The Senate met at 12:01 p.m. and was called to order by the President pro tempore (Mr. THURMOND).

PRAYER

The Chaplain, Dr. Lloyd John Ogilvie, offered the following prayer:

Almighty God, we praise You for great Senators in each period of our Nation's history. And the Senate of the 106th Congress is certainly no exception. Thank you for our Senators who love You, seek Your best for our Nation, and are indefatigable in their efforts to lead with courage and vision. Over the years, You have impacted their consciences with Your Ten Commandments, Your truth, the guidance of Your Spirit, and vision for this Nation so clearly enabled by our founding fathers and mothers. Daily, refine their consciences. Purify them until they reflect the pure gold of Your character and Your priorities of righteousness, justice, and mercy. Then may their consciences guide their convictions, and may they always have the courage of these sacred convictions.

What we pray for the Senators we ask for the entire Senate family. May we all be one in asking You to develop in us a conscience saturated by Your absolutes and shaped by Your authority. To this end, Senators and all staff join in rededicating our lives to glorify You by serving our Nation. Amen.

PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

The Honorable STROM THURMOND, a Senator from the State of South Carolina, led the Pledge of Allegiance, as follows:

I pledge allegiance to the Flag of the United States of America, and to the Republic for which it stands, one nation under God, indivisible, with liberty and justice for all.

RECOGNITION OF THE ACTING MAJORITY LEADER

The President pro tempore. The able Senator from Alaska is recognized.

SCHEDULE

Mr. STEVENS. Mr. President, today by previous order the Senate will begin 1 hour of morning business to be followed by 2 hours of debate on S. 335, the Deceptive Mail Prevention and Enforcement Act regarding sweepstakes. The first rollocall vote today will occur at 5:30 p.m. on passage of the sweepstakes legislation. At 3 p.m. today, the Senate will resume consideration of the Agriculture appropriations bill. It is hoped that Senators who have amendments will work with the bill managers to schedule time to debate those amendments. Additional votes beyond the 5:30 vote could occur relative to the Agriculture appropriation bill. It is the intention of the majority leader to complete action on as many appropriations bills as possible before the August recess. Therefore, Senators should be prepared to vote into the evenings throughout this whole week.

1 thank my colleagues for their attention.

1 yield the floor.

MORNING BUSINESS

The President pro tempore. The able Senator from North Dakota is recognized.

Mr. DORGAN. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent to speak for 10 minutes in morning business under the time allocated to Senator DASCHLE. The President pro tempore. Without objection, it is so ordered. (Mr. STEVENS assumed the chair.)

FAMILY FARMING IN AMERICA

Mr. DORGAN. Mr. President, this afternoon at 3 o'clock we will begin debate on a farm disaster relief plan that will be offered by Senator HARKIN, myself, Senators CONRAD, DASCHLE, and others. I think this will be, for those of us from farm country, one of the most important pieces of legislation addressed by this Congress this year. I know that unless one lives on a family farm, it is probably pretty hard to describe the farm crisis, but I thought I would read a letter from my constituents in North Dakota.

Before I do, I am reminded of the story the former chairman of the House Agriculture Committee used to tell. Kika de la Garza was his name. He used to talk about agriculture and food by telling a story about nuclear submarines. He said he met with all these folks from the Defense Department and they told him about the wonders of these nuclear submarines the United States had. They told him about all of their provisions and all their fuel and their capabilities and their speed and their distance. And he said, well, how long can a nuclear submarine stay under the sea? And the admiral says: Until the food runs out. It was Kika de la Garza's way of pointing out that food, after all, is the essence of most of our existence, and we are a world, a rather fragile, large globe—as seen by those nuclear submarines. They do the things together in a community that we forget about sometimes in our country. What is it that makes this country work at its roots? It is entrepreneurship, it is family farming, it is a sense of community, and it is a sense of sharing. Here is a family farm. This woman says in her letter to me:

We aren't asking for a free ride, just the possibility of surviving. We are private people and we bear our pain alone, and we don't
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discuss the true situation out here on the farm. Family farm is not just a dream. Our neighbors are all in the same situation. The spirit of North Dakota will be gone with these people and their farms. We cannot survive without a reasonable income. How much longer will it be before people understand that we are trying to feed our family, and pay for basic necessities? But with today’s income we are not saving money for retirement. We are not going on trips. We are not enjoying any of the fruits from our labor. We are slowly but surely going broke.

A man who lives in southeastern North Dakota on the family farm says: It sometimes brings a tear to my eye that maybe in a year, maybe two years, I will not be around in family farming to matter any more. This won’t be easy to explain to my three young daughters. This is the first time I wanted to bring them up, in a rural setting of life that I was used to and that I understand. If it happens, I hope they read in their history books that it wasn’t because I was a dumb man. It was because it was caused by policy and giant concentration of companies who want dominance.

Or, from a woman named Susan whose letter I have read previously on this floor. She lost her husband, and she had to sell their family farm. Prices had collapsed.

I had an auction last week to sell the machinery so that I could pay off some of the debt that incurred after 25 years of farming. I have a 17-year-old son who would not help me prepare for auction and did not even get out of bed the day of the auction sale because he was heartbroken that he cannot continue to farm this land.

