to the Consumer Bankruptcy Protection Act. We hope we will get cloture on that. Because of objections from Senator KENNEDY of Massachusetts, we had to file cloture on a motion to proceed. If we get cloture on that, then we would move immediately to cloture on the bill itself, if necessary. But I hope we get cloture on the motion to proceed. Then we can work out a way to consider this legislation and Senators would have a chance or chances to offer amendments, if they would like to.

This could be a busy week. It could be a productive week. We also will probably file cloture sometime this week, perhaps Wednesday, on the child custody bill, but we will make that decision as we see how the week is proceeding and progressing. We will make that call probably Wednesday.

I yield the floor.

MORNING BUSINESS

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Mr. SMITH of New Hampshire). Under the previous order, there will now be a period for the transaction of morning business.

WEAPONS INSPECTIONS IN IRAQ

Mr. THURMOND. Mr. President, last Thursday the Armed Services and foreign Relations Committees held a joint hearing to hear testimony from a courageous and dedicated American—Major Scott Ritter. Major Ritter began his opening statement by saying,

> Last week I resigned my position with UNSCOM out of frustration because the U.N. Security Council, and the United States, as its most significant supporter, were failing to enforce the post-Gulf War resolutions designed to disarm Iraq. I sincerely hope that my actions might help to change things . . .

For nearly three hours, Major Ritter responded to Senators' questions, describing how U.S. policies in support of United Nations Security Council resolutions were not being honestly implemented. He also expressed his views regarding the dangers associated with Iraq's continuing pursuit of weapons of mass destruction and how this Nation's victory in the Persian Gulf war was being squandered.

Major Ritter served as an intelligence officer in the Marine Corps during the Persian Gulf War to liberate Kuwait from Iraq. He became a United Nations inspector in 1991 and acted under international law created by the United States and the United Nations. His job as an inspector was to plan and conduct inspections to eliminate illegal weapons of mass destruction in Iraq. Major Ritter was deeply dedicated to his duties. He explained that his duty as a weapons inspector represented a vital continuation of what many Americans had fought and died for during the Gulf War. Finding and destroying these dangerous weapons is critically important to the United States and our allies. These weapons of mass destruction could one day be used again by Saddam Hussein to attack his neighbors, dominate the region and threaten vital interests of the United States. Major Ritter was dedicated to reducing the threat from such weapons. He earned a reputation as a tough, demanding inspector. Saddam Hussein feared his perseverance and tried to get him removed from UNSCOM and Iraq. I regret that he has resigned. I felt better knowing Major Ritter was on the job. However, Major Ritter found that he was repeatedly and systematically hindered from performing his duties. The very laws he was asked to enforce were not now being supported by the U.N. Security Council nor his own government.

Major Ritter's resignation from his position as an UNSCOM inspector was a selfless and patriotic act. However, his resignation and the reason for his resignation deserve our immediate attention and action. I hope that his personal sacrifice will spur the Congress and the Administration to act with the same courage and urgency as Major Ritter.

During the hearing, Major Ritter was asked all the most difficult questions to challenge his judgment and veracity. His challengers were unsuccessful. He simply told the truth, and the truth is a National embarrassment. Although Major Ritter had the courtesy not to say it, his message was clear. ''Congress, I have done my job. It is now time to do yours.'' Our job in Congress requires the same courage Major Ritter displayed last week and for the past nine years as a weapons inspector for the United Nations. I am deeply disappointed that such a brave and bright young American was forced into choosing to resign from his duties because of his principles. His actions clearly send us a message. ''This Nation's actions must be consistent with its policies.''

I believe that our Nation and the world are far less safe as a result of Saddam Hussein's programs of weapons of mass destruction. We must insist that UNSCOM be allowed to do its job. We in government must say what we mean, and do as we say. We have not been doing this recently in our foreign and national defense policies.

Mr. President, it is now Congress' responsibility to ensure that this happens.

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

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will call the roll.

The legislative clerk proceeded to call the roll.

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

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

Mrs. BOXER. Mr. President, I understand that my Democratic leader has time, and I wish to use some of that time.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Under the previous order, we are in morning business until 12:30. The Democrat leader has time until 11:30 a.m.

