

bipartisan approaches. As the wide bipartisan support for today's amendment shows, we are on a promising track, and we intend to stick with it. Market-based pooling must be a part of any comprehensive health reform solution.

I urge my colleagues to support my amendment.

Mrs. BOXER. Mr. President, I ask for the yeas and nays.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Is there a sufficient second?

There appears to be a sufficient second.

The question is on the adoption of the concurrent resolution, as amended.

The clerk will call the roll.

The legislative clerk called the roll.

Mr. DURBIN. I announce that the Senator from South Dakota (Mr. JOHNSON) is necessarily absent.

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Mr. CASEY). Are there any other Senators in the Chamber desiring to vote?

The result was announced—yeas 52, nays 47, as follows:

[Rollcall Vote No. 114 Leg.]

YEAS—52

Akaka	Feingold	Nelson (FL)
Baucus	Feinstein	Nelson (NE)
Bayh	Harkin	Obama
Biden	Inouye	Pryor
Bingaman	Kennedy	Reed
Boxer	Kerry	Reid
Brown	Klobuchar	Rockefeller
Byrd	Kohl	Salazar
Cantwell	Landrieu	Sanders
Cardin	Lautenberg	Schumer
Carper	Leahy	Snowe
Casey	Levin	Stabenow
Clinton	Lieberman	Tester
Collins	Lincoln	Webb
Conrad	McCaskill	Whitehouse
Dodd	Menendez	Wyden
Dorgan	Mikulski	
Durbin	Murray	

NAYS—47

Alexander	Dole	McCain
Allard	Domenici	McConnell
Bennett	Ensign	Murkowski
Bond	Enzi	Roberts
Brownback	Graham	Sessions
Bunning	Grassley	Shelby
Burr	Gregg	Smith
Chambliss	Hagel	Specter
Coburn	Hatch	Stevens
Cochran	Hutchison	Sununu
Coleman	Inhofe	Thomas
Corker	Isakson	Thune
Cornyn	Kyl	Vitter
Craig	Lott	Voinovich
Crapo	Lugar	Warner
DeMint	Martinez	

NOT VOTING—1

Johnson

The concurrent resolution (H. Con. Res. 21), as amended, was agreed to.

(The resolution will be printed in a future edition of the RECORD.)

Mr. CONRAD. I move to reconsider the vote, and I move to lay that motion on the table.

The motion to lay on the table was agreed to.

Mr. CONRAD. Mr. President, we have now taken the next step on the journey to having a budget resolution in place for the Nation. It passed the committee and has now passed the Senate. This is an important turning point for the Congress, certainly for the Senate. Three of the last five years, our country has not had a budget. It is impor-

tant—critically important—for the Congress of the United States to agree on a budget. I would be the first one to say this is an imperfect budget, but it does advance the cause of having the discipline of a budget for our country.

I thank all of our colleagues who have worked to this end, even those who voted against it but who cooperated in the process. I especially thank Senator GREGG again and his outstanding professional staff. I see his staff director, Scott Gudes, who has been a true professional.

I very much appreciate having the chance to work with people of that caliber. And again, to my own staff director, Mary Naylor, who has worked such extraordinary hours, weekend after weekend, night after night until 10, 11, sometimes 2 in the morning, this has truly been an extraordinary effort, and I thank her, and I thank all of my staff. To many of them who are here, I say thank you. You have done this institution proud, and I appreciate it deeply.

Mr. President, I suggest the absence of a quorum.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will call the roll.

The assistant legislative clerk proceeded to call the roll.

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

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

MORNING BUSINESS

Mr. REID. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the Senate now proceed to a period of morning business with Senators allowed to speak therein for a period of up to 10 minutes each.

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

SPRINGTIME ARTISTRY

Mr. BYRD. Mr. President, once again, we welcome in the Spring.

Blows the thaw-wind pleasantly,
Drips the soaking rain,
By fits looks down the waking sun:
Young grass springs on the plain;
Young leaves clothe early hedgerow trees;
Seeds, and roots, and stones of fruits,
Swollen with sap put forth their
shoots; Curled-headed ferns sprout in
the lane; Birds sing and pair again.

There is no time like Spring,
When life's alive in everything . . .

—Christina Rossetti.

March 21 is the vernal equinox, when the day and night are, briefly, in perfect balance. It is the first day of spring. This year, of course, the early switch to daylight savings time has created the illusion of an earlier spring with the artificial and arbitrary establishment of darker mornings and longer evenings. I, for one, am happy to welcome an early spring. It is my favorite season, full of new hope and untarnished promise.

