Mrs. FEINSTEIN. What I am concerned about is, I have made this known for a number of days now. I have been patient and I have tried to get in the queue. I have waited. I have no objection if this is Wednesday or Wednesday afternoon, but I would appreciate having some time. I am prepared to object if I can't get that time.

Mr. REID. I say to my friend, objecting doesn't help her cause. It just prevents us from having everybody gathered to know what is going to happen. Otherwise, there will be no vote and Senator WELLSTONE will argue his amendment, and we will be out of here anyway. On the Democratic side, we probably have 8 or 9 Senators on the same position that the Senator from California is in. They have offered amendments, and they are waiting to have a vote on those amendments. I have worked with——

Mrs. FEINSTEIN. But my experience is that if they come to the floor, they are often accommodated. I don't see why that same accommodation should not be made for me, most respectfully.

Mr. REID. The Senator certainly is a great advocate. We would like to concede that she has the right above everybody else to a vote, but right now we don't have the parliamentary ability to do that.

I say to my friend that I think Senators FEINGOLD, DURBIN, JOHNSON—I can go through the whole list—have also been here making the same requests the Senator from California has and we haven't been able to get the votes up because of the nongermane amendments being debated on minimum wage and everything. It isn't as if the Senator from Iowa hasn't wanted votes. We haven't been able to get to them.

Mrs. FEINSTEIN. My amendment is germane.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Is there objection?

Mrs. FEINSTEIN. I object.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Objection is heard.

The Senator from Minnesota has the floor.

Mr. WELLSTONE. Mr. President, I want to point out that if there is an objection, people can't leave. I am trying to accommodate people's schedules. I think it would be unfortunate if because of an objection Senators who want to leave to get back for Veterans Day are not able to leave tonight. I was trying to accommodate.

I hope the Senator from California will reconsider. Basically, the implication is that many people have many other amendments. This happens to be one of the three amendments that was part of the original agreement about how we would proceed. That is the only difference. Many of us have other amendments.

If the Senator wants to object, go ahead.

Mrs. FEINSTEIN. I have no objection to proceeding with the amendment. What I suspect is going to happen come Wednesday is it will be closed down, and we will not have an opportunity to offer an amendment. One of these amendments I have made to the bankruptcy bill. The Senator from Iowa knows I have been a supporter of this bill. He is supportive of this amendment. If there is an opportunity, I believe it will pass. Senator JEFFORDS and I are cosponsors of the amendment. I, again, would like an opportunity to offer it before there is a cloture motion or something and there will be no more amendments on the bill.

Mr. REID. I say to my friend from California that none of us here have power to do anything about it. The Senator from Iowa and I will be happy to put the Senator from California in line to vote tonight. But there may not be any more votes tonight and we may have votes next Wednesday. There may be only one vote on the Wellstone amendment. We don't know. There is no problem having the amendment as one of the next ones to come up—whenever that will be, this year or next year—on this bill.

Mr. GRASSLEY. Mr. President, if the Senator will yield.

Mrs. FEINSTEIN. I certainly will.

Mr. WELLSTONE. Mr. President, I have the floor.

Mr. WYDEN. Will the Senator from Minnesota yield?

Mr. WELLSTONE. First, I say to the Senator from Iowa, I hope we can work it out so Senators can leave.

Mr. GRASSLEY. I am trying to satisfy the Senator from California, although I don't think I can do any better than the Senator from Nevada has just done. But I pled for two reasons. No. 1, I still hope to work with the Senator from Texas, the chairman of the Banking Committee, to see what we can do to facilitate the amendment, whether it is now or a week from now or next year, if we aren't finished with this bill. No. 2, we are trying to get to a situation where we can get to a vote, which is something we promised a Member who has been waiting for a long, long time.

We still have the third situation where Senator REID and I are going to sit down with our staffs to see what we can do with all of the amendments so we know where we are and have a complete picture. That is why I would plead with her to let the unanimous consent request go through.

Mrs. FEINSTEIN. My understanding is that at some point I will have an opportunity to offer this amendment, whether that is on Wednesday, another day, or next year. Is that the correct understanding?

Mr. GRASSLEY. As far as I am concerned, the answer is yes. But let me say it is my understanding under the agreement we have now that there can be an objection to the Senator offering her amendment if, for instance, somebody on the Banking Committee——

Mr. REID. She already offered it.

