

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

stalking bill. Finally, on July 25, after agreeing to several changes at the request of my Republican colleagues, my legislation passed the Senate by a voice vote. The compromise, Mr. President, that was worked out was supported by even the most ardent progun Members of this body. Even those Members were not willing to go on record and stand up here and vote to say that someone accused of wife abuse, child abuse should have to have a gun.

They did not want to vote on it, because it would have been a shameful experience. Maybe they would have pleased some, but they would not have pleased all. So our sense was that with the changes that were made at their request, the stalking bill, which was here with my amendment attached, should be able to move quickly and easily through the House.

It was my understanding that the majority party here was going to help work it through the House. Well, Mr. President, it looks like the extremists are back. Although the House passed a large number of noncontroversial bills earlier this week, this legislation was not among them. Now we hear that there is a move afoot among Republican leaders in the House to eliminate my proposal, the proposal that wife beaters should not get guns.

I think, Mr. President, the American people would share my outrage at this. Every year thousands of women and children die at the hands of a family member, and 65 percent of the time those murderers use that gun. There is no reason why wife beaters and child abusers should have guns, and only the most progun extremists could possibly disagree with that. Unfortunately, these same extremists seem to have veto rights in the House of Representatives.

Mr. President, I made it clear that if the stalking bill comes back from the House with my proposal gutted I will not just sit back and take it. The lives of thousands of women and children are at stake. We are not just talking about the use of a gun in a murder; we are talking about a gun that is used in intimidation, to threaten and to strike fear and harass. Imagine what a child must think when he sees a man holding a gun, threatening a woman, even if he does not pull the trigger. What kind of a society are we that says by law we should not remove the gun from the hands of that individual? I will fight for this every step of the way.

Now we have the progun extremists dictating how this body is going to function. It is across the Capitol, but we are willing to do it here. Things like judicial appointments, so that justice can be administered, so that we can move the process that this country has in its very foundation, a country of laws.

"No, no," the Senator from Texas says. "No, no, you are not getting those judges. I don't care how good they are." What she is saying is, "Un-

less you take off the denial of a convicted wife abuser to own a gun, I am not letting judges go through." What a contrast. It is perfect. Want to control the law, not let the judges go through, not let other important legislation go through? Tie the place up in a knot.

Well, maybe that is where we are going to be, but I hope the American public hears it. I hope they understand what is being said here, that you can have a gun even though you may have beaten your wife. It reminds me of the story I repeated on this floor now a few times about the judge in Baltimore County, not far from here, who, faced with a sentencing of a man who murdered his wife, sentenced him to 18 months, time to be done on weekends, because he said he "didn't like giving a noncriminal a criminal sentence." In other words, murdering a wife is not the same as murdering a stranger.

Those who want to shut this place down are ignoring what the consequences are of this, not to let us consider noncontroversial judicial appointments. So eager that we protect the rights of child abusers that they will not let us consider a bill to fund veterans health care, environmental protection; so eager not to deprive a wife beater of a gun that they are willing to grind the Senate to a halt on all appropriations bills.

Mr. President, this is extremism run amok. It is outrageous, almost unbelievable. So I hope the people and the press will tell the American people what is going on here. It is quite an amazing story, stranger than fiction. It is unbelievable, in my view. It says a lot about this Congress and the power of the National Rifle Association. It says a lot about our values, priorities, and about our commitments to people victimized by domestic violence.

Mr. President, I am hoping that we can overcome the extremism on this issue, because special interests may have a lot of power in Washington. Extremism may have a lot of power in Washington, but, at the end of the day, the real power in this country rests—and so it should—with the American people. I am convinced that the overwhelming majority of Americans would agree with these basic principles: Wife beaters should not have guns. Child abusers should not have guns.

It is time for Congress to put these principles into law.

Mr. President, I just want to refer to the RECORD of July 25, 1996, when the Senator from Texas [Mrs. HUTCHISON], said:

Senator Lautenberg is to be commended for working with us to make his amendment a good amendment, and it is a good amendment, and I applaud him for it. I think it adds to the bill. He was willing to work with us, and I think we now have a very strong bill. Because of Senator Lautenberg's amendment, we are also going to be able to keep people who batter their wives or people with whom they live from having handguns. So I think it is going to be a great bill that will give the women and children of this country some protection that they do not

now have, and I am very pleased to be supportive of the compromise.

