

interested in going into a back room and negotiating a sellout of the committee or of the safety provisions that I believe are extremely important. That is simply a nonstarter for me as manager of this bill.

I do remind all Senators they can offer amendments and this Senator is happy to consider them as the rules allow. As far as the NAFTA provisions are concerned, I will remind all of our colleagues once again, the underlying bill is not a violation of NAFTA. That is very clear. I set that out in my remarks this morning, and I am to go through that again this afternoon.

Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that at 2:15, when the Senate reconvenes, the Senator from Illinois be allowed 20 minutes to discuss his issue that he would like to present to us and then Senator BILL NELSON from Florida be recognized.

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

RECESS

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Under the previous order, the Senate stands in recess until 2:15.

Thereupon, at 12:38 p.m., the Senate recessed until 2:15 p.m. and reassembled when called to order by the Presiding Officer (Mrs. CLINTON).

DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION AND RELATED AGENCIES APPROPRIATIONS ACT, 2002—Continued

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Under the previous order, the Senator from Illinois was to be recognized for 20 minutes.

The Senator from New Mexico.

Mr. DOMENICI. Madam President, I ask unanimous consent I be permitted to proceed now for 5 minutes, and then return to the regular order.

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

Mr. DOMENICI. Madam President, it isn't that this subject matter should be dealt with briefly, but I think I can express my concerns in 5 minutes. I hope others are as concerned as I about this issue.

Senator MURRAY is here on the floor. She is the chairman of the Subcommittee on Transportation. She has worked very hard to accommodate this bill through language with reference to Mexico and Mexican trucking and busing between our borders under NAFTA. She has worked very hard to get something much better than that which was passed in the House and she kept things from passing in our subcommittee that would be much worse than the arrangement we now have in the bill with her amendment.

I would like to say that the United States should be quite pleased today that we have a new relationship grow-

ing between the Republic of Mexico and the United States. It is obvious everywhere you go in Mexico with everyone you talk to, and with everyone you talk to in the border States, that the arrival of President Fox has brought a whole new attitude between these two great countries.

For instance, in the 29 years or so that I have been here, there have been four Presidents of Mexico, but not a single one was willing to say that the economic problems of Mexico are not America's problems, and we have to solve our own. President Fox is the first President to say we had better improve the permit system for people coming from his country to work here because he believes they should do this in a legal manner instead of a manner that leaves many Mexicans here in positions of hiding out while they hold jobs and they can't return home—some wonderful ideas about what should happen on our border in terms of cleaning up the border which has grown topsyturvy. Law enforcement can now trust Mexican law enforcement for the first time in modern times. The litany goes on.

I, for one, hope the Senators from both sides of the aisle will find a way to sit down and draft a provision on the busing and trucking access to the United States pursuant to the NAFTA arrangements. There are some who have said their trucks aren't safe enough, that they don't have the right kind of insurance—and a rather major litany.

I suggest we had better be careful that we are not couching these things in a way so as to avoid what it really is. It appears to me it is borderline discrimination against Mexican enterprise. There has to be a better way to solve it than we have solved it in this Transportation bill, but in a way that will let Mexico and Mexico's leaders say we are equal partners with the United States, and that we are going to be treated the same way as Canada. Canada, America, and Mexico are the three partners. I believe to do otherwise is to say to the Mexican people and the new President: We don't care about you; we don't even care if we discriminate against you; we have a hot issue, and we are going to pass something; and maybe in a few years we can work something out with you, Mr. President of Mexico, as a NAFTA partner of the United States.

I believe the time is now, on this bill. The President has said he will veto the bill with the Murray language in it. That is official. We ought to sit down and work out something for them so it won't be vetoed.

There are great American transportation issues and problems for every Senator and for every State. We ought to get the bill passed. The way to get it passed is not to send it to the President with language he already said he

will veto and offend Mexico unjustifiably. What we are doing is unjustifiable. Let's get it resolved.

There is a simple proposition around. Let's come up with a California solution. I am pretty familiar with the various solutions. Let us in the Senate say we stand ready to help.

I hope we can do this and pass the bill in due course—the full bill—and put some legislation in it that will protect Mexico against discrimination in trucking and busing and allow them to grow and prosper, but at the same time offer as much assurance as we can that their vehicles are going to be safe, and include whatever other requirements we need to ensure they are treated like trucks coming from Canada.

Mr. President, I stand in strong support of permitting Mexican motor carriers full access to the United States in a safe, fair, and timely manner.

The North American Free Trade Agreement went into effect in January 1994. The agreement calls on each country to apply national treatment to services of each of the trading partners. NAFTA required that Mexican trucks have full access to the United States by January 1, 2001.

Rather than prepare ourselves to meet this obligation, we foolishly prohibited our southern partner's trucks beyond 20 miles from the border.

An arbitration panel ruled that the United States violated NAFTA, and today we face the possibility of trade sanctions in excess of \$1 billion per year of noncompliance.

Some hope to completely bar Mexican domiciled motor carriers, assuming that because they are Mexican, then they are necessarily unsafe.

I applaud Senator MURRAY's attempt to craft a balance to ensure that Mexican trucks are safe, while meeting our national obligation.

As a Senator from a border state, I am deeply concerned about the safety of Mexican trucks. However, I do not believe that we should use safety as an excuse to inappropriately discriminate against Mexico.

As such, I have some fundamental concerns about the language of Senator MURRAY's proposal.

Principally, I am troubled that it seems to harbor a deep mistrust of Mexico.

The United States and Mexico both agree that Mexico must comply with U.S. laws, and that it is the United States' right to enforce those laws. Why then, must we impose additional and unreasonable requirements before permitting Mexican motor carriers access?

NAFTA requires that each member country give national treatment to the other member countries. That means that Mexico and Canada must abide by U.S. safety standards when in the U.S.

Canada has been doing so for some time, and Mexico is prepared and eagerly awaits the opportunity to do so.