led soldiers that included men from Puerto Rico in an effort to thwart the British in the territory of Florida, which extended from the State of my distinguished colleague, Senator GRAHAM of Florida, all the way to what is now Louisiana and the territory and State which we know in present day as Louisiana. So for our State there is a particular, emotional, long-standing attachment to this issue.

With all of what my colleagues have said—and I reiterate, we can give all the great speeches we want, but actions speak louder than words—in light of that, the truth of that, in the light of fairness and what is appropriate, I urge my colleagues to take this month to do something meaningful and real, something more than words, that could have a lasting effect on millions of Puerto Ricans and Americans, and the strength of our country.

Mrs. MURRAY. Mr. President, I am pleased to join my colleagues in calling attention to the celebration of National Hispanic Heritage Month.

The Hispanic community in my home state of Washington is the youngest and fastest growing of any ethnic minority group, yet its history is a long one. indeed, Washington was a part of Mexico until 1819. The many Spanish place names that dot the landscape are only part of the legacy of the early Hispanic explorers and settlers. Early Hispanic pioneers helped lay the economic infrastructure of the region, bringing commodities such as wheat and apples and livestock.

Today Hispanic Americans continue to play a pivotal role in our state's economy. The contributions of Mexican immigrants has been vital in the growth and continued success of our state's agricultural industry. Hispanic-owned businesses range from the mom-and-pop small business to large corporate concerns. Hispanic citizens, taking advantage of their many ties to Mexico and other Latin American nations, have helped to expand trade, our state's economic lifeblood.

The contributions of Hispanic Americans are not limited to economic ones. Hispanic Americans have risen to positions of leadership throughout the state. They occupy elected offices at all levels of government, including our state legislature and judiciary. Hispanic community activists have led the fight for social equality. The Hispanic community has also enhanced our state's cultural life. Spanish language newspaper and radio, Latin American cuisine and Hispanic customs and ceremonies are an integral part of our state's landscape.

The Hispanic community has mobilized to meet the challenges facing it. Community-based organizations throughout the state are working to create educational and economic opportunities and meet the need for housing, health and social services. Their efforts benefit not only the Hispanic community but the state as a whole.

Washington State's Hispanic community is a dynamic and vibrant one. I salute their many accomplishments and contributions. I encourage my colleagues to join me in celebrating the diversity that makes our country so rich by commemorating National Hispanic Heritage Month.

Mr. DASCHLE. Mr. President, Hispanic Heritage Month presents a unique opportunity to celebrate the history and achievements of nearly 30 million people of Hispanic descent living in the United States and Puerto Rico. Today, as we stand on the threshold of a new century, we look to the outstanding contributions of Hispanic Americans for inspiration and leadership.

We should also acknowledge Puerto Rico's 100 years of Social, Political and Economic Union with the United States. I strongly support the right of self-determination for U.S. citizens living in Puerto Rico. Citizens in Puerto Rico should have the opportunity to decide their political future, and have a right to political, social and economic equality.

America has always drawn strength from the extraordinary diversity of its people. Throughout our nation's history, immigrants from around the world have been drawn to America's promise of hope, freedom, and opportunity. These newcomers have shared their cultural traditions and values, contributed to our nation's economy, strengthened our shared belief in democracy and helped create a more fair and just society.

Earlier this year, the House of Representatives passed the ''United States-Puerto Rico Political Status Act,'' H.R. 856. The Senate version, S. 472, provides a congressionally recognized framework for U.S. citizens living in Puerto Rico to freely decide statehood, independence, or the continuance of the commonwealth under U.S. jurisdiction.

Hispanic Heritage Month provides us with a unique opportunity to again raise the debate of the Puerto Rico plebiscite. I cannot think of a better time to push this issue forward.

That is why I am joining today as a cosponsor of S. 472. This year, the Senate has an opportunity to grant the 3.8 million American citizens of Puerto Rico an opportunity to decide their own future. Such an election would be the first step in allowing these U.S. citizens an opportunity to exercise one of the most fundamental principles of a democracy—a government chosen by the people.

In recognition of this historic opportunity, I am hopeful that my colleagues will join with me as cosponsors of S. 472, and that the Committee on Energy and Natural Resources will mark up the bill quickly.

Mr. GRAHAM. Mr. President, I thank the Senator.

There are others of my colleagues who have indicated a desire to speak during this period for morning business. Unfortunately, none of them are here at this time. Therefore, I ask unanimous consent that the remainder of the time for these presentations on ''Hispanic Heritage Month'' be reserved until our colleagues who wish to speak are present.

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

Mr. MCCONNELL addressed the Chair.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Kentucky.

