

following that time, the majority control the final 15 minutes of morning business; that at the close of morning business, the Senate then resume consideration of H.R. 2419, the farm bill.

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

PROGRAM

Mr. DURBIN. As a reminder to Members, cloture was filed on the Harkin substitute amendment on H.R. 2419. All germane amendments must be timely filed by 1 p.m. tomorrow; however, Members do not need to refile any germane amendments already filed.

ORDER FOR ADJOURNMENT

Mr. DURBIN. I now ask that following the remarks of Senator DOLE, the Senate stand adjourned under the previous order.

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

Mr. DURBIN. Pending the arrival of Senator DOLE, I suggest the absence of a quorum.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will call the roll.

The legislative clerk proceeded to call the roll.

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 President, I ask unanimous consent that the order for the quorum call be rescinded.

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

HUNGER AND NUTRITION

Mrs. DOLE. Mr. President, in America—the land of prosperity and plenty, some people have the misconception that hunger plagues only faraway, undeveloped nations. The reality is that hunger is a silent enemy lurking within 1 in 10 U.S. households.

In my home State of North Carolina alone, nearly 1 million of our 8.8 million residents are struggling with food insecurity issues. In recent years, once-thriving North Carolina towns have been economically crippled by the shutting of textile mills and furniture factories. People have lost their jobs and sometimes their ability to put food on the table.

I know this scenario is not unique to North Carolina, as many American manufacturing jobs have moved overseas. While many folks are finding new employment, these days a steady income does not necessarily provide for three square meals a day. Hunger and food insecurity are far too prevalent, but I think Washington Post columnist David Broder hit the nail on the head when he wrote:

America has some problems that defy solution. This one does not. It just needs caring people and a caring government, working together.

I certainly agree. The battle to end hunger in our country is a campaign that cannot be won in months or even a few years, but it is a victory within reach.

To this end, I strongly support what the nutrition title of the farm bill strives to accomplish. I commend my colleagues on the Senate Agriculture Committee for putting together a package that helps address the hunger and nutrition needs of Americans of all ages. For example, with regard to the Food Stamp Program, this bill seeks to responsibly address concerns of fraud, waste, and abuse in the system and help ensure that it serves those who truly need assistance.

I am also pleased that the nutrition title expands the Fresh Fruit and Vegetable Program to all 50 States. This program encourages healthy eating habits in schoolchildren and helps combat childhood obesity. According to a recent Duke University report, in the last 25 years, the rate of obesity has doubled for children ages 6 to 11, and has tripled for teens.

Today, about 10 percent of 2- to 5-year-olds and 15 percent of 6- to 19-year-olds are overweight. In North Carolina, where childhood obesity rates have been higher than national averages, I am very proud that nearly 1.4 million children are enrolled this school year in the Fresh Fruit and Vegetable Program. This certainly is a positive way to help combat the childhood obesity problem.

Furthermore, I am pleased this bill will allow schools participating in the School Lunch Program to use geographic preference when purchasing fruits and vegetables. This is especially good news in North Carolina where our farmers produce a wide variety of nutritious fruits and vegetables.

I also welcome a provision in the nutrition title that makes permanent the exclusion of combat zone pay from eligibility determinations in the Food and Nutrition Program. More than 157,700 servicemembers from North Carolina have deployed to Iraq and Afghanistan, and their families, who are sacrificing greatly, should not become ineligible because the head of household receives extra income for serving in harm's way.

Additionally, I am pleased that the nutrition title expands the use of electronic benefit transfer at farmers' markets. As in other States, in North Carolina's rural areas the poverty rate tends to be higher, and there is limited access to grocery stores that participate in the Food and Nutrition Program. Our State prides itself on having some of the finest farmers' markets around, and allowing the use of EBT will provide needier individuals access to these healthy, homegrown foods.

Likewise, this bill also increases funding for the Senior Farmers' Market Nutrition Program, which helps low-income seniors, and it continues and extends the Commodity Supplemental Food Program to more low-income individuals.

While I am encouraged by these hunger and nutrition components, there is still more we can and should accomplish in this farm bill to help those in need.

One area where I have focused my efforts is gleaning, where excess crops that would otherwise be thrown out are taken from farms, packinghouses, and warehouses, and distributed to the needy.

It is staggering—really staggering—that each year in this country 96 billion pounds of good, nutritious food, including that at the farm and retail level, is left over or thrown away. Gleaning helps eliminate this waste. It helps the farmer because he does not have to haul off or plow under crops that do not meet exact specifications of grocery chains. And it certainly helps the hungry by giving them nutritious, fresh foods.

Last month, in Harnett County, NC, I gleaned sweet potatoes with volunteers from the hunger relief organization the Society of St. Andrew. One of the single largest concerns for groups such as this wonderful organization is transportation—how to actually get food from the farm, for example, to those in need. According to the Society of St. Andrew, the increase in fuel costs has made food transport particularly challenging. They say today it costs 30 percent more to hire a truck to move food than it did 2 years ago.

To help address this problem, I am putting forward my bill, the Hunger Relief Trucking Tax Credit, as an amendment to this legislation. My measure would change the Tax Code to give transportation companies tax incentives for volunteering trucks to transfer gleaned food. Specifically, my bill would create a 25-cent tax credit for each mile that food is transported for hunger relief efforts by a donated truck and driver. This bill would provide a little extra encouragement for trucking companies to donate space in their vehicles to help more food reach more hungry people.

Additionally, I am proud to join my colleague Senator LAUTENBERG as a cosponsor of an amendment that helps fight hunger in our communities by combining food rescue with job training, thus teaching unemployed and homeless adults the skills needed to work in the food service industry.

The FEED Program, which stands for Food Employment Empowerment and Development, will support community kitchens around the country with much needed resources to help collect rescued food and provide meals to the hungry. Successful FEED-type programs already exist. For example, in Charlotte, NC, the Community Culinary School recruits students from social service agencies, homeless shelters, halfway houses, and work release programs. And just around the corner from the U.S. Capitol, students are hard at work in the DC Central Kitchen's culinary job training class. This is a model program, which began in 1990, and it is always, to me, a great privilege to visit the kitchen and meet with the individuals who have faced adversity but are now on track for a career in the food service industry.

While I do have a number of concerns about the farm bill and its impact on North Carolina agriculture, I welcome this bill's hunger and nutrition focus. Particularly with Thanksgiving just 1 week away, let us remember our 35 million fellow Americans who are struggling to have enough to eat. With the

addition of the Hunger Relief Trucking Tax Credit and the FEED Program provision, this farm bill can go even further to responsibly lend a helping hand to those in need.

Mr. President, I yield the floor.

ADJOURNMENT UNTIL 9:30 A.M.
TOMORROW

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Under the previous order, the Senate stands adjourned until 9:30 a.m. tomorrow.

Thereupon, the Senate, at 7:17 p.m., adjourned until Thursday, November 15, 2007, at 9:30 a.m.