

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

COMMITTEE ON HOMELAND SECURITY AND
GOVERNMENTAL AFFAIRS

Mr. CONRAD. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the Committee on Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs be authorized to meet during the session of the Senate on Wednesday, April 29, 2009, at 10 a.m. to conduct a hearing entitled "Swine Flu: Coordinating the Federal Response."

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

COMMITTEE ON THE JUDICIARY

Mr. CONRAD. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the Senate Committee on the Judiciary be authorized to meet during the session of the Senate, to conduct a hearing entitled "Nominations" on Wednesday, April 29, 2009, at 2 p.m., in room SD-226 of the Dirksen Senate Office Building.

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

COMMITTEE ON VETERANS' AFFAIRS

Mr. CONRAD. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the Committee on Veterans' Affairs be authorized to meet during the session of the Senate on Wednesday, April 29, 2009. The Committee will meet in room 562 of the Dirksen Senate Office Building beginning at 9:30 a.m.

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

SUBCOMMITTEE ON CRIME AND DRUGS

Mr. CONRAD. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the Senate Committee on the Judiciary, Subcommittee on Crime and Drugs, be authorized to meet during the session of the Senate, to conduct a hearing entitled "Restoring Fairness to Federal Sentencing: Addressing the Crack-Powder Disparity" on Wednesday, April 29, 2009, at 10 a.m., in room SD-226 of the Dirksen Senate Office Building.

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

SUBCOMMITTEE ON OVERSIGHT OF GOVERNMENT
MANAGEMENT, THE FEDERAL WORKFORCE,
AND THE DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA

Mr. CONRAD. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the Committee on Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs' Subcommittee on Oversight of Government Management, the Federal Workforce, and the District of Columbia be authorized to meet during the session of the Senate on Wednesday, April 29, 2009, at 2:30 p.m. to conduct a hearing entitled, "The Federal Government's Role in Empowering Americans to Make Informed Financial Decisions."

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

SUBCOMMITTEE ON PERSONNEL

Mr. CONRAD. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the Subcommittee on Personnel of the Committee on Armed Services be authorized to meet during the session of the Senate on Wednesday, April 29, 2009, at 2:30 p.m.

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

SPECIAL COMMITTEE ON AGING

Mr. CONRAD. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the Special Committee on Aging be authorized to meet during the session of the Senate on Wednesday, March 29, 2009 from 2 p.m.–4 p.m. in Dirksen 106 for the purpose of conducting a hearing.

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

UNANIMOUS CONSENT
AGREEMENT—S. 896

Mr. REID. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that on Thursday, April 30, following a period of morning business, the Senate proceed to the consideration of Calendar No. 52, S. 896, Helping Families Saves Their Homes; that immediately after the bill is reported, Senator DURBIN be recognized to offer an amendment relating to "cram-down"—that is, bankruptcy; that there be 4 hours for debate with respect to the amendment and the time be equally divided and controlled between the leaders or their designees; that upon the use or yielding back of time, the Senate proceed to vote in relation to that amendment; that adoption of the amendment will require an affirmative 60-vote threshold; that if the threshold is achieved, the amendment be agreed to and the motion to reconsider be laid upon the table; that if the amendment does not achieve that threshold, that it will be withdrawn; provided further that no amendment be in order to the amendment and that no further amendments on the subject of "cram-down" be in order during the pendency of S. 896; further, that upon disposition of the Durbin amendment, Senator DODD be recognized to offer a Dodd-Shelby substitute amendment.

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Mr. BEGICH). Without objection, it is so ordered.

Mr. REID. Mr. President, before we move on, there are times in the legislative process that you see someone who has invested a great deal of their personal time and passion on an issue. I came to Congress at the same time that Senator DURBIN of Illinois came. He is a man, we all know, who is very articulate. He is a person who can express himself very well. He is a person who believes in the legislative process. He understands that legislation is the art of compromise. But that can be carried a little too far.

Senator DURBIN has done everything within his power to get an issue that he believes in very strongly. I agree with him. It is unbelievable to me that people can have their primary residence in Las Vegas and have a beach house in Laguna, CA, and a ski chalet in Brian Head, UT, or some other ski area in Utah, and they come upon hard times. The resorts they have at the beach and up in the mountains, they can go to bankruptcy court and get that readjusted. Their primary residence, they

cannot. But a person who has a home in Las Vegas or some other place in Nevada who comes upon hard times, they cannot do a thing with their home. They cannot go to bankruptcy court. They are stuck with this horrible process, we found.

I do not know how to summarize this other than to say that I hope the banks are proud of themselves. I hope they are proud of themselves, of what they have done—I add in that the financial institutions generally—what they have done to our country. And now they are standing in the way of our trying to help a little bit, trying to help people who have a home and they cannot get any relief. So the banks are going to wind up with a lot of peoples' homes because they are going to foreclosure upon them and the people have no alternative.

On the morning news today, Phoenix, AZ, the price of the homes in the last year—at least the way I heard it on public radio today—the price of homes has dropped 50 percent. A home that was worth \$500,000 last year is worth \$250,000 now.

Everyone knows that the assistant leader of the Senate is Senator DURBIN. We work very closely together. And I help him whenever I can, as he helps me whenever he can. But I feel badly for the country. I am happy we got this agreement. Maybe we will be able to get very fortunate and pick up some votes. But I am very disappointed in the rope-a-dope that has been used on Senator DURBIN. He has tried everything—everything—to try to get this done. Quite frankly, the amendment he is going to offer, I wish we would have one a little stronger than that.

But I hope that there will be a night's rest and people will come in and say: I guess DURBIN is right. Let's do this. But I want the record spread with the fact that the people of the State of Illinois are very fortunate to have someone of his caliber, his integrity, working to help them and in the process help our country.

I ask unanimous consent that on Thursday, April 30, upon disposition—Mr. 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.

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

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

UNANIMOUS CONSENT AGREEMENT—EXECUTIVE CALENDAR

Mr. REID. I ask unanimous consent that on Thursday, April 30, upon disposition of the Durbin amendment and after Senator DODD has called up his amendment, that has been previously worked out, the Senate proceed to executive session to consider Calendar No. 56, the nomination of Thomas