this is not the place, this is not the forum, this is not the right way, this is not sending the right message to seniors. This provision ought to be stricken.

That is what we are suggesting. I think the Senator is absolutely correct in his assumption as he proposes the question tonight. I am happy to yield to the Senator.

Mr. WARNER. Mr. President, I just hope as my two colleagues are discussing an issue of Medicare, particularly the Senator from Connecticut, I find that you omitted any reference to the report of the trustees, trustees appointed by the President of the United States, who came back and clearly provided this body, the Congress, with a report saying that Medicare is going broke and that something has to be done. I hope the Senator, as he addresses this issue, would include reference to that report.

I, myself, am still hopeful. I just had a brief meeting with the majority leader. There are conscientious efforts underway to resolve this impasse. I am privileged to represent a great many Federal employees. I would like to see it resolved.

When I hear debate like this and no reference to that trustees' report, I feel it is selective argument.

Mr. DASCHLE. Let me retain the floor and say the answer to that comment is very simple: The increase in premium that the majority has included in the continuing resolution does not solve the solvency problem by one nickel. It has absolutely nothing to do with solvency. It has nothing to do with the trust fund. It has nothing to do with the long-term projections of the future of the trust fund. It has nothing to do with the trustees' report.

The trustees said we have to resolve the trust fund solvency issue and, toward that end, we have to find ways to save $89 billion. Nothing in part B changes or premium increases has anything to do with the trust fund, which is in part A.

That is why both of us have expressed our grave concern about what we are doing here. Perhaps if the premium increase had something to do with the trust fund, we could better understand—though I would still argue that this should be decided in the broader context of Medicare reform—the emergency need to include it in a continuing resolution. But it does not. There is absolutely no connection.

That makes it all the more critical, it seems to us, to take some time to consider whether or not it is fair to ask seniors to do something that we are not asking anybody else to do, to determine whether or not even in the overall context of Medicare reform this has a place. Certainly, I hope the Senator from Virginia would agree.

Just to finish, certainly the Senator from Virginia would agree that without hearings, without any full appreciation of what it is we are doing here, to add it to the continuing resolution is not a prudent thing to do.

I yield again to the Senator from Connecticut.

Mr. DODD. I appreciate the Senator's yielding.

My good friend from Virginia has raised the issue of the trustees' report. The trustees' report from last year painted a darker picture than this year, but I did not hear a single voice being raised about the condition of the trust fund a year ago. That is No. 1.

No. 2, we are now cutting $270 billion in the proposal out of the Medicare trust fund, as the distinguished Democratic leader has pointed out, Mr. President. No one can explain to anyone why that number was chosen, except in the context of the tax breaks of $245 billion. The only way you can pay for them is that size of a cut in Medicaid. There is no relationship between the size of that cut and what the trustees reported were the proposals with Medicare. That is point No. 2.

Point No. 3 is the one the Democratic leader has made in the discussion here, that matter that is included in this resolution deals with part B, which does not have anything to do with the trust fund whatsoever. So it is totally unrelated.

The last point I would make is this one. Normally, here, when there is a matter of this import involving this many Americans and something as critical as their health care, you would think there might be a set of hearings where we, as Members of this body, would enjoy the benefit of people who spend every day working at these issues as to how we might fix this problem.

There has not been a single day of hearings, not one, on this issue. We have had 27 days of hearings on Whitewater. We had 11 days of hearings on Waco. We had 10 days of hearings on Ruby Ridge. And not 1 day, not a single day, not 1 hour, not 1 hour of hearings on Medicare.

Mr. President, for 37 million Americans, their safety net in health care is being written into this piece of paper, passed without even the considerations of what the implications are for people. That is not the way to legislate. That is not the way to deal with a legitimate issue of how you bring some trust and some faith and some soundness to the Medicare trust funds.

So for those reasons some of us, as I said a moment ago, object to this because, frankly, we are just writing this into this particular proposal. We are not really examining how to fix this issue.

As I said a moment ago, the debate is not whether or not we ought to do something about the trust fund. The Democratic leader has spoken on numerous occasions about the importance of doing that. We all understand that. But that is not what this proposal is. It is written in here primarily, as was pointed out earlier by the Senator from Nevada, to provide the resources for a tax break.