West Virginia has seen some snow this winter. The snow was welcomed by

skiers and farmers, but those of us who neither ski nor plow view snow more as a nuisance—something to be moved out of the way, something that complicates our commutes and closes the schools. Snow makes the world monochromatic, a palette that ranges along a single line from blinding white through the shades of gray to the tired black of grime-crusted snow along the roadways. We are ready for spring, ready for some light and for lots of vibrant color around us.

This year, the March winds again worked their artistry, blowing away the flotsam and jetsam of winter to uncover a clean canvas with just the sweeping curves of earth and the angular armature of tree limbs sketched in charcoal, awaiting the Master's hand to apply delicate springtime washes of color. Over the past weeks, we have seen the Master's skill at work in the first creeping stain of green across the lawns and fields, the soft blush of blossoms in the wild plum trees, the deepening blue of the sky. Each day, the colors have grown darker, richer, and more vibrant, as if the warm breezes carried them to us from some distant sunny clime. Bright details have begun to take shape in the scattered spangles of violet and yellow crocus and the bright accents of hardy daffodils amid their grass green leaves. Oh, daffodils—the poets write of you! The Boston poet Amy Lowell (1874–1925) wrote of you:

Thou yellow trumpeter of laggard Spring!
Thou herald of rich Summer's myriad flowers!

The climbing sun with new recovered powers
Does warm thee into being, through the ring
Of rich, brown earth he woos thee, makes
thee fling

Thy green shoots up, inheriting the dowers
Of bending sky and sudden, sweeping showers,

Till ripe and blossoming thou art a thing
To make all nature glad, thou art so gay;
To fill the lonely with a joy untold;
Nodding at every gust of wind to-day,
To-morrow jeweled with raindrops.
Always bold
To stand erect, full in the dazzling play
Of April's sun, for thou has caught his gold.

Mr. President, spring would not be spring without the daffodils. Their delicate beauty and seemingly fragile petals belie their toughness. Year after year, the daffodils spread, competing with the grass and the tree roots to expand their beds. They manage to deter the onslaught of determined squirrels and other wild creatures who unearth and consume dainty and expensive spring bulbs like so many canapés at a reception. They push their way up into the sun through frozen ground and choking mats of fallen leaves. They defy howling winds and frigid night-time temperatures. They survive people and houses to bloom on around the decaying foundations of long ago farmsteads. And they do it all with effortless beauty, inspiring us and filling us with joy. The first daffodil, like the first robin, is akin to the dove that brought the olive branch back to Noah—a reassurance to worried man

from God that the spring, like the land, will return.

I do not want to take up too much of the Senate's time. We have important matters before us, matters of war and peace, matters of spending and accounting. But even in the heat of debate, we can each find joy in those first spring days. We can each feel peace in the steady warmth of the springtime sun, calm in the soft breeze that carries the scent of hyacinths, and delight in springtime flowers. The first day of spring is truly a time to stop and smell the flowers.

There is no time like Spring,
When life's alive in everything,
Before new nestlings sing,
Before cleft swallows speed their journey
back
Along the trackless track—God guides their
wing,
He spreads their table that they nothing
lack,
Before the daisy grows a common flower
Before the sun has power
To scorch the world up in his noon tide hour.

—Christina Rossetti.

STOPPING OVERSEAS SUBSIDIES ACT

Ms. COLLINS. Mr. President, our Nation's manufacturers and their employees can compete against the best in the world, but they cannot compete against nations that provide huge subsidies and other unfair advantages to their producers. Time and time again, I hear from manufacturers in my State whose efforts to compete successfully in the global economy simply cannot overcome the practices of illegal pricing and subsidies of nations such as China. The results of these unfair practices are lost jobs, shuttered factories, and decimated communities.

Consider this one example that affects my home State. The American residential wood furniture industry has experienced devastating losses due to surges of unfairly priced furniture imports from China. According to the U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics, 146,600 jobs, or about 22 percent of the workforce, have been lost in the U.S. furniture industry since 2000. Unfairly priced imports from China are a leading cause in these job losses. China's wooden bedroom furniture exports to the U.S., which amounted to just \$169 million in 1999, reached an estimated \$1.8 billion in 2006. By subsidizing investments in furniture manufacturing facilities, China is exploiting the U.S. market to the benefit of its producers and putting our employees at an unfair advantage.

