

soybean farmers from South Dakota and other states around the Nation.

Moreover, the enactment of renewable fuel standards would greatly increase the Nation's energy security. Greater usage of renewable fuels would displace the level of foreign oil that we currently use. During these difficult times it is imperative that we find ways to improve our Nation's energy security and reduce our overwhelming dependence on foreign oil. A renewable fuel standard would go a long way toward achieving this critically important goal.

The House has passed an energy bill without any provisions for renewable fuel standard. Moreover, I believe the other body looks backward by focusing too heavily on simple tax breaks for traditional fuel supplies without enough encouragement for new technologies. Where there are agriculturally based fuels, wind energy, and so on, we adequately provide for it in this Senate legislation. The House bill sets us on track for continued heavy reliance on imported petroleum from unstable nations all around the world.

I believe the Senate bill that is now introduced achieves the right balance for the Nation's future. I commend Senator DASCHLE AND SENATOR BINGAMAN for their efforts and I look forward to debate this coming year on this critical piece of legislation which directs our attention not only to energy needs of every kind in our Nation but to the energy independence and energy security that during these troubling times we all understand now more profoundly than ever is so badly needed.

ORDER OF PROCEDURE

Mr. REID. I ask unanimous consent that at 11:40 a.m. today the Senate proceed to executive session to consider Calendar No. 584, Harris Hartz, to be United States Circuit Court Judge; that the Senate immediately vote on confirmation of the nomination; and immediately following the disposition of the nomination, calendar Nos. 585 and 588 be confirmed; that any statements on the above nominations appear at the appropriate place in the RECORD; and upon the disposition of the above nominations, the President be immediately notified of the Senate's action and the Senate return to legislative session.

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. Without objection, it is so ordered.

Mr. REID. Madam President, as in executive session, I ask for the yeas and nays on Calendar No. 584.

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. Is there a sufficient second?

There is a sufficient second.

The yeas and nays were ordered.

Mr. REID. I suggest the absence of a quorum.

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. The clerk will call the roll.

The assistant legislative clerk proceeded to call the roll.

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

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. Without objection, it is so ordered.

DEFENSE APPROPRIATIONS

Mr. REID. Madam President, in a short period of time we will take up the Defense appropriations bill. This is a bill the Chair and the ranking member, Senators INOUE and STEVENS, have been working on as partners. A better term would be cochairs. They work so well together and have for so many years. They worked hard to get the bill to the point where it now is. We also have the full committee chair, Senator BYRD, who has worked very hard on this, with his counterpart, also, Senator STEVENS, to get to the point where the bill is.

One of the—and I am sorry to say this—controversial aspects of this legislation deals with something Senator BYRD has called homeland security. There will be efforts to strike this provision because it costs too much money, according to some, even though Governor Ridge, the homeland security czar, has stated that we need hundreds of millions of dollars for the things he has already recognized need to be done.

If we, in our mind's eye, fix the headlines of newspapers in recent weeks—Smallpox threat; subsequent headline: Cost of smallpox vaccinations more than originally anticipated; yesterday's headlines across the country: Osama bin Laden and the terrorists have recognized that they have what is called a dirty nuclear weapon, maybe—I hope we will be in a position to do something about this. That is what Senator BYRD has tried to do. That is what this legislation is all about, dealing with some of the things I mentioned, headlines around the country indicating we need to do something about homeland security.

Two of our Senators have been attacked with anthrax: Senator DASCHLE and Senator LEAHY. As we speak, we are trying to work with Senator LEAHY's letter to find out what should be done with that.

I hope when this legislation comes before us, which will be very soon, we will recognize we will have problems with anthrax and other biological agents such as smallpox, that our ports are unsafe and our nuclear plants are unsafe. Local government is really being hurt as a result of their spending all this money. So I hope we do something to keep that in the bill.

I see the majority leader has come to the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Mr. NELSON of Florida). The Senate majority leader.

Mr. DASCHLE. Mr. President, I compliment the distinguished assistant Democratic leader for his comments just now and add my voice. He has said it so well. I know within the hour the distinguished chair of the Appropriations Committee, Senator BYRD, along with the Senator from Hawaii, our dear colleague, Mr. INOUE, will lay down the Defense Appropriations Committee bill. Of course, a key part of that Defense Appropriations Committee bill is the homeland defense legislation incorporated within that bill.

The homeland defense bill is one-half of our economic stimulus plan, first and foremost. It responds to the economists across the country who have said, if you are going to improve the economy, if you are going to strengthen our economic circumstances, the very best way to do it—in fact, the only way to ensure that it happens—is to make sure the confidence level of all Americans improves.

Confidence has been shaken. The only way we can address it effectively is by ensuring that, regardless of where they travel, regardless of their circumstances at home, the mail they are now receiving—that under any circumstances we begin to put the safety back into our system, safety that we have lost since September 11. That is what homeland defense is all about.

Read the headlines in almost any daily newspaper. You don't need any more evidence than that, that we have a set of circumstances unlike this country has seen before. God forbid we have another event tomorrow, an attack within the week. I have no doubt, if we had any kind of additional terror activity, regardless of where it may be, even abroad, it would trigger the need, it would trigger the desire on the part of our colleagues, to ensure that we have the resources for homeland defense.

That is what we are saying. We should not be response oriented, we should be preventive in our desire to ensure the infrastructure is in place.

We have proposed a very narrowly drawn bill, a bill that addresses the need for bioterrorism response, the need for greater law enforcement, the need for protecting our infrastructure, the need for ensuring that we have the health facilities in place. That is what this bill does.

I don't know that you could make a better case than the New York Times editorial this morning about the need for homeland defense now. They simply make a statement, about two-thirds of the way through the editorial, that says basically: The American people want this protection now. They don't want to wait until next year. They know what we know: The terrorists do not operate on a fiscal year basis. Terrorists operate now. Terrorists will operate whenever it is convenient and appropriate for them.