

There appears to be a sufficient second.

The yeas and nays were ordered.

AMENDMENT NO. 2407 TO AMENDMENT NO. 2406

Mr. REID. Mr. President, I now call up amendment No. 2407, a second-degree amendment, which is at the desk.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will report.

The legislative clerk read as follows:

The Senator from Nevada [Mr. REID] proposes an amendment numbered 2407 to amendment No. 2406.

The amendment is as follows:

(Purpose: To convert all mandatory spending to discretionary spending subject to annual appropriations)

At the appropriate place, insert the following:

**SEC. 12 . FUNDING.**

Notwithstanding any other provision of this Act or any amendment made by this Act, each amount made available by this Act or an amendment made by this Act that is funded through direct spending (as defined in section 250(c) of the Balanced Budget and Emergency Deficit Control Act of 1985(2 U.S.C. 900(c))) shall be considered to be an authorization of appropriations for that amount and purpose.

**FLOOD INSURANCE REFORM AND MODERNIZATION ACT—MOTION TO PROCEED—Continued**

Mr. REID. Mr. President, I move to proceed to Calendar No. 250, S. 1940.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The motion is pending.

The Senator from Montana.

**AGRICULTURE REFORM**

Mr. TESTER. Mr. President, I rise to talk about the farm bill and recognize the fine work the Senate Agriculture Committee did in bringing this bill forward.

I am disappointed, to say the least, that this bill is bogged down in legislative games. This bill is too important for folks to play politics. If we want to talk about a lack of predictability, this is a prime example. We should be passing a bill and instead games are being played.

Agriculture is the largest industry in Montana. Montana's farmers and ranchers produce the food that powers the Nation. Providing an effective safety net for those of us in production agriculture is important, and it is potentially very costly. It would have been easy for the Senate Agriculture Committee to write a bill that keeps spending at the levels of the last farm bill, but they did not.

This bill recognizes the fiscal challenges we face. It cuts more than \$23 billion, more than double the amount proposed by the Simpson-Bowles Commission.

Due to the good work of the Senate Agriculture Committee, this bill produces meaningful savings and reduces the number of programs at the Department of Agriculture. At the same time the bill preserves a strong safety net for farmers, invests in conservation and nutrition and institutes much needed reforms.

I have offered amendments to address the issues that still face farmers and ranchers around the country. The first is my provision to ensure that farmers will be able to buy public varieties of seeds. My amendment will make sure the Department of Agriculture follows through on the government's commitment to public seed varieties. It ensures that the USDA will devote the resources necessary to support a strong public breeding program and develop public plant and animal varieties. For too long the Agriculture Department has failed to promote public seed varieties. The USDA must support diverse seed research that farmers can adapt to various growing conditions.

My amendment will not solve the problem, but it is a necessary first step to ensure that farmers have a choice of what kind of seeds to purchase.

I have also introduced an amendment that takes a proactive approach to protect our country's livestock producers. Back in 2009, Senator BARRASSO and I wrote a new law to help livestock producers get compensation for losses related to wolves. Any producer will tell us they would rather prevent predation than get compensated for a loss, but losses do happen. A number of States receive some assistance from that program. That is why I have introduced an amendment to help producers protect their livestock from the threat of predation. It is a commonsense solution to support livestock producers who live near protected populations of predators.

Speaking of commonsense amendments, I am also offering what some have called the biggest package of sportsmen's bills in a generation. My sportsmen's act combines over 20 different sportsmen bills. It comes in response to the concerns I have heard as a chairman of the Congressional Sportsmen's Caucus.

What I hear most often from sportsmen is the importance of access to public lands. That is why this bill dedicates funding to ensure sportsmen's access to some of the best places to hunt and fish in this country.

Some folks might ask why is this important, but hunting and fishing is a way of life in places such as Montana. In fact, one in three Montanans hunts big game and over 50 percent fish. For us, it is not just recreation, it is a critical part of our economy. It drives and sustains jobs.

So Senator THUNE and I, as cochairs of the Congressional Sportsmen's Caucus, have combined the best bills and ideas from Republicans and Democrats. In addition to preserving access to public lands, it reauthorizes several vital conservation programs and preserves our shooting heritage. That is why it has the support in a wide variety of sportsmen and conservation groups. Neither party has a monopoly on good ideas.

My sportsman's act takes the best from the House bill and the best from both sides of the aisle in the Senate to

move the ball forward for sportsmen and sportswomen in Montana and the Nation. By adding this sportsmen's package to the farm bill, we will conserve some of our most productive habitat, passing on hunting and fishing traditions to future generations and entrusting them to those who care about them the most.

(The further remarks of Mr. TESTER are printed in today's RECORD under "Morning Business.")

Mr. TESTER. I yield the floor and suggest the absence of a quorum.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will call the roll.

The legislative clerk proceeded to call the roll.

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

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

Mr. UDALL of Colorado. Mr. President, earlier this week I came to the Senate floor to speak about the importance of the forestry title in what is a bipartisan farm bill we are considering right now as I speak.

In my previous remarks, I spoke about a growing emergency in our Nation's forests caused by the largest bark beetle outbreak in our recorded history—an outbreak that is projected to kill nearly every lodgepole pine in Colorado.

I know the Presiding Officer from the neighboring State of New Mexico is experiencing these same conditions in his State. The Forest Service has estimated that 100,000 dead trees are falling in our forests every day. Hard to imagine, but their estimates are such: 100,000 trees every day. That means our landscapes are littered with tinder ready to burn, which, combined with the hot dry summer we are already experiencing, is a recipe for a disastrous fire season.

Mother Nature bats last, which means much of what we face is out of our control. But we can act, and we must act, in order to manage the magnitude of the crisis in our home States.

In some ways—I know the Presiding Officer sees this the same way I do—the forests in Colorado are the canaries in the coal mine that tie us into and identify the effects of a changing climate. Warmer temperatures and drought conditions have exacerbated beetle infestations in our forests, and we are now dealing with an unprecedented combination of explosive fire season events.

There is a raging Colorado wildfire today, as I stand here, in Larimer County—the High Park Fire—and it continues to grow. It has consumed over 46,000 acres. It has claimed the life of a local homeowner, and it is causing devastating effects in the surrounding communities. As of first thing this morning, only 10 percent of the fire had been contained. We have made sure, though, that all available resources are dedicated to this effort. I am told we now have over 1,000 firefighters on site,

which is good news. We will not know the true costs of the fire for some time, but it, undoubtedly, will have a lasting effect on my State.

I want to assure Coloradans that I will continue to closely monitor the High Park Fire to ensure that firefighters on the ground have all the resources they need to beat back this devastating blaze. I also urge my fellow Coloradans to heed the warnings and follow the evacuation guidance of the firefighters who are tasked with keeping us safe. Most importantly, I ask that we keep these brave public servants in mind as they work to protect lives and personal property—especially as what is a very unpredictable fire progresses.

Again, I know the Presiding Officer has had a series of fires in his State, and he knows the capricious nature of wildfire. I want to also, in giving a little more background, point out that the High Park Fire is burning predominantly on private land. But it is moving rapidly into a beetle-infested national forest. This is a reminder of exactly why we need flexibility to treat hazardous beetle-killed trees and to engage the public in the active and collaborative management of our Nation's forests.

We cannot reverse the tragic loss of life and property that the High Park Fire and many other fires have caused, but it is essential that we take steps to understand what can be done in the future to better prevent, prepare, and respond to wildfires. We must learn more about the conditions that make those fires catastrophic.

Let me start by talking about homeowners.

Homeowners can create what we know in our States is called defensible space, depth space. That involves clearing brush, moving woodpiles, and looking at other actions through which we can protect structures. Those actions have been proven to be the hallmark of what has saved such properties in past fires.

These are important takeaways we have learned in my State of Colorado in the wake of catastrophic fires, and they are also the result of subsequent stories and studies that I have called for to inform the public about what they can do to protect their homes and property.

The same studies have also taught us that Federal forest management policies must prioritize tree removal around communities to protect homes, roads, and infrastructure—something I have fought to provide resources for over the last decade. The added benefit to these efforts is that they create local jobs and support the critically important timber industry in our States.

But that is not all. We must also advance new policies that will actually help prepare our firefighters to combat these raging fires. A recent example of this is action the Senate took to pass a bill I cosponsored to expedite the pur-

chase of much needed air tankers to fight wildfires. Our Nation's tanker fleet has aged and dwindled dramatically in recent years. Without sufficient air tankers, we are ill-prepared to respond to catastrophic fires—especially multiple fires at once. I am pleased the Congress passed this bill, and I understand the President is prepared to act quickly to sign the air tanker legislation into law. Still, we need to and we can do more.

We need more flexibility to treat forests more comprehensively. I believe, as I mentioned at the beginning of my remarks, the forestry title of the farm bill is a good start. However, I believe it does not go far enough to authorize adequate resources to treat forests that have been affected by bark beetle infestations.

The Forest Service's bark beetle strategy calls for doubling the number of acres it has been able to treat in past years. In other words, the Forest Service is saying: Look, we want to double what we have been doing. We believe we have the expertise to do that. What else do they need, though? They need money.

In fiscal year 2011, the Forest Service allocated \$110 million to treating acres affected by bark beetles in the Western United States. But if we are going to double that acreage, we are going to need more Federal support.

A year ago I fought to increase the amount of funding the Forest Service had available to treat hazardous trees. I worked with the administration and strongly supported a reprogramming request that would have allowed the Forest Service to use extra money to treat problem areas in the West.

The Senate supported this commonsense request. But, I have to tell you, unfortunately, the House Appropriations Committee stood in the way of getting these critical funds into the forests where it was and is still needed most. So that inaction meant that thousands of acres of beetle-killed trees were not treated—areas that are potentially now worsening the High Park Fire as we speak.

In the new farm bill, the Agriculture Committee has authorized \$100 million for designated treatment areas affected by beetle infestation, which is less money than last year, and certainly not enough to double the number of acres that were targeted for fire prevention and tree removal.

At the current authorization level of \$100 million, the Forest Service simply will be unable to meet its goal. To help remedy this, I have filed a bipartisan amendment, No. 2295, with Senator THUNE of South Dakota, which would increase the authorization for funding to \$200 million to authorize adequate resources in order for the Forest Service to address these looming and immediate emergencies.

I have been a strong advocate for finding ways to ensure we are prudent in how we spend taxpayer dollars, but the need to address this crisis is imme-

diately and the threat to public health, safety, and our economy will only get worse, causing us to pay more later. Another way to put it is it is less expensive to prevent fires, to prepare for fires, than it is to fight fires and then be involved in the rehabilitation of those landscapes after those devastating fires are finally put out.

In addition to the amendment I have filed with Senator THUNE that would provide increased authorization for the funding of tree removal, I have also filed amendment No. 2294 that would extend Colorado's good neighbor authority.

Good neighbor authority gives the U.S. Forest Service and the Bureau of Land Management the capability and the power to enter into cooperative agreements with State foresters to plan and implement forest health projects on more acres more efficiently. This would give my State and other States the opportunity to collaborate with Federal agencies to perform forest, rangeland, and watershed restoration services—actions that a study I requested after the Fourmile Canyon Fire in Boulder County, CO, found firsthand helps agencies and homeowners better prepare to reduce the risk of damage and loss of life from wildfires.

Lest viewers and those who are interested in wildfires think they are an aberration, wildfires are actually a fact of life in the West and in forests in general, and they will continue to occur over and over again in Colorado. But I am committed to doing everything possible to learn from every fire and take whatever precautionary measures we can, with the hope of saving more lives, property, and communities in the future.

As I have said before—and we all know—wildfires can easily become a multimillion-dollar effort affecting every level of government. As the bark beetle epidemic continues to present a significant threat to our economy, critical infrastructure, and important natural resources, we must allocate resources to address this epidemic up front in a commonsense way.

Again, I know the Presiding Officer has faced these challenges head on in his State. Some may see this as just solely a western problem, but I urge my colleagues to support bipartisan efforts to ensure that we manage our forests to reduce fire risk, protect water supplies, and bolster our economy.

Forests all over our country are susceptible and vulnerable to fires. We can work together in the Senate to ensure that we have the tools to protect our forests and protect the communities and the people who live in those communities.

I look forward to the Senate taking up these two important amendments in the near future as we hopefully move the farm bill to passage in the Senate and to the President's desk.

I yield the floor, and 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. UDALL of Colorado. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the order for the quorum call be rescinded.

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

(The remarks of Mr. UDALL of Colorado are printed in today's RECORD under "Morning Business.")

Mr. UDALL of Colorado. I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Alaska.

(The remarks of Ms. MURKOWSKI are printed in today's RECORD under "Morning Business.")

Ms. MURKOWSKI. I thank the Chair and yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Wyoming is recognized.

#### A SECOND OPINION

Mr. BARRASSO. Mr. President, I come to the floor today, as I do week after week, and have since the health care bill was signed into law, with a doctor's second opinion about the health care law. I do that as someone who practiced medicine, taking care of families all around Wyoming for about a quarter century.

I continue to hear great concerns from folks back home and across the country about the health care law. So often people ask the question: Does the President understand the health care law?

Well, last week President Obama shocked a lot of Americans when he made a statement—not on the teleprompter but off script—that the "private sector was doing fine." He said the private sector was doing fine. He said the weaknesses in our economy had to do with State and local government.

The words made it very clear to people in this country that the President is not in touch with what is happening in this country—specifically with the economy.

But then on Monday, the President said something else about the health care law that made it once again look as though he doesn't understand what is happening all across America. During an interview the President was doing with a local news reporter from Sioux City, IA, he actually was surprised to learn that his health care law is hurting small businesses—certainly hurting small businesses all across the country. He was surprised to learn of that.

While the news doesn't come as a shock to most Americans, it definitely caught President Obama off guard. Here is what happened. The Iowa reporter told the President that one business in Iowa needed to "close up shop and move the jobs back to Wisconsin" because of the President's health care law. The President's response to the reporter I found troubling. President Obama said:

Yeah, that would be kind of hard to explain, because the only folks that have been

impacted in terms of the health care bill are insurance companies.

