separations are narrowed, and we are expecting over 5,000 new light jets into our system in the next 10 years.

We have to look at the expectations Amtrak has had to live with over this period of time. Insufficient capital, that is where it all started, and it has continued to make it very difficult for Amtrak to produce the kind of service we want. I believe they ought to be responsible for maintaining the quality of service, for providing the data that is required on what progress has been lacking. Current law already requires Amtrak to minimize Government subsidies and provide high-quality rail service.

I believe the real goal of this amendment is to reduce or eliminate Federal operating support for long-distance routes and other services where current infrastructure problems or ontime performance limits the service quality. Of course, as I said earlier, these problems resulting from insufficient capital expenditures and also hosting freight railroad delays are addressed by this bill.

Most of the accountability Senator BOND desires is already in our bill through requirements of a 5-year plan, through the reduction of the operating subsidy by 40 percent. Our bill calls for

changes that are significant as we attempt to put them in place. That is where we are going.

While the Senator's amendment also requires the Secretary to eliminate funding for any route not meeting Amtrak's long-distance plan required under the bill, S. 294 already gives the Secretary this authority. But our bill preserves some flexibility for the Secretary to continue a long-distance route if Amtrak could not implement a plan or did not meet the goals of a plan for legitimate reasons or events beyond Amtrak's control. Heaven forbid if we have another serious hurricane or terrorist attack. The Secretary should have the ability to take these situations into consideration when judging whether Amtrak meets the requirements demanded under the law.

I look forward to debating this amendment further. I certainly am open to discussion with the Senator from Missouri on his amendment. But as it is currently drafted, I urge my colleagues to oppose it.

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. The Senator from Missouri.

Mr. BOND. Mr. President, I wish to respond to my friend from New Jersey and point out that while I may have had some operating delays coming into downtown Washington this morning because of the rain, I am not the only one. Service reliability continues to plague Amtrak. Amtrak systemwide in 2007 had ontime performance through August at only 68 percent and long-distance ontime performance was only 40 percent.

The Senator points out that there are constraints on Amtrak. With the exception of Connecticut, which I believe has its lines, most of the Amtrak lines run on lines established, bought, and paid for by freight railroads. For the lines to be kept operating, they have to continue to use freight.

If the chairman of the subcommittee is proposing that we build a national network of passenger rails—buy the land, buy the equipment, install the rails—I will be happy to take a look at the numbers that would be involved, whether they are billions or trillions, but I question whether we could make that investment.

What I have stated only in this amendment is that we should come to an agreement on what the mission of Amtrak is. What is it supposed to do? If you don't know where you are going, it is hard to tell when you have gotten there. Yes, we put money into a capital operating plan, a 5-year plan in 2005. There were supposed to be operating savings. The operating savings are not being realized. What I propose is simply good management techniques.

My colleague has run a successful business, and I assume to run a business he had to have a mission and he had to have standards and goals by which to judge the achievement of that mission. S. 294 talks about all kinds of metrics, but it doesn't say there are any goals. How do you know if you

have gotten there? Where are you going? You don't know.

Maybe I have missed it, but I don't think any of us are clear on the clearly stated mission of Amtrak and any standards by which the achievement of that mission should be judged. I would be happy to have a discussion—and this is the appropriate place to do it—on what should be the mission of Amtrak. Maybe for my edification, I ask my friend from New Jersey to cite to me what the written mission of Amtrak is because I will have to admit, I am not familiar with that specific mission statement and the standards and goals by which Amtrak and the FRA and we in Congress can judge the effective accomplishment of the objectives within the parameter of that mission. Through the Chair, I ask my friend from New Jersey to enlighten me.

Mr. LAUTENBERG. Mr. President, I thank the Senator from Missouri for asking this question at this moment because I have here existing law, which is continued in S. 294. Here, in existing law, it says the purpose of the management is:

By using innovative operating and marketing concepts, Amtrak shall provide intercity and commuter rail passenger transportation that completely develops the potential of modern rail transportation to meet the intercity and commuter passenger transportation needs of the United States.

The first goal is to:

use its best business judgment in acting to minimize the U.S. Government subsidies, including—

And it lists a number of these things which I will submit for my colleague and friend to take a look at and see if these questions are not already dealt with.

Yes, we have to be more diligent. There is no doubt we have to fill the board of Amtrak's open positions. We have not done that. We want to expand the board to a more significant body of opinion. We are doing all kinds of things.

I have an affection for the State of Missouri, having been a soldier there many years ago and trying to dig foxholes in the Ozark Mountains. We know what steels the spine of those people who live in Missouri now. It is the depth and the quality of the rock upon which most of Missouri is built. That is why the railroad contributes so much, for instance, from Chicago to St. Louis, Kansas City to Kansas City.

