Mr. FORD. I announce that the Senator from Hawaii [Mr. INOUYE] is necessarily absent.

The yeas and nays resulted—yeas 64, nays 35, as follows:

[Rollcall Vote No. 120 Leg.]

YEAS—64

Abraham	Feinstein	Mack
Allard	Frist	McCain
Ashcroft	Glenn	McConnell
Bennett	Gorton	Murkowski
Biden	Gramm	Nickles
Bond	Grams	Robb
Breaux	Grassley	Roberts
Brownback	Gregg	Roth
Burns	Hagel	Santorum
Campbell	Hatch	Sessions
Chafee	Helms	Shelby
Coats	Hollings	Smith (NH)
Cochran	Hutchinson	Smith (OR)
Collins	Hutchison	Snowe
Coverdell	Inhofe	Specter
Craig	Jeffords	Stevens
D'Amato	Kempthorne	Thomas
DeWine	Kyl	Thompson
Dodd	Landrieu	Thurmond
Domenici	Lieberman	Warner
Enzi	Lott	
Faircloth	Lugar	

NAYS—35

Akaka	Feingold	Mikulski
Baucus	Ford	Moseley-Braun
Bingaman	Graham	Moynihan
Boxer	Harkin	Murray
Bryan	Johnson	Reed
Bumpers	Kennedy	Reid
Byrd	Kerrey	Rockefeller
Cleland	Kerry	Sarbanes
Conrad	Kohl	Torricelli
Daschle	Lautenberg	Wellstone
Dorgan	Leahy	Wyden
Durbin	Levin	

NOT VOTING—1

Inouye

The PRESIDING OFFICER. On this vote, the yeas are 64, the nays are 35. Three-fifths of the Senators duly chosen and having voted in the affirmative, the motion is agreed to.

Mr. DOMENICI. Mr. President, I move to reconsider the vote by which the motion was agreed to.

Mr. LOTT. I move to lay that motion on the table.

The motion to lay on the table was agreed to.

AMENDMENT NO. 468

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The question now occurs on the amendment of the Senator from Arizona.

The amendment (No. 468) was agreed to.

Mr. LOTT. Mr. President, I move to reconsider the vote by which the amendment was agreed to.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection, the motion to lay on the table is agreed to.

The motion to lay on the table was agreed to.

Several Senators addressed the Chair.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The majority leader is recognized.

Mr. LOTT. Mr. President, I think we have been making good progress. Unfortunately, we have had far too many amendments that were carried over from last night.

I hope that at some point in the future we can come together with the leadership on both sides and come to an agreement on a better system of doing business than having these votes on important matters of 10 minutes. But for now we have been making good progress.

The managers on both sides and the staff have been working very hard to understand what these amendments are and to see if agreements can be worked out on them and to see if they can be accepted or whether or not they should be passed or defeated. But they need a little time now.

MORNING BUSINESS

Mr. LOTT. Mr. President, I ask that there now be a period for the transaction of morning business until the hour of 12:45 with Senators permitted to speak for up to 5 minutes each.

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

Mr. LOTT. Mr. President, when the Senate resumes, the voting sequence will start at approximately 12:45. I urge all Senators to please be back in the Chamber in order to make the process as orderly as possible. This will give us a chance to get a bite to eat and for the staff to assess which one of these amendments we can accept or reject.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Who seeks time?

Mr. ABRAHAM addressed the Chair.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Michigan is recognized.

Mr. ABRAHAM. Thank you, Mr. President.

MFN STATUS FOR CHINA

Mr. ABRAHAM. Mr. President, I take this opportunity in morning business to talk briefly about an issue that I know a number of Members on both sides of the aisle care very much about.

Yesterday in the House of Representatives a resolution which would have opposed or ended America's most-favored-nation status relationship with the People's Republic of China was defeated. But in the wake of that defeat, I think we still have an obligation to examine closely the policies of the Chinese Government and to not simply criticize those policies in word but also act with respect to those policies indeed. To that end, I urge my colleagues to begin the examination process of what, separate from acting in the context of most-favored-nation status, we might do as a matter of American policy.

The concerns that many of us have with respect to human rights abuses in China, ranging from coercive family planning practices to religious persecution, to the events that occurred in Tiananmen Square just a few years ago, combined with a variety of other things, such as the activities in this country of certain Chinese companies that operate under the auspices of the People's Liberation Army—most recently the incidence in which AK–47 assault rifles were on their way to street gangs in Los Angeles, and happily that was prevented from occurring—but a variety of actions that I think demand a response from this country that goes beyond rhetoric.

