

House, and it was thwarted. So it has now had an opportunity and it was to be brought up in a way that the amendment would not be on it.

I have supported the amendment. I would like to see the amendment stay on it. But nevertheless, it is not one person in the House, it was several who have objected to it. And when it was to be brought up in that way, Members of the New Jersey delegation objected, and, of course, I understand that. I am not being critical. That is everyone's right, but nevertheless, I have been told I should be grateful for the help in passing my bill, which is now dying, and I am trying to see where we can make an agreement on this in order to free the business of the Senate.

Mr. LOTT. Mr. President, if the Senator will yield further, I commit to her I will stalk this bill across party lines, across State lines.

Mrs. HUTCHISON. Mr. President, I am not worried about the majority leader being committed.

Mr. LOTT. Let me go one step further. I want to assure her of my own commitment. I will be prepared to try to get unanimous consent to do it this night if that will be helpful.

Let me say, before I yield to the Democratic whip, the Democratic leader and I work together. We try very hard, in our trusting relationship. I think we have that. Sometimes we hope we can do things, we hope to achieve, but we have to deal with 98 other people. Every now and then, we get a little further out on the limb, and we have to back off.

The minority leader is a man of his word, and he has assured the Senator from Texas that he will work with us to try to get this done at the earliest time that the Senator from Texas would like to get that done. I don't want to speak for him or put words in his mouth, but I know him and I know, as he has already worked with me and with the Senator from Texas, that he is for this stalking bill, and he is going to work with us to try to get it done. He has another Senator, or Senators, who have an interest. We have to work through all that, but we will work through that.

Would the whip like to say something? I yield to the whip.

Mr. FORD. Mr. President, I was not privileged to the agreement among the distinguished Senator from Texas and New Jersey and our leader. So I am somewhat in a difficult spot here this morning. I will have to wait until the leader has arrived. He is not here at the moment, and we all understand why he is not, and also the Senator from New Jersey.

Two things happened. I remember the distinguished Senator from Texas making a statement on the floor about how much stronger her bill was after the Lautenberg amendment was attached, and you made a very strong statement about the bill as it left here.

The bill was only passed last week. We have been trying to get bills passed

for 8, 9, and 10 months. So it was just passed last week. The problem in the House, as I understand, was they tried to strip the Lautenberg amendment from the stalking bill, and that is where it ran into trouble.

The day is not over and tomorrow is not over, as the majority leader has said. Maybe things can work out. I am willing to help in any way I can, but I am somewhat at a disadvantage, if I may use that as a tool here. I will work with the majority leader, as Senator DASCHLE has.

So I think what I am saying is correct here, that attempting to take the Lautenberg amendment off the stalking bill last night caused the problems, and that was the reason it was not brought up. Today is another day.

Mr. LOTT. Mr. President, if I could seek recognition again.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The majority leader is recognized.

Mr. LOTT. Before I press the Senator or give assurances to the Senator from Texas even further, could I inquire of the Democratic whip—I was under the impression that, if we could work out the difficulties with the nomination of Ms. Montgomery, we could also move the CFTC nominations, which are Republican and Democrat, we could move the military nominations, and we could begin to move the appropriations conference reports.

I am informed that maybe that is not the case if I move forward in good faith on the nomination of the judge from Minnesota. Have I been informed correctly we are not going to move these other nominations?

Mr. FORD. That depends. That would be my position as of this time, that only the one judge. We can do judges, and that is plural. We can do safe drinking water. We can do the small business minimum wage conference report.

Mr. LOTT. Oh, yes.

Mr. FORD. We could do health care and those sorts of things.

Mr. LOTT. Can we do the health care conference report?

Mr. FORD. Yes, we could. But, I mean, we have a little problem with that bill. As the majority leader knows, we want to have a striking provision relating to a drug patent that was put into the conference report. We would like to have an opportunity to remove that before we move to it.

Mr. LOTT addressed the Chair.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The majority leader.

Mr. FORD. You have the floor.

Mr. LOTT. We are going to have to have some good faith and cooperation. If the Democrats are going to hold up all the legislation until we get agreement on all the judges, then I think that is exceeding anybody's expectations. It is not going to happen. I have acted in good faith. I continue to act in good faith. I have been here before everybody trying to work out one more. But if you are going to hold up agreed-to CFTC nominations and health insur-

ance legislation and all these other bills until there is some agreement on all of the judges here today, then I think that is just not going to be possible.

