

Members of the leadership here. I understand as well it is not easy for TRENT LOTT and DON NICKLES, the leadership on the other side.

My hope is when we come back here in January we get about the business of grappling with the underlying questions. We spent a lot of time on Iraq and the other questions. The American people want to know why we cannot spend a few days talking about the issues they worry most about. When they get up in the morning and they go to bed at night, they worry and they sit around talking about how they will lick these issues. They would like to know we would spend at least as much time on those questions as some of the other issues.

Mr. BURNS. Mr. President, I rise today to support the hard work of the conferees on the election reform conference report. I did not hesitate to vote against S. 565 because it unfairly disadvantaged rural States and did not fix the most grievous flaws with the current system. I am pleased to report that significant improvements have been made from the original bill, and I support this attempt to give greater integrity to the electoral process.

We can now ensure that the ballots from our servicemen and women overseas are properly handled. Their ballots cannot be refused based on early submission, and each will bear a postmark in order to avoid recent election debacles from occurring again.

All States will receive a minimum grant award, with the potential to apply for additional funds, an improvement over the Senate-passed version, which would have disadvantaged rural States with a solely competitive grant program. Most importantly, this report identifies remedies for election fraud. States may purge any individuals who do not vote in two consecutive Federal elections and are unresponsive to follow-up by State officials. We must clean up our voter rolls, and this provision gives States the vehicle to do so, should they choose to use it. This is by no means a perfect report, but I am sufficiently convinced that we have taken great strides to better our voting process.

ORDER OF PROCEDURE

Mr. DODD. I ask unanimous consent tomorrow's cloture vote be vitiated and that the Senate proceed to the consideration of S. Res. 304 immediately upon the disposition of H.R. 5010, the Defense appropriations bill. I further ask unanimous consent that tomorrow's order with respect to the election reform conference report, H.R. 3295, commence at 11:40 a.m. and tomorrow's order with respect to the Defense appropriations conference report commence at 2:15 p.m., with all other provisions of the above-mentioned orders remaining in effect.

I am told this is cleared by the minority as well.

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

Mr. DODD. I yield back all the remaining time on the conference report.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection, the time is yielded back.

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

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

ONE-YEAR ANNIVERSARY OF SENATE ANTHRAX ATTACK

Mr. DASCHLE. Mr. President, one year ago today, a letter containing about two grams of anthrax was opened in my office. My staff, Senator FEINGOLD's staff, and the law enforcement and medical personnel who responded to the incident were suddenly thrown into a world of frightening uncertainty.

Twenty-eight people tested positive for exposure to multiple lethal doses of anthrax, and about 45 others were presumed to be significantly exposed.

They endured 100 to 120 days of antibiotics and the fear and anxiety that accompany the largest bioterrorist attack on U.S. soil. All the while, they continued to come to work and do their jobs—jobs that included trying to protect the rest of America from a similar fate.

Of course, the effects of this attacks were felt well beyond my office. Hundreds of others from the immediate area were placed on preventive antibiotics. House and Senate office buildings were closed for several days, and the Hart building was closed for 3 months.

Every member and employee of the Senate was affected, and I must say it was an inspiration to see how well our community pulled together to ensure that the Senate continued to address the business of the country.

In retrospect, we were very lucky. We knew exactly when and where people had been exposed, which gave us an advantage that others did not have—the opportunity to provide those who were exposed with immediate preventive care. And while there were some terrifying times, no one in the Senate community died as a result of their exposure to anthrax.

Sadly, others were not so lucky. Robert Stevens and Ernesto Blanco had no idea they had been exposed to anthrax when they fell ill. October 5 is the anniversary that Ernesto Blanco remembers; October 5 is the day his co-worker, Robert Stevens, died.

Next week America's postal workers will mark two more tragic anniversaries: October 21 is the day Thomas L. Morris, Jr. died of inhalation anthrax, and his colleague Joseph P. Curseen, Jr. succumbed the following day.

Because it was not yet understood that the deadly bacteria could escape

through envelopes, Mary Morris, Celeste Curseen, and their families and friends have endured a terribly painful year.

Thomas Morris, Joseph Curseen, and all of America's postal workers continued to work even when they knew they could risk for exposure to anthrax or other biological or chemical agents. Postal workers accept those and other risks every day, and for their courage and dedication, they deserve a nation's gratitude.

Those who knew and loved Kathy Nguyen and Otillie Lundgren have their own anniversaries approaching: October 31 and November 17. Exactly how these women were exposed remains a sad mystery.

Still others, including Ernesto Blanco, LeRoy Richmond, and Naomi Wallace, survived the disease. But many of them are suffering from debilitating often painful long-term health effects. They have no anniversary to mark the end of their ordeal, for it is ongoing.

All of these people, like the first responders and Senate employees exposed to anthrax, were innocent victims.

My staff and I feel a special kinship with the families of those who died and with those who continue to struggle with their health. On their behalf, and on behalf of the entire Senate, I extend our deepest sympathy to those to who lost friends and loved ones and our very best wishes for a full recovery to those who survived the disease.

What else shall we offer these families? They need more than our sympathy. They—and all Americans—need our absolute resolve to ensure that our country does everything it reasonably can to prevent and address the bioterrorist threat, so that others do not suffer what they have suffered. As tragic as the anthrax attacks of last fall were, they could have been much worse, and we must prepare ourselves for and defend against the possibility of far greater threats.

We must be vigilant in our effort to identify and neutralize terrorist cells. We must develop better ways to detect chemical and biological agents in the air, water, and food supplies. We must develop better vaccines. We must develop better treatments for those who are exposed to deadly viruses, bacteria, and agents. And we must develop better coordination between the various public health, intelligence and other government entities responsible for addressing the bioterrorist threat.

The victims and their families also need and deserve to know that the perpetrator or perpetrators of these terrible crimes will be brought to justice. We are all frustrated by the fact that the person or persons responsible are still out there, capable of striking again. This is a complex case, and I know the FBI has focused many resources on it. I am hopeful they will soon be in a position to bring the case to a successful close.

One year ago today, an anthrax-laden letter was opened in my office.