But in the final analysis, I think it is important to note a significant difference between business operations. I was fortunate enough to run a fairly large company; but business to business. However, it is clearly stated that Amtrak is a not-for-profit organization. When we look at what happens with good business operations and think of the subsidy that has been given to the airlines—it was as a result of a terrible calamity in American history, 9/11—but over \$20 billion has been given to the airlines, for-profit businesses. They are doing very well right

now, I might add, and still getting subsidies.

I think, in fairness, we will have a chance to look at this further. We are pressed by several things, not the least of which is that there are others who would like to be included in the debate. I will be happy to loan the Senator from Missouri my copy of the existing law, if he would like to borrow it for a while.

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. The Senator from Missouri is recognized.

Mr. BOND. Mr. President, if I may respond, I don't see any clearly defined mission. If my colleague doesn't agree that Amtrak should be providing efficient and effective passenger service in those travel markets in which passenger rail offers a trip time and service quality, competitive or complementary travel option consistent with the goal of continuing to reduce Federal operating subsidies—we are not saying it should be a for-profit company, but it certainly should not be a continual growing loss operation.

I believe we must have some discipline that I do not see in the law and particularly saying “best business practices”—best business practices to do what?

I hope we can continue this discussion, and I thank the Chair and my colleagues for the time.

Mr. LAUTENBERG. Mr. President, I understand we are ready to go to morning business.

MORNING BUSINESS

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. Under the previous order, the Senate will now proceed to a period of morning business with Senators permitted to speak up to 10 minutes each.

The Senator from North Dakota is recognized.

Mr. DORGAN. Mr. President, I had previously requested the right to speak for 30 minutes in morning business.

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. That had been granted.

AMERICA'S PRIORITIES

Mr. DORGAN. Mr. President, I wish to talk this morning about the President's request for \$190-plus billion in emergency funding for the war in Iraq and for activities in Afghanistan.

Before I do that, however, I wish to mention the subject of Iran. I notice in the paper this morning, and I noticed the other day in a press conference by President Bush, he made a reference to world war III in a description of the issues with Iran. I am very concerned about what I hear from this administration. This administration has had a history of describing for us how they see the world. Many of us have spent a lot of time in classified, top-secret briefings with members of this administration, some of whom are now speaking out now about Iran. They include Secretary of State Condoleezza

Rice, Vice President DICK CHENEY, and others. We have had plenty of experience in top-secret briefings with them in which they described circumstances with respect to the country of Iraq.

It turns out what we were told in top-secret briefings about Iraq was not accurate. No one has done the in-depth investigation to find out why that was the case. It appears to me, in some cases that which was described to us by top-level folks in this administration about Iraq prior to the Iraq war—in some cases, it turns out they either should have known, and in some cases may have known, that what they were saying to the Congress and to the American people was not accurate.

My point is this. I think there is precious little credibility on the part of the administration on these issues. I do not—I would say most of my colleagues feel the same—do not want this administration moving off precipitously based on information they have, to take military action of any type against another country. They certainly cannot in my judgment do that without the consent of Congress. I believe they would have a very difficult time getting the consent the Congress, given the lack of credibility in this administration on many of these issues.

These are important issues. Preventing the country of Iran from acquiring a nuclear weapon is a very important mission, in my judgment. But we will best accomplish that through diplomatic means with other countries, particularly with the Europeans and the Russians and many others. I must say my own view is that the foreign policy of this administration—I regret to say it—has largely been an inept and a clumsy foreign policy at best. We face, as a result of it, very substantial challenges around the world. My hope is that we see much more action on diplomacy and negotiation and working to form alliances and much less front-page headlines by members of this administration.

Now I wish to talk about priorities. I wish to talk about the President's request for \$196 billion in emergency funding, none of it paid for. But first I want to talk about this little girl. This little girl, her name is Ta'Shon Rain Littlelight. Ta'Shon Rain Littlelight is from the Crow Nation in Montana. She loved to dance, as you can see—sparkling, beautiful eyes, 5 years old, loved to dance the Indian dances.

Ta'shon's grandmother testified at a hearing I held at the Crow Reservation in Montana, with my colleague, Senator TESTER. Her grandmother told us a story about Ta'Shon Rain Littlelight. Ta'Shon died, by the way. This little girl with the bright eyes and the love of dancing isn't with us anymore. Ta'Shon had health problems. Last year she was taken, many times, to the Crow Indian Health Service clinic. They were treating her—after they had diagnosed various things—they were treating her for depression. It turned out this little girl didn't have