

Now, even Mr. Bolten would recognize the number of judges being sent to us has been pretty slow. But that is no excuse. We will be happy to move forward on nominations, generally. The White House needs a lot of these people, and we understand that. There has to be a give and take on this, as the White House showed the week before the recess, which Mr. Bolten and I worked on.

So I am convinced there are a lot of things we can do. The farm bill is something where we also need the co-operation of the White House. The managers of this bill have worked very hard—the Senator from Georgia and the Senator from Iowa—along with the two managers of the bill, as it relates to finance, who have worked with their counterparts in the House. We need to get a little better work from the White House. We have basically worked out the numbers. We cut back the President's numbers. We are working on the offsets now. That should be something we can do. We need to have the White House engaged in this, but more so than they have been.

The farm bill is important. I tell my distinguished counterpart that I heard about this farm bill during the break. I had calls from many of my Senators asking what can be done about this. We are trying. As Senator MCCONNELL notes, Senator CHAMBLISS, the ranking member on the Agriculture Committee, has worked with Senator HARKIN. We are doing our best to work through this. I hope we can get something done so we don't have to extend it again. The bill expires again on April 18. We cannot go on without renewing this bill and/or passing a new bill. If we do not renew this legislation, the price of milk will basically go back to 1949 levels. Based on that, a half gallon of milk would be about \$5. So we have a lot of work to do.

I appreciate the constructive attitude of the Senator from Kentucky. I don't agree with a lot of his illustrations, but I think it was a positive statement. I hope we can work something out on these and other issues.

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. The Senator from Kentucky is recognized.

Mr. MCCONNELL. Mr. President, I appreciate the spirit in which the majority leader addressed my remarks on the housing issue. I think it is safe to say there is interest on both sides in moving forward. Whatever reservations we have on this side relate to how the minority will be treated once we have made the decision to move forward. This is something the majority leader and I will continue to discuss, as we have in the last few weeks.

With regard to judges, with the best of intentions, the majority leader and I both came up with what we thought was a reasonable goal for the number of circuit judges that ought to be approved in this Congress based on the pattern of each of the last three Presidents, which had, from their point of

view, the misfortune of ending their terms with the opposition in control of the Senate. The lowest number achieved in circuit judges was under President Clinton. It was 15. We currently have six. If we are going to have any chance of getting to what the majority leader and I agreed was at least a modest, achievable goal in this Congress, we have a ways to go. I am not blaming him for that. It strikes me that the Judiciary Committee simply isn't functioning. But it remains the goal of mine—and I hope it is still his goal—to meet a sort of minimal threshold of an acceptable level of circuit judge confirmations.

I appreciate the attitude in which the majority leader has pursued that issue from the beginning of this Congress. I hope we can continue to work to try to get to some level that would be widely considered by any objective standard as a fair number in this situation.

I yield the floor.

RESERVATION OF LEADER TIME

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. Under the previous order, leadership time is reserved.

MORNING BUSINESS

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. Under the previous order, the Senate will proceed to a period of morning business, with Senators permitted to speak therein for up to 10 minutes each.

The Senator from Georgia is recognized.

Mr. DORGAN. Will the Senator yield?

Mr. ISAKSON. Yes.

ORDER OF PROCEDURE

Mr. DORGAN. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that I be recognized to speak for 30 minutes in morning business following the presentation of the Senator from Georgia.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Is there objection?

Without objection, it is so ordered.

The Senator from Georgia is recognized.

SOCIAL SECURITY AND MEDICARE

Mr. ISAKSON. Mr. President, today, I will pay tribute and make some celebratory remarks about two exciting lives in my community. First is the upcoming celebration of the 80th birthday of Mack Henderson, a man in my community who, besides being a leader, has been a warm and trusted friend. He and his wife Jean have been pillars of our community. The women's health care facility in Kennesaw was named after them as a tribute. Mack's daughter lives in this area, in Alexandria, VA. She has been a great friend to me. The entire Henderson family is going to gather to celebrate the 80th birth-

day of Mack Henderson, a great American and a great citizen of Cobb County. I wish him a most happy birthday.

On March 10, another birthday occurred—the very first of my grandson, William Edwin Isakson, born to my son Kevin and his wife Katherine Isakson. William is our eighth grandchild. He weighed 7 pound 9 ounces. He has a great future ahead, and I wish him the very best.

