But with virtually all 55 GOP senators now on board, and Democrats joining them, the plan appears to have enough support to overcome the Senate filibuster that has thwarted a four-year renewal of the statute for months. Senators said they think the White House will be able to coax the Republican-controlled House to agree as well, even though House leaders have complained that senators' demands had weakened the measure.

''It was a bipartisan group of us that really believed we could do better . . . to protect civil liberties even as we gave law enforcement important tools to conduct terrorism investigations,'' Sen. John E. Sununu (R–N.H.) told reporters. He said that he and his fellow negotiators had to make more concessions to the administration than they wanted to, but that Congress will monitor the law's application over the coming years and perhaps revise it.

Sen. Richard J. Durbin (Ill.), one of several Democrats who agreed to back the compromise yesterday, said ''it falls far short'' of the bill that was passed by the Senate last year but rejected by the House. ''But if you measure it against the original Patriot Act . . . we've made progress'' toward ''protecting basic civil liberties at a time when we are dealing with the war on terrorism,'' Durbin said.

Senate Minority Leader Harry M. Reid (D-Nev.) called the compromise ''a step in the right direction.''

The proposal would restrict federal agents' access to library records, one of the Patriot Act's most contentious provisions. A form of secret subpoena known as a National Security Letter could no longer be used to obtain records from libraries that function ''in their traditional capacity, including providing basic Internet access,'' Sununu and others said in a statement. But libraries that are ''Internet service providers'' would remain subject to the letters, Durbin said.

The Senate proposal would no longer require National Security Letter recipients to tell the FBI the identity of their lawyers.

The compromise bill also addresses ''Section 215 subpoenas,'' which are granted by the Foreign Intelligence Surveillance Act court. Recipients of such subpoenas originally were forbidden to tell anyone about the action. The proposed Senate measure would allow them to challenge the ''gag order'' after one year, rather than the 90-day wait in earlier legislation.

Sununu said the administration insisted on the longer waiting period. ''You now have a process to challenge the gag order,'' he said, defending the concession. ''That didn't exist before.''

Sununu said he and his allies were disappointed that the compromise does not require agents to ''show a connection to a suspected terrorist or spy'' before obtaining a Section 215 subpoena. Instead, a FISA judge would have to agree that there are reasonable grounds to believe the items being sought are relevant to an investigation into terrorism.

Several liberals condemned the bill. ''I am gravely disappointed in this so-called deal,'' said Sen. Russell Feingold (D-Wis.). ''The White House agreed to only a few minor changes'' that ''do not address the major problems,'' he said, adding: ''We've come too far and fought too hard to agree to reauthorize the Patriot Act without fixing those problems.''

But Justice Department spokesman Brian Roehrkasse said the Senate compromise ''maintains the tools necessary to fight terrorism while further strengthening safeguards to protect civil liberties.''

''We are hopeful that the Congress will now move forward to renew the Patriot Act,'' he said.

In a related area yesterday, several Democrats said the administration must do more to explain and justify the domestic surveillance program conducted by the National Security Agency.

''If they came with the idea that this is going to stop an investigation on the part of the Senate intelligence committee, they were wrong,'' committee Vice Chairman John D. Rockefeller IV (D-W.Va.) told reporters after a closed briefing by two top administration officials. ''There were certain kinds of questions which could easily have been answered but weren't. . . . Where we really wanted hard information that was important to us, that gave us the size and the scope and the reach and the depth of the program,'' he said, ''they were not forthcoming.''

Sen. Dianne Feinstein (D-Calif.) said after the briefing: ''For the life of me, I don't understand why the administration won't say, 'Sure, you have a right to look at this. We'd like to expand it.' ''

ADDITIONAL STATEMENTS

TRIBUTE TO WILLIAM A. COOPER

● Mr. COLEMAN. Mr. President, earlier this week, I paid tribute to Mr. William A. Cooper, honoring his career and service to the State at the occasion of his retirement. Today, I would like to have printed into the RECORD the following statement from the esteemed Minnesotan and former Senator Rudy Boschwitz in honor of our friend Bill Cooper.

