

bill for the benefit of small business men and women across this country.

Mr. KENNEDY. Mr. President, I understand that I have 32 seconds remaining?

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator is correct.

Mr. KENNEDY. Mr. President, this issue was considered by the Supreme Court of the United States with a number of Justices that were nominated by Republican Presidents, and it was decided 9 to 0—not 7-2, not 8-1, 9 to 0—to sustain the arguments that we have presented here this afternoon. The Senator wants to overturn that decision here this afternoon, and I hope that we will not do so.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The time under the control of the Senator has expired.

Mr. HUTCHINSON. Mr. President, how much time do I have remaining?

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator has 20 seconds remaining.

Mr. HUTCHINSON. This legislation does not overturn that Supreme Court decision, as I know. That court decision involved the issue of whether you could be a paid union employee and be a bona fide employee for another company, and you can't. This doesn't deal with that. This deals with the destructive practice of going in with the primary purpose of not organizing but destroying the employer.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The time of the Senator has expired.

Mr. HUTCHINSON. Mr. President, I observe the absence of a quorum.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will call the roll.

The assistant legislative clerk proceeded to call the roll.

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 President, I ask unanimous consent that the order for the quorum call be rescinded.

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

CLOTURE MOTION

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Under the previous order, 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 provision of rule XXII of the Standing Rules of the Senate, do hereby move to bring to a close debate on the motion to proceed to Calendar No. 344, S. 1981, the salting legislation:

Trent Lott, Tim Hutchinson, Don Nickles, Lauch Faircloth, Paul Coverdell, John Ashcroft, Jim Inhofe, Susan Collins, Chuck Hagel, John Warner, Jeff Sessions, Connie Mack, Sam Brownback, Jesse Helms, Wayne Allard, Kit Bond.

CALL OF THE ROLL

The PRESIDING OFFICER. By unanimous consent, the mandatory quorum call under the rule is waived.

VOTE

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The question is, Is it the sense of the Sen-

ate that debate on the motion to proceed to S. 1981, the Truth in Employment Act, shall be brought to a close. The yeas and nays are required under the rule. The clerk will call the roll.

The assistant legislative clerk called the roll.

Mr. NICKLES. I announce that the Senator from New York (Mr. D'AMATO) and the Senator from Pennsylvania (Mr. SPECTER) are necessarily absent.

Mr. FORD. I announce that the Senator from South Carolina (Mr. HOLINGS), the Senator from Maryland (Ms. MIKULSKI), the Senator from Illinois (Ms. MOSELEY-BRAUN), and the Senator from New Jersey (Mr. TORRICELLI) are necessarily absent.

The yeas and nays resulted—yeas 52, nays 42, as follows:

[Rollcall Vote No. 266 Leg.]

YEAS—52

Abraham	Gorton	McConnell
Allard	Gramm	Murkowski
Ashcroft	Grams	Nickles
Bennett	Grassley	Roberts
Bond	Gregg	Roth
Brownback	Hagel	Santorum
Burns	Hatch	Sessions
Chafee	Helms	Shelby
Coats	Hutchinson	Smith (NH)
Cochran	Hutchison	Smith (OR)
Collins	Inhofe	Snowe
Coverdell	Jeffords	Stevens
Craig	Kempthorne	Thomas
DeWine	Kyl	Thompson
Domenici	Lott	Thurmond
Enzi	Lugar	Warner
Faircloth	Mack	
Frist	McCain	

NAYS—42

Akaka	Dorgan	Landrieu
Baucus	Durbin	Lautenberg
Biden	Feingold	Leahy
Bingaman	Feinstein	Levin
Boxer	Ford	Lieberman
Breaux	Glenn	Moynihan
Bryan	Graham	Murray
Bumpers	Harkin	Reed
Byrd	Inouye	Reid
Campbell	Johnson	Robb
Cleland	Kennedy	Rockefeller
Conrad	Kerrey	Sarbanes
Daschle	Kerry	Wellstone
Dodd	Kohl	Wyden

NOT VOTING—6

D'Amato	Mikulski	Specter
Hollings	Moseley-Braun	Torricelli

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Mr. ALLARD). On this vote the yeas are 52, the nays are 42. Three-fifths of the Senators duly chosen and sworn not having voted in the affirmative, the motion is rejected.

Several Senators addressed the Chair.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The majority leader.

