

system is in place right now and will be taking calls for as long as necessary. Personnel have been deployed from FEMA's Infrastructure, Individual Assistance, and Hazard Mitigation Programs to California to begin work with State and local officials.

As I mentioned, Secretaries Cisneros and Peña are on their way now to California to decide what additional assistance might be warranted. I will work closely with my colleague, Senator BOXER; my colleagues in the House; and you, Mr. President, and others in the Senate. Over 30 congressional districts in California have been affected by this disaster, and we, together, will make sure that Federal response is swift, effective, and complete.

My heart goes out to the families that have members who have perished in this, our latest disaster, and to the many thousands of people that have been affected by the rising waters. My message to them is that FEMA will be there until we can get people back in their homes, businesses back on their feet, and lives back in order.

I thank you very much, Mr. President, and I yield the floor.

CONGRESSIONAL ACCOUNTABILITY ACT

The Senate continued with consideration of the bill.

Mr. GLENN. Parliamentary inquiry, Mr. President. Are we back in legislative session now?

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Yes, we are.

Mr. GLENN. Mr. President, I thank the Chair.

Mr. President, I suggest the absence of a quorum.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will call the roll.

The bill clerk proceeded to call the roll.

Mr. WELLSTONE. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the order for the quorum call be rescinded.

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

Mr. WELLSTONE. Mr. President, I will take just a few moments because I understand from the Senator from Ohio that we will for a short period go into recess following my statement, is that correct?

Mr. GLENN. Mr. President, that is correct. The majority leader said when we were finished now, we will go into recess until 4:30 when he will come to the floor and have a colloquy with Senator BRYAN.

Mr. WELLSTONE. Mr. President, I thought that while I was here I would summarize this past week for other Senators, and just as important, for people in the country, action of the Senate on some key political reform agenda items that were again blocked here in the Senate.

The piece of legislation that has been before this body is called the Congressional Accountability Act. There were a number of amendments introduced on

the floor this week that I think spoke to the heart of accountability. Many, many Senators have been talking about reform. I just want to summarize for a moment the record.

There was the Wellstone-Levin-Feingold-Lautenberg lobbyist gift ban. One of the central political reform item agendas, Mr. President—along with lobby registration and real campaign finance reform—and this was tabled on virtually a party-line vote. This was, once again, an amendment that was connected to what all of us have said we are about, which is to end this taking of gifts, expensive meals, and vacation travel from lobbyists and other special interests. I believe the Senator from Michigan, the occupant of the chair, was actually one of the few from his side who voted for this. But with the exception of the Senator from Michigan and a couple of other Senators from the majority, it was almost a straight party-line vote.

There was another amendment, the Wellstone amendment, to restrict political contributions from lobbyists who have lobbied a Member within a year. I think that goes to the heart of this sort of nexus between money and lobbying, and the extent to which people in the country feel left out of the loop of governing. This, I am sad to say, was not just a party vote. There was an overwhelming vote against this, and I really believe we are making a big mistake by not, in a very significant way, reforming this political process and doing something about the mix of money and its influence in politics.

There was an amendment by Senator FORD, from Kentucky, to prohibit the personal use of frequent flier miles by Members of Congress and staffers. While Senate rules already prohibit this, this amendment would have codified the rule for us and extended the rule to House Members.

Senator MCCONNELL's amendment struck language from the Ford amendment that would have applied the prohibition consistently to the House and Senate, allowing House Members to continue the practice of using frequent flier miles for family vacations, expensive meals, and other means of having their lifestyles subsidized indirectly by their official travel, paid for by the taxpayer. So Senator FORD's reform amendment was unsuccessful, voted down in what was largely a party vote.

There was the Exon amendment to require specificity in how we propose to get to a balanced budget and to prohibit outlays in excess of revenues in the year 2002.

Mr. President, what Senator EXON was trying to do was say, let us have some truth in budgeting, let us be accountable, let us be honest and direct with people about the cuts we are going to be making if we pass the balanced budget amendment to the Constitution. That amendment was defeated by almost a party-line vote. Now, I opposed that amendment for other reasons, but I do believe that, at

a minimum, Members of Congress ought to make clear the huge cuts that would be required by the balanced budget amendment before we vote on it. By and large, that vote on the Ford amendment was also a party-line vote.

