

four, strengthen the financing of the Social Security system while ensuring that women and other economically disadvantaged groups are protected to the greatest degree possible.

Look at that plan. Does it further reduce poverty among older women? I told you that his plan does not. We certainly want to see if it includes retirement savings options. Are these options something that will work for women? That is where we are.

I will close by repeating a quote from an expert, John Mueller, a former adviser to Representative Jack Kemp, who said:

The largest group of losers from "privatizing" Social Security would be women. This is true for women in all birth-years, all kinds of marital status, all kinds of labor-market behavior, and all income levels.

If you look at this experiment in Texas, everyone lost—all families, women, everyone. Let's not go down this path. We can't afford to do that.

TRIBUTE TO FRANK AUKOFER

Mr. KOHL. Mr. President, I rise today in recognition of 40 years of outstanding reporting by my friend, Frank Aukofer, who is retiring from the Milwaukee Journal Sentinel next week. With his retirement, the Capitol loses one of its finest journalists and Wisconsin loses one of its keenest eyes on Washington. I lose a reporter I admire and trust.

Frank is regarded as among the best in his profession, by both his peers and by those he covers. He is respected as a straight-shooter, valued for his integrity and admired as an honorable man. As a journalist, he has reported on virtually every event of consequence in our country over more than three decades. He has an impressive working knowledge of Congress, of policy, and of politics. Frank is usually three steps ahead of the story.

He is a journalist who didn't lose sight of the responsibilities of reporting, a professional who is a credit to his occupation.

Frank's love of his profession is evident in his long reach beyond the newspaper. He will be honored later this month by the Freedom Forum, a foundation dedicated to free press and free speech throughout the world. He is recognized as a national expert on the media, and has testified before Congress to promote access to government information. He was a visiting professor at Vanderbilt University. He was an early and strong supporter of the Newseum, our country's premier news museum.

Frank is also an active member and former President of the National Press Club, and an enthusiastic, if not particularly gifted, performer for the Gridiron Club. Earning the envy of his colleagues and sports car enthusiasts everywhere, Frank has even managed to peddle a legitimate weekly auto column to newspapers around the country.

As Frank closes this chapter of his career, I know he looks forward to new adventures and more time to spend with his grandkids. Frank has many more years of ideas and ambitions ahead of him. While I am saddened by his departure from the Capitol, I'm convinced that no one will enjoy a busier retirement than Frank Aukofer. I wish him well, I wish him continued good health, and I will miss him.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Illinois is recognized.

Mr. DURBIN. Mr. President, I ask the Chair to advise me of the time remaining on the Democratic side?

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Democratic side has until 11:30 a.m.

SOCIAL SECURITY

Mr. DURBIN. Thank you. I come to the floor this morning to talk about an issue which is dominating the Presidential race across the United States. It is the issue about the future of Social Security.

It is interesting when you ask Americans how important it is. As an issue in this Presidential campaign, 71 percent of Americans say it is very important. It is understandable, because, at least since the era of the New Deal and Franklin Roosevelt, Social Security has really been there as an insurance policy against the devastating impact of age and retirement of people before its creation.

There was a time in America before Social Security when, if you were lucky enough to have saved some money, or if you were among the fortunate few with a pension, retirement was kind of an easy experience. But for the vast majority of Americans who didn't have that good fortune, retirement was a very troubling and dangerous experience.

It is no surprise that before Franklin Roosevelt conceived of the notion of creating Social Security, one of the highest ranking groups of poor people in America was parents and grandparents who were elderly. In his era, President Franklin Roosevelt changed the thinking in America to say: we are going to create, basically, a safety net to say to everyone, if you will give the Social Security fund some money as you work during the course of your employment, we will put that aside and guarantee to you that there will be a safety net waiting for you; that you will have a nest egg; that the Federal Government will be watching; and it will be there.

Over the years, of course, because of medical science and other things, we have gotten to the point where we live longer and more and more people are taking advantage of Social Security. Over the years, the amount of payroll tax for Social Security went up so you could take care of those senior citizens. But Social Security in America, for 70 years, has been that basic insurance policy.

