

What can we do to address this problem? Can we address this problem? Of course, we can address this problem. Both the next President and the Congress must pursue a comprehensive energy policy that decreases our reliance on foreign oil by increasing the safe, environmentally sound production of our domestic oil and gas resources and by developing a more diversified supply of energy sources.

The answer is not, as Vice President GORE recommended yesterday, to tap into the Strategic Petroleum Reserve. These 570 million barrels were set aside to deal with severe disruptions in oil supply caused by war or other national emergencies.

The strategic reserve was not created to make up for 8 years of inattention from the Clinton-Gore administration or to make up for the detrimental impact their policies have had on domestic production. The Vice President himself acknowledged in February this statement when he said it would be a "bad idea"—his words—to tap into the strategic reserve. And so has the President's Secretary of the Treasury, Mr. Summers; as has the Chairman of the Federal Reserve, Mr. Greenspan.

Furthermore, opening up the strategic reserve will not do anything to address the shortage of home heating oil. Why? The strategic reserve consists of crude oil. It would need to be refined into heating oil, and our refineries are already running at full capacity. If we still had the 36 refineries that were shut down over the last 8 years of this administration, then we might be able to refine that extra oil from the strategic reserve, but it does nothing to help our current situation. It is bad policy, shortsighted policy.

In addition to augmenting domestic oil production, the United States must explore other future energy options that will reduce other foreign oil dependency. Our Nation's future is directly connected to energy capacity. If we fail this great challenge, our children and history will judge us harshly and we will leave the world more dangerous than we found it. That is not our heritage. That is not our destiny. It will require bold, forceful, intelligent new leadership. That is America's heritage. That is America's destiny.

Mr. President, I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The distinguished majority leader.

Mr. LOTT. Mr. President, I commend the Senator from Nebraska for his remarks. He certainly is making points that need to be made. I am sure we are going to hear a lot more about it in the next few days. I thank him for wrapping up his remarks at this point so that we may proceed with a number of business items before we go out for the week.

CONCLUSION OF MORNING BUSINESS

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Morning business is closed.

IMMIGRATION AND NATIONALITY ACT AMENDMENTS—MOTION TO PROCEED

Mr. LOTT. Mr. President, I call for regular order with respect to the H-1B bill.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will report the motion.

The assistant legislative clerk read as follows:

A motion to proceed to the bill (S. 2045) to amend the Immigration and Nationality Act with respect to H-1B nonresidential aliens.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The question is now on agreeing to the motion.

The motion was agreed to.

AMERICAN COMPETITIVENESS IN THE TWENTY-FIRST CENTURY ACT OF 2000

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Mr. DOMENICI). The clerk will now report the bill by title.

The legislative clerk read as follows:

A bill (S. 2045) to amend the Immigration and Nationality Act with respect to H-1B nonimmigrant aliens bill.

There being no objection, the Senate proceeded to consider the bill, which had been reported from the Committee on the Judiciary, with an amendment to strike all after the enacting clause and inserting in lieu thereof the following:

SECTION 1. SHORT TITLE.

This Act may be cited as the "American Competitiveness in the Twenty-first Century Act of 2000".

SEC. 2. TEMPORARY INCREASE IN VISA ALLOTMENTS.

In addition to the number of aliens who may be issued visas or otherwise provided nonimmigrant status under section 101(a)(15)(H)(i)(b) (8 U.S.C. 1101(a)(15)(H)(i)(b)), the following number of aliens may be issued such visas or otherwise provided such status for each of the following fiscal years:

- (1) 80,000 for fiscal year 2000;
- (2) 87,500 for fiscal year 2001; and
- (3) 130,000 for fiscal year 2002.

SEC. 3. SPECIAL RULE FOR UNIVERSITIES, RESEARCH FACILITIES, AND GRADUATE DEGREE RECIPIENTS.

