

That is why we have a different proposal. Our proposal says very clearly, yes, additional assistance to agriculture and substantially more than is in the Grassley plan. We have \$97 billion over 11 years; he has \$64 billion over 11 years. I think the more important difference is we will not raid the Medicare trust fund to do it. In the first year, this current fiscal year, we take it out of the \$96 billion of nontrust fund surplus that is available, and in the succeeding years, we take it by reducing slightly the President's proposed tax cut.

## AMENDMENT NO. 176

(Purpose: To provide emergency assistance to producers of agricultural commodities in fiscal year 2001, and additional funds for farm and conservation programs during fiscal years 2002 through 2011)

Mr. CONRAD. Mr. President, I call up the Johnson amendment.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Grassley amendment is laid aside.

The clerk will report the amendment.

The legislative clerk read as follows:

The Senator from North Dakota [Mr. CONRAD], for Mr. JOHNSON, for himself, Mr. DASCHLE, Mr. HARKIN, Mr. DORGAN, and Mrs. LINCOLN, proposes an amendment numbered 176.

Mr. CONRAD. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent reading of the amendment be dispensed.

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

(The text of the amendment is printed in today's RECORD under "Amendments Submitted.")

Mr. CONRAD. I ask unanimous consent Senator JOHNSON be shown as the prime sponsor, that I be shown as a cosponsor, along with Senators DASCHLE, HARKIN, DORGAN, and LINCOLN.

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

Mr. CONRAD. I yield the floor.

Mr. DOMENICI. Mr. President, I don't have anything further to say. I will have a chance tomorrow to speak again. I think we have a unanimous consent agreement that takes over.

I suggest the absence of a quorum.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will call the roll.

The legislative clerk proceeded to call the roll.

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 President, I ask unanimous consent that the order for the quorum call be rescinded.

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

## MORNING BUSINESS

Mr. DOMENICI. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent there now be a period of morning business with Senators permitted to speak up to 10 minutes each.

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

## THE CRISIS IN CHINESE-AMERICAN RELATIONS ON HAINAN ISLAND

Mr. AKAKA. Mr. President, the only way to resolve the current crisis in American-Chinese relations is the prompt and safe return of the 24 American airmen now being detained by the Chinese military on Hainan Island and by the swift return of the U.S. Navy's plane. Only after their return can we begin to discuss other issues with China over this and other incidents affecting our relations.

I am deeply disturbed by the delay in allowing American embassy personnel to meet with our service personnel, and I am concerned about press reports that they are being detained in separate areas. I understand our bilateral consular agreement requires the Chinese to provide full access to American citizens within four days but nothing precludes them from giving such access sooner. Indeed our consular agreement with China requires consular access to all American citizens within 48 hours of receipt of official notification of their detention. As Chinese officials issued statements concerning their detention on April 1, China may already be in violation of its consular agreement with us. The fact that American consular officials are already present on Hainan Island and the extraordinary circumstances surrounding our plane's emergency landing on Hainan provide the Chinese authorities with an opportunity to demonstrate their good will.

Press reports that Chinese personnel have entered our plane and removed equipment are also deeply disturbing. Under international law, the plane enjoys sovereign immune status as the incident took place in international air space and the plane should not have been entered or tampered with. There is no doubt about the location of the incident as even the Chinese Foreign Ministry press spokesman, Mr. Zhu Bang Zao, acknowledged that it took place 104 kilometers, or 65 miles, at sea.

This incident is the most recent in a series of serious episodes in American-Chinese relations since the establishment of diplomatic relations between our two countries. When the Chinese embassy was mistakenly bombed in Belgrade, we moved quickly to assume responsibility and to make appropriate amends. I hope that the Chinese are now willing to take similar steps to defuse the situation and restore the trust necessary between two great nations. It behooves both countries to exercise restraint and respect for each other. The first step towards resolution is for China to release our detained personnel and equipment. Perhaps they do not realize how profoundly affected Americans are by the perception that their fellow citizens are being mistreated or misused as tools of political propaganda. The seizure of the U.S.S. *Pueblo* by North Korea and the take-

over of the American Embassy in Iran, as examples, remain sores in the American psyche. We deeply resent the mistreatment of Americans for simply being Americans doing their duty under the protection of international law and agreements. We can also understand China's concern over the loss of its pilot and plane. We regret their loss but prolonging this crisis can benefit neither country nor lead to a reconciliation between us.

A first step needs to be taken. I hope the leaders of our two countries do so soon by opening a direct dialogue. May God bless our servicemen and women who are now suffering this time of trial. Our thoughts and prayers are with them constantly.

## EQUAL PAY

Mr. KENNEDY. Mr. President, today, Equal Pay Day, marks the day this year when women's median earnings for 2000 and 2001 to date, catch up with what men earned last year.

It is disgraceful that hard-working women and people of color are still battling wage disparities and pay discrimination on the job. There is a wealth of evidence that shows that the wage gap still continues to plague American families, and that wage discrimination continues to be a serious and pervasive problem in workplaces across the country. In spite of the progress we have made, women still earn only 76 cents for every dollar earned by men. African American women earn just 64 cents, and Latinos earn only 54 cents for every dollar earned by white men.

I have long supported the Equal Pay Act, which was signed into law 37 years ago by President Kennedy, and believe that the wage gap in the United States is unconscionable. Women and people of color should not be treated as second class citizens when it comes to pay. But not everyone shares my view. I was deeply troubled to learn this week that Diana Furchtgott-Roth, one of the strongest and most vigorous opponents to equal pay, was newly named as Chief of Staff to the Council for Economic Advisors.

These pay disparities translate into large costs in lost wages and lost opportunity. The average working woman loses \$4,200 in earnings annually, and suffers a loss of \$420,000 over her career. This gender gap has a long-term impact, since lower wages and lower lifetime earnings lead to lower pension benefits in retirement. The median pension benefit received by new female retirees is less than half that of the benefits received by men.

While some critics argue that the differences in pay are based on different levels of education, years in the workforce, occupational differences and similar factors, these factors alone do not explain away the wage gap. Studies