Mr. President, I yield the floor.

I suggest the absence of a quorum.

Mr. MCCONNELL. Mr. President, will the Senator suspend? Could I ask what the order of business is?

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Mr. NELSON of Nebraska). The order is to resume consideration of H.R. 2299.

Mr. MCCONNELL. Seeing no one else on the floor, I ask unanimous consent I be allowed to proceed for 5 minutes as in morning business.

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

FEDERAL FUNDS FOR ELECTION REFORM

Mr. MCCONNELL. Mr. President, the subject of election reform has been talked about and discussed a great deal during the past 6 or 7 months. In fact, there have already been more than 60 hearings this year in Washington and in the States.

I appreciate the attention that has been paid to this important issue, and commend my colleague on the Senate Rules Committee, Chairman DODD, for his attention to this issue.

I think we can all agree that America needs, wants, and demands action on election reform.

The Senate is in a strong position to act on this issue of tremendous national importance, and in a refreshingly bipartisan manner. On election reform, Republicans and Democrats agree on far more than we disagree.

In fact, 90 senators agree that we need meaningful election reform.

Ninety Senators are cosponsoring either the bipartisan McConnell-Schumer-Torricelli election reform bill leading the election reform pact with 70 Senators on board—38 Republicans, 31 Democrats, and one Independent; the Democrats-only Dodd bill which has all Democrats and one Independent as cosponsors but no Republicans; or the McCain bill—which has 2 cosponsors.

That means 90 Senators are cosponsoring legislation authorizing federal funding to assist the 50 States in improving their election systems. The McConnell-Schumer-Torricelli bill, the Dodd bill, and the McCain bill all have funding in them for election reform. Federal funding is the common denominator which brings the Senate together on this critical issue and makes election reform possible for the American people.

But no money has yet been appropriated for election reform. No election reform money at all—not one thin dime—is yet in any appropriations bill for fiscal year 2002.

I think we can all agree that is unacceptable. We must have election reform money appropriated for fiscal year 2002. Otherwise, any authorization which is passed later this fall will be all-show and no-go, until subsequent appropriations are enacted.

If we do not appropriate election reform money in this round of appropriations—for fiscal year 2002—then election reform will be delayed. Election reform would either be postponed until fiscal year 2003, or be contingent upon an emergency supplemental appropriations bill at some point.

Election reform delayed is election reform denied.

The Republican Leader, Senator LOTT, had planned the election reform debate in the Senate to occur during June. Senators SCHUMER, TORRICELLI, and I were ready to press ahead. The organizations supporting our bill—including Common Cause and the League of Women Voters—were ready to do an all-out push for our election reform bill. Obviously, that floor debate did not happen.

It is not clear now when election reform will pass the Senate in the form of an authorization bill. In any event, any authorization for Federal funding for new voting machines and other enhancements in election systems will require that money be appropriated.

That is why I take the floor today, to announce my plan to pursue a meaningful appropriation for election reform.

The McConnell-Schumer bill authorizes $500 million annually. The Dodd bill authorizes such sums as many be necessary.

While it may be nearly impossible to appropriate several hundred million dollars for the upcoming fiscal year, I do believe that we can come together on both sides of the aisle to find an election reform appropriation that is possible and meaningful. Today, I am pledging my commitment to do just that and calling on my colleagues on the Rules and Appropriations Committees to help me make this happen.

There will have to be an authorization mechanism later on to determine precisely who will administer the funds, how, to whom and for what. But we do know that the sum is substantial. And that time is running out to make a difference for the 2002 elections.

Senators on the Appropriations Committee have already demonstrated great enthusiasm for election reform with nearly all the Republicans and half the Democrats on my bill and all the Democrats on the Dodd bill.

If not successful at the committee stage in the appropriations process, I will offer an amendment on the floor at a suitable time.

One way or another, we need to make sure that the Senate will have the election reform issue before it—sooner rather than later—in the form of the funding that is absolutely essential to make the McConnell-Schumer-Torricelli election reform bill, the Dodd bill, or the McCain bill work.

Let's appropriate election reform money for 2002. We can decide later which election reform bill will become law, who will hand out the money, and whether there will be Federal mandates.

I look forward to working with Chairman DODD on the Rules Committee and Senators BYRD and STEVENS and my fellow members of the Appropriations Committee to ensure that this appropriations season does not pass without setting aside funds for election reform.

Mr. President, I yield the floor.

CONCLUSION OF MORNING BUSINESS

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Morning business is now closed.

DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION AND RELATED AGENCIES APPROPRIATIONS ACT, 2002

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senate will now resume consideration of H.R. 2299, which the clerk will report.

The assistant legislative clerk read as follows:

A bill (H.R. 2299) making appropriations for the Department of Transportation and related agencies for the fiscal year ending September 30, 2002, and for other purposes.

Pending:

Murray/Shelby amendment No. 1025, in the nature of a substitute.

Murray/Shelby amendment No. 1030 (to amendment No. 1025), to enhance the inspection requirements for Mexican motor carriers seeking to operate in the United States and to require them to display decals.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Arizona.

AMENDMENT NO. 1030

Mr. MCCAIN. Mr. President, I believe the pending business is an amendment by the Senator from Washington; is that correct?

The PRESIDING OFFICER. That is correct.

Mr. MCCAIN. Mr. President, I rise to speak on the amendment. I will not take very much time because I just discussed with the Senator from Washington an amendment we would have which we would propose, perhaps, as a second-degree amendment to the first-degree amendment of the Senator from Washington. But more importantly, we hope perhaps we can work out an agreement in the areas in which we are in disagreement.

Over the weekend, I examined the language in the Transportation appropriations bill and our concerns about it. I do not think those concerns are unbridgeable. So I would like to speak for just a few moments. And hopefully we can discuss this issue and debate it and then, if necessary, vote on the Murray amendment. If not, hopefully we can work out some agreements which will achieve the goal we all seek.

The goal we all seek is simple: That Mexican trucks that are allowed to come into the United States of America, according to the North American Free Trade Agreement—this is in compliance with the North American Free Trade Agreement. The United States has already been found, by a panel, to be out of compliance with the North American Free Trade Agreement because of our failure to allow trucks