

The problems and inconsistencies with the current program make it both unaffordable and confusing to agricultural producers. Costly premiums are the biggest problem. In years of depressed market prices, crop insurance, though badly needed, is simply unaffordable for farmers.

This bill inverts the current subsidy formula, in order to provide the highest levels of subsidies to producers at the highest levels of buy-up coverage, and thus alleviate the unaffordable premiums. It also allows for the revenue policies to be fully subsidized.

Another important provision in this bill is to allow an additional subsidy for risk management activities. If a producer uses futures or options, utilizes cash forwards, attends a risk management class, uses Agricultural Trade Options or FFARM accounts or reduces farm financial risk, they will receive a 5 percent write-down on their premium for taking part in two of the above risk management tools.

This bill also takes into account lack of production histories for beginning farmers or those who have added land or use crop rotation. This will make it possible for those producers to get a foot in the door and receive affordable crop insurance.

Many times, especially in Montana, multi-year disasters occur. This bill helps producers that take a blow several years in a row, which reduces their Annual Production History (APH). If a producer has suffered a natural disaster during at least 3 of the preceding 5 years and their APH was reduced by at least 25 percent they may exclude one year of APH for every five years experience. During this time, the producer's APH may increase without limit back up to the level before the multi-year disaster began.

Specialty crops such as canola or dry beans, are another important addition to this bill. The Risk Management Agency (RMA) will allocate at least 50 percent of their Research and Development funds to specialty crop development. Additionally, RMA is authorized to spend up to \$20 million each fiscal year to create partnerships for developing and implementing specialty crop risk management options.

This bill will also ultimately put more control in the hands of active producers by including four active producers; as well as one in crop insurance, and one in reinsurance. The board would also include the Under Secretary for Farm and Foreign Agricultural Services, the Under Secretary for Rural Development and the Chief Economist of USDA. In addition, it mandates that the Board Chairperson be one of the non-governmental members. These are important steps to ensure that the new program is run for the producers by the producers.

This bill is an important tool to reform the current crop insurance program into a risk management program, designed to help the producer in the long-term. It is vital to find a solution

to provide a way for farmers to stay in agriculture. They must be able to continue to produce and distribute the world's safest food supply at a profitable margin.

I look forward to working with Senators ROBERTS and KERREY on this important piece of legislation. I believe this bill will pave the way for massive crop insurance reform and help agricultural producers out of this economic crisis.

NOMINATION OF RICHARD PAEZ

Mr. LEAHY. Mr. President, the Hispanic whose actions and fate I would like the Senate to focus on for action is Richard Paez. Richard Paez has never been convicted of a crime and is not associated with the FALN. He is not a petitioner seeking presidential clemency. Rather, he is a judicial nominee who has been awaiting consideration and confirmation by the Senate since January 1996—for over 3½ years.

The vacancy for which Judge Paez was nominated became a judicial emergency during the time his nomination has been pending without action by the Senate. His nomination was first received by the Senate almost 44 months ago.

This nomination has now been held even longer than the unconscionable 41 months this Senate forced Judge William Fletcher to wait before confirming his nomination last October.

Judge Paez has twice been reported favorably by the Senate Judiciary Committee to the Senate for final action. He is again on the Senate calendar. He was initially delayed 25 months before finally being accorded a confirmation hearing in February 1998. After being reported by the Judiciary Committee in March 1998, his nomination was held on the Senate Executive Calendar without action for over 7 months, for the remainder of the last Congress.

Judge Paez was renominated by the President again this year and his nomination was stalled without action before the Judiciary Committee until late July, when we were able to have his nomination reported again. The Senate refused to consider the nomination before the August recess. I have repeatedly urged the Republican leadership to call this nomination up for consideration and a vote. If they make time on the Senate floor for debate and consideration of a Senate resolution commenting on the clemency grant, which is a power the constitution invested in the President without a congressional role, the Senate should find time to consider the nomination of this fine Hispanic judge.

Judge Paez has the strong support of both California Senators and a "well-qualified" rating from the American Bar Association. He has served as a municipal judge for 13 years and as a Federal judge for 4 years.

In my view Judge Paez should be commended for the years he worked to

provide legal services and access to our justice system for those without the financial resources otherwise to retain counsel. His work with the Legal Aid Foundation of Los Angeles, the Western Center on Law and Poverty and California Rural Legal Assistance for nine years should be a source of praise and pride.