One fine furniture manufacturer in Maine, Moosehead Manufacturing, struggled for years to cope with the onslaught of unfair imports from China. Despite the company's quality products and attempts to survive through several rounds of layoffs and participation in the Federal Trade Adjustment for Firms program, Moosehead was not able to keep its doors open in the face of unfair Chinese imports. The com-

pany announced its closing on February 8, 2007. This is a tragic development—for this family-owned business, for its skilled employees, and for the community and State.

It is because of the experience of manufacturers such as Moosehead that I reintroduced the Stopping Overseas Subsidies Act. I am pleased to be joined by my friend and colleague from Indiana, Senator BAYH, who has worked closely with me on this legislation. The core provision of this bill revises current trade remedy laws to ensure that U.S. countervailing duty laws apply to imports from nonmarket economies, such as China.

Our Nation's trade remedy laws are intended to give American industries and their employees relief from the effects of illegal trade practices. Unfortunately, some countries in the world choose to cheat instead of compete fairly. In these cases, U.S. industries can file petitions under U.S. trade remedy laws for relief.

Up until recently, the practice of the Department of Commerce was to accept an antisubsidy petition against any market economy—such as Canada or Chile—but not against a nonmarket economy such as China. As a result, nonmarket countries that subsidize their industries the most heavily and cause the most injury to U.S. industries and workers, such as China, were exempt from the reach of American countervailing duty laws.

The countervailing duty statute on its face in no way limits the application of the law to any country. There is nothing in the countervailing duty provisions per se, or anywhere else in the statute, that limits the broad language applying countervailing duty remedies to every "country." Unfortunately, the Department's interpretation of this statute for the last two decades has been that it does not apply to nonmarket economies, and this policy was upheld by a 1986 Federal court decision that maintained that Congress needs to clarify the statute on this issue.

The good news is that, on November 22, 2007, the Department of Commerce finally accepted the first countervailing duty petition against a nonmarket economy since the 1986 court decision. The case was filed against China by New Page Corporation, a coated free sheet paper company with operations in Maine, Ohio, and Maryland. Despite its efficient, state-of-the-art mills, skilled and dedicated employees, strong relationships with customers, strategically located mills and distribution facilities and growing markets for its products, New Page had to shut down an entire paper line as a result of unfair foreign competition.

Jim Tyrone, senior vice president of New Page Corporation, testified before the Ways and Means Committee on February 15, 2007, regarding the illegal subsidies that China is providing to its paper industry. Starting in the late 1990s the Government of China targeted its domestic coated paper industry for

rapid development. As part of this development plan, the Chinese Government provides low-cost policy loans through government-owned banks. It also provides grants for the development of new paper capacity, and tax breaks based on export performance and domestic equipment purchases. Moreover, Tyrone testified, government banks in China forgave at least \$660 million in loans they had provided to China's largest paper producer, Asia Pulp & Paper, when that company declared bankruptcy in 2003.

The result is that in the United States, Chinese coated free sheet market share has increased by an average 75 percent annually over the past four years based on publicly available data, despite having to ship their products thousands of miles to reach the U.S. market. Ironically, and in contrast to U.S. paper producers, China has no natural advantage in the production of paper. It does not have an abundant supply of the requisite inputs, and must import much of the pulp that it uses to make paper. It is only because of illegal subsidization that China can compete in the paper products market in the U.S. and Europe.

According to a 2005 study by the American Forest and Paper Products Association, China is using an array of subsidies to promote the development of timber and pulp production in China. These include government loans and loan subsidies for technology renovation, promotion of foreign investment in state-owned enterprises, and protection of debt-ridden state-owned enterprises that maintain excess or idle production capacity through local government "soft" loans and loan forgiveness.

In its 2006 Report to Congress, the U.S.-China Economic and Security Review Commission, a bipartisan organization established by Congress in 2000 to provide recommendations to Congress on the relationship between the United States and China, noted:

China has a centralized industrial policy that employs a wide variety of tools to promote favored industries. In particular, China has used a range of subsidies to encourage the manufacture of goods meant for export over the manufacture of goods meant for domestic consumption, and to secure foreign investment in the manufacturing sector.

Similar conclusions are contained in the United States Trade Representative's 2006 Report to Congress, which concludes:

China continues to pursue problematic industrial policies that rely on trade-distorting measures such as local content requirements, import and export restrictions, discriminatory regulations and prohibited subsidies, all of which raise serious WTO concerns.

These practices run counter to China's obligations under its 2001 World Trade Organization accession agreement. In its accession protocol, China explicitly agreed that it would be subject to the subsidy disciplines of other