To that end, I recently introduced legislation here in the Senate, the China Sanctions and Human Rights Advancement Act. I ask my colleagues to take a look at that legislation. Now that it is clear that the most-favored-nation status debate is over for this year, I think we should be looking at other options.

I believe this legislation embodies a variety of very targeted responses to the things that have gone on in the People's Republic of China that Americans are concerned about. It would, among other things, deny visas to those high-ranking Government officials who have engaged in some of the policies and practices that we deplore. It would upon the United States to vote ''no'' with respect to votes on loans to China by international multilateral development banks so that we will not have American taxpayers subsidizing the Chinese Government.

It would identify those Chinese companies who are operating in this country and take specific sanctions against those who have been identified as having engaged in inappropriate and illegal activities.

It would attempt to deal in a very specific way with the issues of the proliferation of weapons technologies that has gone on between the Government of China and nations such as Iran.

It has a wide array of components to it.

I ask that all Members who are concerned about the actions of the Chinese Government look at this legislation. This Senator is anxious to look at other ideas, because I think a response is warranted beyond the MFN debate itself.

Mr. President, with that I yield the floor. I suggest the absence of a quorum.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will call the roll.

The legislative clerk proceeded to call the roll.

Mr. SANTORUM. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the order for the quorum call be rescinded.

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

WELFARE REFORM

Mr. SANTORUM. Mr. President, after listening to some of the debate on amendments that are being offered and having the opportunity to come to the floor and defend what we did last year on the welfare reform bill, you would think by all of the amendments that are being discussed and by all of the gnashing of teeth that is going on here in the U.S. Senate today, that we have a welfare reform bill—the bill that passed this Congress last session and implemented by the States' 50 Governors—that we are having an abject failure; that horrible things are happening out there in the area of welfare

that we have to now come back and save all of these people. I hate to disappoint anybody's party here. But the fact of the matter is that things are not all that bad. In fact, things are doing very, very well in the area of welfare. I will point to a couple of things as illustrations.

First, I have not seen one major newspaper write one bad article or editorial on the devastating effects of welfare reform passed by the last Congress. I assure you that if there were any devastating stories to be told, they would be telling them because of all these papers that were against the welfare reform bill that went through. The fact that we have not heard of horror stories and that we have not heard any gnashing of teeth from the media about what is going on is certainly a positive sign that things are actually going well.

I might also add that none of the press has come and said, ''Gee, we were wrong.'' Welfare in Wisconsin—50 percent of the people have been dropped off the rolls, and are working. Across the country the average is 20 percent of welfare rolls have been reduced, and people are working—in case after case after case.

I spend at least one visit a week when I am back in the State of Pennsylvania going in and talking to people in education and training programs, homeless shelters—you name it—talking to the people who are intersecting with the welfare programs. And almost unanimously what I have gotten as feedback is, ''This program is a program I wish you had passed earlier. I wouldn't be here today working. I wouldn't be here today getting the education and training I need, succeeding, and feeling better about myself had this bill not passed.''

We have an unmitigated success in welfare. We threw the ball up in the air. The Governors of the 50 States jumped. They caught it, and they are running with the ball. They are doing positive things for the poor and for the disadvantaged all across America. I just think that we need to take some time here today in the midst of all of these amendments that says all of these people are being hurt. The fact of the matter is a vast majority are being helped tremendously by what went on in welfare reform.

I hope Members—frankly, those who supported welfare reform and those who did not—I hope that they will come to the floor and say, ''Look, this program is working.'' From any objective criteria, people are working; people are going in and getting education and training that they never would have had before because, frankly, they needed that little shove. We are giving it to them. We are supplying them, and the Governors, with the child care that they need.

We have a lot of work to continue to do on that front and on some other fronts in the area of Medicare and other kinds of health coverage. But the Governors are working on that. They are taking this responsibility that we have given them—this flexibility that we have given them—very seriously and are doing a terrific job.

So I just want to set the record straight here on a day that might otherwise be seen as a day where welfare reform came under attack here in the U.S. Senate. What we are seeing in reality outside of Washington DC, outside of the Senate Chamber, where we continue to think of the welfare of the past and look to the future—go out there in those communities and find out the success stories, the wonderful, heartfelt stories of people who needed this piece of legislation and who needed this change in the welfare culture.

I think probably the most dramatic thing that I heard from someone who is not on welfare but someone who worked in the system is from two people who had been in the welfare casework role for 25 years in New Castle, PA. They came to me and said, ''I can't thank you enough for changing the law to let me do what I wanted to do 25 years ago but never had the chance''—that is, help people get off welfare, help people actually use their ability and get the respect for themselves instead of just passing out checks and creating dependency. The person was actually thanking me, almost in tears, thanking us for giving him the opportunity to do what 30 years of welfare policy wouldn't let him do—that is, get people off of welfare, give them the incentive and the tools to make it off the dependency of the Government instead of ensuring that they would never leave by creating a meal ticket forever on welfare.

