

will be a farm bill. The only issue is when and how, and that is something we will have to negotiate here in the Senate, as we always do.

I yield the floor.

Mr. REID. Mr. President, last word, maybe; otherwise, I get the last word later.

Mr. President, the Republicans offer an amendment. I offered the first amendment on behalf of DORGAN and GRASSLEY. It is a bipartisan amendment. If they have an amendment they want to offer, let them offer it. I will be happy to stand out of the way. But they are offering all these excuses why they can't do it, and that is too bad.

RESERVATION OF LEADER TIME

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. Under the previous order, the leadership time is reserved.

MORNING BUSINESS

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. Under the previous order, the Senate will proceed to a period of morning business for 60 minutes, with Senators permitted to speak up to 10 minutes, with the time equally divided or controlled by the two leaders or their designees and with the majority controlling the first half and the Republicans controlling the final half.

Who yields time?

Mr. REID. 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.

Mrs. LINCOLN. 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 President, I ask unanimous consent that the order for the quorum call be rescinded.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.

FOOD AND ENERGY SECURITY ACT

Mrs. LINCOLN. Mr. President, I rise today and come to the floor to encourage my colleagues to move expeditiously to pass the Food and Energy Security Act of 2007.

Sometimes we get caught in our bubble in Washington and we forget, we forget there is a whole world outside in this great land of ours: working families, folks who are working hard each and every day to provide for their families, to ensure their safety, to take care of their children, to be a part of their community, and to help their neighbors.

On October 25 our Senate Agriculture Committee passed this legislation unanimously, not one single dissenting vote. And that is because there were a lot of Members who understood the importance of this bill. They came together and worked to come up with a bill in which everyone had a vested interest.

It passed unanimously for good reason. It does a tremendous amount not

only for our farm families but for antihunger advocates, for environmentalists, those working to spur economic development in rural areas, and it takes tremendous strides to rid our Nation of its dependence on foreign oil.

All of those are positive, progressive things that happen in this bill, brought together, again, by a group in the Senate Agriculture Committee who wanted to make progress, who wanted to put together a bill everybody could be proud of, that everybody could help move forward.

I know this policy effort is not on the top of everyone's priority list in this body like it is on mine. It is on the top of my mine, and it is a huge priority for me for multiple reasons. One, I am a farmer's daughter. I understand. I understand what farm families are doing out there. I understand, when they get up at the crack of dawn, before the Sun comes up, they get out and work hard, to do something that gives them a tremendous sense of pride. They produce a safe and abundant and affordable supply of food and fiber for this country.

I also know it is a huge priority for me because of my State, and the fact that my State has an economy that is based on agriculture. They have a great sense of pride in not only being able to provide that safe and abundant and affordable food supply in the most efficient way possible for this great land, but they do so worldwide as well.

At a minimum, everyone here should recognize and appreciate what this bill accomplishes, even if you take for granted that the grocery store shelves are full when you go in that grocery store, even if you take for granted that you pay less than anybody in the developed world per capita for your food source, and even if you take for granted the fact that it is produced in the most environmentally respectful way, and also that it is produced in a way that is safe, through all kinds of regulations, all kinds of research that provides us the sound backing that our food source is safe.

It is safe for our children, safe for our elderly, safe for our families. That is huge. At a time when we are seeing foods coming in through our borders, through our ports that are unsafe from countries that do not put on those restrictions and regulations, for countries that do not have the efficiency on their farms that we do, it is absolutely critical that we bring ourselves together and focus on this bill.

In this bill there is a \$5.28 billion increase—an increase—to our nutrition programs. These are programs that provide assistance and a nutritious meal at breakfast and lunch for children, nutritious meals for the elderly across this country, nutritious summer feeding programs, nutritious fruits and vegetables and snacks for school children. That is a huge step in the right direction.

Something we can all get behind is over a \$4 billion increase to conservation. You know it is unbelievable to see

that kind of an increase to reinforce those who love and use the land, that they can do so with the incentives to make sure they are using the optimum of technology and research to conserve that land that means so much to them and to future generations.

