

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Alaska.

Mr. STEVENS. I thank the Senator from Arizona for his normal courtesy to me as manager of the bill that we are trying to bring up. I did not object on my own behalf and he knows that full well. But I do believe we all know what the situation is.

UNANIMOUS CONSENT REQUEST—
H.R. 4475

Mr. STEVENS. Mr. President, I ask consent that the Senate now proceed to the Transportation appropriations conference report, notwithstanding the receipt of the papers from the House.

I further ask consent that the conference report be considered under the following time agreement: 10 minutes for the chairman and ranking member of the Appropriations Committee; 10 minutes for the chairman and ranking member; of the appropriations subcommittee; and 15 minutes under the control of Senator MCCAIN.

I further ask consent that following the use or yielding back of time, the Senate proceed to vote on the adoption of the conference report, without any intervening action or debate.

Mr. MCCAIN. I object.

Mr. STEVENS. I thank the Senator for his normal courtesy.

I suggest the absence of a quorum.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will call the roll.

The assistant legislative clerk proceeded to call roll.

Mr. WELLSTONE. 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 President, I ask unanimous consent that the order for the quorum call be rescinded.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. WELLSTONE. Mr. President, I will take 10 minutes in morning business while we are trying to work things out here on the floor.

Mr. STEVENS. Mr. President, will the Senator yield for just one moment?

Mr. WELLSTONE. I am pleased to yield.

Mr. STEVENS. For the purpose of managing the floor, would there be an objection if we extended morning business until 11 a.m.? The papers are not here on the Transportation appropriations bill.

EXTENSION OF MORNING
BUSINESS

Mr. STEVENS. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that morning business be extended to the hour of 11 a.m.

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

The Senator from Minnesota is recognized.

Mr. REID. Will the Senator yield, just so I can enter into a colloquy with my friend?

Mr. WELLSTONE. I am pleased to yield.

Mr. REID. I say to Senator STEVENS, the problem we are having on this side, as I know you are having on your side

of the aisle, is whether there is going to be any votes this morning. Would you be able to determine that quickly from your leader, as to whether or not there is going to be a vote? We have a number of Senators, with the holiday coming up, with places to go. We need to know whether there is going to be a vote this morning.

Mr. STEVENS. I say with due respect to my friend—and despite words at times, he is my friend—I believe the Senator from Arizona would have to answer that. It is our intention, once the papers are here, to move to proceed to that conference report. That is not a debatable item. There would be a vote immediately. After that, the conference report would be before the Senate, I would ask for the yeas and nays, and it would be a matter of time, how much time the Senator from Arizona wishes to debate the bill.

I know of no other speakers.

Mr. REID. I have spoken to my friend from Arizona and there is no question he is going to want to speak for more than a half-hour or an hour.

Mr. STEVENS. I would expect that. I honor his right to do so. It would be my predilection that you should address that to the leader. The question is how late in the day would the Senator from Arizona finish his brief comments?

Mr. REID. If, in fact, he would finish today.

Mr. STEVENS. That is for the Senator from Arizona to determine.

Mr. REID. I guess my question to the Senator from Alaska is, if we do not vote on that, does the majority leader want us to vote on something else today? I hope in the next few minutes there could be a determination made as to whether or not, around 11 o'clock when we finish morning business, there will be a vote on something other than the Transportation appropriations bill.

Mr. STEVENS. I might say to my good friend from Nevada, and to the Senate as a whole, it has been my request to the leader that we proceed with appropriations bills and only appropriations bills so we can get them to the President. We have been doing that. We do have other appropriations bills on the move now. The Agriculture conference was finished last evening. I do not think we can get to that today. But I do believe we should try to finish the Transportation bill today if we can and take up Agriculture appropriations next week.

We have three other conferences that are going forward and we do, I understand, have an agreement now—nearly an agreement on how to handle the VA-HUD bill. So we should be voting on several bills early next week. But I do not know of any other bill that we can get before the Senate today in the form of a conference report. I do think we could handle the VA-HUD bill if we could round up that agreement. It is still waiting for one clearance. I doubt we will finish that one today. We should take that up early next week, however.

Mr. REID. It sounds to me it is fairly safe to assume there will not be any votes on appropriations bills today. As I said, I have spoken to my friend from Arizona.

