and to making sure that we honor them by fulfilling our commitments to them.

I see one of the many veterans of World War II serving still in the Senate, and I will yield to my friend and neighbor, the distinguished senior Senator from New York.

Mr. MOYNIHAN. Mr. President, I had not intended to speak in this debate. This is the fourth time this amendment has come to the floor since I have been present. But the speeches, statements, the addresses by the Senator from Nebraska and the Senator from Virginia compel me simply to bear witness to them. There are 10 Members in the Senate today, 10 remaining persons, who were in uniform in World War II.

I was in the Navy—not heroically; and I was called up again briefly in Korea. I was part of that generation in which service to the Nation was so deeply honored, and lived with horror to see the disrespect shown those who answered the country's service in Vietnam, as they were asked to do. They were commanded to do so and they had taken an oath to obey.

What a thrilling thing it is to see, two such exemplars, men of heroism, achievement and spotless honor, come to this floor and speak as they have done. We take one oath which binds us today. Those who have been in the military have taken earlier oaths. Our oath is to uphold and defend the Constitution of the United States against all enemies, foreign and domestic—not ''foreign or,'' not just ''foreign.'' This was added over the course of the 19th century.

Surely, there would be no one, however unintentionally—and I say this as a member of the American Legion—who would propose that to debase the First Amendment to the Constitution meets the criteria of upholding and defending it.

Those two men have defended their nation in battle—one in the Navy, one in the Marines. I speak as one who was involved. I was in 20 years, altogether, before being discharged. I have to grant, I was not aware that I was discharged, but it turned up later in the file somewhere.

Our oath is solemn, and it is binding, and they—Senators ROBB and KERREY—stand there as witness to what it requires of us. If we cannot do this on this floor, what can we expect Americans to do on battlefields, in the skies, under the seas, and on the land in the years ahead?

Please, I say to all Senators, heed them and walk away from this trivializing of our most sacred trust. Defeat this amendment.

I thank the Chair.

Mr. DASCHLE. Will the majority leader allow me to make one brief comment before he propounds his unanimous-consent request?

Mr. LOTT. Yes.

Mr. DASCHLE. Mr. President, I came to the floor to thank the distinguished senior Senator from New York, but also my two colleagues, Senators ROBB and KERREY, for their extraordinary statements on the Senate floor. I hope the American people have had the opportunity to hear, and I hope the opportunity to read what they have said is made to schoolkids and others who have given a great deal of thought to our Constitution and the reason our Founding Fathers wrote as they did.

Their eloquence and their power and their extraordinary persuasiveness ought to be tonic for us all late in the day on an afternoon which has seen a good debate. I am hopeful people have had the opportunity to hear this contribution, above and beyond all of those made so far in this debate.

I yield the floor.

VETERANS BENEFITS

Mr. WELLSTONE. Mr. President, I wish to make one other point, which is not a constitutional argument, but it does have a lot to do with veterans. I say that we have spent some time on this, and we should; it is not an unimportant matter. But I also hope we will spend time on the floor of the Senate talking about a range of other very important issues that affect veterans. I am amazed that every time I meet with veterans in Minnesota, or in other parts of the country, I hear about the ways in which veterans fall between the cracks. We have a budget this year that is better than a flatline budget, but Senator KENNEDY is out here—a health care Senator—and he knows that better than anybody in the Senate.

The fact is, we have an aging veteran population like we have an aging population in general, and that is all for the good because people are living longer. We don't have any real way right now of helping those veterans the way we should. We passed the millennium bill, but the question is, Will the appropriations be there? We ought to be talking about the health care needs of veterans as well. We ought to be talking about how we are going to make sure those veterans can stay at home and live at home with dignity, with home-based health care.

I was at a medical center in Minneapolis, which is a real flagship hospital. It is not uncommon, when you go visit with veterans, you will see spouses who are there with their husbands, or maybe out in the waiting room or the lobby relaxing. You can talk to them for 3 minutes and realize they are scared to death about their husband going home. Maybe they had a knee or a hip operation, or maybe they have cancer. The spouses are mainly women. They don't know how they are going to take care of their husbands.

There isn't even any support for respite care. When are we going to talk about that issue? When are we going to talk about the number of veterans who are homeless? When are we going to talk about the number of them who are Vietnam vets, because they are struggling with posttraumatic syndrome and because they are struggling with substance abuse and they don't get the treatment? When are we going to be talking about this overall budget for veterans' health care, which is not a national-line budget?

There is an increase from the President this year—I am glad for that—but it doesn't really take into account all of the gaps and all of the investment we need to make. When are we going to do that?

I did not come to the floor to not speak to this amendment. I have spoken with as much as I can muster as to why I oppose it. But I also want to say—I want this to be part of my formal remarks because I don't think it is off the Record—colleagues, that I hope we will talk about the whole set of other issues that are very important, not only to veterans but to the American people.

I can assure you that I have worked with veterans to put together their independent budget. That is a whole coalition of veterans organizations. It is really shocking how many veterans fall between the cracks. We have a lot of work to do. We are talking about people's lives. It is no way to say thanks to veterans when we don't come through with the health care we promised them.

I want to make it clear that I hope we will soon focus on these issues as well. I hope the veterans community will—I know the veterans community will—focus on these issues as well. I spend an awful lot of time with veterans. I have a lot of meetings with veterans and with county veteran service officers. These issues come up over and over again.

THE FREEDOM TO FARM ACT

Mr. WELLSTONE. Mr. President, as much as I hate to recognize this, this is the fourth anniversary of the passage by the House and the Senate of the ''freedom to fail'' bill.

On this date in 1996, both houses of Congress approved a new farm bill, described then as ''the most sweeping change in agriculture since the Depression. It would get rid of government subsidies to farmers over the next seven years.''

The bill has made sweeping changes in agriculture—it has produced one of the worst economic crises that rural American has ever experienced. Thanks to the Freedom to Farm, or as I call it the Freedom to Fail Act, tens of thousands of farm families are in jeopardy of losing their livelihoods and life savings.

The Freedom to Farm bill is not saving tax payers money, in fact we have spent $19 billion more in the first 4 years of the 1996 farm bill than was supposed to be spent through the 7 year life of the law.

However, what has resulted is the precipitous loss of family farmers because this legislation has not provided