The President said that the only folks—only folks—who have been impacted in terms of the health care bill are insurance companies.

That is why I continue to come to the floor with a doctor's second opinion, ever since NANCY PELOSI made the famous statement that "first you have to pass it before you get to find out what is in it."

I had hoped that by now the President would actually know what is in the health care law. By his statements to this reporter in Iowa, it certainly seems to me the President does not know what is in the health care law, does not know how it is impacting jobs and the economy in the United States. How on Earth can President Obama believe insurance companies are the only people impacted by the health care law? Small businesses all across the country are being slammed by the law's expensive mandates—the mandates that people have to have government-approved insurance, which is much more expensive than what they had before. The insurance premiums that he promised would drop by \$2,500 per family have actually gone up higher and faster than if the law had never been passed. The President said if you like what you have, you can keep it. We know that millions of Americans who had insurance they liked are not able to keep it.

The fact is that colleges are dropping their insurance plans for students because, under the President's law, those insurance plans were going to go up anywhere from 4 to 10 times more as a result of the mandates that those students buy government-approved levels of insurance, which was a lot more insurance than the students needed, wanted, or could afford. So the colleges are saying we cannot pass this expense on to students, so we are going to drop it entirely.

It is astonishing that the President doesn't realize how many people are impacted in a bad way by his own health care law. He thinks it is only the insurance companies, but small business owners are forced now, because of this law, to choose between bad choices. One is that they can offer very high-cost government-approved insurance, making it much more expensive for them to try to run their business and hire workers in this time of significant uncertainty in the economy, or they won't offer any health coverage at all because they cannot afford the law's out-of-touch and expensive insurance mandates. The choice is completely unacceptable, and the President should know that.

Someone in the White House ought to be informing the President. They ought to clearly be leveling with the President about the impact of his bill, his law, and his understanding of it, and what the impacts are on American families and the American economy. The private sector is not doing fine.

This health care law negatively impacts people across the country, including many small business owners.

The President also deserves to know from his advisers that his health care law is having a significant impact on American seniors.

Earlier this week, Senator COBURN and I joined the rest of the Republican health care providers in Congress, in the House and Senate, and released a "Doctor's Note on Medicare." This new report details how the President's health care law specifically makes it harder for America's seniors to get the care they need from a doctor they choose at a lower price.

I want to walk you through this report. There is a section called "10 Facts Seniors Need to Know About Medicare's Future." I will focus on five of those.

One, to control Medicare spending, instead of trusting seniors, the President empowered 15 unelected bureaucrats. That is right, the President set up the Independent Payment Advisory Board, people who would be politically appointed—not elected by the voters but unelected bureaucrats. They will be the ones in charge of deciding and controlling Medicare spending.

Another is that doctors overwhelmingly believe the Independent Payment Advisory Board will hurt seniors' access to care. This is under the facts that seniors need to know about Medicare's future as a result of the President's health care law.

In a recent survey, 80 percent of doctors said this Independent Payment Advisory Board, which the President liked and put in his health care law, will cut reimbursement rates to doctors, which will harm seniors' access to care.

Now let's go to a third. Without congressional action, Medicare reimbursement rates will drop about 30 percent at the end of the year, which would harm seniors' access to care. That is in the law as it stands now. If the law isn't changed, that cut will automatically go into place, and it is going to be that much harder for seniors to get doctors. Seniors are very concerned right now about being able to find a doctor. If their doctor retires, they may have a hard time finding a new doctor. If the senior moves locations, they may have a hard time finding a doctor in that location. This is an increasing problem that is made worse by the health care law.

I think the President deserves to hear that and to know that and to realize the impact his law has had on people way beyond, as he says, just insurance companies. The President also needs to know—because seniors know—that the President's health care law took \$530 billion from Medicare—not to save Medicare, not to strengthen Medicare, but to spend on other programs not for seniors. The health care law cut more than \$½ trillion from the Medicare Program to fund new government programs. Seniors realize this, and it is

time the President of the United States understood the impact of the decisions he made when he signed this health care bill into law.

Many seniors on Medicare Advantage will lose their plan. More than one in four seniors are currently on Medicare Advantage. It is a choice they make. They know they are on Medicare Advantage. Over 11 million seniors are on Medicare Advantage. Yet, according to the Actuary of Medicare alone, by 2017, when the Medicare Advantage cuts in the President's health care law are fully implemented, roughly half—half—of seniors who like the Medicare Advantage plan they have will lose it.

The President said: If you like what you have, you can keep it. Perhaps he should have realized the bill he signed into law would cause him to break a number of the promises he made to the American people. That is another one of those broken promises. So the President promised: If you like what you have, you can keep it. But we find out many more people are not able to keep what they have. And the President said his plan would lower insurance costs by \$2,500 per family. Yet we see insurance rates have gone up, and they are going up faster than if the law had never been passed in the first place.

So the reality is from the time I gave my second opinion speech last week until today, the President needs to realize the private sector is not fine and his health care law hurts small businesses, hurts seniors, and hurts patients all across this country. If the President wants to do something to help the private sector, he should work with Congress to repeal his health care law and to replace it with better reforms that would actually be better for patients and providers and taxpayers.

This health care law, as I see it, is bad for patients, it is bad for providers—the nurses and the doctors who take care of those patients—and it is terrible for the American taxpayer. What we need is health care reform that actually provides the care for people they need from a doctor they choose at a lower cost.

Mr. President, I yield the floor, and I suggest the absence of a quorum.

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Mr. CARDIN). The clerk will call the roll.

The bill clerk proceeded to call the roll.

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

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

#### SUGAR PROGRAM

Mr. BAUCUS. Mr. President, I rise in strong opposition to multiple amendments to the farm bill that would undermine critical support for American sugar producers and the American jobs they create. These amendments would pull the rug out from underneath sugar beet producers in my home State of Montana. It would leave farmers and other sugar industry workers in Montana and across the country vulnerable

to job loss. In these tough economic times, this is a step backwards in job creation, and that is a step we can't afford to take.

Montana is the fifth largest sugar beet-producing State in the Nation. In 2010, our cash receipts totaled more than \$66 million, and those dollars mean good-paying American jobs. That is why the farm bill continues the vital support that helps America's sugar producers sustain more than 140,000 jobs and nearly \$20 billion in economic activity every year.

Our sugar policy is a proven investment in American jobs at no cost to the taxpayer. That is right. Let me repeat that. The U.S. sugar policy doesn't cost American taxpayers a single cent. So why in the world would we want to get rid of this proven job creator at a time when jobs should be our No. 1 priority?

The policy does not restrict access to lower sugar prices for manufacturers, but it allows sugar producers from Montana and the rest of the United States to compete in the world market with access to less quality sugar, cheaper labor, and fewer regulations. Other countries very strongly protect their sugar industry.

Some argue our Sugar Program, while not costing the American taxpayer directly, costs them indirectly at the grocery store. But let me be very clear: For every \$1 candy bar bought at a grocery store, only 2 cents of that total cost is sugar. For every \$1, only 2 cents of the cost of that candy bar is sugar.

With no cost to the American people and proven benefits extending from rural farmers through the entire economy, this policy works. It is a lifeline to Montana's sugar beet farmers and the rural communities in which they live. I would not let us get rid of a policy that supports proven job creators at a time when we need jobs more than ever.

Mr. President, I yield the floor, and I suggest the absence of a quorum.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will call the roll.

The bill clerk proceeded to call the roll.

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

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection, it is so ordered. The Senator from Kansas is recognized.

#### FOOD FOR PEACE

Mr. MORAN. Mr. President, I come to the floor this afternoon to address an issue related to hunger, a topic that is a significant component of the farm bill we are debating, and particularly to raise the topic associated with an amendment I have offered. It is amendment No. 2403.

Most of us have heard the expression, since it is an old saying, that goes like this: Give a man a fish and he eats for a day; teach a man to fish and he will eat for the rest of his life.

By teaching someone how to fish or how to grow crops, we help them pro-

vide food for themselves and for their families. The bill we are considering has funds set aside for a program called Food for Peace, title II. They are intended to do just that, to help combat world hunger and malnutrition. We have a long history in Kansas, Senator Dole being a prime example of someone who has cared greatly about hunger not only in the United States but around the world. The funds used here in Food for Peace are very important to us, certainly as a matter of humanitarian issues, but also the security of our country and its future.

There are funds designated within that title II, some to be used for emergency aid and some to be used for developmental aid, the difference being the ability to respond to an immediate crisis or disaster, and other funds, the developmental aid, to be used to improve the chances that crisis never occurs.

The question I want to raise with my colleagues here in the Senate is how do we allocate the amount between emergency food aid and the amount of money we use to teach folks the skills necessary to help them survive when disaster strikes? We are not talking about any new spending, any new money; we are simply trying to address the issue how do we allocate what amount has already been decided upon by the committee.

I have been to Darfur, for example, spent time in Sudan, and saw the efforts by many to keep people from starving. Those are very important. I am thankful for the generosity of Americans, both as charitable organizations and as taxpayers, who provide emergency food assistance to these people. We never want to have the kind of suffering we see there and other places around the world.

But I am concerned about the allocation that is included in this bill and I have introduced an amendment to ensure that at least 20 percent of Food for Peace, the title II funds, is available each year for prevention-based programs that reduce hunger in poor, crisis-prone communities. If we can prevent the need for emergency food assistance and help more people gain the skills needed for their lifetime, then we should do that. That is what this amendment is intended to do.

The legislation we are considering significantly reduces the minimum amount of funding for developmental programs that equip vulnerable people around the world to feed themselves. The farm bill, this farm bill we are debating, reduces by nearly 40 percent the amount of funds that would be used for the important work of development aid. Instead, it directs those dollars to emergency food aid. The amendment I am offering would raise the minimum amount that would be spent on developmental programs by 5 percent so we can prevent circumstances where people are starving and need that emergency aid.

This has been an issue we have worked on for a long period of time.

This is my third farm bill as a Member of Congress. In the 2008 farm bill, we created a lockbox, an amendment I offered that was included in the 2008 farm bill, that set aside about \$450 million for purposes of developmental aid, again trying to make certain we have the resources in place to reduce the chances we are going to need emergency aid. It is true that many countries have a high concentration of malnourished children, and subsistence farming usually goes hand in hand in those circumstances.

Affected by droughts and crop failures, eroding soils, lack of sustainable income, these populations are short of food several months of the year and they oftentimes need emergency food aid as a result. As a consequence of that circumstance, even though title II emergency food aid programs are intended to be short-lived, lasting between a few months maybe up to a year, usually most emergency food aid is directed to the same areas, year after year, because of the continuing need. It is a reoccurring need, in fact, so year after year we are trying to provide emergency food aid to the same populations and the same areas and the same countries.

My point is we would be wiser in spending our dollars by trying to reduce that reoccurring starvation, that recurring need, that lack of food, because of the amount and length of a food crisis and the need to stretch our taxpayer dollars as far as possible. Because using food aid more effectively is the key to success, the 2008 farm bill assured that a portion of that food aid would be combined with technical assistance, training, and business development to boost agricultural productivity, conserve natural resources, link farmers to markets, and improve child nutrition, incomes, and diets.

That lockbox set aside about \$450 million. It is expected, if this bill were fully funded, that these millions are nearly now \$100 million less. So we are moving in the direction of providing a lot less developmental aid. In fact, in the 1970s when this program was amended and altered, 75 percent of title II money, of Food for Peace money, was set aside for developmental aid. Over time, that amount has been reduced, time and time again. Through economic empowerment, improved infrastructure, watershed innovations, these programs in developmental aid help protect and safeguard against the need for emergency aid. Providing a consistent and adequate level of funding for prevention-based programs has been proven to work.

For example, in Haiti, World Vision has been implementing a 5-year multi-year assistance program, supported by developmental aid funding. The central plateau region of Haiti has historically suffered from lack of adequate food, causing extremely high levels of poverty and stunting among children under 2 years of age. World Vision has worked with clinic and community

health workers through a mobile clinic strategy to provide nutritional and primary health care support to mothers and children. During their last national nutrition survey, large parts of that central plateau moved from red and yellow, crisis and severe insecurity areas, to green, indicating the investment in preventing malnutrition using the nonemergency programs is an effective and worthwhile investment in fighting ongoing hunger and preventing additional use of emergency funds down the road.

In Haiti we see the example of using the prevention dollars to reduce the need for disaster or crisis dollars. Title II prevention-based programs are implemented by private, voluntary organizations and co-ops. They are supported, begun, by the American people. They have regular audits and oversight. We are talking about organizations such as World Vision, as I mentioned, Catholic Relief Services, Food for Hunger, Mercy Corps, Congressional Hunger, the United Methodist Committee. These are folks who are engaged day in, day out, year in, year out, in trying to prevent hunger from occurring or the circumstances which create hunger in a community from occurring. The inability to plan and predict the uncertainty of the amount of money that would be available by what we do each year in appropriations and what we do every few years in a farm bill makes their job much more difficult. So the consistency of having the resources available to fight and the need to fight the circumstances that create the need for crisis intervention is something that is important, as is the certainty that can come from knowing there will always be this certain amount of money available for prevention.

Reasonable levels of food aid are important in both the urgent needs. There are going to be crises. Certain things happen—floods, natural disasters occur. We know we need to be able to respond quickly. But we also know we need to be able to reduce the incidence of hunger occurring time and time again in certain areas of the world. With this amendment, title II will still largely be used for emergencies but will increase by a modest amount the funding for developmental programs that helps eliminate the need for that emergency assistance down the road. I encourage my colleagues in the Senate to support this amendment.

I know this has been a significant issue within the Senate Committee on Agriculture and I appreciate their consideration of this topic. I commend the chairperson, Senator STABENOW, and the ranking member, my colleague from Kansas, Senator ROBERTS, for their tremendous efforts trying to bring to the Senate a farm bill that meets both the needs of agricultural producers and the people they feed. I offer my sincere appreciation to both those Senators and other members of the Senate Agriculture Committee for their work.

