

the votes to have capital gains. I will give you an amendment that says you can take up to \$1 million in capital gains during your lifetime, but no more than \$1 million. Of course, \$1 million does not mean very much to the people in this country who are going to benefit from the suggestions we are seeing, but I want to see who supports families that have less than \$1 million and who supports families that have more. Because if we are going to construct tax cuts that help families, let us target them, let us help American families who are out there working and struggling and trying to make ends meet.

Again I say, at the risk of being overly repetitive this morning, I hope all of those who spent the last couple of months talking about the dangers of the Federal deficit would stay in harness and be part of the team, keep marching and keep pulling when it comes to dealing with the deficit. We must not be diverted by polls and charts and by the attractiveness of deciding now is the time, with the kind of deficit we have, to propose nearly \$200 billion in tax cuts during the coming 5 years.

I read my children children's books from time to time. They love the Berenstain Bears. The one I read them most often, perhaps, is the "The Berenstain Bears Get the Gimmies," and in that book the parents can simply never seem able to control the habit of the Berenstain cubs saying "Gimmie this, gimmie that, gimmie this." It is the way I feel about the tax cut proposals in the House and Senate by people who talk about the need to deal with the deficit and come to the floor saying: Gimmie this tax cut, gimmie that tax cut because it will gain favor with the American people.

That is not what this is all about, it seems to me. Our responsibility is to do the right thing. And I hope it will be agreed by everyone in this Chamber that the right thing is to aggressively work to cut Federal spending and then to decide to use that savings to cut the Federal budget deficit, and then, when we finish that job, to decide that we will turn our attention to dealing with the tax issues as they affect families—yes, all American families, and, yes, families that work and struggle and spend most of their day trying to make ends meet. That, it seems to me, represents the priorities all of us have an obligation to pursue here in this Chamber.

I yield the floor.

Several Senators addressed the Chair.

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Mr. BURNS). The Senator from Oklahoma.

Mr. INHOFE. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent to proceed for 5 minutes as in morning business.

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

THE FAMILIES FIRST BILL AND THE LINE-ITEM VETO

Mr. INHOFE. Mr. President, I have a couple of comments I wanted to make, a couple in response to the distinguished Senator from North Dakota and also one concerning line-item veto.

We heard from the Senator from Indiana many of the good things that would come in terms of accountability with the adoption of a responsible line-item veto for our procedure here in this Chamber. I suggest he may have overlooked one thing.

It is true the President of the United States, whether he is a Republican or a Democrat, whether he is a liberal or a conservative, would be held accountable for those things in which he really believed. If you look at a spending bill that goes to the desk of the President of the United States that has 100 unrelated spending matters in it, there is pork for all the favorites, yet there may be something in there for veterans benefits. So he will stand up and say, "I am against all this pork but I have to sign it because I am for the benefits for veterans. They are well deserved." If we had line-item veto, he can support those things he proclaims to support and reject those that he proclaims to reject.

But the one thing that was not articulated by the Senator from Indiana is it also makes us more accountable, in that once you veto one item and that item is sent back to the Senate and to the House, it forces those Members to get on record so they can no longer answer their mail saying I was really against all those pork projects but I had to do it for the veterans.

So I think the name of the line-item veto is really accountability for the President as well as for the Members of the House and the Members of the Senate.

As far as the families first bill, I would only like to suggest, if one heard the complete presentation on this bill, he would see this could be accomplished and we could balance the budget by the year 2002, have the tax relief for the families, and at the same time have a slight growth in Government—not cut any Government programs.

I think it was well articulated by the Senator from Minnesota that, if we had a 2-percent growth cap, this would accomplish what we are trying to accomplish. But when you look at some of the tax cuts that are going to be suggested in the families first bill, you have to go beyond the economics of it and look at the social aspects. It is a fact today that a family of four making \$25,000, living together happily—if that family, the man and wife, should get a divorce and continue to cohabit out of wedlock, and each become the head of a household, they can increase their take-home pay by 13 percent. That is the issue we are trying to get to.

The unfairness of the earnings test for our senior citizens in America—I have had people come to me in town hall meetings and say, "For the first

time in my life I have been forced to be dishonest because I am not reporting income that I am making, because I do not think it is right for the Government to come along and say I cannot have the Social Security I was entitled to because I want to remain productive after age 65."

So I hope when people are considering the families first bill and the various tax cuts on the American family—all ages of that family—that they consider there are aspects other than economic aspects to be considered.

Since the 1960's we have gotten ourselves into a position where families are no longer important, no longer relevant, no longer significant. This is what the revolution of November 8 was all about. We are going to reverse that.

I yield my time.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The minority leader.

Mr. DASCHLE. Mr. President, I am going to take some leader time. We are, hopefully, about to come to some agreement on the business of the day, but until that happens I have a statement I wish to make on another matter.

MISSOURI RIVER MASTER MANUAL

Mr. DASCHLE. Mr. President, last week, Senator BAUCUS introduced the Missouri River Water Control Equity Act. I have cosponsored that bill because all the analysis of the current master manual guidelines for managing the dams along the Missouri River that I have seen confirms that change in the corp's management of the river is long overdue.

The assumptions about economic uses that drive the management of the river have not been seriously reexamined or revised in 50 years. In those 50 years, times and conditions have changed dramatically. But the management of the river has not kept pace.

In 1992, the General Accounting Office noted that the master manual for operating the dams is outdated. GAO concluded that the corps has been managing the river based on "assumptions about the amount of water needed for navigation and irrigation made in 1944 that are no longer valid."

According to GAO, "the plan does not reflect the current economic conditions in the Missouri River Basin."

The Corps of Engineers, caught between the competing self-interest of the upstream and downstream States, has recommended only modest revisions in the master manual. In May 1994, the corps selected a "preferred alternative," which calls for shortening the navigation season by 1 month and a higher spring flow rate.

Given the conditions that now exist along the Missouri River, these changes are clearly insufficient to equitably distribute the economic benefits of the river. For example, shortening the navigation season by only 1 month means that the concerns of the