

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

UNANIMOUS CONSENT REQUEST—
H.R. 2316

Mr. REID. Mr. President, I want to visit with everyone present for just a few minutes about S. 1, the ethics and lobbying reform bill. We hope to appoint conferees on this important bill today. By doing this today, we would enact this critical legislation that is so important to be done. It is the most significant lobbying ethics reform, I believe, in the history of this country. It makes tremendous reforms—long overdue. It will restore the people's confidence in their elected officials.

Last year, Americans rightly got sick and tired about story after story of corruption, the culture of corruption some called it, here in Washington led by Jack Abramoff, who is now in prison; Randy Cunningham, who is now in prison; Bob Ney, who is now in prison; Safavian, the head of Government contracting, led away from his office in handcuffs; Scooter Libby—numerous people who worked for various House Members who were involved in corrupt activities, airplane trips to golf in Scotland and places that are hard to imagine.

The American people responded at the polls last November with a clear message that they wanted a new direction, and we, the Democrats, responded by passing the most sweeping ethics and lobbying reform in a generation. We did it with the help of the minority. I do not say that lightly. But let's see what is in this bill. Let's review it for a bit to find out what this bill does.

It prohibits lobbyists and entities that hire lobbyists from giving gifts to lawmakers and their staffs. It prevents corporations and other entities that hire lobbyists from paying for trips for Members or staffs. And it prohibits lobbyists from participating in or paying for any such trips. It requires Senators to pay fair market value prices for charter flights, which put an end to the abuses of corporate travel.

Many people in this Chamber flew in corporate jets and paid first-class airfare. That did not corrupt any Members of Congress, but it was corrupting. It didn't look right, and therefore it is important it be stopped. And I hope it stopped. We need legislation to make sure it is stopped.

This legislation also slows the so-called revolving door by extending a ban on lobbying by former Members of Congress and senior staffers, and prevents Senators from even negotiating for a job as a lobbyist until their successor has been elected. This legislation puts an end to pay-to-play schemes, such as the notorious “K Street Project.” It provides dramatic improvements to disclosure and lobbying activities by doubling the frequency that lobbyists must file reports on their activities, requiring disclosure of contributions and bundled contribu-

tions, requiring that lobbyists' disclosures be publicly available on the Internet in a searchable form. This is for the first time ever.

This legislation requires lobbyists to certify in writing that they have not violated House or Senate gift and travel rules. It ends the practice of corporations hiding their lobbying activities behind bogus coalitions with friendly sounding names, and increases civil and criminal penalties for lobbyists who violate the law.

The bill has brought about a revolution in earmark disclosure.

For the first time ever, the Senate will identify all earmarks in bills, the Senator who requested it, and the entity or location that receives it. Further, every Senator has certified that he or she has no monetary interest in their earmarks. Let me say that. This disclosure is the first time ever that this information will be disclosed. The Senate could have required the disclosure last year or the year before or the year before that, while the number of earmarks was exploding under a Republican Congress, but it did not. This year we took the lead and changed the way we do business around here. At the beginning of the year, we sent a message that ethics and lobbying reform was our No. 1 commitment by designating the bill S. 1. We worked hard to make this a bipartisan bill. Now we must take the next step by appointing conferees. I look forward to moving the ethics bill forward so we can reassure the American people that Congress is as good and honest as the people it represents.

I have gone over most everything in this bill. There are other things in it, but this is strong, important information the American people deserve. It is a law that should become a reality as quickly as possible.

I, therefore, ask unanimous consent that the Senate proceed to the immediate consideration of Calendar No. 182, H.R. 2316, lobbying disclosure; that all after the enacting clause be stricken and the text of S. 1, as passed by the Senate on January 18, 2007, be inserted in lieu thereof; that the bill be read a third time, passed, the motion to reconsider be laid upon the table; that the Senate insist on its amendment, request a conference with the House on the disagreeing votes of the two Houses, and the Chair be authorized to appoint conferees on the part of the Senate with a ratio of 4 to 3, with the above occurring without intervening action or debate.

