

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.