I particularly wish to express my gratitude for the Senator from Kansas, Mr. ROBERTS, for his continuing involvement in agriculture throughout his time as a Member of the House, chairman of the House Agriculture Committee, now the ranking member of the Senate Agriculture Committee. His efforts on behalf of the folks back home as well as around the world are greatly appreciated by me.

Again I ask my colleagues in the Senate to support an adequate portion of the Food for Peace resources being used to stave off reoccurring food crises, rather than just reacting to them. I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Mr. MERKLEY). The Senator from Alabama is recognized.

#### FOOD STAMP PROGRAM

Mr. SESSIONS. Mr. President, as we deal with the farm bill we have to acknowledge that 80 percent of that bill now is the SNAP program, or the Food Stamp Program. I will repeat that—80 percent of this bill. So we need to not call it the farm bill anymore. It needs to be considered primarily the Food Stamp bill as that's what it is.

When we look at the bill, our sponsors are rightly pleased that they have tightened the belt of the farmers, they reduced some of the subsidies and programs, they created a little better policy, I believe, and they deserve some credit for that. But of the \$800 billion that will be spent in the next 10 years, under current law—\$800 billion compared to \$200 billion in the rest of the farm program—for the \$800 billion they are only claiming a \$4 billion savings.

It is quite true that we in America do not want to have people hungry. We do not want to have people malnourished. What we want is to run a Food Stamp Program that has integrity, that creates an incentive for responsible personal behavior and that helps America to be a healthy nation.

I do not think we are there yet. In fact, we have Members on the Democratic side who are opposing even this \$4 billion reduction in projected spending. This is less than half of 1 percent. And some of them don't even want to have that. Cut the farmers, all right, whack them 10 percent; but don't make real cuts to anything else or deal with any other programs. So our challenge simply is to make sure that people who are truly in need get the benefits. My Republican colleagues and I see this as a program that is temporary, helping people through tough times and creating an incentive for them to move on, be successful, find work and take care of themselves and their dependents.

I believe this chart will give some indication of the situation that we are in today. It is an accurate illustration of spending in this bill, the 2013 bill, which begins October 1 of this year. The Food Stamp Program will make up \$82 billion out of the spending in this legislation that we are dealing with. In the bill, \$6 billion will go to conservation programs—which is not really a

farmer's program, and they may get some benefits from it—another \$6 billion for commodities, which is the orange in the chart, and \$8 billion for crop insurance, which is the new fundamental basis of farm policy. I am not complaining that farmers are being squeezed. Hopefully, this has been done in a smart way that will also make those programs better. However, what I am suggesting is that there is virtually no change in the 80 percent of spending in this bill. We don't have the money to waste especially if it can be done better and smarter.

The main farm provisions in the bill experience a \$14.7 billion reduction. That is a reduction of nearly 10 percent of spending relative to the baseline. To add some context, if the food stamp portion were to be reduced by 10 percent, it would save the U.S. Treasury \$75 billion. Food stamp spending has quadrupled since 2001. It doubled between 2001 and 2006. Some people say the reason food stamp use is up is due to unemployment and recession. Well, that is not the entire story. For example, from 2001 to 2006, under President Bush's time when the economy had a small recession but was moving along very strongly in 2006, it still doubled from 2001 to 2006. At that time unemployment remained at about 5 percent. It is now 8 percent. When food stamps were first expanded nationally, 1 in 50 Americans were on the program. Today that number has increased to 1 in 7.

Are we confident that each of those seven Americans need this kind of subsidy? Are we sure that is needed? I believe we need to examine the program. If they need this benefit, let's get it for them. If not, let's not.

There are nearly 80 welfare programs provided by the U.S. Government, and 17 are for food and nutrition support. I repeat, 17 programs are for food and nutrition support. The costs now exceed \$700 billion annually for all of these Federal programs, food and others too, plus \$200 billion in State contributions. So that is almost \$1 trillion a year, which is so much money it is difficult to express.

For example, an individual on food stamps may have a household that is eligible to receive and may receive \$25,000 a year in total welfare support. We have a host of programs for which people can qualify, so we need to keep that in mind as we go forward. There is a patchwork quilt of Federal and State programs that help people in need. This is in addition to charitable and religious support that people can access.

The farm bill proposes to permanently elevate food stamps far above prerecession levels. In 2008 we spent less than \$40 billion on food stamps. I repeat, in 2008—just a few years ago—less than \$40 billion a year. Food stamp spending over the next 10 years is estimated to average almost \$80 billion. This is double the prerecession amount.

This chart shows how we have grown from a little under \$20 billion in 2001 to

over \$70 billion in 2022. We can see a little decline there between 2013 and 2022. That chart is based on projections from the Congressional Budget Office and assume that the unemployment will begin to drop in the future—we hope this is correct. Even though unemployment is expected to fall below 8 percent, they are not showing that we are going to have a major dropoff in food stamp spending in the future. Hopefully, unemployment will be falling. Hopefully, we will get this economy on the right track.

I would suggest the point that is revealed in this chart is that unemployment is not what is driving the food stamp increases. The increases far exceed the unemployment rate increases, and the decline from a projected reduction in unemployment is not very much either.

Were food stamp spending returned to prerecession levels those, say, in 2007, and then they were indexed for inflation, it would produce for the U.S. Treasury a \$340 billion savings. So I don't think in 2007 the numbers that were spent are totally disproportionate to what we would need today, and I believe if properly managed we could do better.

The amendments I have filed—and there are four—address some of the perverse incentives for States to increase food stamp registration rather than an incentive to increase the integrity of the program.

For example, one of the things we need to do is to deal with the Federal provision that provides bonuses to States that increase the number of people who are registered. States currently receive bonuses for increasing enrollment and running the Food Stamp Program. They don't get bonuses for efficiently managing the program to reduce fraud, they don't get bonuses for finding people who are on the program illegitimately and selling their benefits in the marketplace or otherwise abusing the program, they get bonuses for seeing how many people they can sign up. That is not a sound policy.

The next amendment I have is Restoring the Asset Test for Food Stamps. You would think it is pretty well accepted that if a person has a certain amount of assets, they shouldn't have the government pay for their food. But through a system known as categorical eligibility, 43 States have now provided benefits to individuals whose assets exceed the statutory limit for them. Only 11 States did that in 2007.

Why? There are a couple of reasons. I guess one of them is they help get the incentive bonus for signing up more people. If they get around the asset test and sign up more people, maybe they get a bonus.

What incentive does the State have to reduce the amount of dollars from Washington? They don't match a dime of it. What incentive do they have to reduce the amount of money—free

money in their minds—from Washington going to the State? Not much really.

According to the Congressional Budget Office, if passed, this amendment would save \$11 billion, and all it would do is to say that SNAP beneficiaries would have to comply with the requirements of the program before they get the food stamps. It is called categorical eligibility. If people qualify for any other welfare program, the States have been given the power to say they qualify for food stamps even though they don't meet the formal qualifications for the food stamp program. Let me say that again—if they qualify for these others, under categorical eligibility they are categorically entitled to food stamps. That is not a good policy. It does not appropriately target the correct population, and we should fix that.

Another issue is what has been referred to as the LIHEAP loophole. This reform—and the amendment I have offered, and I hope we get a vote on it—requires households that receive larger food stamp payments on the basis of home energy expense actually provide proof of that expense. This is a real problem. States have been part of this, frankly. They have learned how to manipulate the Low-Income Home Energy Assistance Program money, and it creates an opportunity to have more people qualify for higher food stamp benefits than they are entitled to. It is not good policy and this abuse should be dealt with. The CBO says if that abuse were eliminated, it would save \$9.5 billion over 10 years in addition to the other savings in this bill.

Then another amendment, called the SAVE amendment, would simply require that the Federal Government use a program called SAVE—similar to the E-Verify program—to ensure that those adults receiving benefits are, in fact, lawfully in the country. If they are not lawfully here, they should not be getting welfare support from the U.S. government. How basic is that? They just should not.

One of the most important things we can do to restore integrity in our immigration system is to quit providing economic benefits for people who violate the law. This is the first thing we need to do. It is an important thing to do. So I think that would be an amendment we should include.

According to the Congressional Budget Office, Federal spending is set to increase 50 percent over the next 10 years. I repeat: Federal spending is projected to increase 50 percent over the next 10 years, and this creates a problem for us. Our per-person debt is worse than that of Portugal, Greece, Spain, or Italy.

This is a chart that shows that. We didn't make up these numbers, and it is perfectly established that they are accurate.

This raises a good question. What is the per capita debt of the United States per person? In other words, what

does the U.S. government owe? It is \$49,800 per person—man, woman, and child in America. In Spain it is \$20,000, in Portugal it is \$22,000, in France it is \$35,000, in Greece it is \$40,000, in Italy it is \$40,000, and in Ireland it is \$46,000.

This level of debt is not healthy for us. So the idea that we have an unlimited ability to throw money at every problem we have and that we don't have to make sure every single dollar we appropriate helps the people truly in need, and is wisely spent, is over. We have to end that concept. This government, this Congress, this administration has been far too blase about managing the people's money.

It is like we just want to leave the money out there and maybe it will create a stimulus and somehow it will help the economy and we will give more than we need to give and not worry about it. We don't want to investigate anybody who rightfully qualifies for these benefits. We don't want to cut off anybody who truly deserves these benefits. That would be unkind. However, it is not unkind to insist that people meet the qualifications of the program. The people who don't meet the qualifications don't get the money. That is only common sense, and that is justice as Americans know it.

It is amazing that 40 cents of every dollar we spend in our country today is borrowed. The United States is headed for what has been called the most predictable economic crisis in its history. The debt course we are on is unsustainable. We are headed to a debt crisis if we don't change where we are going, as every witness before the Budget Committee, of which I am ranking member, has told us. Yet many Senators in this body are not only unwilling to achieve more than \$4 billion in savings from the \$800 billion program, but some even consider \$4 billion too much to reduce from the program.

The junior Senator from New York proposes to increase food stamp spending even more than the current growth we have seen, explaining that "food stamps are an extraordinary investment because for every dollar that you put into the SNAP program [the food stamp program] you get out \$1.71." I won't repeat that because this is what the director of the program said, or the Secretary of Agriculture, I believe. He said that for every dollar spent on food stamps, you get out \$1.71. Under this reasoning, we ought to just increase the food stamp program 10 times. Why not? Under this reasoning we are going to get even more money back. Somehow, it is going to create a stimulus and it is going to bring more money in for the Treasury and make the economy grow. Why don't we just pay for clothes, shoes, and housing? Why not? It is precisely this kind of thinking that has bled our Treasury of money that we need to pay for the demands this country has.

I also think it is a moral issue. What is our policy objective? Is it our na-

tional goal to place as many people on welfare, food stamp support, as we can possibly put on that program? Is that our goal? Is that a moral vision for the United States of America, just to see how many people we can place in a situation where they are dependent on the Federal Government for their food? I just ask that. I think we should wrestle with that question.

Under the current proposal, no fewer than one in nine Americans will be on food stamps at any point during the next 10 years. Which is the better goal—to permanently have one in nine Americans on food stamps or to have as many Americans as possible achieving financial independence?

Left unattended, the safety net really can become a restraint, a trap. Welfare reform is guided by the moral principle that welfare support can become damaging not only to the Treasury of the United States but to the recipient. Over time, the trillions of dollars we spend on welfare programs—with the greatest of intentions, with the greatest desire to do good—can replace the normal support role of private family, church, and community. It can become a barrier to self-sufficiency and an incentive not to be engaged in the tough, real world of work and competition. So I think it is not compassionate to increase without limit the size and reach of the Federal Government. The central premise of the American society is that the empowerment of the individual is always preferable to the empowerment of the state.

The amendments we have spent a lot of time working on—each one of them is crafted to improve the program. None of them represent major cuts in the amount of spending that is involved in the food stamp program. For each one of them the biggest savings would be about \$10 billion, but in each case it is \$10 billion that would be saved, that would make the program more efficient, that would improve the integrity of the program, and not reduce any of the benefits that will go to those who would qualify for food stamps under existing law. It would not reduce that.

I am concerned that the majority leader has filled the tree on this bill. Senator REID has basically taken control of the amendment process. So we have a bill moving through the Senate that will spend about \$1 trillion over the next 10 years, and 80 percent of the spending in this bill will deal with food nutrition programs, with SNAP programs—80 percent of it—and we have only had one amendment that deals with that program—only one.

We have been here for days without voting on anything.

Senator ROBERTS is trying to get amendments from the Republican side to be voted on.

The majority leader says: Well, I don't think I will approve that one. No, we don't want to vote on that. We have already voted on something like that.

We are not going to vote on that. You have already had a food stamp amendment. We are not going to have any more food stamp amendments.

That is the kind of talk that is going on here.

This is the U.S. Senate, the greatest deliberative body in the history of the world—something we are exceedingly proud of—where we can have debate, vast, continuous, intense debate. It is part of the glory of this body. So now we have one person—the majority leader—using a parliamentary technique called filling the tree and basically saying I don't get a vote on any of those amendments I just mentioned.

I believe they are responsible amendments. I believe all four should be adopted. I believe it would make the food stamp program better. It would help ensure we have enough money to make sure the people who are in need get help. If we don't get off the debt course we are on, we are going to be in a crisis and all the programs are going to be cut—maybe more than we really need to cut them—because we have to get on the right course.

So I am objecting to this. I am not happy about it. I don't think it is healthy. I do believe the majority leader has utilized this technique of filling the tree more than any majority leader in history—far more than any majority leader in history—and it is not a healthy trend for the Senate.

We have always had a lot of amendments on the farm bill, and we need to have these amendments. So I hope and believe that—I hope we will get votes on these amendments. I hope that we will be able to debate these amendments and that we will be able to help improve the food stamp program.

