

UNANIMOUS-CONSENT
AGREEMENT—S. 1200

Mr. REID. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the previous order with respect to H.R. 1328 be vitiated and that the Senate vote on passage of S. 1200, as amended; further, that any order that would have occurred on passage of H.R. 1328 now be effective on passage of S. 1200, and that all other provisions of previous orders remain in effect.

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. Is there objection?

Without objection, it is so ordered.

SCHEDULE

Mr. REID. Mr. President, today we have heard the Farewell Address of General Washington.

Today we will debate the remaining pending amendments to the Indian Health Care Improvement Act. At 5:30 this evening, we will have a cloture vote on the substitute amendment and votes in relation to two of the pending germane amendments by Senator DEMINT.

INDIAN HEALTH CARE

Mr. REID. Mr. President, in the month since this year's congressional session has opened, we have had the ability to focus on some of the domestic priorities our country faces.

Today we turn to the Indian Health Care Improvement Act. Although we often have legitimate disagreements on matters of policy, Senator McCONNELL and members of the Republican Caucus have worked with us in a bipartisan manner on what we believe is a critical piece of legislation that does so much for the Native American community. I appreciate their efforts.

Chairman DORGAN and Senator MURKOWSKI deserve our thanks for their leadership and hard work in managing this legislation.

Chairman BAUCUS and Senator GRASSLEY followed suit, working on a bipartisan basis on provisions to improve the way by which the Indian health care system and tribal recipients can participate more fully in Social Security and the benefits that relate to health in Social Security. Senators KENNEDY, BINGAMAN, KYL, and ENZI spent years working on this legislation. Because of their efforts and those of countless tribal leaders and Federal agency staff, this is legislation that Democrats and Republicans can all support now.

A final word of praise is due to the tribal advocates who stood behind this cause from the beginning: The National Congress of American Indians, the National Indian Health Board, the National Council of Urban Indian Health, the Indian Health Board of Nevada, and other State tribal organizations which

have played crucial roles in this legislation. I say with confidence that this bill reflects their priorities, their varied interests, and their solutions to the problems that plague the health care system upon which Native Americans rely.

I was glad to be an original cosponsor of this initiative. Over the past 8 years, my staff and I have had countless meetings with tribal leaders. Now tribal leaders are making clear how this legislation is needed all over the country. It is needed for 30,000 Native Americans living in Nevada and millions living throughout the United States.

Right now, our Native American communities have access to the least adequate health care in America. Far too many Native children are diagnosed with diabetes, suffer from abuse and neglect or die prematurely because of accidents or illness that could have been prevented or cured with basic health care. Far too many adult Indians get lost in a sea of bureaucracy and fail to receive preventive care and other health benefits they need and deserve. We can and must do better, and this legislative initiative will help Federal and tribal health professionals deliver quality care to Native Americans of all ages. It supports the recruitment and retention of doctors, nurses, pharmacists, and other health professionals for Indian health programs. It strengthens and expands health services to American Indians. For the first time, tribes will be allowed to use Federal funds to provide hospice, long-term care and home-based and community-based care for elders and the most vulnerable tribal members. It increases individual access to health services by facilitating third-party reimbursements from private insurance, Medicaid, Medicare, and other Federal health benefit programs. It expressly addresses behavioral health needs of adults and children by authorizing programs to address suicide, substance abuse, sexual abuse, and domestic violence programs affecting some communities and households. It furthers tribal self-determination sovereignty by authorizing consultation and rulemaking on important programs affecting health delivery and access.

Chairman DORGAN has often said America spends more on health care, per person, on Federal prisoners than on Native Americans. Senator DORGAN has said that many times. This bill is only part of the solution, but it is a critical first step. I urge all my colleagues to finish work and approve this bill in the same spirit of bipartisan cooperation it has seen from the beginning.

Millions of our first Americans await our action. Let's quickly pass this bill and send it to the President for his signature. We must let our country's Native Americans know they are not forgotten and that we will deliver them the care they have earned.

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. The Republican leader is recognized.

FISA

Mr. McCONNELL. Mr. President, this is going to be a very busy few weeks and a very important few weeks. First, we have to complete the Indian health bill. Then we will have a debate on progress in Iraq. After the Iraq debate, we will turn to the economy and home ownership, and then the annual budget debate when the two parties put their priorities on the table.

So in the midst of an extremely consequential Presidential race, the Senate will debate some of the most important issues of the day, including terrorism and the economy.

But the debate over FISA—the Terrorist Surveillance Act—should be over. A bipartisan majority in the Senate has already voted to revise and extend our Nation's foreign intelligence surveillance program. A majority in the House, we know—a bipartisan majority—supports the Senate bill, and the Director of National Intelligence says our ability to track terrorists was weakened by the House leadership's failure to act.

This failure to act on FISA has weakened our ability to track terrorists. For the safety of the American people, the House needs to take up the Senate bill that got 68 votes in the Senate, and it should do so without further delay.

Two competing plans for moving America forward will be on vivid display over the next few weeks. The two parties will make their case on the issues that matter most. Republicans are ready and eager for the debate.

I yield the floor.

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. The Senator from Illinois is recognized.

Mr. DURBIN. Mr. President, I thank the minority leader of the Senate, Senator McCONNELL, for making that statement, but I would like to amend it. I would like to add something he failed to add and failed to advise the Senate.

We offered to extend the terrorist surveillance law. We said there shouldn't be any gap in terms of the efforts of the United States to monitor these conversations. We made a repeated effort on the floor of the Senate to extend the law. Each and every time we offered to extend the law, an objection was heard from either Senator McCONNELL or another person on the Republican side. It appears this is not about the security advantage of the United States in fighting terrorism but about some political advantage that if this law appears to lapse, they believe they can make some political gain, I guess. That is the only thing I can deduce is their reason; otherwise, they would have extended this important