Mr. MCCONNELL. 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.

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

Mr. MCCONNELL. I object.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Objection is heard.

Mr. REID. I say to my friend from Kentucky, it is just for a unanimous consent request.

Mr. MCCONNELL. Mr. President, reserving the right to object.

Mr. REID. I will even tell the Senator what it is. I want to ask that during the pendency of the Interior appropriations bill that a congressional fellow in my office have the privilege of the floor.

Mr. MCCONNELL. I do not object, Mr. President.

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

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Is there an objection? Without objection, it is so ordered. The Senator is recognized.

## PRIVILEGE OF THE FLOOR

Mr. REID. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that during the pendency of the Interior appropriations bill, Scott Conroy be extended the privilege of the floor.

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

Mr. MCCONNELL. 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.

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

Mr. FEINGOLD. Mr. President, I object.

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Mr. SMITH of Oregon). Objection is heard.

The assistant legislative clerk continued with the call of the roll.

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

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Is there objection? The Chair hears none, and it is so ordered.

## DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR AND RELATED AGENCIES APPROPRIATIONS ACT, 1999

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will report the pending business.

The assistant legislative clerk read as follows:

A bill (S. 2237) making appropriations for the Department of Interior and related agencies for the fiscal year ending September 30, 1999, and for other purposes.

The Senate continued with the consideration of the bill.

AMENDMENT N. 3554

Mr. MCCAIN. I say to my friend from Wisconsin, I am not going to make any motion at this time. I just want to assure my friend from Wisconsin and others that we will not give up on this fight. We will continue this fight. But I also think it is important to point out that we got 52 votes, which was the same as the last time. I intend to work with friends on both sides of the aisle to try to get additional votes so we can make progress on this issue. Since that is not the case, it is my understanding that the majority leader will move off of this bill probably at this time.

I want to make sure that again we are not giving up this fight. We will continue. And sooner or later I am convinced that we will have the opportunity to prevail.

Mr. President, I yield——

Mr. FEINGOLD addressed the Chair.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Wisconsin.

Mr. MCCAIN. Mr. President, I have not yielded the floor.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Wisconsin.

Mr. FEINGOLD. Mr. President, I express my appreciation to the Senator from Arizona for his willingness to continue this important fight. I understand that we may well be moving now to another piece of legislation, but I want to indicate that we will continue to move this amendment, to try to adopt this amendment. As I understand it, it will be the pending business on the Interior bill when it comes back, and we will certainly proceed accordingly.

Mr. LOTT addressed the Chair.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The majority leader.

Mr. LOTT. I have not been involved in the debate over the last 2 days, but I want to say that we have had this debate and we have had this vote again because Senator MCCAIN felt it was important that it be considered further, especially in view of the House vote. But we have had that debate and we have had the vote, and the vote is the same. Nothing has changed. There is no consensus.

I still maintain that before we start changing the laws we ought to try to find out who broke the laws, how did they break the laws, why did they break the laws. We now have not one, not two, but three 90-day preliminary investigations of whether or not to go forward with the independent counsel on whether the President, the Vice President, and a Deputy Chief of Staff were involved in 1996 campaign violations.

It seems to me it would be wise to see what is going to happen there, find out what happened. I still don't understand why, if people broke the law, there are those who say, ''Oh, geez, what we need to do is change the law.''

Do we have some areas where we are going to have to take a look at the campaign laws as far as contributions, and where money can be raised, or how, what kind of money on Federal property? Yes, we are going to have to take a look at that, and I am going to work with Senators on both sides of the aisle who really want to have something done that is balanced and fair.

This is not the solution. This is not the time. Here we are 60 days before an election, 30 days before the end of the session. We are trying to do the Interior appropriations bill. We spent 2 days on campaign finance reform, and now we have threats that it is going to continue. I have been patient. I have tried to be cooperative. I appreciate the cooperation I have received. I do think now the time is right for us to move on to Interior, bankruptcy reform, and child custody, very important issues that need to be addressed.

I yield the floor.

Mr. MCCAIN addressed the Chair.

Mr. MCCAIN. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that before I make a motion to withdraw my amendment, the Senator from Wisconsin be recognized for 2 minutes and then I regain the floor.

Mr. LOTT. For debate only.

Mr. MCCAIN. Debate only.

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

Mr. FEINGOLD, Mr. President, I do understand that Senator MCCAIN intends to withdraw the amendment momentarily which he has been courteous enough to indicate to me. I just want to reiterate that we are going to continue with this effort, that the amendment will be offered again on this bill and, if necessary, other bills until the job is done.

