

P.G.E.I. of America Charitables Foundation, Inc., the Council Generals of Greek Cypriot, the Order of AHEPA and the Joint Public Policy Committee of Hellenic American Women. On behalf of these organizations, the Greek community in New Jersey and all Americans of Greek descent, I am honored to pay tribute, on behalf of the Nation, to the Greek community on the anniversary of their independence day.

Mr. DASCHLE. Mr. President, I will use some of my leadership time to speak as if in morning business.

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

NOMINATION OF DR. FOSTER TO BE SURGEON GENERAL

Mr. DASCHLE. Mr. President, I want to take this opportunity to state my concern about the direction and tenor of the debate on the nomination of Dr. Henry Foster to be Surgeon General.

I spoke on the floor a month ago about this nomination. At that time, I expressed hope that this debate could be restored to its proper perspective—an honest assessment of whether Dr. Henry Foster's skills fit the Nation's needs for the position of Surgeon General.

So far, Mr. President, that has not occurred.

First of all, there has not been much substantive discussion about this nomination. At a time when many of the public health problems historically addressed by the Surgeon General are reaching crisis proportions, it seems that there should be more discussion about the contributions Dr. Foster can make in this capacity and the urgency of approving his nomination.

Unfortunately, what little debate there has been has not centered on Dr. Foster's qualifications, skills, and contributions to society. Instead, it has revolved around Dr. Foster's performance of a legal medical procedure, and how many times he has performed it.

Little attention has been paid to the thousands of lives Dr. Foster has brought into the world over his 35-year career, or the hundreds of lives he has saved.

Little attention has been paid to the evidence that supports President Clinton's evaluation that Dr. Henry Foster has much to contribute as Surgeon General of the United States.

Do not be fooled into believing the evidence is lacking. Nothing can be further from the truth.

Before being nominated to the post of Surgeon General, Dr. Foster was perhaps best known for his efforts in establishing the I Have A Future Program. This teen pregnancy prevention program, which stresses abstinence and attempts to help teens understand the positive reasons for delaying pregnancy, was selected by President Bush as one of his Thousand Points of Light.

Listen to the words of Dr. Louis Sullivan, President Bush's Health and Human Services Secretary.

[The] I Have a Future [program] turns young people's lives around . . . [it is] the kind of program that the country needs.

Dr. Foster has pledged to focus on teen pregnancy prevention as Surgeon General. That cause certainly should be a national priority, and Dr. Foster would bring great experience and credibility to it.

Little attention has been paid to the stories of Dr. Foster's commitment and heroism. Like the time he saved the life of the mayor's son when his wife developed complications with her pregnancy.

Or the time a pregnant patient of Dr. Foster's called him up in the middle of the night because she was bleeding, and Dr. Foster met her at the hospital in his bedroom slippers.

Or the time Dr. Foster talked a young, pregnant and unmarried woman out of having an abortion. Her child later went on to become high school valedictorian.

These are the elements that are missing in the debate over the Surgeon General nomination. These are the reasons Dr. Foster deserves every consideration for this post.

It is my sincere hope that Dr. Foster will receive a fair hearing. It is unfair to judge a candidate before having heard all the facts. I hope that those who have reservations about the nomination will keep an open mind until committee hearings are held.

I also hope that these hearings will be held sooner rather than later. The Nation needs a Surgeon General.

Every day approximately 2,781 teenagers become pregnant.

Mr. President, this many teenagers become pregnant while we wait to confirm a Surgeon General who plans to make teen pregnancy prevention the centerpiece of his tenure in that post.

We should not delay action on this nomination. I urge the Chair of the Labor Committee to schedule hearings on this issue as soon as possible and do everything within her power to ensure that Dr. Foster is given a full and fair hearing.

Mr. President, I yield the floor. I note the absence of a quorum.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will call the roll.

The legislative clerk proceeded to call the roll.

Mr. KERREY. 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. KERREY. Mr. President, is there a time limit for morning business?

The PRESIDING OFFICER. It has been 10 minutes per Senator.

FARM POLICY REFORM

Mr. KERREY. Mr. President, every year the President of the United States is required by law to send an economic report not just to the Congress but to the people of the country. It is a very, very important report. It provides us

with the administration's assessment of where the economy is and what needs to be done both to sustain economic recovery and to adjust in certain areas.

There is a section in the President's economic report described as farm policy reform. I would like to comment upon that here this afternoon in the time that I am allowed.

Mr. President, one of the first statements that this document says is:

Efficiency requires that farmers be given greater opportunity to respond to marketing incentives, and the cost-effective public policies used to correct market failures in agriculture. Revising agriculture to meet better these objectives will help unleash more of the innovative energy that has long characterized American agriculture.

Mr. President, there is very little barrier between the farmer and the marketplace today, notwithstanding a lot of the political rhetoric that seems to imply that somehow agriculture is heavily subsidized. If agriculture was heavily subsidized, Mr. President, one would expect an economic analysis to reveal very low rates of productivity. That is typically what one sees.

If I subsidize somebody a great deal—we hear this in the welfare debate—subsidize somebody a great deal, it is apt to encourage not increased productivity, it encourages just the opposite.

If agriculture was heavily subsidized, one would expect to see very low rates of productivity and would expect to see economic analysis, particularly analysis that showed how the agriculture sector compared to other sectors of the U.S. economy and our international competitors, it would show that we are relatively unproductive. Just the opposite, Mr. President.

Compared to our OECD competitors, agriculture is more productive than computers, more productive than automobiles, more productive than steel, more productive than pharmaceuticals, more productive than chemicals, more productive than all other sectors of our economy.

This report, Mr. President, implies that the Government of the United States of America somehow is standing in between farmers out there who would like to be competitive and the market, and it just is not true.

The report, in my judgment, distorts what is actually in plain view out there in the countryside. The report says that "The farm sector no longer looms large in the macroeconomy."

Now, that is based on a GAO analysis that showed that only 2 percent of the U.S. population is now in agriculture production. But 18 percent of all the jobs, according to this report, are either directly or indirectly related to agriculture production. So if farmers are not making money, if the profit shifts someplace else, Mr. President, these businesses are going to have a tough time making ends meet and,