Mr. LOTT. Just to inform Members, we will have a second vote momentarily, but it will not be very long, I don't think. I believe the Democratic leader is going to have some brief remarks and then I have one Member who wants to have remarks printed in the RECORD, and Senator CRAIG wishes to make closing remarks on our side. So after a relatively brief period of time we will have another vote, and then that will be the last vote for tonight.

Again, I am going to talk to Senator DASCHLE, but I believe the next vote

will be at 2:15 tomorrow afternoon, after the luncheon.

I yield the floor.

DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR AND RELATED AGENCIES APPROPRIATIONS ACT, 1998

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Under the previous order, the Senate will continue with the consideration of the bill.

The Senate continued with the consideration of the bill.

AMENDMENT NO. 3580

Mr. DASCHLE. Mr. President, I understand all time has expired on the pending amendment. I choose to use my leader time.

Mr. LEAHY. Mr. President, could we have order? The leader is entitled to be heard. The Senate is not in order.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senate will please come to order. Senators will please take their conversations to the cloakroom. We would like to have quiet in the Chamber.

The minority leader is recognized.

Mr. DASCHLE. I thank the Chair, and I yield 2 minutes to the Senator from Montana.

Mr. BAUCUS. Mr. President, I thank my leader from South Dakota.

Mr. President, I think many minds on this amendment are already made up. I, just for a couple of minutes, would like to speak to those Senators who have not yet made up their minds. The point very simply is this: There are a good number of farmers and ranchers. I daresay most of them are in dire straits through problems and conditions that are no fault of theirs. They didn't cause them.

Prices for their products are way below cost of production, whether it is wheat, cattle prices, whatnot. For example, in my State of Montana, farmers are getting \$2 a bushel. They subtract from that \$1 a bushel for freight costs and that ends up \$1 a bushel. The price of a loaf of bread in the supermarkets is pretty close to that. There is no way in the world a farmer can begin to make ends meet in these conditions, and that is true for most farmers.

The amendment before us is very simple. It just says take the cap off the loan rates just for crops that are harvested in 1998—not for next year, just 1998—to put a little bit of cash in farmers' pockets to help them pay the loans, to help them make the payments to the bank, to help them just a little bit. I must tell you, raising the caps is nowhere close to solving the problem. It is just a little bit.

Why are prices so low? Very simply, because of worldwide production, countries are subsidizing producing wheat.

Second, we are in dire straits because of the Asian crisis. Asia is not buying anymore.

Third, because the U.S. dollar is so high. Farmers didn't cause those problems, but farmers are facing those problems, and in some parts of the country, there is a drought, there is flooding, there is infestation of insects. They are stuck.

The only argument of any credibility I have heard against this amendment—

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator's time has expired.

Mr. BAUCUS. I ask for 1 additional minute.

Mr. DASCHLE. I yield 1 additional minute.

Mr. BAUCUS. I thank the Senator. The only credible argument I have heard against this amendment is it breaks open Freedom to Farm and it might raise worldwide prices because you are raising loan rates. The short answer to that is we are not opening Freedom to Farm. This is just a 1-year, temporary payment to meet an emergency. And secondly, we have no idea what the prices are going to be next year. We have no idea.

We can't let perfection be the enemy of the good. At least adopt this amendment to help farmers right now. We will worry about next year, next year. This amendment is very much needed.

Mr. President, I very much thank the Senator from South Dakota for yielding this time.

Mr. DASCHLE. Mr. President, I yield 2 minutes to our ranking member, the distinguished Senator from Iowa.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Iowa is recognized.

Mr. HARKIN. Mr. President, this amendment is going to save a lot of farmers and do it in a cost-effective manner and a manner that is sound financially. It looks as though we are going to come down on one or two courses here. We either are going to raise the caps on loans and provide a loan rate increase to farmers, or we are going to have some kind of direct payment to farmers. I hear rumbling around that there is going to be a big, massive multibillion-dollar check to go out to farmers this year.

I said earlier there is a poll released today of 1,000 farmers—Mr. President, may we have order? I can't even hear myself think.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senate will please come to order. The Senator from Iowa.

Mr. HARKIN. I thank the President. A poll came out today of 1,000 farmers taken nationwide by a polling firm. It was done for the Nebraska Wheat Growers, American Corn Growers and the Nebraska Farmers Union—1,000 farmers.

