

MORNING BUSINESS

Mr. REID. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the Senate proceed to a period for morning business with Senators allowed to speak of a period not to exceed 10 minutes.

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

FARM POLICY THAT WORKS

Mrs. LINCOLN. Mr. President, I joined my colleague from Arkansas, Senator HUTCHINSON, to introduce a bill of the utmost importance to our farmers.

Since the passage of the Freedom to Farm bill in 1996, our farmers have toiled under clouds of uncertainty. Quite simply stated, our Nation needs a farm policy that works for working farmers.

That is why I and Senator HUTCHINSON, along with Senator HELMS of North Carolina, Senator MILLER of Georgia, and Senators BREAUX and LANDRIEU of Louisiana, are proud to offer a new alternative.

We offer a farm bill that will ensure a strong safety net for America's farmers and ranchers.

We offer a farm bill that will increase investment in conservation programs by 80 percent.

We offer a farm bill that provides more effective support for disadvantaged working families through nutrition programs.

We offer a farm bill that will increase and improve our Nation's agricultural trade programs, such as the Food Aid program that sends food to the neediest nations.

We offer a farm bill that will preserve and protect our Nation's forests and environment while investing in rural America.

For too many years, while the American economy at large was posting astonishing and unprecedented gains, our agricultural producers have not benefited from our prosperity.

It is not only our farmers who are suffering as a result of failed government policy. The institutions of small-town and rural America local banks and merchants, feed and supply stores, equipment dealers, even corner groceries and family-owned hardware stores are all caught in the web of financial collapse.

Here is a letter I received from a young farmer in northeast Arkansas just a few months ago. He says that his family's farm is nearing "a point of no return," and that if the crisis continues, he will have to leave the land that his grandfather worked.

Here is a letter from a bank president in southeast Arkansas, who notes that when he moved to his community in 1969, a new John Deere combine sold for about \$15,000. Today, a comparable model sells for \$220,000. Fuel for that combine cost 15 cents per gallon in

1969, he writes; today, a gallon of diesel fuel costs \$1.05. He goes on to note that while a farmer could expect to receive \$3 for a bushel of rice 32 years ago, today he only gets \$2.7 for the same bushel. The costs skyrocket, but the returns on these investments continue to fall.

Here is a letter from a young woman in east Arkansas who works a 600-acre rice and soybean farm with her husband and child. Her husband is so depressed that he needs counseling and medication. She can't let her child participate in after-school sports because of the additional costs entailed. She writes that where she and her family once felt pride in their sense of independence and self-sufficiency, today they feel only shame at having to rely on loans and supplemental income payments to get by.

These stories are not unusual. In many rural areas, they are becoming the norm. We cannot afford to let our farmers continue suffering like this. They can't wait another year for us to pass a farm bill. Their problems are here today.

Our bill will address their problems. Our bill will restore to them a better economic future. Our bill will restore to them their hope, so that they can build a better future for their children.

I am proud to be a coauthor of this bill, and I am proud to say that I will take my stand to fight for its passage.

LOCAL LAW ENFORCEMENT ACT
OF 2001

Mr. SMITH of Oregon. Mr. President, I rise today to speak about hate crimes legislation I introduced with Senator KENNEDY in March of this year. The Local Law Enforcement Act of 2001 would add new categories to current hate crimes legislation sending a signal that violence of any kind is unacceptable in our society.

I would like to describe a terrible crime that occurred March 29, 1997 in Huntington Beach, CA. Michael Reign Caywood, 21, allegedly beat and robbed a gay man in his home. The assailant, who allegedly has ties to white supremacist groups, was charged with assault and residential robbery in connection with a hate crime.

I believe that government's first duty is to defend its citizens, to defend them against the harms that come out of hate. The Local Law Enforcement Enhancement Act of 2001 is now a symbol that can become substance. I believe that by passing this legislation, we can change hearts and minds as well.

ADDITIONAL STATEMENTS

NOVARTIS PHARMACEUTICALS

• Mr. BROWNBACK. Mr. President, more than at any other time in my ca-

reer we are a nation that is unified. We are a nation that, recognizing a common goal, is rallying with a knowledge that we will achieve a remarkable thing. It is extraordinary to witness.

One of the things that has always made this nation great, is that when we witness that which is extraordinary, we try to emulate it. You see it one thousand times a day, from the magnitude of contributions that have flooded to relieve every heroic firefighter's family, to the full sized flags flying from the back of Topeka pickup trucks, to the once rare act offering a smile and a bid of good morning to a stranger on the street.

And these acts of unity have not been the lot of individuals alone, nor have they been reserved to a response to the tragedy of September 11. It is one of these acts of unity—one of these recognitions of a common goal—that brings me to the floor today.

Last week the Novartis Pharmaceuticals Corporation announced their new CareCard drug discount program to aid the needy elderly who lack prescription drug coverage. This new program will translate to a savings of 30 to 40 percent off of retail pharmaceutical prices for the seniors with the greatest need. For this remarkable thing, Novartis deserves our thanks.

Over the past several years, the issue of the increasing cost of prescription drugs for seniors has remained a dominant story. Nearly every American has read of seniors forced to chose between the food to sustain them, the rent to shelter them or the medicine to keep them well. Because our antiquated Medicare system includes only very limited prescription drug coverage, the neediest senior have to figure out a way to pay for their medication.

In the absence of Congressional action to fundamentally reform and modernized the Medicare system in a way that would include prescription drug coverage, companies, like Novartis, have acted. In the case of the CareCard program. Novartis is offering seniors age 65 or older, with an annual income of less than 300 percent of the Federal Poverty Level who do not currently have prescription drug coverage substantial discounts on their products. This program could translate to \$10 million Americans who may now be able to afford the medicine they need.

All of this said, Mr. President, that we congratulate Novartis for stepping up and making these discounts available to seniors, should not serve as an excuse for Congress to continue not to act. That Novartis has done the right thing, is not reason for us to do nothing. Medicare is a 36 year old program that has not kept up with our health care economy. We must modernize Medicare. We must reform Medicare. We must make prescription drug coverage available for all seniors; and we must act soon.●