Mrs. BOXER. Mr. President, I ask to address the Chamber without time restraint.

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

PRIVATE AND PUBLIC MORALITY

Mrs. BOXER. Mr. President, I hope all my colleagues had a good Labor Day at home with their constituents. I want to say that I had the real pleasure of being with hundreds of people all over the great State of California with the Lieutenant Governor this Labor Day. And it was very uplifting to be with the people who are moving our country forward, because every day they get up and put one foot in front of the other, and they work, they take care of their families, and they build this country.

So it was, indeed, a very good day, and I think a day that gave a lot of us perspective as to why we are here and what our real interests should be in terms of making sure that this economic expansion continues, and that every child, regardless of station, has a chance at the American dream.

Mr. President, last week, Senator LIEBERMAN made a very thoughtful speech on the Senate floor in which he expressed his ''deep disappointment and personal anger'' concerning the President's improper behavior.

Senator LIEBERMAN then laid out the process by which the Senate can go on record in an official expression of disapproval.

When I was asked how I felt about that, I expressed agreement with Senator LIEBERMAN and with his understanding of the options that are before this body.

I would like to reiterate today what I have said about this matter since January. At that time I put my faith in the process, which I said would lead to the truth. The process is in fact leading to the truth, and the process is continuing.

In 1983, when I served in the House of Representatives, we had such a process in place when I voted to censure two colleagues—one a Democrat and one a Republican—for relationships that involved interns; we had a process in place in 1990, again, when a House colleague was reprimanded for his conduct.

Unfortunately, we did not have such a process in place in 1991, when a Supreme Court nominee was about to be confirmed with not so much as a look at allegations of sexual harassment. And in 1995, the integrity of the Senate process was being compromised to keep such charges by 18 women secret, rather than following the normal course of open public hearings. We also learned that the military routinely ignored similar complaints.

So despite the difficulty of all of those incidents—and they were all very difficult—I am proud that many women in Congress have worked to make sure that improper relationships in the

workplace are no longer swept under the rug. We certainly know about the President's relationship. It was wrong. It was indefensible, and as Senator LIEBERMAN has said, the relationship was immoral. The President has now agreed with that assessment. I fervently wish he had seen it that way before the relationship started. And in any case, he should have taken responsibility much earlier.

This President has led us out of the worst recession since the Great Depression. He has led us to a balanced budget—the first one in 30 years. And in my home State we have seen 1.4 million new jobs, 100,000 new businesses, and a decline in crime of 28 percent.

I will always be grateful to the President for his visionary public policy in so many areas, and so will the people of California. I fervently hope that while the process moves forward we can continue to work with President Clinton to keep the country moving in the right direction. The people want us to do that, and I think we should do that.

I don't believe there are differences in this body about the immorality of the President's relationship with an intern.

As I said, the President himself agreed with Senator LIEBERMAN's comments.

We have a process in place to deal with the President's morality as it relates to an improper relationship. I would like to ask us today to also set our agenda to deal with public policy morality.

I want to explain what I mean by that.

Is it moral for an HMO to deny a child desperately needing care?

I spoke at a press conference the other day about one of my constituents, a little girl, who is undergoing chemotherapy treatment. She is very sick and she has severe nausea and vomiting from the procedure. The HMO denied the parents $54 for a prescription to take away her nausea and vomiting while the CEO of that company was drawing down tens of millions of dollars in salary. I don't think that is moral.

I want to see us pass a Patients' Bill of Rights with teeth in it to deal with that.

Is it moral that 14 children every day die from gunshot wounds in America? Fourteen children every day. Let's pass sensible gun laws that do not infringe on people's rights but make our country safer.

Is it moral not to fund three out of four approved NIH grants? That is what happens today. The NIH budget is squeezed. We need to do more. Our people are sick. They worry about cancer, Alzheimer's—all the diseases that plague us today. Let's double the Federal commitment to help research within the context of a balanced budget, and then tell our people we are doing all we can. That would be the moral thing to do.