Two questions I will point out: One, Congress should modify the current farm program. Yes, 76.9 percent; no, 17 percent.

Congress should lift loan caps and raise loan rates 59 cents per bushel on wheat and 32 cents on corn. Yes, 72.5 percent; no, 19.4 percent.

Over 3 to 1. Farmers recognize this is the best way to proceed rather than getting a direct payment. Keep in mind, if we raise the loan rates, it gives the farmer a marketing tool. The farmer can get the loan and hold on to the crop. If prices go up next year, the farmer can sell that crop and then pay

the loan back to the Government with interest.

If, however, we are just going to get a bunch of money and send it out to farmers in a payment, there is no chance that any of that money is ever going to come back to the Government. Keep in mind, these loans have interest charges, and if farmers pay those loans back, they pay them back with interest.

Secondly, if we make a payment to farmers this fall, as I hear some people want to do, just one big lump sum, just a check that goes out, a lot of those people getting that money will not be in farming next year, and it won't go to the producers.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator has used his 2 minutes.

Mr. HARKIN. I ask for 30 seconds.

Mr. DASCHLE. I yield the Senator an additional 30 seconds.

Mr. HARKIN. If the loan rates go up, the loan rates increase, it goes to producers; it gives them a marketing tool whereby they can take the grain and market when they want and not just dump it all out there this fall. That is why we have to remove the loan caps that are in the farm bill of 1996. I yield the floor.

Mr. DASCHLE. I yield to the distinguished Senator from Louisiana.

Ms. LANDRIEU. Mr. President, two months ago, I joined my colleagues in requesting assistance for our Nation's farmers in Louisiana and other parts of the Nation who are on the brink of bankruptcy. Not because they are bad farmers but as a result of natural disasters and prices that they cannot control.

In Louisiana, farmers are experiencing the most severe agriculture disaster it has been subjected to in the last 100 years. The Louisiana State University (LSU) Agricultural Center has estimated crop losses at \$391 million. When losses due to aflatoxin in corn and livestock losses are added, the State is projecting escalated losses of \$450 million. If no effective disaster relief is provided, Louisiana will lose 35–40 percent of its farmers. Without these farmers the State projects that its economy will lose an additional \$1 billion.

Mr. President, this is a very serious situation, one that warrants an effective solution for the disaster situation facing the South and the income losses facing the Midwest. For Louisiana, relief needed is twofold: One, production loss related to the drought and heat and two, economic. For other areas, income loss assistance needed is different.

The major problem in providing equitable relief is that while the Midwest has bumper crops and no price, the South has no crops and no price. Therefore, I am very concerned that while this amendment will provide help to some, it does not go near far enough to ensure that Louisiana farmers are provided the emergency disaster assistance that they need to make it another year.

For example, under the current legislation being debated a corn farmer in the Midwest who produces a normal yield of 120 bushels per acre under a loan rate of 30 cents per bushel would receive a Loan Deficiency Payment (LDP) of \$36 per acre. In the South, a corn farmer who produced only 50 bushels per acre, due to the drought, under the same loan rate would only receive a LDP of \$15 per acre. A corn farmer in the South whose corn had to be destroyed due to aflatoxin would receive no LDP whatsoever.

The bottom line is that higher loan rates only benefit producers on actual production sold. The only way higher loan rates would benefit producers whose production was substantially reduced would be to make an economic payment on the lost production in addition to the bushels harvested. Therefore, while this may help farmers in the Midwest, it provides little to no assistance to farmers in the South.

The other provision in the underlying amendment that may be more helpful in providing disaster assistance to Louisiana is the \$1.5 billion included in the amendment to replenish the national disaster reserve. However, the details in how USDA would implement this measure to provide disaster assistance to farmers with only one year losses, such as in the case of Louisiana, is unclear.

As I have previously stated, the reasons for the income loss related problems facing farmers in Louisiana and other parts of the U.S. are quite different, but the results are the same. Only through direct assistance, can Louisiana farmers be helped.

For Louisiana and other Southern States, many farmers will not see next year and grow the crops that provide Americans with the safest food supply in the world. Time and time again, when a natural disaster has struck, the Congress has provided the help needed to rebuild our cities and towns. Should we provide help to family farms that are facing an economic disaster beyond their control? Absolutely. It is now time that the Congress work on the bipartisan basis to provide direct financial assistance to our farmers just like we provide assistance to other individuals who have faced disasters beyond their control.

