Mr. BENNETT. I move to lay that motion on the table.

The motion to lay on the table was agreed to.

Mr. DURBIN. Madam President, unless the Senator from Utah has any further amendments or modifications, I do not believe there are any additional actions on the bill.

Mr. BENNETT. Madam President, one of the pleasures of handling this bill is that there are almost always no additional amendments or complications.

Mr. DURBIN. I thank the Senator from Utah and yield back all my time.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Does the Senator from Utah yield back his time as well?

Mr. BENNETT. The Senator from Utah yields back all his time.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. All time is yielded back.

The question is on agreeing to the committee amendment.

The committee amendment was agreed to.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Under the previous order, the question is on the engrossment of the amendments and third reading of the bill.

The amendments were ordered to be engrossed and the bill to be read a third time.

The bill was read the third time.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Nevada.

Mr. REID. Madam President, I ask unanimous consent that the vote on passage of H.R. 5121, the legislative branch appropriations bill, occur at 1:50 p.m. today, with rule XII, paragraph 4 being waived.

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

MORNING BUSINESS

Mr. REID. Madam President, I ask unanimous consent that there be a period of morning business with Senators allowed to speak therein for a period not to exceed 10 minutes each up until 1:50 today, the time set for the vote, and the time to be equally divided and controlled in the usual form between the two leaders or their designees.

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

Mr. REID. 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.

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 President, I ask unanimous consent that the order for the quorum call be rescinded.

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

GREATER ACCESS TO PHARMACEUTICALS ACT

Mr. HATCH. Mr. President, I rise to speak on the pending legislation, S. 812, the Greater Access to Pharmaceuticals Act. Even if I had major differences of opinion on the substance of this legislation, I commend Senators MCCAIN and SCHUMER, KENNEDY and EDWARDS for their efforts in this area.

I especially wish to recognize the efforts of Senators KENNEDY, EDWARDS, and COLLINS for their work, which was almost a complete rewriting of the McCain-Schumer bill. Let me also hasten to commend Senators GREGG and FRIST for working to improve the bill that emerged from the HELP Committee and for their leadership during the debate.

Mr. President, last week, I provided a brief summary of the existing statute that S. 812 seeks to amend, the Drug Competition and Patent Term Restoration Act of 1984. I happen to know something about this law, which is commonly referred to as the Waxman-Hatch Act, or alternatively, the Hatch-Waxman Act.

Last week, I gave an overview of my concerns with the HELP Committee legislation. With those comments in mind, today, I want to delve further into the details of the HELP Committee re-write of S. 812 the bill originally introduced by Senators MCCAIN and SCHUMER.

The central components of S.812 are aimed at rectifying concerns raised in recent years over two features of the 1984 law: first, the statutory 30-month stay granted to a pioneer firm's facing legal challenges to its patents by generic competitors; and, second the 180-day period of marketing exclusivity awarded to generic drug firms that successfully challenge a pioneer firm's patents.

During debate on S. 812, there have been a number of comments indicating that there is a substantial problem with these two provisions. That may or may not be the case. One great disadvantage of holding the floor debate at this time is that we do not have the benefit of an extensive Federal Trade Commission survey of the pharmaceutical industry that focuses on precisely these two issues that go to the heart of S. 812 and the substitute adopted by the HELP Committee. The results of this long-awaited, extensive, industry-wide FTC survey are expected in a few weeks.

I have stated on numerous occasions that before this body undertakes a substantial rewrite of provisions central to the Hatch-Waxman Act, we should have the benefit of the FTC study and its implications.

The Senate could have taken a more prudent course. The Senate could have waited for the FTC report. We—and by we I specifically include the Senate Judiciary Committee—could have held hearings on the FTC study, evaluated the data, and then discussed, debated, and refined the actual, now barely two-week old, legislative language that is pending on the floor today.

But this was not possible due to the tactical decision of the Majority to dispense with the regular order so as to minimize the politically-inconvenient fact that the Senate Finance Committee would have most likely have rejected any Democratic Medicare drug proposal in favor of the Tripartisan approach.

To my great disappointment, although not anyone's great surprise, we failed to arrive at the 60-vote consensus required to enact a Medicare drug bill in the Senate. Make no mistake about it. This is a great failure for the American people because for two years now we have set aside $300 billion in the federal budget to be spent over 10 years to provide prescription drug coverage for Medicare beneficiaries.

We have all heard from elderly constituents many of whom live on limited, fixed-incomes—who have had substantial difficulties in paying for prescription drugs. Rather than rise to the occasion and make good on our promise to rectify that situation, and we are letting this abundant opportunity slip between our fingers.

I am very disappointed with the outcome of the votes Tuesday. It is my hope that we can find a way to come together on the important issue of a Medicare drug benefit for our seniors.

At a minimum, we should use the $300 billion already in the budget to expand drug coverage for those seniors who need the most help. What we should not do is enact an expensive, government-run scheme that could bankrupt our country and plunge our economy further into the abyss when the government usurps what should legitimately be a private-sector-run benefit.

The collapse of any 60-vote consensus on the Medicare drug benefit does not show the public the type of bipartisan spirit that voters across the country say they prefer, in poll after poll after poll.

And so, we move back to the important, if more mundane, matters in S. 812.

One of the real marvels of this debate is that we have finally found out who the bad guys are in this debate.

It is not the government that has failed to make good on the promise to provide needy seniors with pharmaceutical coverage.

No, it's the pharmaceutical industry, an industry that is working day and night to bring us the medicines, the miracle cures that seniors seek.

I just had no idea that is who was going to be blamed.

This game plan comes right out of the Clintoncare play-book. As you hear attack after attack on the drug companies, I just want all of you listening to this debate to know that a similar tactic was employed by the Democrats when they tried to foist Clintoncare on a very unreceptive public back in 1993 and 1994.

Here is how David Broder and Haynes Johnson, two highly respected journalists, described the tactics of the Clinton White House in trying to pass its too grand health care reform plan:

This quote is from ''The System,'' a book by Haynes Johnson and David