When political leaders of either political party—Democrats or Repub-

licans—start talking about changing Social Security, a lot of American families start listening—not only those who are receiving it but many who are near retirement. Certainly, a lot of younger workers ask very important questions, such as: Will it ever be there when I need it? I think for the last three or four decades in America that question from younger workers has been very common. It is natural to be skeptical—when you are 20 years old or 25 years old—that the money you are putting into the payroll tax for Social Security will ever help you.

Yet if you take a look at the record in America, Social Security has always been there. Payments have always been made. We have kept up with the cost-of-living adjustments to try to improve and increase those payments over the years. But we have kept our promise. A program created almost 70 years ago has been an insurance policy for every American family.

There are warnings, of course, for people: Do not count on Social Security for a living because it is a very spartan existence. It doesn't provide a lavish lifestyle once you have retired. But you are not going to starve. You are going to have some basic health and necessities of life. Americans have built this into their thinking about their future. What will happen to us at the age of 65? We would like to think we are prepared with savings and retirement, but we always know that we have worked for a sufficient number of quarters for our lives so that we will qualify for Social Security.

It is interesting. In the year 2000, in this Presidential campaign, there is a brand new debate, and the debate suggests that we ought to take a brand new look at Social Security. On one side, George Bush has suggested we ought to change it rather dramatically; that we ought to take at least 2 percent of the payroll savings taxes that are taken out for Social Security and put that into a private account in which individuals can invest.

There is some appeal to that because a lot of people say maybe that will be a better idea—maybe I can make more money by investing it personally and directing my investments than if the Federal Government buys a very conservative investment plan with the whole Social Security trust fund. It is not uncommon to think that people across America are feeling good about directing their own future.

I say at the outset that—I think I speak for everyone in the Senate, both Democrat and Republican—we believe in encouraging people to save for their future. We believe in giving them options for investment. That is why we have created IRAs and 401(k)s, and all sorts of vehicles under the Tax Code so people can make plans for their future. But George Bush raises a more important question, and one that I would like to address for a few minutes.

What would happen if George Bush had his way? If we took 2 percent of the

proceeds going into the Social Security trust fund and said they will no longer go into the trust fund but people will be allowed to invest them individually, what impact would that have? Frankly, it could have a very serious and, I think, a very negative impact.

Keep in mind that the money being taken out of the payroll taxes each week in America goes to pay the current benefits of Social Security retirees. There is not some huge savings account that is blossoming. But basically we are talking about a pay-as-you-go system. If you take 2 percent away, you are still going to have the retirees needing their Social Security check. You are going to have to figure out some way to plug this gap.

If you say that 2 percent of payroll taxes will stop going into the Social Security trust fund, who will make up the difference? How big is that difference? Some estimate that the difference is \$1 trillion. If you think about that, you have to ask George Bush and others who support this: Where is that money coming from? How will we make up the difference if we start saying to people they don't have to put it all in the trust fund, keep 2 percent and invest it personally? That \$1 trillion transition has to be taken in the context of George Bush's other suggestion of a \$2 trillion tax cut primarily for the wealthiest people in America.

I will concede that we are in good times in America for most families. The economy is strong. For the first time in decades, we are seeing surpluses in the Federal accounts. You can attribute that to leadership in Washington, leadership in business, and leadership in families. It has all come together in the last 8 years. America is moving forward. We are in a surplus situation. Who would have thought we would be talking about this on the floor of Congress just a few years after we debated a balanced budget amendment?

But many of us believe that even in a surplus situation we should be cautious because we are not certain what is going to be around the bend. We want to make certain that the decisions we make now about investing surplus funds makes sense for ourselves, for our children, and for our grandchildren.

To come up with an idea for taking this surplus and putting it into a massive tax cut for wealthy people or putting it into a Social Security change that could cost us another trillion dollars, in my mind, is not fiscally conservative. Yes. That is right—fiscally conservative.

