

amend the Horse Protection Act to prohibit the shipping, transporting, moving, delivering, receiving, possessing, purchasing, selling, or donation of horses and other equines to be slaughtered for human consumption, and for other purposes.

The bill would prohibit the shipping, transporting, moving, delivering, receiving, possessing, purchasing, selling, or donation of horses and other equines to be slaughtered for human consumption. In short, it would further limit the already limited options for disposal of unwanted horses.

An unwanted horse is one that has reached the useful end of its economic or recreational life. There are numerous reasons for the existence of unwanted horses, not the least of which are economic reasons such as loss of job, price of feed or stabling, relocation, poor health of the horse or its owner.

It must be recognized that no one has adequately addressed the fate of the estimated 90,000 unwanted horses that were formerly slaughtered on an annual basis. Animal welfare groups and rescue organizations can only do so much to shoulder the load of aiding the adoption or care of these horses. They are currently stretched to capacity, and we expect an increase in need. As a result, we are witnessing a significant increase in abandonment and neglect of horses in this country. Particularly in the West, growing numbers of unwanted horses are being dumped on public or private rangelands.

I believe that we should take the time to examine this growing issue of the unwanted horse before passing legislation that ties the hands of horse owners, public and private land managers, and others.

AUTHORITY FOR COMMITTEES TO MEET

COMMITTEE ON ENVIRONMENT AND PUBLIC WORKS

Mr. DORGAN. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the Committee on Environment and Public Works be authorized to meet during the session of the Senate on Wednesday, December 5, 2007 at 9 a.m. in room 406 of the Dirksen Senate Office Building in order to conduct a business meeting to consider the following items: amendment in the Nature of a Substitute, Lieberman-Warner Climate Security Act of 2007, S. 2191.

Pending nominations: John S. Bresland, of New Jersey, to be a Member of the Chemical Safety and Hazard Investigation Board; John S. Bresland, of New Jersey, to be Chairperson of the Chemical Safety and Hazard Investigation Board; C. Russell H. Shearer, of Delaware, to be a Member of the Chemical Safety and Hazard Investigation Board; William H. Graves, of Tennessee, to be a Member of the Board of Directors of the Tennessee Valley Authority; Susan Richardson Williams, of Tennessee, to be a Member of the

Board of Directors of the Tennessee Valley Authority; and Thomas C. Gilliland, of Georgia, to be a Member of the Board of Directors of the Tennessee Valley Authority.

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

COMMITTEE ON THE JUDICIARY

Mr. DORGAN. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the Senate Committee on the Judiciary be authorized to meet during the session of the Senate in order to conduct a hearing entitled "Reauthorization of the Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention Act: Protecting Our Children and Our Communities" on Wednesday, December 5, 2007 at 10 a.m. in room SD-226 of the Dirksen Senate Office Building.

Witness list:

J. Robert Flores, Administrator, Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention, U.S. Department of Justice, Washington, DC; Shay Bilchik, Founder and Director, Center for Juvenile Justice Reform, Georgetown University Public Policy Institute, Washington, DC; Deirdre Wilson Garton, Chair, Governor's Juvenile Justice Commission, Madison, WI; Ann Marie Ambrose, Director, Bureau of Child Welfare and Juvenile Justice Services, Harrisburg, PA; Richard Miranda, Chief, Tucson Police Department, Tucson, AZ.

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

COMMITTEE ON THE JUDICIARY

Mr. DORGAN. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the Senate Committee on the Judiciary be authorized to meet during the session of the Senate in order to conduct a hearing entitled "The Looming Foreclosure Crisis: How To Help Families Save Their Homes" on Wednesday, December 5, 2007 at 2:30 p.m. in room SD-226 of the Dirksen Senate Office Building.

Witness list:

Nettie McGee, Chicago, IL; Mark Zandi, Chief Economist, Moody's Economy.com, Inc., West Chester, PA; Mortgage Industry Witness TBD; Professor Mark Scarberry, Resident Scholar, American Bankruptcy Institute, Washington, DC; The Honorable Jacqueline P. Cox, United States Bankruptcy Judge, United States Bankruptcy Court for the Northern District of Illinois, Chicago, IL; The Honorable Thomas Bennett, United States Bankruptcy Judge, United States Bankruptcy Court for the Northern District of Alabama, Birmingham, AL; Henry J. Sommer, President, National Association of Consumer Bankruptcy Attorneys, Philadelphia, PA.

