

huge stake in the heart of the purchasing power of Medicare for 43 million senior citizens to be able to negotiate those prices down by bulk purchases.

It is clearly time for the Congress to stand up for our constituents and to help lower these prescription drug prices.

I am looking forward to working with Senators in a bipartisan way to embrace this Vitter-Nelson amendment.

Thank you.

I yield the floor.

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore, The Senator from North Dakota.

Mr. DORGAN. Mr. President, my colleague from Florida was describing the issue of prescription drug pricing in our country—an amendment that would be offered to a subsequent appropriations bill dealing with the FDA and its enforcement of the reimportation of prescription drugs.

Let me point out, as he properly said, that Senator SNOWE and myself and others, a large bipartisan group, Senators MCCAIN and KENNEDY, introduced legislation—and have been blocked from having it considered for some many months in the Senate—dealing with the comprehensive approach to reimportation of FDA-approved drugs.

The American consumer is now charged the highest prices for prescription drugs in the entire world. Let me say that again. The American consumer is charged the highest prices for prescription drugs anywhere in the world. It is not fair. That pricing policy has to change. One of the ways to change it will be to put downward pressure on pricing in this country by allowing American consumers to access those identical FDA-approved drugs, some of which are actually made in this country; to reimport them from other countries, FDA-approved, made and manufactured in manufacturing plants approved by the FDA.

My colleague talked about Canada and the United States. That is an obvious issue. My State borders Canada, and we see people coming back and forth going to Canada to purchase prescription drugs, in some cases for one-tenth the price they are charged in this country.

We need to find a way to pass the comprehensive legislation. My colleague from Florida cosponsored that bill and worked with us on it—myself, Senator SNOWE from Maine, Senator MCCAIN, Senator GRASSLEY, Senator KENNEDY, a pretty significant bipartisan group in the Senate. We have not had a vote on that only because it has been blocked. We will have a vote on that in the next session of Congress if we are not able to offer it in the coming weeks. In the next session of Congress, we will have a vote on it.

We will have very substantial numbers in the Senate supporting that legislation. When we do, it will be good news for American consumers who now pay the highest prices in the world for

prescription drugs. That is unfair. I certainly support the amendment that deals with a funding limitation that would be offered as described by my colleague from Florida. That in itself does not solve the larger problem. He has indicated that. I believe Senator VITTER would indicate that as well. It is a step in the right direction.

I am supportive of it with the understanding that we will have a more comprehensive piece of legislation on this issue which will be introduced, will be offered, and will be voted on with a very large majority in the Senate. The House of Representatives has already demonstrated its support for such a plan. If we can't get it done in the lameduck session, as soon as we turn the calendar and begin a new year, I am convinced we will get this done.

I appreciated the words of my colleague from Florida.

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

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

The assistant legislative clerk proceeded to call the roll.

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

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. Without objection, it is so ordered.

The senior Senator from North Dakota is recognized.

FARMER DISASTER ASSISTANCE

Mr. CONRAD. Mr. President, yesterday I withdrew an amendment to provide disaster assistance to farmers and ranchers for the disasters of 2005 and 2006. I did so on the basis of an assurance by the majority leader that is in the RECORD very clearly: we would go to the Agriculture appropriations bill today, I would have a chance to offer my amendment today, the rights of all Senators were protected, and that they would have their rights. Now I am told there is an objection to going to the Agriculture appropriations bill.

I say to my colleagues, that leaves me with no alternative but to object to other business. I, in good faith, removed my amendment yesterday, took it down, with the assurance—and that is in the RECORD, very clearly in the RECORD—from the majority leader, the assurance that we would go to Agriculture appropriations today. I alert my colleagues I kept my word. I would hope others would keep theirs.

If that is not to be, I will be in a position in which I will be objecting to any other business coming before the Senate. If they want to have a live quorum, we can go through that exercise, but we will go through it repeatedly. This is not fair. It is not right. We have tried repeatedly to get this bill up so we can have a vote. It has previously passed the Senate with 77 votes in favor.

