

have now sent in letters, but I can safely say there is not a veterans organization in the country that would oppose this legislation. I could travel to any State, any center, and I could go to a homeless shelter. I used to organize with homeless people, visit with homeless veterans, many Vietnam veterans. This legislation provides some support services for them—job training, counseling for veterans struggling with addiction, other social service programs.

There is a Senator who has put a hold on it, and I cannot find out who he or she is. These anonymous holds drive me up the wall. I have never put an anonymous hold on a bill—never. I am putting a hold on just about every single piece of legislation that any Senator on the other side of the aisle wants to put through here until this piece of legislation goes through. I have come out here twice or three times. I can't find out who objects to it. I would love to debate a Senator about why he or she opposes this homeless veterans bill.

So I am going to come to the Chamber every day, every single day, and I am going to ask unanimous consent to pass this bill. I hope that whoever opposes it will tell me why. In the meantime, I am putting a hold on just about every single piece of unanimous consent legislation that is proposed from the other side of the aisle, which I hardly ever do.

This is a great way to proceed in a bipartisan manner, to have some Senator, who has apparently very little courage, put an anonymous hold on a bill which provides more homeless assistance to veterans, who will not come out here to debate it, and basically stops it dead in its tracks. I have been around here 11 years. The only thing I can figure out is I just put a hold on pretty much everything that comes from the other side of the aisle. I will review them one by one, but I will not do it anonymously.

Let me say to my colleagues, many of whom I enjoy and like and rarely am angry with even if I disagree, I am sorry. I apologize. But I am putting a hold on just about every single piece of legislation that comes through here from the other side.

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

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Ms. CANTWELL). The clerk will call the roll. The assistant legislative clerk proceeded to call the roll.

Mr. THOMAS. Madam President, I ask unanimous consent the order for the quorum call be dispensed with.

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

Mr. THOMAS. I ask that I may speak up to 10 minutes in morning business.

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

#### SENATE PRIORITIES

Mr. THOMAS. Madam President, I rise to reflect a little bit on the issues

we have before us and the idea that we have some things to do that are priorities. I think most of us would agree to a certain set of priorities, and that we ought to be dealing with those priorities and moving forward with what we have to do. We have known this for quite a long time, as a matter of fact.

I am sure the folks on the other side of the aisle will get up and say the Republicans are blocking everything; that is not true. We need to put a priority on what we are seeking to do and get those jobs done.

We have three more appropriations, I think, out of the 13 with which to deal. We ought to be doing that and we are working on one now.

Conference reports, which will be coming back—handle those.

Certainly, I think everyone is committed to the idea of doing an economic stimulus package. I understand there are different points of view, and it is understandable because I don't think anybody knows precisely what it is that will have the most and quickest impact on the economy. Nevertheless, we need to do that; we need to do some things that are short term that have an impact. Most of us understand that.

We need to finish up airport security. That has to be done, of course, before we go.

Somewhere along the line, of course, bioterrorism is something that needs to be done.

We had hoped as part of the stimulus package or related to it we could get a date or do something with energy. If there is anything that impacts the economy, certainly it is an energy policy. An energy policy also, of course, is becoming vital to what we are seeking to do in the Middle East.

The idea that here we are in kind of a shutdown, when we are kind of in a press to get things done, and it seems like an opportunity to stick on everything that everybody has ever wanted to do is not a very good way to manage this place. It is not a very good way for us to set the priorities that this country needs, which is our job, and then to get on with doing it.

I have to say it gets a little discouraging sometimes for us to be going along with all this to do and somehow we can't seem to get with it. We have not even voted in the last 2 days in a rollcall vote.

I know it is a difficult thing to do. I am not critical of anyone particularly. But I think collectively we ought to come to the snubbing post and say we have these things to do and here is what we have to do to them and put aside some things that have been hanging around forever and put them on something that is going in, which is always the impact and effect of coming down to the end.

I have to share a certain amount of frustration with what is happening. We are not going to agree on every issue. To not understand that is naive. But we could agree on saying we have to get this job done. Some have to give up

this or have to give up that, but we have to do it.

I feel very strongly about the energy issue. I have been part of the group that has worked on that for a very long time. I do believe it has, indeed, always been important to have a policy, to do something more about domestic production. But it is even more important now, and clearly so.

I can't think of anything, as a matter of fact, that probably has more impact on the economy than the availability and cost of oil and we produce that oil and the cost of production.

These are the kinds of things we can do. So I am hopeful that as we work towards adjournment time, which can't be too far off, we will set a list of priorities. We should say: These are the things we need to do. Here are our priorities. Let's do them. Let's get on with it.

Madam President, I yield the floor and suggest the absence of a quorum.

Mr. SESSIONS addressed the Chair. The PRESIDING OFFICER. Does the Senator withhold?

Mr. THOMAS. Yes. The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Alabama.

#### DEPARTMENTS OF LABOR, HEALTH AND HUMAN SERVICES, AND EDUCATION, AND RELATED AGENCIES APPROPRIATIONS ACT, 2002—Continued

AMENDMENTS NOS. 2042, 2045, AND 2054,  
WITHDRAWN

Mr. SESSIONS. Madam President, I have offered three amendments today: Amendment No. 2042, a wage index adjustment amendment; amendment No. 2045, calling for a study on AIDS prevention program funding; and amendment No. 2054, an amendment dealing with a study on student loans, with the goal of reducing fraud and abuse in student loan programs.

Having worked with the leadership and the floor managers on these amendments, I withdraw all three amendments at this time, with the understanding that amendments Nos. 2045 and 2054, with modifications, would be made part of the managers' amendment.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Nevada.

Mr. REID. Madam President, I have spoken with the managers of the bill, and what the Senator from Alabama has said is correct. If, for some reason, the managers cannot agree to these amendments—and they have indicated they would—the Senator would have a right to reoffer these amendments.

Mr. SESSIONS. I thank Senator REID for his courtesy, as always.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection, it is so ordered. The three amendments are withdrawn.

Mr. REED. Madam President, I suggest the absence of a quorum.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will call the roll.

The assistant legislative clerk proceeded to call the roll.