Judge Paez has had the strong support of California judges familiar with his work, such as Justice H. Walter Crosky, and support from an impressive array of law enforcement officials, including Gil Garcetti, the Los Angeles District Attorney; the late Sherman Block, then Los Angeles County Sheriff; the Los Angeles County Police Chiefs' Association; and the Association for Los Angeles Deputy Sheriffs.

The Hispanic National Bar Association, the Mexican American Legal Defense and Educational Fund, the League of United Latin American Citizens, the National Association of Latino Elected and Appointed Officials, and many, many others have been seeking a vote on this nomination for what now amounts to years.

I want to commend the Chairman of the Judiciary Committee for his steadfast support of this nominee and Senator BOXER and Senator FEINSTEIN of California for their efforts on his behalf.

Last year the words of the Chief Justice of the United States were ringing in our ears with respect to the delays in Senate consideration of judicial nomination. He had written: "Some current nominees have been waiting a considerable time for a Senate Judiciary Committee vote or a final floor vote. . . . The Senate is surely under no obligation to confirm any particular nominee, but after the necessary time for inquiry it should vote him up or vote him down." Those words resonate with respect to the nomination of Judge Paez.

I trust the American people recognize who is playing politics with the issue of clemency. I disagreed with the President's decision, but it was his to make. He says that he granted clemency with conditions after study and based on a sense of proportion and justice. The calls for clemency in these cases came from Bishop Tutu, Coretta Scott King, other Nobel peace prize winners, a number of churches and religious groups. It has drawn praise in some circles and criticism in others.

I do not agree with the President, but I caution that the overreaching by Republican critics in the Congress on this is worrisome, as well. To contend that this shows a weakness of resolve against international terrorism is both wrong and may itself be creating a dangerous atmosphere.

We ought to be careful when anyone, let alone the Senate and Congress of the United States, start bandying about declarations that accuse the United States Government of making "deplorable concessions to terrorists," "undermining national security" or

“emboldening domestic and international terrorists.”

Playing politics with this matter and accusing the President of “undermining our national security” or “emboldening terrorists” carries significant risks. Could a potential terrorist somewhere in the world believe this political rhetoric and be “emboldened” by it? This is risky business. I do not believe the short-term political gain to the other party is worth having the Senate endorse a resolution that might itself have precisely that effect.

The Senate cannot find time to vote on the nomination of Judge Richard Paez or that of Bill Lann Lee to head the Civil Rights Division or that of Justice Ronnie White to be a Federal judge in Missouri or any of the scores of other nominees pending before it. The Senate has not completed work on 11 of the 13 appropriations bills that must be passed before October 1. The Republican Congress cannot find time to consider campaign finance reform or pass a real patients’ bill of rights or consider raising the minimum wage or reforming Medicare or complete the juvenile crime bill conference, but there is plenty of time for floor debate and on the President’s decision to exercise his clemency power. The Senate has had three hearings on judicial nominations all year and the Republican Congress will have that many hearings on the clemency decision this week.

In closing, I ask: If the Senate has the time to debate and vote on this resolution, why does it not have time to vote on the nomination of Judge Richard Paez to the Ninth Circuit?

THE VERY BAD DEBT BOXSCORE

Mr. HELMS. Mr. President, at the close of business yesterday, Monday, September 13, 1999, the Federal debt stood at \$5,654,837,966,230.82 (Five trillion, six hundred fifty-four billion, eight hundred thirty-seven million, nine hundred sixty-six thousand, two hundred thirty dollars and eighty-two cents).

Five years ago, September 13, 1994, the Federal debt stood at \$4,681,594,000,000 (Four trillion, six hundred eighty-one billion, five hundred ninety-four million).

Ten years ago, September 13, 1989, the Federal debt stood at \$2,853,357,000,000 (Two trillion, eight hundred fifty-three billion, three hundred fifty-seven million).

Fifteen years ago, September 13, 1984, the Federal debt stood at \$1,572,267,000,000 (One trillion, five hundred seventy-two billion, two hundred sixty-seven million).

Twenty-five years ago, September 13, 1974, the Federal debt stood at \$480,717,000,000 (Four hundred eighty billion, seven hundred seventeen million) which reflects a debt increase of more than \$5 trillion—\$5,174,120,966,230.82 (Five trillion, one hundred seventy-four billion, one hun-

dred twenty million, nine hundred sixty-six thousand, two hundred thirty dollars and eighty-two cents) during the past 25 years.