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. Is there objection?

UNANIMOUS CONSENT REQUEST—
S. 223

Mr. BENNETT. Madam President, reserving the right to object, on behalf of the Republican leader, I would add an additional unanimous consent request that at a time to be determined by the majority leader, in consultation with

the Republican leader, the Senate proceed to the immediate consideration of Calendar No. 96, S. 223, under the following limitations: That the committee-reported amendment be agreed to and that the only other amendment in order be a McConnell or his designee amendment, with 1 hour of debate equally divided in the usual form on the bill and 1 hour equally divided on the McConnell amendment, and that following the use or yielding back of the time, the Senate proceed to vote in relation to the McConnell amendment, followed by a vote on passage of the bill, as amended, if amended, with no intervening action or debate.

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. Is there objection?

Mr. REID. Madam President, here we go again, doing their best—that is, the Republicans—to stop us from going ahead on ethics and lobbying reform. The suggestion of the distinguished Senator from Utah is reasonable, but it should be a different matter. In fact, once we look at the amendment, we may be willing to accept it. But it is only an effort to divert attention from ethics and lobbying reform, those matters—corporate jets, what lobbyists can do, what they can't do, bundling, what we need to do with earmarks. It is an effort to divert attention from that. Attention may be diverted for a few minutes this afternoon, but we are going to continue to focus on it. We need to pass this legislation. It is important we do so.

We, the Democrats, support what the Senator has suggested, basic electronic filing of FEC reports. There is no problem with that. Senator FEINSTEIN moved it through the Rules Committee and has been seeking consent to pass it on the floor unanimously. We have never seen the amendment Senator McCONNELL wishes to stick on this. Once we have a chance to review it, we will be able, perhaps, to move forward on this consent request. In any event, let's not muddy the waters on the ethics bill. We want to move forward on that comprehensive bill, the most sweeping reforms in a long time, probably ever.

I wanted everyone to know there has been objection made by the minority to going forward on a conference. The conference will be led by JOE LIEBERMAN on our side, a man who is certainly fair to both sides. Why would we not go to conference on this important legislation?

I will be back. I will be back and hope there will be the revelation to the Republicans that we are going to do everything we can on this legislation. We are going to focus attention on why it is not going to conference. It is not going to conference because the Republicans are stonewalling our ability to do so, coming up with something as diverting as FEC reports being filed electronically.

I object to the request of my friend.

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. Objection is heard.

Mr. BENNETT. In that case, Madam President, on behalf of the Republican leader, I must object to the request of the majority leader.

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. Objection is heard.

Mr. REID. I 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. REID. Madam 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.

MORNING BUSINESS

Mr. REID. Madam President, we are waiting for the legislative counsel to bring us the legislation we are going to be dealing with, so I think it would be appropriate that we be in a period of morning business until 10 of 4 and that Senators be allowed to speak for up to 10 minutes each for the next however many minutes it is, and that at 10 to the hour I be recognized. I ask unanimous consent that be the order.

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. Without objection, it is so ordered.

Mr. REID. Madam President, I 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. SALAZAR. Madam 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.

Mr. SALAZAR. Madam President, I ask that I be recognized for up to 10 minutes.

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. The Senator from Colorado.

ENERGY

Mr. SALAZAR. Madam President, last Thursday night, very late in the evening, this Chamber put its arms around a new energy bill. It is an energy bill that deals with making sure we move forward with alternative fuels in a robust and real way for the future of America. It is an energy bill that says we have had enough as Americans wasting 60 percent of our energy, and we can do much better on efficiency. It is an energy bill that says it is time for us to move forward from the point in time where we have tolerated vehicles that have not had the kind of efficiency we know is technologically possible in America, so we are going to adopt new CAFE standards. It is a piece of energy legislation that says we recognize the linkage between how we use fossil fuels here in America and the global warming that is occurring around our globe. So we said we would

move forward and take some new steps in the way of sequestration of carbon dioxide emissions. This is a good piece of legislation. It is a bill which we hope—I hope and I know many Members of this Senate, led by Senator BINGAMAN and Senator FEINSTEIN and others, and Senator REID—makes it to the President's desk.