Again, what Senator EXON was trying to say for those who were for the constitutional amendment to balance the budget—I am not—is please be direct and honest with people and let us be clear about how we propose to get there. It was voted down on what was, by and large, a party-line vote.

There was the Kerry amendment to prohibit the personal use of campaign funds. It would have imposed tough new rules to prevent abuses by some Members of Congress in this area, including the leasing of cars for essentially personal use in the Washington area, paying for recreational travel, meals, and the like. Again, this amendment was tabled.

There was another attempt to address the problem of personal use of frequent flier miles by my colleague, the Senator from Ohio, Senator GLENN. The Glenn amendment was to extend to the legislative branch the same frequent flier rules that apply to the executive branch. That was tabled on essentially a party-line vote.

And finally, Mr. President, and I summarize, there was the Wellstone amendment on children. My colleagues on the other side of the aisle have been saying over and over again, "We are not going to impose cuts that are going to hurt children, that would create more hunger or homelessness among children." This amendment asked Senators to go on record voting for what they have been saying. Believe it or not, that amendment was tabled on virtually a party-line vote.

Mr. President, I just present this summary because somewhere, someplace in the United States of America, people should know that the so-called reformers did not follow through on a great deal of the reform agenda; in fact, they are blocking it. Americans should know that there is much that we can and should and must do to make this process more open, more accountable, more honest. And over and over and over again, on many important amendments, we had virtually straight party-line votes defeating these reform efforts by people who ran for office on a reform agenda.

Mr. President, I know that the majority leader on "Face the Nation" a couple of weeks ago, in talking about the gift ban said something to the effect that: "We're in control of the Congress now, and we're going to set the agenda."

Party control has shifted, and the majority leader is a skillful legislator and a skillful leader. But my question, Mr. President, looking at the past week is: When are we going to get beyond party-line votes? When are we going to get to the merits of amendments if, every time a Senator brings

an amendment to the floor, it is automatically tabled because the majority leader says that is not what our party is going to support?

My question for my colleagues is: When are we going to see a little more independence?

I hope that we follow through on commitments we have made to the people in this country, which is that we are going to be serious about reforming this process. The Congressional Accountability Act is a good, sound, positive piece of legislation in that direction, but we had an opportunity to do much more, and I have given examples of amendment after amendment after amendment that I bet 90-plus percent of Americans would support which were tabled on virtually party-line votes. I thought people wanted us to get beyond that. I thought people wanted each and every one of us to be independent, to vote on the merits of the legislation, to vote on what we think would be good for the people back home.

Did Senators vote against an amendment saying we would not do anything to create more hunger and homelessness among children because they thought this amendment was not good for the people they represent back home? Did Senators vote against gift ban or abuses of frequent flier miles or other campaign finance reform measures because they thought the people back home whom they represent did not want them to vote for these amendments? It was virtually a straight party-line vote.

So, Mr. President, we will see, with the unfunded mandates bill that will be before the body within the next day or so, but I certainly hope as soon as possible, Senators will consider each and every amendment based on their merits, not based on party calculation—based upon what the people back home would want them to do—based on their own personal convictions and independence, regardless of what they think the majority of people back home want to do.

Different people have different models of how they represent their States. Right now, what I have seen, by and large, is virtually a straight party-line vote, all about control, all about power, and not about the merits of the amendments or the legislation, but a retreat from the very reform agenda that many of my colleagues said they were committed to.

So I look forward to the next piece of legislation, and I hope that we will do better. I intend to continue to fight for this political reform agenda, including lobbying registration and gift ban reform, and tough, comprehensive campaign finance reform legislation here in the Senate. I commend my colleagues on their work on the Congressional Accountability Act, which I wholeheartedly support. I yield the floor.

Mr. GRASSLEY addressed the Chair.