So I just want to reiterate one last time that anyone in this Chamber who believes that welfare reform is in bad shape and we need to go and rewrite the welfare bill because of all the terrible things that are going on out there, I suggest you go out there and you talk to the Nation's Governors, you talk to the people who are working in the system, you talk to the people who are going through the system, and you will hear a very different story than what you are hearing here today in the Senate.

I yield the floor.

Mr. DURBIN addressed the Chair.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Who seeks time?

The Senator from Illinois is recognized.

Mr. DURBIN. I thank the Chair. I would like to respond to my colleague from Pennsylvania.

I voted for the welfare reform bill, and I thought it was long overdue. The welfare system in America definitely needs to be changed, reformed, and in many areas just plain abandoned. It was a system which had sustained many families, but it also captured many families and ensnared them in welfare dependency, and we knew it. And that is why on a bipartisan basis we voted for welfare reform. But I do not believe that it is accurate to assess the success of welfare reform strictly on the wisdom of that legislation.

Fortunately, we live in a time of an expanding economy that is creating jobs, creating opportunities for small businesses, for new housing starts. We are seeing the lowest controlled inflation in a long, long period of time. We are seeing the deficit come into control. And I have to say to my friend, the Republican from Pennsylvania, I don't think you can take any credit for that because, unfortunately, not a single Republican Member of this Senate at the time supported the President's plan for deficit reduction. It passed with all Democratic votes and the vote of the Vice President and passed by a scant margin in the House of Representatives with no Republican support. And because of the President's plan, we have had 5 straight years of deficit reduction and economic expansion, something the other party speaks of a lot but something the Democrats delivered.

And so when we talk about opportunities to come off welfare, what opportunity would there be if we were in a recession with fewer jobs for people who are searching for that first-time job opportunity. I am afraid very, very few. And I also have to take exception to the idea that this welfare reform was somewhere hammered into marble, Holy Writ, that should not be changed or addressed. The success of a man like Franklin Roosevelt as President of the United States was his recognition that he was not perfect. He would come up with good ideas and he would try to implement them. Some turned out to be wildly successful, like Social Security, others fell on their face. He had at least the good sense to come forward and say there are times when you should abandon a program or change it. The same is true when it comes to welfare reform.

I might remind my colleague from Pennsylvania that even this year the Republican leadership in the House and Senate acknowledged the shortcomings of our welfare reform bill, particularly when it came to those who are legal immigrants to the United States. That was a very unfair provision, to force people off of disability income because they were here strictly on the basis of being legal immigrants. These are not illegals but legally here in the United States. I offered an amendment today. I tried to correct another failing, as I see it, in the welfare reform bill and it relates to food for children, food stamps for children. These are children of legal immigrants living in the United States who were cut off their food stamps in April of this year. I will tell the Senator from Pennsylvania the decision of this Chamber today I think was the wrong one, to deny food stamps to these children. It is one that we will pay for over and over and over again. A hungry child in this country without appropriate nutrition is a child who is likely to have more medical problems,

likely to fall behind in school, more likely to become a future welfare or crime statistic.

I cannot understand why this Congress, like so many businesses, and I guess so many people, cannot look ahead beyond the next budget. We live in a country where the biggest growth industry is the construction of prisons. There are 19 cities in my home State of Illinois competing right now not for a new business but for the latest prison to be built by our State. We have more people under lock and key in America than in any country other than Russia. Why?

Is it because we are just more violent, more prone to criminal activity? I think it is a much deeper question. It goes to our children, whether or not some of these kids can be rescued, can be saved, can be put on the right path in their lives. It involves a commitment. Yes, I believe in three strikes you're out, but I also believe in taking the necessary action to avoid the first strike. Give a child a chance with prenatal nutrition, with appropriate infant nutrition, with Head Start, with education, with mentoring, the kind of community support that counts. And yet this body I am afraid considers that to be squandering of national assets. We have all the money in the world to build a prison. We do not have all the money in the world to improve our schools. When my colleague, Senator CAROL MOSELEY-BRAUN, comes forward with the crumbling schools proposal that says let us make sure the schools our kids attend are safe, that they have appropriate care for the children there, we find out that there are many people particularly on the Republican side of the aisle who say that is something that our Government should not worry about. I disagree. The shiniest new building in many cities across America is a prison; the one that is crumbling down is a school. What message does that send to children, to families and to our Nation?

