Mr. President, for

the information of my colleagues, what

we are considering is something that

has been negotiated extensively. It has

passed the House of Representatives. It

has been negotiated extensively in the

Foreign Relations Committee amongst

the members interested. It is on the

issue of North Korean human rights, or

the lack thereof, and U.S. policy.

This bill establishes for the first

time—the first time in at least a generation—

a human rights principle toward

North Korea. Everybody is familiar

with the six-party talks that are

going on regarding North Korea and

nuclear weapons and the threatening

nature of the North Korean Government,

of its testing missiles, of it moving

military operations to threaten

people around the country, in South

Korea, in Japan, and in particular the

United States to give them direct aid

to guarantee their security, and issues

mostly surrounding the nuclear weapons

development.

This bill brings into focus a United

States Government position on North

Korean human rights abuses, which are

extensive, probably the worst human

rights abuses in the world. It is at least

in the top two or three, and that is saying

something when you consider what

is taking place in the Sudan and Iran.

North Korea lost 10 percent of its

population in the last 10 years to starvation.

We think they have something

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around 150,000 people, maybe more, in

the gulag system, political prisoners.

There is trafficking of individuals taking

place within that country. They

are counterfeiting money. They are

drug running. They are gunrunning.

This is a criminal enterprise that is

taking place.

This bill deals with the human rights

issues. It brings it front and center.

The bill requires a report to be issued.

It requires the Secretary of State to

put forward a person of high distinction

to press the human rights agenda,

and we hope to get the issue of human

rights in North Korea elevated to the

same level or in the level with the

talks in the six-party system.

The North Korean Government, when

it talks about nuclear weapons development,

will bluster and talk a great

deal and say they need to be able to do

this and they are threatening, but

when you raise the issue of human

rights, they go silent because there is

no response to the shame of what they

have done to their own people.

We are elevating this issue and making

clear the United States Government

position on the issue of human

rights in North Korea. This is a very

important bill. I am delighted we

passed it this evening.

I wanted to give that brief explanation

of this bill as it moves through

the process, now to go back to the

House and to the President.

I thank my colleague from Maine for

yielding the floor and giving me this

time. I yield the floor, and I suggest

the absence of a quorum.