I want to mention one more thing. Senator RAND PAUL offered an amendment earlier that did not pass that would have block-granted the money to the States. I am not sure—different people can disagree on exactly how he would go about that and whether he did it the right way and whether the spending level he chose was appropriate, but let me say this: A system in which the Federal Government gives an unlimited amount of money to the States creates a perverse incentive for the States to make sure they achieve every possible dollar from Washington. This system creates no incentive for the States to enhance the integrity of the program and to stop those who are abusing it, because when we spend State money to investigate and prosecute and stop abuse, we have reduced the treasury of the State. When we reduce the amount of food stamps pouring into the State, we reduce the amount of Federal money coming into a State—an additional adverse consequence economically for that State.

So we need to create a situation in which the State is given a certain amount of money—a fair formula—and then they have the responsibility of making sure it goes to the right people. If poor people aren't getting enough

money, they will then have an incentive to identify those who are improperly getting the money, cut them off, and direct the money to people in need. We don't have that incentive today. That is one reason the food stamp program is not operating effectively.

So I think Senator PAUL was correct fundamentally in his approach that block-granting the food stamp program to the States would create the right incentive to make the program more effective, to create more integrity, and to make sure people most in need receive the benefits.

I thank the Chair and yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Colorado.

#### THE ECONOMY

Mr. BENNET. Mr. President, first, I wish to thank the Senator from Alabama for calling this body's attention once again to the debt crisis we face as a country. I was with some people just a little while ago, and I was telling them a story about a conversation I had in Colorado about our debt and our deficit and the moral obligation we have to our kids to actually deal with this problem and face up to the fact. My then-10-year-old daughter was with me, Caroline.

We walked out on the front stoop of this place, and she said to me: Daddy.

I said: What.

She said: Just to be clear—she was making fun of me because I say that sometimes—she said: Just to be clear, I am not paying that back.

That is the right attitude she ought to have and the right attitude children all across the country ought to have and the right attitude we ought to have. I look forward, when we get into this discussion this summer, to finding out how to find a bipartisan path through this morass so that Caroline Bennet doesn't have to pay back a debt she didn't accrue.

I wanted to come to the floor today to talk about the economy because I think one thing we can agree on in this body for sure is that the best deficit reduction program we can find would be to get this economy moving again. I wanted to talk about one sector in particular that has created tremendous economic growth in Colorado; that is, the wind energy sector. I know my colleague from Colorado, MARK UDALL, came down earlier today to discuss the same issue, and I so much appreciate his continued efforts in fighting for these jobs.

Just a piece of context here. We face very significant structural issues in this economy today. I have brought this chart down here before, but what it shows is that our gross domestic product—our economic output—is actually higher today than it was when we went into the worst recession since the Great Depression. Our productivity is off the charts. That is the blue line, the second line. It has been going that way since the early 1990s because of our response to competition from China and India and other places, because of

our use of technology, and because of the recession itself, which drove productivity straight up as firms all across the United States tried to figure out how to get through this tough time with fewer people. But median household income continues to fall in this country, and we have 23 or 24 million people who are unemployed or underemployed, even though we are generating this economic output.

I think there are two fundamental answers to this. One is education. The worst the unemployment rate ever got for people with a college degree in the worst recession since the Great Depression was 4.5 percent. But the other is innovation. Jobs are going to be created tomorrow and next week and the week after that that have rising wages, not lowering ones, not falling ones. And this economic recovery, like the last economic recovery—those two together are the first recoveries we have had as a nation in our history where economic growth decoupled from job growth and wage growth. I don't know about the Presiding Officer, but that is what I hear about most in my townhall meetings at home.

The wind production tax credit, it seems to me, cuts right to the core of whether and how we want to compete in this global and changing economy.

Let me show another picture here. This is it. This is a factory in Brighton, CO—bricks and mortar, made in America. It is a wind production facility. We are not talking about some fly-by-night experimental industry here.

This credit has triggered tremendous economic growth in Colorado and all across the country—good-paying jobs, manufacturing jobs here in the United States. As Representative STEVE KING, a Republican from Iowa, said recently in an op-ed he published, the production tax credit has driven as much as \$20 billion in private investment. This is not some Bolshevik scheme. That is \$20 billion in private investment supporting jobs here in the United States, manufacturing jobs here in the United States.

Wind power accounts for more than one-third of all new U.S. electric generation in recent years. In Colorado alone, it has created 6,000 jobs. It has moved our State toward a more diversified and cleaner energy portfolio. But because they can't get any certainty out of Washington, like everybody else, developers and manufacturers are already starting layoffs. They are laying off employees today in anticipation of the credit expiring at the end of the year.

Vestas, which has a huge manufacturing footprint in Colorado, from Windsor all the way south to Pueblo, is poised to lay off 1,600 workers if we fail to act. It is hard for me to understand, when our concerns about the deficit and our concerns about economic growth are ones that we hear about every day on the floor, why laying off 1,600 workers in Colorado is a good idea. Iberdrola Renewables, also doing

business in Colorado, has already laid off 50 employees. Nationally, 37,000 jobs are at risk, not to mention the ones we could have created after 2012 but won't if we let this credit expire.

I know sometimes I sound like a broken record, but the world is not going to wait for us. Our largest single export today is energy, actually—interestingly enough. That is a very recent occurrence that we became a net exporter of energy. Before that, our single largest export was aircraft. We build the best aircraft in the world. Mr. President, \$30 billion a year is what that export is to the United States.

China's export of solar panels last year was \$15 billion—half our largest single export. They did not export 1 solar panel 10 years ago, and we invented the technology in the United States. In fact, some of us claim we invented it right at home in Colorado.

I am sure China would love to have this business as well or we can get out of our own way and extend the PTC, extend the tax credit, save those jobs, and grow our own clean energy economy.

This is not a partisan issue. I led a letter several months ago, where Republicans and Democrats from the Colorado delegation came together to urge a quick extension as part of the payroll deal. That effort, unfortunately, was not successful, nor were the others we have tried to take in the interim.

Shortly after our letter I filed an amendment—a bipartisan amendment—with the Senator from Kansas, a fully paid-for 1-year extension of the credit. This place has become the land of flickering lights. We extend one thing for a month, we extend another thing for 2 months.

I am very proud of the work we are doing on FDA right now, which is a 5-year reauthorization. But, my goodness, couldn't we extend this for a year to give people some degree of certainty, particularly when it is paid for?

I thank Senator MORAN, Republican from Kansas, for joining me—or for letting me join him—to lead that amendment.

Following that, several colleagues and I have partnered with Senator GRASSLEY and others to write a bill that would extend the credit for 2 years. There is clearly plenty of bipartisan support out there, and I know the people in my State—whether Republicans or Democrats or Independents or not even thinking about that—I know they want us to get this done.

Nearly 7,500 Coloradans have already signed a petition on my Web site supporting the wind production tax credit. I urge others today who are watching this to visit my Web site and please add their name.

I conclude by asking why, when the economic stakes are as high as they are, the Congress cannot get its act together. We need to extend the wind production tax credit, and we need to do it now.



## EQIP AND CSP

Mr. President, I rise to speak on Coburn amendment No. 2353, and I want to be the first to say how much I appreciate the efforts of my colleague from Oklahoma at deficit reduction. In fact, we are currently working together to promote a comprehensive approach to deficit reduction, and I deeply appreciate his leadership, which in many ways has been unparalleled on this issue. However, I have to oppose this particular amendment. I understand we are likely to consider the amendment this afternoon. I urge my colleagues to oppose the amendment by supporting the motion to table.

This amendment will repeal the popular Environmental Quality Incentives Program, EQIP, and the Conservation Stewardship Program, CSP. Both are critical programs authorized under the conservation title of the farm bill.

In Colorado, I have heard time and time again from our farmers and our ranchers how critical these programs are to holding on to their family farm.

EQIP, for example, is on the front lines of agricultural production. It helps farmers ensure that their operations contribute to clean water and clean air in our rural communities. It proactively and successfully addresses new and emerging resource issues to avert the need for regulation—to put our farmers and ranchers in a place where they have less regulation, not more, because of the work they are doing on the ground to conserve their lands.

Let me give you one example from Colorado. EQIP resources have been used to ensure that the sage grouse stays off the endangered species list—a listing that would threaten ranchers all across the West. That is the result of the great work that has been done by farmers and ranchers in Colorado with EQIP.

By providing resources to mark barbed wired fences—making them more visible to the threatened bird—EQIP is working for farmers and ranchers, and it is working well. It is the flagship of voluntary, incentive-based conservation programs, which is a direction I think we should be heading, and a direction we head in this farm bill.

Both EQIP and CSP provide quantifiable benefits that are reflective of the varied conservation challenges all across our country. So I strongly support this new conservation title as we reported it out of the committee in a bipartisan vote.

As I have mentioned, and has been discussed on this bill, this bill is also remarkable for the cuts it makes: \$23.6 billion. To my knowledge, there is not any other committee in the Senate or any committee in the House of Representatives that has actually reached bipartisan agreement and, in this case, bipartisan consensus on budget cuts, which is the way we should be doing business around here because it is what the American people and the people in

Colorado expect from us, particularly on these difficult questions around our deficit and our debt. And \$6.4 billion of those cuts—\$6.4 billion of that \$23 billion—came from the conservation title, not all of which I liked, but we made difficult compromises at the committee level, and we ought not make further cuts on the floor, especially to programs that make smart and effective investments in our rural communities.

So I will oppose, for those reasons, amendment No. 2353 and support the motion to table, and I urge my colleagues from both sides of the aisle to do the same.

Finally, I wish to say thank you to the chairwoman of this committee and the ranking member, DEBBIE STABENOW and PAT ROBERTS, for their extraordinary bipartisan work in getting the bill this far. It is my fervent hope that leadership on both sides reaches an agreement on these amendments so we can move forward and do the right thing for our farmers and ranchers back home in Colorado.

With that, I see my colleague from Connecticut, Senator LIEBERMAN, on the floor. I thank the Presiding Officer for his patience and yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Connecticut.

Mr. LIEBERMAN. I thank the Presiding Officer and my friend from Colorado.

Mr. President, I rise to speak as in morning business.

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

## CYBERSECURITY

Mr. LIEBERMAN. Mr. President, I rise to speak about the urgent need for the Senate to adopt cybersecurity legislation.

I begin by recalling a recent story in the Washington Post that detailed how a young man living an ocean away from us was able to use his computer to hack into the cyber control system of a local water utility here in the United States. It took him just 10 minutes and required no special tools or no special training.

While the hacker could have taken over the water company's operations and caused real damage, instead he posted screen shots of his hack on the Internet to show that he had been there and prove his point that our Nation's Internet security is woefully lax. And it took very little in the way of resources or skill to penetrate it.

This kind of story is but one piece of what I would call an avalanche of evidence showing that there is an urgent need to pass comprehensive cybersecurity legislation that will safeguard our critical cyber infrastructure.

The fact is, as this 22-year-old's activities showed, and as authorities in the area, such as ADM Mike McConnell, the former Director of National Intelligence, have said, the cyber infrastructure which is owned by private entities is simply not adequately defended. And when it is not adequately

defended—and here I am talking about vital national systems: The electric power grid, water companies, transportation systems, pipelines, et cetera, et cetera—when the cyber systems that control them now are not adequately protected, it means our Nation is not adequately protected because a cyber-attack can incapacitate vital national entities that we all depend on every day and, in fact, cause enormous harm and loss of life, as much as a conventional attack by air in earlier confrontations and conflicts.

Yesterday the majority leader came to the floor of the Senate and spoke, I thought, eloquently about the urgency of the Senate adopting cybersecurity legislation. I wanted to come to the floor today to thank Senator REID for that statement and to say, as chairman of the Senate Homeland Security Committee, how strongly I agree with him. Of course, we are not alone.

A few days ago six of our Nation's most experienced national security leaders, spanning the last two-plus administrations, transcending any lines of partisanship, wrote a letter to Senator REID urging him to bring up cybersecurity legislation “as soon as possible.” That is a quote: “as soon as possible.”

In that letter to both—not just to Senator REID, but to Senator McCONNELL, the Republican leader, as well—former Department of Homeland Security Secretary Mike Chertoff from the Bush administration; former Director of National Intelligence, ADM Mike McConnell, whom I referred to, from the Bush administration; former Deputy Defense Secretary Paul Wolfowitz, also from the previous administration; former NSA and CIA Director Mike Hayden, also from the previous administration; former Vice Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, GEN James Cartwright, and former Deputy Defense Secretary Bill Lynn sent this letter—incidentally, to say what is already a matter of public record. In doing so, they express opinions that are quite similar to what we have heard from all the leaders of the current administration when it comes to security—Secretary of Defense Panetta, Director of National Intelligence Clapper, Director of the CIA Petraeus, and so on, and, of course, Secretary Napolitano at the Department of Homeland Security.

I want to read from this letter from these national security leaders because it sums up where we are. I quote now:

Given the time left in this legislative session and the upcoming election this fall, we are concerned that the window of opportunity to pass legislation that is in our view critically necessary to protect our national and economic security is quickly disappearing.

In the letter they went on to say—and I quote again

We—

The signers of the letter—carry the burden of knowing—

Along with a lot of the rest of us—that 9/11 might have been averted with the intelligence that existed at the time. We do

not want to be in the same position again when “cyber 9/11” hits—it is not a question of whether this will happen; it is a question of when.

Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that this letter be printed in the RECORD.

There being no objection, the material was ordered to be printed in the RECORD, as follows:

JUNE 6, 2012.

DEAR SENATORS REID AND MCCONNELL: We write to urge you to bring cyber security legislation to the floor as soon as possible. Given the time left in this legislative session and the upcoming election this fall, we are concerned that the window of opportunity to pass legislation that is in our view critically necessary to protect our national and economic security is quickly disappearing.

We have spoken a number of times in recent months on the cyber threat—that it is imminent, and that it represents one of the most serious challenges to our national security since the onset of the nuclear age sixty years ago. It appears that this message has been received by many in Congress—and yet we still await conclusive legislative action.

We support the areas that have been addressed so far, most recently in the House: the importance of strengthening the security of the federal government’s computer networks, investing in cyber research and development, and fostering information sharing about cyber threats and vulnerabilities across government agencies and with the private sector. We urge the Senate to now keep the ball moving forward in these areas by bringing legislation to the floor as soon as possible.

