

business to go with other small businesses in what we call the exchange, and they will get much better rates because the insurance costs and the costs of illness and treatment will be spread over hundreds of thousands of people instead of only 5 or 6 or 10 people in one of these health care plans in a small business.

This also has tax credits, additional tax credits for small businesses. We are going to see a lot of help in this legislation for small business.

I will close again saying our health care bill that was voted out of the Health, Education, Labor, and Pensions Committee protects what works in our health care system and fixes what is broken. If you are happy with your health care insurance, you can keep it. If you are happy with your employer plan, you can keep it. We will build some consumer protections around it.

If you are not happy, you are dissatisfied, or you don't have insurance, you will get insurance under this bill.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Mrs. GILLIBRAND). The Senator from Vermont is recognized.

AMENDMENT NO. 2276

Mr. SANDERS. Madam President, I thank the Senator and applaud his strong efforts in fighting for health care for all Americans. I want to take a few minutes right now to touch on an issue that in fact has not gotten a lot of discussion here in Congress and that is that family-based dairy agriculture is on the verge of collapse. This is not a regional issue, this is a national issue. From the east coast to the west coast, what we are seeing is prices plummeting for dairy farmers way below the cost of production. If Congress does not act, all over America rural communities are going to be suffering economically. People are going to be losing their jobs. The American people increasingly will not be able to obtain fresh locally produced food.

As we talk about stimulus, as we talk about trying to revive this economy, let's remember rural America and let's remember the dairy farmers throughout this country who are producing an important part of the food we consume. At this moment, dairy farmers across the country are suffering from the lowest milk prices in four decades. Let me repeat that. Dairy farmers across the country are suffering from the lowest milk prices in four decades.

In the last year, the price farmers receive for their milk has plummeted 41 percent, to \$11.30 per hundredweight. To understand how low \$11.30 per hundredweight is, you must understand it takes \$17 or \$18 to produce a hundredweight of milk. In other words, for every cow that is milked, the farmer is losing a substantial amount of money.

As a result of these low prices, many family farms have gone out of business and, if we do not act immediately, you are going to see many more, from one

end of this country to the other, close up. I can tell you in the State of Vermont there was a lot of publicity surrounding a farm in the southern part of our State that had been in one family since the Revolutionary War—since the Revolutionary War. But because of these horrendously low milk prices, that farm has gone up for sale.

This is not just an issue for dairy farmers. This is not just an issue for rural communities. This is an issue for every American who wants to gain access to good quality, locally produced food.

All over this country people are saying no, I don't want my food coming in from China, I don't want my food coming in from places all over the world. I want to see the quality food that is produced in my area, in my State, in my region. If we do not act to protect family-based dairy agriculture, we are going to increasingly lose that opportunity.

Let me underline this. I know the people familiar with dairy always say these are great regional fights, the Northeast is fighting the Midwest is fighting the Southeast is fighting the west coast, and every region has its own set of priorities.

This is not a regional issue, this is a national issue. Let me talk a little bit about what is happening, briefly, in various regions around the country. California Farmers Union President Joaquin Contente spoke about the situation in his State of California. He testified:

In my lifelong history as a dairy farmer, I have never seen prices this far below our cost for this long and I have never seen so many dairy producers so desperate for relief. In my county alone—

This is in California, not Vermont.

In my county alone, 25 dairies have either filed or are in the process of filing for bankruptcy and many more are closer to bankruptcy each day.

Joaquin Contente, California Farmers Union president.

Let me talk about Texas, the Southwest. The executive director of the Texas Association of Dairymen spoke about the situation in his State of Texas. He said:

This is the worst situation I have seen since 1970. Some say it is the worst since the depression.

That is the State of Texas. Let me talk about the Midwest, Wisconsin. A Stanley, WI dairy farmer stated:

In my area, farmers are burning up their equity accumulated over their lifetimes. One farmer in my area had to cash out his wife's IRA just to get crops planted this spring. My parish priest in my small town has had to counsel one or more dairy farmers a week to prevent their suicides. And we know of reports across the country of farm suicides that have already occurred.

These are just a few examples from California and Texas. I can go on and on about what is going on in California and the Northeast.