The conservative approach being proposed by President Clinton and Vice President GORE says take the surplus and instead of putting it into something of great risk, such as a tax cut or some privatization of Social Security, let us buy down parts of the national debt. The national debt costs taxpayers in America \$1 billion a day in interest. That is right. You are paying taxes

now—payroll taxes and income taxes—to the tune of \$1 billion a day for interest payments on old debt.

If you think about it, what is a better gift to our children and their children than to reduce this debt, and to say to them that we are going to take care of our mortgage, the one that we were going to leave to you, by paying down the national debt? That is Vice President GORE's suggestion. He says, in the Social Security program, pay down the debt in the trust funds. Pay down all of the bonds that have accumulated. When you do it, incidentally, you can extend the life of Social Security and make it stronger to the year 2050. It is a twofer—reducing the national debt and reducing the interest payment on it, and at the same time strengthening Social Security. That is the Gore approach. It is a conservative approach. I will concede that. But I think it is the fiscally responsible approach.

On the other side, George Bush has said don't worry about paying down debt; Let's talk about a tax cut of \$2 trillion for wealthy people, and let's talk about a new Social Security privatization idea that will cost at least \$1 trillion in transition. That is not conservative, nor do I think it is prudent. I think you can appropriately call it a risky idea.

I joined with Senator BYRON DORGAN of North Dakota and Senator CHARLES SCHUMER of New York and my friend and colleague Senator BOXER of California in sending a letter to George Bush saying to him: If you want to talk about one of the most important programs to America's families, Social Security, and you want to talk about dramatic changes in Social Security, then we want you to come forward with an idea about what this means. What impact will this have on families?

We are anxious to receive a reply because, you see, George Bush, in the last few weeks, has gone beyond the 2-percent suggestion—that we can take 2 percent and invest it in the stock market—and now he says he can envision a day when we invest all of our Social Security in the stock market.

I readily concede that over the last 8 years, during President Clinton's administration, the stock market has done very well. It doesn't from day-to-day for those who follow it, but over the long term it has. The Dow Jones Industrial Average of 3,000 back in 1993 is now up to 10,000. That suggests a lot of wealth has been created in America. Those that were smart enough, and could, invested in the stock market and have seen their savings grow.

It is naive to believe this will go on indefinitely. We have certainly seen in the last 6 months the roller coaster of the NASDAQ and the roller coaster of the New York Stock Exchange, to suggest there have been good days and bad days. To take your life savings, or take 2 percent of your payroll tax and Social Security, and put it in the stock exchange, you understand there are risks. I think most Americans appreciate that fact.

As I said earlier, for those who want to invest their savings, that is their business. When it comes to Social Security, we have always said this is a part of our system that should be protected. If we go forward with George Bush's plan to privatize Social Security, it would truly give to individuals some power to invest. However, it also raises questions about the future of this Social Security system. Where will we come up with the \$1 trillion in transition payments?

There are only so many ways to achieve that: We can tax Social Security to come up with more revenue; we can reduce benefits, for those who are currently receiving Social Security; or we can raise the retirement age under Social Security.

Frankly, I reject all three of those. I don't think America's families who are looking forward to enjoying their retirement years and counting on Social Security will sign up for George Bush's deal when they understand it could jeopardize Social Security as we know it and as we count on it. That is truly one of the serious problems we face.

Second, if we accept the George Bush approach on privatizing Social Security, we don't have the money that Vice President GORE wants to invest in paying off the national debt and paying off the debt of the Social Security trust fund. So we leave that interest payment out there for future generations. We don't stabilize Social Security. We don't give it a longer life.

A point made earlier by my colleague from the State of California, Senator BOXER: What if George Bush guesses wrong? What if people invest some part of their Social Security into the stock market and the market goes down and they are losing money? What will the response be of the elected officials across this country? We don't know because we have never faced it.

History tells us it is likely that Democrats and Republicans will say: Wait a minute; we cannot let a sizable number of Americans fail. People cannot be in a position where they don't have enough money to live on in retirement.

