

(The bill will be printed in a future edition of the RECORD.)

Mr. TESTER. Mr. President, I move to reconsider the vote, and I move to lay that motion on the table.

The motion to lay on the table was agreed to.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Montana.

MORNING BUSINESS

Mr. TESTER. Mr. President, I 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 PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection, it is so ordered.

NOMINATION OF MICHAEL PUNKE

Mr. TESTER. Mr. President, I rise today to urge the immediate confirmation of Michael Punke to be the U.S. Ambassador to the World Trade Organization.

The United States has been without an ambassador for more than 6 months because one Republican Senator has been holding up his nomination for no good reason. This is another example of standing in the way of doing what is right for our country.

Michael Punke is well qualified. He is ready to serve. He happens to be from Montana. Michael's qualifications are as follows: Michael received his undergraduate degree in international affairs from George Washington University. He then attended Cornell Law School where he earned his juris doctorate with a specialization in international legal affairs. He also served as editor in chief of the Cornell International Law Journal.

For 14 years Michael served in government and private practice in Washington, DC. From 1991 to 1992 he acted as international trade counsel to Senator MAX BAUCUS, then-chairman of the Finance Committee's International Trade Subcommittee.

Michael has been fully vetted. He received strong bipartisan support in his Senate Finance Committee hearings, and the Finance Committee unanimously approved his appointment. Let me repeat that. Michael Punke passed out of the Finance Committee with the support of all the Senators on that committee. That means all the Democrats and all the Republicans supported his nomination, including the junior Senator from Kentucky, who continues to hold up his nomination. The reason Senator BUNNING is giving for his hold? He wants Canada to repeal parts of the antismoking law that they passed in the Canadian Parliament. I don't think that holds water.

This job is too important to remain open because one Senator has a flimsy policy beef with a foreign country. Common sense has to prevail.

Expanding U.S. exports will help rebuild our economy by creating jobs. Michael Punke is an important part of

that goal. Michael will be responsible for promoting and securing U.S. trade interests abroad to create jobs for America's farmers, workers, and businesses right here at home. Our trading partners use his absence as an excuse to stall progress on serious negotiations. Standing in the way is hurting America's businesses and workers who are affected by these very important negotiations.

Michael could be working right now to create jobs for American farmers, workers, and businesses. But, instead, some issue about tobacco in another country is keeping us from moving forward. That is not right.

That is why a broad coalition of America's farmers and businesses have been calling for quick approval of Michael Punke by the Senate. A coalition of 42 food and agriculture groups wrote Senator REID and Senator MCCONNELL last January to call for Michael's quick confirmation saying:

U.S. food and agriculture exports are under assault in many markets with trading partners erecting even more barriers in recent months . . . The longer the delay in confirming Mr. Punke, the more likely that the U.S. loses exports and jobs.

So if we act today to confirm Michael Punke, the Senate will have done something right now to help create jobs in America. Holding up Michael Punke does just the opposite. For all these reasons—oh, and may I add this guy is one quality individual—I would request we confirm Michael Punke in the Senate, we do it as soon as possible, and confirm him to the position of U.S. ambassador to the World Trade Organization.

BIG SANDY PIONEERS

Mr. TESTER. Mr. President, I rise to share some news from my hometown of Big Sandy, MT. It is a town of just over 700 folks. That means in Montana, it is a Class C town. In Montana, Class C basketball isn't just a tradition, it is a way of life. For a lot of Montanans, the entire year revolves around that basketball season.

Last week, Coach Roy Lackner led his boys—the Big Sandy Pioneers—to the Class C basketball tournament. They fought their way to the championship game on Saturday night and they played another outstanding Class C team in the Power Pirates.

It was one of those games folks will be talking about for years. After a last-second foul, with less than a second on the clock, senior forward Corbin Pearson broke the 49-to-49 tie by sinking both free throws. I was 6 years old the last time Big Sandy boys won a State championship. That was 47 years ago.

So I rise in honor of Coach Lackner, assistant coach Gregg King, and the Big Sandy boys basketball team, including Corbin Pearson, Zac Leader, Blake Brumwell, Taylor Ophus, Colter Darlington, Trevor Lackner, Jeff Zeiger, Scott Drga, Dallas Briese, Kaden Beck, Matt Gullickson, and C.J. Hansen.

I am sharing this good news not just because these young men are from my hometown—although I am very proud of that—I am sharing this news because we can all use a reminder that hard work, working together, and teamwork pays off. Coach Lackner says winning a State championship was a matter of perseverance. It is. The Big Sandy Pioneers persevered. They worked hard as a team. They won their championship, and I congratulate them on that.

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

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will call the roll.

The bill clerk proceeded to call the roll.

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

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

TAX ON BONUSES RECEIVED FROM CERTAIN TARP RECIPIENTS

Mr. ROCKEFELLER. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the Senate now proceed to Calendar No. 36, H.R. 1586, and that once the bill is reported, I be recognized to offer a substitute amendment.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Is there objection?

Without objection, it is so ordered.

The clerk will report the bill by title.

The assistant legislative clerk read as follows:

A bill (H.R. 1586) to impose an additional tax on bonuses received from certain TARP recipients.

AMENDMENT NO. 3452

(Purpose: In the nature of a substitute.)

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will report the amendment.

The assistant legislative clerk read as follows:

The Senator from West Virginia [Mr. ROCKEFELLER] proposes an amendment numbered 3452.

Mr. ROCKEFELLER. I ask unanimous consent that the reading of the amendment be waived.

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

(The amendment is printed in today's RECORD under "Text of Amendments.")

Mr. ROCKEFELLER. Mr. President, I am very happy to be here this afternoon with the most excellent ranking member of the Commerce Committee, Senator KAY BAILEY HUTCHISON of Texas, to lay down our Transportation bill, and in so doing we say that our transportation system is at a crossroads, and not a comfortable one.

For decades, the Federal Aviation Administration has done an excellent job of operating the world's most complex airline system. Nobody else comes close. The system has served us very well. Not only is it the safest airspace system in the world, it is a critical component of the national economy. I cannot overstate the importance of a