Mr. MCCAIN. If my friend will yield, I am seeking agreement to take up this legislation on which American lives are at stake—not money but safety and lives of Americans. I am seeking an agreement to take that up. If we could get agreement to get that bill up, with relevant amendments, then I will be more than happy to not impede the work of the Senate.

I do not know of a higher priority than to take up legislation about a compelling issue that has to do with the lives of the American people. So I hope we could get an agreement to take up that legislation, either now or in the next several days. Then I would certainly remove my objections to proceeding with an appropriations bill. Apparently, that is not the case because there are “rolling holds” on this legislation. I think that is really quite remarkable.

Mr. STEVENS. Mr. President, as the Senator from Arizona knows, I am a member of the conference committee, and I support the legislation he mentions. But I also know portions of it are in this bill and were agreed to by the Transportation conference committee, and the matter he suggests is a leadership issue. I am in no position to negotiate on when the bill, that I also support, would come up. But I do believe our problem is trying to get this bill on its way. We cannot flood the White House with bills, appropriations bills, and expect to get answers in time.

We are trying to get them down day by day so we can get some timing and get some response. If the President wishes to veto them, we will have to come back and deal with those, too.

But we are trying to move this bill. This bill is ready to go. The Transportation bill is ready to go. It contains a portion of the bill the Senator from Arizona has mentioned—not all of it but a portion of it. It is not negative, but it is not totally positive.

I do believe the issue he reaches, whether or not the Senate will allow the consideration of the bill—that is under consideration now in the House—at any particular time, is a matter for the leader to determine, not for me. I would like to move forward with this Transportation bill. I urge my friend to allow us to do that because it is a significant bill, one of the most significant Transportation bills on which I have been privileged to work. It sets a new process for trying to reduce the increasing numbers of drunken drivers on our highways.

If there is a safety problem out there that is greater than the one the Senator from Arizona mentioned, it is alcohol. I do not want to see this bill delayed. I would like to see it get to the President. I am informed the President will sign it. I hope he will. We could get

it to him today if the Senator from Arizona will allow us to do that. But for now, I suggest the absence of a quorum.

Mr. WELLSTONE. No, no.

Mr. STEVENS. Pardon me. I do thank the Senator for yielding. I apologize and yield back to the Senator from Minnesota.

Mr. REID. Mr. President, it is my understanding the Senator from Minnesota has the floor?

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Minnesota has the floor for 10 minutes.

Mr. REID. The Senator from Minnesota has the floor. I know his urgency, being able to speak for up to 10 minutes, but there are a number of Senators who are concerned about whether or not we are going to have a vote. It appears, based on what the Senator from Alaska said and interchanges with the Senator from Arizona, we are not going to have a vote on appropriations bills today. That seems very clear. So unless there is a vote on some other issue, or on a motion to proceed to it, I don't think we will have a vote.

Mr. MCCAIN. If the Senator will yield, I am still hoping the leadership will agree to take up this bill. The chairman of the Appropriations Committee says he is not in the leadership. I have seen the Senator from Alaska have significant effect on the leadership from time to time. What I am hoping is we can get this issue resolved and move forward with the Transportation appropriations bill.

Mr. STEVENS. Will the Senator yield further? Without question, there will be a vote on the motion to proceed to the Transportation appropriations bill today—without any question.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senate is in a period for morning business to end at 11 a.m. The Senator from Minnesota has the floor for not to exceed 10 minutes.

Mr. WELLSTONE. Mr. President, one has to keep a twinkle in one's eye, I guess. I am glad we are going to vote on something. I do not mind being here Monday early or Friday late as long as we are working. Sometimes it is a little maddening when there are other things you want to do back in your State that you think are important and you do not know if we are going to have a vote.

I am glad we are going to vote on something and move forward.

VIOLENCE AGAINST WOMEN ACT AND TRAFFICKING VICTIMS PROTECTION ACT

Mr. WELLSTONE. Mr. President, in the spirit of moving forward, I thank colleagues for the bipartisan work on the Trafficking Victims Protection Act. I especially thank Senator BROWNBACK with whom I have had a chance to work very closely on this bill. There are other key people as well.

