

Americans have accepted serious ideological differences in Supreme Court nominees over the years. But one thing they will never, ever tolerate is a belief that some groups are more deserving of a fair shake than others. Nothing could be more offensive to the American sensibility than that.

Judge Sotomayor is certainly a fine person with an impressive story and a distinguished background. But a judge must be able to check his or her personal or political agenda at the courtroom door and do justice evenhandedly, as the judicial oath requires. This is the most fundamental test. It is a test that Judge Sotomayor does not pass.

I yield the floor.

RESERVATION OF LEADER TIME

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

AGRICULTURE, RURAL DEVELOPMENT, FOOD AND DRUG ADMINISTRATION, AND RELATED AGENCIES APPROPRIATIONS ACT, 2010

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. Under the previous order, the Senate will resume consideration of H.R. 2997, which the clerk will report.

The legislative clerk read as follows:

A bill (H.R. 2997) making appropriations for Agriculture, Rural Development, Food and Drug Administration, and Related Agencies programs for the fiscal year ending September 30, 2010, and for other purposes.

Pending:

Kohl/Brownback amendment No. 1908, in the nature of a substitute.

Kohl (for Murray/Baucus) amendment No. 2225 (to amendment No. 1908), to allow State and local governments to participate in the conservation reserve program.

Kohl (for Nelson (FL) amendment No. 2226 (to amendment No. 1908), to prohibit funds made available under this act from being used to enforce a travel or conference policy that prohibits an event from being held in a location based on a perception that the location is a resort or vacation destination.

McCain amendment No. 1912 (to amendment No. 1908), to strike a provision relating to certain watershed and flood prevention operations.

McCain amendment No. 2030 (to amendment No. 1908), to prohibit funding for an earmark.

Johanns/Nelson (NE) amendment No. 2241 (to amendment No. 1908), to provide funding for the tuberculosis program of the Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service.

Brownback (for Barrasso) amendment No. 2240 (to amendment 1908), to require the Secretary of Agriculture to conduct a State-by-State analysis of the impacts on agricultural producers of the American Clean Energy and Security Act of 2009 (H.R. 2452, as passed by the House of Representatives on June 26, 2009).

Coburn amendment No. 2243 (to amendment No. 1908), to eliminate double-dipped stimulus funds for the Rural Business-Cooperative Service account.

Coburn amendment No. 2244 (to amendment No. 1908), to support the proposal of the President to eliminate funding in the bill for digital conversion efforts of the Department

of Agriculture that are duplicative of existing Federal efforts.

Coburn amendment No. 2245 (to amendment No. 1908), to strike a provision providing \$3,000,000 for specialty cheeses in Vermont and Wisconsin.

Coburn amendment No. 2248 (to amendment No. 1908), to prohibit no-bid contracts and grants.

Coburn amendment No. 2246 (to amendment No. 2226), to provide additional transparency and accountability for spending on conferences and meetings of the Department of Agriculture.

Kohl amendment No. 2288 (to amendment No. 2248), to provide requirements regarding the authority of the Secretary of Agriculture and the Commissioner of Food and Drugs to enter into certain contracts.

Sanders amendment No. 2276 (to amendment No. 1908), to modify the amount made available for the Farm Service Agency.

Sanders amendment No. 2271 (to amendment No. 1908), to provide funds for the school community garden pilot program, with an offset.

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. Under the previous order, the time until 10:30 a.m. will be equally divided and controlled between the managers and the Senator from Arizona, Mr. MCCAIN, or their designees.

Mr. MCCAIN. Mr. President, I suggest the absence of a quorum and ask that the time be divided equally on both sides.

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

The clerk will call the roll.

The legislative clerk proceeded to call the roll.

Mr. MCCAIN. Mr. 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. MCCAIN. Mr. President, what are the proceedings under the unanimous consent agreement?

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. The time until 10:30 is equally divided.

Mr. MCCAIN. Following that, there would be a vote on two amendments; is that correct?

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. That is correct.

Mr. MCCAIN. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the second rollcall vote be vitiated and replaced by a voice vote.

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. Is there objection?

Without objection, it is so ordered.

AMENDMENT NO. 1912

Mr. MCCAIN. Mr. President, this vote will be on amendment No. 1912. The amendment eliminates, as recommended by the President of the United States, the USDA Watershed and Flood Prevention Operations Program, also known as the Small Watershed Program.

