

Mr. REID. Mr. President, before the Senator from Minnesota leaves the floor, I want to make a couple comments. There have been, as the Senator indicated, a number of people who have worked very hard on domestic violence. Senator JOE BIDEN authored the original legislation and has been a model for what has transpired since then.

I say in the presence of the Senator from Minnesota that since he came to the Senate, this has been an issue he has worked on passionately. I appreciate the work he has done.

The Senator from Minnesota mentioned his wife Sheila. I remember the work the two of them have done together.

I remember the display they put in the Russell Building, which certainly dramatized the need for continuing the work in this area. There are many unique partnerships in America today, but one of those that I admire greatly is that of PAUL and Sheila WELLSTONE. They have worked on these issues together. I think it goes without saying that the good work the Senator has done would not be as good but for the involvement of his wife.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Minnesota.

Mr. WELLSTONE. Senator REID from Nevada is very gracious towards lots of Senators. That is just the way he is. I thank the Senator very much.

I yield the floor and suggest the absence of a quorum.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will call the roll.

The senior assistant bill clerk proceeded to call the roll.

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 President, I ask unanimous consent that the order for the quorum call be rescinded.

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

#### SAFETY AND THE TRANSPORTATION APPROPRIATIONS CONFERENCE REPORT

Mr. HOLLINGS. Mr. President, I want to emphasize the bipartisanship of the request made by my distinguished chairman, the Senator from Arizona, to get some kind of consent for S. 3059, the bill dealing with, of course, the defective equipment. We had extensive hearings.

Let me emphasize several things that we learned during the hearings.

One, generally speaking, the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration has been—I do not want to say defunct; I will use an elaborative; dormant. The testimony showed there had not been a single recall ordered by the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration in five years. They had not ordered a recall.

Now, of course, I have kept up on this because I have had to stand in the well defending my trial lawyer friends who really bring about far more safety than one would normally suspect. In the 5-year period, there have been 99 million recalls. And everybody can write a

thank-you note to Mark Robinson in the Pinto case. He never collected a cent in his punitive damages. But once industry realized there could be just that—lawsuits—then they began to voluntarily have recalls. And that is what occurred here.

This defective tire situation, causing multiple deaths—over 100 that we know about in the United States—was not a result of recalls ordered by NHTSA. More or less, the lawsuits, even though gagged, had really brought it to the attention of NHTSA to get off the dime, wake up, and start acting.

So we brought together now a measured safety precaution where this will not occur again. And again, it has been simmered down somewhat from the unanimous vote. We have been working, on both sides, with consumer product safety officials, with the tire companies. I talked to the tire companies themselves. Their main objection, in a way, to that bill was dealing with foreign defects, in reporting foreign defects and otherwise. Of course, you can call it the A tire here in the United States and manufacture the B tire in another country like it is different, but it is the same tire. So we would want to know about the recalls in Saudi Arabia, which started first, in order to bring the attention here of the Firestone defect.

So we worked it out. Now here we have a unanimous report out. The distinguished chairman of the Appropriations Committee, as he just said a moment ago, had no objection to that bill coming up because he voted for it to be reported favorably to the floor of the Senate. Otherwise, the distinguished majority leader, as a member of our committee, voted for it. So there has to be an untying of this snarl or knot so that we can get things done.

The only reason we cannot get it done is that we cannot offer an amendment to the conference report. If the conference report were an item just called up, we could call up this amendment, have a time limit for 10 minutes to a side, and easily adopt or reject the amendment, which was the bill, S. 3059. But, of course, it is a conference report, and under the rules we cannot just bring it up as an amendment. I say that so everybody will understand.

But as the distinguished chairman of our committee, Senator MCCAIN, pointed out, we could easily agree to give it some kind of consideration—an hour to a side. It could be called up so we can stop this indiscriminate killing on the highways due to faulty equipment.

I think it ought to be emphasized that we found this out really as in getting past the gag orders. I do not like these gag orders, but sometimes they do promote settlements of judicial disputes. So we do not have anything in the bill in relation to the gag orders. But when you get lawsuits—that means that you have gone to a lawyer; you have a serious injury or you maybe have a death case, or whatever it is—so when you get multiple lawsuits, then

that notice is given, of course, to NHTSA, and we can act from there.

But it is a studied, deliberate, measured response. Generally speaking, they don't ever agree. I do not want to infer the industry agrees this is a good bill, but listening to them, they didn't have any serious objection that I can discern.

I support 100 percent Senator MCCAIN's movement on the floor. He is not holding things up. We can get a Transportation conference report to the President here on Friday. We can come in here on Tuesday, if there is a holiday on Monday. We can easily get it to the President.

And as has been indicated, it has already been approved. We know the White House folks watch and make sure their concerns are taken care of in the measure. So whether it gets there Friday, gets there Tuesday, next Wednesday, let's get on with having safety in America.

The Senator from Arizona standing in the well is not being an obstructionist whatsoever, but trying to promote safety where everybody is agreed. But, as he said, there is a "fix" on somewhere because why can't we just call up the bill and get an agreement and everything else of that kind?

Our distinguished leader, the Senator from Nevada, says perhaps there is not going to be any vote in the Senate. And the Senator from Alaska, the chairman of the Appropriations Committee says, oh yes, we are going to have a vote to move to proceed. But that is not going to get us anywhere because with the vote to proceed, we will still have plenty of time to talk. And we will talk into next week, and talk into Tuesday and Wednesday, and everything else, to show to the American people that there is some kind of responsibility with this political entity here, the Senate.

Heavens above, when we have everybody agreed—it is totally bipartisan—why can't we move deliberately and bring it up and have a vote on it?

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Time in morning business has expired.

Mr. HOLLINGS. I yield the floor.

Mr. THOMAS addressed the Chair.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Wyoming.

Mr. DODD. May I inquire? Would it be possible to extend morning business a few minutes beyond the 11 o'clock hour?

The PRESIDING OFFICER. It would take unanimous consent.

Mr. DODD. Senator STEVENS and I both have a short time we want to take after our distinguished colleague has a chance to speak.

#### EXTENSION OF MORNING BUSINESS

Mr. REID. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the morning hour be extended until 11:15, with the time equally divided.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Is there objection?