I wish to remind my colleagues while I have the floor for a few minutes that, in fact, this is one of the things we have been working on in the Senate for the last several years.

In 2005, we passed the Energy Policy Act of 2005, and we said to the world: We are going to start taking the concept of energy independence for America in a very real and serious way. Last year, after some significant debate on this floor, we also opened up lease sale 181 and its extensions on the gulf coast for exploration and development of our resources.

This year, with the passage last week of the 2007 act, we put another layer on the cake in terms of trying to move forward to the reality of a world that embraces energy independence.

We still have a long way to go. We have a long way to go with this legislation. It is my hope we don't get it caught up in a procedural quagmire, either here in the Senate or in the House of Representatives, and that ultimately we get legislation that is adopted which President Bush ultimately signs into law. It is good legislation and the kind of legislation we ought to be working on in this body.

Even though there has been a lot of focus lately on the President's domestic initiative relative to immigration, the fact is that when one looks at the state of the Union and what the President said in his State of the Union Address, we as Americans are addicted to foreign oil. He said it is time for us to move forward in an aggressive and ambitious way to get rid of the addiction we have to foreign oil. We have been able to do that by embracing the committee's legislation which had that bipartisan goal in mind, that we would take some significant steps forward in this 110th Congress to deal with our overaddiction to foreign oil.

From my point of view, as I talked about this issue with the people I represent, the nearly 5 million people in the State of Colorado, I am reminded of the fact that we have come a long way in this debate on energy and that we are now facing some inescapable forces which have grabbed the attention of the American public in a way they never have before.

The first of those inescapable forces is national security. How can we as the United States say we are secure as a nation when we import, as we did in March of last year, 66 percent of our oil from foreign countries? Many of those countries we are importing our oil from are countries that are spawning terrorism around the world. So from a national security point of view, it seems to me that embracing the con-

cept of getting rid of this addiction to foreign oil is an inescapable force of our time.

That is why on this floor of the Senate you will see Republicans and Democrats, conservatives and progressives, coming together to say that as a matter of national security, this inescapable reality is something we must deal with. It was on that basis that several years ago the Energy Futures Coalition, led by the distinguished progressive, my colleague and good friend, former Senator Tim Wirth, who now runs the United Nations Foundation, together with a friend of his, C. Boyden Gray, one of the leading voices of conservative causes, came together and founded a piece of legislation that we are trying to get through this Senate now that is called the Set America Free legislation. We gave it another name as we went through our processes here in the Senate, calling it the DRIVE Act, and broke it up into different pieces of legislation. But at the end of the day, the Energy Futures Coalition and the Set America Free concept, the proposal they pushed forward, have been embodied and embraced in the legislation that was adopted by this body just this last week.

So the national security implications of what we are doing here are, in fact, an inescapable reality and an inescapable force that will lead us to a clean energy future for America in the 21st century.

Secondly, there is a major issue for us and another inescapable force we deal with in our country today, and that is the issue of our own environmental security. How will we deal with the issue of global warming? We know that is an issue we will have to deal with some more, and there will be adequate time to debate the particulars on how we might be able to move forward. This legislation, with its efforts on efficiency, with its efforts on renewable energies, including what we do with biofuels, takes us a step in that direction.

In addition, the environmental security of our Nation is also addressed in that legislation because we deal for the first time in a very real way with the issue of carbon sequestration. I see my good friend from Kentucky here who often has lauded the importance of coal, and I understand why. When you are from Kentucky, you would see the importance of coal, as I do as well, being from Colorado, as does my good friend JON TESTER from the State of Montana.

So the issue for us as we look at the coal resources of our Nation, where we have enough coal to supply the needs of the United States of America for 200 years, is how can we use this abundant energy resource in a manner that doesn't compromise our environment? We can do that. We can do that with the new technologies we have with respect to IGCC. We can do that as we learn how to sequester the carbon emissions from the burning of coal. It