This is a 17-year-old boy who is not a bad boy. It is just that he could get out of bed to watch the auction sale of his farm because he couldn’t bear to see the loss of his dream and his family’s dream. He wanted to be a farmer as well.

She said: My husband was an excellent manager, fully equipped to farm the land as well as live in a big city. He had a job once with Motorola. He wanted to raise his children in a place with clean air, no crime, and good schools. They worked hard physically and emotionally to make this farm work. And its failure was no fault of his. Something is seriously wrong with our country when we will sacrifice the family farm for a political system and an entire way of life for hundreds of years.

Her point is that farmers at this point are not at fault for what is happening. The world is hungry. Most people need food. We raise it in great abundance, and family farmers are told that what they produce doesn’t matter.

I would like to use a couple of charts that show the dilemma that family farmers are facing not only in my State but around the country.

I show this chart because some people might wonder, well, what is all this farm crisis about? I ask anyone who looks at this chart—this chart shows prices received by farmers for wheat. Most of the farmers in my part of the world are wheat farmers. Put minimum wage in this chart, if this had happened with the minimum wage; put corporate

profits on this chart, if this had happened to corporate profits—what do you think that outcry would be? Put the same chart on this chart. If this had happened to congressional salaries, what would the outcry be?

This represents the income farmers are receiving from their products when the price of every other thing is increasing. This income received by farmers is collapsing.

For purposes of comparison, let me compare the price of corn and wheat with what farmers received for those commodities during the middle of the Great Depression. With the price adjusted over time, ask yourself: What do farmers get now relative to what they got during the Great Depression?

Take a look at it in 1998. These are the worst farm prices price adjusted for 50 years. Famines cannot make a living in this country in these circumstances.

I am tempted to go into a long discussion of so-called Freedom to Farm. I didn’t vote for it. It was a terrible piece of farm legislation. Some farms loved it. Some voted for it. Some still support it. Certainly it has a wonderful name.

It reminds me of the people early on who sold insurance. They called it “death insurance.” Many years ago they sold “death insurance.” Do you know something? Death insurance didn’t have a very good name for it. It didn’t sell very well. Nobody wanted to buy death insurance. So what did they do? They changed the name to “life insurance.” It is a better sounding name, and it sold much better.

So we had a farm bill called Freedom to Farm. What a nice sounding name with bankrupt policies that said family farming doesn’t matter much in whatever way it matters. This name has meaning with respect to agriculture.

There has never been a free market in agriculture, and never will be.

Do you think the European countries whose citizens have gone hungry will decide it doesn’t matter whether they have family farmers? They will never make that decision. They will always have a farm program that insists on price supports for families on the farms in Europe.

The point is that this country has decided by itself that family farming as a concept doesn’t matter to its future; that whatever the market decides is what our future shall be. If the market decides that corporate farms shall farm from California to Maine, so be it.

The problem with that is that all across this country we will have yardlights turned off and families leaving the farm. The economic arteries that they provide to the small towns will be boarded up, and those small towns will be boarded up. The people will be leaving small towns. We will see the collapse, the total collapse, of a rural lifestyle.

The author Critchfield, who was a wonderful, world-wide, world-renowned essayist who actually grew up in Fargo, ND, said that family values have always been nurtured on the family farms in this country, and the refreshing small towns rolled to the cities from many family farms. It was always a seedbed of family values of nurturing and helping and working together. We will lose all of that because some people say it doesn’t matter.

We are having a debate this afternoon on a farm bill. It is critical. This matters more than most people in this country will ever know. I hope that with my colleagues we can easily pass a disaster bill in the first step, and in the second that we can then pass a revision of the underlying farm bill, and say to farmers: You have a future. We want to provide you hope and help because we think you matter to our country.

Mr. President, I yield the floor.

Mrs. LINCOLN. Mr. President, I echo the words of my colleague.

I was raised on and continue to be a part of the seventh generation Arkansas family farm.

I think it is so important that we recognize this is an issue—those from other States, as well as farm States, agricultural-based States—and that we can impress upon our colleagues in Washington, D.C. the crisis that our small rural communities and our farming communities are going through.

I will certainly be joining the Senator later on this afternoon in that debate. We need to impress upon people that this is an issue for this country. It is not just agriculture; it is a heritage of this country and a heritage of our rural communities.

SAFE SCHOOLS ACT OF 1999

Mrs. LINCOLN. Mr. President, I rise to speak on what I think is the most critical as well as the most worthy of discussion that we should be dealing with in the Senate and the Congress; that is, the emotional well-being of our children. They are truly the fabric of the success of our Nation into the next century.

All too often we have been through incidents such as Jonesboro, AK, as well as Littleton, CO. We like to talk about them and discuss these issues and the crises that are going on in our children’s minds and in their souls. But all too often we talk about it, and we seem to forget it. We don’t do what we really need to be doing on behalf of our children in this country.

Mr. President, the Safe Schools Act of 1999 will provide resources to public schools so they can remain safe and strong cornerstones of our communities.

As we move into the 21st century, we must adapt our approach to education to meet the changing needs of students, teachers and parents in these communities.