The statement follows:

THE TAXPAYERS' FRIEND RETIRES (?)

Not many people can say they saved the taxpayers billions. Bill Cooper can. Well, some credit must be given to the team he brought to Minnesota and some locals that he found here and made a part of that team. But Bill was clearly the leader. Without him it is highly doubtful that TCF would have survived.

It must be mentioned at the very outset that without his wife, Sherry, it would have been highly doubtful that Bill himself would have survived, much less be able to endure the pressures and hours that first saving and then building a major institution entails.

It started about 20 years ago in the midst of the Savings & Loan crisis when S&L's were going broke left and right including some big ones here in Minnesota. The eventual cost to the taxpayer was in the neighborhood of $100 billion. Extraordinarily high interest rates combined with poor management and complicated by the lugubrious sounding phenomena of disintermediation had brought S&L's nationwide to their knees. Twin City Federal Savings and Loan (TCF), the largest and mightiest of them all in the Upper Midwest, appeared to be the next candidate for failure and a Government bailout to protect its depositors.

But, finally the Directors of TCF acted. By a single vote margin (many credit Community Activist and Leader, Harry Davis, with casting that vote) their decision was to bring in a fellow named Bill Cooper to save the sinking ship—though I suspect those embattled Directors must have had considerable doubt about the prospects for success.

My estimate may be wrong, but I suspect a TCF failure would have been one of the bigger ones nationally and cost the taxpayer $3 billion or more.

Instead, today TCF National Bank with its 500+ branches is a strong growing institution with stockholder value exceeding $3 billion. And much to Bill Cooper's credit, that value has been spread generously to his team (and other stockholders) returning riches beyond the dreams of the many who joined under Bill's leadership to create a new TCF.

This commendation could as well be entitled ''Only in America.'' I don't know the intricacies of Bill's life from his boyhood forward, but I do know that he was a policeman on the beat in Detroit; that he went to college in the evenings; got his degree in accounting and joined the many other young aspirants as an ''associate'' at a large national accounting firm. There he was put to work auditing bank clients and the rest, as they say, is history.

I joined the Board of TCF in 1991. The stock was about $2½ at the time (naturally I didn't buy enough of it). I served on the Board for about 9 years till my 70th birthday when the by-laws stipulated my retirement, though my feeling of closeness to the institution and its people continues unabated. It should! I continue to contribute to it's PAC and am the recipient (for another 3–4 years) of a retirement income from TCF.

I have been a Director of a number of national corporations. None has been as well managed as TCF. A single word summarizes Bill Cooper's role: Leadership. It is a totally focused leadership. At TCF there is no question about who is in charge. It is Bill Cooper (and with Lynn Nagorske as CEO I suspect there will continue to be no question). Bill has no problem in being tough, direct and fair. Bill does not turn away from the vagaries of the most difficult decisions. He is a remarkable leader both at the Bank and in his Community. The fact that in my 15-year association there have been few leadership changes at TCF—other than through retirements—attest to the quality and strength of Bill's leadership which includes delegating responsibility and expecting and very objectively measuring performance.

Does such a man really retire? I don't think so. Certainly not entirely. Not a man of Bill's curiosity and drive. Besides, he still has young kids in school and college educations loom ahead. The idea of Bill sitting around, playing golf, and not rising to new challenges is incongruous. It won't happen. And it will be fun watching what develops.●

PENSION RIGHTS CENTER'S 30TH ANNIVERSARY

● Mr. HARKIN. Mr. President, I would like to recognize the great achievement of the Pension Rights Center as it celebrates its 30-year anniversary. Since its founding on February 17, 1976, the center has championed the pension rights of working Americans and their families. The center is one of the country's foremost leaders on pension issues from a consumer perspective and has made an enormous difference in the lives of millions of workers, retirees and their families.