What we are asking for is not unreasonable. We have reduced the cost dra-

matically. Here, a person's word is their bond. I kept my word. I am expecting others to keep theirs.

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. The Senator from North Dakota.

Mr. DORGAN. Mr. President, my colleague was on the Senate floor yesterday, as I was, and he was offering an amendment on the Military Construction appropriations bill dealing with agricultural disaster. In exchange for withdrawing that amendment on the Military Construction bill, he was given some assurance that the Agriculture appropriations bill would come next to the Senate and he would be able to offer that amendment on the Agriculture appropriations bill.

Let me, first of all, support my colleague, Senator CONRAD. He knows and I know that the Agriculture appropriations bill includes a disaster piece that I added in the committee many months ago. That amendment I offered in the committee was one we had worked on with Senator CONRAD and many other Senators on a bipartisan basis. It was Senator CONRAD and myself who were recognized in the committee to offer the agricultural disaster plan. That was in the spring of this year.

Subsequent to that, we have now had a very substantial drought that has enveloped a fair part of this country, devastating some additional crops, and we have not been able to get the Agriculture appropriations bill back to the Senate so we can make an adjustment to the disaster plan for farmers, an adjustment to include the 2006 disaster, but we have not been able to get it to the floor of the Senate. That is why my colleague, Senator CONRAD, offered it yesterday as an amendment to the Military Construction bill. We have already passed it twice in the Senate; that is, an agricultural disaster plan.

Two times I added it in the Appropriations Committee. On two occasions—I believe both were with supplemental bills—both occasions we went to a conference with the House of Representatives. I had money in for a farm disaster plan. In both circumstances, we went to the conference; the Senate conferees, at my request, had a vote, insisted on the Senate position which included an agricultural disaster plan for family farmers who got hit with the weather disaster; and on both occasions the President threatened a veto and got the House conferees, at the request of the Speaker, to object. Therefore, twice it got knocked out in a conference.

The third time now, I have added the farm disaster piece to the Agriculture appropriations bill. We did that before this growing season in which we had a very devastating drought, so that needs to be adjusted.

My colleague, Senator CONRAD, is offering the farm disaster piece that would try to reach out to those family farmers who now do not know whether they will be able to continue farming, reach out with a helping hand to say: You are not alone. We cannot make

you whole, but we can help you during a tough time.

This Congress has already said to the farmers in the Gulf of Mexico: You will get disaster aid because you got hit with Hurricane Katrina and you lost your crops. You get disaster aid. This Congress has essentially said to other farmers and this President has said to other farmers: You might have lost all of your crops from a drought or a flood, but it didn't have a name named "Katrina." It is not like a hurricane, it is not named; therefore, you are not going to get any disaster help—just those who got hit with Hurricane Katrina and lost their crops. That is not fair. No one in this country would think that is fair.

So what we are trying to do—I in the Committee on Appropriations and my colleague, Senator CONRAD, here in the Senate with this amendment—is to say to farmers who are out there wondering: Will our family be able to continue on the farm next year? Will we be able to do spring planting? Will we have the capability to put a crop in? At this point, the answer for many of them, thousands of them, is: No, we are not going to be able to continue farming because we had a disaster. Where a crop should have existed on our land, there was barren land, no seeds, no crop.

It used to be in our farm bill we had a disaster title. When a disaster occurred, we, with that disaster title, could say to farmers: We want to help you. Now there is no disaster title in the farm bill, and each year when there is a disaster we have to reach out to try to create a disaster bill.

This country goes almost every place in the world to help when there is trouble. What about at home? What about when there is trouble on the family farm? I know that is far from the city lights and far from the cameras, but the fact is, that is real trouble for families whose dream is about to end because they cannot continue farming. Why? Is it because they mismanaged? Is it because they are not good farmers, because they can't grow a crop? No. It is because a drought came around and destroyed everything on their farm or it is because a flood came and washed it away.

