

America approaches the 21st century as the most advanced civilization man has ever seen. We have the world's largest and most vibrant economy and remain the only military superpower left standing after the cold war. We should be looking toward the new millennium with nothing but enthusiastic expectations of greatness for ourselves and our children. Yet we confront an enemy today that threatens the very fabric of our society.

Crime in the United States is on the rise, and the violence and insecurity it breeds will erode the American people's faith in their elected government and destroy the dreams of the hundreds of millions who have pinned their hopes on our success. It is unsurprising, too, that their faith is wavering when one considers just a few of the startling facts about the demise of law and order in our country.

Today 8 out of every 10 Americans can expect to be the victim of a violent crime at least once in their lives. Since 1960, crime has increased by over 300 percent, and violent crime has gone up by over 550 percent. The rate of homicide is five times greater here than in Europe, and four times greater than in neighboring Canada. Rape in the United States is seven times more likely than in Europe.

What is even sadder is that these statistics have a disproportionate impact on our children. Teenagers are 2½ times more likely to be victims of violent crime than those over 20. And from 1960 to 1991, the rate of homicide deaths among children under age 19 more than quadrupled.

In what has become an oft-consulted collection of documents for many of the Members of this Congress, John Jay wrote in the Federalist Papers these very poignant words: "Among the many objects to which a wise and free people find it necessary to direct their attention, that of providing for their safety seems first." If indeed public safety is our first priority, then we as a body have been given an opportunity to carry out our obligation.

As the contract's crime package passes the House, I congratulate my colleagues' strong support for each of the six separate measures. The package includes a strengthening of the death penalty and longer prison sentences for criminals. It makes it more difficult for criminal aliens to remain among us, and closes loopholes in the law that for too long have set the guilty free on technicalities. It puts more police on the streets, gives local units of government wide latitude to develop crime prevention programs, and finally recognizes the rights of the victims for a change.

These reforms represent the best hope for us to begin restoring the rule of law of our land, and they reflect the will of a large majority of Americans. Most Americans believe strong, swift punishment acts as a credible deterrent to individuals who might consider committing a crime.

This package acts on that belief and reflects their philosophy in six different but important ways. It promises to make real steps toward catching, convicting, and incarcerating more murderers, rapists, and thieves.

The debate over these crime bills has embroiled us in more than an exchange of competing partisan ideas. It has in fact engaged us in a struggle that effects the very core of American society. Despite all of our Nation's glorious successes, our robust economy, our military prowess, and our clear and unquestioned recognition as the leader of the free

world, we cannot expect our Nation to survive, let alone remain on top, if it continues to rot from within.

As the discussions end, I once again congratulate my colleagues on taking swift and strong action on behalf of the well-being and safety of our Nation. We owe it to every American to make the war on crime our paramount concern, and tonight we can go home knowing that while we certainly did not solve all our problems, we have indeed made great strides in the right direction.

75TH ANNIVERSARY OF THE LEAGUE OF WOMEN VOTERS

HON. RON KLINK

OF PENNSYLVANIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, February 14, 1995

Mr. KLINK. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to congratulate the League of Women Voters on their 75th anniversary.

The League of Women Voters has been a stalwart and steadfast defender of democracy in this country since 1920. Their activism has been and continues to be an example to all citizens.

In my district, the League is an undeviating participant in the electoral process. It encourages the informed and active participation of Western Pennsylvanians in their government, works to increase public understanding of major policy issues and influences public policy through education and advocacy.

The League emerged from the struggles of the women's suffrage movement and continued to fight on a variety of issues from child labor laws to environmental concerns. Its members, both men and women, work on problems at the State and local level as well.

I commend the League of Women Voters on three-quarters of a century of good work. I hope to participate when they reach their 100th anniversary.

THE CARL GARNER FEDERAL LANDS CLEANUP ACT

HON. BLANCHE LAMBERT LINCOLN

OF ARKANSAS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, February 14, 1995

Mrs. LINCOLN. Mr. Speaker, today I rise to pay tribute to a man who has given so much to his country and to the State of Arkansas. I have just introduced legislation to rename the "Federal Lands Cleanup Act," the "Carl Garner Federal Lands Cleanup Act."

This honor is well deserved as Mr. Garner was the inspiration behind the enactment of the Cleanup Act in 1985. Mr. Garner is the Resident Engineer with the Army Corps of Engineers in Greers Ferry Lake, AR, and his devotion to a cleaner environment goes back several decades.

In 1970, Mr. Garner organized a group of local volunteers to pick up trash accumulated along the shores of Greers Ferry Lake. This one day cleanup event escalated to an annual event throughout the State of Arkansas. Last year alone, more than 24,000 Arkansans participated in the cleanup at more than 100 sites in Arkansas.

This devotion to the protection of our environment attracted the attention of Senator

BUMPERS, who was the lead sponsor of the Federal Lands Cleanup Day of 1985. This bill promotes the concept of community partnership and pride in our Federal lands to protect our valuable natural resources.

It is with great pride and esteem that I rise to introduce this piece of legislation to honor Mr. Carl Garner, who embodies the notion of public service.

