

for potential members to have a secret ballot. Unions are for the members, not for the union bosses. Members have a right to know. That is what the law passed in 1959 was and is all about. Enforce the law. Be sure union members have a right to know.

I would also like to point out that the legislation does not contain funding for the National All Schedules Prescription Reporting Act—NASPER. Known as NASPER, this law was designed to assist States in setting up prescription drug monitoring programs—to make sure people can't get multiple refills of their restricted prescriptions merely by crossing State lines. Instead, this legislation funds an unauthorized similar program through the Justice Department. Congress should first fund the programs that are authorized by committees that have jurisdiction over the measures. As the lead Republican on the HELP Committee, I know the value of the authorization process—Federal programs are reviewed by Senators and staff to ensure there is value for program beneficiaries and taxpayers alike. Funding unauthorized programs usurps the entire authorizing committee process.

All that being said, there are many provisions in this legislation that are not objectionable, and some of which I support. Like previous years, the bill contains language that prohibits the Labor Secretary from issuing regulations related to the Workforce Investment Act, known as WIA, until the Congress has reauthorized the program. Reauthorizing WIA is a bipartisan priority for the HELP Committee, and a top personal goal of mine that I have been working toward for many years. Congress should first act to reauthorize the law before the administration moves forward with regulations. This reauthorization is long overdue. Modernizing job training programs will result in better, higher paying jobs. Under my chairmanship, we passed this reauthorization—but it was held by Democrats who would not allow the appointment of conferees because of concerns they would not be included in the process. That argument no longer holds true. They control a majority in each legislative body, and a majority on conference committees. Congress needs to pass this legislation to provide training for current and future jobs so Americans have the skills they need to get the best jobs—instead of sending them overseas because we don't have trained workers at home.

This legislation also restores the authority of the Railroad Retirement Board Office of the Inspector General to conduct Railroad Medicare audits and investigations. Similar language was included in previous years, but was dropped in the conference with the House. My hope is that this year we will be successful in restoring that authority. In September, Senator KENNEDY and I, together with Senators BAUCUS and GRASSLEY, weighed in on this issue with the Appropriations

Committee, thanking them for including this language in their bill, and urging them to fight for this provision in conference. Restoring the ability to audit is fiscally responsible, and is the right thing to do.

In closing, while there are valuable provisions in the Labor-HHS spending bill that ought to be enacted, I will be voting against this legislation because of the excessive total spending level, as well as some objectionable policy language that I have discussed today.

I stand ready to work with all of my colleagues on a compromise product that can garner support from both the legislative as well as the executive branch of our Government.

I 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. HARKIN. 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.

MORNING BUSINESS

Mr. HARKIN. Mr. President, I now ask unanimous consent that the Senate proceed to a period of morning business, with Senators permitted to speak for up to 10 minutes each.

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

Mr. HARKIN. Mr. President, I 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. DURBIN. 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.

ONGOING TRAGEDY IN BURMA

Mr. DURBIN. Mr. President, over the past few weeks, I have joined many of my fellow Senators from both sides of the aisle in speaking about the recent events in Burma.

A few weeks ago, the world watched in admiration and support as thousands of Buddhist monks peacefully marched through Burma's largest cities calling for an end to that country's brutal military dictatorship. Amidst tens of thousands of clapping and cheering supporters, the monks chanted "democracy, democracy."

All the while, Nobel laureate Aung San Suu Kyi remained locked under house arrest—an appalling situation that has continued for most of the last 18 years of her life. Despite the shameful detention, the Burmese people have not forgotten it was her political party that won a landslide victory in the 1990 election.

During the recent protests, the monks reportedly reached Suu Kyi's heavily guarded home, where witnesses said she greeted them at her gate in tears.

This scene is moving in its dignity and simplicity—a population peacefully saying: Enough.

What happened next was tragic. The military in Burma used violence, murder, and arbitrary detention to try to halt the calls for change. The military did what all dictatorships do: it used fear to suppress its own people. Yet it is the military that is truly afraid—afraid of the people of Burma, afraid of change, afraid of releasing Aung San Suu Kyi.

This Reuters photograph is so graphic. It shows Burmese military violently attacking peaceful protesters. It also shows a Japanese photographer, Kenji Nagai, being shot at close range. You see his body lying on the street. Mr. Nagai died shortly after this photo was taken. The military's mouthpiece newspaper brazenly said his death was his own fault as he was "inviting danger" by being among the protesters.

Sadly, reports from the past few days are even more tragic. Instead of reaching out to Aung San Suu Kyi and the international community to work toward peace, the military has only furthered its brutal crackdown, hunting down and detaining leaders of the peaceful movement.

Amnesty International has expressed concern that the arrested dissidents will be tortured—a real concern in a country with an abhorrent record of torturing political prisoners. For example, the 2006 State Department Human Rights Report on Burma cites a recent study by the Assistance Association for Political Prisoners that meticulously documents the regular use of electric shocks, beating until unconscious, forced crawling on glass, and threats of rape. The Government is reportedly even hunting down simple participants and bystanders from the rallies, including groups of "those who watched," "those who clapped," and "those who joined in."

Mr. President, this is madness. The United States and international community must not allow this to continue. This is a government with a long and well-documented history of brutality and indifference to its people. For example, in eastern Burma, the military has destroyed 3,000 villages over the past 10 years. It has widely used forced labor and has recruited up to 70,000 child soldiers—70,000 child soldiers—far more than any other country in the world. Today, Burma has an estimated 1.5 million refugees.

Global condemnation of Burma's brutal actions has been loud and swift. European Union foreign ministers have just approved new sanctions against the military junta, including an embargo on the export of wood, gems, and metals, and threatened further penalties. President Bush and First Lady Laura Bush have similarly called for