Last week, after Congress's strong urging, Secretary Vilsack announced that the government would spend \$243

million to raise price supports for dairy farmers, and we very much appreciate the Secretary and the Obama administration's quick response to our needs. That support is important. It is likely to raise milk price supports by about \$1.25 per hundredweight, but that is nowhere near enough of what we need when in fact cost of production is \$17 or \$18 per hundredweight.

This afternoon I will be offering legislation cosponsored by you, Senator GILLIBRAND, cosponsored by Senator SCHUMER, Senator TOM UDALL, Senator SPECTER, and Senator JEANNE SHAHEEN, among others. This amendment will go a long way to help farmers over the short-term crisis.

Long term, obviously we need to do some fundamental rethinking about dairy agriculture, how you bring long-term stability to the dairy industry and end that volatility that has been rampant in that industry for so many years. There are so many ideas out there about how we bring long-term stability for dairy farmers in this country. This is short-term relief to make sure farmers all over this country do not go out of business. What this amendment would do is provide the Secretary of Agriculture with \$350 million in additional funding for milk price supports. That would, again, bring the price up about another \$1.50 per hundredweight. This short-term help could mean the difference between economic viability or financial disaster for dairy farmers from one end of this country to the other.

Once again, all of us are focused on how we get out of this deep recession. All of us are focused on how we create decent-paying jobs. I urge my colleagues, do not forget about rural America. Rural America, whether it is Vermont, Wisconsin, California, Colorado—rural America is hurting. They need help as well.

Later on this afternoon I will be bringing forth this very important amendment to provide some economic support for rural America and hope to have the support of all my colleagues.

#### THE CALENDAR

Mr. SANDERS. Madam President, I ask unanimous consent the Senate proceed to the immediate consideration of the following postal naming bills en bloc: Calendar Nos. 133 through 144: S. 748, S. 1211, S. 1314, H.R. 774, H.R. 987, H.R. 1271, H.R. 1397, H.R. 2090, H.R. 2162, H.R. 2325, H.R. 2422, and H.R. 2470.

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

Mr. SANDERS. I ask unanimous consent the bills be read a third time and passed en bloc, the motions to reconsider be laid on the table en bloc, and any statements be printed in the RECORD.

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

**CESAR E. CHAVEZ POST OFFICE**

The bill (S. 748) to redesignate the facility of the United States Postal Service located at 2777 Logan Avenue in San Diego, California, as the "Cesar E. Chavez Post Office," was considered, ordered to be engrossed for a third reading, read the third time, and passed, as follows:

S. 748

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

**SECTION 1. CESAR E. CHAVEZ POST OFFICE.**

(a) REDESIGNATION.—The facility of the United States Postal Service located at 2777 Logan Avenue in San Diego, California, and known as the Southeastern Post Office, shall be known and designated as the "Cesar E. Chavez Post Office".

(b) REFERENCES.—Any reference in a law, map, regulation, document, paper, or other record of the United States to the facility referred to in subsection (a) shall be deemed to be a reference to the "Cesar E. Chavez Post Office".

**JACK F. KEMP POST OFFICE BUILDING**

The bill (S. 1211) to designate the facility of the United States Postal Service located at 60 School Street, Orchard Park, New York, as the "Jack F. Kemp Post Office Building," was considered, ordered to be engrossed for a third reading, read the third time, and passed, as follows:

S. 1211

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

**SECTION 1. JACK F. KEMP POST OFFICE BUILDING.**

(a) DESIGNATION.—The facility of the United States Postal Service located at 60 School Street, Orchard Park, New York, shall be known and designated as the "Jack F. Kemp Post Office Building".

(b) REFERENCES.—Any reference in a law, map, regulation, document, paper, or other record of the United States to the facility referred to in subsection (a) shall be deemed to be a reference to the "Jack F. Kemp Post Office Building".

**DR. MARTIN LUTHER KING, JR. POST OFFICE**

The bill (S. 1314) to designate the facility of the United States Postal Service located at 630 Northeast Killingsworth Avenue in Portland, Oregon, as the "Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. Post Office," was considered, ordered to be engrossed for a third reading, read the third time, and passed, as follows:

S. 1314

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

**SECTION 1. DR. MARTIN LUTHER KING, JR. POST OFFICE.**

(a) DESIGNATION.—The facility of the United States Postal Service located at 630 Northeast Killingsworth Avenue in Portland, Oregon, shall be known and designated as the "Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. Post Office".