H.R. —

Be it enacted by the Senate and House of Representatives of the United States of America in Congress assembled,

SECTION 1. THE CARL GARNER FEDERAL LANDS CLEANUP ACT.

The Federal Lands Cleanup Act of 1985 (36 U.S.C. 169I-169I-1) is amended by striking "Federal Lands Cleanup Day" each place it appears and inserting "Carl Garner Federal Lands Cleanup Day."

BALANCED BUDGET BINGO

HON. ANDREW JACOBS, JR.

OF INDIANA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, February 14, 1995

Mr. JACOBS. Mr. Speaker, the following article is journalism at its best; it effectively translates something that is obscure, yet vital to our well being as a nation. And the translation itself is not simply one more frustrating attempt to breach the portals to the arcane.

[From the Indianapolis News, Feb. 11, 1995]

BALANCED BUDGET BINGO

(By David L. Haase)

WASHINGTON.—Can an average American citizen balance the federal budget without starving the needy, abandoning the elderly or taxing businesses out of business?

More to the point, after a middle-aged reporter does the deed, will his 71-year-old mother on Social Security still talk to him?

I dared to think so when I stepped into the basement office of the Bipartisan Commission on Entitlement and Tax Reform, ready to tackle the deficit using its computer.

The deficit is a hot topic on Capitol Hill. Two weeks ago, the U.S. House approved an amendment to the Constitution that would require the government to balance the federal budget. The Senate is debating the issue.

But what does a balanced budget mean for Americans? The commission, now out of business, had a computer game that could tell us.

Sen. Bob Kerrey, D-Neb., forced President Clinton into naming the commission as the price of his support for the 1993 budget deal.

It was never a Clinton priority. Its office in the basement of the Russell Office Building showed that it wasn't much of a priority for the Senate either.

The staff worked at used computers plopped on aged wooden government-issue desks and tables.

The commission went kaput without its 32 members ever agreeing on a way to halt the growth of entitlement spending. The task proved too painful.

Entitlement spending is mandatory. Neither Congress nor the president can deny these funds to any eligible comer.

On the other hand, discretionary spending, which Congress approves from year to year, amounts to only 40 percent of federal spending.

In the commission's view, entitlements are THE problem with the federal budget.

These programs include Social Security, Medicare, Medicaid, federal pensions, farm subsidy programs, unemployment compensation and certain welfare programs.

Without a change in policy, entitlement spending and interest on the national debt will consume almost all federal revenues in 2012—about the time David Letterman reaches retirement age.

By 2030, when Michael Jordan and Julia Roberts turn 65, federal revenues won't even cover entitlement spending.

So, there I stood in the commission's doorway, eager to reverse the tide of history with the help of the commission's Budget Shadows computer game.

Heather Lamm, a commission researcher, explained the rules.

Cut enough spending and raise enough taxes to score 100 points, and you balance the entitlement side of the budget.

In other words, you keep the deficit equal to 2.3 percent of GDP, or gross domestic product. That's the value of all goods and services in the U.S. economy.

Without big changes, the commission figures the deficit will skyrocket to 18.9 percent of GDP by 2030.

The perfect score of 100 does not balance the entire federal budget. To do that, you have to score 115. But 100 does keep the problem from getting worse.

David Modaff, the commission's computer consultant, put it a little more bluntly.

"All the screaming now (about how large the deficit is), that's your goal," he said. "To keep it at that level."

(And, I added to myself, keep Mom talking to me.)

Budget Shadows offered me 50 options in four categories:

- Health care
- Taxes
- Social Security
- Other federal entitlements

I started in health care. Spending in this part of the economy grows far faster than anything else.

After reviewing 16 options and getting confused by Medicare Part A, Medicare Part B and Medicaid, I decided to move on to a section where they speak English.

Not a great start, but I had learned something.

I needed a strategy so I would make decisions in each category based on the same logic.

First, cut spending before raising taxes.

Second, do something about COLAs—the automatic cost-of-living increases that kick up federal spending without Congress or the President ever saying yea or nay.

Third, means-test everything. In essence, if you make more than a certain amount, I decided you don't need this government program.

Leaving health care behind (just like Congress and the president last year). I charged into the non-Social Security entitlements like Medicare, unemployment and veterans' compensation benefits and started making decisions.

1. Means test non-Social Security entitlements. Score: 15 points. Only 85 to go.

2. Adjust the Consumer Price Index, the leading formula for measuring price increases, to better measure inflation for non-Social Security entitlements—10 more points. One-quarter of the way home and Mom was still talking to me.

This stuff was easy!

Next stop—either taxes or Social Security. I figured I would tax as a last resort, so on to Social Security.

3. Means test Social Security. Social Security was never intended to replace retirees' savings or be the sole source of their retirement income.

This option would keep it available as an income floor for the neediest but would also encourage others to plan better for their retirements. Nine points. That gives me 34. Cruising.

4. It's COLA time. Budget Shadows offers two options: Cancel the Social Security COLA for one year or revise the way it is calculated.

I picked the revision. Four points.

