

provisions wholly unrelated to the purposes of aiding economically distressed farmers, including:

- \$40 million for salaries and expenses of the Farm Service Agency, apparently to administer \$100 million in new loan funds;
- \$100 million for rural economic development;
- \$50 million for a new revolving loan program for farmer-owned cooperatives;
- \$4 million to implement a new mandatory price reporting program for livestock;
- \$8 million for a new product labeling system for imported meat;
- \$1 million for rapid response teams to enforce the Packers and Stockyards Act; and finally,
- \$15 million for a Northeast multispecies fishery.

These provisions have no place in a bill to provide emergency assistance to America's farmers. There is an established process for dealing with spending and policy matters that are not emergencies. It is the normal authorization and appropriations process, where each program or policy can be assessed as part of a merit-based review. Many of the provisions I have listed above may very well be meritorious and deserving of support and funding, but the process we are following here today does not provide an appropriate forum for assessing their relative merit compared to the many other important programs for which non-emergency dollars should be made available. I think even some of the potential recipients of these non-emergency programs would agree that they should be considered in the normal appropriations and authorization processes.

There is one special interest provision of the Republican proposal that I would like to discuss further and that I intend to address directly in an amendment later in the debate. The Republican proposal gives the already heavily subsidized sugar industry one more perk—relief from paying a minuscule assessment of just 25 cents on each 100 pounds of sugar. This tiny tax raised just \$37.8 million last year, and was supposed to be the sugar industry's sole contribution to reducing annual budget deficits. Thanks to their successful lobbying, for the next three years, big sugar will not have to pay this assessment if the federal government has a budget surplus. While the assessment was initially imposed to help reduce annual budget deficits, which fortunately have been eliminated as a result of the Balanced Budget Act, what about the \$5.6 trillion national debt?

This little bit of targeted tax relief for big sugar comes on top of a \$130 million per year government-subsidized loan program for sugar producers, and price supports that cost American consumers over \$1.4 billion a year in higher sugar prices at the store. The sponsors of the proposal make no claim that this provision is in any way related to a disaster or drought-related economic crisis in the sugar industry that would merit its inclusion in this

emergency farm aid bill. Its inclusion simply adds one more perk to the already broad array of special subsidies for big sugar companies.

I intend to offer an amendment later during the debate on this bill to terminate taxpayer support of the sugar industry. If the Republican farm aid proposal is adopted, as I expect it will be, I will include in my amendment a proposal to strike this newly created perk for big sugar.

Mr. President, I am going to support the more modest Republican proposal, regardless of the outcome of my amendment to eliminate the inequitable and unnecessary sugar subsidies. But I do so only because of the real economic hardship faced by many of our nation's farmers and their families.

I abhor the continuing practice of attaching pork-barrel spending to any and every bill that comes before the Senate, especially when real disasters are cynically exploited to designate pork as emergency spending. This kind of fiscal irresponsibility undermines the balanced budget and hinders debt reduction efforts, exacerbates the need to preserve and protect Social Security and Medicare, and threatens efforts to provide meaningful tax relief to American families.

Once again, I can only hope that the final farm aid proposal will be targeted only at those in need—America's farmers. I urge the conferees on this legislation to eliminate the provisions that solely benefit special interests who have once again managed to turn needed emergency relief into opportunism. I also urge the conferees to seek offsets for the additional spending in this bill, to avoid again dipping into the Social Security surplus and putting our balanced budget at risk.

Mr. LOTT. Mr. President, for the information of all Senators, there will be no further votes this evening. The discussion regarding the dairy issue will occur from 9 a.m. until 9:40 a.m. on Wednesday, with the cloture vote occurring at approximately 9:45 a.m.

Assuming cloture is not invoked on Wednesday morning, I anticipate the Senate will resume consideration of the pending Ashcroft amendment, which is an amendment to the disaster amendment by Senators HARKIN and DASCHLE.

Also, if an opportunity does present itself, I understand that there will be another disaster-related amendment by Senator ROBERTS and Senator SANTORUM. Of course, that will be in line behind the other amendments because of procedure. But at the appropriate time there is a plan by those two Senators, and others, to offer another amendment.

MORNING BUSINESS

Mr. LOTT. Having said that, I now ask unanimous consent that there be a period of morning business with Senators permitted to speak for up to 10 minutes each.

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

Mr. LOTT. I yield the floor, Mr. President.

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

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will call the roll.

The legislative clerk proceeded to call the roll.

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

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

PRIVILEGE OF THE FLOOR

Mr. GRAHAM. Mr. President, I ask that Mr. Sean McCluskie, Mr. Adam Foslid, and Ms. Brooke Russ of my office be granted the privilege of the floor for the duration of the Agriculture appropriations bill.

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

MESSAGES FROM THE PRESIDENT

Messages from the President of the United States were communicated to the Senate by Mr. Williams, one of his secretaries.

EXECUTIVE MESSAGES REFERRED

As in executive session the Presiding Officer laid before the Senate messages from the President of the United States submitting sundry nominations which were referred to the appropriate committees.

(The nominations received today are printed at the end of the Senate proceedings.)

MESSAGES FROM THE HOUSE

At 2:30 p.m., a message from the House of Representatives, delivered by Mr. Berry, one of its reading clerks, announced that the House has passed the following bills, with amendment, in which it requests the concurrence of the Senate:

S. 606. An act for the relief of Global Exploration and Development Corporation, Kerr-McGee Corporation, and Kerr-McGee Chemical, LLC (successor to Kerr-McGee Chemical Corporation), and for other purposes.

S. 1257. An act to amend statutory damages provisions of title 17, United States Code.

The message also announced that the House has passed the following bills, in which it requests the concurrence of the Senate:

H.R. 211. An act to designate the Federal building and United States courthouse located at West 920 Riverside Avenue in Spokane, Washington, as the "Thomas S. Foley Federal Building and United States Courthouse," and the plaza at the south entrance of such building and courthouse as the "Walter F. Horan Plaza."

H.R. 695. An act to direct the Secretary of Agriculture and the Secretary of the Interior to convey an administrative site in San Juan County, New Mexico, to San Juan College.

H.R. 747. An act to protect the permanent trust funds of the State of Arizona from erosion due to inflation and modify the basis on