This program is the perfect example of how reckless earmarking can devastate a well-intentioned government program. Like the previous four Presidents' budgets, this administration has

proposed to terminate this account—four previous Presidents—because “Congress has earmarked virtually all of this program in recent years, meaning that the agency is unable to prioritize projects on any merit-based criteria, such as cost-effectiveness.”

According to the Congressional Research Service, the Small Watershed Program was 97 percent earmarked in fiscal year 2009, which severely marginalized the ability of the U.S. Department of Agriculture to evaluate and prioritize projects.

A 2003 Office of Management and Budget study showed this program has a lower economic return than any other Federal flood prevention program, including those in the Army Corps of Engineers and the Federal Emergency Management Agency.

The onslaught of earmarks over the years has most certainly contributed to the current backlog of about 300 unfunded authorized small watershed projects, totaling \$1.2 billion.

As was originally intended, the Small Watershed Program may be a worthwhile program, but by inundating it with so-called “congressionally designated projects,” the program is challenged to function properly to the point where four previous Presidents have recommended its termination. Nevertheless, the Appropriations Committee hasn't given up on plundering it just yet. The bill provides \$24.3 million for this program, including \$16.5 million in earmarks for various unauthorized projects.

I urge my colleagues to support the President's recommendation. Again, I will quote from the President's recommendation—the President of the United States:

The administration proposes to terminate the Watershed and Flood Prevention Operations Program. The Congress has earmarked virtually all of this program in recent years, meaning that the agency is unable to prioritize projects on any merit-based criteria, such as cost-effectiveness.

So it goes on and on. Every analysis is that it has a lower economic return than any other program. Four Presidents have sought to eliminate it. We will probably lose this vote. But if there is ever a graphic example that once a program is established and once you fund it, it acquires a constituency and a powerful special interest and that funding continues on and on—we are proving, and we will continue to prove as we go through the appropriations bills, that there is no program that, once it exists, is going to be eliminated by this body, and that the appropriators continue to defy not only the President of the United States but logic and good sense as we amass deficits of monumental proportions which are mortgaging our children's and grandchildren's futures.

We cannot even stop a program the President wants terminated, that has no value, that the Office of Management and Budget and any objective observer will say deserves termination. It

is only \$24.3 million, but the appropriators will join and jawbone others, and we will lose this vote, the same way we lost a vote yesterday that, again, had been recommended for termination by the President of the United States.

I didn't come up with this. It wasn't my idea to terminate it, although I certainly do think we should. It was the idea of the President of the United States. It is also every objective observer's idea. We will prove that not only will we not eliminate that program, but we send the message to the country that this program—even though the President wants it terminated, even though it has a clear record of total inefficiency—we will continue to maintain.

Sooner or later, there will be more tea parties and more protests, and the American people are going to rise up and say: Stop it.

I yield the floor.

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

Mr. KOHL. Mr. President, this program provides for cooperation between the Federal Government, State government agencies, and local organizations to prevent erosion, floodwater and sediment damages, and to further the conservation and proper utilization of lands in authorized watersheds.

This program helps communities prepare detailed watershed work plans for flood prevention projects in cooperation with soil conservation districts and other local sponsoring organizations.

Annual natural resource benefits include 90 million tons of soil saved from erosion; 47,000 miles of streams and stream corridors enhanced or protected; more than 1.8 million acre-feet of water conserved; nearly 280,000 acres of wetlands created, enhanced or restored; and over 9 million acres of upland wildlife habitat created, enhanced, or restored.

This is a very important program. I urge Senators to oppose this amendment.

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

Mr. BROWNBACK. Mr. President, I have a lot of sympathy for the comments made by the Senator from Arizona. I think he has accurate points. My colleague from Wisconsin makes points, as well, about the program overall.

My point in rising is to say that the system is very difficult to change and to get things pulled out. That is why we have to change the system. What I have put forward for years is a proposal to take a BRAC-type process—the military base closing process—and have it looked at and make a recommendation to the Congress and then one vote on the entire package. That is a way we found to eliminate military bases.

When a program like this is started, or others, there are people who say: Wait a minute. This works for my dis-

trict even if it doesn't work for somebody else. This is a high-priority project, even if it is not for somebody else. That system is such that it is built to spend, not built to cull, where you can cull things out and say this one doesn't look good, but this does, in trying to get it through a body of 100 people. We are trying to get an Agriculture appropriations bill through that we have not been able to get done in 3 years. We haven't had floor time for an Agriculture appropriations bill. We are trying to move this forward.