Mr. GRASSLEY. Then the answer is yes.

Mrs. FEINSTEIN. I understand that. I will not object.

Mr. WELLSTONE. Can we get the agreement?

Mr. GRASSLEY. Can we move forward with the agreement?

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Is there objection?

Mr. CONRAD. Reserving the right to object, I repeat my request to have 5 minutes.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. That is part of the agreement.

Mr. CONRAD. Then I certainly do not object.

Mr. REID. In fairness to the Senator from California, I don't know what is going to happen. I am not in a position to do anything about it. But it is possible there could be some procedural thing that will stop a lot of votes from going forward. The Senator from Iowa says, all things equal, the Senator's amendment will go forward. I can't stand here and guarantee it will happen. I don't know what will happen. Procedurally, a lot of amendments may not go forward.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Is there objection?

Without objection, it is so ordered.

Mr. WELLSTONE. Mr. President, I still have the floor. I know we want to move forward. I am trying to move forward. I would like to yield 3 minutes to the Senator from Oregon. He has been waiting.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Is there objection? Without objection, it is so ordered.

Mr. CONRAD. Mr. President, reserving the right to object, I thought this was part of the agreement. It is unclear to the Senator from North Dakota what the agreement was. My understanding was I would be recognized after this agreement was reached for the purpose of responding to the statements that have already been made on the floor. I was assured that was part of that agreement.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The agreement provides 5 minutes for the Senator from North Dakota.

Mr. CONRAD. I would like to have that 5 minutes at this time, Mr. President.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The request is that the Senator from Oregon be recognized for 3 minutes. Is there objection?

Without objection, it is so ordered.

The Senator from Oregon.

SECRET HOLDS

Mr. WYDEN. Mr. President, and colleagues, this is the time of the legislative session when too many important bills and nominations are killed in secret through a process known as the secret hold. This session of the Senate was supposed to be different as a result of an agreement between the majority and the minority leaders. I am going to read from that agreement. On February 25, Senator LOTT and Senator DASCHLE wrote all Senators:

All Members wishing to place a hold on any legislation or executive calendar business shall notify the sponsor of the legislation and the committee of jurisdiction of their concern. Further written notification should be provided to respective leaders stating their intentions regarding their bill or nomination. Holds placed on items by a member of a personal or committee staff will not be honored unless accompanied by a written notification from the objecting Senator by the end of the following business day.

Suffice it to say, colleagues, I suspect there are a few sponsors of legislation here in the Senate who have not been notified that there is a hold on their legislation.

I hope as we move towards the last hours of this session all Senators, Democrats and Republicans, will honor the policy set out by Senators LOTT and DASCHLE. The secret holds are a breach of all that the Senate is supposed to stand for in terms of openness and public accountability.

I hope Senators will comply with that new policy set out by Senators LOTT and DASCHLE.

I yield the floor.

DAKOTA WATER RESOURCES ACT

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from North Dakota.

Mr. CONRAD. Mr. President, I would like the opportunity to respond to statements that have been made about the Dakota Water Resources Act over the last several days by the Senator from Missouri. Yesterday we were told that North Dakota is seeking somehow to steal water from our neighbors to the south. That is factually incorrect. It is untrue. We are not making any claim on anybody's water but our own.

Under the current law, North Dakota has a right to water flowing through the Missouri River. That is in the law today. In the law today there is authorized a very large water project for North Dakota called the Garrison Diversion Project. The reason it is authorized is because North Dakota accepted the permanent flood of 550,000 acres of the richest farmland in North Dakota—permanently inundated to provide flood protection to downstream States, including Missouri. We have saved billions of dollars of flood damage in those States because North Dakota has accepted this permanent flood of over half a million acres. That is the fact.

The new legislation before us is designed to substantially alter what is currently authorized in the law to reduce its costs by $1 billion to reduce dramatically the number of irrigated acres, and instead to have water supply projects for cities and towns that desperately need it.

The assertion has been made that this would somehow deplete the water going to Missouri.

The fact is, the flow of the Missouri River in Missouri is 50,000 CFS. We are talking about 100 CFS to meet the legitimate water needs of the State of North Dakota, water needs that are already recognized in the law.