Mr. President, I urge my colleagues to join me and my senior colleague from Louisiana, Senator BREAU, in working to ensure this assistance is provided fairly to all farmers, including farmers in Louisiana and the South.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The minority leader is recognized.

Mr. DASCHLE. Mr. President, I thank my colleagues for their eloquent comments and the contributions they have made to this debate all afternoon. I will be very brief, because I know that Senators wish to express themselves on this amendment, and we will accommodate that.

There are two points I want to make. The first is that since the Senate has

attempted to address this problem in July, the situation has worsened immeasurably. To the extent that we can measure it, it is simply important for all of us to understand that prices have fallen dramatically just in the last 6 weeks.

For July, corn prices have fallen 28 percent. For wheat, since July, prices have fallen an additional 20 percent. For soybeans, an additional 20 percent, and that is just since July. The bottom has fallen out of the market. The situation continues to worsen.

Mr. President, we have no choice but to take as immediate an action, as comprehensive an action as we possibly can to address this problem. Very simply, the second point is to simply address one last time what it is we attempt to do.

The Senator from Iowa ably, again, articulated why we need to increase the cap on the marketing loan. That is No. 1.

No. 2, so farmers aren't forced to move their grain onto the market, we give them the opportunity to store their grain on an emergency basis. Let me remind my colleagues, we are only talking about a 1-year authorization, first for the loan rate, and second for the storage.

Third, we provide indemnity losses. The Senator from Louisiana is right and the senior Senator from Louisiana has expressed his concern to me about how this problem is spreading. Louisiana is hit even harder now than they were last July. So the indemnity proposal is absolutely essential if we are going to address the multiplicity of problems we have in agriculture nationally.

The fourth is that we go back to the issue that we discussed earlier on mandatory price reporting. If we are ever going to change the livestock situation, we must get rid of the secret deals. We must make sure that they—that is livestock producers—have the same opportunities for open and fair competition as others. Mandatory price reporting will do that.

And then finally, we believe that we need to make consistent in agriculture what we have done in every other commodity and industry for as long as I know, and that is, simply label the products when they are imported. We do it for every other product. We ought to do it for the food we eat.

Mr. President, basically that is what we are proposing today, to address this problem in as comprehensive a way, recognizing that in both livestock and grain we have a serious problem. We cannot wait any longer. This issue must be addressed. This amendment does it.

I yield the floor.

Mr. LOTT addressed the Chair.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The majority leader is recognized.

Mr. LOTT. From my leader time, I yield such time as he may consume to the Senator from Idaho, Senator CRAIG.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Idaho.

Mr. CRAIG. Mr. President, is there a farm problem? You bet there is. Is there a farm crisis? Yes. On most farms in America today, if you are below the cost of production, and you have a debt, you have a problem. The Senators on the other side of the aisle are absolutely true to what they speak. And I could have used every one of their charts this afternoon for the very same message.

We have a crisis in American agriculture. Is it a result of Freedom to Farm? No. It is a combination of everything coming together, the loss of our markets in Asian countries and tremendous overproduction. Thank goodness, it is a blessing in most countries when agriculture overproduces; it is a crisis in ours because it shoves down the price of commodities.

Yes, Mr. President, we have a crisis in farm country. Have we recognized it? Yes, we have. And we started doing something about it before we adjourned here in August. We passed and reauthorized the agriculture research title. We advanced the fiscal year 1999 transition payment. We revoked sanctions on India and Pakistan to try to move some of our product into the market.

We approved significant reform in the farm labor program. We established a binational commission to examine the concern that we have with beef prices and with the flood of Canadian meat coming into our market. We required international programs to purchase American commodities. And we passed a sense-of-the-Senate resolution encouraging USDA to use existing authorities to help wheat farmers. Did it raise the price of wheat at the farm bin? It did not. But it sets in motion a variety of opportunities to begin to move that.

What further should we do? Frankly, Mr. President, there is a great deal more we should do. The chairman of the Ag Committee has announced he will reexamine much more thoroughly sanctions and trade reform to open up the 11 percent of the market that our farmers are now exempt from or cannot get to. We have talked about and we will do meaningful tax reform.