We are then likely, on a political basis, to ride to the rescue. Anyone remember not too long ago we did that with the savings and loan bailout? Too many institutions had lost money across America, and a lot of people lost their savings accounts. We bailed out the savings and loans. I didn't like voting for that, but I didn't see any alternative. The economy was at stake and we did it.

I happen to believe if the Bush privatization scheme goes through and it doesn't work, this Congress will be called on to come up with the money to bail out the families who guessed wrong in the stock market. Think about where this leads. From the dark days of deep red ink and deficits, we are now in a surplus. George Bush is saying let's try something that is a little new and a little innovative and

hasn't been tried. He is suggesting changes which could jeopardize the strength of this economy, the strength of our recovery, and what we envision as a strong American economy for decades to come. He is taking what I consider to be a leap of faith that some scheme which someone has come up with will work.

Vice President GORE is urging a more conservative approach: Put the surplus into bringing down the substantial debt, into strengthening the Social Security trust fund; put the surplus into making certain that Medicare is there for years to come; reduce the national debt so our children and their children don't continue to pay \$1 billion in interest a day on old debt that we have accumulated.

That is the fundamental choice. It is not a question of whether people should have the right to invest their savings in the stock market—that is their right in America; 50 percent of families are doing that now. Our family is one of them—but whether or not you take the Social Security system, and after 70 years, turn it upside down and say we are now going to make this a much different system.

In the words of George Bush: We will privatize Social Security. I think there is a great amount of risk to that. I can understand the skepticism of a lot of American families about this proposal.

Mrs. BOXER. Will the Senator yield for a couple of questions?

Mr. DURBIN. I am happy to yield to the Senator.

Mrs. BOXER. I thank my colleague. Once again, he has explained quite clearly what the risks are to this Bush plan.

I was reading some of the quotes that appeared in the press surrounding the Bush plan. I ask my colleague to comment on some of them.

Bush's top economic adviser, Lawrence Lindsey, acknowledged somewhat sheepishly he bailed out of the market years ago. He said: That was because of my personal situation. I don't take risks. I hate losing money.

That was from the Philadelphia Inquirer: I don't take risks; I hate losing money.

I think that reflects certain people are more conservative. Others are willing to take a risk.

The point my colleague and I have tried to make is that we think it is fine if you want to take a risk with certain accounts you have, but you don't want to risk the foundation of your retirement, the safety net of your retirement. You want to count on that.

Bush's top economic adviser is saying he hates losing money, and yet the person he advises is essentially putting money at risk for other people.

I want to mention something else. The word "privatization" is a good word. I like it. It is similar to the word "deregulation." It is a nice word. Everybody likes "privatization." It is a nice word that indicates individual control. Of course, much of what we do

in our life is privatization. We have our own accounts, whether they are savings accounts, or we own bonds, and we direct them. However, Social Security is a little bit different. It is the foundation.

The Houston Chronicle reported that Bush said on Tuesday, his plan to create private savings accounts could be the first step toward a complete privatization of Social Security. That would be the end of a program that has worked for 70 years. There is more at stake than a 2-percent diversion of funds.

Finally, the New York Times reports, when answering the question about his plan, Mr. Bush said the Government could not go from one regime to another overnight. It is going to take a while to transition to a system where personal savings accounts are the predominant part of the investment vehicle. When he is asked by the Dallas Morning News, would beneficiaries receive less money, he says: Maybe; maybe not.

I ask my friend for his comments on the volatility of the stock market expressed by Bush's own top economic adviser, the fact that this could be the first step toward the end of Social Security, and the fact that George Bush cannot answer today whether anyone would have to take a cut in your benefits.

Mr. DURBIN. I thank the Senator from California. Quoting George Bush on this issue tells me more than anything else that he has not thought this through. In the 18 years I have served on Capitol Hill, when the issue of Social Security has come up, I have had a tendency to step back and wait. I want to hear both sides.

