

a fundamental part of the modern economy, and it has some great resources. First is its presence all over the country. One of the things we are doing—we worked on this with Senator SANDERS and others—in the substitute, we will create an advisory commission, a new commission which will be charged with the responsibility of not only reviewing the operations of the Postal Service to make sure it is being managed and run most efficiently but for looking for a new business model, for new ways to use the great assets of the Postal Service—one, that it is all over the country in the post offices; and, two, that no one else can cover the last mile of delivery to everybody's house or business in the country regardless of where you live, including the iconic burros that help deliver the mail in the Grand Canyon and the mailmen on snowshoes who deliver it in rural parts of Alaska. Right now, FedEx, UPS, and others use that service of the last mile to complete their delivery to their customers.

We want to see if we can figure out how the Postal Service can make more money so it can stay alive. This is a great American institution which I believe has a great future, but it is not going to have it unless we help.

So here we are challenged again. Are we going to fall into ideological rigidity or partisan conflict and let this great institution slide and fall into a deep crisis or are we going to work together, as I believe our committee has, to present a bipartisan solution which will guarantee, in a very different time in American history, that the post office—the U.S. Postal Service—can play as vital a role as it has throughout all the rest of our history.

I yield the floor.

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 President, I ask unanimous consent that the order for the quorum call be rescinded.

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

Under the previous order, the motion to proceed to S. 2204 is agreed to.

#### UNANIMOUS CONSENT REQUEST— S. 2204

Mr. REID. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that if cloture is invoked on the motion to proceed to S. 1789, which is the postal reform bill, and the motion to proceed is later adopted, the Senate resume consideration of S. 2204, which is the Repeal Big Oil Subsidies Act, at a time to be determined by the majority leader, following consultation with the Republican leader.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Is there objection?

The Republican leader.

Mr. McCONNELL. Mr. President, reserving the right to object, I share the

majority leader's view that we ought to turn to the postal reform bill. What I intend to do is to ask that we modify the consent that the majority leader just offered—modify his request so that on Monday, April 16, we proceed to the consideration of S. 1769, the postal reform bill.

That would give us an opportunity to further debate and discuss the Menendez proposal, which we just invoked cloture on yesterday, for the remainder of the week. So I object.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The majority leader.

Mr. REID. Mr. President, reserving the right to object, I think most people know I worked here as a police officer for most of the time I was going to law school. I also worked for a period of time in the post office. I am not an expert on the post office, but I know the importance of post offices.

I know what is going to happen in the State of Nevada if we do not make some arrangement to help the Postal Service survive. Scores of small post offices in Nevada will go out of business. There will be distribution centers that may not exist after a few months. So I wish to get to the postal bill as much as anyone in this Chamber, having worked for the Postal Service, through the House Post Office.

I wish to move to the postal bill. But I am not going to be forced into doing it at a time that may not work out just right for our schedule; that is, the Senate. So I will move to that shortly after the recess as quickly as I can, but I am not going to agree to a specific time.

I object to the modification.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The request of the initial modification is objected to.

Mr. McCONNELL. Mr. President, I object to the initial request.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Objection is heard to the initial request.

#### 21ST CENTURY POSTAL SERVICE ACT OF 2011

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Under the previous order, pursuant to rule XXII, the clerk will report the motion to invoke cloture.

The assistant legislative clerk read as follows:

#### CLOTURE MOTION

We, the undersigned Senators, in accordance with the provisions of rule XXII of the Standing Rules of the Senate, hereby move to bring to a close debate on the motion to proceed to Calendar No. 296, S. 1789, the 21st Century Postal Service Act.

Harry Reid, Thomas R. Carper, Sherrod Brown, Mark Begich, Bill Nelson, Frank R. Lautenberg, Jeanne Shaheen, Richard Blumenthal, Christopher A. Coons, Dianne Feinstein, Patrick J. Leahy, Richard J. Durbin, Joseph I. Lieberman, Patty Murray, Charles E. Schumer, Mark L. Pryor.

#### POSTAL REFORM

Mr. DURBIN. Mr. President, there is no question the Postal Service faces se-

rious challenges, and it needs to work with Congress and the American people to address them.

There are some who say that the Postal Service can cut its way out of its financial hole.

The plan put forth by the Postmaster General would do just that. It would have a heavy impact on my State, with at least 8 processing facility closures and perhaps more than 250 post office closures. Under that plan, mail from Springfield—the State capital—would be shipped all the way to St. Louis, just to come back to Springfield once again.

And these facilities are key hubs of commerce throughout the State.

Take Quincy, IL, for example. The Postal Service had already studied Quincy for consolidation in 2009. At that time, the Postal Service found that the facility in Quincy was efficient and closing it would not create new efficiencies. Despite that finding, the Postmaster General decided to press ahead with the closure of the Quincy facility this year. The facts are in Quincy's favor, but it seems that the Postal Service only wants to cut its way to death.

This bill is about jobs too. The Postal Service employs more than 30,000 people in my State, from clerks, to drivers, to postmasters, to letter carriers, and so many more. These are not high-paying jobs, they are not glamorous. These are middle-class jobs that support the world's best postal delivery network. Nationwide, the Postal Service employs more than half a million people. Millions more in this country are employed in businesses that depend on the Postal Service.

Given the wide-reaching impact of the Postal Service, it is clear to me that cutting to the bone is the wrong approach. It will lead to a death spiral and the eventual end of the Postal Service as we know it.

The Postal Service must grow and reform its way into 21st century competitiveness. This bill is a first step toward achieving that goal. Brought to the floor under the leadership of Senators LIEBERMAN and COLLINS, this bill begins the process of addressing some of the serious challenges facing the Postal Service. This will help USPS reduce long-term costs, increase efficiency, and grow into a 21st century service provider. I think these steps can be taken while maintaining a world-class level of service.

There is no question there will be some short-term and long-term pain associated with reforming the Postal Service. Without tough choices, I can assure you there will be bankruptcy and the demise of the Postal Service.

I believe that measured steps now, though painful, are worthwhile to preserve and improve the Postal Service for generations to come.

I urge my colleagues to join me in voting for cloture on the motion to proceed to this important legislation.