

We should have National Parks. We should have land that is set aside for public use. That is not the issue, but we are not taking care of what we currently have. The key issue is, what do we do with this program, and how do we reform it. As has already been mentioned, it is the key issue. If the Land and Water Conservation Fund has a reform, there are ways to be able to handle some of our deferred maintenance and the backlog that is there. If it doesn't have any reform at all, we are continuing to purchase new land, but one key thing that is in this as well, as it currently stands right now, the Land and Water Conservation continues to function. Nothing changes about it. The only thing that changes, as of tomorrow, is that we are not adding new dollars into it. Twenty billion dollars is already sitting in that fund, enough money to fund this program at current rates for 65 years'—65 years'—worth of savings that is already built up in this program. I think it is fairly safe at this point. Strangely enough, the Land and Water Conservation Fund is more stable than Social Security is.

So the argument is that there is some urgent emergency here to be able to take care of it, and to continue to add dollars to it without reform I think will not work. We need to reform this program. We need to manage carefully the land we have, and we can do that.

I would highly suggest that the committees continue to do their work to be able to continue to reform this program. With that, I would also join in the objection to extending it as it currently exists today.

I yield back the remainder of my time.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from New Mexico.

Mr. HEINRICH. Mr. President, my colleague from Utah purports to speak for westerners. I want to make it clear, he doesn't speak for New Mexico, he doesn't speak for me, he doesn't speak for my constituents, and he certainly doesn't speak for the businesses that write letters to me speaking about how the Land and Water Conservation Fund has benefited their businesses—particularly businesses that rely on tourism and outdoor recreation, that rely on places like the Valles Caldera National Preserve, that rely on places like the Rio Grande National Monument for their livelihood. The reason why, as westerners, I can take my kids out and go hunting on public land and the reason we can go camping and cut firewood to heat our homes is because of the public land the Land and Water Conservation Fund has provided in places like New Mexico.

We had a hearing in the Energy and Natural Resources Committee. If anything, what we heard is that we didn't need to reform this program; that, frankly, it was working better than just about any program in the Federal Government.

LWCF works. It has broad bipartisan support. It creates recreation jobs that

are key to Western States. LWCF buys from willing sellers in places that oftentimes reduce how much we spend on maintaining, protecting, and managing our Federal lands. Imagine in-holdings that make it harder for our foresters to manage wildfires and to protect and do the work. We need to do a better job of managing wildfires across the West.

So many of these issues that have been raised, particularly reform, are a red herring for what is truly an ideological opposition to the Land and Water Conservation Fund—a program that has put soccer fields and baseball diamonds in just about every little town across the United States. All of my counties, many of my cities, have benefited from sports fields specifically from this fund for decades now, as well as purchases like the new National Wildlife Refuge in Albuquerque's South Valley, the Valle de Oro National Wildlife Refuge, something the local community has enormous pride in. They had a friends group set up for this wildlife refuge before the refuge even existed.

So it is an indication of just how off base and out of the mainstream some of our conversations in Washington, DC, have become that we have this ideological opposition to the Land and Water Conservation Fund—a program that is actually working as it was designed to work and that has broad bipartisan support from one coast to the other in this Nation.

So I am disappointed in the actions of my colleagues. This issue is not going away. We have a strong coalition. We are going to continue to fight for the reauthorization of the Land and Water Conservation Fund. I would argue that we ought to stop taking money out of the Land and Water Conservation Fund and using it to cover other expenses within the general fund; that we should remain true to the concept of this fund as it was created back in the 1960s, under Secretary Udall, and return to a level of fiscal responsibility, where the money flowing into the Land and Water Conservation Fund actually benefits land and water.

With that, I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Oklahoma.

Mr. LANKFORD. Mr. President, I suggest the absence of a quorum.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will call the roll.

The legislative clerk proceeded to call the roll.

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

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

MORNING BUSINESS

Mr. MCCONNELL. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the Senate be in 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.

FEDERAL PERKINS LOAN PROGRAM

Mr. DURBIN. Mr. President, time is running out for the Senate to act to save the Federal Perkins Loan Program.

If we do nothing, this critical program that makes college affordable for 30,000 students per year in Illinois will expire at the end of the day.

Perkins was first authorized as part of the National Defense Education Act of 1958; and, unlike Federal student loans that we often think about, Perkins is a campus-based loan program.

Participating colleges and universities make low-interest federally subsidized loans to students with exceptional financial need.

The program also offers forgiveness and cancellation options to qualifying borrowers.

The real key to Perkins is the flexibility it offers to schools to provide financial aid to students to make up for gaps in costs that Pell or other financial aid may not cover.

If a student has an unexpected change in the financial situation of their family, say a parent loses a job, Perkins allows a college or university to step in and provide aid to that student to allow them to continue their studies.

The campus-based nature of the program means that students' individual financial needs can be met more effectively, and in my home State of Illinois, more than 150 institutions of higher education provide Perkins loans.

College presidents and financial aid administrators across Illinois have told me that without this key piece to the Federal financial aid puzzle, many students may be left behind, unable to afford a college education.

But it does not have to come to that.

The House sent us a bill passed with overwhelming bipartisan support that would extend this worthy program for another year.

I am disappointed that an attempt to take up and pass this House measure to continue the Perkins program was blocked today on the Senate floor.

Despite today's setback, I hope the Senate will still act to extend the Federal Perkins Loan Program and help keep college in reach for more than half a million students across the country who rely on this program.

BUDGETARY REVISIONS

Mr. ENZI. Mr. President, section 251 of the Balanced Budget and Emergency Deficit Control Act of 1985 establishes statutory limits on discretionary spending and allows for various adjustments to those limits, while section 302 and 314(a) of the Congressional Budget Act of 1974 allows the chairman of the Budget Committee to establish and make revisions to allocation, aggregates, and levels consistent with those adjustments. Today, the Senate passed