

Mr. COVERDELL addressed the Chair.

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Mr. ROBERTS). The Senator from Georgia.

Mr. COVERDELL. Mr. President, I thank the Senate and our cosponsors. I want to reiterate my gladness that this has been a spontaneous effort on the part of the U.S. Senate to respond to a great American President.

Throughout the debate it was questioned from time to time, what was the position of the Reagan family? There was not a position. This is a gesture from a people and grateful nation and a grateful Senate. And I thank my colleagues, those who disagree, for the collegiality in which this matter was resolved.

I yield the floor.

Mr. LOTT. Mr. President, I want to congratulate and express my appreciation to the Senator from Georgia for the leadership he has exhibited here. He kept calm and he got the job done. I think it was the right thing to do, and I am very proud that the Senate, in a very broad, bipartisan vote, voted to name this airport after former President Reagan. I had the opportunity to talk to a couple of colleagues here in the well as we were voting—Democrats who came up and remembered acts of kindness they had experienced from former President Reagan, and they voted for the legislation.

I know some had reservations or misgivings, but I think it was the right thing to do and it was the right time to do it. I thank the Senator for his efforts; he did an excellent job. I thank one and all for their cooperation.

Mr. BYRD addressed the Chair.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from West Virginia is recognized.

#### THE HIGHWAY BILL

Mr. BYRD. Mr. President, the Intermodal Surface Transportation Efficiency Act reauthorization, ISTEA—in other words, the highway bill—sets the authorization levels for the current fiscal year and the next 5 years for our Federal highway construction, bridge, highway safety, and transit programs. When the Senate found itself unable to complete action on S. 1173 at the end of the last session, it was necessary to pass a short-term extension bill to tide these programs over from October of last year until May 1, 1998. I supported that short-term extension measure, but I did so with the understanding from the distinguished Senate majority leader, and others in the leadership, that “immediately following the President’s State of the Union Address,” the Senate would return to the highway reauthorization bill.

It now appears that things have changed and that the distinguished majority leader is being urged by a handful of Senators to delay action on it and not bring up ISTEA until after Congress completes action on the fiscal year 1999 budget resolution. Mr. President, as one who has been majority

leader, I can understand the pressures that are upon our own distinguished majority leader at this time with reference to the highway bill. I have had discussions with the able majority leader, and prior to the reconvening of the Senate, I had the pleasure of talking with the majority leader in my office. He showed me the courtesy of coming to my office, and we sat for 30 minutes and discussed this measure and other matters. I can understand the pressures that are on him from other Senators in this body. Having been majority leader, I know that one cannot please all Senators on his own side, much less Senators on the other side of the aisle. I am fully aware of that. And what I say with respect to the bill certainly is not in denigration of our majority leader. I have an excellent relationship with him, as I do with my own leader on this side of the aisle, and I would not want to do anything to impair that relationship.

But, Mr. President, having said that, this would be a very shortsighted approach to handling one of the most important matters to come before this Congress—the highway bill. I understand that the very able chairman of the Budget Committee, Mr. DOMENICI, has expressed his hope and intention to proceed quickly with his hearings and the markup of the budget resolution. As Senators are aware, Section 300 of the Congressional Budget Act sets a date of April 1 as the deadline for the Senate Budget Committee to report the budget resolution each year. The Congressional Budget Act requires Congress to complete action on budget resolutions every year by April 15.

I was here, Mr. President, when we enacted the Congressional Budget Act of 1974, and I spoke for it, supported it, and had a considerable bit to do with the formulation of it. But in all of the years since the Congressional Budget Act of 1974, Congress has met the deadline for completing action on budget resolutions only 3 times. Those 3 years were fiscal years 1976, 1977 and 1994.

I say to all Senators, but particularly to the leadership, that this is not a very good record upon which to base our hopes for early completion of the fiscal year 1999 budget resolution. Yet, that’s what the plan appears to be, as it relates to the highway bill. As I say, I implored, I importuned, I beseeched, I pleaded with the distinguished majority leader before this session was convened and urged that we be allowed to bring up the highway bill. That was the commitment that was made. It was made to the Senate, it was made to the American people. As I say, I know the majority leader has a lot of pressures on him, and I can understand those, having been majority leader. So I am not going to be one to criticize the majority leader in this respect. Heavy and uneasy is the head that wears the crown.