5. Gradually raise the retirement age.

Americans can now retire with full Social Security benefits for the rest of their lives at age 65. That is scheduled to change in 2000 when the retirement age will gradually rise—to age 67 by the year 2022.

I got three options here: Phase in the 67 retirement age sooner, raise it to 68 or raise it to 70. I picked age 70. Take 5 more points. At 43 points, I'm not even halfway there.

In the interest of fairness, I did pass up the chance to tax more Social Security benefits.

6. Include all new state and local government employees in Social Security.

This is too complex to explain, but it helps cash flow now and defers payments until later. Two more points. Makes the total 45.

7. Index the Social Security benefits formula for overall inflation instead of just increases in average wages. Seven points.

I passed up the chance to change the Social Security payroll tax base or raise the tax rate. They sounded too taxing.

Budget Shadows liked what I had done.

"Congratulations," it beeped at me. "You have restored Social Security to actuarial balance."

I didn't know what "actuarial balance" meant, but it sounded good.

At this point, I passed the halfway mark, and I had not increased a single tax.

"Amazing," the computer told me. "You've cut the 2030 deficit to 11 percent of GDP."

That's down from the 18.9 percent the entitlement commission thinks we're headed toward.

I liked this computer.

Now it was on to taxes. Watch my restraint.

8. Limit the home mortgage interest deduction.

Once again, two options: Kill it. (Not me.) Or reduce the maximum mortgage from \$1 million to \$300,000. (Done.) One point.

I refused to tinker with boosting the capital gains tax on estates, with curtailing itemized deductions for charitable contributions and with eliminating the tax deduction for state and local taxes.

Taxes only gave me one point, so the next choices would demand big impact.

Only one place to go. Back to health care—and catastrophe.

I discovered that somewhere along the way I had pushed buttons I had not meant to. I'd selected two options here already.

That made my first choice—means test non-Social Security entitlements—look like a 15-point hit when in fact it got me only six-tenths of a point. When I corrected everything, my score of 52 plunged to 37.

I had caused all that havoc in Social Security; Mom wouldn't talk to me, and, instead of being halfway home, I was barely one-third of the way there.

What a dumb game.

Just to be sure, I recalculated everything and my score rose to 41. "Interaction" among the choices can change things as much as 10 percent, Lamm explained. At least this 10 percent "interacted" in my favor.

More decisions. Would they never end?

9. Means-test health care benefits for Medicare. I got nine points, but "interaction" only raised my score to 47.

It was lunch time now, and I had been hunched over that computer almost three hours.

I needed bigger cuts faster, but I was running out of options.

10. Tackle Medicare Part B. This is the voluntary part of Medicare that pays for doctors' visits, lab work and outpatient hospital visits. The elderly pay a monthly premium and a \$100 deductible.

I raised the deductible to \$300 a year and indexed premiums so the enrollees' share would stay at current levels. That gave me 11 points, but "interaction" allowed only a 57 score.

I could have raised eligibility age and costs on Medicare Part A, the hospitalization part, but I figured older people need this. Were you listening, Mom?

Medicare/Medicaid outlay savings. This single option represents a blizzard of changes in the way doctors and hospitals are paid for Medicare services and also caps Medicaid payments to the states.

I had to make big savings, and this option spread for pain around. Fourteen points.

My score was 71. My bladder was full. My stomach was empty. And my bottom was sore. [No federal funds were wasted on the charts at the entitlement commission.]

I had combed all four categories of options for something acceptable—and BIG. Now I had to go back to taxes.

So far, I thought, I had placed the burden of balancing entitlement spending on those who receive the entitlements.

As a result of my choices:

Benefits paid to the elderly, the sick and the poor would rise more slowly.

Old folks would pay more of their health care costs.

My generation—the baby boomers—would retire much later in life than our parents.

Mom stopped talking to me ages ago.

I made my last decision. After this, my working wife wouldn't talk to me. My brother and sisters wouldn't talk to me. My co-workers wouldn't talk to me. And I would likely die in a driveby shooting.

But this last choice gave me 24 points and boosted my score to 95, within "interaction" reach of holding the line on the deficit.

In fact, my score chart showed the deficit would inch up to only 3 percent of GDP over the next 35 years. Instead of rising to 18.9 percent, as the commission feared.

The computer liked me. "Amazing," it said.

I was grateful someone liked me.

Starting in the year 2000, phase in over five years taxation of employer-provided health care benefits as though they were cash income.

That's right. You would pay income taxes on your health insurance if your boss buys it.

This would more accurately reflect an employer's true cost of hiring someone. It should get people thinking about health care costs and how much is paid on their behalf.

I had to do it to balance the budget. Really.

Hello. Hello? Anybody out there? Mom?

NATIONAL SALUTE TO HOSPITALIZED VETERANS HIGHLIGHTS PT PHONE HOME PROJECT

HON. G.V. (SONNY) MONTGOMERY

OF MISSISSIPPI

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, February 14, 1995

Mr. MONTGOMERY. Mr. Speaker, today is the Department of Veterans Affairs' [VA] 22nd