Over the years, the center has played a key role in identifying pension inequities and promoting reasonable solutions. They have played an instrumental role in shaping and ultimately helping to secure Federal laws and regulations that have expanded pension rights for widows, divorced spouses, and working people. The center is also the most trusted resource for pension information for policymakers, researchers, and the media on the highly complex pension issues translated from a consumer perspective.

The center has led the way in helping individuals with their pension problems and in helping develop and coordinate the country's first nationwide pension information and assistance services for older Americans. The center provides backup legal training and technical assistance for the U.S. Administration on Aging's Pensions Counseling and Information Program. There are now currently six regional counseling projects that provide free assistance to thousands of individuals in 17 States.

The center also has spearheaded the Conversation on Coverage, an innovative public policy initiative that has brought together a wide range of experts—including businesses, unions, financial institutions, and national retiree, women's, and consumer organizations—to find common ground approaches to increasing pension coverage. The Conversation on Coverage's three working groups are in the process of finalizing recommendations to expand pensions and savings for millions of Americans.

The center's work is needed now more than ever. As baby boomers get closer to retirement, it is becoming clearer and clearer that they likely will not enjoy the retirement security that their parents have enjoyed. Younger workers are even more at risk. Many employers are backing away from their longstanding commitment to providing for their workers' retirement security.

Thousands of pension plans have been terminated or frozen and thousands more are considering additional pension cutbacks. The center has always been at the forefront of protecting workers' pensions and in proposing innovative and workable solutions, and their efforts will be all the more critical in the days and years ahead.

I wish the Pension Rights Center, its founder, Karen Ferguson, and the dedicated staff a very healthy 30th anniversary.●

MESSAGES FROM THE PRESIDENT

Messages from the President of the United States were communicated to the Senate by Ms. Evans, one of his secretaries.

EXECUTIVE MESSAGES REFERRED

As in executive session the Presiding Officer laid before the Senate messages from the President of the United States submitting sundry nominations which were referred to the appropriate committees.

(The nominations received today are printed at the end of the Senate proceedings.)

MEASURES PLACED ON THE CALENDAR

The following bill was read the second time, and placed on the calendar:

S. 2320. A bill to make available funds included in the Deficit Reduction Act of 2005 for the Low-Income Home Energy Assistance Program for fiscal year 2006, and for other purposes.

ENROLLED BILL PRESENTED

The Secretary of the Senate reported that on today, February 17, 2006, she had presented to the President of the United States the following enrolled bill:

S. 1989. An act to designate the facility of the United States Postal Service located at 57 Rolfe Square in Cranston, Rhode Island, shall be known and designated as the ''Holly A. Charette Post Office'' .

INTRODUCTION OF BILLS AND JOINT RESOLUTIONS

The following bills and joint resolutions were introduced, read the first and second times by unanimous consent, and referred as indicated:

By Mr. SANTORUM (for himself, Mr. DODD, Mr. BENNETT, Ms. LANDRIEU, Mr. DEWINE, Mr. LOTT, Mr. BUNNING, Mr. HATCH, Mr. BURNS, Mr. INHOFE, Mr. MENENDEZ, Mr. LAUTENBERG, Mr. LIEBERMAN, Mrs. CLINTON, Mr. SCHUMER, Ms. STABENOW, Mr. DAYTON, Mr. GRASSLEY, Mr. CRAIG, Mr. BURR, Mr. CRAPO, Mrs. LINCOLN, and Mr. HARKIN):

S. 2321. A bill to require the Secretary of the Treasury to mint coins in commemoration of Louis Braille; to the Committee on Banking, Housing, and Urban Affairs.

By Mr. ENZI (for himself and Mr. KENNEDY):

S. 2322. A bill to amend the Public Health Service Act to make the provision of technical services for medical imaging examinations and radiation therapy treatments safer, more accurate, and less costly; to the Committee on Health, Education, Labor, and Pensions.