Our colleague from Kansas has talked about making sure that crop insurance is the right kind of insurance so that the production agriculture buys it and uses it to insure their crops, to insure their income against disaster, against drought for an income purpose. We are working on that. We have to get that done next Congress, come heck or high water.

And then let us look at a lost market compensation payment. The Senator from Iowa says that is so much money, just throw it out to the farmer. It is something we can buy and afford to buy. It is not a \$7 billion program off-budget, no offsets—emergency spending proposed by our colleagues on the other side of the aisle.

Senators, this is a \$7 billion program you are being asked to vote on tonight. Stop and think about it. We have not

worked together. When we solve agricultural problems, we come together. All of those items that I mentioned we passed before the August recess, we did it in a bipartisan way. We did not open the farm bill. We did not open Freedom to Farm.

I would hope you stand behind the chairman of the Senate Ag Committee tonight on a motion to table. Does that mean this issue is gone? Absolutely not. We are meeting now and we will meet tomorrow. I would hope, too, that my colleagues on the other side of the aisle would come down and sit with us and look at what we can do. Are we going to spend some money? Yes. We are going to spend some money so that agriculture does not go bankrupt. And we have got to do it. But I suggest that lifting a loan cap does not solve that problem on the short-term basis and the long-term basis. Then it becomes so easy to extend it, and then it is \$8 or \$10 billion or more.

So this is not the last vote we are going to have tonight or tomorrow or before this Congress adjourns to deal with a real farm crisis, be you a grain producer, a hog farmer, a cattle rancher—soybeans, corn, you name it. They are not making money. They are losing millions.

We ought to be sensitive to assuring that there is some kind of baseline out there this year so that the farmer can be in production next year. We will accomplish that here in the Senate, if we recognize that and come together to get it done.

I do not believe this is a solution to the problem. I encourage all of our colleagues to stand with the chairman of the Ag Committee—vote to table this amendment.

Mr. LOTT addressed the Chair.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The majority leader.

Mr. LOTT. I yield the remainder of my time to Senator ROBERTS. I understand we have one other Senator who would like to speak briefly, Senator BREAUX. But first I yield that time to Senator ROBERTS.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Kansas.

Mr. ROBERTS. I thank the distinguished majority leader for yielding.

Mr. President, I rise today in opposition to the amendment offered by the Senator from Iowa and to present what I believe will be an important plan to help our farmers and ranchers get through the current low prices and natural disasters they are experiencing.

Mr. President, there are indeed areas of rural America facing economic hardships caused by drought, flooding, wheat scab, and low prices. The question here is: will raising loan rates provide the cash flow assistance that farmers need? Or, will it create an additional set of issues that simply exacerbate the current problem?

We have consistently heard on this floor that there is no longer a "safety net" for America's farmers. Yet, we do not hear that under the 1996 farm bill,

farmers have received over \$6 billion more in payments than they would have received under the old farm bill. We do not hear about the transition payments producers are receiving on 85 percent of their historical yields. And, we do not hear about the Loan Deficiency Payments (LDPs) producers are receiving under the 1996 legislation. Recent estimates show that producers may obtain up to \$3 billion in LDPs on their 1998 crops—in addition to their transition payments.

This is a "safety-net!"

Let me repeat: We have a "safety-net!"

Raising and extending loan rates does not improve producer incomes. Extending the loan rate actually results in lower prices in the long-run. Extending the loan for six months simply gives producers another false hope for holding onto the remainder of last year's crop. Farmers will be holding onto a portion of the previous year's crop, while at the same time harvesting another bumper crop in 1998.

As I stated during debate on the Agricultural Appropriations bill, rolling over the loan rate actually increases the amount of grain and soybeans on the market and results in lower prices—not higher prices. Since excess stocks will continue to depress prices, will we then extend the rate again? It will become an endless cycle that costs billions of dollars, and which will eventually lead to a return to planting requirements and set-aside acres in an attempt to control agricultural output and limit the budget effects.

Extending and raising loan rates will only serve to exacerbate the lack of storage associated with the transportation problems in rural America because it causes farmers to hold onto their crops and fill elevator storage spaces. Kansas still has wheat on the ground from this year's near record wheat harvest and we have begun to harvest what are expected to be record or near record corn, sorgham, and soybean crops. Raising loan rates will worsen the storage problems we are already facing.