When this Senate decided today to defeat my amendment not to send food stamps to these children, I am afraid it is a decision we will pay for for years to come. These kids are likely to become citizens of the United States. They are likely to be our neighbors, kids seeking jobs in the future. We are penny-wise and pound-foolish when we do not provide the basic necessities of life like food and health care and education for children.

So, yes, I supported welfare reform. I think the economy has sustained the kind of growth which has given welfare reform an opportunity to flourish but, for goodness sakes, why aren't we investing in our children? Why has this become so partisan and so strident that when we stand up with the Levin amendment and talk about more time for vocational education so that kids can get off welfare and go to work, it becomes a partisan vote? The Republicans say no; the Democrats say yes. Nothing happens. For the kid, the young man, the young woman who needs a chance at education, that was an important vote. And this Senate said no. That does not make sense. End welfare but end it responsibly. Make an investment in America's kids, an investment that will pay off for many generations to come.

Mr. SANTORUM. Will the Senator yield for a question?

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The time of the Senator from Illinois has expired. Who seeks time?

Mr. BROWNBACK addressed the Chair.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Kansas is recognized.

Mr. BROWNBACK. I would like to quickly respond, if I could, to just a couple of comments. I hope we will not stand here and say that the welfare program, the changes that we made in the last Congress have been a failure. They have been a great success. Look in my home State of Kansas where welfare rolls have gone down 30 percent. And, yes, we have had a strong economy, but in the past we have had a strong economy when the welfare rolls have gone up. You have to change the incentives in the program. That is what we did in the last Congress. It was a positive step to move forward. So I hope that we do not make something a failure when it has been a strong success and people are working now rather than receiving payments from the Government and they are having more self-confidence themselves.

I think this is good for people, too, because with the past system the people on welfare, along with the people that paid for welfare, thought it was a horrible failure and a horrible system. We have changed the dynamics, and we have changed the incentives in this program to where the people are incentivized to work. And they feel good about it. They feel better about it. And this is a program that is going to work.

I think there are a lot of things we could spend money on that might well be good, but we have tended to do a lot of that in the past, to the point we are over $5 trillion in the hole. So that we just cannot keep voting for everything to be able to do it or else we are not going to get in balance.

MOST-FAVORED-NATION STATUS FOR CHINA

Mr. BROWNBACK. Mr. President, I would like to comment on the comments of the Senator from Michigan where he was addressing a foreign policy concern, and that is China.

Yesterday, the House voted on most-favored-nation status and extended that status toward China even though we are having a great deal of difficulty in that country, and I do think we need to take additional steps in addressing this issue of China and our relationships back and forth.

We have had problems with that nation expanding weapons of mass destruction, selling them to some of our enemies that we have around the world, particularly Iran. We have had problems with religious persecution, with forced abortion in that nation, and I think we need to step up and pass the issue of MFN.

The Senator from Michigan has a start in his bill when he is talking about some different areas where we can put pressure on that nation in our relationship there to encourage more religious freedom taking place and to discourage things like weapons proliferation.

RELIGIOUS PERSECUTION

On Monday of this week, Senators JOE LIEBERMAN and ROBERT BENNETT, along with myself, hosted a forum on religious persecution around the world. We found this was not just a problem in China. It is in the Middle East. It is in Africa. And we are talking about an issue that goes beyond just certain levels of discrimination, all the way to the point of slavery, to murder that is taking place in those countries.

A number of us came forward with solutions. Let's create a register of those people who are being persecuted around the world, and let's start to highlight it. Let's start a commission in areas of the Middle East, in Africa, focusing on this issue of the need for religious freedom. It is a founding principle of this country. People came here seeking freedom, seeking religious freedom. We are and we always will be best as a nation when we talk about principles. This is a guiding principle that we need to continue to move forward beyond this debate of MFN and focus nationally on this issue of what is taking place there. Create the register, create the commissions, focusing on this area. And I look forward to working with my colleagues, Senator LIEBERMAN and many others. I hope it will begin in us talking about something that is so basic to America, religious freedom. We need to implement that and move those around the world.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Who seeks time?

Mr. KERRY addressed the Chair.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Massachusetts is recognized.

(The remarks of Mr. KERRY pertaining to the introduction of S. 956 are located in today's RECORD under ''Statements on Introduced Bills and Joint Resolutions.'')

BALANCED BUDGET ACT OF 1997

Mr. DOMENICI. Parliamentary inquiry. Is it not time to return to consideration of the bill?

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Under the previous agreement, the Senate resumes consideration of S. 947. The Senator is correct.

The Senate continued with the consideration of the bill.