We are being told we should just be patient and our State highways and transit authorities should not worry.

We’ll get around to enacting the ISTEA bill after the budget resolution is finished. Mr. President, that places our State highway departments in an extremely precarious and uncertain position as they struggle to continue, without interruption, the Nation’s critically important highway construction, bridge construction and repair, highway safety and transit programs.

Now, every highway department is being put into that position. How can we be sure that the budget resolution will be completed at all, much less by the April 15 statutory deadline? Eventually, it will be completed, but how can we be sure that it will be finished in time to meet that deadline? In the past 25 years, Congress has only met that deadline three times, as I have already indicated. On all other occasions, the deadline was missed, sometimes by months, as it was in fiscal year 1985 when the budget resolution was not completed until October 1, 1984; and for fiscal year 1991, when the budget resolution was not completed until October 9, 1990.

But even if it is passed, how can we afford to wait until that deadline? How can we afford to wait until April? How can we afford to wait until April 15 to bring up the highway bill? Construction seasons are upon us. Construction seasons in the northern States, in particular, are going to be constricted.

If the leadership continues to hold up the ISTEA bill, I am concerned that Congress will not be able to act on a new highway bill prior to the statutory deadline now in existence for the obligation of highway and transit funds. How many more days do we have, Mr. President until May 1? May 1 is the drop-dead date with respect to highway obligations—new obligations by the highway departments throughout this country. May 1. How many more days remain? We don’t count Saturdays and Sundays, naturally. But only 41 session days remain. Only 41 session days when the Senate will be in session. The States will hit the spending walls for highway transfer funding on May 1. I assure all Senators that we will hear from the American people if we continue to ignore the basic transportation needs of this Nation in such a cavalier fashion. The disruption of these transportation projects will be massive, massive in the Northeast, in the Northwest, in the Southwest, and in the Southeast—all over this country. The disruption of these projects will be massive across the Nation as States will be required to stop obligating funds on May 1 for the highway and transit programs. Congress needs to get its act together!

This is an irresponsible and unnecessary course that threatens the very lives of people as well as the economic well-being of the people throughout the country. Does it take a crisis, Mr. President, to force us to act here in Congress? Do we have to have a bridge collapse and possibly have people killed before we wake up? I have not

forgotten the collapse of the Silver Bridge at Point Pleasant, WV, in 1967. It killed 46 people.

Let us look out of the windows and observe the rains that are pounding our area. Listen to the radio, or watch the television set—I don't do much of that; but I do watch the weather—and watch what they are saying about the weather all over this country, about the storm, about what is happening in States back to the west and to the north. The snow, the ice, the ravages of winter will further pock-mark and erode our highways and bridges. We can't afford delays in stepping up to our responsibilities for public safety very much longer.

Mr. President, I have asked the journal clerk how much time the Senate wasted yesterday in quorum calls and in recesses. On yesterday—one day alone—we spent 59 minutes, almost an hour, in quorum calls, and 2 hours and 18 minutes in recesses. That is 3 hours 17 minutes—with a quick calculation—3 hours 17 minutes spent in quorum calls and recesses here in the Senate yesterday. We could have been working on the highway bill.

Strategy games in Washington may be fine for those who do not depend on safe, modern highways to protect their livelihoods and their lives. But, hand-sitting will not serve us well when the public realizes what is going on.

I implore the leadership to move this bill as soon as possible. The clock is ticking, Mr. President, and time is running out.

I thank the Chair. I thank all Senators. I yield the floor.

#### MEASURE PLACED ON CALENDAR—S. 1601

Mr. LOTT. I understand the cloning bill is at the desk awaiting second reading by the clerk.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The majority leader is correct. The clerk will report the bill.

The assistant legislative clerk read as follows:

A bill (S. 1601) to amend Title 18 United States Code to prohibit the use of somatic cell nuclear transfer technology for the purposes of human cloning.

Mr. LOTT. Mr. President, I object to further consideration of this bill at this time.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The bill will be placed on the calendar.

#### EXECUTIVE SESSION

NOMINATION OF DAVID SATCHER, OF TENNESSEE, TO BE AN ASSISTANT SECRETARY OF HEALTH AND HUMAN SERVICES, MEDICAL DIRECTOR OF THE PUBLIC HEALTH SERVICE, AND SURGEON GENERAL OF THE PUBLIC HEALTH SERVICE

Mr. LOTT. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the Senate now

proceed to executive session to consider the nomination of David Satcher, and that it be in order to consider both the position of Surgeon General and the Assistant Secretary of HHS en bloc.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Is there objection?