It is also argued raising loans rates allows farmers to wait for a higher price. However, a study by Kansas State University looked at the years 1981 through 1997 and compared farmers' earnings if they held wheat in storage until mid-November versus selling at harvest. In all but five years, farmers ended up with a net loss as storage and interest costs exceeded grains in prices. Raising rates simply provides a false hope to farmers.

Mr. President, I think we must also ask several important question that have not been addressed by the advocates of this plan.

How do higher loan rates help producers who have suffered crop failures and have no crop to put under loan?

If loan rates will raise prices—as has been argued by the advocates—what will this do to feed prices for livestock producers who are in many instances

facing more severe economic situations than grain producers?

How do higher loan rates help wheat producers that have already harvested and marketed their crops?

It is argued this action is needed to raise prices because the 1996 Farm Bill has caused the low prices we are currently experiencing. What about the low prices we experienced under the previous program in the mid-1980s and early 1990s? What was the cause of those programs?

Mr. President, it is obvious this plan will not work and will not assist all producers. Therefore, I am proposing the following five point plan which will be supported by many Republicans and which I believe can also garner bipartisan support.

The plan addresses cash flow concerns, crop insurance, the tax burden on farmers, trade, and the Conservation Reserve Program.

It is obvious we must provide some form of cash flow assistance to all farmers, including those who did not or will not have a crop to harvest. Therefore, I propose a "Farmer Income Assistance Program" which will ensure that all farmers receive some form of cash assistance. I know of no other way to address the multiple problems of farmers with one year of crop losses, multi-year crop losses, and those with large crop but no price. This is the fairest method available to us, and it will ensure that no producer slips through the cracks.

Mr. President, we must also take important steps to reform the crop insurance program. One of the most common complaints I hear from my farmers is that crop insurance does not work. They argue the policies available do not address their needs, not do they get adequate coverage for the money they invest in insurance policies.

A large problem with the program is the roadblocks the Risk Management Agency (RMA) has repeatedly put up to halt or slow down the development and expansion of many private policies. At the same time RMA acts as the regulator over these private companies, it is also developing and selling products in direct competition with the insurance companies. I know of no other industry facing these same roadblocks.

Mr. KERREY and I have long been committed to major reforms of the crop insurance program. And, we are circulating a proposal to pursue these goals. However, it will be difficult to pursue major reforms in the short period of time remaining this session. Therefore, I propose several minor changes this fall to improve the program followed by what I hope will be serious reform next year. The proposed changes include:

Providing a proportional subsidy for all coverage levels up to 75 percent. Farmers often buy only the lowest level of coverage because that is where the highest subsidy levels occur.

Increase the subsidy rate so that it is the same for all revenue insurance con-

tracts as for other all forms of crop insurance.

Mr. President, we must also pursue real tax reform that benefits our farmers and ranchers. We must pursue tax legislation that includes: 100 percent deductibility of self-employed health care; permanent extension of income averaging for farmers; farmer savings accounts; and reductions in the capital gains rates.

I realize some will argue that capital gains reductions do not help farmers. However, I would advise my colleagues on the other side of the aisle that a recent report by the Department of Agriculture recently stated that the greatest level of benefits to farmers from the 1997 Taxpayer Relief Act has come from the reduction in the capital gains rate.

Increased access to world markets is an important step that must be taken. Our farmers and ranchers simply cannot be successful without access to foreign markets. The most important toll to obtaining these markets is to pass fast track trade negotiating authority for the President. Secretary of Agriculture Dan Glickman has stated on several occasions that trade is the "safety-net" for America's farmers and ranchers. Last fall's failure to pass fast track is the single most important foreign policy blunder for agriculture since the shattered glass embargo policies of the late 70s and early 80s. We must pass fast track now.

Finally, Mr. President, USDA should announce a new Conservation Reserve Program (CRP) sign-up sometime this fall. I checked the Farm Service Agency (FSA) website before coming to the floor, and it stated that as of October 1998 there will be just over 30 million acres enrolled in the CRP. The Secretary is allowed to enroll up to 36.4 million acres, and I encourage him to enroll the maximum number of acres during this fall's sign-up. This is an important action which the Secretary does not need additional Congressional approval to undertake, and it will help to take many acres of high risk land out of production—particularly in the Northern Plains.

