rather than waiting for all 50 States to adopt uniform laws. S. 761 will provide the basic framework, or the rules governing the future of electronic commerce in America. It will foster the continued expansion of electronic commerce. More importantly, it will empower consumers to take part in a vibrant segment of our economy. It will afford consumers throughout all 50 States the real opportunity, if they so choose, to take advantage of electronic commerce. This, to me, is the crux of this legislation. The ability of our citizens in all 50 States to improve the quality of their lives. S. 761 provides that ability.

Some have expressed concern that this measure places a higher standard and unnecessary burdens on the on-line world than those in effect for the off-line world. I do not see it that way. I believe a good-faith effort was made to provide the flexibility necessary for those with that great entrepreneurial spirit and imaginative ability to advance the Internet and electronic commerce. If, over time, bureaucracy does indeed impede the bill's intent, I expect that Congress will again assume responsibility and take corrective action.

The participation of several Members of Congress was integral to this bill's enactment. They include the chairmen of both the House and Senate Commerce Committees, Chairman BILEY and Chairman MCCAIN, Chairman GRAMS of the Senate Banking Committee, and Chairman HATCH of the Senate Judiciary Committee. I extend my thanks to them and to all of the members of the conference for their attentiveness and commitment to this important issue.

I also want to take a few moments to express my appreciation to my colleagues and good friend, Senator ABRAHAM. Senator ABRAHAM recognized early on the extreme importance of electronic signatures. It was his initiative that led to the 106th Congress' enactment of the Government Paperwork Elimination Act, a significant first step toward the eventual broad use and acceptance of electronic signatures. Senator ABRAHAM's continued stewardship, vision, and tireless efforts have led to the next logical step of now affording these accessible opportunities in electronic commerce for the private sector and millions of consumers. I believe no other Senator worked as hard on, or knows as much about, this issue as Senator ABRAHAM. Without his hard work, keen judgment, and persistence, I do not believe we would be voting on this conference report today. Senator ABRAHAM is to be commended for his leadership in this area, and I look forward to working with him on other important technology issues facing Congress.

It goes without saying that Congress could not operate without the dedicated efforts of staff. I want to identify those Senate staffers who worked hard to prepare this legislation for consideration. Renee Bennett, Mickey Boyd, Jeanne Bumpus, Cesar Conda, Robert Creasati, Makan Delrahim, Geoff Gray, Martin Grunenberg, Carole Grunberg, Dave Hoppe, Jackson Howard, Jim Hippe, Kevin Kolevar, Chase Hutto, Tim Hyland, Julie Katzman, Maureen McLaughlin, Paul Margie, Mike Rawson, Dena Ellis Rochkind, Lisa Rosenberg and Jim Sartucci, as well as my former Congressional Fellow, Steven Apicella. I thank them all.

Electronic signatures is an innovative technology whose time has come. S. 761 will remove barriers to their use in a timely and useful manner. S. 761 will make it easier for millions of Americans to use electronic commerce. S. 761 will help stimulate our nation's economy. And S. 761 will preserve America's leadership in the global marketplace. I am proud that the 106th Congress has taken this action.

THE PRESIDING OFFICIAL. The Senator from Michigan.

Mr. ABRAHAM. Mr. President, I thank my colleagues on both sides of the aisle for their work on the legislation which has just passed. This is an extraordinarily important bill which will essentially open up opportunities in e-commerce that has previously not been existent for Americans. It will be a tremendous incentive to our economy. I express to all my colleagues my appreciation for their hard work on the legislation. It is a significant accomplishment for the Congress.

THE PRESIDING OFFICIAL. The Senator from Nevada.

Mr. REID. Mr. President, on behalf of Senator LEAHY, I ask unanimous consent for the Senator from Washington to be allowed to make a statement without objection, it is so ordered.

EXECUTIVE SESSION

LEAVE OF ABSENCE

Mr. REID. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that he be permitted to be absent from the service of the Senate today, Friday, June 16.

THE PRESIDING OFFICIAL. Without objection, it is so ordered.

THE DAIRY INDUSTRY

Mr. GRAMS. Mr. President, I will take a few minutes this morning to talk about an industry that is very important to the State of Minnesota, and that is our dairy industry.

June is National Dairy Month, and I come to the floor today to pay tribute to the family farmers who rise early every morning to supply fresh milk to our Nation. We as consumers assume there will always be dairy products in our grocery stores, without considering the hard work that is a daily requirement to get them there.

I grew up on a dairy farm myself, and I can remember those early morning