Section 214(g) of the Immigration and Nationality Act (8 U.S.C. 1184(g)) is amended by adding at the end the following new paragraphs:

"(5) The numerical limitations contained in paragraph (1)(A)(iii) shall not apply to any nonimmigrant alien issued a visa or otherwise provided status under section 101(a)(15)(H)(i)(b)—

"(A) who is employed (or has received an offer of employment) at—

"(i) an institution of higher education (as defined in section 101(a) of the Higher Education Act of 1965 (20 U.S.C. 1001(a))), or a related or affiliated nonprofit entity; or

"(ii) a nonprofit research organization or a governmental research organization; or

"(B) for whom a petition is filed not more than 90 days before or not more than 180 days after the nonimmigrant has attained a master's degree or higher degree from an institution of higher education (as defined in section 101(a) of the Higher Education Act of 1965 (20 U.S.C. 1001(a)))."

"(6) Any alien who ceases to be employed by an employer described in paragraph (5)(A) shall, if employed as a nonimmigrant alien described in section 101(a)(15)(H)(i)(b), be counted toward the numerical limitations contained in paragraph (1)(A)(iii) the first time the alien is employed by an employer other than one described in paragraph (5)(A)."

SEC. 4. LIMITATION ON PER COUNTRY CEILING WITH RESPECT TO EMPLOYMENT-BASED IMMIGRANTS.

(a) SPECIAL RULES.—Section 202(a) (8 U.S.C. 1152(a)) is amended by adding at the end the following new paragraph:

"(5) RULES FOR EMPLOYMENT-BASED IMMIGRANTS.—

"(A) EMPLOYMENT-BASED IMMIGRANTS NOT SUBJECT TO PER COUNTRY LIMITATION IF ADDITIONAL VISAS AVAILABLE.—If the total number of visas available under paragraph (1), (2), (3), (4), or (5) of section 203(b) for a calendar quarter exceeds the number of qualified immigrants who may otherwise be issued such visas, the visas made available under that paragraph shall be issued without regard to the numerical limitation under paragraph (2) of this subsection during the remainder of the calendar quarter.

"(B) LIMITING FALL ACROSS FOR CERTAIN COUNTRIES SUBJECT TO SUBSECTION (e).—In the case of a foreign state or dependent area to which subsection (e) applies, if the total number of visas issued under section 203(b) exceeds the maximum number of visas that may be made available to immigrants of the state or area under section 203(b) consistent with subsection (e) (determined without regard to this paragraph), in applying subsection (e) all visas shall be deemed to have been required for the classes of aliens specified in section 203(b)."

(b) CONFORMING AMENDMENTS.—

(1) Section 202(a)(2) (8 U.S.C. 1152(a)(2)) is amended by striking "paragraphs (3) and (4)" and inserting "paragraphs (3), (4), and (5)".

(2) Section 202(e)(3) (8 U.S.C. 1152(e)(3)) is amended by striking "the proportion of the visa numbers" and inserting "except as provided in subsection (a)(5), the proportion of the visa numbers".

(c) ONE-TIME PROTECTION UNDER PER COUNTRY CEILING.—Notwithstanding section 214(g)(4) of the Immigration and Nationality Act, any alien who—

(1) is the beneficiary of a petition filed under section 204(a) for a preference status under paragraph (1), (2), or (3) of section 203(b); and

(2) would be subject to the per country limitations applicable to immigrants under those paragraphs but for this subsection,

may apply for, and the Attorney General may grant, an extension of such nonimmigrant status until the alien's application for adjustment of status has been processed and a decision made thereon.

SEC. 5. INCREASED PORTABILITY OF H-1B STATUS.

(a) IN GENERAL.—Section 214 of the Immigration and Nationality Act (8 U.S.C. 1184) is amended by adding at the end the following new subsection:

"(m)(1) A nonimmigrant alien described in paragraph (2) who was previously issued a visa or otherwise provided nonimmigrant status under section 101(a)(15)(H)(i)(b) is authorized to accept new employment upon the filing by the prospective employer of a new petition on behalf of such nonimmigrant as provided under subsection (a). Employment authorization shall

continue for such alien until the new petition is adjudicated. If the new petition is denied, employment authorization shall cease.

“(2) A nonimmigrant alien described in this paragraph is a nonimmigrant alien—

“(A) who has been lawfully admitted into the United States;

“(B) on whose behalf an employer has filed a nonfrivolous application for new employment or extension of status before the date of expiration of the period of stay authorized by the Attorney General; and

“(C) who has not been employed without authorization in the United States before or during the pendency of such petition for new employment.”.