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Mr. ABRAHAM). The Senator from Iowa.

RECESS

Mr. GRASSLEY. Mr. President, since there are no further amendments, other than the managers' package—and that is to this bill that is before us—and no other Senators are seeking the floor at this time, I ask unanimous consent that the Senate now stand in recess until 4:30 p.m. this afternoon.

There being no objection, the Senate, at 3:09 p.m., recessed until 4:30 p.m.; whereupon, the Senate reassembled when called to order by the Presiding Officer [Mrs. HUTCHISON].

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Chair, acting in her capacity as Senator from Texas, suggests the absence of a quorum.

The clerk will call the roll.

The legislative clerk proceeded to call the roll.

Mr. DOLE. Madam President, I ask unanimous consent that the order for the quorum call be rescinded.

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

VISIT TO THE U.S. SENATE BY DISTINGUISHED GUESTS

Mr. DOLE. Madam President, and my colleagues, we are very honored today to have visitors from Japan, the Prime Minister, Mr. Murayama; the Minister of Foreign Affairs, Mr. Kono; Parliamentary Deputy Chief Cabinet Secretary, Mr. Sonoda; Assistant Director of the First North American Division, Mr. Suzuki. They have been here visiting with President Clinton earlier today, and Senator DASCHLE and I have had a very good visit.

As you know, we have had a strong, good relationship with Japan since World War II. The commemoration of the conclusion of that war will be next year. I was saying to the Prime Minister that obviously you look to the past and you remember the past, and you remember the agonies; but we also look to the future. We have our problems and they have their problems. We have our problems with them, and they have their problems with us.

I say to my colleagues that I hope you will take this opportunity to say hello to the Prime Minister and the Minister of Foreign Affairs and other members of the delegation. To facilitate that, I ask unanimous consent that we stand in recess until 5 p.m.

There being no objection, the Senate, at 4:54, recessed, until 5:01 p.m.; whereupon, the Senate reassembled when called to order by the Presiding Officer (Mr. ASHCROFT).

Mr. DOLE addressed the Chair.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Kansas.

CONGRESSIONAL ACCOUNTABILITY ACT

The Senate continued with the consideration of the bill.

Mr. DOLE. As I understand it, under the agreement, there will now be a colloquy between myself and the distinguished Senator from Nevada, Senator BRYAN.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. That is the Chair's understanding.

Mr. DOLE. I ask unanimous consent that the Lautenberg amendment be set aside.

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

Mr. BRYAN. Mr. President, I yield to the distinguished majority leader.

Mr. DOLE. Does the Senator from Nevada wish to make a statement first and have me respond?

Mr. BRYAN. As the majority leader prefers, I am willing to do it either way.

Mr. DOLE. I think I should respond to the Senator's request.

Mr. BRYAN. I thank the leader.

Mr. President, Members of the Senate, yesterday I was prepared to offer an amendment to the Congressional Accountability Act, S. 2, which would have made congressional pensions and that of our employees on a parity with other Federal civil servants.

The distinguished majority leader and I had several conversations on the floor yesterday evening. I received an assurance from him that he believed that this is an important issue for the Senate to address. I know that it is his intention to do so, and I accept his representation that this is a matter that is going to come before the body.

I indicated to the majority leader that I would forbear in offering the amendment. However, if I saw no action by the Easter recess of this year, it would be my intention to offer an amendment on congressional pension reform, to any piece of legislation which might then be pending on the floor of the Senate for action.

I am satisfied in my own mind that the majority leader shares my commitment to address this and I accept his representation and I thank him for his comments.

But I think that our colleagues need to understand, that although we are not going to be voting on this today because of the commitment that I have had from the distinguished majority leader, this is not an issue we are going to be able to postpone and bury. It is going to come before the Senate very shortly. I want to acknowledge and express my appreciation to the distinguished majority leader for his assurances along that line. I look forward to working with him and our colleagues on both sides of the aisle.

I thank the leader.

Mr. DOLE. I thank the Senator from Nevada.

I know that we have a number of colleagues on both sides of the aisle who share the concerns just expressed and