This is complicated. We are literally talking about a Social Security system that benefits tens of millions of Americans today and that many more Americans are counting on for the future. When people start talking about change in Social Security, I am very cautious. I think the people of Illinois who have sent me here expect me to be cautious.

I recall when the Senator from California and I were serving in the House of Representatives many years ago when there was a debate on the floor about the so-called "pickled-pepper" amendment. Jake Pickle of Texas and Claude Pepper of Florida had a fight over the future of Social Security and whether to raise the retirement age from 65 to 67. I voted against that. I really think the retirement age is an important milestone in people's lives, particularly if they have jobs involving manual labor and physical work. So when people start talking about changing Social Security—"We will change a little bit here and a little bit there"—I am very skeptical because I don't want to see us put in a position where someone's great campaign promise in the year 2000 means someone trying to retire in just a few years from now finds out that the window is closed at Social Security:

"No, you have to wait a few more years."

"Why?"

"We wanted to try a new approach to Social Security."

The Senator from California is right. When George Bush says—and this is a quote from the Houston Chronicle—"creating private savings accounts in Social Security could be the first step toward a complete privatization of Social Security," that is a frightening idea. Let me explain to you why.

If we ever privatize Social Security, we will still have millions of Americans who worked their whole lives, paid their taxes, obeyed the laws, and counted on Social Security, who need to receive their benefits. If you are going to have that requirement out there, you have to figure out a way to keep Social Security moving while George Bush creates a brand new system, his new idea, whatever it is. That is a massive investment. When we talk about keeping America's economy moving forward, not increasing our deficit, creating more surpluses, keeping job creation online and businesses thriving, I think this is a risky venture by George Bush when it comes to Social Security.

Frankly, I think the American people should ask of George Bush what several Members of the Senate have asked: Sit down and explain this to us; put it on paper. Before you start messing with Social Security, explain to us what you have in mind because a lot of us—a lot of families across America—are counting on this system.

Mrs. BOXER. If my friend will yield further, I understand Senator GRAMS came down and quoted me as saying I like the idea of people investing in the market. I do. But not taking it away from the foundation of Social Security. Social Security is that foundation. As my friend pointed out, this is really serious.

Since Governor Bush is now saying he envisions the day when we don't have any more Social Security, when it would all be private accounts—that is not Social Security. He is right to point out: What happens to those of us who have worked our 40 quarters? There would be nothing going into the Social Security fund to pay those benefits. What does that mean? We are not going to let those people go poor; everyone knows that. The pressure will be on us. We will bail out the system.

If you take it a step further and look at his \$2 trillion tax cut, where is he going to get the money? He will print it. We will go back to those days his father oversaw, with \$300 billion deficits which added to the national debt. As my friend well knows, we had more debt in the Reagan-Bush years than we had from George Washington to Ronald Reagan.

We do not want to go back to those days. We don't want to go back to those days when our President had to go visit another country to find out how to run the economy. Those were

bad days for this Nation—bad, bad days. It took us a long time to get out of it. A lot of people lost their seats around here because they had the courage to vote to balance this budget. It did not take courage to vote for a balanced budget amendment to the Constitution. It did take courage, however, to vote to actually balance the budget. It meant some tough stuff.

I want to ask my friend, we have a colleague on this side of the aisle who says: Yes, we ought to go into privatizing Social Security. But he is one of the most courageous and straightforward colleagues, Senator BOB KERREY. What does he say about it? He says if you are going to go that route, this is what you have to do: Raise the retirement age.

My friend has already pointed out we have raised it to 67 over time. What is it going to be, 75? People will die long before they get their checks or they will be too old to really appreciate it. We don't want to see that happen, raising the retirement age after people worked so hard, and then make them work longer, or raise taxes on the Social Security that you get, or on your interest from these personal accounts. Raise taxes, raise their retirement age, lower benefits—you have to do a combination of those things.

I have to say, there are a lot of things we do around here that are not very good. But would my friend not agree we have a good system here that has lasted through time—70 years, as he points out? It is a basic retirement, a basic safety net.