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

COMMITTEE ON VETERANS' AFFAIRS

Mr. DORGAN. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent for the Committee on Veterans' Affairs to be authorized to meet during the session of the Senate on Wednesday, December 5, in order

to conduct a hearing on the Nomination of James Peake to be Secretary of Veterans Affairs. The Committee will meet in room SDG-50 of the Dirksen Senate Office Building, at 9:30 a.m.

SELECT COMMITTEE ON INTELLIGENCE

Mr. DORGAN. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the Select Committee on Intelligence be authorized to meet during the session of the Senate on December 5, 2007 at 3 p.m. to hold a closed conference on the fiscal year 2008 Intelligence Authorization.

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

SPECIAL COMMITTEE ON AGING

Mr. DORGAN. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the Special Committee on Aging be authorized to meet today, Wednesday, December 5, 2007 from 10:30 a.m. to 12:30 p.m. in Dirksen 106 for the purpose of conducting a hearing concerning the elderly who have been displaced by war, poverty, and persecution abroad.

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

PRIVILEGE OF THE FLOOR

Mr. WYDEN. I ask unanimous consent that privileges of the floor be granted to my legislative aide, Jacquelyn Elder.

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

MEASURE READ THE FIRST TIME—S. 2416

Mr. MENENDEZ. Madam President, I understand there is a bill at the desk, and I ask for its first reading.

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Ms. CANTWELL). The clerk will report the bill by title.

The legislative clerk read as follows:

A bill (S. 2416) to amend the Internal Revenue Code of 1986 to repeal the alternative minimum tax on individuals and replace it with an alternative tax individuals may choose.

Mr. MENENDEZ. Madam President, I now ask for a second reading, and in order to place the bill on the calendar under the provisions of rule XIV, I object to my own request.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Objection is heard.

ORDERS FOR THURSDAY, DECEMBER 6, 2007

Mr. MENENDEZ. Madam President, I ask unanimous consent that when the Senate completes its business today, it stand adjourned until 10:30 a.m., Thursday, December 6; that on Thursday, following the prayer and the pledge, the Journal of proceedings be approved to date, the morning hour deemed expired, the time for the two leaders be reserved for their use later in the day; that there be an hour of debate prior to a vote on the motion to invoke cloture on the motion to proceed to H.R. 3996, with the time equally divided and controlled between the leaders or their

designees; that the 20 minutes immediately prior to the cloture vote be divided 10 minutes each for the leaders and the majority leader controlling the final 10 minutes; that upon the use or yielding back of time, without further intervening action, the Senate proceed to vote on the motion to invoke cloture on the motion to proceed.

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

PROGRAM

Mr. MENENDEZ. Madam President, as a reminder, cloture was filed on the Harkin substitute to the farm bill. Therefore, if Members have amendments on the list of amendments in order to the bill, they should have germane first-degree amendments filed at the desk by 1 p.m. tomorrow. However, if amendments have already been filed, there is no need to refile at this time.

ORDER FOR ADJOURNMENT

Mr. MENENDEZ. Madam President, if there is no further business to come before the Senate, I ask unanimous consent that following the remarks of Senator THUNE for up to 15 minutes, the Senate then stand adjourned under the previous order.

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

Mr. MENENDEZ. Madam President, I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from South Dakota.

THE FARM BILL

Mr. THUNE. Madam President, for the past 5 weeks now, my colleagues and I have spent literally hours on the Senate floor talking about the 2007 farm bill. Unfortunately, talking about the farm bill for over 5 weeks is all we have done. We could have spent all the days and hours since November 5 productively debating this farm bill. Instead, the distinguished leader on the other side of the aisle made a decision the very first day of the farm bill debate when the farm bill was brought to the floor and the debate ensued to not allow any amendments to reach the floor. Not one single farm bill amendment has been discussed.

Farm bill authority spans 5 years. This legislation impacts every man, woman, and child in America. My colleagues in the minority, who are not members of the Agriculture Committee and who have not had an opportunity to help craft this legislation, deserve a chance to offer their suggested changes.

The farm bill before us totals 1,600 pages. It reauthorizes over \$280 billion in spending on commodity, conservation, nutrition, trade, energy, and rural development programs. This bill is far too important to be held hostage by partisan tactics. However, the majority leader made a decision, as I said,

nearly 2 weeks ago, to prohibit amendments from being offered to this landmark legislation.