(b) EFFECTIVE DATE.—The amendment made by subsection (a) shall apply to petitions filed before, on, or after the date of enactment of this Act.

SEC. 6. EXTENSION OF AUTHORIZED STAY IN CASES OF LENGTHY ADJUDICATIONS.

(a) EXEMPTION FROM LIMITATION.—The limitation contained in section 214(g)(4) of the Immigration and Nationality Act with respect to the duration of authorized stay shall not apply to any nonimmigrant alien previously issued a visa or otherwise provided nonimmigrant status under section 101(a)(15)(H)(i)(b) of the Immigration and Nationality Act on whose behalf a petition under section 204(b) to accord the alien immigrant status under section 203(b), or an application for adjustment of status under section 245 to accord the alien status under section 203(b), has been filed, if 365 days or more have elapsed since the filing of a labor certification application on the alien's behalf, if required for the alien to obtain status under section 203(b), or the filing of the petition under section 204(b).

(b) EXTENSION OF H-1-B WORKER STATUS.—The Attorney General shall extend the stay of an alien who qualifies for an exemption under subsection (a) in one-year increments until such time as a final decision is made on the alien's lawful permanent residence.

SEC. 7. EXTENSION OF CERTAIN REQUIREMENTS AND AUTHORITIES THROUGH FISCAL YEAR 2002.

(a) ATTESTATION REQUIREMENTS.—Section 212(n)(1)(E)(ii) of the Immigration and Nationality Act (8 U.S.C. 1182(n)(1)(E)(ii)) is amended by striking “October 1, 2001” and inserting “October 1, 2002”.

(b) FEE REQUIREMENTS.—Section 212(c)(9)(A) of the Immigration and Nationality Act (8 U.S.C. 1182(c)(9)(A)) is amended in the text above clause (i) by striking “October 1, 2001” and inserting “October 1, 2002”.

(c) DEPARTMENT OF LABOR INVESTIGATIVE AUTHORITIES.—Section 413(e)(2) of the American Competitiveness and Workforce Improvement Act of 1998 (as contained in title IV of division C of Public Law 105-277) is amended by striking “September 30, 2001” and inserting “September 30, 2002”.

SEC. 8. RECOVERY OF VISAS USED FRAUDULENTLY.

Section 214(g)(3) of the Immigration and Nationality Act (8 U.S.C. 1184 (g)(3)) is amended to read as follows:

“(3) Aliens who are subject to the numerical limitations of paragraph (1) shall be issued visas (or otherwise provided nonimmigrant status) in the order in which petitions are filed for such visas or status. If an alien who was issued a visa or otherwise provided nonimmigrant status and counted against the numerical limitations of paragraph (1) is found to have been issued such visa or otherwise provided such status by fraud or willfully misrepresenting a material fact and such visa or nonimmigrant status is revoked, then one number shall be restored to the total number of aliens who may be issued visas

or otherwise provided such status under the numerical limitations of paragraph (1) in the fiscal year in which the petition is revoked, regardless of the fiscal year in which the petition was approved.”.

SEC. 9. NSF STUDY AND REPORT ON THE “DIGITAL DIVIDE”.

(a) STUDY.—The National Science Foundation shall conduct a study of the divergence in access to high technology (commonly referred to as the “digital divide”) in the United States.

(b) REPORT.—Not later than 18 months after the date of enactment of this Act, the Director of the National Science Foundation shall submit a report to Congress setting forth the findings of the study conducted under subsection (a).

SEC. 10. MODIFICATION OF NONIMMIGRANT PETITIONER ACCOUNT PROVISIONS.

(a) ALLOCATION OF FUNDS.—Section 286(s) of the Immigration and Nationality Act (8 U.S.C. 1356(s)) is amended—

(1) in paragraph (2), by striking “56.3 percent” and inserting “36.2 percent”;

(2) in paragraph (3), by striking “28.2 percent” and inserting “30.7 percent”; and

(3) in paragraph (4)(A), by striking “4 percent” and inserting “2.5 percent”.

(b) LOW-INCOME SCHOLARSHIP PROGRAM.—Section 414(d)(3) of the American Competitiveness and Workforce Improvement Act of 1998 (as contained in title IV of division C of Public Law 105-277) is amended by striking “2,500 per year.” and inserting “3,125 per year. The Director may renew scholarships for up to 4 years.”.

