

good faith and we appreciate that. What I am trying to do this morning is to see if I can help get the rest of the way. I think in this arcane area of election law, where I think, frankly, the Senators from Missouri and Connecticut and New York know more about this nationally than do I, it is very complicated. But I think there is the framework for a genuine compromise. If we stick with that kind of outline, I think we can still get there and we ought to try with this bill which, as a result of efforts of the Senator from Missouri and the Senator from Connecticut, has a lot of good in it. It has a lot of useful provisions. I am for it, but we have to get over this particular problem.

Mr. BOND. Will the Senator yield?

Mr. WYDEN. Of course.

Mr. BOND. Just a further question. I stated very clearly that I applaud and support the Senator's premise that we ought to make sure the registration the first time is legitimate because that is where the problem begins. I will ask the Senator a two-part question: Does he understand that existing motor voter law does not permit effective ascertainment of the legitimacy of a registration upon registration, No. 1? And, No. 2, that the bill before us would not apply to anybody who is already registered?

We had set up these requirements. Is the Senator aware we set up these requirements only for people registering after the date of the act, and they only have to meet the requirements to prove they are a live, qualified human being, one time—either upon registration or upon the first vote? Is the Senator aware of those two things?

Mr. WYDEN. Mr. President, the Senator makes a valid point with respect to the first part. With respect to the second part, I and others think the motor voter law has been an important step forward. We are concerned about the implication that some of the spirit and substance of it could be unraveled. That is why we are trying to stay at the table with the distinguished Senator from Missouri and work this out.

I think if we can get an acceptance of the proposition that a signature should be valid to the ballot—if that basic proposition can be accepted, which is something we believe works in 27 States—I think we can do a great deal to reach out on the other concerns the Senator from Missouri has. He has raised them consistently. He understands the substance of this very well. We are trying to reach out to him in an effort to get this compromise.

But what we need in return is to know that when people actually vote after they have gone through what I would call a real gauntlet of steps to make sure there are antifraud provisions at the front end, then let us have a signature be valid for the ballot, a system which works very well in our State.

I will close by way of saying I think people are stunned by this. In the Sen-

ate special election in 1996, we tripled the rate of voter participation from the previous Senate special elections in this country. This is a system that has empowered voters.

That is why it is so important in those 27 States to seniors, the disabled, minorities, and others. With record turnouts, people are being prosecuted now in a small number of instances. Where there is fraud, we would like to find a way to protect against that as it relates to having a signature be valid to the ballot.

In return, we are willing to meet the Senator from Missouri halfway and more on the front end so that we come down aggressively on fraud in the area where we believe it can do the most.

My time has expired. I am inclined to get back to the negotiating table with the Senators from Missouri, Connecticut, and New York so we can get a bipartisan compromise.

I yield the floor.

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. The Senator from Missouri.

Mr. BOND. Mr. President, my chief of staff and my counsel negotiated 4 to 5 hours a day for 6 months, and they thought they had reached the end. If the Senator from Oregon and I are now talking about different things than what he has outlined, it would seem to make very good sense. No. 1, he says make sure there is a real, live person qualified to vote when they register. Hallelujah. If we can do that, then I agree that they sign a registration, and any time they go to vote, all they have to do is sign, whether it is a mail-in or whether it is voting in person.

But what I want to make sure of is when that first registration comes in, there is something to identify it. It is not a gauntlet. It is picking one of the pieces of evidence that shows they are a real, live human being, or, if we can find a better way, that we can even task the local election authorities to use money we provide them to verify.

If they confirm that the registrations are legitimate, and if they deal with the problem that the Senator from New York and the Senator from Connecticut laid out about the 8 years full of clogged rolls, there is no problem that I have with letting people vote by signature once it is proven they are real, live human beings at the beginning of the registration process. If that is the basis, we can start over again, and see all of you in July, maybe.

But the Senator from Connecticut is good humored, equally determined, and is willing to go at it again.

If what the Senator from Oregon laid out is what I said, then I think there is some good possibility that we can get agreement. But sending in a signature alone is not going to cut the mustard.

We will get back to the Senator from New York on the number of people doubledipping. The December 19th issue of the New York Post reports on doubledippers. We will get back with the information on that. That is a good reason to clean up the registration rolls. I hope we can do that as well.

I thank the Chair. I thank particularly my colleague from Connecticut for his good humor throughout this.

I suggest the absence of a quorum.

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. The clerk will call the roll.

The legislative clerk proceeded to call the roll.

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

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

Mr. GRASSLEY. Mr. President, I would like to speak in morning business for about 9 minutes.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator has that right.

(The remarks of Mr. GRASSLEY pertaining to the introduction of S. 1974 are printed in today's RECORD under "Statements on Introduced Bills and Joint Resolutions.")

EXTENSION OF MORNING BUSINESS

Mr. REID. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that morning business be extended until the hour of 2 o'clock.

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

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Minnesota is recognized.

(The remarks of Mr. WELLSTONE pertaining to the submission of S.R. 213 are printed in Today's RECORD under "Statements on Submitted Resolutions.")

THE STEELWORKERS OF AMERICA

Mr. WELLSTONE. Mr. President, I thank the steelworkers of America for coming to Washington, DC, today. I think it is a historic gathering. Time is not neutral or on the side of these workers and their families, including the taconite workers in the Iron Range in Minnesota. I could spend hours on our trade policy and the ways in which I do not think we have a fair trade policy. But when you have the best workers who care fiercely about their families and their communities in our country and essentially the dumping of steel and, for that matter, semifinished steel in our market, way below the cost of production in other countries, much less quite often produced at wages that are deplorable wages, the effect is devastating.

The request and the demand of the White House, which follows up on an International Trade Commission recommendation, is for a 40-percent import fee. If we get that fee, then we will be able to compete effectively. If we don't get that fee, I think it will be very difficult to see a future for the steel industry in our country. There will be no way we can cover legacy costs, health care costs of retirees; and a whole lot of very decent, good, working people are going to be spat out of this economy.

Nobody is asking for a leg up on anybody else. Frankly, when you see the