

to have a unanimous consent agreement. We have a window with some time on Friday before we get into any heavy lifting on campaign finance reform. We would do it anytime: Early in the morning, late at night tomorrow, or on Monday.

This is a bill blessed with wide support. The bill has almost 60 cosponsors and passed out of our committee last week with a 15-3 vote. We went to tremendous effort to satisfy those three. For example, Senator VOINOVICH, who is a very fine legislator, had some problems. I told him during the markup that we would work with him to try to resolve those differences, and we did that. I know some of my colleagues on the committee voiced their concerns about some specific bill language, including my friend Senator VOINOVICH, at the markup. I am pleased to say that Senator VOINOVICH and all of the others who had problems, we worked night and day, the staff worked night and day to reconcile differences.

The chairman of the committee is BOB SMITH of New Hampshire. I am the ranking member. We have worked extremely hard on this legislation. We wanted to have a bipartisan bill come out of that committee, a 50/50 committee, as are all the committees over here. The President supports this bill. This bill reflects the bipartisan efforts of Senator SMITH and myself on the committee. It also reflects the tremendous staff work of our committee in helping us work out these differences we had, even though the bill was reported out 15-3. We wanted to make sure they were satisfied.

I appreciate the cooperation of my colleagues on both sides of the aisle to address these concerns and others and produce a bill with even more broad support. We have worked closely with Senators INHOFE, BOND, and CRAPO—I have already mentioned Senator VOINOVICH—as well as Senators CLINTON, BOXER, CORZINE, and GRAHAM to accommodate the interests they expressed at our committee hearing. I understand the bill we have before us to date does just that. I am very proud of that.

This bill is truly the best compromise we could reach and is a symbol of our ability to reach across the aisle and enact truly bipartisan legislation.

I understood, when we entered into this historic power-sharing agreement this year, that we would truly work together. I understood that we would truly work to pass thoughtful bipartisan legislation, just like the bill we had before us today.

This brownfields legislation, S. 350, is an issue on which President Bush campaigned. This is a bill his administration has endorsed. Yet we stand here today basically being denied the opportunity to bring up this bill. We know there is a need for this legislation. There are more than 500,000 contaminated, abandoned sites in the United States. They are waiting to be cleaned and to become thriving parts of our

communities. It works in urban areas; it works in rural areas.

Redeveloping a site will create almost 600,000 jobs nationally. In the State of Nevada, it would create hundreds of new jobs, millions of dollars in tax revenue, and, on a national level, tax revenues would be increased to as much as \$2.5 billion.

This bill is good, and we need it. This bill provides three important things to directly spur cleanup and reuse of these abandoned and contaminated sites.

No. 1, it provides critically needed money to assess and clean up abandoned and underutilized brownfields sites, which will create jobs, increase tax revenues, and preserve and create parks and open space.

No. 2, it encourages cleanup and redevelopment by providing legal protections for innocent parties such as contiguous property owners, prospective purchasers, and innocent landowners.

Every day that goes by that we do not pass this legislation means property owners have problems. One reason I care so strongly about this issue is that we waited for 2 years, the entire last Congress, to get this to the Senate floor, and we were always prevented from doing so.

No. 3, this legislation provides for funding and enhancement of State cleanup programs and a balance between providing certainty for developers, which they want, and others but still ensuring protection of public health.

This legislation has been signed off on by the business community, the development community. It has been signed off on by the environmental community. It is a fine balance, but it is good legislation.

This bill does a number of additional things that are not in the committee report. It clarifies the coordination between the States and EPA. Senator VOINOVICH thought this was important. It provides clarification that cities and others can purchase insurance at brownfields sites. It provides for an additional \$50 million per year for addressing abandoned sites which are contaminated by petroleum, such as corner gas stations.

For those of you not familiar with Superfund, it does not cover petroleum, so our original brownfield bill did not cover these sites either. I am pleased, however, that we were able to work out provisions so that these numerous sites can also be addressed.

This was a provision requested by Senators INHOFE and CRAPO, and I am pleased we were able to agree to it. Senator CRAPO felt very intensely about his objections to this bill. He expressed them well. As a result of that, we came back and corrected his problem. I do appreciate the intensity of his feelings about this.

This legislation also adds provisions so that areas with higher than average instances of cancer and disease and sites with disproportionate effects on

children, minority communities, or other sensitive subpopulations will be given consideration in making grant decisions. This is something that was advocated very well by Senators CLINTON, CORZINE, and BOXER.