Is it moral for special interests to give unlimited funds of money to a political campaign? We could stop that. Let's pass the McCain-Feingold campaign finance reform laws. That would help solve the problem.

Is it moral to have children attending schools where ceiling tiles fall on their heads?

I just visited such a school in Sacramento—an old school. I had to run out of there literally choking on the must and the mildew in the room. We need an education plan to help all of our children learn.

Is it moral to leave our kids at home in empty houses or to join gangs because they are so lonely after school? We know the juvenile crime rate goes just straight up like this after school, and we know that afterschool programs work. Let's pass a program at least to fund 500 of those afterschool programs.

So my point today is this: In the Senate and in our own way we must strive for private morality, and we also should strive for public morality.

Mr. President, we have so much work to do. But I know we can do good things for the people of this country if we have the will to move forward to address the many moral questions facing us—the moral questions on the private side, and the moral questions on the public side.

So, again, as we reflect on the situation as it confronts us, let's remember to do our best on both sides of the equation—private morality, absolutely; and public morality, absolutely.

Thank you very much, Mr. President.

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

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

The legislative clerk proceeded to call the roll.

Mr. HATCH. 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 PRESIDING OFFICER. Under the previous order, the time until 12 o'clock will be under the control of the distinguished Senator from Utah, Mr. HATCH, and the distinguished Senator from Iowa, Mr. GRASSLEY.

PRIVILEGE OF THE FLOOR

Mr. HATCH. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that Patricia Kramer, a congressional fellow in Senator GRASSLEY's office, be given floor privileges during the consideration of debate of S. 1301, the Consumer Bankruptcy Reform Act.

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

CONSUMER BANKRUPTCY REFORM ACT

Mr. HATCH. Mr. President, I rise today to again express my disappointment in the refusal of Members on the other side of the aisle to allow the Senate to proceed to S. 1301, the Consumer Bankruptcy Reform Act of 1998.

This is a very important piece of legislation, and it will be an enormous disservice to the American people if we fail to act on it this year. We all know the time is short and the schedule is very crowded in these last few weeks of the session. I just hope that, when the time comes, my colleagues on the other side will vote for cloture on the motion to proceed tomorrow and provide the Senate a fair chance to debate this much-needed legislation. In fact, I hope that they will waive their filibuster on the motion to proceed and will invoke cloture on the bill itself, if that is needed.

In recent years, personal bankruptcy filings have reached epidemic proportions in the United States. We simply cannot afford to continue down this path because excessive bankruptcy filings harm every one of us in America. Consumer bankruptcy ends up costing Americans almost $40 billion a year, or roughly $400 per household in this country. The negative repercussions associated with consumer bankruptcy go far beyond the debts owed to credit card companies and big businesses.

The reality is, contrary to what the critics of reform would lead us to believe, this issue profoundly impacts the average American. Bankruptcies end up harming small business owners, senior citizens who rely on rental income to supplement their retirements, and of course members of credit unions. Even the person who files for bankruptcy can end up being hurt. Some filers, victims of so-called ''bankruptcy mills,'' are neither apprised of their options nor informed of the consequences of a bankruptcy filing. Ultimately, they suffer the consequences of having filed, when a better alternative may have been available to them.

This legislation is guided by two main principles: No. 1, restoring personal responsibility in the bankruptcy system; and, No. 2, ensuring adequate and effective protection for consumers.

There are individuals who can repay some of what they owe but, instead, choose to use—rather, ''abuse''—the current bankruptcy system or laws to avoid doing so. The bankruptcy laws need to be reformed to prevent this from occurring. S. 1301 does this, while delicately safeguarding the bankruptcy system so that it can provide a ''fresh start'' to those who truly need it.

I note that according to statistics from the American Bankruptcy Institute, most States in this Union have seen a troubling rise in bankruptcy filings. This is at a time when our economy has been doing extremely well. While we must preserve bankruptcy for those who need it, as legislators we must recognize that there are some unscrupulous individuals who are able to repay some of what they owe but still use the current bankruptcy laws to avoid doing so. In fact, to go one step further, there are some people who can pay all of what they owe but opt out through the bankruptcy system because of current loopholes in the law itself.