

open personality, and remarkable compassion for people in need allowed my office to advocate successfully to open and to successfully complete the work on more than 100,000 individual cases throughout Massachusetts.

As my colleagues well know, constituent services are critical in serving the people of our States and they are sometimes the most thankless and the most difficult tasks we confront. Jeanette assembled and managed a team that continues to help people in search of housing, education opportunities, and nutritional assistance. She has also overseen many complex housing partnerships with the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development and State agencies, helping to bring quality, affordable housing to thousands of people throughout the State.

Jeanette is leaving to enjoy more time with her husband Perry, her son Tracey, and his sons, and the South End community she loves so dearly. Within the South End, she formed the Four Corners Neighborhood Association, which led to the construction of the Langham Court Apartments. This complex is a wonderful example of Jeanette's abilities and her commitment to improving her community. It has been recognized with awards for its architecture and innovative program of mixed-income housing. She is also deeply involved in the Roxbury Presbyterian Church where she serves as an elder, a trustee, a member of the choir, and a member of the renovation committee.

These words today—and I know my colleagues will share this sense for any long-term staff person who departs—cannot fully recognize Jeanette's contributions to the people of Massachusetts or the full extent of my personal appreciation for her time with me. Although she departs my staff tomorrow, the principles she has represented in her work will never leave; rather, they will do as Jeanette has done, which is to serve as a moral compass pointed toward a better world where a bright future is open and available to everyone in this country.

I am deeply grateful for her time with me, and I extend to her and Perry my very best wishes as they begin a wonderful new chapter in their lives.

I yield the floor.

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 President, I ask unanimous consent that the order for the quorum call be rescinded.

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

The Senator from Wisconsin.

THE NORTHEAST DAIRY COMPACT

Mr. KOHL. Mr. President, in the omnibus package that will be brought to

the floor sometime this evening, there are two pieces of legislation on dairy that I want to spend a couple of minutes discussing because I think they are unfair and very much not in the spirit of the American economic system.

One is the Northeast Dairy Compact. The Northeast Dairy Compact is an arrangement in which the New England States literally fix the price of milk in those seven States and no one can tamper with that price. It is the only price at which milk can be distributed from the farmer to the processor. In effect, it takes all the competition out of that product in that State, in all the New England States. We have never done that before in this country. It is contrary to everything that is represented by the economic system in the United States.

The reason why we have such a great country in part is because our economic system provides that anybody with a good idea to develop a product or a service has an unfettered opportunity in all 50 States to market that product. That is what has made America great: competition. That is why we have full employment, the best economy in the world, and an economy that can compete anywhere in the world and succeed. That is because in this country we say: In order to get your share of market, you have to be able to provide the best product at the best price and market it in the best way. There are no restrictions in the 50 States to do that. That has been true since the United States of America was originated.

The northeast dairy cartel is in contrast to that. There is nothing about the cartel that is American in terms of how we do business. There is something else about that. They say, and I have heard this from some of the leaders in the northeast: Can't we just have our cartel? After all, it represents only a fraction of the milk market in the country. Why can't we just have our cartel? But, obviously, if they can have their cartel, then everybody can have a cartel. What stops us from having a Southeast cartel or a Southwest cartel? What stops us from having a Southern cotton cartel? What stops us from having a Midwest corn cartel or a Plains States wheat cartel? If a cartel makes sense in any form, then it makes sense not only in the New England States and not only for milk; it makes sense anywhere, conceivably, and for any product.

Now I ask the question: Does the Senate want to go on record as favoring this type of economic policy? I think we all know the answer is not yes. Nobody has defended this to me, even though it is coming tonight. Nobody has defended it to me. I talked with the leaders in the Senate. I asked them to explain why we should have this kind of legislation in the omnibus

bill. I tell you, not a leader, not a single Senator, has explained to me and defended in any way that makes sense the idea of price-fixing cartels. Yet here it comes.

