

The Senate may not be able to unilaterally agree upon exactly what should be done to assist family farmers this year, but I think we can probably agree that the administration's proposal is off base and, most frankly, out of touch with real America. It does not accomplish the goals that they want to accomplish of saving the small and medium-sized farmers and not helping the well-off farmer.

So I look forward to working with my constituents, various agricultural groups, commodity groups, and my colleagues in Congress to give family farmers the economic security that they deserve.

I yield the floor.

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 President, I ask unanimous consent that the order for the quorum call be rescinded.

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

Mr. WELLSTONE. Mr. President, I thank my colleague from Wyoming for his graciousness. I will take 3 minutes at the most. I appreciate him giving me some Republican time for this.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection, the Senator is recognized for 3 minutes.

THE CAPITOL HILL POLICE

Mr. WELLSTONE. Mr. President, I have made a commitment that I would come to the floor every day to speak about the Capitol Hill police but also about the public. Again, I want to repeat what I have said the last couple of days. As did many of my colleagues, I went to the service for officers Chestnut and Gibson. It was an unbelievably horrible and painful time—first of all, for their families. I do believe, at that time and since then, we made a commitment for our police officers, and for that matter for the public, that we would do everything we possibly could—albeit nothing is 100-percent effective—to make sure such a tragedy would never happen again.

I have come to the floor several times to point out that at too many posts, or at least at some times at some of our posts, we only have one officer. When you have lots of people coming in and you have one officer, if, God forbid, you have somebody who is deranged, that officer is in real peril and so is the public.

I know we have made the commitment over and over again to have two officers at every post. I am not pretending to be the expert as to all the budgets, where the money has been spent, but I know this: We can do better by the Capitol Hill police officers, and we should. We can do better by the

public. Whatever it takes, we need to honor our commitment and we need to make sure we have the necessary resources so we have two officers at these posts.

There are many other issues. I am not going to get involved in these other issues because I am not the expert. I know what I have observed. I know the police officers with whom I have talked. I know the commitment we made to these police officers. So I am going to continue to speak about this a couple of minutes every day. I am hoping the appropriators and others will come through.

I thank my colleague from Wyoming. I think all of us are in agreement on this; I believe this is not a Democrat or Republican debate at all.

So I thank my colleague from Wyoming and yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Mr. KYL). The Senator from Wyoming.

Mr. THOMAS. Mr. President, I believe this next hour is allocated to the majority party, is that correct?

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator is correct.

Mr. THOMAS. Mr. President, we are pleased to have a little time to talk about some of the issues that will come up, some of the issues that are on the agenda and some that are not. I appreciate the comments of my friend from Minnesota. Certainly that is an issue we are all interested in, and I appreciate the effort he is making on that.

Mr. WELLSTONE. I thank my colleague.

THIS YEAR'S AGENDA

Mr. THOMAS. Mr. President, in this coming session—which is going to be relatively short, as it always is on election years, but particularly this year—we have to focus if we intend to accomplish things. I hope we do. As is often the case in election years, there are times when people are more interested in creating the issue than they are in resolving the issue. I think we will see a considerable amount of that, of course, going out towards the Presidential election and trying to find the issues the party will be for—which is all part of the system. But I am hopeful we can concentrate and focus on the issues that we think are most important.

We have had some experience, unfortunately in the last several weeks, and certainly even last year, that quite often the minority chose to bring up issues they knew would not be resolved but brought them up continuously to diffuse the issues on which we have been working. In this body, that is easy. One person very readily can hold up things, unless we can get 60 votes to do something different.

In any event, I am hopeful that will not be the case. We are going to focus on some things that we have decided

upon. This will be more refined as time goes on, but certainly education will be one. The issue of education, of course, is not whether we try to improve it, but how we fund those improvements. I do not believe that we should have one-size-fits-all regulations that come from some bureaucracy in Washington. We should distribute our education funding in a manner that allows the States and local school boards to make those decisions.

Certainly the needs in Pinedale, WY, are going to be different than in Philadelphia. That is as it should be. We need to allow for this type of flexibility.

Another area that we will be focusing on is health care. We did some work last year on strengthening Medicare, doing something particularly in rural areas so outpatient care can be better financed. We intend to continue to do that, at the same time doing whatever is necessary to ensure Medicare continues to provide the benefits it is designed to provide.

Certainly one of the issues that will be difficult and controversial, yet I think most people want to do something about, is providing the opportunity for everyone to have pharmaceuticals available if they cannot afford them; hopefully to protect the programs we have now, to encourage and in fact assist people who now get their own supplementals, but be able to help those people who are not able to do that.

Social Security will continue to be an area of great concern. We have made some progress in not spending Social Security money in the operational budget. However, that is not all that is necessary. If the young people who will start making Social Security payments at their first job can expect some benefits 30, 40, 50 years from now, then things will have to be done differently. Obviously, we have alternatives. We can increase taxes—but not many people are for that. Social Security payments are one of the highest taxes many people pay in the United States. We could reduce benefits—again, there is not much support for that. Or we could, indeed, increase the return on the money that is in a trust. We think that is an excellent idea, to provide individual accounts so at least a portion of the money that is in the fund would belong to you and belong to me. I suspect people over 50 or so would not see any difference, but younger people would have an account that would be theirs and, indeed, could be invested in equities for a much better return.

So, along with reducing the debt, those are some of the things, with which we will be involved.

GUN CONTROL

Mr. THOMAS. Mr. President, unfortunately, one of the issues that continues to show up and seems to have