I think the Senator has some excellent points. We need to pass this sort of BRAC process for the rest of government so we actually do go at a culling process that everybody has faith in, which has worked before on military bases and we now can apply to the rest of government. That is a system where we can eliminate things, which we need to do in a number of areas. It is not going to happen on a one-shot-by-one-shot basis because some people say: This is a program that really works for my area. Then we get hung up on the floor with lengthy battles, and then we are never able to get the bill through.

I urge my colleagues—and I hope some on the majority side will look at this CARFA bill, we call it, to see about putting that in place so we can get at these in a systematic way that everybody is agreeable to.

I yield the floor.

Mr. KOHL. Mr. President, I ask for the yeas and nays.

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. Is there a sufficient second?

There is a sufficient second.

The question is on agreeing to amendment No. 1912.

The clerk will call the roll.

The legislative clerk called the roll.

Mr. DURBIN. I announce that the Senator from West Virginia (Mr. BYRD), the Senator from Massachusetts (Mr. KENNEDY), and the Senator from Maryland (Ms. MIKULSKI) are necessarily absent.

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. Are there any other Senators in the Chamber desiring to vote?

The result was announced—yeas 27, nays 70, as follows:

[Rollcall Vote No. 257 Leg.]

YEAS—27

Barrasso
Bayh
Bunning
Burr
Carper
Coburn
Corker
Cornyn
Crapo

DeMint
Enzi
Feingold
Graham
Grassley
Gregg
Johanns
Kaufman
Kyl

Martinez
McCain
McCaskill
McConnell
Menendez
Risch
Sessions
Thune
Webb

NAYS—70

Akaka
Alexander
Baucus
Begich
Bennet
Bennett
Bingaman
Bond
Boxer
Brown
Brownback
Burris

Cantwell
Cardin
Casey
Chambliss
Cochran
Collins
Conrad
Dodd
Dorgan
Durbin
Ensign
Feinstein

Franken
Gillibrand
Hagan
Harkin
Hatch
Hutchison
Inhofe
Inouye
Isakson
Johnson
Kerry
Klobuchar

Kohl
Landrieu
Lautenberg
Leahy
Levin
Lieberman
Lincoln
Lugar
Merkley
Murkowski
Murray
Nelson (NE)

Nelson (FL)
Pryor
Reed
Reid
Roberts
Rockefeller
Sanders
Schumer
Shaheen
Shelby
Snowe
Specter

Stabenow
Tester
Udall (CO)
Udall (NM)
Vitter
Voinovich
Warner
Whitehouse
Wicker
Wyden

NOT VOTING—3

Byrd Kennedy Mikulski

The amendment (No. 1912) was rejected.

Mr. KOHL. Mr. President, I move to reconsider the vote.

Mr. BROWNBACK. I move to lay that motion on the table.

The motion to lay on the table was agreed to.

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. The Senator from Wisconsin.

AMENDMENT NO. 2030

Mr. GRASSLEY. Mr. President, I want to speak in opposition to the amendment of the Senator from Arizona to strike funding for Iowa State University's Rural Vitality Center.

According to the Small Business Administration, Iowa historically has ranked near the bottom nationally in business startups. Small businesses with less than five employees account for 86 percent of Iowa businesses, yet these enterprises increasingly are bypassed by existing entrepreneurial assistance and capital networks, particularly in nonmetro areas. The Iowa Rural Vitality Project is Iowa State University's response to help foster innovation and economic vitality in rural Iowa.

The Vitality Center engages with academic institutions, community leaders, and economic development agencies to leverage resources. The center provides statewide leadership by building community capacity for assisting and supporting entrepreneurs and community foundations.

During the past year, the Vitality Center has led an effort to organize a statewide microloan foundation and complementary community microenterprise development initiatives. The program targets low- and moderate-income people and underserved rural areas. The microloan program helps fund businesses that don't quite meet the commercial lenders' requirements for credit, which is even more important during these tight lending times. This initiative is creating two to three new business startups per month that would not otherwise exist.

According to Iowa State University, the funding approved for fiscal year 2010 will be used to encourage the development of 20 community-based entrepreneurial development systems, allow for expanded philanthropic capacity in 10 community foundation projects, and research new strategies for enhancing rural vitality for rural and underserved communities. Their program, with this funding, will help continue their creation of jobs across the State.