(c) NATIONAL SCIENCE FOUNDATION GRANT PROGRAM.—Section 286(s)(4)(B) of the Immigration and Nationality Act (8 U.S.C. 1356(s)) is amended to read as follows:

“(B) NATIONAL SCIENCE FOUNDATION COMPETITIVE GRANT PROGRAM FOR K-12 MATH, SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY EDUCATION.—(i) 25.8 percent of the amounts deposited into the H-1B Nonimmigrant Petitioner Account shall remain available to the Director of the National Science Foundation until expended to carry out a direct and/or matching grant program to support private-public partnerships in K-12 education.

“(ii) TYPES OF PROGRAMS COVERED.—The Director shall award grants to such programs, including, those which support the development and implementation of standards-based instructional materials models and related student assessments that enable K-12 students to acquire an understanding of science, mathematics, and technology, as well as to develop critical thinking skills; provide systemic improvement in training K-12 teachers and education for students in science, mathematics, and technology; stimulate system-wide K-12 reform of science, mathematics, and technology in rural, economically disadvantaged regions of the United States; provide externships and other opportunities for students to increase their appreciation and understanding of science, mathematics, engineering, and technology; involve partnerships of industry, educational institutions, and community organizations to address the educational needs of disadvantaged communities; and college preparatory support to expose and prepare students for careers in science, mathematics, engineering, and technology.”.

(d) REPORTING REQUIREMENTS.—Section 414 of the American Competitiveness and Workforce Improvement Act of 1998 (as contained in title IV of division C of Public Law 105-277) is amended by adding at the end the following new subsection:

“(e) The Secretary of the Department of Labor and the Director of the National Science Foundation shall—

“(1) track and monitor the performance of programs receiving H-1B Nonimmigrant Fee grant money; and

“(2) not later than one year after the date of enactment of this subsection, submit a report to

the Committees on the Judiciary of the House of Representatives and the Senate—

“(A) the tracking system to monitor the performance of programs receiving H-1B grant funding; and

“(B) the number of individuals who have completed training and have entered the high-skill workforce through these programs.”.

SEC. 11. KIDS 2000 CRIME PREVENTION AND COMPUTER EDUCATION INITIATIVE.

(a) SHORT TITLE.—This section may be cited as the “Kids 2000 Act”.

(b) FINDINGS.—Congress makes the following findings:

(1) There is an increasing epidemic of juvenile crime throughout the United States.

(2) It is well documented that the majority of juvenile crimes take place during after-school hours.

(3) Knowledge of technology is becoming increasingly necessary for children in school and out of school.

(4) The Boys and Girls Clubs of America have 2,700 clubs throughout all 50 States, serving over 3,000,000 boys and girls primarily from at-risk communities.

(5) The Boys and Girls Clubs of America have the physical structures in place for immediate implementation of an after-school technology program.

(6) Building technology centers and providing integrated content and full-time staffing at those centers in the Boys and Girls Clubs of America nationwide will help foster education, job training, and an alternative to crime for at-risk youth.

(7) Partnerships between the public sector and the private sector are an effective way of providing after-school technology programs in the Boys and Girls Clubs of America.

(8) PowerUp: Bridging the Digital Divide is an entity comprised of more than a dozen nonprofit organizations, major corporations, and Federal agencies that have joined together to launch a major new initiative to help ensure that America's underserved young people acquire the skills, experiences, and resources they need to succeed in the digital age.

(9) Bringing PowerUp into the Boys and Girls Clubs of America will be an effective way to ensure that our youth have a safe, crime-free environment in which to learn the technological skills they need to close the divide between young people who have access to computer-based information and technology-related skills and those who do not.

(c) AFTER-SCHOOL TECHNOLOGY GRANTS TO THE BOYS AND GIRLS CLUBS OF AMERICA.—

(1) PURPOSES.—The Attorney General shall make grants to the Boys and Girls Clubs of America for the purpose of funding effective after-school technology programs, such as PowerUp, in order to provide—

(A) constructive technology-focused activities that are part of a comprehensive program to provide access to technology and technology training to youth during after-school hours, weekends, and school vacations;

(B) supervised activities in safe environments for youth; and

(C) full-time staffing with teachers, tutors, and other qualified personnel.

