

statute is very clear. It does not suggest that the prioritization of low-income schools is optional but clearly indicates that first priority be given to the schools with the greatest proportion of low-income children. The statute also removes any reference to dried fruits that previously existed. The program is intended to provide fresh fruits and vegetables only.

As my colleagues may gather from my remarks, I am extremely proud of what we have accomplished in the nutrition title of this farm bill. We have made the title a top priority within the bill and taken pains to ensure that we strengthen our Federal nutrition programs for the tens of millions of children, seniors and families they serve. Of course, we still have a long way to go before we end hunger in this country. But with this legislation we will be moving in a direction of reducing hunger, strengthening our people and building healthier, stronger communities.

Mr. President, in addition to the more than 1,000 farm, conservation, nutrition, consumer and religious organizations who urged us to override this veto, more than 2,700 Americans signed an online petition, which said the following:

We urge Congress to override President Bush's veto of the 2008 farm bill . . . It protects the safety net for all of America's food producers, increases funding to feed our nation's poor, enhances support for important conservation initiatives, and helps make America more energy independent . . . Please vote to override President Bush's veto and enact the 2008 Farm Bill into law.

I will not enter all the names into the RECORD because there are e-mail addresses listed here, and I don't want to make all those public.

I ask consent to have the petition printed in the RECORD.

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

We urge Congress to override President Bush's expected veto of the 2008 Farm Bill which takes our country in a bold new direction. It protects the safety net for all of America's food producers, increases funding to feed our nation's poor, enhances support for important conservation initiatives, and helps make America more energy independent.

The House and the Senate passed the Farm Bill on May 14-15 with enough bipartisan support to override a possible veto by President Bush.

We urge members of Congress to continue to vote for the interests of Americans instead of caving to President Bush who is out of touch with the everyday needs of middle America.

Please vote to override President Bush's veto and enact the 2008 Farm Bill into law.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from North Dakota.

Mr. CONRAD. Mr. President, we should take a moment to appreciate the historic nature of this vote. This is the first time ever a Presidential veto of a farm bill has been overridden. Of course, we all know this is far more

than a farm bill. In fact, that is a misnomer. This is a food bill, a conservation bill, an energy bill—all those things combined in a way that I think should make us all proud. It got 82 votes for a reason. It is a good product. It got 316 votes on a Presidential override because it is a good product.

I thank especially the leadership of the Agriculture Committee. Our chairman, Senator HARKIN, who is indefatigable, to have a vision to turn farm policy in a new direction, to be more conservation oriented—history will treat him very kindly. Senator CHAMBLISS—we call him, in our office “Cool Hand Luke” because you couldn't ask for a better partner throughout an effort than Senator CHAMBLISS has been to all of us. He has been steadfast. He has been calm, cool, and collected in a lot of situations that demanded real restraint in order to keep things together. I also thank him for the friendship we have formed throughout this effort.

To the staffs—I wish to especially thank my staff: Jim Miller, my lead negotiator who has given body and soul to this effort. I calculate he spent more than 3,000 hours over the last 2 years on this effort; Tom Mahr, my legislative director, who has a lot of brainpower that he brought to this effort, as he does to so many jobs in my office. I deeply appreciate all the assistance Tom has given me and the other members, the other negotiators; Scott Stofferahn, my other negotiator, who helped write the disaster provisions that have proven to be so well done. John Fuher is a member of my staff who has taken on a lot of responsibility at a young age. He has stepped up onto the stage. I appreciate it. Miles Patrie and Joe McGarvey handled key sections of the legislation; on Senator HARKIN's staff, Mark Halverson, the staff director. I joked the other day he started to go gray in this process. You know, it may go further than gray with the little glitch that happened over on the House side; and Susan Keith, who is so determined to write good agriculture policy, she can be proud of what she has helped accomplish in this bill; Martha Scott Poindexter is a consummate professional, somebody for whom we developed high regard. It has been a delight to work with her; Martha Scott, we appreciate the good humor you have brought to this effort, as well as Vernie Hubert, a consummate pro. These are talented people, good people. They deserve our thanks.

I also wish to thank, if I can, the occupant of the chair, Senator NELSON of Nebraska. He is a critically important member of the Agriculture Committee who has provided that kind of mature leadership that is so often necessary in writing legislation of this importance. I thank the occupant of the chair for all he did to make this a reality as well.

#### MORNING BUSINESS

Mr. CONRAD. Mr. President, I have been asked to make a request that we go into morning business, with Senators permitted to speak for up to 10 minutes; that upon my conclusion, Senator DORGAN be recognized for up to 5 minutes, Senator CASEY for up to 5 minutes, Senator VITTER for 15 minutes, followed by Senator STEVENS for 15 minutes.

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

The Senator from North Dakota.

#### UNANIMOUS-CONSENT REQUEST— H.R. 980

Mr. DORGAN. Mr. President, on behalf of the leader, I ask unanimous consent—and I ask it not be taken out of my time—that H.R. 980 remain the pending business.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Is there objection?

Mr. VITTER. Yes, Mr. President, on behalf of Senator ENZI, the ranking member of the committee of jurisdiction, I object.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Objection is heard.

The Senator from North Dakota is recognized.

#### THE FARM BILL

Mr. DORGAN. Mr. President, I want to start by acknowledging the tremendous work of Senators CONRAD, HARKIN, and CHAMBLISS. This farm bill has taken countless hours of patience and perseverance. Thank goodness they have all that in abundance, along with great skill, wisdom and vision.

I especially want to recognize Senator CONRAD's work here in the Senate and Congressman POMEROY's work in the House. We wouldn't be where we are today without their efforts and I wanted to publicly thank them.

Mr. President, the Congress has made a major decision today. That decision is to say to this President: It is time to start taking care of things here at home. It is a pretty substantial message—notwithstanding the objections of the President, this Congress said we need to stand for family farmers and have voted overwhelmingly to decide that we will override the President's veto and voted overwhelmingly to decide that we will override the President's veto. Sometimes there is not much distance between the right track and the wrong track. But with respect to the farm bill, the distance here between the right track and the wrong track, between the President and the Congress, is a country mile. It surprises me, in fact.

This Congress has said: Let's start taking care of things here at home for a change. Now, family farmers have always been the bedrock of this country's family values. They, in many cases, work alone. They raise a family out under yard lights, out in the country. They take big risks every year.