

to the FAA Administrator. We talked to pilots and people who know what needs to be done to close the vulnerabilities that we saw on September 11. In fact, the bill that is being introduced today, of which I am a cosponsor, has many of the items I have proposed in the past and certainly think we must pass today. We must have sky marshals in the air. In fact, I applaud the Attorney General for putting sky marshals on many of our flights around the country. They are in plain clothes. Most people would not know they are on a flight. But we do indeed have armed sky marshals on many of the flights that are in the air as we speak. But we want to make them permanent. We want to make sure we have sky marshals on virtually every flight, and possibly every flight later down the road.

We need to assure the passengers that there is a certified peace officer onboard who is trained to do what is necessary to deal with the crime that is committed in the air.

The second major provision in this bill that I think we must do is upgrade the screening. We will upgrade the equipment, and we will upgrade personnel education and training. We all know the screeners have been hired by contractors. They have high turnover rates. They do not have the experience that we would expect in screening. We have seen pictures of things that have gone through the screens and gotten onto an airplane that are just not appropriate. We want to stop that from happening.

That is why upgrading the screeners is important. I think they should be a part of a Federal system of security.

We are going to put some kind of barrier between the pilots and the rest of the airplane so that someone would not be able to penetrate a cockpit, as so sadly happened on September 11. We will have a Deputy FAA Administrator in charge of aviation security so that we will have one person in charge of all of aviation security.

It is my hope that we would start with entry-level screeners, and that it would be a career path for the aviation security department which would include graduating to become a sky marshal, staying in the system with a career in the system so we could have more trained and experienced people.

Those are some of the important points that are in this bill. I know some people disagree with certain parts of this bill. But it is a great start. It is an important start for rehabilitating our airline industry.

If we have the security, people will fly. People love to fly. We had 600 million people fly last year. We can build back to that number if we have the security for passengers. The convenience will be there. It is going to take a little longer going through the airport, but I think people are willing to wait a little

longer and go earlier in order to feel safe. The flying public will come back.

I support this bill. I will continue to work on it with the chairman. But mainly I want the people of America to know we are addressing security in the air and we will do something very shortly, as we are also trying to shore up our airlines. We will not let our transportation system fail. If we do, the terrorists will have won. The terrorists are not going to beat the United States of America.

Thank you, Mr. President.

UNANIMOUS CONSENT REQUEST—
S. 1450

Mr. DASCHLE. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the Senate now proceed to S. 1450, the aviation assistance and security bill; that no amendments or motions be in order to the bill; that there be 1 hour for debate equally divided between the two leaders or their designees, with an additional 15 minutes under the control of Senator BYRD, with 10 minutes for Senator KENNEDY; that at the conclusion or yielding back of the time, the bill be read a third time and the Senate vote without intervening action or debate on final passage of the bill.

I further ask unanimous consent that when the Senate receives from the House its companion bill, it be immediately considered, read a third time, and passed, provided it is identical to the Senate-passed bill.

I further ask unanimous consent that once the House bill has been enacted into law, provided it is identical to the Senate measure, then action on the Senate bill be vitiated and the measure then be indefinitely postponed.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Is there objection?

Mr. FITZGERALD. I object.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Objection is heard.

The Senator from Minnesota.

AVIATION SAFETY

Mr. WELLSTONE. Mr. President, I believe this Transportation Safety Act, which I know Senator HOLLINGS and others are going to introduce very soon, will certainly pass with strong support.

First of all, I ask unanimous consent to be added as an original cosponsor of this piece of legislation.

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

Mr. WELLSTONE. Mr. President, the Senator from South Carolina is absolutely right. Not only does safety have to be there with the money, but the fact is, without the safety, people aren't going to fly. If they don't fly, we are never going to have this industry financially viable. It is that simple. You can see it traveling around the country right now. There are very few

people at the airports. People are quite frightened. We have to absolutely pass this bill. I think it should be in this package right here. But we will be coming back to this very soon, and I think the sooner the better.

There were some provisions that I desperately wanted to see in this bill. I know the Senator from South Carolina and others tried with all their might. I know Senator DASCHLE did. There were negotiations late into the evening.

From my point of view, this language is essential to air service. I want to make sure that gets lived up to.

A good part of our State is rural. We don't want our smaller airports left out.

On the question of general aviation and VFR, there are a lot of people hurting right now. I traveled in a small plane this last weekend. They are having to lay off people. We don't have any protections for them. We will get back to that next week.

But the final point I want to make is that we had, I think, about a \$3.7 billion package that dealt with all the people who are being laid off. Northwest Airlines just announced that 10,000 people will be laid off. Half of them are in the State of Minnesota. Frankly, look at the economy.

There are an awful lot of people in a world of economic pain. I believe what should have been in this package—I know there were Representatives on the House side who resisted this, talking about the companies, yes—is the extending of unemployment benefits and making sure people have access to job training, that there is a dislocated worker focus.

The most frightening thing of all, next to losing your job, is that you then lose your health care coverage. COBRA is too expensive. I wish we had something better. For so many of these employees, this is going to be critically important.

These are going to be some really hard times for people. As one Senator from the State of Minnesota, I am really disappointed we did not get this included. I know the Senate majority leader, Mr. DASCHLE, said this would be a first priority. I know Senator HOLLINGS has said that. We have to come back next week and we have to focus on these employees. We have to make sure we provide the help to them and to their families. That has to be part of a relief package. We have to move fast now. We couldn't get it in today. It will be in next week or it will be in as soon as possible. It must be.

Last point: We have all these huge issues staring us in the face. When I flew out here, I was talking to some of the employees of Northwest. I said: How are you doing? They said: We are holding on. They meant about the world they live in. Everybody is very worried. Everybody is very resolute. Everybody is very worried. But they