effective once Congress has passed it and, in this case, three-fourths of the State legislatures having ratified it. Instead, we put a whole new condition on the amendment that we have before us, the amendment to be ratified: The passage of a 7-year budget reconciliation act.

That is not a constitutional convention for the ratification of an amendment. And I think this amendment by the leader of the minority should be beaten.

We have heard it said that if Congress may constitutionally insist as a condition for ratification that the States ratify a proposed constitutional amendment within 7 years, then it is constitutional for Congress to impose a condition such as the Daschle amendment before Congress submits the proposal to the States. This analysis is incorrect for two reasons.

First, the courts have upheld limitations on the ratification process, but no case has ever upheld the imposition of a condition for initiating ratification proceedings once Congress has adopted an amendment.

Second, the Supreme Court has ruled that although it is a political question, article V implicitly requires a contemporaneous majority to ratify an amendment. Thus, a 7-year or equivalent period is a constitutional necessity under the case law. But no such status pertains to the proposal by the Senator from South Dakota.

So, Mr. President, we should pass the balanced budget amendment. We should not adopt the Daschle amendment to that amendment because it is impractical and because it is unconstitutional. The American people want us to end business as usual. They see the so-called right-to-know amendment to be business as usual—a business-as-usual approach, rejected by the people in the November 8 election, a business-as-usual approach rejected by Congress for the first time in 40 years, as we try to bring to a vote all of the things that have been buried in Congress by a Congress controlled for 40 years by the now minority party.

We accept our responsibilities to reject business as usual, with our surveys showing 80 percent support for the constitutional amendment for a balanced budget. It has been before this body four or five times over the past 15 years. Now is the time to pass it.

I yield the floor and the remainder of my time.

Mr. BRYAN addressed the Chair.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Nevada [Mr. BRYAN], is recognized.

Mr. BRYAN. Mr. President, if the Chair and the acting floor manager will indulge me, I ask unanimous consent to speak for 3 minutes as in morning business and to extend the time before the recess.

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

ILLEGAL IMMIGRANTS OCCUPYING PUBLIC HOUSING

Mr. BRYAN. I thank the Chair and my colleague from Iowa. Mr. President, I want to call the attention of my colleagues a situation, which I discovered during our recent December recess, dealing with public housing.

Since 1980, the law has been clear that those who are illegal immigrants are not entitled to occupy public housing. So I was somewhat astonished in visiting with a housing authority director in my own State and to have him tell me that in the city of Reno, he would estimate that approximately 10 percent, maybe a little more, maybe a little less of those who occupy public housing are, in fact, illegal immigrants. At the same time, in the city of Reno—and I think this is replicated throughout the country—there are some 500 families waiting to occupy public housing.

So I asked the question, well, if it is illegal for them to occupy public housing, why have you not done something about it? That, Mr. President, is an astonishing story. In 1982, 1984, and 1986, apparently, efforts were made to implement by regulation what the statute establishes by way of policy. Through a series of administrative or bureaucratic delays and obfuscation, in fact, none of these regulations have been implemented.

So currently the housing authority directors in America are told that although the 1980 law remains in effect, you may not inquire and you may not verify the resident status of those persons who seek to make application to occupy public housing. May I say, Mr. President, this is absolutely absurd and ridiculous.

The law says that they ought not to be eligible—those who are illegal immigrants—to occupy public housing. Nevertheless, they are permitted to do so. There is a glimmer of hope. That is, that there is a rule making its way through the Office of Management and Budget, and I urge OMB to implement that regulation immediately so that the policy since 1988 may be carried out.

I thank you, Mr. President for your courtesy and that of the distinguished Senator from Iowa.

I yield the floor.

RECESS UNTIL 2:15 P.M.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Under the previous order, the hour of 12:30 p.m. having arrived, the Senate will stand in recess until the hour of 2:15 p.m.

Thereupon, the Senate, at 12:38 p.m., recessed until 2:15 p.m.; whereupon, the Senate reassembled when called to order by the Presiding Officer (Mr. COHEN).

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Chair recognizes the Senator from Indiana.

(Mr. THOMPSON assumed the chair.)

Mr. COATS. Mr. President, for decades Congress has enjoyed the unlimited luxury of unlimited debt. Our practices, which are pleasing for the moment to constituencies that profit from the practice of unlimited debt, have seriously undermined the credibility of this institution with the American people.

Skepticism and cynicism abound. That skepticism and cynicism—directed toward those who have made hollow promises, unfulfilled year after year, perceived to have been made for political purposes—brought about, in my opinion, the results that we saw in the November election. The American people want Congress to be honest and to be straightforward with them, even if it brings some unpleasant truths.

Now, with the passage in the House of Representatives of the balanced budget amendment by a historic 301 to 132 vote, the spotlight has turned on the Senate. As such, we, in a sense, are on trial. Our credibility is at stake. We are debating something of which the American people have become very well aware—the impact, year after year, for 25 straight years, of expenditures that exceed our revenues.

It has become apparent to the American people that we are forfeiting not only our own future but, more importantly, that of future generations and their opportunity to participate in the American dream.

I do not think there should be any argument about the urgency of our circumstances. Every child born in America inherits about $18,000 in public debt. This unfair burden placed on the future is the result of a failure of political will and it is a betrayal of moral commitments.

It was Thomas Jefferson who noted long ago:

> The question of whether one generation has the right to bind another by the deficit it imposes is a question of such consequence as to place it among the fundamental principles of Government. We should consider ourselves unauthorized to saddle posterity with our debts, and be morally bound to pay them ourselves.

''The fundamental principles of Government,'' Jefferson noted. What is perhaps the most fundamental of those fundamental principles?

It is the same principle that applies to each person in our individual lives, to our family life, to corporate America, to business America, to virtually every institution. That fundamental principle involves being responsible and accountable to the people we serve, to our employees, to our family members, to ourselves. It means not spending more than we receive and running up a debt to the extent where we have become unable to pay that debt. Or, in paying that debt, we must squander resources that should go for essential purposes and essential services.

That is exactly what has happened here in the United States. We now face a national debt of $4.8 trillion. Applied across the board per capita that is