The Feds aren't the only ones supporting this center. They have received grants from private sources and the State legislature for their efforts. It also receives a \$1 for \$1 match from each community demonstration project for approximately 10 projects, and approximately a \$2 non-Federal to \$1 Federal match from Iowa State University on the center operations budget.

I urge my colleagues to oppose the amendment to strike the funding for this center.

AMENDMENT NO. 2030

Mr. KOHL. Mr. President, all time is yielded back on McCain amendment No. 2030.

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. Is there further debate on the amendment?

If not, the question is on agreeing to the amendment.

The amendment (No. 2030) was rejected.

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. The majority leader.

Mr. REID. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that Senator BROWN be recognized for a period of approximately 8 minutes, followed by Senator SANDERS, to speak until 11:15 a.m., until our recess occurs.

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

The Senator from Ohio.

HEALTH CARE REFORM

Mr. BROWN. Mr. President, I rise again, as I have every day for the last week or so, to share some letters from Ohioans—from people in Painesville, Findlay, Lima, Springfield, Zanesville, and all over my State—which speak to people and their health care situations.

We hear discussion in this Chamber of market exclusivity and the gateway and the exchanges and all these kinds of Washington terms that people don't necessarily understand, but we don't talk often enough about how this health care system today is damaging the country. We don't think often enough about the situations people find themselves in.

We are not just enacting health care reform. If we do nothing, if we continue down this road, it means that small businesses, that are so overwhelmed with health care costs, are going to go out of business; that more small businesses are going to have to eliminate their insurance programs; and larger businesses—our biggest companies in the country—are having trouble competing internationally because of health care costs. People are paying huge costs out of pocket for their copays or deductibles, and so they cannot afford health care insurance. This means many people have deferred care, which is no care.

At the same time, we see the Nation's insurance companies all too often using preexisting conditions to deny care; using lifetime caps to deny care. This system is broken. Many parts of the system work, and the point

of this bill is to protect what works and to fix what is broken in our health care system.

For 4 or 5 minutes, I wish to share some letters I have received from people around my State of Ohio about the situations they are facing with their health care. This is Debra, from Adams County. Adams County is three counties east of Cincinnati on the Ohio River.

Debra writes:

In October 2003, I discovered I had breast cancer. Luckily we found it early and I was treated with a lumpectomy and radiation treatments. I'm doing fine now. But I had to fight with the insurance companies to pay for the radiation treatments. I had 32 radiation sessions and they were over \$800 per treatment. To 2002 I paid \$218 per month for health insurance. Over the next 3 years my premiums were increased to \$550 per month. Today, the insurance company increased premiums to \$719 per month.

We are not poor but we are not rich, but \$719 per month for insurance is half of what I receive in a month. I cannot afford to pay that amount. No insurance company wants to take me because of my preexisting breast cancer condition. I don't know what I am going to do. If I cancel the insurance and then I come down with cancer again or another serious illness, we will lose everything we worked so hard for all our lives.

I paid for my own insurance since 1985 and have never asked for help, but I can't do this. Please can you help me?

Think about this. This is a woman who was paying \$200 per month for health insurance. She paid for health insurance for almost 25 years. Then she gets sick. Then she had to fight with her insurance to get them to even pay for the treatment. Then they more than tripled the cost of her health insurance.

That is not what health insurance should do. That is not what a functioning good health care system should do. That is why we need this health care reform, to help people such as Debra in Adams County.

Barbara from Delaware County, an increasingly suburban but somewhat rural county straight north of Columbus, central Ohio. Barbara writes:

I had excellent insurance when employed for many years. Then I was laid off when I turned 63. I went without insurance and tried to find a health insurance policy which I could afford. I was very happy to turn 65 and have Medicare.

After having worked for 30 years, I am very grateful for both Social Security and for Medicare. At the age of 68, I don't mind paying into the system since I am glad to be part of a system that helps all of us who are in our advanced years. The security of knowing that I would be covered if something unforeseen would occur keeps my stress level down.