Several Senators addressed the Chair.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Texas is recognized.

Mrs. HUTCHISON. Mr. President, I am pleased that Senator LAUTENBERG has come to the floor, because I think that he is partially correct in his scenario of July 25, and that is that he and I and the leader of the Democratic side and the leader of the Republican side came together and made an agreement, and it was an agreement that I was concerned about but, nevertheless, was willing to work with all of my colleagues to make happen. That was the following: I do agree with his amendment. I think it is a good amendment. That was never the question. The question is, do we hold up a good bill that protects the stalking victims of this country with an amendment that might bog the bill down because it has to go back to the House?

Now, I supported his amendment, but I asked, "Could we put it on another bill? Could we make the agreement that Senator LAUTENBERG would get his vote on another bill?" The distinguished leader of the Democratic Party said, "Well, they can take it up on a suspension in the House. It really won't delay the bill if they will do that." And I said, "What if it runs into opposition in the House?" at which time the Senator from New Jersey and the Senator from South Dakota agreed that they would let the Senate pass a clean bill that could go directly to the President, pass the same bill clean so it could go directly to the President, to get relief for the stalking victims, with the agreement of the distinguished majority leader that Senator LAUTENBERG would be able to go to another forum, another bill for his amendment.

So when we talk about the extremists that are for wife beaters having guns, that is really not the issue. The issue is, are we going to have the stalking bill, which is a good bill, which passed unanimously in the House of Representatives, if we can't get Mr. LAUTENBERG's amendment on the bill? That is the question.

Now, the Senator from New Jersey and the Senator from South Dakota gave their word that if it ran into trouble in the House, they would help pass a clean bill so that we could do that much and give the Senator from New Jersey another opportunity on another bill for his amendment. So that is the issue here. Now it has run into trouble in the House.

The distinguished Senator from Kentucky says, "It has only been passed for a week." We got the bill Memorial Day. I had hoped that we could have it passed before Memorial Day. It has been 2 months since the bill came from the House, and we have had this opportunity.

I am certainly in sympathy with the Senator from New Jersey in wanting to have his amendment. But he did make

an agreement that he would not hold up one good bill for his amendment having to go just on that bill. We have other options. There will be other bills. The majority leader, whose word is good, will find another opportunity for the Senator from New Jersey. But we must know that we are going to have the stalking bill at some reasonable time. I would like to see it before the recess so that we can put this law into place. It has been pending since Memorial Day. So I would like to ask if we could work on having this bill out and work with the Senator from New Jersey for his amendment to go on another bill. It is really quite simple. If everyone is in agreement that the underlying stalking bill is good, then I think we should move forward on that.

Mr. BOND addressed the Chair.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Missouri is recognized.

VA-HUD APPROPRIATIONS BILL

Mr. BOND. Mr. President, while we are talking about bills that need to be moved, I want to return to the matter of the VA-HUD appropriations bill. As Members in this body and those who are observing our actions will recall, last night, proceeding to the bill was objected to by the Senator from Minnesota. This bill is being held hostage for another issue not related to it.

I rise today to point out to my colleagues the importance of passing this bill as quickly as possible. This is an appropriations bill. This is an important appropriations bill that provides money for the Veterans Administration, the Department of Housing and Urban Development, Environmental Protection Agency, National Aeronautics and Space Administration, National Science Foundation, and others.

We not only have to pass that bill, however, to provide funds beginning on October 1, the start of the new fiscal year, there are, at the request of the administration, certain emergency supplemental matters that have to be dealt with now. Let me advise my colleagues that the consequences of continuing to delay action—and the delay last night may already have made it too late to get this bill through—I am ready, however, to stay here and work as long as the leadership wants us to work, because this bill contains a supplemental appropriation for Ginnie Mae, the Government National Mortgage Corporation. This bill provides a \$20 billion increase in the current limitation on loan guarantees for mortgage-backed securities needed to finance FHA and Veterans Administration mortgages through September.

