

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Yes, it has.

Mr. REID. Mr. President, before my friend from North Dakota leaves the floor, I would like to direct a couple of comments through the Chair to my friend. First of all, I appreciate the statement made relating to energy. Everything you say has to be overlaid with the fact that we have the most oil friendly administration in the history of our country. Both President Bush and Vice President CHENEY made their fortunes in oil.

I would direct a question to my friend. It certainly appears our administration has lived up to being the most oil-friendly administration. Would my colleague agree with that?

Mr. DORGAN. Mr. President, it has. There is no question we need oil. We use a lot of oil, but we need to have an energy policy that is a balanced policy, and my colleague, the majority leader, is working with all of us on an energy bill that we hope we can get by the end of this session that is balanced. It must include renewable energy. We will also use fossil fuels, as well as need more conservation and efficiency. Further, we must make our vehicle fleet much more efficient. For the first time in 27 years, I believe, the majority steered through this Senate an energy bill that got 65 votes, including for reformed CAFE standards which will make our vehicle fleet more efficient.

So we have a lot to do on energy, but we have made some significant progress. I hope we can get that bill by the end of the year.

Mr. REID. Mr. President, I would also say to my friend, I appreciate the statement on where we stand with these subprime loans. The financial community is crying out for help. Foreclosures help no one. The person who has the home loses. The entity that holds the loan loses significantly. It is usually about 30 to 35 percent of the value of the home, on average, is gone. The entity where the home is located, a county or a city, loses money because that home becomes—any foreclosure takes time. You usually have to board up the windows. It loses value, it loses tax dollars. Something has to be done by the Federal Government. What is being done by the Federal Government in its limited fashion is hurting.

Around this country, one of the things that helps people who are in foreclosure is to have a counselor sit down and talk to them about alternatives they have. People are so frightened, and we have learned that people who get foreclosure notices don't know what to do with them and usually don't even respond to them, either by mail or on the telephone. What this administration has done for these counselors—which, by the way, are nonprofit entities—they have cut back their funding by three-quarters. At a time when people need help, they cut back funding.

We know President Bush doesn't like Government. He doesn't like Govern-

ment. He has proven that from the time he ran for Congress in the 1970s and said Social Security should be privatized, and he has lived up to that. He doesn't like anything to do with Government. He is a person who is anti-Government.

There is a time for Government. Adam Smith, in his great book "The Wealth of Nations," in 1776, said there is a place for Government. If he were writing that book today, he would talk about the need for Government throughout America in many different ways. One thing we need to do is do something with FHA, with Fannie and Freddie, which are organizations we set up in Congress to help people buy homes.

I would say to my friend in the form of a question: Does my colleague think the Federal Government should be more active in what is going on than ignoring the problem?

Mr. DORGAN. Mr. President, the majority leader is absolutely right. We have a role to play. The first and most important aspect is to help those who have been victimized by this unbelievable speculation and greed, and the second is to make sure it doesn't happen again. That requires effective regulation. So the response to this subprime loan issue cannot be no response or just to look the other way. It has to be to address those things.

One of the points the majority leader has made is the need to rework some of these mortgages. The interesting thing is that, in the old days when you got a mortgage, you knew where you got it, and you knew who had it. If you had trouble, you went and worked it out with your lender. Nowadays, they have already sold that mortgage, so it makes it much more difficult. They have sold it, wrapped it into a security someplace, and sold it two or three times. Borrowers go to the place where they got the mortgage, but the company says we don't have the mortgage.

So we have a lot to do. I appreciate the words of the majority leader. We have to help a lot of people try to get through this. We need to help our country's economy get through this and make sure it doesn't happen again.

Mr. REID. Mr. President, one final thing before my friend leaves the floor. There is no one more involved in farm policy any more than the Senator from North Dakota. North Dakota is an agricultural State. Tomorrow morning we are going to have a vote on cloture on the farm bill. We are going to have a cloture vote. It is a very important vote. The question is, Are the Republicans going to kill the farm bill?