One last point I would make for my friend to comment on. Around here we are like everybody else; we want to make sure we can take care of our families. I think what we do around here is a good system. We have had Social Security since the 1980s. We decided to make sure we paid in. We have Social Security retirement as our basic foundation, and then, if we want, we can add a thrift savings plan. So, yes, we can pick out investing in the market—or, by the way, Government bonds, or corporate bonds—in addition to our Social Security.

That will be my last question to my friend. We know it is good to not put all your eggs in one basket, but we also think it is important to have a basic account, No. 1; No. 2, don't go back to the bad old days of these yearly deficits that were dragging our economy down. Yes, you want to add something to sweeten your retirement pie, take a little risk with it. We know some people who have taken some risks and didn't do too well; others have done very well. That is fine. Don't mess with the foundation of the house. If you want to add a room, fix it up. That is great. But don't mess with the foundation.

Mr. DURBIN. I thank my friend, the Senator from California.

It is interesting in this debate how the roles have been switched. It used to be not that long ago the Democrats

were faulted for being fiscally irresponsible, too liberal when it came to tax and spend. In this debate over the future of Social Security, the fiscally conservative and, I think, from my point of view, the prudent approach is being pushed on the Democratic side. That is, make certain before we take the surplus economy for granted, and make certain before we talk about any changes for Social Security, that we have thought them through.

Here we are in the middle of the Presidential campaign, with George Bush, the Republican candidate, suggesting sweeping changes in Social Security, changes which could literally affect millions of American families.

The concept that we would somehow privatize Social Security would have been laughable not that many years ago. Now it is being said with a straight face during the course of this Presidential campaign. Unfortunately, the candidate, George Bush, who is making these statements, refuses to come forward and explain how he would achieve it.

I think it is natural for those of us on the other side, those supporting Vice President GORE, to ask of him to be specific. If you are going to start talking about Social Security, start telling us in specific terms how you are going to change it and what it is going to cost us.

I think the plan on the other side, from Vice President GORE, is a conservative, sensible approach that does not assume this economic boom which we have seen over the last 8 or 9 years will continue indefinitely. What Vice President GORE has said is take the surplus we have coming into the Federal Government and invest it back to pay off the debt of our Nation.

We in Illinois, I think, represent kind of a microcosm. I represent a microcosm of this Nation—rural, urban, liberal, conservative, and you name it—across our great State. When I go back and talk to business leaders about what to do with our surplus, they universally agree with Vice President GORE's position: Be prudent, be sensible, take the surplus and invest it in such a way so if 6 months from now we are in a recession or a downturn, we will not regret decisions we have made.

Take a look at what has happened to us in just a short period of time. Because we have had fiscal discipline for the last several years, the Nation's debt is already \$1.7 trillion lower than it would have been. In other words, if we had not made this decision a few years ago to balance the budget and to make certain that Social Security trust funds were not spent for other reasons, we could be \$1.7 trillion deeper in debt, meaning we would have bondholders in the United States and around the world asking every month for their interest payment and being paid with taxes coming out of families, businesses, and individuals across America.

We are on the right track. I think we in Washington got the message. Under

the Clinton-Gore administration, we have started bringing down this debt and the economy has flourished for most people. There are exceptions: In the farm belt, exceptions in the inner city, exceptions in small towns. But by and large, most people believe America is moving in the right direction.

Along comes a Presidential campaign. Really, this is a referendum on our future. I am not going to question the motives of George Bush on the Republican side, and I hope he would not question the motives of Vice President GORE.

The American people basically have a crucial choice this November. In a time of prosperity, what should America's future look like? What should we be doing for the young people across America to say to them: We want to create at least as good an opportunity for you as we have had in this country.

Frankly, the Democratic approach, Vice President GORE's approach, is the sensible one. It basically says: Don't assume prosperity forever; pay down the debt so we don't have to collect more in taxes to pay interest on this debt. Reduce the debt of the Social Security program so that it will be stronger for a long period of time.