Mr. President, to summarize the plan is as follows: Income assistance payments; crop insurance reform; tax relief; increased trade; and full enrollment in the CRP.

This is not a plan which is set in stone. It is open to change, and I am happy to work with my colleagues on both sides of the aisle to undertake a plan to assist America's farmers.

I am hopeful my colleagues will work with me in a bipartisan manner. I do not question the desire of my colleagues on the other side of the aisle to help our producers. I simply think their approach will do more harm than good.

We tried to increase loan rates in the early and mid-1980s. It led to excess production and excess stocks that brought agriculture to its knees and greatly contributed to the agricultural crisis of the 1980s.

Mr. President, we tell our children that we study history so we will not make the same mistakes of the past. Past history shows us the Senator from Iowa's plan will not work. I hope that we have learned our lesson and will take the steps necessary to help agriculture move into the 21st Century and not mired in the broken policies of the 20th Century.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The majority leader is recognized.

Mr. LOTT. Do I have any time remaining?

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Yes.

Mr. LOTT. This is unusual. But in the hope that he will be brief, I yield the balance of that time to Senator BREAUX. I am sure he will speak against this amendment in that time.

Mr. BREAUX. Thank you for the time.

I make one point very quickly, and the point is this: Our friends in agriculture in the northern part of the United States have a problem: They have a crop but they have a very poor price that doesn't allow them to continue. They need help. That is why the loan level is being increased—to try to help those.

For those of us who represent the southern areas, our problem is the opposite: Because of the drought, we don't have any crop. It is not a question of local price. There is no crop to sell at any price.

One of the sections that is in this bill says that the Secretary may use funds made available under this section to make cash payments that don't go for crop disasters but for income loss.

Now, as a representative of an area that has a crop disaster, it seems to me I am being written out of any help at all. If that is the case, I would like to know about it.

Maybe my friend from North Dakota can respond, and I yield to him.

Mr. CONRAD. If I might respond to the Senator from Louisiana and assure him, as the author of this provision, it is designed specifically to help every State that has experienced income loss.

Mr. LOTT. How much time is left?

Mr. BREAUX. I ask unanimous consent that Senator CONRAD may complete the response to my question.

Mr. CONRAD. I just say to the Senator from Louisiana, this is specifically designed to help every State that has suffered income loss. The reason the funding has been expanded is because of the losses in Louisiana, the losses in Oklahoma, the losses in Texas, the losses in Georgia.

This is designed to help every State that has experienced income loss, including the Senator's State of Louisiana.

Mr. BREAUX. I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Under the previous order, we will proceed to vote. The question is on the motion to table the Daschle amendment. The yeas and nays have been ordered. The clerk will call the roll.

Mr. NICKLES. I announce that the Senator from New York (Mr. D'AMATO), and the Senator from Pennsylvania (Mr. SPECTER) are necessarily absent.

Mr. FORD. I announce that the Senator from South Carolina (Mr. HOLLINGS), the Senator from Maryland (Ms. MIKULSKI), the Senator from Illinois (Ms. MOSELEY-BRAUN), and the Senator from New Jersey (Mr. TORRICELLI) are necessarily absent.

I further announce that, if present and voting, the Senator from Illinois (Ms. MOSELEY-BRAUN), would vote "no."

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Mrs. HUTCHISON). Are there any other Senators in the Chamber desiring to vote?

The result was announced—yeas 53, nays 41, as follows:

[Rollcall Vote No. 267 Leg.]

YEAS—53

Abraham	Frist	McCain
Allard	Gorton	McConnell
Ashcroft	Gramm	Murkowski
Bennett	Grams	Nickles
Bond	Grassley	Roberts
Brownback	Gregg	Roth
Campbell	Hagel	Santorum
Chafee	Hatch	Sessions
Coats	Helms	Shelby
Cochran	Hutchinson	Smith (NH)
Collins	Hutchison	Smith (OR)
Coverdell	Inhofe	Snowe
Craig	Jeffords	Stevens
DeWine	Kempthorne	Thomas
Domenici	Kyl	Thompson
Enzi	Lott	Thurmond
Faircloth	Lugar	Warner
Feingold	Mack	

NAYS—41

Akaka	Dorgan	Lautenberg
Baucus	Durbin	Leahy
Biden	Feinstein	Levin
Bingaman	Ford	Lieberman
Boxer	Glenn	Moynihan
Breaux	Graham	Murray
Bryan	Harkin	Reed
Bumpers	Inouye	Reid
Burns	Johnson	Robb
Byrd	Kennedy	Rockefeller
Cleland	Kerrey	Sarbanes
Conrad	Kerry	Wellstone
Daschle	Kohl	Wyden
Dodd	Landrieu	

NOT VOTING—6

D'Amato	Mikulski	Specter
Hollings	Moseley-Braun	Torricelli

The motion to lay on the table the amendment (No. 3580) was agreed to.

