

of lots of forest fires, which, of course, have been very destructive. We need to take a long look at that, starting, of course, in commending the people who have worked so hard and risked so much to be able to control those fires and have done the very best job that could be done.

On the other hand, we have to take a look at the policy that has to do with the control and the management of resources, in this case particularly the management of forests. I submit to you there does need to be management; unless we want nature's way of reducing forests by fire, then we have to do it in some other ways that can be used. So I do hope we will have an opportunity there, of course, to not only take a look at the necessary funding that will be required in order to give the utmost protection to those activities, but also to seek to avoid this kind of repetition in the future.

We will be talking, of course, about normal trade relations with the People's Republic of China and additionally, shortly thereafter, WTO entry for Taiwan. I hope both of those things can happen, and happen shortly. We have postponed this activity for a very long time.

I think most people understand that if we are going to move forward in today's world, we are going to have to move forward to seek to make some changes in mainland China. The best way to do that is to have some rules laid out for them to be part of a world organization, such as the WTO, and begin to move forward to increase the number of changes that have, indeed, been made there.

I think that is very important. It is very important for our economy, but probably more so, it is important for the kinds of things we would like to have take place in China with regard to human rights, with regard to economic freedom, which are things we want to have happen today. So we will be moving forward certainly on that.

We will have an opportunity to take another look at tax reductions for the taxpayers of this country in a couple of areas that seem to me to be largely based on fairness. For example, the marriage penalty, it is really very difficult to understand how we can be opposed to making that fair. Two people who are single, if you combine their incomes, are at a certain level, but if they were married, with the same level of income, they would pay more income taxes. That does not seem to be right. Fairness ought to be one of the areas vital to taxation.

The same could be applied to the estate tax. As I suggested, our State of Wyoming has lots of small businesses, lots of farm and ranch families who have spent their lives—as did their predecessors—developing these kinds of assets. Under present law, when those assets are subject to the death tax, we

find they have to sell those lands in order to make it work out.

Mr. President, I sense that you are about ready to rap the gavel, as you should. I just end by saying I hope we can address ourselves to the issues that are out there and not put ourselves off creating issues rather than resolving them. It seems to me that is our challenge. We have the opportunity to do that in the next several weeks.

Mr. President, I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Chair recognizes the Senator from North Dakota.

ISSUES BEFORE THE 106TH CONGRESS

Mr. DORGAN. Mr. President, my colleague, the Senator from Wyoming, said we have a lot to do. He is certainly correct, we have a lot to do in about a 5-week sprint to the end of this 106th Congress.

I think all of us aspired to come to this Chamber because we want to get things done for the American people. We want this country to be successful and to grow and prosper. We want to address real problems.

My hope is that we can find ways, between the political aisles, where Republicans and Democrats can agree that there are things that need to be done in this country and that we can do them together. I think that would be a refreshing thing for the American people to see.

In the final 5 or 6 weeks of this Congress, we could probably take some advice from the Robert Frost poem, "Stopping By Woods On A Snowy Evening," where Robert Frost says:

The woods are lovely, dark, and deep,
But I have promises to keep,
And miles to go before I sleep,
And miles to go before I sleep.

We have miles to go before we put this 106th Congress to bed.

What are these issues that we must deal with before we finally adjourn this Congress?

A Patients' Bill of Rights. We have had so much discussion about the Patients' Bill of Rights in this Congress, and yet the Patients' Bill of Rights languishes in a conference. Month after month after month, nothing gets done. I know people have come to the floor of the Senate and have said: Gee, we are making progress. But I say the difference between this conference committee and a glacier is at least a glacier moves an inch or so every decade. This conference committee is not able to make progress on a Patients' Bill of Rights.

It seems to me, in the Senate and the House we must say to this conference: We want to have a real Patients' Bill of Rights brought to the floor of the Senate and the House and passed.

I have told stories in relation to this on the floor of the Senate. It is prob-

ably useful to recount at least one story again as an example of why we need a Patients' Bill of Rights.

A woman fell off a cliff in the Shendoah mountains. After having fallen off the cliff, she was rendered unconscious, with broken bones, with a concussion. Being unconscious, she was taken by ambulance to an emergency room in a hospital. She was rolled in on a gurney, unconscious. She survived. She had very significant injuries, but she survived.

Following that ordeal, she was released from the hospital to be told that her emergency room expenses would not be covered by the managed care organization because she did not have prior approval for emergency room treatment.

This is someone who was hauled into the emergency room on a gurney, unconscious. She was in a coma. She was told by the insurance company: You did not have prior approval for emergency room treatment.

The Patients' Bill of Rights is very simple. It says: A patient ought to have the right to know all of their medical options for treatment, not just the cheapest. A patient ought to have the right to emergency room treatment when they have an emergency. There are a whole series of rights that patients ought to have when dealing with their managed care organization.

There was the woman who cried one day at a hearing that I held with my colleague from Nevada as she held up a picture of her 16-year-old son who had died. She told us that on her son's deathbed he said to her: Mom, how can they do this to a kid like me? Through tears, she held up the picture of her young son who had died who had said: Mom, how can they do this to a kid like me?

That situation had forced this kid and his family to fight the insurance company to get the treatment he needed. They failed. He died. This was a kid who was told to fight cancer and fight the insurance company at the same time. That is unfair. That is not a fair fight.

You ought not have to fight cancer and your managed care organization to get the treatment you need. That is the point. We need to pass a real Patients' Bill of Rights. We have not done that. There are lots of excuses for it, but we need to get it done. We need to get it done now.