In fact, under Vice President GORE's proposal, for another 50 years, it will be solvent, so we can even say to those who are just getting their driver's license this year: Social Security is going to be there when you show up at the window 50 years from now. That is a good thing to say to the future of America.

Also, we are saying when it comes to Medicare—this is a program often overlooked by this Congress; it is not overlooked by tens of millions of elderly and disabled who count on Medicare for their health insurance—we believe we should take part of this surplus and invest it in Medicare as well to make sure it is stronger and is affordable. This is the Gore approach.

The other side is a much different view of our future. What George Bush has proposed for America's future is let's try something new and untried. First, let's talk about a \$2 billion tax cut, and it is a tax cut that is not targeted to families who need it. It is a tax cut that, frankly, goes to a lot of people who are already wealthy.

I am joined on the floor by my colleague from New York, Senator SCHUMER. Senator SCHUMER has a proposal most American families would applaud. He has suggested targeting the tax cuts where they are really needed. One of Senator SCHUMER's proposals is to allow families to deduct up to \$10,000 a year in college expenses for their children. That means about \$2,800 in the bank for a lot of families to help pay college education expenses. That is a smart investment. That is a targeted tax cut that does not go to the wealthiest in America but prepares the next generation of Americans to compete in a global economy.

This election is coming down to: Do you want the Bush tax cut for primarily wealthy people, and do you want to target the tax cuts and invest in paying down the debt? Do you want to keep Social Security strong for decades to come, or try a privatization approach which Governor Bush proposes which has never been tested and will cost us a trillion dollars and runs the risk of more red ink, more deficits, and problems in the future?

We are taking the Gore and Democratic side, fiscally prudent approach which says: Let's look to the future in real uncertain terms.

I know we only have until 11:30 for morning business. My colleague from New York is here. I yield the floor to Senator SCHUMER.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Chair recognizes the Senator from New York.

Mr. SCHUMER. I thank the Chair. Mr. President, I also thank the Senator from Illinois for his, once again, enthusiastic, as well as erudite, presentation on our fiscal policy and on Social Security. Maybe after I finish what I have to say I will say a few words on that. I do not know the time situation.

GUN VIOLENCE

Mr. SCHUMER. Mr. President, it has been more than a year since the Columbine tragedy, but this Republican Congress still refuses to act on sensible gun legislation. Since Columbine, thousands of Americans have been killed by gunfire. Until we act, Democrats in the Senate will read some of the names of those who lost their lives to gun violence in the past year and will continue to do so every day the Senate is in session.

In the name of those who died, we will continue this fight. Following are the names of some people who were killed by gunfire 1 year ago today. Before I read the names, these are names, just letters in black and white, but every one represents a life living and breathing, loving and was loved. Every one leaves a family and friends who will never be the same, as well as the tragedy for all of us that someone is untimely taken from us:

Rodney Autry, 30 years old, Dallas, TX; Aaron Baskin, 28 years old, Chicago, IL; Shawn Blake, 24 years old, Detroit, MI; Eddie Espinosa, 17 years old, Miami-Dade County, FL; Keith Gales, 19 years old, Pittsburgh, PA; Rodney J. Graham, 25 years old, Chicago, IL; Gaberiel Herrea, 22 years old, Detroit, MI; Francisco Horta, 33 years old, Miami-Dade County, FL; Eddie JOHNSON, 17 years old, New Orleans, LA; Goodman Jones, 55 years old, Concord, NC; Brian Sentelle Hill, 20 years old, Macon, GA; Harvey Meyers, 23 years old, Philadelphia, PA; Tarvis E. Miller, 25 years old, Chicago, IL; Cleophis Ramsey, 41 years old, Miami-Dade County, FL; Jesus Rodriguez, 22 years old, Houston, TX; Luther Faye SMITH, 45 years old, Tulsa, OK; Thomas

Tyler, 20 years old, New Orleans, LA; Frederick Williams, 19 years old, Detroit, MI; Jamal Williams, 18 years old, Philadelphia, PA; unidentified female, 12 years old, Chicago, IL; an unidentified male, 24 years old, Norfolk, VA; an unidentified male, 60 years old, Portland, OR.