POINT OF PERSONAL PRIVILEGE

Mr. LOTT. I want to say one other thing, Mr. President, because I have been waiting for an opportunity to rise on a point of personal privilege.

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

Mr. LOTT. My integrity has been questioned by a Member of the House of Representatives. The Congressman from California, PETE STARK, alleged that I had committed an ethical violation because, as the majority leader in the U.S. Senate and as a conferee on the conference with the House on the health insurance legislation, I urged consideration of the conference on a specific issue, this drug that was just mentioned.

Mr. FORD. Drug patent.

Mr. LOTT. The drug patent. That tells you how much I know about this. First of all, I resent the fact that my integrity was impugned. I do not act that way. This is not an issue that I have a direct personal interest in, even though I understand, I have been told, that this is intended to be a dagger aimed at my heart, that we are going to take out this drug patent to get at the majority leader.

Why? This is a product for arthritic patients. It is not produced in my State. There is no plant in my State. I do not have a vested interest in this. I act at the request of my colleagues in the Senate, Republicans and Democrats, Senate and House, as a conferee.

I was presented this issue as a fairness issue. I talked to a lot of different Congressmen and Senators. I talked to Congressman WALKER of Pennsylvania. He is the first one that mentioned it to me. I did not know what he was talking about. There are Democratic Congressmen who spoke up in defense of this issue yesterday.

I remind you, after questioning my integrity, Congressman STARK was one of only two—two—House Members who voted against that health insurance reform package. He is totally out of order, and I resent it. I am not going to tolerate that sort of thing.

Also, Senators came to me from all over America, Republicans and Democrats, saying this is something that ought to be done—Senator GORTON of Washington, I do not know what his interest is; Senator SPECTER of Pennsylvania; Senator SANTORUM. These are good and honorable men who made a case for it.

I have a staff member who is an expert tax lawyer, a woman. We discussed it. It seemed like the right thing to do. I urged, if it were possible, that this be included in the package.

That is the whole story. If you are aiming a dagger at my heart, you better pick another issue. I "ain't got no

dog in this fight." I am just trying to help work it out with Senator KASSEBAUM and Senator KENNEDY and Democrats and Republicans, House and Senate, to get important legislation done for the women and children and the sick and the elderly in this country. A drug for arthritis, for Heaven's sake. So, you know, take it out; it is OK with me. But before you do it, you better check with a lot of Senators, Republicans and Democrats, that say they wanted that. But, in conclusion, Mr. President, if this is to get at the majority leader, you missed. I yield the floor.

Mr. FORD addressed the Chair.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Kentucky.

Mr. FORD. Mr. President, the argument of the majority leader is not with us here on this side. It is with Representative STARK over there, because we are not in—as he said, our dog is not in that fight. We do believe, however, that this drug for arthritis is one that, if you keep this language in the bill, will be manufactured for 2 more years and the price will be up. It will not be a generic drug.

That is our legislative problem with this and not an argument between the majority leader and Representative STARK. I think they should not jump on us. I think we will come together on it.

But the other side of the coin is there is a legislative problem that we would like to try to work out if we could as it relates to the bill. If that is possible, we will try to do that. I do not like personalities at all. I do not like this, taking another Member on in the press. I think it is wrong. I will defend myself. I am just as political as the next person, but I try, as best I can, not to be personal. I think it is unfortunate.

Mr. WELLSTONE. Will the Senator yield for a question?

Mr. FORD. Yes. I will be delighted.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Minnesota.

NOMINATION OF ANN D. MONTGOMERY

Mr. WELLSTONE. It is in the form of a question, if my colleagues would be tolerant for just a moment. The first question or comment is, again, I understand what the Senator from Texas has said. I do want to point out that Judge Montgomery does not have anything to do with what is going on in the House of Representatives or anywhere else. She is just back in Minnesota waiting to be confirmed.

I say to the majority leader, whom I have worked with in good faith and appreciate all that he is doing, that a long time ago we discussed Judge Montgomery. We were going to do it judge by judge. I hope she just does not get held up in this big puzzle, and we can please go forward with her.