Mr. ASHCROFT. Mr. President, reserving the right to object, and I do not intend to object, I am troubled by moving to this measure because I have sought information from this administration, from the Centers for Disease Control, and that information has not been forthcoming.

I thank the majority leader for his willingness to assist me in this respect. He has been very gracious and helpful to me in seeking to get the information that I have requested. I will continue to propound that request, and I have agreed that it would be appropriate to proceed with the measure at this time.

I want to thank the majority leader. While I do not intend to object, I do want to say that I think it would be inappropriate to conclude the debate on this matter in any respect, by a vote or otherwise, absent the kind of cooperation that I think the Senate deserves, when the President has brought a nominee to the Senate and individual Members of the Senate have asked for information.

With that in mind, I thank you for this opportunity to express myself on this. I do not object.

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

Mr. LOTT. Mr. President, let me note that I appreciate the cooperation of the Senator from Missouri, and I certainly agree with him. When a U.S. Senator requests information from an agency or a department like the Centers for Disease Control about a nominee—I have looked over the list. This is certainly not an unreasonable request. It is one that should be able to be complied with very easily. That request has to be honored. I do have a call into the Secretary of Health and Human Services, Secretary Shalala, and will urge her to act expeditiously this afternoon to get that information to Senator ASHCROFT. If that information is not forthcoming, then I certainly understand that there would be no way that this debate could be brought to a conclusion or a vote until all information that is requested by any Senator would be made available to this body.

I thank Senator ASHCROFT for not objecting at this time so we can proceed with the debate and make sure that all relevant information is available to the Senate.

I yield the floor.

Mr. JEFFORDS addressed the Chair. The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Vermont is recognized.

Mr. JEFFORDS. Mr. President, I rise in support of nomination of Dr. David Satcher to serve our nation as Surgeon General and as Assistant Secretary for Health. Dr. Satcher is a well-respected physician and medical researcher who

has devoted his career to serving the Nation's public health.

I want to note at the outset that it is relatively unusual for one person to be nominated to fill two such significant positions at the same time. When I reviewed the history of these positions, however, I learned that there is a historical precedent. From 1977 to 1981, Dr. Julius B. Richmond served ably in both positions. I believe that by combining these responsibilities we will better serve the needs of the nation.

Dr. Satcher has demonstrated the kind of commitment to serving our Nation's public health that will be required to faithfully fulfill these responsibilities. At a time when many physicians and policy makers failed to appreciate urban health care needs, he began his career serving low-income and other disadvantaged patients in neighborhood health centers and urban hospitals. In 1982 he became President of Meharry Medical College in Nashville, Tennessee. Meharry Medical College has trained more African American physicians than any other medical school in the country.

In 1993, Dr. Satcher became the Director of the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention where he has served with distinction the past four years. Under his leadership, CDC has placed greater emphasis upon the prevention of disease. He has worked to increase childhood immunization rates from 55% to 78%.

As a result, the incidence of vaccine-preventable childhood diseases has been reduced to its lowest level ever and three vaccine preventable diseases have been entirely eliminated.

In addition, participation in CDC's comprehensive breast and cervical cancer screening program has expanded from 18 to 50 states. As a result of this initiative, more than 1.2 million women have received screening, over 2900 women with breast cancer have been identified and referred for treatment and over 21,000 women with an early treatable stage of cervical cancer have been identified and referred for treatment.

Dr. Satcher also used his leadership to dramatically upgrade CDC's ability to detect and respond to new infectious diseases and foodborne illnesses. As a result, CDC played a lead role in responding to the outbreak of Salmonella in Oregon that was caused by contaminated food, and was responsible for the efforts to contain the multi-state outbreak of Cyclospora resulting from consumption of contaminated raspberries that threatened the health of thousands of children. Dr. Satcher's efforts lay the groundwork for the development of a new early warning system for infectious disease and foodborne illness that promises to save thousands of American lives each year.

Dr. Satcher will need to draw heavily upon all of this commitment and experience to master the challenging duties for which he has been nominated. The Surgeon General occupies the "bully