That is a third straight record for the farm bill in terms of increases in what we are seeing in this underlying bill. There is \$500 million for rural development in our small communities where we are seeing a desperate need for broadband and access to the information highway where we are looking for investment from entrepreneurs and small businesses so that we can keep strong our communities in rural America, and we do not see this flight into the cities, making sure those communities can be strong for the schools and for churches and for children and the working families who live in those rural communities, who have their heritage, their heart is there in that community, so that they can stay there, so that we as a nation make those investments.

The energy incentives in this bill, when it is coupled with the Finance Committee incentives, shows a true commitment to moving renewable fuels into the marketplace. You know, it does not make a bit of difference if we continue to produce all of these renewable fuels if we do not get them into the marketplace, if we do not get them into the hands of consumers. And it also does not make any difference if we do not start to think outside the box, looking for newer and more innovative processes and research to provide renewable fuels that come from feedstock that might be leftovers.

We know we can make cellulosic ethanol from cotton sticks and rice hulls and rice straw, but we have to get that to the consumer. We have to get that process going. There are great opportunities in this bill for that.

In short, this bill is a win for every region of our great Nation. And everyone, even if your plow is a pencil, even if you have not spent time walking rice levees or scouting cotton or chopping down coffee bean plants in a bean field like I have, even if your plow is a pencil and the closest farm is 1,000 miles away from you, it should be so obvious to everyone that the farm bill provides exactly what this title suggests: it provides this Nation's security, it provides us with security of knowing that we will have the domestic production of a food supply for our people and for our Nation, that we will help feed the world with that safe and affordable and abundant supply of food and fiber.

Unfortunately, it is clear by the criticisms of the farm bill by the editorial boards and major newspapers that many of our hard-working farm families are not getting the respect they deserve for what it is they provide. It is my hope the Senate will not also take for granted the security of safe food and fiber at a time when so much of what is entering this country

is either not inspected, nor safe, or sent back.

We had a hearing in the Finance Committee. We were told about port shopping, that products coming in commodities, coming into our country come to one of our ports, get inspected, get rejected, and then they start shopping around for a port that does not have an inspector. And, yes, we have ports without inspectors.

So not only are we accepting substandard food, but we are minimizing our ability to produce our own with the control and the oversight that ensures us that what we produce domestically is safe.

This piece of legislation is about national security, just as foreign policy is in many other regions of the world. Why is it we think that when we go to these trade negotiations, usually the last thing that is negotiated is agricultural products? It is because those countries understand. Those countries have been hungry. They have been subjected to foods that are unsafe or grown in a manner they don't appreciate. But they also know they can control making sure that there is enough there, if they can control and keep out our products. Many of the commodities I grow do find themselves on the international scene as commodities left out of trade agreements. That is because they are critical. They are a staple in the global community for sustenance of life.

Whether a country provides subsidies at levels much higher than those included in this bill or protects their farmers by a prohibitive tariff structure, every country in some form or fashion ensures a domestic food supply. If we continue in the direction we are going, where we are seeing for the first time in the history of our country the possibility of a trade deficit in agricultural products, what is that going to mean to us as a nation? It is going to mean we are then going to be more dependent on other countries for food that is critical for children and families all across this land.

In the United States, the farm bill is the policy that ensures safe food and fiber. We have worked hard in the Agriculture Committee to come up with a bill that was both bipartisan and biregional, agreed upon by everybody. Everybody got something positive out of a bill that was respectful to the diversity of this country, to the diversity of how we grow our crops. Lord, it was interesting for me to talk with my colleagues from way up on the Canadian border who had snow in August. We had 12 straight days of over 100-degree weather in Arkansas. We are a diverse nation and we are blessed to be that way. It is all the more reason we have the responsibility in this body to be respectful of that diversity and what it is that each of us has to bring to the table from our States. The Agriculture Committee did that.