I hope and pray the reading of these names importunes us to act. Would all of these deaths be prevented with better laws on the books? Maybe not. Would some of them have been prevented with better laws on the books? Most likely. But even if there is a chance that one of the lives I have mentioned might be living, breathing, living under God's sunshine on this Earth, being the kind of person we can all be just by the gift of life, then there is no reason not to act.

I hope the understanding that every day, every year, there are names such as these from every part of this country who are killed by gun violence will finally move this body to act.

I yield the floor.

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

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

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

EDUCATION

Mr. KENNEDY. Mr. President, I once again bring the attention of the Senate to the importance of completing action on an issue that is of fundamental importance to families all across this country, and that is the role of the Congress in addressing the elementary and secondary education challenge which exists across our Nation in which local communities and States are taking action and in which the Federal Government is also a partner.

We have had a total of 6 days debate. Of the 6 days, 2 were debate only. We were not permitted to have votes on 2 of those 6 days, so we had 4 days of debate and votes. We had a total of 8 amendments. One was a voice amendment. There were 7 rollcalls. Of the 7 rollcalls, 2 of those rollcalls were on amendments we had indicated we were prepared to accept. Essentially, we have had 4 days of debate and 5 votes on this legislation.

This is what our good Republican friends have indicated to us about the priority of education.

In January 6, we have our majority leader saying:

Education is going to be a central issue this year. For starters, we must reauthorize the Elementary and Secondary Education Act. That is important.

These are his remarks to the U.S. Conference of Mayors luncheon on January 29:

But education is going to have a lot of attention, and it's not going to be just words.

On June 22, he said:

Education is No. 1 on the agenda of Republicans in the Congress this year.

In remarks to the U.S. Chamber of Commerce on February 1, 2000, he said:

We're going to work very hard on education. I have emphasized that every year I have been majority leader, and Republicans are committed to doing that.

On February 3, in a speech to the National Conference of State Legislatures, he said:

We must reauthorize the Elementary and Secondary Education Act. Education will be a high priority in this Congress.

Congress Daily, on April 20, said this:

Lott said last week that his top priorities in May include an agriculture sanctions bill, ESEA reauthorization, and passage of four appropriations bills.

May 1:

This is very important legislation. I hope we can debate it seriously and have amendments in the education area. Let's talk education.

On May 2, I asked Senator LOTT:

On ESEA, have you scheduled a cloture vote on that? Senator Lott said:

No, I have not. . . . But education is No. 1 in the minds of the American people all across the country, in every State, including my own State. For us to have a good, healthy, and even a protracted debate and amendments on education I think is the way to go.

On May 9, at the time when the legislation was pulled down, I asked the majority leader:

As I understand, we will have an opportunity to come back to ESEA next week. Is that the leader's plan?

He said:

That is my hope and intent.

We are about to go out for a period of 10 days. We are reaching the end of May. We have no end in sight for the completion of legislation dealing with the Elementary and Secondary Education Act. We have been prepared to enter into short time agreements on the various proposals. I don't know of a single amendment on this side on which we could not enter into a time agreement of 1 hour equally divided. We put that forward and we have outlined in detail the various education amendments that we had intended to offer. But we are not getting focus, attention, and priority on this legislation.

I don't believe the American people want us to stonewall on the issue of education. I don't think they want the Senate gagged from having a full debate, discussion and action. We have had other legislation, such as the bankruptcy bill, that went for 15 or 16 days of debate before completion. We can take the time that is necessary and also complete the work on the appropriations bills. But we are serious about bringing this matter to the floor. We are going to raise it continuously. We want to take action. We think families across this country know appropriations are important, but those appropriations are not going to actually be expended until the fall. Families want to know, as we go on into this year, what we are going to do on education and education policy. We owe it