I am told it is coming because promises have been made and arrangements have already occurred, and so on and so forth. On something as important as this, which is price-fixing cartels, it seems to me that saying "promises have been made," and "it has been passed in the House," or "it is too late," or whatever, does not make any sense. May I also say I have been in dialog with the leaders in the Senate for months on this, so this is not a surprise. So here we are with this piece of legislation.

Then we also have this milk pricing policy which, as you all know, arbitrates that the farther you are from Wisconsin in this country, the more you get for your milk if you are a dairy farmer. We all know, again, this was set up 50 or 60 years ago when there was no refrigeration to transport milk and they wanted to encourage the development of the dairy industry. So we provided incentives for dairy farmers at points distant from Wisconsin to develop the dairy industry and to circumvent the need for refrigerated transportation. That is no longer true.

So what we are trying to do is not to eliminate that price differential because that would be too big a step to take at once. We are trying to reduce the price differential—not eliminate it, reduce it. USDA has come up with a program and 97 percent of the farmers in this country have voted for the change in the present milk pricing program. I am not suggesting we need to eliminate the price differential at this time. But let's accept the reduction of the price differential in view of the fact that the present system is archaic and makes no sense.

Again, coming over from the House is legislation that continues to mandate that the old Depression-era pricing system be continued. May I also say the present system, both with respect to the Northeast Dairy Compact and the pricing system, was mandated to conclude on October 1, and we would put in a new system. But before October 1, there was a Federal judge in Vermont who challenged that kind of outcome. So right now it is tied up in the courts and nothing is going to happen. The present system will stay until at least the courts rule on the validity of a new system.

So I suggested, and many have suggested, there be no dairy language in the omnibus; just don't say anything and let's let this thing roll because it is tied up in the courts now anyhow, and we can discuss it next year.

No, promises have been made. People have been won over in one way or another. Other agendas are on the table. So today it comes in an omnibus bill,

with the Northeast Dairy Compact renewed. Price fixing cartels, does any Senator want to vote for that? Price fixing cartels, not just for the Northeast, because if you accept it in the Northeast you accept it elsewhere; not just on milk, because a cartel is not uniquely suited to milk. It can be on any other commodity anywhere.

Does the Senate want to go on record as supporting price fixing cartels in this country? Do we want to tear up the American economy in that way? That comes in the omnibus tonight. We are going to vote on that.

We are also going to vote on going back to the old milk marketing price system which, again, is totally outmoded. The USDA has come up with a new system. I am very upset, obviously, and I am obviously going to fight that omnibus bill to its conclusion in any way I can, to filibuster it and to require everything be done to demonstrate to us and to the American people that there is a giant bill coming down the pike which has at least an element in it which is not acceptable, in my judgment, to how America is supposed to function.

We are also considering a continuing resolution that will be brought to the floor momentarily, I understand. Of course, one of the options we have is to vote against a continuing resolution, which would, in effect, shut down the Government at midnight tonight. I could object to the CR and the Government would shut down. That is something I had considered. But if we do that or if I do that, obviously, it is a huge step, and there are many tens of thousands of people who would be out of a job, with enormous dislocations all across our country. It is a huge step one does not take easily. It is not a step I want to take. It is not a step I am going to take because I do not think it represents responsible action on my part. If some of the other people in this body want to act in a way I consider to be irresponsible and challenge me to be irresponsible—I am not an irresponsible person. Shutting down the Government is a huge, huge decision. One does not take it lightly. I am not going to make that decision over this issue.

But I do want to point out to my colleagues that some strong-arm tactics are at work here. Allowing price fixing cartels is a bad thing for this country. I very much hope we can and will find a way to undo the damage of price fixing cartels in an outmoded milk marketing system in the very near future.

Having said that, I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The majority leader is recognized.

UNANIMOUS CONSENT
AGREEMENT

Mr. LOTT. Mr. President, there are a number of issues we are working on,

but we have one unanimous consent request with regard to the loan guarantee for the satellite local situation we have worked out.