The last point I want to make is just to follow up on the minority whip. Since then I talked to the majority leader yesterday about Lodine. I said

this was something I would challenge on the floor. But I understand exactly what the majority leader had to say, and I, in no way, shape, or form, believe this should have anything to do with any kind of personal attack or anything like that. I am opposed to that. When we have this discussion and I have a point of order, I will stay far away from that.

The majority leader has been someone I have enjoyed knowing and enjoyed working with, and I want him to know that, as somebody who will be on the floor later on in that debate. But could we please—Judge Montgomery is just waiting back in Minnesota for us to move this. Could we please do that for her? I have told her that Senators, Democrats and Republicans, are good people, that we all have a big heart. Could we please move her forward?

Mr. FORD. Mr. President, I yield the floor.

Mrs. KASSEBAUM addressed the Chair.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Kansas.

HEALTH INSURANCE REFORM

Mrs. KASSEBAUM. Mr. President, first I would just like to say, it has been a year ago today that the health insurance reform legislation passed unanimously in the Labor Committee. So, it has been a bumpy road to achieve what has been achieved, and, I think, a very important piece of legislation. One of the reasons it is on the floor today has been the active participation and support of the majority leader.

The Senator from Mississippi has been insistent that we achieve the passage of this bill, the conference be successful. I just want to say that I think any differences that may have arisen because of the patent extension provision, which was added late, can be addressed.

But certainly the majority leader is one of the reasons we have before us today the health insurance reform bill, and it is my hope that we can bring it up and we can address this and not put it off to the point that we are going to lose an opportunity to pass this, which is a small but historic step for health insurance reform. I yield the floor, Mr. President.

Mr. LAUTENBERG addressed the Chair.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from New Jersey.

LAUTENBERG AMENDMENT TO THE STALKING BILL

Mr. LAUTENBERG. Mr. President, I regret that I was not here at the time this debate began because we are now engaged in a discussion about what it is that is holding up the progress of the U.S. Senate on behalf of the American people. We have a most extraordinary situation here in the Senate. I think it is important the public understand what has happened.

The public is being victimized by procedural gridlock that is going to cost thousands of people across this country an opportunity to have their cases heard, to see justice dispensed, and fairness dealt with.

Last night, the U.S. Senate was thrown into gridlock once again, although an agreement had been reached between the respective leaders to move forward with several important judicial nominations. That agreement was undermined at the last minute when one Member of this body objected unexpectedly, and much contrary to the rules and protocol here—courtesy, if you will—when the minority leader, the Democratic leader, asked the Senator what was her objection, she turned on her heel and walked out. I have never seen that in the 14 years I have been in the U.S. Senate. Usually, there is a courtesy that says, "Well, I object for the following reasons," and that makes sense. That is the way this body operates.

Now the basis of the objection has become clear. It is truly remarkable. The Senate is being held hostage and so is the American public for one reason, and one reason only: So that we do not take away guns from wife beaters and child abusers. We want to make sure they can get their gun if they want it. That is why some 2,000-plus women a year get killed by men who have already beat them up, have been hauled into court, and in many cases convicted of misdemeanors, and then they want their gun back. Around here, we want to make sure those nice boys can get their guns.

Mr. President, the situation is too absurd. It would almost be a comedy, but it is too serious, a matter of life and death for thousands of women and children whose futures are being threatened by a narrow faction of extremists.

I want to take a moment to explain. Mr. President, for months I have been trying to get an amendment included in the bill that deals with the problem of stalking. Stalking is a terrible thing for anyone to have to endure. We see it in New Jersey. We see it across the country. I am sure all 50 States have the problem. I support the bill. In fact, I am cosponsor of the legislation.

I wanted to make it even more effective. That is the right that we have here. When you have an opportunity to add a piece of legislation you think has merit, you put it on a piece of legislation that has already been introduced. I have been working to include an amendment that would prohibit anyone convicted of domestic violence from possessing a firearm. It is pretty simple. My amendment stands for the simple proposition that if you beat your wife, if you beat your kid, you should not have a gun. It says "beat your wife, lose your gun; abuse your child, lose your gun." It is pretty simple. It is little more than common sense.

Mr. President, for months I tried to include my proposal as part of the