

My question—it is really a comment in the form of a question. You pointed out we are 3 years after the highway bill. This is correcting some unanticipated errors in that bill. What is happening is, here we are in this recession. There are a lot of projects that are stymied. They were unintended to be stymied, but we need to correct that.

My question is, Don't you think it is time to correct a bill that passed 3 years ago, and we are going to get to the new highway bill next year? This is unfinished business. It is bipartisan. My point is, do you believe as strongly as I do that the time has come to do this?

Mr. REID. Mr. President, I say to the distinguished chair of the Environment and Public Works Committee, I appreciate the work done on a bipartisan basis to get us here. If there were ever a time we should do this, a technical corrections bill on a bill that passed more than 3 years ago, it is now. It has taken that long to get it done, especially since we have the highway trust fund that now is \$5 billion short of what it should be. There are construction projects that need to go forward. Many of them cannot go forward until this technical corrections bill is passed.

This bill does not favor Democrats. It does not favor Republicans. I think everyone should understand when Senators BOXER and INHOFE work on a bipartisan bill, that is a bipartisan bill. We all know the reputations of the Senator from California and the Senator from Oklahoma. This is a good piece of legislation, and I say to my friend from California, I hope we can get it done very quickly.

We have lots of things to do. I am disappointed we are not going to be able to move to the patent bill. I am sorry about that.

Mr. DURBIN. Will the majority leader yield for a question?

Mr. REID. Yes.

Mr. DURBIN. I may put the leader on the spot, but as I understand it, we have had to file a cloture motion on this bill, which means a threatened filibuster over going to a technical corrections bill to amend and revise a highway bill that is 3½ years old. I know the Republican minority set a record in the Senate with 62 filibusters last year. I don't know if the majority leader can tell us the ongoing number of filibusters from the Republicans at this point. I assume it is over 70 filibusters. The previous record was 62 filibusters in 2 years. Now we have had over 70 filibusters, and we are just into this new legislative year.

I ask the majority leader, in his experience in the Senate, does he ever recall a filibuster being mounted on a bipartisan bill that is a technical corrections bill related to highway projects and other building projects across the Nation, in both Democratic and Republican States?

Mr. REID. I say to my distinguished friend, the answer to that is no. But I

do say this: That is why I made my remarks very clear. I think a lot of it has been unfounded, but we have had some distrust that some of the things we are doing will prevent people from offering amendments; there will not be an opportunity to legislate on this bill.

I have no intention—I made it very clear—of filling the tree. I used kind of a buzzword because everyone knew what I was talking about. But I have no intention of doing that. That is why I said I hope once we get on the bill, the 30 hours will not need to be used; we can just go to the bill and start legislating. That would be the right thing to do.

We have now been in this session for 12–15 months. I would hope by this time we know each other a little better, we can trust each other a little better, Democrats and Republicans. I think we just finished some very good work. Today we passed an extremely important housing bill. It was bipartisan.

I was with some people today, and they criticized: Why did you put this provision in there dealing with homebuilders? It is something that they don't need.

I personally disagree with that. In Nevada we have homebuilders who are doing everything they can to hang onto land so when this market bottoms out they will still have some land to build on. Anyway, I said to them we in the Senate today have a very slim majority, 51 to 49. I said to my friend—I asked this question: We have a number of things in this bill that were put in that we did not especially like.

The Republicans got a number of things in this very important housing stimulus bill that they did not like. But that is what legislation is about. That is the big speech I gave to my friend. I think he understood it after I said this a little better.

After that, we also did something on a bipartisan basis: passed, all in 1 bill, 80 different bills. There is no need to go back into the history of why this happened, but it happened, and we were only able to get it done because we worked on a bipartisan basis. I want to do the same on this highway bill.

We have other things coming up that we need to do this work period. As I indicated, because of the patent bill, for reasons that I am sure will be written about over the next few weeks, we are not going to do a patent bill now. The chairman and ranking member could not work out what they wanted to bring to the floor. So, as a result of that, we have a little extra time. I hope that because of that we can do highway corrections, we can maybe move to that.

There is a veterans bill we are trying to get worked out. We know we have more than 50 votes; we hope we have more than 60; we are very close to that.

We have an FHA reauthorization. We need to do that. I spoke to Chairman ROCKEFELLER a few minutes ago.

So without belaboring the point, in answering the question of my dear

friend, the assistant Democratic leader, no, I don't remember ever a filibuster being filed on a bipartisan bill. But I do not know the entire history. I hope we can move forward on this piece of legislation in regular order.

Mr. KYL. Mr. President, I want to make one brief comment to the leader.

I have no additional comment to make to the leader. I can pose it as a question, but I do not really need to. The leader is aware that there is no intention on the Republican side to filibuster this bill. I concur in his remarks about the bipartisanship that resulted in both of the bills passing today.

There is one matter that needs to be resolved, as I understand it, with respect to this technical corrections bill, which does need to be dealt with, as the chairman of the committee noted. As far as I know, that is the only matter. There could be others, but I know of no intention on the part of anybody on our side of the aisle to raise extraneous matters to use the bill for any other purpose but to complete action on the bill. I am aware of the same matter that the majority leader is right now as the only matter that exists on our side. So there is no intention on our side of the aisle to filibuster the bill.

Mr. REID. Mr. President, I say also through the Chair to my friend, I have spoken to that Senator, and still we might be able to work something out. If we cannot, he can offer an amendment and see what happens that way.

Mr. KYL. Sure.

Mr. REID. Mr. President, I feel comfortable with what we have been able to accomplish this week. I cannot say that every week we have left here, but this has been a really good week. I think we have accomplished a lot that is good for the American people in the process.

We have a farm bill that is moving along. We had today an actual conference, Democrats and Republicans, trying to come up with a farm bill. It is wonderful that that is taking place because in recent years we have not had a real conference. We have had little meetings take place. But I think that is wonderful that we were able to get that done.

#### MORNING BUSINESS

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

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

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from New Mexico.

#### THANKING STAFF

Mr. BINGAMAN. Mr. President, earlier today the Senate passed S. 2739, the Consolidated Natural Resources Act of 2008. As I said during the debate, S. 2739 is a collection of over 60 bills reported from the Committee on Energy