In addition, we also feel that protection of our critical infrastructure is essential in order to effectively protect our nation, and economic security from the growing cyber threat. Infrastructure that controls our electricity, water and sewer, nuclear plants, communications backbone, energy pipelines and financial networks must be required to meet appropriate cyber security standards. Where market forces and existing regulations have failed to drive appropriate security, we believe that our government must do what it can to ensure the protection of our critical infrastructure. Performance standards in some cases will be necessary—these standards should be technology neutral, and risk and outcome based. We do not believe that this requires the imposition of detailed security regimes in every instance, but some standards must be minimally required or promoted through the offer of positive incentives such as liability protection and availability of clearances.

Various drafts of legislation have attempted to address this important area—the Lieberman/Collins bill having received the most traction until recently. We will not advocate one approach over another—however, we do feel strongly that critical infrastructure protection needs to be addressed in any cyber security legislation. The risk is simply too great considering the reality of our interconnected and interdependent world, and the impact that can result from the failure of even one part of the network across a wide range of physical, economic and social systems.

Finally, we have commented previously about the important role that the National Security Agency (NSA) can and does play in the protection of our country against cyber threats. A piece of malware sent from Asia to the United States could take as little as 30 milliseconds to traverse such distance. Preventing and defending against such attacks requires the ability to respond to them

in real-time. NSA is the only agency dedicated to breaking the codes and understanding the capabilities and intentions of potential enemies, even before they hit “send.” Any legislation passed by Congress should allow the public and private sectors to harness the capabilities of the NSA to protect our critical infrastructure from malicious actors.

We carry the burden of knowing that 9/11 might have been averted with the intelligence that existed at the time. We do not want to be in the same position again when ‘cyber 9/11’ hits—it is not a question of ‘whether’ this will happen; it is a question of ‘when.’

Therefore we urge you to bring cyber security legislation to the floor as soon as possible.

Sincerely,

HON. MICHAEL CHERTOFF,  
HON. J. MIKE MCCONNELL,  
HON. PAUL WOLFOWITZ,  
GEN. MICHAEL HAYDEN,  
GEN. JAMES CARTWRIGHT  
(RET),  
HON. WILLIAM LYNN III.

Mr. LIEBERMAN. The majority leader came to the floor yesterday, as I have said, echoing these sentiments in his floor speech, when he said:

When virtually every intelligence expert says we need to secure the systems that make the lights come on, inaction is not an option.

I could not agree more with Senator REID.

The fact is, the House of Representatives, the so-called other body of Congress, has passed a cybersecurity bill—a package that I think takes some significant initial good steps. I thank the House for that. But I believe the bipartisan Senate Cybersecurity Act of 2012, S. 2105, which is sponsored by Senators COLLINS, FEINSTEIN, ROCKEFELLER, and me, takes the additional necessary steps to secure our cyber systems and, therefore, is preferable.

It is preferable, in large part, because it addresses the need to secure our Nation’s critical cyber infrastructure; that is, the computers that control the systems that, if commandeered, attacked or intruded upon, could allow an attacker to open and close key valves and switches in pipelines for gas and oil and refineries and factories and water and sewer systems and electric plants and banks and along transportation nodes without detection by their operators.

We need to pass this bill or something very much like it so we can go to conference with the House and iron out whatever differences we have this year so we can get legislation to the President’s desk. He has endorsed, I am grateful to say, S. 2105—certainly endorsed the principles that are in it.

We have to do that so we raise our defenses before we are victims of a cyber 9/11. The time remaining to do so in this session is obviously growing shorter. We know the lameduck session will be almost exclusively taken up with difficult questions about the budget, debt, sequester, the expiration of the so-called Bush tax cuts and much more. So we have to act.

I am encouraged by Senator REID’s statement yesterday and my own belief

after conversations with him that the leader is intent on bringing this legislation to the floor in July. The truth is, if we do not take it up in July and see whether we have the votes—and I am confident we will when it comes to the floor—we are not going to be able to pass this legislation that is timely and allows us to go to conference, reach an agreement, and send the bill to the President of the United States for his signature.

When talking about cybersecurity, the biggest threats we all know come from other nations, nation states, also nonstate actors such as terrorists and organized crime syndicates. But this young man I referred to at the beginning of my statement and his ability to quite easily penetrate the cyber control system of a local water company in the United States shows us that an attack can come from just about anywhere and from just about anywhere.

According to the Washington Post story, “This individual who goes by the name prOf is a bright unemployed 22 year old who favors hoodie sweatshirts and lives in his parent’s home somewhere overseas.”

But this good guy, white-hat hacker, knows the risks our Nation is facing. He told the Post:

Eventually, somebody will get access to a major system and people will be hurt. It is just a matter of time.

That is the truth. Six of our Nation’s premier equity security experts are in agreement with this 22-year-old hacker as they said in their letter: It is just a matter of time. We have to act before that time comes. To my colleagues who have concerns about the Cyber Security Act of 2011, the Collins-Feinstein-Rockefeller-Lieberman legislation, I say: Come on and work with us. We can and must resolve our differences. In fact, around some of the major areas of discussion, controversy, the section of our bill that has performance requirements for private sector entities that own the most critical infrastructure which, if attacked, could cause mass deaths, casualties, catastrophic economic loss, and a denigration of our national security, those are—and then the other section being the information-sharing section, where some people have civil liberties or privacy concerns, there is a good-faith effort going on to resolve those differences because, I think increasingly, Members of the Senate on both sides, just reacting to the facts, are worried this is a real and present danger to our security.

Perhaps the most real and present immediate danger of a massive attack on our homeland that exists today is by cyber attack. I do not think any of us wants to look back and say: Why did we not act before we were attacked? Therefore, I am encouraged by these deliberations. But I say to anybody else who has concerns about our bill, Members of the Senate, please be in touch with Senators COLLINS, FEINSTEIN, ROCKEFELLER or myself.

If we cannot resolve our differences, then draft amendments and let's debate them on the floor and have up-or-down votes and let the Senate work its will. As Senator REID said in his remarks yesterday:

Everybody knows this Congress cannot pass laws that do not have broad bipartisan support. So we are going to need to work together on a bill that addresses the concerns of lawmakers on both sides of the aisle.

That time is coming soon, I am confident to say, based on my conversations with the majority leader. That time is coming soon on the floor of the Senate, but we have to start now to make sure we are ready when the bill comes to the Senate floor. I guarantee that one day in the near future, if we do not pass comprehensive cybersecurity legislation, and there is a serious and significant cyberspace attack on us, we will rush to pass it and that will be too late and we will not do it in a thoughtful way.

Time grows short while the threat keeps swelling. What if the next 22-year-old who decides to take over a water plant or an oil or gas pipeline or an electric powerplant decides to make a more convincing demonstration than just posting screen pictures online? If a 22-year-old can do this, think what an enemy nation with a significant amount of money and personnel and training behind it could do to us if we are not adequately defended?

I say to my colleagues on both sides of the aisle, because this is not a partisan issue at all, this is a national security-homeland security issue: Let's get to work. Let's get ready for the floor debate on cybersecurity that I am confident is coming soon. Then let's pass this urgently needed legislation for the sake of both our national and economic security.

I yield the floor and I suggest the absence of a quorum.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will call the roll.

The bill clerk proceeded to call the roll.

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

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Ms. KLOBUCHAR). Without objection, it is so ordered.

Mr. WYDEN. Madam President, I ask unanimous consent to speak as in morning business for up to 20 minutes.

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

#### STRENGTHENING AGRICULTURAL PRODUCTION

Mr. WYDEN. Madam President, I am going to take a few minutes to outline the amendments I plan to offer on the farm bill. In beginning, I particularly want to commend the chair of the committee, Senator STABENOW, and Senator ROBERTS. I think we all understand that if you want to tackle a big issue, an important issue, you have to find a way to come to something resembling common ground.

This bill is especially important. This is a jobs bill at a time when our

country needs good-paying jobs. It is an extraordinarily important health bill, particularly one with great implications for how America tackles the issue of obesity. It is an environmental bill because it has great implications for conservation. And, of course, it has extraordinary impact on rural communities—rural communities that are hurting right now.

The amendments I am going to be offering on the farm bill address those major concerns, and those concerns are particularly important to my State. My State does a lot of things well, but what we do best is we grow things. We grow things, add value to them, and ship them somewhere. We grow lots and lots of things—hundreds of crops, wonderful fruit and vegetables. We want to have a chance to grow this part of our economy. It is a \$5 billion economy for the State of Oregon, and one we want to strengthen in the days ahead.

The first amendment I will be offering on the farm bill addresses the Farm to School Program. Schools all across the country purchase produce—pears, cherries, tomatoes, and lettuce—from Department of Agriculture warehouses. In some cases, the warehouses may be hundreds and hundreds of miles away. There are schools, however, that wish to source their fruits and vegetables locally. There are producers who wish to sell their goods to local schools.

You don't have to be a fancy economist, but that sounds like a market to me. The Congress ought to enable this market, not make it more difficult for this market to function. I spent a lot of time in rural Oregon over the last few months. As I have previously indicated, Harry & David, a producer in my home State—and a lot of Senators have gotten their wonderful products over the years as holiday gifts—wants to sell their wonderful pears to the school down the street. In attempting to do so, Harry & David has been met with a real maze, a welter of odd Federal rules, that has prevented them from doing so.

It should not be bureaucratic water torture for a local producer to sell to a nearby school. It is getting at that kind of bureaucracy and redtape that my Farm to School amendment seeks to address. As of now, Federal agriculture policy seems to be dishing out a diet of paperwork, process, and limited options, when we ought to be promoting innovation and getting away from this sort of one-size-fits-all approach.

My Farm to School amendment would allow for at least five Farm to School projects across the country, where States like mine that are innovative, have established and proven Farm to School programs in place, would be able to source healthy, quality produce rather than buy it from one of these faraway Federal warehouses.

Under this kind of approach, with this crucial program, the schools are

going to win, our farmers are going to win, and our kids will be able to enjoy delicious local produce every day with this particular amendment.

The second amendment I plan to offer also encourages healthier eating. This one deals with the SNAP program—the program formerly known as Food Stamps. As the occupant of the chair knows, this program represents a substantial amount of the funding for the farm bill—over \$70 billion. There are 700,000 SNAP recipients in my home State of Oregon. For too many Oregonians, this program is the only thing that stands between them and hunger.

I have said it on this floor before, and I want to say it again: I am not in favor of cutting these benefits; quite the contrary. I think Senator GILLIBRAND has an excellent amendment to ensure that that doesn't take place. I hope she will win support in the Senate for it. We should not have, in a country as rich and strong as ours, this many Americans going to bed at night hungry and trying to dig themselves out of the great recession at the same time. So I am not in favor of cutting SNAP benefits, but I am in favor of incentivizing this program to make it possible for those of modest incomes to get healthier, more nutritious foods, especially in light of the growing obesity epidemic our country faces.

What troubles me is that, in one sense, the Food Stamp Program, the SNAP program, is something of a conveyor belt for calories. It essentially says all of the various food products are equal. At a time when we see such extraordinary rates of obesity, particularly for low-income children and low-income women, I only hope we can look at ways to create incentives for healthier eating.

I am not in favor of setting up some kind of Federal policy that starts dictating from Washington, DC, what folks who are using the SNAP program can eat. I am not interested in some kind of national nanny program, or something that says you can't eat this or that. What I am proposing is that here in the Senate, we look at ways, particularly when you are talking about \$70 billion of Federal nutrition spending, to at least promote healthier eating wherever possible, and the increased consumption of healthy fruits and vegetables.

Studies by the Centers for Disease Control show that low-income women and children—those most likely to receive SNAP benefits—are more likely to be obese than higher income women and children. What I am proposing with this amendment is giving the States some flexibility to try out ways to make SNAP benefits a launch pad for better nutrition, rather than, as I characterized it earlier, a conveyor belt for calories.

What I wish—and I know the Chair hails from a State with a substantial amount of agriculture—is to see farmers, retailers, health specialists, and

those who rely on the SNAP program, to get together and find a consensus—some common ground—on a way to wring more nutritional value out of those SNAP benefits.

In Oregon, we have tried this idea out. Those in the retail community, farmers and anti-hunger groups got together, and this group thinks they can do more to improve nutritional outcomes under this very large program.

The amendment makes clear that you could not get a waiver to reduce eligibility, or reduce the amount of benefits that someone on the SNAP program receives. But you could, for example, try various approaches to promote nutritional eating. A State could encourage SNAP recipients to purchase more fruits and vegetables by partnering with grocery stores or other food sellers to provide coupons to enable SNAP recipients to purchase extra or discounted fruits and vegetables. There are now programs that allow SNAP benefits to be exchanged at farmers markets for coupons that produce \$2 worth of produce for \$1 of SNAP benefits. The cost of the extra produce is paid for using non-federal funds. A State waiver could enable this type of program, for example, to be expanded beyond farmers markets.

There is a host of innovative proposals, in my view, that could improve public health and increase the consumption of healthy food. I hope as we go forward toward the conclusion of this legislation in the Senate, we can look at ways to accept the proposition that not all of the wisdom resides in Washington, DC, particularly when we are seeing these skyrocketing rates of obesity, tragically with special implications for low-income women and children. I think there are better ways to proceed. This amendment empowers States to have that opportunity.

The third amendment I am going to offer, I have not spoken about on the floor to date, and I wish to take just a minute to describe what this amendment deals with. It is an amendment I plan to offer that addresses the issue of industrial hemp farming. It is cosponsored by Senator RAND PAUL and is identical to legislation in the House, which has 33 bipartisan cosponsors.

This is, in my view, a textbook example of a regulation that flunks the commonsense test. There is government regulation on the books that prevents America's farmers from growing industrial hemp. What is worse, this regulation is hurting job creation in rural America and increasing our trade deficit. When my colleagues get more information about this outlandish, outrageous restriction on free enterprise, I think most of them are going to agree the restriction on industrial hemp is the poster child for dumb regulations. The only thing standing in the way of taking advantage of this profitable crop is a lingering misunderstanding about its use. The amendment I have filed on this issue will end a ridiculous regulation once and for all.

