

bill—in fact, the biggest part of this farm bill is nutrition. Over 60 percent of this farm bill is nutrition; it is food stamps, it is the TEFAP program, the Temporary Emergency Food Assistance Program, WIC, it is all of these programs that help low-income people put food on their table. Yet we know, with the increasing prices of food, people are hurting, low-income people are hurting in this country.

Well, with a 1-year extension, we give no relief at all to low-income families. In this bill, what we have agreed upon so far is roughly about \$10 billion more—not base—\$10 billion more in nutrition programs. Now, if we have a 1-year extension, that is gone. So I think we have an obligation here to help people who are low-income, who maybe had a job and lost it, who need to go on food stamps for a short period of time to be able to help their families. Well, if we have an extension, that will not happen.

Energy. We hear a lot of talk—I think it is misguided—about some of the food going for ethanol and that is causing a lot of problems. That is not it at all. That is not it at all. A lot of people have the mistaken idea that the corn that is being made into ethanol is the corn people eat. That is not so. People do not eat that. It is not the kind of corn you buy and you eat on your plate at night. This is the corn which is fed to chickens and cows and hogs. Most of the hungry people in the world are not hungry because they are not getting meat; they are hungry because of subsistence diets. So the ethanol thing is kind of a bugaboo; that is a phony issue out there. But we recognize the limits, and we recognized that in the Energy bill we passed where we mandated a renewable fuels standard, but we said that, of that, no more than 15 billion gallons a year from present sources, corn. So therefore we want to move aggressively into cellulosic ethanol, using wood products and waste products and things such as those for making ethanol. This bill pushes us in that direction, moves us aggressively in that direction. Well, if we have a 1-year extension, we will lose yet another year or two on that.

Lastly, let me mention conservation. Millions and millions of acres are coming out to be used for crop production. You cannot stop it. These are contracts that farmers had to set aside land. The contracts are up. Because of the high prices of wheat and corn and beans and other commodities, farmers now see they can make money by planting row crops. That is fine. That is good. That will help keep the prices of food down. We need that productive capacity.

That is what was so good about the Conservation Reserve Program. It was like a reservoir, that if we needed it at some time, we could use it. Well, now is the time. We are going to use it. And more crops will be planted on this land. But some of these lands are fragile, they are hilly, they are highly erodable. So therefore we need to put

some incentives in there for farmers to do it right, to put in grass waterways, to put in buffer strips, to do minimum tillage, to do all that is necessary to conserve our soil and clean up our water. We can have production, and we can have good conservation. This bill puts a lot more money into the very conservation programs that will allow farmers to go out and plant and grow and yet be good conservationists. Yet, if we have a 1-year extension, we do not have that.

So for that and for a lot of other reasons, I wish the White House would quit talking about that and say: Look, you have a good bill. You have done a lot of work. We will work with you. We will get this bill done, and the President will sign it into law. That is the kind of cooperation we need from the White House right now and not the veiled threats of a year extension, things like that.

I think the Senator from Idaho is right, we have been so locked up in meetings on this that perhaps Senators and their staffs and others have not really been brought up to speed on what we are doing. I want to take this opportunity to bring them up to speed as to where we are in all of these negotiations.

We are very close. We are meeting right now again at 10:30 and will proceed on today, tomorrow, through the weekend if necessary to get this done.

I ask unanimous consent that the bill be read three times and passed, the motion to reconsider be laid upon the table with no intervening action or debate, and any statements related to the bill be printed in the RECORD.

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. Is there objection?

Mr. CRAIG. Mr. President, no objection, but this was the original at the desk, not the one amended by the Chair?

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. The Senator is correct.

Mr. CRAIG. I thank the Chair.

Mr. Chairman, let me thank you for that report. I do not know if there is anyone here in ag country who does not want your work product to become policy as soon as possible.

I think the colloquy this morning has been extremely valuable. Please go back to work.

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. Without objection, it is so ordered.

The bill (S. 2903) was ordered to a third reading, was read the third time, and passed, as follows:

S. 2903

Be it enacted by the Senate and House of Representatives of the United States of America in Congress assembled,

SECTION 1. ADDITIONAL TEMPORARY EXTENSION OF AGRICULTURAL PROGRAMS AND SUSPENSION OF PERMANENT PRICE SUPPORT AUTHORITIES.

Effective April 25, 2008, section 1 of Public Law 110-196 (122 Stat. 653) (as amended by Public Law 110-200 (122 Stat. 695)) is amended—

(1) in subsection (a), by striking “April 25, 2008” and inserting “May 2, 2008”; and

(2) in subsection (d), by striking “April 25, 2008” and inserting “May 2, 2008”.

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. The Senator from Massachusetts.

ORDER OF PROCEDURE

Mr. KERRY. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the time used in the colloquy we just heard not be charged to either side and that the remaining Democratic time be equally divided between Senator WEBB and myself.

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. Without objection, it is so ordered.

Mr. KERRY. Mr. President, exactly how much time is remaining?

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. There is 16 minutes on the Democratic side.

Mr. KERRY. I thank the Chair.

NATIONAL SMALL BUSINESS WEEK

Mr. KERRY. Mr. President, this is National Small Business Week. This country has nearly 27 million small businesses in total, and their contributions to the country are remarkable. They create the majority—the vast majority—of jobs, they drive the economy, and they are part of the solution to lead us out of economic downturns. But if we are going to really pay appropriate tribute to small business during Small Business Week, we frankly need to do more than simply provide lip service; we need to promote policies that work for small businesses, not policies that favor large businesses under the guise of helping small ones.

In the Committee on Small Business and Entrepreneurship, we have worked on behalf of small business on a bipartisan basis. Senator SNOWE, the ranking member, and I and the entire committee passed unanimously three bills to improve small business services that help America's job creators expand their payrolls. Unfortunately, these bills have been blocked for a full year by some in the Senate: S. 1256, the Small Business Lending Reauthorization and Improvements Act of 2007; S. 1662, the Small Business Venture Capital Act of 2007; and S. 1671, the Entrepreneurial Development Act.

S. 1256, the Small Business Lending Reauthorization Improvements Act, passed the Small Business Committee 19 to 0 on May 16, 2007, almost a year ago. This legislation authorizes the Small Business Administration's major lending programs which are the largest source of long-term capital for small businesses in the country. The bill also strengthens the microloan program, a concept that has proven unbelievably effective around the world in helping men and women lift themselves and their families out of poverty by accumulating assets, building wealth, and creating jobs. That is very important because the income gap, the economic gap, is growing year by year. When an