

citizens. These realities challenge us to move forward together in the best interest of all people living with HIV and all Americans. And that is what Senator KASSEBAUM and I have attempted to do.

The compromise in this legislation acknowledges that the HIV epidemic has expanded its reach. But we have not forgotten its roots. While new faces and new places are affected, the epidemic rages on in the areas of the country hit hardest and longest.

The pain and suffering of individuals and families with HIV is real, widespread, and growing. All community-based organizations, cities, and States need additional support from the Federal Government to meet the needs of those they serve.

This legislation represents a compromise, and like most compromises, it is not perfect and it will not please everyone. But on balance, it is a good bill—and its enactment will benefit all people living with HIV everywhere in the Nation.

We have sought common ground. We have listened to those on the frontlines. And we have attempted to support their efforts, not tie their hands. The Senate put aside political, geographic, and institutional differences to face this important challenge squarely and successfully.

Although the resources fall short of meeting the growing need, the act is working. It has provided life-saving care and support for hundreds of thousands of individuals and families affected by HIV and AIDS.

The act is about more than Federal funds and health care services. It is also about the caring American tradition of reaching out to people who are suffering and in need of help. Ryan White would be proud of what is taking place in his name. His example, and the hard work of so many others, are bringing help and hope to our American family with AIDS.

Since the beginning, the CARE Act has been a model of bipartisan cooperation and effective Federal leadership. Today that tradition continues and 64 Senators joined Chairman KASSEBAUM and me in presenting this bill to the Senate—and 96 Senators supported its passage. It does not get much clearer than that.

This is an important day for people living with HIV and AIDS and all Americans. We must do more to provide care and support for those trapped in the epidemic's path. And with this legislation, we will.

Mrs. KASSEBAUM addressed the Chair.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Kansas.

Mrs. KASSEBAUM. Mr. President, I will just add in support of what the ranking member of the Labor and Human Resources Committee, Senator KENNEDY, has said in acknowledging the support of the leaders, both the majority leader and the minority leader in the Senate, who have been instru-

mental in helping us move forward with this legislation and final passage.

Mr. President, I am pleased that the Senate has just concluded its action on the Ryan White CARE Reauthorization Act of 1995. As a result of this act, many individuals and families in this country who suffer from the HIV virus will continue to receive compassionate treatment and support services.

As you know, I have not been alone in my support for this legislation. I wish to thank my 65 Senate colleagues who are cosponsors of this legislation. In particular, the ranking member on the Committee on Labor and Human Resources, Senator KENNEDY, has been instrumental in the development and eventual passage of the reauthorization bill.

The development of this legislation has been difficult at times, requiring the personal commitment of many individuals from various organizations. Without mentioning each, I wish to acknowledge their efforts.

Finally, I thank Labor Committee staff who developed and helped orchestrate the passage of this act. In particular, I wish to acknowledge the dedication of Michael Iskowitz and Seth Kelbourne on Senator KENNEDY's staff and Doctors Marty Ross and James Wade on my own staff.

MORNING BUSINESS

Mrs. KASSEBAUM. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that there now be a period for morning business, not to exceed 45 minutes, with Senators permitted to speak for up to 5 minutes each.

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

Mr. LEAHY addressed the Chair.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Vermont [Mr. LEAHY] is recognized.

SHOULD THERE BE FEDERAL FARM PROGRAMS

Mr. LEAHY. Mr. President, for the past decade most of the debate on farm programs has centered around the question of "how much should we spend on farm programs?" Now the debate has shifted to whether there should be any programs that provide benefits to farmers. I take the floor today to address this issue.

Let me begin my statement by asking three questions, giving three quick answers, and then explaining why I have come to these conclusions.

Question: Do the historic justifications for farm programs make sense today?

Answer: No.

Question: Should there be any Federal program in which tax dollars are transferred to farmers?

Answer: Yes.

Question: Should farm programs be phased out or continued?

Answer: The next month will decide.

Let us start with the third question—to which I answered, "the next month

will decide." It is the heart of this question that the Senate must face this year.

There are two tests that farm programs must meet to merit continued funding.

First, will continued farm program funding mean more food for the hungry; and second, will continued farm program funding mean better management of our natural resources.

Unfortunately the jury is still out on whether the 1995 farm bill will meet these two tests.

Why? First, because some farm groups have proposed taking food from the needy to subsidize wealthy farmers. Second, because some farm groups are trying to repeal a decade of legislation that has brought harmony between agricultural and environmental policies.

Let me make my position clear—very clear. If farm programs become the enemy of the hungry and the environment, I will not support them. Indeed, I will join those on the floor who want to dismantle them.

Now a few words of background.

TIMES CHANGE

A long time could be spent explaining why farm programs need to be changed. It comes down to this. When the Agricultural Act of 1949 was written, 42 percent of rural Americans were farmers and farmers were 15 percent of the U.S. population. Rural Americans were generally poorer than most Americans. An income support program that helped farmers, helped rural America. Today farmers are only 2 percent of the American population and the average farmer is wealthier than the average American.

At one time regulations that required farmers to idle land also helped stabilize some food prices. By and large, there is now very little consumer benefit from the land idling aspects of farm programs. Today land retirement programs function only to control the budgetary costs of the program.

Farm programs are no longer an effective means to promote economic growth in rural America. Farm programs no longer stabilize consumer prices.

NEEDY REQUIRE ALLIES

The other primary justification for the farm programs, has been that they were part of the political arrangement that provided political support for feeding programs. Urban Congressmen supported farm programs in return for rural support of nutrition programs. While every program should stand on its own merits, in a democracy, the needy require allies more than anyone else. Even an unholy alliance makes sense if it helps us to meet our moral obligation to end hunger in America.

Unfortunately earlier this year, during the Senate Budget Committee's consideration of the budget resolution, the farm groups united in an effort to cut nutrition programs in order to increase farm program payments. If this