Right now, the United States is importing over ten-million of dollars of hemp products to use in paper products, construction materials, textiles, and a variety of other goods. We are importing a crop that U.S. farmers could be profitably growing right here at home if not for government rules prohibiting it.

Our neighbors to the north can see the potential for this product. In 2010, the Canadian Government injected over \$700,000 into their blossoming hemp industry to increase the size of their hemp crop and fortify the inroads they're making in U.S. markets, at the expense of our farmers. It was a very good bet. U.S. imports of hemp products have consistently grown over the past decade, increasing by 300 percent in 10 years. From 2009 to 2010, they grew 35 percent. The number of acres in Canada devoted to growing industrial hemp nearly doubled from 2011 to 2012.

I know there are going to be Members of Congress, and others who are listening to this, who are going to say all this talk about hemp is basically talk about marijuana. The fact is, while they come from the same species of plant, there are major differences between them. They have different harvest times, they're different heights, and the cultivation techniques are markedly different. And when we recognize those differences, we'll be able to focus on the benefits from producing domestically the hemp we already use.

Under this amendment, the production of hemp would still be regulated, but it would be done by the States through permitting programs, not the Federal Government. Nine States have already put legislation in place to provide for a permitting system that enforces the prohibition on marijuana and ensures that industrial hemp maintains a very low THC level—under 0.3 percent. The lowest-grade marijuana typically has 5 percent THC content. The bottom line is no one is going to get high on industrial hemp.

Hemp has been a profitable commodity in a number of countries. In addition to Canada, Australia also permits hemp production, and the growth in that sector helped their agricultural base survive when the tobacco industry dried up. Over 30 countries in Europe, Asia and North and South America currently permit farmers to grow hemp, and China is the world's largest producer. In fact, our country is the only industrialized nation that prohibits farmers from growing hemp.

Oregon is home to some of the major manufacturers of hemp products, including Living Harvest, one of the largest hemp food producers in our country. Business has been so brisk there that the Portland Business Journal recently rated them as one of the fastest growing local companies.

There are similar success stories in other States. One company in North Carolina has been incorporating hemp into building materials, reportedly making them both stronger and more

environmentally friendly. Another company in California produces hemp-based fiberboard.

No country is better than ours at developing, perfecting, and expanding markets for our products. As the market grows, it ought to be domestically produced hemp that supplies that growth.

I would like to close on this topic with a couple statements by one of the leading newspapers in my State, The Bulletin. I think it would be fair to say The Bulletin would not cite itself as one of the first places one ought to look for left-wing thinking, and here is what they had to say with respect to my amendment, which they encouraged support for:

... producers of hemp products in the United States are forced to import it. That denies American farmers the opportunity to compete in the market. It's like surrendering the competitive edge to China and Canada, where it can be grown legally.

The editorial then goes on to say:

Legalizing industrial hemp does not have to be a slippery slope towards legalizing marijuana. It can be a step toward removing regulatory burdens limiting Oregon farmers from competing in the world market.

I ask unanimous consent to have printed in the RECORD a copy of the editorial from The Bulletin.

There being no objection, the material was ordered to be printed in the RECORD, as follows:

[From the Bulletin Staff, June 9, 2012]

U.S. SHOULD LEGALIZE INDUSTRIAL HEMP  
(Editorial)

U.S. Sen. Ron Wyden, D-Ore., has introduced a change to the farm bill to remove the federal prohibition on growing industrial hemp. Wyden's change would put an end to an unnecessary ban.

The Oregon Legislature authorized the growing of industrial hemp in 2009, but federal law still blocks hemp as an illegal crop.

Why? Federal policy does not distinguish between the varieties of cannabis. Some are good for oilseed and fiber. Some are better for smoking to get high.

Yes, both do contain the hallucinogenic compound delta-9 tetrahydrocannabinol (THC). Industrial hemp is low in it. Marijuana is high in it.

That doesn't mean the country should ban growing all of it.

Industrial hemp is versatile and can grow like crazy. It can be used for paper, clothes, rope. The seed oil can be used for a variety of things: food, paint, pharmaceuticals and more.

It's already used in Oregon and across the country. But producers of hemp products in the United States are forced to import it. That denies American farmers the opportunity to compete in the market. It's like surrendering the competitive edge to China and Canada, where it can be grown legally.

There are concerns about what legalizing hemp would mean. Would it be another headache for law enforcement?

One way to solve that, if it's a problem, is to require industrial hemp fields to be licensed and require random testing to ensure the crop is low in THC. Oregon's law said the state could seize crops that had a THC level higher than 0.3 percent.

Legalizing industrial hemp does not have to be a slippery slope toward legalizing marijuana. It can be a start toward removing regulatory burdens limiting Oregon farmers from competing in the world market.

Mr. WYDEN. Madam President, if this farm bill is about empowering farmers and increasing rural jobs, let's give them the tools they need to get the job done. Let's boost revenue for farmers and reduce the overhead costs for the businesses around the country that use this product. And let's put more people to work growing and processing an environmentally friendly crop with a ready market in the United States.

For all the reasons I have described, I will be urging my colleagues to support this amendment so the law can be changed and farmers are not prevented from growing a profitable crop in the future.

Even though my amendment is about growing a crop and should be clearly relevant to the farm bill, it may be blocked from getting a vote because of the Senate rules on what amendments are allowed to be offered once cloture is invoked on the bill. If I get the opportunity, I am going to bring this amendment up through the regular order. But if cloture is invoked and my amendment is not allowed, I want colleagues to know I will be back at this again until there are smarter regulations in place for industrial hemp.

In closing, let me say I don't think we can overstate the importance of the best possible farm bill. Senator STABENOW and Senator ROBERTS have, in my view, done yeomen's work in trying to build a bipartisan approach. The question now is can we use the amendment process to improve on the kind of bipartisan effort they brought to the floor.

Each of the areas I have described this afternoon—improving the Farm to School program, wringing more value and better nutritional outcomes from the SNAP program, and helping a promising hemp industry—give us a chance to attain the objectives of what I have described as the best possible farm bill, and we can do this all without spending one single dime of additional taxpayer money—not a dime of additional taxpayer money. It is my hope we can take the good work that has already been done by Senators STABENOW and ROBERTS and build on that. I hope the Senate will support the three amendments I have described this afternoon.

With that, I yield the floor, and I suggest the absence of a quorum.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will call the roll.

The bill clerk proceeded to call the roll.

Ms. STABENOW. Madam President, I ask unanimous consent that the order for the quorum call be rescinded.

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

Ms. STABENOW. Madam President, first, let me thank all of our colleagues who are working with us as we move forward in putting together a package of amendments to be voted on here in the Senate. I want to thank everyone—of course my ranking member, Senator

ROBERTS, but also people on both sides who are working together in good faith as we move through this process.

This morning, we did have two votes, and in the next little while we will have two more. And I do want to speak to one of those but also to just indicate again to all of our colleagues how important it is to farmers and ranchers, families, and rural communities across America that we come together and pass this farm bill.

Sixteen million people have jobs related to agriculture. I am not sure there is any one single piece of legislation we have had in front of us that actually impacted 16 million people like this one. Of course, we are very proud of the way we have come together in a bipartisan way to propose something that actually cuts the deficit by over \$23 billion and creates real reforms that taxpayers and farmers have asked for, while strengthening our risk-management tools for agriculture, conservation, other jobs efforts, certainly rural development, alternative energy, and certainly our support for families with their own personal disaster when it comes to putting food on the table during an economic downturn for them.

I want to specifically take a moment, though, to speak and urge my colleagues to vote yes on a motion to table Coburn amendment No. 2353, which would repeal two of the most successful conservation programs in the history of our country, the Environmental Quality Incentives Program, which we all call EQIP, and the Conservation Stewardship Program.

EQIP is on the front lines of production agriculture, helping farmers comply with regulatory pressures, and it has been very effective. It is the cornerstone of our country's commitment to voluntary, incentive-based conservation—voluntary—working with farmers, working with ranchers in a voluntary way, to partner with them to be able to provide ways to tackle environmental issues we all care about.

I would underscore the fact that what we call the farm bill is actually the largest investment we as a country make in conservation of land, air, and water on working lands—lands that are owned by the private sector, partnering, because we all have a stake in runoff and clean water issues and erosion issues and all of the other things that relate to protecting our wildlife and our wetlands for not only habitats but also for our hunters and fishermen and all of the other issues around which we celebrate what we have been able to do around conservation in this country.

EQIP really is a cornerstone of our commitment to a voluntary incentive-based conservation program. It provides a cost share to farmers to implement practices that have been absolutely proven to work to benefit our country's soil, air, and water resources.

This last year the Environmental Quality Incentive Program entered

into 38,000 contracts with farmers and ranchers all across America, covering 13 million acres of land. EQIP has a number of incredible stories across the country—in Louisiana, helping farmers recover from Hurricane Katrina; in Oklahoma, helping producers implement best management practices to reduce sediment in the Mission Creek, improving water quality, helping restore fish populations. In Michigan, they have helped farmers struggling with bovine TB protect their herds and livelihoods.

So this is one of two critical conservation programs that would be repealed by this amendment. The other one is the Conservation Stewardship Program. This encourages higher levels of conservation across agricultural operations as well as the adoption of new and emerging conservation practices. CSP encourages producers to address resource concerns by undertaking additional conservation activities and improving and maintaining their current activities. And they focus on seven resource concerns as well as energy—soil quality, soil erosion, water quality, water quantity, air quality, plant resources, and animal resources—all things important not only for our farmers and ranchers but to all of us—every community, every State, all of us in the country.

This program is extremely popular. It has been very successful. This year producers enrolled 12 million acres in the program, and this brings the total to 49 million acres across the country that now have conservation practices as a result of the CSP. It provides conservation bankers with more acres than any other conservation program in the country. I strongly urge we table this amendment. I ask for a "yes" vote in tabling the amendment.

I would like to talk a little bit more about what we have done in a positive way in the conservation title. One of the areas of this bill I am most proud of is the work that has been done with conservation and environmental groups all across the country—in fact, we have 643 conservation and environmental groups that have said this is the right approach.

In tough economic times, when we know we do not have additional dollars, we took a look at every single page, every single program. There are 23 different programs in conservation. Every time somebody had a good idea, a program got added rather than looking at duplication, redundancy, how we can streamline and make it better for farmers, communities, better for ranchers, make it simpler and more understandable. So we decided to go back and do what every taxpayer and every citizen has asked us to do; that is, streamline, make more accountability, cut the paperwork, make things work better.

We do support flexibility. We support locally led ground-up voluntary efforts.

We increase transparency and accountability, we streamline, consolidate programs, help farmers comply with regulatory pressures, and we basically have come together. We have taken 23 different programs down to 13 and put them in three different areas and created a lot of flexibility. We want to stretch the dollars even further in four areas: working lands, easements, conservation reserve programs, and regional partnerships, which are so important to so many of us.

All across the country family farms are passed down to children, grandchildren, and great-grandchildren. Our rapidly growing population demands our farmers and ranchers double their production over the next few decades and use fewer acres to do it, so innovation in farming is absolutely critical. But no amount of technology can make up for degraded soil or polluted water.

The farm bill's conservation programs help our producers meet their challenges and the country's challenges, ensuring that we have a safe, abundant food supply, clean water, and thriving wildlife populations for many generations to come.

It is wonderful to see the partnerships that are going on all across Michigan, all across the country. Many farmers take advantage of these voluntary, incentive-based conservation programs. In our Great Lakes region alone—I would say not only Michigan but our Presiding Officer from Minnesota certainly cares as well. We championed together so many times on the Great Lakes initiative. But in the Great Lakes region alone farmers use one form of conservation on 95 percent of the acres. On 95 percent of the acres we have conservation going on.

As we look at streamlining from 23 to 13 programs, making them more flexible and so on, we actually have been able to achieve savings of \$6 billion while maintaining conservation functions, and I would argue strengthening their effectiveness as well while cutting the dollars. Nationally, there are 357 million acres of cropland, 406 million acres of forest land, 119 million acres of pasture land, and 409 million acres of rangeland under private ownership in the United States. That is a lot of land, and all of that is impacted by what we do in the conservation title of the farm bill.

We also know the challenges my farmers face in Michigan are different than those in Kansas or Oklahoma or Minnesota or Montana. We have built in enough flexibility in this new title, modernizing it, reforming it, creating flexibility to be able to meet very different needs across the country. I will briefly go through each area. We are focusing, as I said, on four different areas.

Working lands, where we have two programs that are proposed to be eliminated right now, the Environmental Quality Incentives Program, which I spoke about, and CSP is in the working lands title. We also include the con-

servations innovation grants, which are geared to projects that offer new approaches to providing producers environmental and production benefits. Again, we look for ways to support efforts that have not been receiving ongoing funding through the past bill to be able to continue and have greater flexibility in a number of different programs.

One is critical, I believe, for America's sportsmen and sportswomen; that is, access to good recreational land. I know that is very important to my State of Michigan, very important to my family.

The Voluntary Public Access and Wildlife Incentives Program encourages farmers to open their land for recreational uses—hunting, fishing, bird-watching. Right now, 26 States are taking advantage of the program, and we continue that in the bill, which is very important.

Our second area is on easements. There are three existing conservation easement programs. We are putting them into one to protect our lands from development and keep them devoted to agricultural use as well as to keep the land for grazing. Wetland easements restore, protect, and enhance wetlands which are important to water quality, quantity, and wildlife habitat in many areas also.

We are focusing on long-term land protection. Over the last 20 years the Wetlands Reserve Program helped more than 11,000 private landowners voluntarily restore, protect, and enhance wetlands and wildlife habitat. So we are very pleased all of this is in the bill as well.

