

same: they would leave Americans more vulnerable and Iraqis at the mercy of al-Qaida, a terrorist group whose aim toward Iraqis and Americans is clear.

If Democrats spent half as much time fighting terrorists as they do this administration, America would win this war a lot faster.

Democrats claim to be the only ones who care about what Americans think, but Americans can see through their posturing. Compassionate rhetoric without a real plan for action is nothing more than an empty promise.

Republicans are committed to securing our homeland and have backed up that talk with action. Like my colleague, Senator ISAKSON, I invite my Democratic colleagues to join us in honoring the sacrifice of those who have already given their lives for freedom by providing real hope and security for all Americans instead of just partisan rhetoric.

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

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Mr. VITTER). The clerk will call the roll.

The legislative clerk proceeded to call the roll.

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 President, I ask unanimous consent that the order for the quorum call be rescinded.

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

Mrs. MURRAY. Mr. President, what is the pending business?

#### CONCLUSION OF MORNING BUSINESS

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Morning business is now closed.

#### SECURITY AND ACCOUNTABILITY FOR EVERY PORT ACT

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Under the previous order, the Senate will now resume consideration of H.R. 4954, which the clerk will report.

The legislative clerk read as follows:

A bill (H.R. 4954) to improve maritime and cargo security through enhanced layered defenses, and for other purposes.

Pending:

Reid amendment No. 4936, to provide real national security, restore United States leadership, and implement tough and smart policies to win the war on terror.

Schumer amendment No. 4930, to improve maritime container security by ensuring that foreign ports participating in the Container Security Initiative scan all containers shipped to the United States for nuclear and radiological weapons before loading.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Under the previous order, the time until 12:15 p.m. shall be equally divided in the usual form.

The Senator from Washington is recognized.

Mrs. MURRAY. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the pending amendment be temporarily set aside in order that I may send an amendment to the desk.

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

AMENDMENT NO. 4967

Mrs. MURRAY. Mr. President, I send an amendment to the desk on behalf of Senator STABENOW and ask for its consideration.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will report.

The legislative clerk read as follows:

The Senator from Washington [Mrs. MURRAY], for Ms. STABENOW, for herself, Mr. LIEBERMAN, Mr. LEVIN, Mr. SCHUMER, Mr. DURBIN, Mrs. BOXER, and Mr. DAYTON, proposes an amendment numbered 4967.

Mrs. MURRAY. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the reading of the amendment be dispensed with.

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

The amendment is as follows:

(Purpose: To authorize grants for interoperable communications)

At the appropriate place, insert the following:

#### SEC. \_\_\_\_ EMERGENCY COMMUNICATIONS AND INTEROPERABILITY GRANTS.

(a) IN GENERAL.—The Secretary, through the Office of Domestic Preparedness of the Office of State and Local Government Preparedness and Coordination, shall make grants to States, eligible regions, and local governments for initiatives necessary to improve emergency communications capabilities and to achieve short-term or long-term solutions to statewide, regional, national, and, where appropriate, international interoperability.

(b) USE OF GRANT FUNDS.—A grant awarded under subsection (a) may be used for initiatives to achieve short-term or long-term solutions for emergency communications and interoperability within the State or region and to assist with any aspect of the communication life cycle, including—

- (1) statewide or regional communications planning;
- (2) system design and engineering;
- (3) procurement and installation of equipment;
- (4) training exercises;
- (5) modeling and simulation exercises for operational command and control functions; and
- (6) other activities determined by the Secretary to be integral to the achievement of emergency communications capabilities and communications interoperability.

(c) DEFINITIONS.—In this section—

(1) the term “eligible region” means—

(A) 2 or more contiguous incorporated municipalities, counties, parishes, Indian tribes, or other general purpose jurisdictions that—

(i) have joined together to enhance emergency communications capabilities or communications interoperability between emergency response providers in those jurisdictions and with State and Federal officials; and

(ii) includes the largest city in any metropolitan statistical area or metropolitan division, as those terms are defined by the Office of Management and Budget; or

(B) any other area the Secretary determines to be consistent with the definition of a region in the national preparedness guidance issued under Homeland Security Presidential Directive 8; and

(2) the terms “emergency response providers” and “local government” have the meanings given the terms in section 2 of the Homeland Security Act of 2002 (6 U.S.C. 101).

(d) AUTHORIZATION OF APPROPRIATIONS.—There are authorized to be appropriated to carry out this section—

(1) \$1,000,000,000 for each of fiscal years 2007 through 2011; and

(2) such sums as are necessary for each fiscal year thereafter.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Who yields time? The Senator from Nebraska is recognized.

AMENDMENT NO. 4945

(Purpose: To provide emergency agricultural disaster assistance, and for other purposes)

Mr. NELSON of Nebraska. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent to call up my amendment No. 4945.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection, the pending amendments are set aside. The amendment is called up, and the clerk will report the amendment.

The legislative clerk read as follows:

The Senator from Nebraska [Mr. NELSON], for himself, Mr. CONRAD, Mr. REID, Mr. SALAZAR, Mr. JOHNSON, and Mr. DORGAN, proposes an amendment numbered 4945.

Mr. NELSON of Nebraska. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the reading of the amendment be dispensed with.

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

(The amendment is printed in the RECORD of Tuesday, September 12, 2006, under “Text of Amendments.”)

Mr. NELSON of Nebraska. Mr. President, first I would like to point out the cosponsors. Senators TALENT, LEAHY, OBAMA, DURBIN, DAYTON, SCHUMER, and CLINTON have all asked to be original cosponsors of my amendment.

I rise today to offer an amendment to H.R. 4954 that will provide much needed emergency relief to farmers, ranchers, and small businesses in rural America that today and for some time have been suffering the devastating impacts of natural disasters, such as the long-running drought in my home State of Nebraska.

A few years ago, I named the drought “David” to make the point that a drought is a natural disaster just like hurricanes—although it seems to be in slow motion—or floods or tornadoes and should be treated by Congress in much the same way because they are disastrous. Congress provides emergency relief to those who have suffered through devastating hurricanes, and there is no excuse for not helping farmers, ranchers, and businesses suffering from this natural disaster.

Unfortunately, in parts of Nebraska, Drought David is celebrating its seventh birthday, and yet Congress has failed to provide relief. I believe this relief must be addressed before Congress heads home for the elections, and I believe it should be addressed this week. That is why I am offering my amendment.

Ordinarily, I wouldn’t offer an amendment to the port security bill because I certainly want to support that. But because of the lack of other opportunities and the increasing need for relief, I am faced, along with my cosponsors and others who will join me, with the recognition that there aren’t many opportunities. And waiting until after