For people who say: Well, gee whiz, we have had no opportunity to offer amendments—cloture on the farm bill does not stop amending the farm bill. Relevant amendments can be offered on the farm bill. We have 30 hours to do that. I, of course, would allow those amendments to go forward. There would be no way to say: Well, we are only going to vote on this one. If there

are germane amendments subject to the rule, they can be offered and they can do it postcloture. So I hope all my Republican friends understand this farm bill is important. People at home are going to be watching how we vote on this farm bill because it is a very important vote. Are we going to continue working on the farm bill or let it go? It appears to me the response from the Republicans is let it go. Maybe we will be able to do it some other time.

But I ask my friend: It is true, is it not, that this is an important vote and there will still be amendments allowed even if cloture is invoked?

Mr. DORGAN. Mr. President, the reason a cloture motion was even filed is we have been here a week and a half and have not even been able to move to the first amendment because it has been blocked. Yesterday, Senator HARKIN offered this. He said: Well, how about if we at least start. The way to move on it is to start. He said: How about let's start with a couple of Republican amendments and a couple of Democratic amendments. In every case, there was an objection by the minority side which said no, we can't start.

So I think the majority leader had no choice but to say let's file a cloture motion and try to shut off debate, but that will not shut off amendments that are germane postcloture. After being very discouraged, I really hope those of us who care about a farm program can move forward. Having watched this blocking of the farm bill now for a week and a half, I hope tomorrow morning, when we have this vote, the message that American farmers will get is that this Senate cares enough to decide that, yes, we will go to work, and we will do the farm bill.

I would make one final point to the majority leader. I made the point yesterday. Farmers can't do what the minority in the Senate is doing. When it is time to milk a cow, you have to milk a cow, or the cow gets sore. When it is time to plant, you have to plant, or your crop will not grow. When it is time to harvest, you have to harvest, or the crop will spoil. The farmers don't have the luxury the minority has to say: Well, let's do nothing.

I hope our colleagues will join us tomorrow in voting for cloture. I appreciate the filing of the motion by the majority leader because we didn't have any other choice.

MEASURE PLACED ON THE CALENDAR—H.R. 4156

Mr. REID. Mr. President, I understand that H.R. 4156 is at the desk and due for a second reading.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will report the bill by title.

The assistant legislative clerk read as follows:

A bill (H.R. 4156) making emergency supplemental appropriations for the Department of Defense for the fiscal year ending 2008, and for other purposes.

Mr. REID. Mr. President, I object to any further proceedings with respect to this measure.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Objection is heard.

The bill will be placed on the calendar.

Mr. REID. Mr. President, I note the absence of a quorum.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will call the roll.

The assistant legislative clerk proceeded to call the roll.

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

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Mr. BROWN). Without objection, it is so ordered.

CONCLUSION OF MORNING BUSINESS

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Morning business is closed.

FARM, NUTRITION, AND BIOENERGY ACT OF 2007

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Under the previous order, the Senate will resume consideration of H.R. 2419, which the clerk will report.

The bill clerk read as follows:

A bill (H.R. 2419) to provide for the continuation of agricultural programs through fiscal year 2012, and for other purposes.

Pending:

Harkin amendment No. 3500, in the nature of a substitute.

Reid (for Dorgan/Grassley) amendment No. 3508 (to amendment No. 3500), to strengthen payment limitations and direct the savings to increased funding for certain programs.

Reid amendment No. 3509 (to amendment No. 3508), to change the enactment date.

Reid amendment No. 3510 (to the language proposed to be stricken by amendment No. 3500), to change the enactment date.

Reid amendment No. 3511 (to amendment No. 3510), to change the enactment date.

Motion to commit the bill to the Committee on Agriculture, Nutrition, and Forestry, with instructions to report back forthwith, with Reid amendment No. 3512.

Reid amendment No. 3512 (to the instructions of the motion to commit to the Committee on Agriculture, Nutrition, and Forestry, with instructions), to change the enactment date.

Reid amendment No. 3513 (to the instructions of the motion to recommit), to change the enactment date.

Reid amendment No. 3514 (to amendment No. 3513), to change the enactment date.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Iowa is recognized.

Mr. HARKIN. Mr. President, we are back on the farm bill. To refresh memories, we have now been on the farm bill 10 days. This is our tenth day. Not one vote has occurred. We have tried time and again to bring up amendments, and they have been objected to. I will attempt to do that again this morning. I will wait until my ranking member is present. I see that Senator SALAZAR is here to speak on the farm bill.