Here we are, going to shut down the Federal Government in 3 or 4 hours, thousands of people are either going to lose pay or be sitting home wondering what is going to happen tomorrow, and it comes down to this issue: Whether or not you can muscle the President into signing a continuing resolution which goes right at the heart of senior citizens, when a simple resolution extending the continuing resolution for a week or two would avoid the problem altogether.

It is a backhanded way of dealing with a very serious, very legitimate issue that must be dealt with in a more profound way than we are this evening. I thank the Democratic leader.

DISCUSSIONS ON THE PRESIDENT'S TRIP TO ISRAEL

Mr. DASCHLE. Mr. President, let me add another point that I think is important. It has been discussed over the weekend again, and for the life of me I cannot understand how this got started, but there has been some discussion, led particularly by the Speaker of the House, that on the trip to Israel last week the President did not come back to discuss any of these matters with leadership.

I must tell you, I was there. The minority leader of the House, DICK GEPHARDT, was there. The majority leader was there, and the Speaker was there. The Israeli Ambassador was there. So there are a number of people who were there who can vouch for what I am about to tell you.

The fact is that, not once, not twice, but on a number of occasions throughout that trip, both going and coming back, the President came back and expressed himself, talked with us, hoped we could work something out. We did not talk specifics, but we talked very specifically about the desire to resolve these differences. Not only did the President come back to talk to us, but on a number of occasions his Chief of Staff, Leon Panetta, came back.

As I say, I do not know how this got started. But there ought to be no question, and we ought to put to rest once and for all this rumor, this innuendo, this statement on the part of Republican leadership, especially the Speaker, that the President did not express any interest in open discussion of this issue.

He was there with some frequency. He came back on a number of occasions. And, of course, it was the Speaker's prerogative to seek the President if he felt so strongly about the need to talk. He could have come up. If he did not think it was enough, as many times as the President came back and as many times as his Chief of Staff came back—if that was not enough—he could have sought out the President. There was no ''do not enter'' sign in the quarters. There was no statement, ''you are not welcome up here.'' There was every opportunity for people to come, every opportunity to talk with

the President, every opportunity to express themselves to the Chief of Staff or to the President.

So I must say, again, it does a real disservice to this dialog and, really, to a factual and honest accounting of what happened on that trip. The President came back on a number of occasions, and I have yet to see anyone else dispute that fact.

I hope that the Speaker would admit that on a number of occasions he had conversations directly relevant to the budget with the President of the United States on the trip and coming back from Israel just last week, in fact, a week ago tonight.

THE DEBT LIMIT

Mr. DASCHLE. Mr. President, I also want to address, while I have the floor—I know the Senator from Virginia is seeking recognition—but we have not had the opportunity yet tonight to talk briefly about the debt limit, at least I have not. I know some of my colleagues have addressed the matter.

The President, as you know, vetoed the debt limit bill this afternoon. He did so for good reason. Let there be no doubt, we need to increase the debt limit. We recognize how critical it is that the Government of the United States not go into default.

Let me offer praise for the Secretary of the Treasury for all that he has done to educate, to inform, to bring everyone to a better understanding of the ramifications of default, beginning Wednesday, if nothing is done. As I understand it, there is some hope now that we might be able to have yet another auction to move us back yet perhaps another 3 days. But while the Secretary of the Treasury and the administration appear to be doing virtually everything they can to see that this country does not default, our Republican colleagues, at that moment when they should cooperate and find some way with which to resolve this crisis, have chosen to do just the opposite.

On what ought to be a very simple extension of the debt, our Republican colleagues have added a complete elimination of all the opportunities the Treasury Secretary has to manage the debt, to use short-term tools, to do what every single Treasury Secretary has been able to do for decades. They have sought to strip him of all those responsibilities and opportunities for debt management at the very time he needs them the most. Can you think of anything more irresponsible than that? Anything?

It is just outrageous that, at the time when we ought to be pulling together with a full appreciation of the magnitude of the problems we may face if we go in default, what do our colleagues on the other side of the aisle do but say we are going to make it even harder. We are going to make it even more challenging, create even more problems.