(2) SUBAWARDS.—The Boys and Girls Clubs of America shall make subawards to local boys and girls clubs authorizing expenditures associated with providing technology programs such as PowerUp, including the hiring of teachers and other personnel, procurement of goods and services, including computer equipment, or such other purposes as are approved by the Attorney General.

(d) APPLICATIONS.—

(1) ELIGIBILITY.—In order to be eligible to receive a grant under this section, an applicant

for a subaward (specified in subsection (c)(2)) shall submit an application to the Boys and Girls Clubs of America, in such form and containing such information as the Attorney General may reasonably require.

(2) APPLICATION REQUIREMENTS.—Each application submitted in accordance with paragraph (1) shall include—

(A) a request for a subgrant to be used for the purposes of this section;

(B) a description of the communities to be served by the grant, including the nature of juvenile crime, violence, and drug use in the communities;

(C) written assurances that Federal funds received under this section will be used to supplement and not supplant, non-Federal funds that would otherwise be available for activities funded under this section;

(D) written assurances that all activities funded under this section will be supervised by qualified adults;

(E) a plan for assuring that program activities will take place in a secure environment that is free of crime and drugs;

(F) a plan outlining the utilization of content-based programs such as PowerUp, and the provision of trained adult personnel to supervise the after-school technology training; and

(G) any additional statistical or financial information that the Boys and Girls Clubs of America may reasonably require.

(e) GRANT AWARDS.—In awarding subgrants under this section, the Boys and Girls Clubs of America shall consider—

(1) the ability of the applicant to provide the intended services;

(2) the history and establishment of the applicant in providing youth activities; and

(3) the extent to which services will be provided in crime-prone areas and technologically underserved populations, and efforts to achieve an equitable geographic distribution of the grant awards.

(f) AUTHORIZATION OF APPROPRIATIONS.—

(1) IN GENERAL.—There is authorized to be appropriated \$20,000,000 for each of the fiscal years 2001 through 2006 to carry out this section.

(2) SOURCE OF FUNDS.—Funds to carry out this section may be derived from the Violent Crime Reduction Trust Fund.

(3) CONTINUED AVAILABILITY.—Amounts made available under this subsection shall remain available until expended.

Amend the title to read as follows: "A bill to amend the Immigration and Nationality Act with respect to H-1B non-immigrant aliens, and to establish a crime prevention and computer education initiative."

AMENDMENT NO. 4177

Mr. LOTT. Mr. President, I send an amendment to the desk and ask for its immediate consideration.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will report.

The assistant legislative clerk read as follows:

The Senator from Mississippi [Mr. LOTT], for Mr. ABRAHAM, proposes an amendment numbered 4177.

Mr. LOTT. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that reading of the amendment be dispensed with.

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

(The text of the amendment is printed in today's RECORD under "Amendments Submitted.")

Mr. LOTT. Mr. President, I ask for the yeas and nays on the amendment.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Is there a sufficient second?

There is a sufficient second.

The yeas and nays were ordered.

AMENDMENT NO. 4178 TO AMENDMENT NO. 4177

Mr. LOTT. Mr. President, I send an amendment to the desk and ask for its immediate consideration.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will report.

The assistant legislative clerk read as follows:

The Senator from Mississippi [Mr. LOTT] proposes an amendment numbered 4178 to amendment No. 4177.

Mr. LOTT. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that reading of the amendment be dispensed with.

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

(The text of the amendment is printed in today's RECORD under "Amendments Submitted.")

CLOTURE MOTION

Mr. LOTT. Mr. President, I send a cloture motion to the desk to the pending H-1B amendment.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The cloture motion having been presented under rule XXII, the Chair directs the clerk to read the motion.

The assistant legislative clerk read as follows:

CLOTURE MOTION

We the undersigned Senators, in accordance with the provisions of rule XXII of the Standing Rules of the Senate, do hereby move to bring to a close debate on amendment No. 4178 to Calendar No. 490, S. 2045, a bill to amend the Immigration and Nationality Act with respect to H-1B non-immigrant aliens.

Trent Lott, Chuck Hagel, Spencer Abraham, Phil Gramm, Jim Bunning, Kay Bailey Hutchison, Sam Brownback, Rod Grams, Jesse Helms, Gordon Smith of Oregon, Pat Roberts, Slade Gorton, Connie Mack, John Warner, and Robert F. Bennett.