I wish to make it very clear, tomorrow morning we will have a vote on

cloture on the farm bill. I want there to be no mistake in anyone's mind: Tomorrow morning's vote will be a vote on whether we have a farm bill this year. If we get cloture on the farm bill tomorrow, we will have a farm bill this year. We will be able to pass a bill in the Senate, we will go to conference, and we will send it to the President.

If we do not get cloture tomorrow, that is like killing the farm bill. A vote against cloture will be a vote to kill the farm bill. We will run out of time. We will be out of here at Thanksgiving for 2 weeks. When we come back, we have all the appropriations bills to do, we have the Iraq funding bill to work out, and we will only have about 3 weeks before Christmas. Therefore, if we do not get cloture, that is like saying we don't want a farm bill. So I hope everyone understands what the stakes are.

I also hope no one has the mistaken impression that because we invoke cloture, they cannot offer amendments. I got that question from a press person this morning. I had to inform them that, no, if we get cloture, we have 30 hours of debate and people can offer amendments during that 30 hours.

I just spoke with our leader. It would be the prerogative, if we wanted to on the majority side, if we got cloture, to lay down one amendment and take all 30 hours and debate it and block everybody from offering amendments. That has happened around here before, by the way, where we get cloture and then block it and nobody gets to offer any amendments until the end. Then we get into this vote-arama where we have votes on amendments but nobody gets to talk about them. We are not going to do that.

If we get cloture, I will try to reach an agreement with my ranking member, Senator CHAMBLISS, so we can have, say, at least a half hour debate on every amendment and vote. That would give us a shot at having probably pretty close to 20 amendments that could be debated and on which we could vote.

At the end of the 30 hours, of course, any amendments still pending have a right to have a vote. There would be a minute on each side to explain those amendments, and we would vote on them.

I want to make it clear that voting for cloture does not cut off amendments. Yes, it may cut off nongermane amendments dealing with whether we are going to go to the Moon or Mars or whether we are going to do wacky stuff such as that. Yes, it cuts that stuff out. But any amendment that is germane to the farm bill can be offered and will be voted on even after cloture. I want to make that very clear.

If we do not get cloture, that is it; that is the end of the ball game, and I don't know when we can ever come back to the farm bill after that. Certainly not this year.

It is getting late. The crops are in. In most parts of the country, crops are in.

And now they are beginning to think about next year. Bankers want to know, farmers need to know what the program is going to be for next year. Will it be this one or will it be what we have come up with in our farm bill and worked out with the House. So it is getting very late, and we need to get this bill done.

I encourage all Senators, we are open for business now. We can take amendments now. We can debate amendments, and we can vote on amendments all day today.

Shortly, I will be asking consent to bring up amendments. I am going to ask consent to bring up Republican amendments that are filed. I have a Lugar amendment. I have a Roberts amendment, an Alexander amendment, a Lott amendment, and I am going to be asking consent to bring up those amendments. If there is no objection, we will bring them up, have a debate, and we can have votes on a lot of amendments this afternoon.

I want to make it very clear again: This side is not holding up the process. We want to vote; we want to debate. Just as yesterday, I wanted to bring up five amendments yesterday and have limited time and vote on them, but it was objected to. I will try that again today. Hopefully, maybe we can make some movement and we can have some votes today on some amendments. I will be doing that shortly.

I see the Senator from Colorado is on the Senate floor. He has been a great member of our Agriculture Committee. No one has worked harder than Senator SALAZAR in getting us to the point where we have a farm bill that came out of our committee without one negative vote.

I say to my friend from Colorado, someone this morning on a press call asked me: If you don't get cloture, if you don't get this bill, or if the President vetoes it and you have to go back, what are you going to do differently?

I said: I don't know how much we can do differently to get more of a positive vote out of our committee than a unanimous vote. What do you do that is different from that? It is not as if we had a split vote on the committee and we still have to work it out. We didn't have one dissenting vote, so I am not certain how we get much better than that.

I thank my friend from Colorado for all of his hard work on this bill. He was instrumental in a number of issues before the committee, especially on energy, on conservation. The Senator from Colorado was instrumental in working out the agreements and making sure we had a bill that got a unanimous vote out of our committee. I thank him for that.

He has been a champion of ranchers and farmers, a real champion of moving us ahead in energy, in renewable energy, farm-based energy, bio-based energy, which will get us off the Mid-east oil pipeline that we have been on for far too long.