By Mr. KERRY (for himself and Mr. KENNEDY):

S. 2323. A bill to extend the temporary suspension of duty on certain high-performance loudspeakers; to the Committee on Finance.

By Mr. KERRY (for himself and Mr. KENNEDY):

S. 2324. A bill to suspend temporarily the duty on certain audio headphones; to the Committee on Finance.

By Mr. KERRY (for himself and Mr. KENNEDY):

S. 2325. A bill to reduce temporarily the duty on certain audio headphones achieving full-spectrum noise reduction; to the Committee on Finance.

By Mr. DOMENICI:

S. 2326. A bill to provide for immigration reform, and for other purposes; to the Committee on the Judiciary.

By Mr. ALLEN (for himself, Mr. KERRY, Mr. SUNUNU, and Mrs. BOXER):

S. 2327. A bill to require the FCC to issue a final order regarding white spaces; to the Committee on Commerce, Science, and Transportation.

By Mr. KERRY (for himself and Mr. KENNEDY):

S. 2328. A bill to extend the temporary suspension of duty on certain synthetic filament yarns; to the Committee on Finance.

By Mr. KERRY (for himself and Mr. KENNEDY):

S. 2329. A bill to extend the temporary suspension of duty on certain filament yarns; to the Committee on Finance.

By Mr. KERRY (for himself and Mr. KENNEDY):

S. 2330. A bill to extend the temporary suspension of duty on certain R-core transformers; to the Committee on Finance.

By Ms. SNOWE (for herself and Ms. COLLINS):

S. 2331. A bill to amend the Internal Revenue Code of 1986 to extend the period for which the designation of an area as an empowerment zone is in effect; to the Committee on Finance.

By Mr. STEVENS:

S. 2332. A bill to amend the Communications Act of 1934 to promote and expedite wireless broadband deployment in rural and other areas, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Commerce, Science, and Transportation.

SUBMISSION OF CONCURRENT AND SENATE RESOLUTIONS

The following concurrent resolutions and Senate resolutions were read, and referred (or acted upon), as indicated:

By Mr. STEVENS (for himself, Mr. INOUYE, Mr. BURNS, Mr. MCCAIN, Mr. ROCKEFELLER, Mr. LOTT, Mr. LAUTENBERG, Mr. SUNUNU, Mr. PRYOR, and Mr. NELSON of Florida):

S. Res. 382. A resolution recognizing Kenneth M. Mead's service as the Inspector General of the Department of Transportation; considered and agreed to.

By Mr. BIDEN (for himself, Mr. BROWNBACK, Mr. OBAMA, Mr. LUGAR, Mr. FEINGOLD, and Mr. DODD):

S. Res. 383. A resolution calling on the President to take immediate steps to help improve the security situation in Darfur, Sudan, with an emphasis on civilian protection; to the Committee on Foreign Relations.

ADDITIONAL COSPONSORS

S. 333

At the request of Mr. SANTORUM, the name of the Senator from Washington (Ms. CANTWELL) was added as a cosponsor of S. 333, a bill to hold the current regime in Iran accountable for its threatening behavior and to support a transition to democracy in Iran.

S. 370

At the request of Mr. LOTT, the names of the Senator from Oklahoma (Mr. INHOFE) and the Senator from Florida (Mr. MARTINEZ) were added as cosponsors of S. 370, a bill to preserve and protect the free choice of individual employees to form, join, or assist labor organizations, or to refrain from such activities.

S. 779

At the request of Mr. DORGAN, the name of the Senator from Wisconsin (Mr. FEINGOLD) was added as a cosponsor of S. 779, a bill to amend the Internal Revenue Code of 1986 to treat controlled foreign corporations established in tax havens as domestic corporations.

S. 910

At the request of Ms. SNOWE, the name of the Senator from New Jersey (Mr. MENENDEZ) was added as a cosponsor of S. 910, a bill to require that health plans provide coverage for a minimum hospital stay for mastectomies, lumpectomies, and