I ask unanimous consent that no later than March 30, 2000, if no Senate committee has reported a bill limited to providing loan guarantees to establish local television service to rural areas by satellite and other means, the Republican leader, or his designee, or the Democratic leader, or his designee, be recognized to introduce a bill limited to sections 2002, 2003, 2004, and 2006 of the conference report accompanying H.R. 1554 providing such loan guarantees, and that the Senate immediately begin consideration of the bill with relevant first-degree amendments in order and second-degree amendments that are relevant to the first-degree amendment proposed to be amended. Further, that if legislation is reported that is limited to such loan guarantees, it be considered on or before March 30 and be open to relevant amendments as provided above. Further, that upon disposition of all amendments, the bill be read a third time and passed, with no intervening action.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Is there objection?

Mr. DASCHLE. Reserving the right to object.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from South Dakota.

Mr. DASCHLE. Mr. President, I compliment the majority leader. This is the result of ongoing discussions we have had for some time. I appreciate very much the involvement and the work done by the distinguished Senator from Montana. This accomplishes much of what we hoped we could do. It is not everything. I am very hopeful we can get this done before April 1, but the majority leader has made as strong a commitment to me personally, and I am sure he is prepared to do it on the record, that he will work with us to accomplish the objectives laid out in this unanimous consent agreement.

I appreciate, as well, the cooperation of the distinguished Banking Committee chairman, and I believe as a result of the effort we have been able to demonstrate in getting to this point, we will achieve our goal. We cannot leave rural America out. We will have an opportunity to provide service to them. This will give us the vehicle to make that happen. So I do not object.

Mr. BAUCUS. Reserving the right to object.

Mr. LOTT. Mr. President, before the Senator reserves the right to object, I want to add my own personal comments rather than just the dry UC that I gave.

I, too, commend and thank the other Senator from Montana, Mr. BURNS, for his efforts in this area and for his tenacity. In fact, this very day, he ruined my lunch talking to me about this issue. I know Senator BAUCUS believes very strongly in it.

It is not just a Montana issue. This is important in South Dakota and this is important in Mississippi. This is important nationwide. If we are going to get this satellite local-to-local service in these smaller markets, we have to have this opportunity, but we want to make sure it is a loan guarantee that will work, that is actually going to do the job, that is not in some way going to improperly benefit any one individual or group of individuals, for that matter, and that it has been carefully thought through.

Again, I am absolutely determined to get this done. I will not only live up to this UC, which I have to, but I will do it with a great deal of vigor and activity.

I thank the Senator from Texas for his willingness to focus on this and get it done by a date certain and make sure he and other committees have added to it to make sure we do it right.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Montana is recognized.

Mr. BAUCUS. Mr. President, I earlier objected to bringing up the continuing resolution because I felt it made much more sense to include the loan guarantee along with the other provisions in the omnibus bill that will be taken up later providing for local-to-local satellite network service.

I thank the Senator from Mississippi, as well as my colleague from Montana. I have been working with my colleague today to figure out some way to lock in even more having loan guarantees passed by this body and by the other body.

The other body has made a similar commitment in a colloquy about 2 hours ago to make sure this is passed so rural viewers of America have the opportunity to have local satellite service.

I compliment my friend from Montana for working so hard on this. He has worked very hard, as well as others. I am not going to hold up the continuing resolution to shut down the Government. In the whole scheme of things, we have our own priorities and know what the priorities should be. But it is important to get this provision in here because it does make it even more certain we are going to get this loan guarantee provision passed in the next year.

I thank the majority leader. He has been very gracious in working this out, as well as the chairman of the Appropriations Committee, who I know wants to work this out as well, and my good friend from Montana. I also thank the Banking Committee chairman. He has been very helpful.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. There is a unanimous consent request before the Senate. Is there objection?

Mr. BURNS. Reserving the right to object, and I will not object, this is a compromise to facilitate the passage of this omnibus bill. We have worked a