It occurred to me, when I was coming to the floor to pay tribute to Mack Henderson on his 80th birthday and to recognize the birth of my eighth grandchild, that as I look into the future, I wonder about what has been said in recent months about Social Security and Medicare and about what Mack Henderson has enjoyed in his life and what I hope we can save and procure for the life of young William Edwin Isakson.

In Mack's early years, Social Security was created. It was a promise to Mack and to every citizen in America that when you reach the age of 65, and when you sign up and are declared eligible, you will receive a supplement to help you in your retirement years. Mack has been retired for 15 years and is enjoying the benefit of that.

Last week, the Social Security Administration sent out a mailer notifying us that the time the Social Security goes bust is now moved forward to 2041. So in Mack's lifetime, Social Security was created, and by the 33rd birthday of my new grandson, Social Security will be gone. Even worse, Medicare, created after Social Security, has benefitted Mack. He has had a heart transplant and other medical problems, and he came through them with the help and assistance of Medicare. As for my grandson William, before he is a teenager, Medicare will be broke, inverted, and gone. As a Member of the Senate who takes a privilege to come to this floor and celebrate the birthday of a great friend and the birth of a new grandson, I know I have some work to do. So do the other 99 Senators and the 435 Representatives on the other side of this building.

The President who serves now, and who will go out of office in January, has made an effort on Social Security, and it was rejected by organizations and others. It was an effort of privatization.

The next President will not be so lucky to be able to neglect this. Time is running out. The next President will probably serve for 8 years. When they are out, it will be 2018, 1 year before Medicare goes broke. I don't think we can afford to allow that to happen.

As I come to the floor and pay tribute to these great lives which are so meaningful and significant to me, it is also an early warning for all of us to get to work on Medicare and Social Security. I commend JUDD GREGG, the Senator from New Hampshire, for his efforts time and again to get us to deal forthrightly with these issues. They are not going to be easy.

I don't want to ever face seeing Medicare go out of business and Social Security go broke. I am willing to stand up and take the heat and make the recommendations and work hand in glove with my fellow Republicans and with Democrats to see to it that the events on those two dates—the date of the death of Medicare in 2019 and end of Social Security in 2041—never take place. Between the two sides of the political spectrum, we can find common ground if we have a willingness to establish a goal and achieve it. I will never forget when President John F. Kennedy came forth to the people in America and declared that one day—8 years later—the United States would launch a man to the Moon, land him on the Moon, and bring him home safely. We didn't know how to do that; we didn't have the foggiest idea. We were getting beaten badly by the Soviet Union in mathematics, science, exploration and technology, and he was daring us to do something nobody knew how to do. We did it by July of 1969.

I don't think saving Medicare and Social Security is as difficult or as technical as getting a man to the Moon and bringing him home. But it is equally as important—maybe more so—for the health, welfare, and livelihoods of our oldest friends who are in the twilight of their years and our children born to us this year; and it is very important to the United States.

So this Senator pledges to his newest grandson that I will stand up anytime, anyplace, or anywhere and work with my colleagues in the Senate to begin the job of seeing that we fix Medicare and Social Security and that we preserve the promise for our grandchildren that our grandfathers have enjoyed and prospered with.

I yield the floor.

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. The Senator from North Dakota is recognized.

Mr. DORGAN. Mr. President, I congratulate my friend, the Senator from Georgia, on his new grandson. We all hope this country continues to hold the promise it has held for so many decades now for all American children.

Mr. ISAKSON. I thank the Senator.

THE ECONOMY

Mr. DORGAN. Mr. President, I have come today to talk a bit about the economy and where we find ourselves. This week we are going to talk about housing.

The effort we have made in the Senate in the majority party to pass emergency housing legislation is very important. I want to put up some charts that show what was happening in this country with respect to housing and what was happening at least to begin to cause the partial collapse we have seen.

This is an advertisement by a company called Millennia Mortgage. Here is what it said to the American people. I don't know this company, but they said:

Twelve months, no mortgage payment. That's right. We will give you the money to make your first 12 payments if you call in the next 7 days. We pay it for you. . . . Our loan program may reduce your current monthly payment by as much as 50 percent and allow you no payments for the first 12 months. Call us today.

Millennia Mortgage. Come over here and get a mortgage from us. You don't have to make a payment for 12 months, they said.