In 2005, in parts of our State, there were over a million acres that could not be planted—think of that—could not be planted at all, and nearly another 1 million planted acres and all the seeds were washed away with torrential rain where one-third of a year's worth of rain fell in 24 hours. Think of that. Then you say to those farmers: You know what. Tough luck. You are on your own.

That is not the way this country has dealt with farmers. We have always believed there is value and importance in having farmers on the land farming and creating America's food supply. We have always said: We want to have a bridge across troubled times for you. When price depressions occur, when

natural disasters occur, we want to create a safety net for you. We have always done that.

Now what happens with disasters, with no disaster title in the farm bill, we face a situation where, because of two years—2005, with substantial flooding, and in 2006, a protracted drought in some significant areas of the country—we face a prospect of losing a great many family farmers just because this country will have said—if we do not do what Senator CONRAD and I and others want to do, this country will have said: It doesn't matter. The only farmers we will help are in the gulf region, those who were hit by a hurricane. Some of my colleagues have said it is tempting to name a drought. Give it a name, if that is what is required here. Give these natural disasters a name. We do with hurricanes.

My colleague is suggesting the right remedy. We have, apparently, some people saying we need to go to another piece of legislation. Perhaps there is the India nuclear agreement.

My colleague says, properly—and I was in the Senate when this exchange took place—my colleague says: Yesterday, I withdrew my amendment from the Military Construction bill—and he did—and I heard the discussion as a result of his withdrawing that amendment. I believe there is an understanding that the next piece of legislation we go to, which would be this afternoon, is the Agriculture appropriations bill. That will give him the opportunity—and me and others—to both introduce and speak to farm disaster aid that is long overdue, that should have been done long ago.

Senator CONRAD has indicated that he would object to other procedures and other proceedings unless we reach an understanding of going to the Agriculture appropriations bill. I certainly support that and would be in the Senate with him, prepared to object, just as he would.

That is the background. That is the story. My colleague, Senator CONRAD, is perfectly within his rights. He is absolutely accurate in terms of what we understood when we left the Senate yesterday.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Mr. DEMINT). The Senator from North Dakota.

Mr. CONRAD. Mr. President, I thank my colleague, Senator DORGAN, and I also point to the RECORD, the RECORD from yesterday, page S. 10900. It says:

Mr. CONRAD. Mr. President, I notice the majority leader has returned to the floor. I tried to recount for our colleagues the status of our discussion, and the understanding that we had reached, that I would withdraw my amendment from this bill with the understanding that we would go to the Agriculture Appropriations bill tomorrow and have a chance to offer it there. All Senators' rights would be reserved. That is the status of it. I just ask if that is the majority leader's understanding. If it is, I will then be willing to withdraw my amendment for the Military Construction bill and we can conclude that.

Mr. FRIST. Mr. President, in the last hour or so we have had numerous discussions on the floor, as our colleagues have observed, and many participated in the discussion. My understanding and the general agreement we have is to go to the Agriculture Appropriations bill tomorrow. That does facilitate the progress we need to make on the current bill that is on the floor, which I hope and expect to be able to finish tonight. If that is the case, we plan on going to the Agriculture bill tomorrow. All rights would be reserved for all Senators, of course. We don't have an agreement, but that is the intention.

The disaster ag relief bill is very important and has been talked about by Republicans and Democrats and we expect to debate it tomorrow. It is a more appropriate place for this amendment. So I think this is a good understanding.

Mr. President, I withdrew my amendment based on that understanding. I did it in good faith. I did it to accommodate my colleagues. I did it so other legislation could move. But now I am told the agreement is not going to be kept. That is not acceptable. That is just not acceptable. That puts me in the position now of having to object to proceeding to other business. I have no alternative but to do that.

I am here representing thousands of farm families across our State and really right down the heartland of the country. We have 26 cosponsors for this legislation, totally bipartisan, about as many Republicans as Democrats on the bill because we have had the third worst drought in the country's history. That is the reality.