AMENDMENT NO. 3581

(Purpose: To provide emergency assistance to agricultural producers)

Mr. DASCHLE. Madam President, I send an amendment to the desk and ask for its immediate consideration.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will report.

The legislative clerk read as follows:

The Senator from South Dakota [Mr. DASCHLE], for himself, Mr. HARKIN, Mr. JOHNSON, Mr. KERREY, Mr. CONRAD, Mr. BAUCUS, Mr. DORGAN, and Mr. WELLSTONE, proposes an amendment numbered 3581.

Mr. DASCHLE. Madam President, I ask unanimous consent that reading of the amendment be dispensed with.

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

The amendment is as follows:

On page 199, between lines 15 and 16, insert the following:

TITLE VII—EMERGENCY AGRICULTURAL ASSISTANCE

SEC. 701. MARKETING ASSISTANCE LOANS.

(a) MARKETING ASSISTANCE LOANS.—

(1) LOAN RATES.—Notwithstanding section 132 of the Agricultural Market Transition Act (7 U.S.C. 7232), for crop year 1998, loan rates for a loan commodity (as defined in section 102 of that Act (7 U.S.C. 7202)), other than rice, shall not be subject to any dollar limitation on loan rates prescribed under subsection (a)(1)(B), (b)(1)(B), (c)(2), (d)(2), (f)(1)(B), or (f)(2)(B) of section 132 of that Act.

(2) RICE.—Notwithstanding section 132(e) of that Act, for crop year 1998, the loan rate for a marketing assistance loan under section 131 of that Act (7 U.S.C. 7231) for rice shall be not less than the greater of—

(A) \$6.50 per hundredweight; or

(B) 85 percent of the simple average price received by producers of rice, as determined by the Secretary of Agriculture, during the marketing years for the immediately preceding 5 crops of rice, excluding the year in which the average price was the highest and the year in which the average price was the lowest in the period.

(3) TERM OF LOAN.—Notwithstanding section 133(c) of that Act (7 U.S.C. 7233(c)), for crop year 1998, the Secretary may extend the term of a marketing assistance loan for any loan commodity for a period not to exceed 6 months.

(b) APPLICATION.—

(1) IN GENERAL.—The authority provided by this section applies to the 1998 crop of a loan commodity.

(2) LOANS.—This section applies to a marketing assistance loan for a loan commodity made under subtitle C of the Agricultural Market Transition Act (7 U.S.C. 7231 et seq.) for the 1998 crop year before, on, or after the date of enactment of this Act.

SEC. 706. EMERGENCY REQUIREMENT.

(a) BUDGET REQUEST.—The entire amount necessary to carry out this title and the amendments made by this title shall be available only to the extent that the President submits to Congress an official budget request for a specific dollar amount that includes designation of the entire amount of the request as an emergency requirement for the purposes of the Balanced Budget and Emergency Deficit Control Act of 1985 (2 U.S.C. 900 et seq.).

(b) DESIGNATION BY CONGRESS.—The entire amount of funds necessary to carry out this title and the amendments made by this title is designated by Congress as an emergency requirement under section 251(b)(2)(A) of the Balanced Budget and Emergency Deficit Control Act of 1985 (2 U.S.C. 901(b)(2)(A)).

Mr. DASCHLE. Madam President, I ask unanimous consent that my amendment be laid aside to accommodate the amendment to be offered by the Senator from Arkansas.

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

Mr. DASCHLE. I yield the floor.

UNANIMOUS CONSENT AGREEMENT—S. 2279

Mr. LOTT. Madam President, I ask unanimous consent that it be in order for the majority leader, after consultation with the Democratic leader, to proceed to the consideration of S. 2279, the Wendell Ford National Air Transportation System Improvement Act. I further ask that during the pendency of S. 2279 only relevant amendments be in order to the bill.