The Conservation Reserve Program has been very successful. From 2006 to 2010 the USDA estimates the Conservation Reserve Program was responsible for reducing 1.09 billion tons of sediment, 3.1 billion metric tons of nitrogen, and 613 million pounds of phosphorus from going into our waters—that is an accomplishment—from going into our Great Lakes, into our oceans, into our rivers, into our streams. These are the main contributors to many of the water quality issues we face as a country.

During the same time period, USDA estimates the Conservation Reserve Program contributed 284 million metric tons of greenhouse gas reduction. It is reducing CO<sub>2</sub>. I would say it is equivalent to taking 55 million cars off the road for a year. Coming from the car State, I appreciate CRP doing that. We want to be able to continue to drive our automobiles, and we are proud of what we are doing around automobiles, but can you imagine that this program alone has taken enough CO<sub>2</sub> out of the atmosphere to equate to 55 million cars being taken off the roads?

As of 2011, CRP was enrolling just under the acreage cap of 32 million. Over the next couple of years, over 15 million acres are set to expire. We recognize not all of those will be re-enrolled, but we want to make sure

there is adequate room to reenroll the most sensitive acres.

As an example of the effectiveness of CRP, last year parts of Oklahoma—I have a special affinity for Oklahoma. My mother was born in Oklahoma. My grandparents' family has lived there all their lives. I am very familiar with that State. Parts of Oklahoma experienced drought worse than the Dust Bowl era of the 1930s. But we did not see dust storms like the 1930s because the voluntary conservation efforts—of the CRP in particular—worked to reduce soil erosion and keep the soil where it was supposed to be, which is on the ground.

There are huge successes we have seen because our country has made an investment in protecting our precious land and water and air. We also have established a new program called the Regional Conservation Partnerships Program which consolidates four very effective regional partnerships into one. I am very pleased we have been able to do this. There is great significance for Members in all parts of the country. We consolidate the Cooperative Conservation Partnership Initiative, the Agricultural Water Enhancement Program, the Chesapeake Bay Watershed Initiative, and the Great Lakes Water Erosion Sediment Program. This exemplifies many of the principles of this title.

We focus on conservation efforts that are locally led, that are voluntary, and we create more flexibility and transparency for reporting as well as making sure we have adequate resources. When we were talking to producers and a variety of partner organizations, nonprofits—again, hunters, fishermen, other organizations—they were very excited about this new regional partnership title as a section. We appreciate all of the input and the support we have received to be able to make this effective.

Let me just say in conclusion that we have a conservation title that is supported in terms of its approach by almost 650 different conservation and environmental groups all across America in every 1 of the 50 States. They have sent a strong message. They worked with us. They know times are tight. They knew we had to create savings, we had to reduce dollars, but we had to make sure we had enough flexibility to do the job people across our country want to see done in protecting our lands, our water, and our air.

This has been achieved with a tremendous amount of hard work on the part of many people. I am grateful for the work of our committee and many others. I appreciate our subcommittee chairman MICHAEL BENNET, who has been deeply involved in this as well, and the Presiding Officer from Minnesota as well. We have many people who feel very strongly. Our chairman of the Finance Committee who was on the Senate floor earlier speaking about this is another true champion around conservation. There were so many people in our committee.

I could go on and on about this, and on both sides of the aisle I might add, but if I start naming people I will probably get in trouble for missing someone. But we have strong people, strong advocates on both sides of the aisle.

I thank everybody for their wonderful work on this conservation title. I think it is an example of the great work that has been done in putting the bill together. Again, I urge colleagues to vote yes to table the Coburn amendment and the additional amendment I will talk about at another point that will be coming before us, and continue to work with us as we bring together the path forward to completing this very important bill that affects 16 million American jobs.

I yield the floor.

I suggest the absence of a quorum.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will call the roll.

The legislative clerk proceeded to call the roll.

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

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Mr. BENNET). Without objection, it is so ordered.

#### SEXUAL ASSAULT IN THE MILITARY

Mr. BROWN of Massachusetts. Mr. President, I rise to speak about something very serious, which is the issue of sexual assault in the military, and in support of the Shaheen amendment which I cosponsored in the Senate Armed Services Committee markup. Today, I wrote a letter to the House majority leadership expressing my concern for this issue and asking that it be addressed immediately.

The Senate Armed Services Committee recently considered and passed the National Defense Authorization Act for Fiscal Year 2013, and it awaits full consideration of the Senate.

As we all know, our troops need the tools and resources to complete their mission. It is imperative that it gets brought up right away.

As a member of the committee, I joined with members of both sides of the aisle in supporting this amendment which would ensure that women who serve in our Armed Forces and their families are provided access to abortion services in cases of rape or incest.

Sadly, sexual assault of women servicemembers has been recently exposed as far more prevalent than anyone previously thought. As a matter of fact, the Pentagon believes such crimes are vastly underreported. There is evidence that there are as many as 19,000 assaults that are committed every year. That is as many as 50 each day.

Furthermore, women are serving in harm's way—we know that—and they are often in dangerous locations without access to safe, nonmilitary health services. Given their courageous service, they deserve our care and protection, put quite simply.

The language of the amendment is consistent with the longstanding Hyde

amendment, which prevents Federal funding for abortions, except for the victims of rape or incest or when the life of the mother is at stake.

It is a simple issue: Those who are serving in harm's way who are victims of such horrific crimes should be afforded the same rights as citizens they protect and who rely on Federal funding for their health care.

Our amendment passed 16 to 10 on a bipartisan basis, as I referenced earlier, in committee, and I will continue to work with my colleagues to ensure it remains included in the version that passes the full Senate.

As I said, unfortunately, the House Armed Services Committee did not include a similar provision in their version of the bill, and I am not quite sure why.

I urge the House Members to think about the real-world implications of their actions and not block this legislation. I hope we can work together, in a truly bipartisan and bicameral basis, to ensure that our amendment language becomes law so the President may sign it as such.

Extending these provisions to our military servicewomen is the right thing to do.

I thank the Presiding Officer and yield the floor.

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

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

Mr. DURBIN. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent to speak as in morning business.

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

#### DREAM ACT

Mr. DURBIN. On June 15, 1982, 30 years ago, the U.S. Supreme Court handed down a landmark decision, *Plyler v. Doe*. In 1975, the State of Texas had passed a law that allowed public schools to refuse admission to children who were undocumented. The law also withheld State funds from local school districts if they were to be used for education of undocumented kids.

In the *Plyler* case, the Court struck down the Texas law and held that it is unconstitutional to deny public education to children on the basis of their immigration status. Justice William Brennan, who authored the opinion, wrote: "By denying these children a basic education, we deny them the ability to live within the structure of our civic institutions and foreclose any realistic possibility that they will contribute in even the smallest way to the progress of our nation."

The year was 1982. In the 30 years since *Plyler v. Doe* was decided, millions of immigrant children have received an education and become con-

tributing members to America and society. They are today's doctors, soldiers, teachers, engineers, and they make us a better nation.

But since it was decided, *Plyler* has been under attack from anti-immigration forces. On the very day the decision was announced, there was a lawyer at the Justice Department who wrote a memo criticizing his superiors for not arguing support of this Texas law that was stricken by the Court.

Keep in mind at the time *Plyler* was decided, the Justice Department was not under the control of a Democratic President; Ronald Reagan was President. Who was the Justice Department lawyer criticizing the Reagan administration for not being tough enough on immigrant children? His name was John Roberts.

Twenty-three years later, in 2005, he was nominated to be Chief Justice of the Supreme Court. During his confirmation hearing, Chief Justice Roberts said he would not vote to overturn cases that are "well-settled law." For example, he said *Brown v. Board of Education*, the Supreme Court decision that ordered desegregation of schools, was also well-settled law.

*Plyler v. Doe* is often called the *Brown v. Board of Education* of the immigrants in America. But when I asked John Roberts whether he considered *Plyler* to be well-settled law, he refused to answer my question. Over the years, there have been attempts to pass Federal legislation overturning this Supreme Court decision.

In 1996, Congress was considering a bill to restrict illegal immigrants. Representative ELTON GALLEGLY, a Republican from California, offered an amendment to overturn *Plyler v. Doe* and permit States to bar undocumented children from public schools. At the time, I was in the House. I voted against the Gallegly amendment and so did most of the Democrats.

But most Republicans voted for it and it passed. President Clinton threatened a veto if the Gallegly amendment was included in the final version of the immigration bill. The amendment was also opposed by a bipartisan group of Senators, including the late great Senator Ted Kennedy and our colleague, Senator KAY BAILEY HUTCHISON of Texas.

As a result of this opposition, the Gallegly amendment was dropped from the final version of the bill. The latest threat to *Plyler v. Doe* is a spate of State laws targeting legal and illegal immigrants. On June 9, 2011, 1 year ago this week, Alabama Gov. Robert Bentley signed into law H.B. 56, the strictest immigration law in the country.

Under Alabama law H.B. 56, it is a crime for a legal immigrant to fail to carry documents proving his or her legal status at all times. Police officers in Alabama are required to check the immigration status of any individual if they have "reasonable suspicion that he or she is undocumented."

I am especially concerned about the provisions of the Alabama law that involve schools in enforcing immigration laws. For example, in Alabama, schools must check the immigration status of every student and report that information to the State. Schools are authorized to report students and parents they believe to be undocumented to the Federal Government.

Last year, the U.S. Justice Department and the U.S. Department of Education sent a letter to every school district in the country warning that enrollment practices that discourage students from attending school could violate Federal civil rights law. The letter reminded school districts of their obligation to provide access to undocumented students under the Supreme Court's decision in *Plyler v. Doe*.

Supporters of the Alabama law argue it does not prohibit immigrant children from attending public schools. But involving schools in enforcing immigration laws will clearly discourage immigrant children from attending. Last month, Tom Perez, the head of the Justice Department's Civil Rights Division, sent a letter to the Alabama Superintendent of Education about their department's investigation of Alabama's H.B. 56.

Mr. Perez said the Justice Department has concluded that "in the immediate aftermath of [H.B. 56's] implementation, Hispanic student absence rates tripled, while absence rates for other groups of students remained virtually flat" and "the rate of total withdrawals of Hispanic children substantially increased" to 13.4 percent of all Hispanic students in Alabama schools.

Mr. Perez also said: "Hispanic children reported increased anxiety, diminished concentration in school, deteriorating grades, and increased hostility, bullying, and intimidation."

The author of the education provision of the Alabama law has made it clear his real goal is to overturn *Plyler v. Doe*. If this challenge should make it to the Supreme Court, it could find a receptive audience in the Chief Justice, who criticized *Plyler v. Doe* when it was decided and refused to say it was well-settled law when he appeared before the Senate Judiciary Committee.

I think this is the wrong approach for America. Instead of challenging *Plyler v. Doe*, we should be building on its legacy. Eleven years ago, I introduced the DREAM Act—11 years. The DREAM Act is a bill that would give a select group of immigrant students who grew up in America the chance to earn their way to legal status if they do one of two things: serve in America's military or at least complete 2 years of college in good standing.

These young people were brought to the United States as children. I am sure the Presiding Officer knows many of them in his home State. They grew up in this country and, thanks to *Plyler v. Doe*, they got a chance to go to school here. They are the valedic-

torians and ROTC leaders in many schools.

It wasn't their decision to come to this country. They were kids when the decision was made, and their parents made the decision. The fundamental premise of the DREAM Act is that we should not punish kids for any wrongdoing by their parents. That isn't the American way. As Senator MARCO RUBIO has said, just because the parents got it wrong, we should not hold it against the kids.

As Justice Brennan said in *Plyler v. Doe*, "legislation directing the onus of a parent's misconduct against his children does not comport with fundamental conceptions of justice."

The DREAM Act isn't just the right thing to do, it is the right thing to do for America. It would help our economy by giving these talented immigrants a chance to become tomorrow's engineers, entrepreneurs, small business owners, teachers, and doctors.

The DREAM Act would strengthen America's national security by giving thousands of highly qualified, well-educated young people a chance to serve in America's Armed Forces. It is one of the greatest levelers in America. When we decided to integrate the Armed Forces under President Harry Truman, we set the stage for the civil rights revolution in this country. When men and women in the military were recognized for their inherent worth and commitment to this Nation rather than the color of their skin, it set a standard that now guides our Nation.

Almost every week I do my best to come to the floor to tell a story of one of these young people who would qualify for the DREAM Act. Today I will tell you about Al Okere. Al was born in Nigeria in 1990. In 1991, Al's father was killed by the Nigerian police after he wrote newspaper columns criticizing the Nigerian Government. The killing of Al's father was documented in the State Department's annual human rights report.

In 1995, Al's mother fled Nigeria and brought her 5-year-old boy Al to the United States. Al's mother, because of the murder or killing of her husband, applied for asylum, but her application was denied and she was deported in 2005, when Al was 15—after 10 years in the United States.

Today Al is 21 years of age. He lived in the State of Washington. His mother's sister, who is a U.S. citizen, is Al's legal guardian and has raised him since Al's mother was deported.

Al graduated from Rogers High School, near Tacoma, WA. He is currently attending Central Washington University, where he is an honors student with a 3.5 grade point average. He is an avid basketball and football player. He is an active volunteer in his community. For example, he recently headed up a fundraising drive for the Hope Children's Hospital.

I ask a lot of these "dreamers" to send me letters about their view of the United States and their hope for the future. He wrote this:

I have been in accelerated academic programs most of my educational life and hope to be a medical doctor some day, to contribute to the well-being of fellow humans. I hope to continue to emulate and walk in the great academic shoes of my late father, who earned a Ph.D degree from a university in Paris, France. My family and community support has been enormous and it gives me zeal to work hard in my studies, to be able to lend a hand to others in need, to realize a bright future.

Unfortunately, Al has been placed in deportation proceedings. Under our immigration law, his aunt, who is a U.S. citizen and his legal guardian, can't sponsor him for citizenship.

Al Okere grew up in America. He has never committed a crime. We have already invested in him. He has received his entire education, from kindergarten through college, in the United States. He didn't get any financial help in going to college from the Federal Government. He borrowed for that because he is undocumented. He had to find other sources and work his way through college. But he made it. He has a great potential to contribute to America. He doesn't remember a thing about Nigeria, and he doesn't speak their native language. Despite all that, the laws of America say that Al should be deported.

