

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