This legislation also increases citizen participation by adding to the list of State brownfields program elements the right for citizens to request that a site be considered under the State program.

All these changes have been carefully considered and provide improvements to the bill. We acknowledge that. Moreover, they collectively represent the same delicate balance, as does the underlying bill, in the managers' amendment. We address the different but often complementary needs of the real estate community, environmentalists, States, mayors, and other local government officials, land and conservation groups, and the communities that are most directly affected by these sites. This balance is what makes this bill unique and makes it a success.

As we all know, S. 350 has the support of a wide variety of groups including, as I have already mentioned, environmentalists, mayors, businesses, and the real estate community. This is a bill that reflects a meeting of the minds from all sectors of American society because it is so badly needed. It is also something that is bipartisan in nature. This is not something that either the Democrats or Republicans are trying to cram down our throats. It is a model of how an evenly divided committee can work.

I urge the Senate to recognize how good this legislation is and to prove to Americans that a 50/50 Senate can be productive and we can enact these laws. I am terribly disappointed that we are in a position now where we cannot go forward with this legislation. I am not going to ask unanimous consent that this agreement be effectuated. I will not do that. I understand there is an objection on the other side. I acknowledge that.

I do say, however, that it is too bad we can't move forward on this legislation. It has been signed off on by every Democratic Senator. I hope there will be work done, maybe even during the night, so we can do something about this legislation and move forward on it. It is important legislation. It would be great for America in so many different ways, and I hope that very quickly we can have whatever problems are on the side of the Republicans alleviated and we can move forward on this most timely and important legislation.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Alabama.

MORNING BUSINESS

Mr. SESSIONS. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that there now be a period for the transaction of routine morning business with Senators permitted to speak therein for up to 10 minutes each.

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

EXPRESSION OF APPRECIATION

Mr. SESSIONS. Mr. President, I will take one moment to express my appreciation to the people who worked extremely hard to make this bankruptcy bill a success. The 83-15 vote is a strong testament to the wisdom and the balance that this bill maintains. Some said it is not balanced and is unfair but when we had the final full debate and people voted, there was an overwhelming vote.

As the Presiding Officer knows, freedom on legislation of this kind does that large a vote result. I am pleased with that.

I am honored to have worked with Senator HATCH and Senator GRASSLEY in making this a reality. I think it is appropriate that we take just a moment to express appreciation to some people who gave extraordinary effort to make this successful conclusion a reality.

First, I note that in my office Ed Haden, who is with me today, is one of the finest legal minds in this Senate, an exceedingly hard worker, a man of integrity and ability who dedicated himself to reaching the just result of today.

I could not have been successful without Ed's leadership and assistance. Also, Brad Harris on our staff, and Sean Costello, who used to be there; Lloyd Peeples, on our staff previously, now in private practice; Kristi Lee, who preceded Ed, is now a U.S. magistrate judge. They all worked in previous years on this legislation. I know they are happy to see it come to a conclusion. I am, too.

I must note that Makan Delrahim on Senator HATCH's staff has provided tremendous leadership, as did Rene Augustine; Senator GRASSLEY's Rita Lari Jochum and Kolan Davis provided tremendous effort. Senator GRASSLEY was the original sponsor of this legislation. I must also thank Dave Hoppe and John Mashburn of Senator LOTT's office, who also worked on it significantly.

Mr. President, one more thing about this. Senator BIDEN has been a strong leader in this legislation, and he is here to speak. I have thought, from day one, there was a good concept of this bill. I have expressed my overall view of what it is about, what it attempted to do, and why I thought it was important.

I have been somewhat disappointed to see certain people in consumer groups I admire take positions that I thought were unconnected to the reality of this legislation. I am glad that after full and open hearings, now three different times have we voted here, all those issues were aired and people had the chance to have their say. I am very confident that it is good legislation that will improve the administration of justice in the Federal bankruptcy courts of America.

RADIATION EXPOSURE COMPENSATION TRUST FUND

Mr. DOMENICI. Mr. President, today I rise to express my continued dismay with the lack of funding for the Radiation Exposure Compensation Trust Fund. Hundreds of former uranium miners, including many New Mexicans, have recently been mailed IOUs from the Department of Justice. These individuals have had their claims approved, but have been told that there is no money in the Fund to compensate them. These are former miners who are stricken with radiation-related diseases, and unfortunately, many will die soon.