The fact is we have not really had a real process in the last 2 days that we would expect on a bill like this. We have had talk intermittently, but each time this has come up, in September, October of 1997, in February and March of this year, and on this occasion, we have never been allowed the right to have the normal amending process that allows a consensus to be achieved. That is what was allowed in the House, and that is what lead to the passing of the Shays-Meehan bill. Until that kind of process, rather than the mere permission to speak, is granted, this is not the kind of process that we are entitled on an issue of this importance, so this will continue. It must continue. And our effort has bipartisan support of the majority of both Houses of the Congress.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Arizona.

Mr. MCCAIN. Let me just make a couple of comments before I withdraw my amendment. As I said, we will not give up the fight. We need to have progress. We need to pick up a couple of additional votes, and it is important we make every effort to do so.

There would at least have been a vote at noon today on this issue, because a tabling motion was in order by the Senator from Wisconsin. The Senator from Wisconsin, for very legitimate reasons, chose not to have that vote. So we could have had everybody on record at least on the tabling motion.

I insisted the night before last that we have 2 full days of debate. I had rather harsh words exchanged between myself and the majority leader—which is very uncustomary for me to have, except on approximately a daily basis. But the fact is the majority leader agreed that we would have 2 full days of debate. Then I came in today to find that, for the convenience of a Senator or Senators on that side of the aisle, we had to have a vote at 1:45. There were many on both sides who wanted to debate this particular amendment, but we had to curtail it. Last night there were Members on this side as well as the other side who wanted to speak on this issue. Instead, the Senator from Massachusetts had to speak for 2 or 3 hours on minimum wage.

So, if we are really serious about this, I want to tell my colleagues on both sides of the aisle, then we ought to go ahead and debate it, and debate it fully. We reached the point before the vote at 1:45 that, even on this side, the seven Republicans who wanted to debate did not have sufficient time to do so, because rather than go late into this evening as I had envisioned, for the convenience of Senators on that side of the aisle we had to curtail the debate and have a vote at 1:45 today.

So I think it is important to point out that I do not believe the issue was debated as fully as it should have been, even though it has been done several times in the past. I urge, again, my colleagues to recognize there is one way we are going to get true, meaningful campaign finance reform, and that is on a bipartisan basis. My opening statement yesterday articulated three principles as to what brings about meaningful campaign finance reform, and one is bipartisanship. So I am reluctant—I am reluctant, without progress on this issue, to engage in a debate which could divert the Senate from other important issues of the day.

I want to point out one other reality, much to the sadness of almost everyone I know. Tomorrow's newspapers will probably not highlight the fact that we failed again on campaign finance reform. They will highlight the issue which has consumed all the oxygen throughout this town, and that is the firestorm concerning the scandal that is affecting the Presidency of the United States and the institution of the Presidency today.

So I hope we can move forward. I will never give up on this fight as long as I am a Member of this body. And I hope that we can make progress together. But let's do it in a meaningful way and

in a bipartisan way so we can make genuine progress.

Finally, I thank all the people who worked so hard to get this back up before this body. I thank Senator FEINGOLD. I thank all our friends on the outside. I thank everybody who has worked so hard in this effort. And we will prevail over time. But we will prevail, I believe, in a bipartisan fashion and not in one that exacerbates emotions on the floor of the Senate rather than working towards a common goal of bettering the electoral progress.

Mr. President, I withdraw my amendment.

## CONSUMER BANKRUPTCY REFORM ACT OF 1998

Mr. LOTT. Mr. President, I call for the regular order with respect to the bankruptcy bill.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will report.

The assistant legislative clerk read as follows:

A bill (S. 1301) to amend title 11, United States Code, to provide for consumer protection, and for other purposes.

Pending:

Lott (for Grassley/Hatch) amendment No. 3559, in the nature of a substitute.

The Senate resumed consideration of the bill.

Mr. LOTT. Mr. President, I wish to speak on the subject of the bankruptcy bill. The managers of the legislation will be here momentarily.

I should note that we did call this issue up last Thursday, I believe it was, but we had difficulty in getting to the substance because the Senator from Massachusetts did not want us to get to the substance. He had an amendment he wanted to talk about.

But Senator GRASSLEY and Senator DURBIN did make some small statements at the end of the day on Thursday. I thought it was appropriate that we go back to the bankruptcy bill and that they be able to come to the floor and lay out the outline of this legislation and begin to get Members' attention focused on the bankruptcy bill itself.

Before I go to my own discussion about the importance of this bill, I want to report to the Senate that we did just have a bicameral majority leadership meeting, House and Senate leaders sitting down, talking about the people's business. We met for an hour. And while there are many in this city who are talking about the Starr report and how it is to be dealt with and how can it be done in a fair and bipartisan way, we met for an hour and we talked only about those issues that we need to address in the Congress this year.