I am a member of the Senate Agriculture Committee, and I am proud of the farm bill we passed out of the committee. I give Chairman HARKIN and the ranking member, Senator CHAMBLISS, great credit. I believe they deserve to be given great credit for the efforts they made in committee deliberation. The members of the committee held an open and productive debate. Several amendments were offered, debated, and voted on. At the end of the day, Senate Democrats and Republicans set aside their differences and reported out a bill to meet America's food and energy needs over the next 5 years.

Is the committee-reported bill perfect? No, of course not. But that being said, my colleagues all deserve an opportunity to offer their amendments to the farm bill. There are only 21 of us who serve on the Senate Agriculture Committee, 11 Democrats, 10 Republicans. Senator DOMENICI, Senator NELSON, and I authored an amendment that would add an increased renewable fuels standard to the 2007 farm bill on the floor because it didn't get added in the committee and because there were questions about whether an energy bill was ultimately going to pass the Senate. Therefore, we thought it would be good to improve and strengthen the energy title of the farm bill by adding the RFS to the farm bill. That is one of the amendments that, of course, could be debated if, in fact, there were an open debate process.

As I travel across my State and met with farmers and agricultural leaders, the message to me is very clear. No single policy is more important to our agricultural community than this farm bill and the accompanying Energy bill. If we can get a farm bill passed with a renewable fuel standard, I think our farmers would be very pleased with the work Congress has done to promote American agriculture and move the renewable fuels industry forward.

This renewable fuels standard will create jobs in rural America, give our producers an alternative market for our crops, spur billions of dollars in renewable fuels investment, and save over \$600 million in taxpayer dollars in the underlying bill.

However, we have not had an opportunity to debate any of these amendments, including a renewable fuels standard amendment. I listened all day while accusations have flown back and forth. There has been all this hand wringing going on finger pointing, and the blame game being played. I have to say, as someone who voted for cloture the first time we had a cloture vote on the farm bill, I voted for cloture because I need this bill to move forward—my farmers and my ranchers want a new farm bill—but not because the process has been fair to Members on my side of the aisle.

Senators on the minority side, on the Republican side of the aisle—as I said,

there are only 21 of us who serve on the Senate Agriculture Committee. That means there are 79 other Senators who would like to weigh in on this important legislation. We have had the bill on the floor literally for a 2-week period and we didn't debate or vote upon one single amendment.

As I said before, you are talking about a 1,600-page bill that authorizes \$280 billion in spending over the next 5 years, and there has not been one single amendment voted on. The majority leader decided when the bill came to the floor he was going to fill the amendment tree, which in effect said no amendment can be offered unless it is approved by the majority leader.

I don't happen to disagree with the notion that amendments that are brought to the floor of the Senate ought to be somewhat germane to the underlying legislation. But it is a reality, a practical reality every single day in this institution, in the Senate, that amendments are brought to the floor that are not germane to the underlying bill. I will hold up a case in point because I have heard my colleagues on the other side get up and say: The Republicans want to offer all these nongermane amendments and what are we supposed to do about that, these need to be germane to the underlying farm bill? I would like to see amendments that are germane to the underlying farm bill, but it is a reality in the Senate that on many occasions—in fact it is often the case—amendments are offered to all kinds of legislation that are not germane to that underlying legislation.

A case in point: We are now stalled on the Defense authorization bill, a bill that was debated and voted upon a long time ago. The House passed it, the Senate passed it, we went to conference, we resolved all the differences. I serve as a Member of the Senate Armed Services Committee, and I know some of the issues that were being debated in the conference were somewhat contentious, but they all got resolved. Most of them were related to the underlying bill. Most of them were related to our national security programs, our readiness and that sort of thing. What is holding up the conference on the Defense authorization bill is hate crimes legislation because hate crimes was put on the bill in the Senate before it left, over the objections of many of us who didn't feel it was relevant or germane to the underlying Defense authorization bill. But nevertheless we didn't have the votes. It went to conference.

Now the debate over whether we are going to have a Defense authorization bill doesn't hinge on anything having to do with national security. It hinges on hate crimes legislation. How is that germane to the Defense authorization bill? Yet my colleagues on the other side have continually gotten up today and railed on the Republicans because Republicans, of all things, want a vote on a death tax amendment to the farm bill.