I have a letter on my desk from a man talking about the disaster. And in that letter he said to me—this is from last year when we had terrible flooding—he had 26 inches of rain over a very short period of time. The result was he had no production, and he lost \$120,000. Even with the crop insurance, it did not come close to covering his bills, and that he and his wife and his family were going to be forced off the land if there were not some assistance.

Let me just recount the history. Always in our past when anyone suffered from natural disaster in this country, anywhere, Congress responded. Congress responded. We responded when there was Hurricane Katrina. We responded when there was Hurricane Rita. In fact, this gentleman says: I urged our delegation to support the victims of Hurricane Katrina. We suffered the same kind of loss here, a complete economic loss, but there were no news cameras seeing our disaster. We had a slow-motion disaster but every bit as devastating.

The question is, Are those people going to be given any kind of helping hand, the kind of thing we have done repeatedly in the past?

Now, we don't budget for disasters. Some have said it is a budget buster. No, it is not. No. 1, there is no budget. No. 2, to the extent we have agreed on guidelines for spending, it has always been understood, it has always been the case for the 20 years I have been here that natural disasters are treated separate and apart from the budget. It

is very hard to budget for natural disasters. Nobody knows the extent or when they will occur. As a result, we have always dealt with disaster spending as an emergency outside the budget.

Now, how much money is being talked about here? Mr. President, \$4.5 billion for 2 years of disasters. And this is a national bill. This is not restricted to one region, one location. This will assist anybody who had a loss of at least 35 percent. And if you have a loss of at least 35 percent, only then do you start to get any assistance; and then you only get a percentage of the loss, 50 percent covered. So you get nothing on the first 35 percent of loss, nothing. Only if you have a loss of at least 35 percent do you get anything. If your loss is over 35 percent, you will get assistance on a highly restricted basis.

The bankers of my State have told me if this kind of assistance is not forthcoming, 5 to 10 percent of the farmers and ranchers in our State will go out of business, not because of any fault of theirs, but because of the most incredible swing in weather that we have ever seen.

Last year, we had flooding that prevented a million acres from even being planted. It was not even planted. This year, we have had the third worst drought, according to the scientists, in our Nation's history, a drought that Senator DORGAN and I saw firsthand in a tour with our Governor and agricultural leaders of our State.

I even saw irrigated corn—irrigated corn—in which the ears never filled out because the heat was so unbelievably intense. In one day in my hometown, it was 112 degrees. I am not talking about the heat index. I am talking about the actual temperature, 112 degrees.

In July and August of this last year, we had extreme temperatures day after day after day, and no rain. It was devastating. And it is just not my State. It is right down the heartland of the country: South Dakota, Nebraska, Oklahoma, Texas, over into Minnesota, Montana.

There are 26 cosponsors of this bill. It is fully bipartisan. This legislation has passed overwhelmingly in the Senate with 77 votes.

So I just say to my colleagues, I was given a commitment yesterday that we would go to the Agriculture appropriations bill today, and that I would have a chance to offer my amendment; that Senators could raise any objections they might have. They could raise a rule XVI objection. By the way, we now know that would not lie against our bill. We also know that they could raise a budget point of order. That would require a supermajority vote. We are fully prepared to do that and to accept the will of the body.

But what is not fair is not to have a vote. And what is especially not fair is not to keep the commitment that was made yesterday publicly and privately that we would go to the Agriculture appropriations bill today and have an

opportunity for a vote. That was the commitment that was made. This leaves me with no alternative but to object to going to other business. I will make that objection. And if I have to do it repeatedly, I will make it repeatedly.

With that, I yield the floor.

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

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

Mr. CONRAD. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that Senator LAUTENBERG be recognized for 10 minutes and that I be recognized at the end of that period.

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

The Senator from New Jersey.

HONORING OUR ARMED FORCES

Mr. LAUTENBERG. Mr. President, I thank the Senator from North Dakota for enabling me to make some remarks about the war and where things are as we see them.