(b) REFERENCES.—Any reference in a law, map, regulation, document, paper, or other

record of the United States to the facility referred to in subsection (a) shall be deemed to be a reference to the "Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. Post Office".

**LIEUTENANT COMMANDER ROY H. BOEHM POST OFFICE BUILDING**

The bill (H.R. 2470) to designate the facility of the United States Postal Service located at 19190 Cochran Boulevard FRNT in Port Charlotte, Florida, as the "Lieutenant Commander Roy H. Boehm Post Office Building," was considered, ordered to a third reading, read the third time, and passed.

**KILE G. WEST POST OFFICE BUILDING**

The bill (H.R. 2422) to designate the facility of the United States Postal Service located at 2300 Scenic Drive in Georgetown, Texas, as the "Kile G. West Post Office Building," was considered, ordered to a third reading, read the third time, and passed.

**LAREDO VETERANS POST OFFICE**

The bill (H.R. 2325) to designate the facility of the United States Postal Service located at 1300 Matamoros Street in Laredo, Texas, as the "Laredo Veterans Post Office," was considered, ordered to a third reading, read the third time, and passed.

**GERALDINE FERRARO POST OFFICE BUILDING**

The bill (H.R. 774) to designate the facility of the United States Postal Service located at 46-02 21st Street in Long Island City, New York, as the "Geraldine Ferraro Post Office Building," was considered, ordered to a third reading, read the third time, and passed.

**JOHN SCOTT CHALLIS, JR. POST OFFICE**

The bill (H.R. 987) to designate the facility of the United States Postal Service located at 601 8th Street in Freedom, Pennsylvania, as the "John Scott Challis, Jr. Post Office," was considered, ordered to a third reading, read the third time, and passed.

**ELIJAH PAT LARKINS POST OFFICE BUILDING**

The bill (H.R. 1271) to designate the facility of the United States Postal Service located at 2351 West Atlantic Boulevard in Pompano Beach, Florida, as the "Elijah Pat Larkins Post Office Building," was considered, ordered to a third reading, read the third time, and passed.

**CAROLINE O'DAY POST OFFICE BUILDING**

The bill (H.R. 1397) to designate the facility of the United States Postal

Service located at 41 Purdy Avenue in Rye, New York, as the "Caroline O'Day Post Office Building," was considered, ordered to a third reading, read the third time, and passed.

**FREDERIC REMINGTON POST OFFICE BUILDING**

The bill (H.R. 2090) to designate the facility of the United States Postal Service located at 431 State Street in Ogdensburg, New York, as the "Frederic Remington Post Office Building," was considered, ordered to a third reading, read the third time, and passed.

**HERBERT A LITTLETON POSTAL STATION**

The bill (H.R. 2162) to designate the facility of the United States Postal Service located at 123 11th Avenue South in Nampa, Idaho, as the "Herbert A Littleton Postal Station," was considered, ordered to a third reading, read the third time, and passed.

Mr. SANDERS. I yield to the chairman, Senator KOHL.

Mr. KOHL. 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.

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

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

**AGRICULTURE, RURAL DEVELOPMENT, FOOD AND DRUG ADMINISTRATION, AND RELATED AGENCIES APPROPRIATIONS ACT, 2010—Continued**

Mrs. MCCASKILL. I rise for a minute to concur with the comments of my colleague from Vermont, Senator SANDERS.

I have spent some time on the phone over the last few weeks with dairy producers in Missouri. What is happening is heartbreaking. And in this economic downturn, it is hard to look everywhere we can be looking. One day, the car sector is grabbing our attention; another day, we are talking about what is going on in terms of utility costs for our constituents; another day, we are back talking about whether people can even afford health care. There are so many places we are trying to look and do what is necessary to get us through this rough patch.

Unfortunately, the independent producers do not have a whole lot of lobbyists out there. A lot of the big, multinational agricultural corporations have plenty of help. But the families I know, the families I have talked to, who are trying to continue to produce dairy products for this Nation in the family way and in the independent way, are really on the ropes.

I ask unanimous consent that I be added as a cosponsor to Senator SANDERS' amendment and that we remember