Barbara lost her job at 63, lost her insurance, fortunately had no catastrophic illness or disease happen between 63 and 65 until she got on Medicare. But when I hear this kind of assessment—when I hear her talk about Social Security and Medicare and how it has been for her—and then last night on this Senate floor I heard one of my colleagues on the other side of the aisle talk about how government cannot do

anything right, we don't want government involved in health care, this is all a conspiracy of big government intrusion into our lives—think about Social Security; think about Medicare.

We know government has run Social Security and Medicare pretty darn well. Medicare has an administrative cost of well under 5 percent. Private insurance has administrative costs of 15, 20, 25, sometimes 30 percent. We know this health care system—this is not going to be a single-payer system. People will have choices between the public option and individual insurance plans. That is the way we are going to rebuild this health care system. If you are in health care that you appreciate and you are satisfied with, you can keep it. We are going to put some consumer protections on it to make it better.

Barbara speaks so articulately about why Medicare and Social Security work.

The last couple of letters I will read—this is from Cynthia, from Mercer County, on the Indiana border in western Ohio.

My son had a cyst removed in February that cost \$8,000 and I had hernia surgery in May that cost \$12,000. My insurance company picked up some of the cost but I only make \$31,000 a year. We can't even afford my property taxes. My son also has a learning disability and will likely not go to college this fall; therefore, my insurance company sees fit to drop him from coverage in October when he turns 19. Americans who work hard should be at least granted excellent affordable health care without breaking the bank. Let's get the best care possible, not just a Band-Aid.

Cynthia's son, when he turns 19, gets dropped off the insurance plan. Our legislation says if you choose to, you can stay on your parents' insurance plan until you turn 26. So it gets people through those tough years of school, looking for a job, maybe into the military, coming out of the military—all the things that happen in young lives. Our bill protects people up to age 26.

Today, under the status quo, Cynthia is not protected. Cynthia's son is not protected. Cynthia cannot afford these huge costs, these huge premiums, these huge copays and deductibles. That is why we need a change.

The last letter I will read is from Mike from Ross County. The county seat of Ross County is Chillicothe, a couple of counties south of Columbus. Mike writes:

I am a self-employed small businessman. I am unable to obtain insurance for my wife and one of my two daughters. I live that risk every day, praying that my wife and daughter do not need major medical care. This is America, we can and must do better than that.

One of the things we did in this bill was put together special provisions for small business people so if you are self-employed, if you run a small business, you can get insurance at a more reasonable cost. We know big insurance companies charge small business much more per person than they charge larger businesses. This will allow small

business to go with other small businesses in what we call the exchange, and they will get much better rates because the insurance costs and the costs of illness and treatment will be spread over hundreds of thousands of people instead of only 5 or 6 or 10 people in one of these health care plans in a small business.

This also has tax credits, additional tax credits for small businesses. We are going to see a lot of help in this legislation for small business.

I will close again saying our health care bill that was voted out of the Health, Education, Labor, and Pensions Committee protects what works in our health care system and fixes what is broken. If you are happy with your health care insurance, you can keep it. If you are happy with your employer plan, you can keep it. We will build some consumer protections around it.

If you are not happy, you are dissatisfied, or you don't have insurance, you will get insurance under this bill.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Mrs. GILLIBRAND). The Senator from Vermont is recognized.

AMENDMENT NO. 2276

Mr. SANDERS. Madam President, I thank the Senator and applaud his strong efforts in fighting for health care for all Americans. I want to take a few minutes right now to touch on an issue that in fact has not gotten a lot of discussion here in Congress and that is that family-based dairy agriculture is on the verge of collapse. This is not a regional issue, this is a national issue. From the east coast to the west coast, what we are seeing is prices plummeting for dairy farmers way below the cost of production. If Congress does not act, all over America rural communities are going to be suffering economically. People are going to be losing their jobs. The American people increasingly will not be able to obtain fresh locally produced food.

As we talk about stimulus, as we talk about trying to revive this economy, let's remember rural America and let's remember the dairy farmers throughout this country who are producing an important part of the food we consume. At this moment, dairy farmers across the country are suffering from the lowest milk prices in four decades. Let me repeat that. Dairy farmers across the country are suffering from the lowest milk prices in four decades.

In the last year, the price farmers receive for their milk has plummeted 41 percent, to \$11.30 per hundredweight. To understand how low \$11.30 per hundredweight is, you must understand it takes \$17 or \$18 to produce a hundredweight of milk. In other words, for every cow that is milked, the farmer is losing a substantial amount of money.