Here is what Al said about that possibility:

I don't remember anything about my mother's country of Nigeria. I cannot even speak the language. Every experience I have had in life that I can remember has been in the United States of America. Everyone I know and care about are all here, except for my mother, who was sadly removed and remains in hiding in fear of her life.

Fortunately, the Department of Homeland Security has decided to put Al's deportation on hold. I support this decision, but I know it is only temporary, it doesn't give Al permanent legal status of any kind, and there is still a risk of deportation in the future. The only way for Al to become a citizen is for the DREAM Act to become the law of the land.

Would America be a better Nation if Al Okere were deported? Of course not. Al is not an isolated example. There are thousands of others like him, who are only asking for a chance, asking for justice.

*Plyler v. Doe* gave Al Okere and other bright, accomplished, and ambitious young people like him the opportunity to obtain an education in America. The DREAM Act would give them a chance to fulfill their God-given potential and become our future doctors, engineers, teachers, and soldiers.

A couple of weeks ago—a lot of these DREAM Act students keep in touch with us—one student contacted our office saying he had given up. He lived in America all his life and had been educated here. He made his way through college and was looking forward to being an engineer. He waited 11 years for passage of the DREAM Act, and it hasn't happened. He decided he had no choice but to move to Canada. So now his talents will go to Canada. I have



nothing against Canada; it is a great nation and neighbor. But why would we give up someone we have educated and trained to be a part of America?

On the 30th anniversary of Plyler v. Doe, I again ask my colleagues in both parties to support the DREAM Act. Let's give Al Okere and so many other young people like him a chance to contribute more fully to the only country they have called home. It is the right thing to do, and it will make America a stronger Nation.

I yield the floor and suggest the absence of a quorum.

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Mr. BROWN of Ohio). The clerk will call the roll.

The assistant legislative clerk proceeded to call the roll.

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

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

#### CHILDHOOD OBESITY

Mr. LAUTENBERG. Mr. President, I rise today because there is an epidemic hovering over America, and we ought not to stand by and let it continue.

A staggering one-third of Americans are obese a condition that can endanger health and shorten lifespan. Among our children, the situation is becoming a plague and leaving too many young people unable to participate in physical activities, such as sports or games.

I salute the First Lady, Michelle Obama, for bringing attention to this crisis by educating parents, teachers, and kids about the need to be more active and eat nutritious food, but it is going to take the involvement of this Congress. We need to protect our children, our economy, and our national security.

Our Nation's childhood obesity rate is one of the highest in the world. Here we see it, childhood obesity rates displayed worldwide: Obesity epidemic as seen among American youth. And if we look at the other major countries in the world, going from the lowest, China is at 5.2 percent, upwards to France at 14.1 percent, and then we get to America, and 31.7 percent of our children are obese or overweight. That is discouraging, very sad for the individual and for the country at large.

People who are obese are at a higher risk for heart disease, stroke, diabetes, and even certain types of cancer. Obesity-related conditions kill more than 110,000 Americans every year. We do not want to see more children with diabetes. We don't want our children to be burdened with a lifetime of disease and disability.

Public health advocates have been sounding the alarm for years, but this problem has only gotten worse and this Congress and the Federal Government have largely ignored the problem. Over the last few decades, the rate of children who are obese or overweight has doubled. In 1973, we were looking at 15.4 percent. That was the percentage of obese and overweight American chil-

dren. But if we look ahead only 40 years, we see the rate has gone from 15.4 percent to 31.7 percent. That is almost one-third of our childhood population. This issue has even affected our military and the statistics are shocking; 25 percent of our young men and women who want to join the military are too overweight to serve.

We need to take bold action. This farm bill is not just about making sure businesses stay profitable, it should be about keeping our citizens healthy too. We owe it to our kids and our country to learn what is causing this calamity.

That is why I filed an amendment to focus in on a particular suspected contributor to the problem. The Federal Government can and should determine whether sugary drinks are causing obesity and causing the damage that goes with it. Americans are drinking more high-sugar drinks than ever before—children and adults drink twice the amount of sugary soda than they did just three decades ago. These drinks are cheap and available everywhere—in restaurants, convenience stores, movie theaters or vending machines.

We have seen children and teenagers holding giant cups of soda or other sugary drinks. Some of these sizes are so big they look like a barrel. When a child drinks 32 ounces, takes a 32-ounce cup of soda, it is the equivalent of ingesting 41 sugar cubes. Can you imagine anyone permitting their children to devour 41 sugar cubes? Who in this body would give their child or grandchild 41 sugar cubes to eat?

The city of New York is taking a bold course of action and other communities have done their own studies and have decided to act. In Congress, we need to step up and do our part. We need to know what role sugary drinks are playing in the childhood obesity epidemic in America. My amendment would initiate a study on the impact of these drinks on obesity and human health in the United States. It would require an examination of public health proposals regarding the cost and the size of these drinks. The amendment is endorsed by organizations such as the American Academy of Pediatrics, the American Heart Association, the American Diabetes Association, the American Public Health Association, and the Center For Science and the Public Interest.

I reach out, I urge my colleagues to support this amendment. I ask that, once and for all, we work together to do what we can to protect our children—protect them, in this case, from the obesity epidemic. I hope we will join together to fight for the well-being of our children.

I yield the floor and I suggest absence of a quorum.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will call the roll.

The legislative clerk proceeded to call the roll.

Mr. BROWN of Ohio. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent the order for the quorum call be rescinded.

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Mr. LAUTENBERG). Without objection, it is so ordered.

Mr. BROWN of Ohio. I ask unanimous consent to speak as in morning business for up to 10 minutes.

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

#### AGRICULTURE REFORM

Mr. BROWN of Ohio. Mr. President, the Agriculture Reform, Food, and Jobs Act of 2012, which the Presiding Officer from New Jersey just spoke of, in my State called the farm bill, represents the most significant reform of U.S. agriculture in decades. It is the product of months of policy discussion and late-night deliberations, guided by Chairwoman STABENOW and Ranking Member ROBERTS. It is the reason why people across the country, farmers and business owners and faith leaders and county commissioners are paying attention. The bill benefits all of us, all Americans.

Today, one in seven jobs in Ohio is related to the food and agriculture industry. To get the economy back on track, the farm bill must remain a priority in Congress. The Agriculture Committee has worked to craft a farm bill that is forward-looking and realistic. The centerpiece of the bill's deficit reduction efforts is based on a bill I authored with my colleague JOHN THUNE, a Republican from South Dakota, along with Senator DURBIN, a Democrat from Illinois, and Senator LUGAR, a Republican from Indiana. Our Aggregate Risk and Revenue Management Program proposed streamlining the farm safety net and making it more market oriented. The era of direct payments—the billions of dollars that newspaper editorial writers and constituents alike complained about, these huge farm subsidies that went mostly to large corporate farmers—the era of direct payments made annually regardless of need under this bill is over.

Instead, the new Ag Risk Coverage Program will work hand in hand with crop insurance to provide farmers the tools needed to manage risk, making payments only when farmers need them most.

The program is market oriented. It relies on market data instead of arbitrary numbers in statutes. It is more responsive to farmers' needs and more responsible to taxpayers. The bill reforms a number of longstanding, unjustifiable practices. For the first time, this farm bill ends payments to landowners who have nothing to do with farm management. It puts a firm cap on how much support any farmer can receive from the direct farm support programs every year. There are commonsense reforms that ensure the taxpayer dollars go only where they are needed.

Is there more to be done to make sure taxpayers get the most efficient, effective, and affordable farm policy possible? Of course there is. In the coming years, we will continue to improve our farm and food policy, but

this is a good start. It is good for farmers, good for taxpayers. It continues to move our Nation's food and agriculture policy in a positive direction.

The farm bill is a jobs and innovation bill. Every \$1 billion in exports supports 8,400 American jobs that cannot be shipped overseas, according to the USDA. In 2011, U.S. agriculture enjoyed a trade surplus of \$42 billion, \$42 billion we sold more than we brought in from abroad in farm products, the highest annual surplus on record. Contrast that with the billions and billions, tens of billions, hundreds of billions of dollars in trade deficit we have in manufacturing in other parts of our economy.

There is so much room for growth, not only overseas but also at home. Bio-based manufacturing and renewable energy are two examples of the potential that American agriculture holds for U.S. economic growth and for job creation. Alongside food production, farm-based and renewable energy production, such as advanced biomass energy, can serve as the engine of the rural economy for decades to come. It is investments in agriculture such as this, such as the ones this bill maintains in research and energy and bio-based products and food production, that will enable continued creation of good-paying jobs, again that will not, that cannot be shipped overseas.

The farm bill provides economic relief to millions of Americans. Although we call it a farm bill, this bill is fundamentally an economic relief bill. For farmers, the bill provides financial assistance to weather tough times or adopt conservation practices that protect clean water and healthy soils and wildlife habitat. For millions of Americans, this bill helps put dinner on the table when wages are tight and families are struggling to make ends meet and keeps children from going hungry. That is why this bill is so important. I add, the Presiding Officer from New Jersey has always been such a strong advocate of these nutrition programs. We both understand that more than one-third of people who are getting SNAP, who are receiving what we used to call food stamps, are working families, people who are only making \$9, \$10, \$11 an hour, sometimes working two jobs, and still cannot make it without some food assistance.

The bill includes resources for SNAP, the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program, which is one of the Nation's most essential antipoverty programs. In addition to supporting people who are struggling to feed their families, SNAP supports retailers and businesses and the farmers and ranchers who grow the food.

At a time of high unemployment, SNAP participation now exceeds 44 million Americans, half of whom are children. Many of these families are working families. Half the people served by SNAP are children.

SNAP participation is expected to fall as the economy recovers. The bill continues to support SNAP with mini-

mal modifications. It continues and increases support for commodity distribution to food banks at a time when food pantry shelves in Ohio and across the Nation are bare. But I want to be clear. I have serious concerns with the cuts, not large cuts such as the House Agriculture Committee wants to do and that Senator PAUL tried to do—very unsuccessfully—and that Congressman RYAN made with his budget from the House of Representatives—nothing even close to the tens and tens of billions of dollars they want to cut from nutrition. But I am concerned about this \$4 billion cut. When compared to the \$130 billion in cuts to SNAP in the Ryan budget, the modification in this bill was done carefully.

The farm bill is a deficit reduction bill, a jobs bill, an economic relief bill. It affects every American every day. I commend, again, Chairwoman STABENOW and Ranking Member ROBERTS. Their joint effort to work across party lines is to be commended.

These months of work and deliberation are at risk because some insist on debating dozens of unrelated amendments and others seek to score political points at the expense of American families and at the expense of American farmers. This is not the time to debate conceal-and-carry laws or American aid to Pakistan or the future of the Labor Relations Board. Not that any of those are not debatable or any of those aren't a place where people can have reasonable differences on public policy. But conceal and carry, American aid to Pakistan, the future of the Labor Relations Board should not be part of the farm bill.

I urge my colleagues to work together and halt the impasse that keeps us from making progress on this bill.

I am the first Ohio Senator who is a member of the Agriculture Committee in 40 years. In my first month in the Senate, I made a request to Senator REID to join the Agriculture Committee, along with other duties, because of the importance of agriculture in my State. One out of seven jobs in Ohio is related to agriculture. It is the largest business, largest industry in my State. It matters so much to Ohio.

My position on the Agriculture Committee has helped as I have done roundtables around Ohio and met with literally hundreds of farmers, including grain farmers, dairy farmers, specialty crop farmers, nursery farmers, tree farmers, experts at Ohio State in the agriculture school, and I have come prepared to help write this farm bill both back in 2007 and this year. This is a major step forward. It is something of which we can be proud.

#### MORNING BUSINESS

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

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Mr. BEGICH). Without objection, it is so ordered.

#### TRIBUTE TO MARCIA HERZOG

Mr. REID. Mr. President, I rise today to acknowledge a dedicated public servant who will be retiring this month after 37 years of service to the General Services Administration. Marcia Herzog started her career with GSA in 1973, working for the Federal Supply Service. From 1982 to 1987, she moved to GSA headquarters to work with the Office of the Comptroller, then on to the Public Buildings Service and then to work for the Executive Secretariat. In 1987, Marcia joined the Office of Congressional and Intergovernmental Affairs. In 1997, she assumed the role of national director for the Congressional Support Program, which she continues to hold. For these last 16 years, Marcia has worked in unison with the Senate Sergeant at Arms, the Committee on House Administration, and the House Chief Administrative Officer to oversee and ensure that district offices of both Senate and House Members are located and equipped to each Member's specification and desire. Her poise, professionalism, wisdom, and support have successfully guided the congressional service representatives of GSA, who operate in each of the 10 GSA regions of the United States, to provide the highest level of customer service when responding to congressional office needs in Member home State offices across the country. We congratulate Marcia on her diligent service to this body and offer her our heartfelt well wishes as she transitions to her next endeavor.

#### TRIBUTE TO MCCREARY COUNTY, KENTUCKY

Mr. MCCONNELL. Mr. President, I rise today to pay tribute to a very special part of my home State, the Commonwealth of Kentucky. I am speaking of McCreary County, in the southeastern region of the State. This year, McCreary County celebrates its centennial; according to the McCreary County Museum located in the heart of historic downtown Stearns, KY, the county's birthday was on March 12, 2012. One hundred years ago, Kentucky Governor James B. McCreary signed the legislation creating the county, named after himself, as the 120th and last county of the Bluegrass State, formed out of portions of Wayne, Pulaski and Whitley counties.

The people of McCreary County today have upheld the rich traditions and legacy of the hardy Kentuckians who were there for that county's founding 100 years ago. They have exemplified the very best of what southeastern Kentucky has to offer, they have kept Kentucky's history alive, and they represent the future of Kentucky and our Nation. I ask my Senate colleagues to join me in wishing the people of McCreary County the very best as they celebrate their centennial.