We need to add a prescription drug benefit for senior citizens on the Medicare program. We all know that. If we were to write the Medicare program today, there is no question we would have a prescription drug benefit in the program. But 30 years ago, 40 years ago when the Medicare program was created, most of the lifesaving drugs we have today did not exist. They do now. Each senior citizen needs access to those drugs.

Last year, the cost of prescription drugs increased 16 percent in this country. All too often the prescription drugs—the miracle drugs—they need are out of their reach because of their inability to pay for them. We need to add a prescription drug benefit to the Medicare program. We can do that, and should do that.

We ought to raise the minimum wage. The folks at the bottom of the economic ladder in this country have not kept up. We need to help them as well. Increasingly, they are women trying to raise families in single-parent households. We need to increase the minimum wage. We should do that. We can do that.

We ought to write a new farm bill. Everybody understands the current farm bill has failed. My feeling is, if we have the opportunity—and we should have the opportunity—in this Congress to write a new farm bill, we ought to be able to provide a decent safety net for those out there on America's farms who are struggling to make a living.

These issues and others—school modernization, fixing what is wrong in education—all of these things we can do, and should do. We only have 5 or 6 weeks remaining. I hope all of us, in the spirit of bipartisanship, can decide these are the issues, these are the things that are important to the American people, these are the things that will strengthen our country.

Yes, we have miles to go before we sleep, but we have the opportunity, in this setting, in this democracy, to make these decisions for the benefit of the American people.

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Mr. THOMAS). The Senator's time has expired.

Mr. DORGAN. Mr. President, I yield the floor.

ORDER OF PROCEDURE

Mr. ENZI. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that at 2:15 Senator HELMS be recognized for up to 15 minutes to be followed by Senator CRAIG for up to 1 hour, to be followed by Senator HOLLINGS for up to 1 hour. I further ask that Senator KENNEDY be recognized for up to 30 minutes during today's session.

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

WYOMING v. AUBURN

Mr. ENZI. Mr. President, it is good to be back in the Chamber again. I have enjoyed a month of traveling around Wyoming. I know that our entire delegation was there on a number of occasions. We met at different places across the State as we listened to the people of the State to see what sorts of things they felt were important to our State and our Nation.

I have to mention that at the end of that trip, of course, there was some

football. We are back in that season again. I have to explain the tie that I am wearing today. It is probably bright enough for anybody in the Chamber to be able to read it. Last Thursday night, the opening game for the University of Wyoming Cowboys and the Auburn War Eagles took place on ESPN. Many people might have seen it. I have to say that the Auburn Tigers—now called the War Eagles—were extremely impressive. It, obviously, is an educational institution of higher learning, and they did teach Wyoming a few lessons. At the end of the game, Wyoming almost came back. They got a little overconfident and they got one touchdown behind and wound up losing. Therefore, today, I will be wearing an Auburn tie and making some comments about the fine program they have at Auburn.

I did get to teach part of an MBA class for executives who came in from all over the United States to learn about the business of this country and how to better perform in business. It is a rather unique class. It has wider participation than most, and people are required to have 8 years of experience before they can take the class. So it was a different level of master of business administration candidates than a person normally gets to talk to—again, absorbing some of the lessons they are learning through the questions that they ask.

I was very impressed with the university and the special programs they are offering. Of course, I had to be very impressed with their team. I am now one of the biggest supporters of Auburn outside of the State of Alabama, hoping they go undefeated in the rest of the season, helping Wyoming in their power index and, of course, I hope Wyoming doesn't lose another game this year. I am confident, because of the level of competition involved in this game, that that will be the case. I am proud of the players at the University of Wyoming, and I look forward to a very entertaining year, as well as one of great production as they learn their lessons so they can be the ones who take over the jobs of this country.

COMPLETING THE WORK OF THE SENATE

Mr. ENZI. Mr. President, I have to add a few comments to what was previously said about needing to move forward because I sincerely believe we need to move forward with the work of the Senate.

The biggest work we have before us is finishing the appropriations bills—\$1.7 trillion of spending—and we ought to spend a few minutes debating that. If you will recall, before we left, one of the difficulties we were having was even getting the opportunity to debate those bills; There were filibusters prohibiting the right to debate the bills—extremely long filibusters. That was

debate in itself, but it didn't allow the work of the Senate to proceed to appropriate the \$1.7 trillion. We need to pass the bills, get them brought up; we need to have them discussed and have relevant amendments put on the bills. We need to get that work out of the way first.

I can't help but comment a little on the Patients' Bill of Rights. The conference committee has been working on that. They were making great progress until it looked as if it might not be an issue anymore. Then it was brought up for a vote again and again using the original version, not the compromise version that had been worked out over a long period of very difficult work.

So we have a choice: We can have issues or we can have solutions. It just takes the two sides getting together and moving forward.

I yield the floor and 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. DURBIN. 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. DURBIN. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent to speak for 5 minutes in morning business.

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

THE SENATE'S RESOLVE

Mr. DURBIN. The Senate and House will be returning to business this week in Washington, DC. The important question is, What did we learn in August?

As we went home to our States and spoke to families across Illinois and other States represented in this body, the question was whether the Members of the U.S. Senate will return with the resolve to do something.

You see, for the last several years, the Senate has done virtually nothing when it comes to the important issues facing working families across America. The families I met in Illinois during the month of August were, I guess, almost unanimous in their belief that this Congress should waste no time in enacting a meaningful prescription drug benefit under Medicare. I no longer have to give the speech about Medicare and prescription drugs. The audience gives it to me. They say: Senator, did you know if you cross the border and go into Canada, you can buy the same drugs at half the price? I say: Yes, I was about to tell you that. They say: Did you know people are paying more if they are elderly or disabled than virtually any other group in America? I say: Yes, I was about to tell you that, too.