As a result of these low prices, many family farms have gone out of business and, if we do not act immediately, you are going to see many more, from one

end of this country to the other, close up. I can tell you in the State of Vermont there was a lot of publicity surrounding a farm in the southern part of our State that had been in one family since the Revolutionary War—since the Revolutionary War. But because of these horrendously low milk prices, that farm has gone up for sale.

This is not just an issue for dairy farmers. This is not just an issue for rural communities. This is an issue for every American who wants to gain access to good quality, locally produced food.

All over this country people are saying no, I don't want my food coming in from China, I don't want my food coming in from places all over the world. I want to see the quality food that is produced in my area, in my State, in my region. If we do not act to protect family-based dairy agriculture, we are going to increasingly lose that opportunity.

Let me underline this. I know the people familiar with dairy always say these are great regional fights, the Northeast is fighting the Midwest is fighting the Southeast is fighting the west coast, and every region has its own set of priorities.

This is not a regional issue, this is a national issue. Let me talk a little bit about what is happening, briefly, in various regions around the country. California Farmers Union President Joaquin Contente spoke about the situation in his State of California. He testified:

In my lifelong history as a dairy farmer, I have never seen prices this far below our cost for this long and I have never seen so many dairy producers so desperate for relief. In my county alone—

This is in California, not Vermont.

In my county alone, 25 dairies have either filed or are in the process of filing for bankruptcy and many more are closer to bankruptcy each day.

Joaquin Contente, California Farmers Union president.

Let me talk about Texas, the Southwest. The executive director of the Texas Association of Dairymen spoke about the situation in his State of Texas. He said:

This is the worst situation I have seen since 1970. Some say it is the worst since the depression.

That is the State of Texas. Let me talk about the Midwest, Wisconsin. A Stanley, WI dairy farmer stated:

In my area, farmers are burning up their equity accumulated over their lifetimes. One farmer in my area had to cash out his wife's IRA just to get crops planted this spring. My parish priest in my small town has had to counsel one or more dairy farmers a week to prevent their suicides. And we know of reports across the country of farm suicides that have already occurred.

These are just a few examples from California and Texas. I can go on and on about what is going on in California and the Northeast.

Last week, after Congress's strong urging, Secretary Vilsack announced that the government would spend \$243

million to raise price supports for dairy farmers, and we very much appreciate the Secretary and the Obama administration's quick response to our needs. That support is important. It is likely to raise milk price supports by about \$1.25 per hundredweight, but that is nowhere near enough of what we need when in fact cost of production is \$17 or \$18 per hundredweight.

This afternoon I will be offering legislation cosponsored by you, Senator GILLIBRAND, cosponsored by Senator SCHUMER, Senator TOM UDALL, Senator SPECTER, and Senator JEANNE SHAHEEN, among others. This amendment will go a long way to help farmers over the short-term crisis.

Long term, obviously we need to do some fundamental rethinking about dairy agriculture, how you bring long-term stability to the dairy industry and end that volatility that has been rampant in that industry for so many years. There are so many ideas out there about how we bring long-term stability for dairy farmers in this country. This is short-term relief to make sure farmers all over this country do not go out of business. What this amendment would do is provide the Secretary of Agriculture with \$350 million in additional funding for milk price supports. That would, again, bring the price up about another \$1.50 per hundredweight. This short-term help could mean the difference between economic viability or financial disaster for dairy farmers from one end of this country to the other.

Once again, all of us are focused on how we get out of this deep recession. All of us are focused on how we create decent-paying jobs. I urge my colleagues, do not forget about rural America. Rural America, whether it is Vermont, Wisconsin, California, Colorado—rural America is hurting. They need help as well.

Later on this afternoon I will be bringing forth this very important amendment to provide some economic support for rural America and hope to have the support of all my colleagues.

THE CALENDAR

Mr. SANDERS. Madam President, I ask unanimous consent the Senate proceed to the immediate consideration of the following postal naming bills en bloc: Calendar Nos. 133 through 144: S. 748, S. 1211, S. 1314, H.R. 774, H.R. 987, H.R. 1271, H.R. 1397, H.R. 2090, H.R. 2162, H.R. 2325, H.R. 2422, and H.R. 2470.

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

Mr. SANDERS. I ask unanimous consent the bills be read a third time and passed en bloc, the motions to reconsider be laid on the table en bloc, and any statements be printed in the RECORD.

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