We talked about the appropriations bills, and it is important that we get them through the process. We have now had 11 appropriations bills pass the House, 10 pass the Senate. We are trying desperately to get the 11th appropriations bill to begin to move here in the Senate; that is the Interior appropriations bill. So we will only have left in the Senate after Interior, the D.C. appropriations bill, and the Labor, HHS, Education, and other agencies and departments' appropriations bills—only two. I have urged the appropriators on both sides of the aisle, both sides of the Capitol, to work expeditiously. If we have issues that we just cannot agree on between the two bodies or between the Congress and the White House, set them aside. The important thing is to get the job done.

We also then talked about the importance of preserving Social Security, but allowing the people to get some of their hard-earned taxes back. Absolutely, before we leave this year, we should pass legislation to eliminate the marriage penalty tax. We should allow for the self-employed deduction. The American people don't really realize it, although I am sure they feel the pinch, the American people are being taxed now at the highest levels in years and years and years. They need some relief. Some of the money that is coming up here now, going into the surplus, certainly should go back to the people.

The administration cannot come up here and say: We want all this extra spending for what we consider emergencies, and that will not count against Social Security, but, by the way, if you allow for some tax cuts for the people who earned it in the first place, oh, by the way, you are taking that out of Social Security. That kind of argument, I don't believe, in this atmosphere, is going to sell this year.

But we talked about the fair way to do tax cuts. We talked about what we might want to do next year in terms of more tax cuts, across-the-board rate cuts next year, and how we can begin to make progress in preserving Social Security.

We also talked about the importance of keeping our commitment on the balanced budget last year, sticking to the caps. Yes, there may be some real emergencies we will have to address, but other than that, we need to stick to the caps we agreed to. We gave our word 1 year ago, and we ought to stick to it.

Then we talked about other issues. Higher education—we have a conference committee meeting this week. Hopefully, they will complete agreement on the conference report on higher education this week—certainly within the next few days—so that our children will have access to the colleges—community colleges and universities all across this country. We will get that done.

Mr. President, we talked about the importance of this bankruptcy reform. That brings me to this particular issue. This legislation is long overdue. We have a system now in America which encourages people to take bankruptcy and get out of their debts. We have a system that does not take into consideration that small businessman or woman, that furniture store that is run by the husband and the wife. They are trying to make ends meet. They are selling furniture on credit, and people who are supposedly buying that furniture are declaring bankruptcy or just walking away from what they owe and getting out of their debts. We need reform. This is bipartisan. It came out of the committee of jurisdiction by a wide margin.

I know Senator DURBIN, Senator DASCHLE, Senator GRASSLEY on this side, Senator HATCH—a number of Senators have worked on this legislation. We need to get it done. We are this close to having it go down because Senator KENNEDY wants to offer the minimum wage increase to bankruptcy reform. It is not related to bankruptcy reform, but he insists on it being added to this bill.

It is curious to me, why this bill? It could be to any other bill. Oh, no; he wants this one. I suspect it is because he knows that this is a bill that the leadership on both sides would really like to have. But he is willing to take down this very important legislation to be able to offer his minimum wage increase, even though we have had minimum wage increases the last 2 years in a row and I have had store owners, restaurant owners, self-employed individuals who have little small businesses who have come to me and said:

> OK, we made it the last time, but we are at the limit. We have had to let people go so we can make a living. We are working more hours. But if we have to go through two more, or three more, minimum wage increases, we are going to go out of business. At a minimum, we are going to have to lay people off.

But here is my attitude. If Senator KENNEDY will be reasonable and will agree to a time limit, he can offer his amendment and we will have a vote. But then I think we ought to be able to go on to the bankruptcy bill itself and complete the work with a reasonable time limit and amendments on that.

Some folks say you always want to limit amendments. If you limit a bill to 15 amendments, that is not what I would call a big limit. And I am not saying 15, but something reasonable so we can get bankruptcy done, so we can come back to Interior appropriations, let the Senator from Wisconsin come back again, you know, have something to say, have another vote on Interior appropriations involving campaign finance reform. But at what point are we going to say, ''OK, we played our games''? You have had your votes. We have had our votes on campaign finance reform. We have had votes on bankruptcy reform. We have had votes on national missile defense. We have had all these other votes. But at some point we have to say, ''OK, we have dealt with it, we made our point, and we are going to move on the people's business,'' whether it is the Interior appropriations bill or the next appropriations bill. I understand the plan on the D.C. appropriations bill is to offer a whole series of nonrelevant amendments on that bill.