APEC AND THE WTO

Mr. BAUCUS. Mr. President, I rise today to address recent developments in the world trading system that occurred over the past several days at the Asia Pacific Economic Cooperation (APEC) meetings.

Since its birth in 1989, APEC has been a useful forum to advance U.S. goals for world trade. In 1993, President Clinton hosted the first summit meeting of APEC leaders. That meeting helped to nudge the Uruguay Round of global trade talks to a successful conclusion. The following year, APEC leaders made a political commitment to free trade in the Pacific Basin by a date certain. Two years later, APEC leaders prodded WTO members to sign Information Technology Agreement. That agreement eliminates tariffs on products where U.S. companies have a clear advantage.

APEC has also launched some worthwhile projects aimed at making it easier to do business in the Pacific Rim.

The 21 members of APEC are responsible for almost half of the world’s trade. They include country’s at various stages of economic development. Members are as diverse as Papua New Guinea, Russia, Peru, and Australia. APEC is the only organization where China, Taiwan and Hong Kong sit together as equals to discuss economic issues. In 1998, U.S. trade with APEC members was just over one trillion dollars, about 70% of our trade. Our three biggest trading partners—Canada, Mexico and Japan—are in APEC.

Last week in Auckland, New Zealand, APEC’s trade and foreign ministers held their annual meeting. This was followed by the annual summit meeting of APEC leaders, including President Clinton. These meetings provided an opportunity for using APEC to further American trade interests in two ways. One was bilateral. It dealt with U.S.-China relations. The other was multilateral. It dealt with the World Trade Organization (WTO).

On the bilateral front, the annual APEC summit meeting provided President Clinton an opportunity to meet with China’s President Jiang Zemin and get our relations with China on track. In particular, it was a chance to restart the talks on China’s accession to the WTO.

To join the WTO, China must make one-way concessions in order to gain permanent Normal Trade Relations (NTR) status. Before the China trade talks broke down for political reasons unrelated to trade, China made some important commitments to us in its accession protocol. For example, in addition to tariff cuts and agriculture concessions, China promised to eliminate technology transfer requirements for investment licenses. It will end in-

vestment performance requirements designed to take jobs from other countries.

China’s WTO accession requires no American trade concessions. And China has agreed to a “product-specific safeguard” which will strengthen our ability to fight sudden import surges. A good accession protocol will be good for America. The Clinton-Jiang meeting in Auckland infused our bilateral trade talks with new life.

The U.S. negotiators thus far have done an excellent job. They have already offered American farmers a ray of hope during a very difficult year. And we are close to an accession that will make trade with China fundamentally more fair for our country. It will then be up to this Senate, and to our colleagues, to take the final step by making the normal trade relations we now offer to China permanent.

On the multilateral end, the Auckland meetings were an opportunity for APEC members to show a united front for progress to the other members of the WTO. There was some forward movement on this in Auckland, but not as much as we needed. The key issue is how much we should achieve in the next WTO trade round. The next round will be launched two months from now, when the United States hosts the Seattle WTO Ministerial.

In this regard, last week I introduced Senate Concurrent Resolution 55. It contained the elements of what I believe we should achieve in the next round. At their Auckland meeting, APEC trade ministers endorsed a number of these elements. Procedurally, they said that the talks should be completed in three years, rather than the seven years it took for the Uruguay Round. They said that WTO members should treat the talks as one single package, not a collection of separate topics where members can opt out of the tough issues. They mentioned the need to address tariffs on manufactured products.

All that was useful. But the APEC ministers did not go far enough. President Clinton and the leaders of the other APEC members set out ambitious goals for them five years ago. To achieve those goals, the trade ministers must set specific targets. In agriculture, for example, the Auckland meeting supported abolishing all export subsidies. That is a specific, ambitious target. We need the same specificity on other agricultural trade issues which, such as tariffs, trade-distorting domestic subsidies, and government trading companies. It would have been very helpful to have APEC trade ministers support progress in these areas.

The trade ministers should have made a much stronger statement on trade in services. This is not only an important component of developed economies. Services of all sectors—financial, communications, legal, engineering—are vital to developing nations as well.