Mr. LOTT. Mr. President, for the information of all Senators, this cloture vote will occur on Tuesday. I will announce to the Members the time of that vote later today, after consultation on both sides. In the meantime, I ask that the mandatory quorum under rule XXII be waived.

Mr. DORGAN. Mr. President, reserving the right to object, and I shall not object to the request, I ask the Senator if he will be available to answer a couple of questions. I want to ask some questions following this discussion about the Agriculture appropriations bill, if the majority leader would allow that.

Mr. LOTT. Certainly.

Mr. DORGAN. I shall not object.

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

MOTION TO RECOMMIT WITH INSTRUCTIONS

Mr. LOTT. Mr. President, I move to recommit the bill back to the committee to report back forthwith, and I send the motion to the desk.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will report the motion.

The assistant legislative clerk read as follows:

The Senator from Mississippi [Mr. LOTT] moves to recommit the bill, S. 2045, to the Committee on Judiciary with instructions and to report back forthwith.

Mr. LOTT. Mr. President, I ask for the yeas and nays.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Is there a sufficient second?

There is a sufficient second.

The yeas and nays were ordered.

AMENDMENT NO. 4179 TO THE MOTION TO RECOMMIT WITH INSTRUCTIONS

Mr. LOTT. Mr. President, I send an amendment to the desk to the motion to recommit with instructions and ask for its immediate consideration.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will report.

The assistant legislative clerk read as follows:

The Senator from Mississippi [Mr. LOTT] proposes an amendment numbered 4179 to the motion to recommit with instructions.

Mr. LOTT. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that reading of the amendment be dispensed with.

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

(The text of the amendment is printed in today's RECORD under "Amendments Submitted.")

Mr. LOTT. Mr. President, I ask for the yeas and nays on the amendment.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Is there a sufficient second?

There is a sufficient second.

The yeas and nays were ordered.

AMENDMENT NO. 4180 TO AMENDMENT NO. 4179

Mr. LOTT. Mr. President, I send an amendment to the desk and ask for its immediate consideration.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will report.

The assistant legislative clerk read as follows:

The Senator from Mississippi [Mr. LOTT] proposes an amendment numbered 4180 to amendment No. 4179.

Mr. LOTT. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that reading of the amendment be dispensed with.

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

(The text of the amendment is printed in today's RECORD under "Amendments Submitted.")

Mr. REID. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the pending amendment be laid aside so that I may offer, on behalf of Senator DASCHLE, Senator KENNEDY, myself, and others, the Latino and Immigrant Fairness Act.

Mr. LOTT. Mr. President, reserving the right to object, first, I know there is a lot of interest in this amendment, and there are a number of Senators who have interest in other amendments on both sides of the aisle—additional immigration amendments.

There is a lot of interest on this side—and probably on both sides of the

aisle—with regard to a H-2A provisions, which has to do with additional, I guess, temporary visas in the agriculture area. I understand the interest and support in both of these areas. But Senator DASCHLE and I tried to get clearance. We worked on it over a period of days. We both were very serious in trying to get it agreed to. We have not been able to get it cleared. Even though I think Senator DASCHLE got an agreement cleared on his side, there was objection on our side.

We have tried over a period of months to get an agreement on how to take up this H-1B immigrant visa issue. It is important to industry in America. We have over 2,000 jobs that are going unfilled now. We need these high-tech workers. It is not something that is critical in my own State, but it is critical to the economy and the high-tech industry in our Nation.

We are down to the last few days. We need to get this done. Therefore, I have to object. I object, Mr. President.

Mr. REID. Mr. President, we have tried hard and, as the Senator so graciously stated, we have been able to clear an agreement that we would have five amendments per side, with an hour time agreement. We could finish this bill, certainly, in 1 day.

It is so important that we get this done. I understand the importance of H-1B. I supported it. We have had 420,000 people come to this country as a result of our H-1B legislation in the past. But there are other things that we simply need to do, including the Latino and Immigrant Fairness Act, of which I am a cosponsor. I strongly support this piece of legislation that seeks to provide permanent and legally defined groups of immigrants who are already here working and contributing as taxpayers and to the social fabric of the company. They are awaiting U.S. citizenship.