This conference report, without going into all the details, which will

come to the Senate I hope—"pray" may not be too strong a word—probably Tuesday—it looks as if we are just now working out a time agreement. I thank all Senators for their cooperation.

What is important about this legislation is that we have one part of it that deals with trafficking, which I want to talk about in a moment, and the other is the reauthorization of the Violence Against Women Act which received a huge vote in the House of Representatives.

The Violence Against Women Act, VAWA, has made a huge difference. I could talk for hours about the shelters, about the hotline, about the ways in which police take violence against women more seriously, about the ways in which the country takes this more seriously. Still, about every 13 seconds a woman is battered in her home, and still there are somewhere around 3 million to 10 million children who witness this.

We have to do even better. I look forward to a couple of efforts next year, one dealing with a program which will electronically link all of the shelters, so with one phone call, one, you will know where to go and can be saved, and, two, it will focus on the children who witness this violence. I feel good about the fact we are going to move forward with this. It certainly appears that way. I thank all Senators who have been willing to cooperate.

I also feel good about the trafficking bill on which I have had a chance, as I said, to work with Senator BROWNBACK.

So colleagues know, these two pieces of legislation have a lot of integrity in how they interrelate with one another. One deals with violence against women, children, and families. There are a number of women organizations around this country that have worked on this. They made this possible. And the strong voices of Senators—from Senator BIDEN to Senator LEAHY to Senator BOXER and others—have made a huge difference.

I started on the trafficking legislation 3 years ago. I do not even know if it is appropriate to brag, but it is not about me. My wife Sheila said this is something we really should do. There has been great help from a lot of Senators.

Again, I thank Senator BROWNBACK and also Representatives CHRIS SMITH and SAM GEJDENSON for their help and work, and CONNIE MORELLA is always there on all these issues. I will talk more about staff and the great work by people after this passes. It has not passed yet, but I think we are there. I say to Senator REID, I believe we are there in terms of finally getting a time agreement and we can move this forward.

We are talking about the trafficking of some 2 million women, and mainly girls, for the purposes of forced prostitution and forced labor, some 50,000 to our country. This rivals drug trafficking in terms of how scummy it is and how exploitative it is.

What happens is these women, girls, in countries that are going through economic chaos and disarray are recruited. They are told they will have an opportunity to be a waitress, an opportunity to come to another country, such as our country, and make an income and be able to build a good life.

This happened at a "massage parlor" 2 miles from here in Bethesda where these girls were forced into prostitution. What happens is, these young women, young girls, do not know their rights; they do not know what they are getting into. They come to these countries, and then it becomes a nightmare.

This legislation focuses on prevention. We have an outreach through AID with some of the nongovernment organizations and others who really do the information work so that young girls, young women, know what might be happening to them, know about trafficking, know what the dangers are, and hopefully will have some knowledge about this before they are exploited. That is the first piece.

The second piece is the protection piece. The bitter irony is that all too often one of these young girls, young women, steps forward and says: This is what is happening to me. If they should escape from it, they then are deported. So the victim is the one who ends up being punished. There is a temporary visa extension for 3 years, and then decisions are made after that.

There are services for these women and girls. I say "girls" because we are talking about children, too, 12, 13 years of age. In Minnesota, we have a very, I think, holy place called the Center for the Treatment of Torture Victims. When women and children go through this hell, there is a whole lot that needs to be done to help them rebuild their lives. We have a provision for those services.

The final thing is prosecution. If you are going to be involved in the trafficking of a girl under the age of 16 for purposes of forced prostitution, you can face a life sentence. We should take this seriously. We will be the first country to pass such strong legislation, the first Government in the world. This will be a model for a lot of other governments around the world.

This is one of the best human rights pieces of legislation in the Congress in some time. I am not objective because I have had a chance to be a part of it. I am proud of the fact that we are going to do this. I am proud of the fact that it is going to be linked with the reauthorization of the Violence Against Women Act. And I am proud of the fact the Senate next week, I hope early on, right after Yom Kippur, the Jewish holiday, will take decisive action and will pass this most important human rights legislation. I say to all colleagues, please cooperate. Please, let's do this. This will make a difference. It will make a difference.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Nevada.