Here is a company appropriately named. I don't know this company either—Zoom Credit. They told the American people:

Credit approval is just seconds away. Get on the fast track at Zoom Credit. At the speed of light, Zoom Credit will preapprove you for a car loan, a home loan, or a credit card. Even if your credit's in the tank. Zoom Credit is like money in the bank. Zoom Credit specializes in credit repair, debt consolidation, too, bankruptcy, slow credit, no credit—who cares?

That is what Zoom Credit had to say to the American people.

Then Countrywide, the country's largest mortgage lender, said:

Do you have less than perfect credit? Do you have late mortgage payments? Have you been denied by other lenders? Call us . . .

Just call us; that is not a problem. If you are a bad risk, you don't pay your bills, call us. This from the largest mortgage lender in this country.

And then we wonder what happened? What could have caused all of this economic trouble? Everyone understands this does not work. Mortgage revenue companies advertising: Come to us if you have bad credit; let us give you a loan of some type. And by the way, the same companies, in many cases, applied what is called predatory lending—high-pressure, cold-call telephone sales to people who say: I know you have a mortgage, but we will give you a different mortgage. We will give you one with a 2-percent interest rate, not telling them it will reset to 7 percent or 9 percent or, in some cases, more with prepayment penalties. And the broker who was able to convince someone to do that got a big fat bonus. The mortgage company, well, they got mortgages with big interest rates once they reset, and prepayment penalties so the people could not get out of them. Then what they were able to do was slice them up and put them into—like they did in the old days, like they would pack sawdust into sausages for filler—they would take good mortgages, bad mortgages, subprime, potentially bad, put them all together, slice them up, dice them, and ship them off to a hedge fund that buys them—in some cases the mortgage banks had their own mortgage sides to purchase these securitized investments—and no one knew what was in them. Very much like sausage, I might say. Nobody knew what was there.

Now all of a sudden, they have all of this paper out there and we have about 7.2 million families with what are called subprime mortgages, an outstanding value of \$1.3 trillion. It is esti-

mated that 2 million families will lose their homes in the next 2 years. By the way, 2 million families, that is 5.4 million people who will be affected by the loss of their home in the next couple of years.

We put together legislation to try to address this issue in the Senate, and we have had great difficulty moving it. We hope in the next day or so we will at least be able to get a motion to proceed.

It is interesting, when we are talking about trying to help some people avoid losing their homes, they say: Well, we don't want to help folks such as that. I agree that those who were buying houses for the sake of flipping them, making a bunch of money in the bubble of housing prices, I am not interested very much in them, but I am very interested in someone who was a victim of predatory lending by a bunch of folks who were getting rich, making a lot of money and those folks are now threatened with losing their house. I am very interested in seeing if we can help them a bit.

It is interesting, the big folks always get help. The Federal Reserve Board and the administration, with Treasury Secretary Paulson, have rushed in. They arranged for JP Morgan to buy Bear Stearns, a big old investment bank. Bear Stearns was worth about \$20 billion a couple of months ago. It was acquired by JP Morgan for \$1.3 billion in the last couple of weeks and the Federal Government, through the Federal Reserve Board, will put up \$29 billion to pick up the risks on the assets. Think of that. One investment bank gets a \$1.3 billion acquisition of another investment bank that was worth \$20 billion a couple of weeks ago, and the Federal taxpayers come in to provide \$29 billion as a safety net for the risk JP Morgan assumes.

On top of that, the Fed comes in and says for the first time since the Great Depression that they will make direct loans to investment banks. They have previously made loans to depository banks over which they have regulatory control, but now they will make direct loans to investment banks.

In addition, they will make a \$200 billion loan available to Wall Street bond dealers. It is kind of a form of no-fault capitalism.

I don't know whether the Fed and the Bush administration are doing the right thing. I don't know. I know we cannot, none of us—the administration or the Fed or the Congress—decide to do nothing. We are trying to decide on behalf of families who are about to lose homes to see if we can't do something to give them some help. Obviously, a lot of help has been extended to the Wall Street interests—a lot of help, \$30 billion, \$200 billion, direct lending to investment banks. That is a lot of help. But when it comes to the homeowners, well, not so fast; let's worry about that, they say.

The Secretary of the Treasury has made the point that the problem has