I say to the majority leader that we need to have an opportunity to, in some way, in the waning days of this Congress to work this out. We are going to work very hard. We will do it with the support and consideration of the majority leader, or without it. We really believe this is necessary. We are sorry the majority leader has objected, but we understand the reasons.

Mr. LOTT. Let me say, Mr. President, I am sure we have not heard the last of this issue. As we get to the conclusion of the session, there will be other areas or bills where this issue will be presented and argued. I fully expect that to happen.

Mr. President, is there objection?

The PRESIDING OFFICER. There was objection.

Mr. LOTT. We are back to the original objection to the motion and the reading be dispensed with.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Is there objection?

Without objection, it is so ordered.

NATIONAL ENERGY SECURITY ACT OF 2000—MOTION TO PROCEED

Mr. LOTT. Mr. President, I move to proceed to Calendar No. 552, S. 2557, regarding the increasing price of gasoline and decreasing America's dependency on foreign oil.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The motion is debatable.

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

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

MORNING BUSINESS

Mr. LOTT. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that there now be a period for the transaction of routine morning business with Senators permitted to speak therein for up to 10 minutes each.

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

CONFERENCE ACTION

Mr. LOTT. Mr. President, Senator DORGAN had indicated he had some questions he would like to ask. I have some tributes and routine business and also the closing script that we would like to go into. I thought maybe I would yield for some questions before we begin that.

Mr. DORGAN. Mr. President, I appreciate the Senator from Mississippi yielding to me. I wanted to propound a series of questions.

First of all, let me say that I respect the difficult job the majority leader has. As we come to the end of the 106th Congress and try to put all the pieces together and make them fit, and so on, it is a difficult job.

One specific piece of legislation that is very important to me—as are many others—is the Agriculture appropriations bill.

I come from a farm State. This is a critically important piece of legislation.

The House of Representatives passed an Agriculture appropriations bill on July 11. The Senate passed one on July 20. It is now September 22. I was appointed a conferee for this appropriations conference. I am on the subcommittee, and there has been no appropriations conference at all. We are toward the end of this legislative session, and I worry about the regular process.

Will we have an appropriations conference?

The reason I am asking this question is, as the majority leader knows, there

are some very controversial things in this legislation. I understand there are, because the Senate by a majority vote said we want them. One of those controversial issues is a policy that says: Let us stop using food as a weapon. We want to abolish sanctions on food shipments all around the world. It is controversial.

Some don't want to do that. Some want to continue to use food sanctions against Cuba and other countries. I don't. Seventy Members of the Senate voted not to do it. We want to abolish that approach. That is one.

The other controversial issue is—Senator JEFFORDS and I offered the amendment on the reimportation of prescription drugs approved by the FDA. That was controversial.

The reason I am asking the question of the majority leader is, yesterday someone from the news media called me and said another Member of the Senate indicated that next week the Agriculture appropriations bill will be coming to the floor of the Senate. This Senator asked: How will that happen? He said: By magic.

By magic? I am a conferee. If there is a conference report on the Agriculture appropriations bill being brought to the floor of the Senate, it is not coming from a conference I was ever invited to attend.

These are very important issues.

I haven't mentioned the issue of crop loss and quality loss on crops in North Dakota and across the country where farmers have been devastated by disease and quality loss in their crops. We want to focus on that in this bill as well.

I will not give a speech. But I want to ask the majority leader: Can he tell me anything about this conference or anything about this "magic" that one Member of the Senate suggested was going to happen? Do we expect to have a conference with the House on Agriculture appropriations? And will those of us who are conferees and who come from farm States and have an abiding interest in doing the right thing have the opportunity to pursue these policies and get votes on them?

Mr. LOTT. Mr. President, I would be glad to try to respond to some of the questions and comments.

First of all, I certainly understand the Senator's interest in this very important funding bill for agriculture in America. There is a lot of funding here. I don't know the total amount of this bill, but it is multibillion dollars, and it is important for our farm economy, for food for our people in this country, and also for exports in many ways.

My State also is heavily involved in agriculture and has to deal with a number of problems, all the way from droughts to floods—everything but locusts.

Then, of course, we have the timber industry, which is an important part of