If we do not pass this bill, it means that sometime probably in early September, the VA and FHA will no longer be able to sell in the secondary mortgage market the paper that is generated by an issuance of loans to veterans and to those who qualify for the FHA. These people will be without the financing that should be available to

them, and it will be the fault of this body and those who have held up this bill if veterans in my State, in the State of California, the State of New York, or the State of Minnesota are not able to get mortgages in September.

The effect will be ultimately increasing mortgage interest rates and constraining home financing availability.

In addition, if this bill is delayed past the signing after October 1, as of September 30 the Federal Emergency Management Agency advises us that they will no longer be able to write flood insurance policies. Property owners in every State in the Nation depending upon Federal flood insurance will no longer be able to get Federal flood insurance. The authority expires. We have been asked to include an extension of the authorization for one more year in this bill. Without this bill, flood insurance will not be available.

There has also been discussion of water projects. Everybody knows that the District of Columbia is suffering from drinking water problems. This bill includes \$2 million for water infrastructure funds, including funds that will go ultimately to the safe drinking water revolving fund in every State and the District of Columbia.

That requires some additional explanation. We know that the House has passed the safe drinking water bill. We know also that the appropriations measure which passed both bodies and was signed into law for the current fiscal year had a provision that if the safe drinking water law was reauthorized prior to August 1, there would be roughly \$725 million available for that fund. August 1 has come and gone. As a result of the terms of the appropriations bill for this year, that money goes into the clean water fund. Those moneys are in the process of being paid out by the EPA to the State revolving funds.

When this bill is ultimately passed and signed by the President, traditionally the EPA takes about 3 months to get regulations issued so that funds can be paid out to all of the States under the formula for the drinking water revolving fund.

We are prepared in this measure when the President signs the safe drinking water bill, as I hope he will, to credit the safe drinking water fund with the money that is poured over into the clean water fund and provide additional appropriations, reducing the clean water funds for the next fiscal year.

I have assured the authorizing committees that we will make those moneys available as soon as we can approve this bill. As soon as we can send it to the President and get it signed, that money will be there.

The opposition to moving forward to VA-HUD means that we are holding up money to go to drinking water projects and clean water projects. The money that was temporarily set aside until August 1 for the States for the drink-

ing water funds is now in the clean water fund, and the EPA can continue to distribute that money. It can go to the States and the State revolving fund.

So that money is not lost. There have been some irresponsible statements by people who do not understand the process that the money is being lost. The money is not lost. The money can go to work today, tomorrow, this week on the clean water fund, but if it gets passed by both Houses and the President signs the safe drinking water fund at the direction and at the request of the authorizing committees, I will recommend to the committee and to this body that we put an equivalent amount from the 1997 appropriations into the safe drinking water revolving fund so that the District of Columbia and other States—as soon as the Environmental Protection Agency writes the regulations and can hand out the money—will have the dollars available to improve the drinking water supplies. That is another reason this bill must be protected.

In addition, this bill includes the funds needed as of October 1 to send out benefit checks to about 2 million poor and disabled veterans and veterans' widows. When this bill is held hostage, as it was last night, we are threatening the money that goes to the poor and disabled veterans and their widows.

This bill, Mr. President, also has \$1 billion to restore FEMA's disaster relief fund so that disaster victims from floods and other disasters across the country may be helped by FEMA. Mr. President, when someone holds up this bill and holds it hostage, it is holding hostage the money that would go to aid victims of disaster.

I ask my colleagues to quit playing games with a vitally important appropriations bill. Deal with the other matters. There are many sensitive matters. There are many things that I have that are being held up, and I am doing my best to work out agreements with those who are holding them up. But I say to you that the appropriations bills need to go forward not only to fund vital programs that begin October 1, but in the instance of the Ginnie Mae loan limitation, the bill has to be enacted as soon as possible so that Ginnie Mae's ability to sell VA and FHA mortgages will not expire.

In addition, as of October 1, there will be no authority for FEMA to write flood insurance.

Mr. President, we have talked enough about all of these problems. I hope that very shortly the majority leader will be able to ask unanimous consent to move forward on some of these vitally important measures that are pending before this body.

I yield the floor.

Several Senators addressed the Chair.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Minnesota.