It also respected the needs of those who are less fortunate in the nutrition

title. It respected the idea that Americans want to ensure conservation and good stewardship of the land. We did that. We looked at the need for renewable energy, and we have made a huge investment, both in the farm bill in authorizing policy and also in the Finance Committee package that accompanies it, making sure that incentives are there for communities and for ag producers and all of those in rural America that not only can we continue the research but get into production of renewable fuels and, most importantly, that we can get them to the consumer. It doesn't matter how much we produce; if we are not using it, it is not benefitting the environment and not lessening our dependence on foreign oil. In the long term, it is not going to benefit growers who are looking for that secondary market.

We should all recognize and appreciate the bounty this bill provides and what it does for the hard-working men and women in farm families across this country who support each and every one of us every day in what it is they do for us for that security. I urge my colleagues to get serious about passing this bill and providing the certainty our farm families deserve, knowing that Government stands with them. Today, this time right now in our State of Arkansas, it is time to plant the winter wheat crop. Without knowing what the policy is going to be for next year or the year after that or the year after that, it is pretty hard to go to that banker and ask for that tremendous loan for that investment one has to make in producing that safe and abundant, affordable food supply, without knowing where one's Government stands.

I appeal to my colleagues and ask them to join us on the floor to talk about how important this bill is and, more importantly, to come together and figure out a way we can make this happen before we go home to celebrate Thanksgiving and the incredible bounty this country provides. Let us make sure those who provide for us have an understanding of where their Government stands on their behalf.

I yield the floor and suggest the absence of a quorum.

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

The assistant legislative clerk proceeded to call the roll.

Mr. CORNYN. 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. CORNYN. I yield myself 10 minutes of our allotted 30 minutes.

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. The Senator is recognized.

APPROPRIATIONS

Mr. CORNYN. Mr. President, amid the news we have received this last month on a variety of fronts—some

good, some bad—is some very positive news from our economy. October marked the 50th straight month of positive job creation in the United States, a new record since the Government began keeping such records in 1939. Unfortunately, Congress has set a record of its own last week, when it finally sent the first of 12 appropriations bills that should have been finished before October 1, when the new fiscal year began, to the President for his signature. Not since 1987, 20 years ago, has Congress taken this long to send a single appropriations bill to the President this late in the fiscal year. I ask this question: What family, what small business, who in the United States could run their fiscal house this way, other than the Congress? Only the Congress has the power to basically suspend the powers of disbelief and pass something called a continuing resolution so that spending remains on auto pilot at last year's levels, rather than meet the needs of this current year by passing appropriations bills. Instead of working hard together, as I genuinely believe most Members of this body want, we see instead a calculated game being played out.

I want to focus specifically on our Veterans and Military Construction bill which should have been passed as a stone-alone bill and should have been signed by the President before Veterans Day this last Monday but was not. Rather than working to see that the funding for our veterans and for quality-of-life funding for military families, which is absolutely essential for a volunteer military force such as ours, we see this bill has consciously been held behind, even though it passed some 2 months ago, presumably to serve as a vehicle for a large spending bill that will be offered in December.

This veterans funding bill is perhaps the most telling and troubling sign of the games this process has degenerated into. It strikes me—and I believe I am not alone—that there is a serious discrepancy between what Congress says to our veterans and what Congress does for our veterans. Knowing how important veterans funding is to the President and to the country as a whole and to the Members of this body, some of my colleagues have decided instead to use this bill as a vehicle to expand Washington spending and, unfortunately, engage in partisan games. Rather than funding the veterans bill by itself with important funding and benefit enhancements that will serve America's veterans and military families, the majority leader has decided, initially at least, to try to merge this bill with another bill he knew the President was going to veto. As a matter of fact, he did yesterday, the Labor-HHS bill, because it would cost American taxpayers \$11 billion more than the President asked for and included a number of, shall we call them, "interesting earmarks" or special projects designated by Members of the Senate.