been able to clear it on this side. Therefore, I object.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Objection is heard.

ORDER OF BUSINESS

Mr. REID. Madam President, for the information of Senators, there will be no more votes today. I indicated earlier that we would be out by 6 today. A number of things are going on. We will work on a number of issues over the weekend, including the tobacco issue and other issues. We will vote on Monday at 5:30 on the cloture motions that were filed earlier this afternoon.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Connecticut is recognized.

FAMILY SMOKING PREVENTION AND TOBACCO CONTROL ACT

Mr. DODD. Madam President, I listened carefully to the conversation between the majority leader and our colleague from Arizona. As the manager of this bill on smoking, I for one have been a strong advocate for the reimportation proposal. Others have also expressed interest in this. Most of my colleagues have expressed views, and a majority have expressed support for the idea. This is not about denying a vote on reimportation. We would all like that opportunity.

However, this bill on smoking and children is about as fragile a proposal as I have seen here in a long time. There are strong voices that wish to kill this legislation, and they effectively have. The FDA has jurisdiction over almost every product—except tobacco—including pet food. We waited 10 years trying to get to this bill. If you lose one or two votes on this—if we lose this again, we are back to the last decade.

There will be any number of attractive ideas proposed to this legislation, many of which I have either supported or would like to, but we will run the risk of breaking up the necessary 60 votes to deal with children and smoking. So no matter how appealing some amendments may be, understand what you may be doing, and that is destroying the ability to deal with the 3,000 to 4,000 kids who start smoking every day and the 400,000 people who die every year from tobacco. I want to vote on reimportation as well and a lot of other issues. If every time we bring up a bill of this significance and somebody offers a very appealing proposal—understand that the danger is that you fracture that relationship. That has denied us the opportunity to pass this for a decade, despite the fact that both bodies have voted overwhelmingly but not in the same Congress.

We are on the brink of getting this done. What better thing could we accomplish on the eve of the health care debate than to start saving lives of children? I have 76,000 kids in Connecticut who will die because they are smokers if we do nothing. There are 6 million children today who are going to die prematurely because of smoking if we do nothing. As much as I want to deal with reimportation of drugs, if we do that and it is adopted and we lose the coalition on smoking, what have we achieved? The bill dies. You lose both reimportation as well as the smoking proposal.

I appreciate the majority leader taking the position he did. I know where he stands on the issue. Senator Reid has been a long-time advocate of reimportation. That is not the issue here. It is whether at long last, a decade later, our colleague from Massachusetts, Senator Kennedy, and Senator DeWine, a former colleague from Ohio, Henry Waxman from California, Tom Davis of Virginia, who on a bipartisan basis have tried year in and year out to get this done—we can finally achieve it. So I know the game. But this is not a game, this is life and death for people. For 10 long years, we have not been able to pass laws involving kids and smoking. We can get it done in the next few days. If people insist upon nongermane amendments based on a short-term appeal that denies us that opportunity, we will have done great damage to our country.

I appreciate the position the majority leader has taken. My colleagues know, because I went through the process last week in committee, there were any number of appealing amendments. I thank the members of the committee who wanted to vote for some of those amendments. I see Senator MERKLEY here, a member of our committee. He and I would have liked to have supported additional amendments, fines and such, for kids. We knew that if we did that, we might break that fragile coalition that would get to us the goal line of passing the bill.

I thank the majority leader for standing up on an issue he cares deeply about, the health of our children. He understands, as does the Presiding Officer, as do all of us here who have loved ones who have been smokers and have been affected by tobacco and the damage it does to our citizenry. It is the only disease I know that is self-inflicted. There are more deaths each year as a result of smoking and tobacco products than alcohol, drugs, suicide, automobile accidents, and AIDS combined. It is the greatest killer in America. We have a chance to make a difference. The day will come for reimportation. We ought to get to that. If you do it on this bill, you lose both reimportation and the smoking bill.

I thank the majority leader and yield the floor.

Mrs. BOXER. Madam President, I urge my colleagues to join me in support of the Family Smoking Prevention and Tobacco Control Act, a comprehensive effort to address the threat of tobacco products to public health.

This bill will finally give the Food and Drug Administration the legal authority it needs to prevent the sale of tobacco products to minors, make tobacco products less toxic and addictive for those who continue to use them, and prevent the tobacco industry from misleading the public about the dangers of smoking.

As the leading preventable cause of death in the United States, tobacco kills over 400,000 Americans a year. More deaths in the U.S. are caused by tobacco use than from illegal drug use, alcohol use, motor vehicle accidents, suicides, and murders combined. This legislation takes crucial steps to save the lives of as many as 80,000 Americans every year.

Sadly, our failure to address this issue is having the greatest effect on our Nation’s children. Ninety percent of all new smokers are children. In just 1 day, about 3,500 children will try their first cigarette and 1,000 more will become daily smokers. In just 1 year, kids in my home State of California will purchase 78.3 million packs of cigarettes.

Even though studies have shown children are twice as sensitive to tobacco advertising as adults and that one-third of children experiment with smoking due to advertising, marketing for tobacco products is virtually unregulated. Each year, the tobacco industry spends $13.4 billion nationwide on advertising. Granting the FDA the authority to regulate tobacco advertising will reduce targeting of kids and crack down on false claims.

Additionally, this bill will grant the FDA the authority to regulate smokeless tobacco—particularly those products that have been designed to appeal to children, such as tobacco candy. Claims by the tobacco industry that these products are safe alternatives to smoking are dangerous and wrong. In fact, the Surgeon General has determined the use of smokeless tobacco can lead to oral cancer, gum disease, heart attacks, heart disease, cancer of the esophagus, and cancer of the stomach.

This legislation will ensure that tobacco companies can no longer market addictive carcinogenic candies targeted at children without review by the Food and Drug Administration and careful regulation to safeguard the public health.

Cigarettes contain 69 known carcinogens and hundreds of other ingredients that contribute to the risk of heart disease, lung disease, and other serious illnesses. Yet tobacco products are currently exempt from basic consumer protections like ingredient disclosure, product testing and marketing restrictions to children. Tobacco products are the only products on the market that kill a third of their customers if they are used as directed. In spite of the risks, in spite of the costs, tobacco products are the most regulated consumer products available today.

This bill will ensure that the tobacco industry is finally required to tell us what is in the products they sell.