It has been more than a month since we were last together in the Senate. While we were out of session, the war in Iraq continued to rage. We in the Congress had the pleasure of going home to our families, our friends, familiar circumstances and surroundings. Our troops in Iraq, however, didn't have that opportunity while we were off, so to speak, for almost 6 weeks. Everyone knows that we did work at home, but we were in familiar, safe territory. The troops were in harm's way, trying to bring order to a country in absolute chaos.

Tragically, many of our people there did not survive since the Senate was last in session. During the recess, America lost 157 brave men and women in combat, 146 in Iraq and 11 in Afghanistan, and 649 were seriously wounded. Most of us have been to Walter Reed and the naval hospital in Bethesda and had opportunities to talk to some of those people who are so seriously wounded, some limbless, some sightless. Their pain goes way beyond that which is directly part of their wound; their pain goes on for the rest of their lives.

Now here we are, almost at Thanksgiving. Americans are looking forward to sharing a holiday with family and friends. But in this season of giving and cheer, we have to find a serious way to give some cheer, some recognition for the sacrifices of our soldiers. Outside my office, I have found a way to express thanks to them. We have established a photographic display of those who have lost their lives. It is called the "Faces of the Fallen." It is visited daily by tourists and others

who search the gallery for people they may have known from a hometown or region.

Today I offer another way to honor our courageous men and women. I am going to place the names and hometowns of the 157 troops that we lost since the Senate was last in session in the CONGRESSIONAL RECORD.

Too often when we talk about our fallen troops, they become faceless, if it is not your family, statistics, but we don't want that anymore. We want to recognize, and the American people want to recognize, what is really happening to the fathers, mothers, sisters, and children. They are our children, and many have children of their own.

Among those who perished are PFC Donald S. Brown, 19 years of age, from Succasunna, NJ. I attended his wake 2 weeks ago, met with his family, and LCpl Christopher B. Cosgrove III of Cedar Knolls, NJ. There are many more New Jerseyans who have perished there. The number is almost 80 now. We look around, and they are from States across the country. Almost every State has seen the loss of a former resident, someone with roots in that State:

SGT Bryan Burgess of Garden City, MI;
SGT Courtland A. Kennard of Starkville, MS;
CWO Miles P. Henderson of Amarillo, TX;
CPL Kyle W. Powell of Colorado Springs, CO;
SPC James L. Bridges of Buhl, ID;
LTC Paul J. Finken of Mason City, IA;
LCpl James Brown of Owensville, IN;
SSG Jason D. Whitehouse of Phoenix, AZ;
PFC Jason Franco of Corona, CA;
SGT Luke J. Zimmerman of Luxemburg, WI;
SGT Thomas M. Gilbert of Downers Grove, IL;
SPC Nicholas K. Rogers of Deltona, FL;
MAJ David G. Taylor of Apex, NC;
LCpl Eric W. Herzberg of Severna Park, MD;
CPL Joshua C. Watkins of Jacksonville, FL;
SSG Patrick O. Barlow of Greensboro, NC;
CPL David M. Unger of Leavenworth, KS;
SGT Norman R. Taylor of Blythe, CA;
SSG Garth D. Sizemore of Mount Sterling, KY;
2LT Joshua L. Booth of Fiskdale, MA;
PFC Keith J. Moore of San Francisco, CA;
and
1SG Charles M. King of Mobile, AL.

There are too many more to read them all now.

I ask unanimous consent that a full list of the 157 persons be printed in the RECORD.

There being no objection, the material was ordered to be printed in the RECORD, as follows:

FALLEN HEROES DURING THE SENATE RECESS
Sergeant Bryan Burgess, of Garden City, Michigan
Sergeant First Class Rudy A. Salcido, of Ontario, California
Sergeant Courtland A. Kennard, of Starkville, Mississippi
Staff Sergeant Gregory W.G. McCoy, of Webberville, Michigan
Staff Sergeant Richwell A. Doria, of San Diego, California
Lance Corporal Ryan T. McCaughn, of Manchester, New Hampshire