We often pledge that we will never forget our Nation's veterans, who have sacrificed so much in order to secure our freedoms. But, we have forgotten the uranium miners, who also sacrificed for our nation's security while building up our nuclear arsenal. These miners endured long, dark, and dust-filled days underground. Often, the only fresh air that they breathed was what leaked out of the air compressors used to operate their jack-hammers. These miners were not even given protective masks or gloves, and they were never warned about the lethal medical risks until decades later.

These miners are afflicted with cancer and various respiratory diseases, and very few have sufficient money to pay their staggering medical bills. Most of these miners were never given the opportunity to build up a pension because they were continuously moved from one company to another. And now, while our veterans rightfully enjoy a great many benefits, these miners are left with only a depleted compensation fund and a handful of IOUs. Unfortunately, an IOU does not pay their medical bills.

I recently introduced legislation to provide \$84 million in emergency supplemental appropriations to pay for those claims that have already been approved, as well as the projected number of claims for FY2001. Because of the urgency of these claims, I will make this promise to our miners: I will introduce this legislation as an amendment to the first appropriate legislative vehicle to ensure our miners are compensated as quickly as possible.

We must replenish the trust fund immediately. Our miners have urgent health care needs and medical bills that will continue to pile up. Many miners have died without receiving any of the compensation that they were promised. Many will die without compensation, if we do not take action now. We must not break our promise to the miners who sacrificed and suffered to protect our Nation's security.

I promise today to make every effort to ensure that our miners are compensated for their sacrifice. We must make sure that they don't die with only an IOU in their hands.

I ask unanimous consent that an article from the Albuquerque Tribune be printed in the RECORD.

There being no objection, the material was ordered to be printed in the RECORD, as follows:

[From the Albuquerque Tribune, Mar. 14, 2001]

HALF-LIVES, HALF MEASURES

(By M.E. Sprengelmeyer)

They were promised government compensation, but dying former uranium miners say they get nothing but IOUs.

Richard Leavell doesn't want to die with a government IOU in his pocket.

Like his father, Merle, Leavell helped the United States fight the Cold War from the trenches of the Colorado Plateau. And like his father, he paid a high price.

The Leavells were uranium miners, helping provide the raw material America craved for its nuclear arsenal.

Only years later did the federal government tell miners about the deadly health risks they faced while blasting and digging through the hills of the Four Corners region, breathing radioactive dust that would take its toll as they aged.

After Merle Leavell was left with radiation-related lung damage, the federal government promised \$100,000 of "compassionate compensation" under a law enacted by Congress in 1990. But the check didn't arrive until after his death in 1995.

Now the same thing could happen to his son because of a funding oversight in Congress last year and a long list of unpaid government IOUs.

At 57, Richard Leavell suffers from pulmonary fibrosis and silicosis of the lungs, which leave him gasping for air and tied to expensive, ever-present bottles of oxygen.

"I can't do anything," he said. "This is no kind of life."

Last year, the government sent him a notice that he qualifies for \$100,000 compensation. "Regretfully," the letter said, there's no money to back it up.

Doctors aren't sure whether Leavell, who lives in Cortez, Colo., will live another six months or several years, but he says government officials don't seem to be in any hurry.

"They told us they accept responsibility, and this was supposed to be some kind of apology," Leavell said. "It's not much of an apology if you don't get it."

The Radiation Exposure Compensation Act is in a crisis, but even an emergency fix could come too late for many of the 275 aging former miners, nuclear test participants, downwinders or their surviving spouses with unpaid IOUs.

Commonly known as RECA, the program got only \$10.8 million this fiscal year but needs at least \$84 million on top of that to pay all the claims expected to be approved in 2001.

Although Congress voted to increase each victim's compensation by \$50,000, President Bush put that on hold while he reviews virtually every new regulation approved last year. Bush also signaled he is reluctant to approve any supplemental funding requests while he focuses on a proposed \$1.6 trillion tax cut.

"Here we've got this huge surplus in Washington, D.C., and the government is sending these IOUs to people who are dying," said Rebecca Rockwell, a private investigator from Durango, Colo., who helps miners compile their claims.

"I've lost 10 of my IOU holders since October," Rockwell said. "The problem is people are dying. I've gone to about as many funerals as I can take."

Republican Sens. Pete Domenici, of Albuquerque, and Orrin Hatch, of Utah, recently introduced legislation asking for \$84 million in emergency appropriations. Rep. Scott