Today, in order to respond to the legitimate concerns of the Senators from Missouri, we offered to go even further and to put into law an assurance that they would not lose water at their key navigation time, during this key period when they are concerned with losing even half an inch. That is what this translates into: A reduction of one half an inch, the water level of the Missouri River in the State of Missouri. We are prepared to assure them they don't even lose that half an inch. This is in response to the documented need for water that is so desperately required in my State. We have people who are turning on their tap right now in North Dakota and what comes out looks filthy. It looks filthy because it is filthy.

North Dakota was made a promise that, if you accept the permanent flood to provide flood protection for downstream States, we will compensate you by allowing you to improve the water supply for your citizens. That is what this bill is about. It is not designed in any way to hurt the State of Missouri. We are prepared to make changes in the legislation to make that clear.

Let me conclude by saying we received a letter today that totally confuses this project with the Devil's Lake outlet which is required to solve another problem in another part of the State. These two projects are not the same. We hope officials in Missouri will get it straightened out in their own minds that these are two totally distinct projects. An outlet from Devil's Lake has nothing whatever to do with the Dakota Water Resources Act Project.

I thank my colleagues for their patience, and I yield the floor.

BANKRUPTCY REFORM ACT OF 1999—Continued

AMENDMENT NO. 2532, AS MODIFIED

The PRESIDING OFFICER. There are 15 minutes equally divided on the Dodd amendment.

Mr. DODD. I yield myself 4 minutes under the agreement.

This chart explains the amendment I am offering. As most of my colleagues are aware, there is $43 billion in uncollected child support in this country. If we could collect a fraction of the child support that is outstanding, we could make a huge difference in the lives of children and families all across this country.

Despite the good efforts of those who have authored this bill on bankruptcy, there is a major gap in this bill. The major gap affects the very people this number reflects for child support recipients. This bill places at a significant disadvantage women and children who may get caught up in the turmoil of a bankruptcy proceeding and leaves them at a significant disadvantage with respect to meeting the basic necessities in their lives.

This morning's Washington Post made the case abundantly clear in the lead editorial. It said that the Congress should make sure that in the name of financial responsibility it does not unduly squeeze people who, because of job loss, family breakup, medical bills, et cetera, can't help themselves. These are the people affected by this amendment Senator LANDRIEU and I have offered and on which we will ask for your votes shortly.

Children and families are the most vulnerable. The median income of a person who files for bankruptcy is around $17,000 a year; for a woman filing for bankruptcy, that number is a lot lower than $17,000 a year.

Unfortunately, this bill does not appear to treat these people as we have for almost 100 years. Since the first bankruptcy law was passed in 1903, women and children came first in the line of distributable assets in bankruptcy. They are going to be protected no matter what other tragedy has befallen. No matter what other rights creditors may have, they will not be allowed to disadvantage innocent children and women who have to depend upon some income in order to provide for their families. Unfortunately, this bill leaves gaping holes in this area.

The amendment we have offered has been endorsed by 180 organizations, every imaginable family organization in this country. It does the following four things:

First, we say creditors can't seize or threaten to seize bona fide household goods, such as books, games, microwave ovens, and toys. As written today, S. 625 provides no protection against repossession of operations of business, coming into a home and removing such items from a family. Needless to say, that would be an unsettling, intimidating occurrence for families and children. I don't think this body wants to go on record ratifying these kinds of scare tactics. I appreciate Senator GRASSLEY's support for this provision.

Second, we say if people in bankruptcy are put on a budget and they cannot repay some of their debts, it ought to be a realistic budget. The bill puts them on a budget based on IRS guidelines for people who owe back taxes. Unfortunately, those guidelines ignore obligations such as child care, school supplies, and church tithes. We say the bankruptcy judge ought to be allowed to at least consider these kinds of valid, often necessary expenses when it comes to family needs.

Third, we say money for kids should go to kids, not creditors. We mean that funds a parent receives for the benefit of children—like child support payments or earned income tax refunds—should not be divvied up among creditors. They ought to be reserved for the children.

I want the manager of the bill to have a chance to make his argument against the amendment, and then I will respond.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Iowa.

Mr. GRASSLEY. Mr. President, this bill, the original bill, contains many