And then, to add insult to injury, they add a provision that we have debated on the floor many, many times regarding what ought to happen on appeals for death row inmates; whether or not we ought to have this legal term ''habeas corpus'' modified in some way. What in the world does that have to do with dealing with the default this country may find itself in as early as Wednesday?

How is it that anyone can rationalize, anyone can explain, anyone can find any reason why habeas corpus belongs on an emergency debt limit bill?

And then we have had some healthy debates on the Senate floor now for months about regulatory reform. We have had some cloture votes, and in every single case Democrats have said very simply: You give us regulatory reform that does not endanger the public health and safety of Americans, and we are with you. You are going to get a vote with maybe 70, 80, 90 votes. But you offer regulatory reform that endangers the health and safety of Americans, and we are not with you. That issue has not been resolved. We have reached a stalemate until we resolve it, and there have been good-faith efforts on both sides to try to resolve it, good-faith efforts that are going on right now.

So what happens? Our Republican colleagues add the entire regulatory reform language, all of the comprehensive issues relating to the most detailed threats to public health and safety and all the questions we have debated for months now on the debt limit—on the debt limit—with no opportunity for debate and no opportunity for amendments. It is a take-it-or-leave-it deal. It is accept this or accept default.

Mr. President, for the life of me, I do not understand. I cannot contemplate what may have motivated our Republican colleagues to do that on this bill.

I will yield to the Senator from Nevada in just a minute, but I want to add the last list. In addition to that, the agencies terminated in this short-term legislation include the Interstate Commerce Commission, the Rural Abandoned Mine Program, Land and Conservation Fund, Pennsylvania Avenue Development Corporation, the Advisory Commission on Intergovernmental Relations, the Administrative Conference of the United States—all of that added on top of everything else. Yet, they would like to have the American people believe that this is an emergency, that somehow the President is not cooperating, that somehow all of this has to be done in the context of a continuing resolution, or the debt limit, or it is just not possible.

Mr. President, this is just not the way to legislate. This is not responsible. We know better than this. In our heart of hearts, we know we have to run the country, we have to govern, and we have to do the things necessary to make this country work better. And this is not it.

So I hope at some point before midnight tonight we could come to our senses, and at some point in the next 3 hours we could say, look, let us save these debates for later. Let us conclude that we are going to agree to disagree for as long as it takes to work out the larger issues. Let us admit that this strategy is not going to work, and say that rather than shutting down the Government, rather than bringing this country to a default, we are going to strip them all, we are going to send a clean resolution, we are going to send a clean debt limit, we are going to resolve these matters at another time, and we are going to do the right thing.

Mr. REID. Mr. President, will the Senator yield for a question?

Mr. WARNER. Parliamentary inquiry, Mr. President.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Virginia.

Mr. WARNER. Is there a 10-minute limit on statements by individual Senators?

The PRESIDING OFFICER. That is correct. We are operating in morning business.

Mr. WARNER. I think the distinguished minority leader has now used in excess of his 10-minute allocation?

Mr. REID addressed the Chair.

Mr. DASCHLE. Who retains the floor, Mr. President?

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Democratic leader has the floor. If he wishes to yield for an inquiry, he has that opportunity.

Several Senators addressed the Chair.

Mr. WARNER. Parliamentary inquiry: Are not Senators under a 10-minute rule?

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Virginia is correct.

Mr. DASCHLE. I did not think the parliamentary inquiry was in order if I did not yield time for such an inquiry. Is that not correct?

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator is correct.

Mr. DASCHLE. I yield to the Senator from Nevada.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Nevada.

Mr. REID addressed the Chair.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Is the Senator yielding for a question?

Mr. REID. I am asking a question of the leader.

Mr. DASCHLE. I yield for a question.

Mr. REID. I ask the leader. Is it not true that we have 13 different appropriations bills that should pass?

Mr. DASCHLE. The Senator from Nevada is correct. Thirteen appropriations bills, and only five have been passed so far.

Mr. REID. Is not it true that the President has signed only two of those?

Mr. DASCHLE. As I understand it, he has signed two and five have passed.

Mr. REID. Is it not true that we have been waiting for conferences to be completed sometime in some instances for months?

Mr. DASCHLE. The Senator is correct. I would add that in all the time