



United States
of America

Congressional Record

PROCEEDINGS AND DEBATES OF THE 104th CONGRESS, FIRST SESSION

Vol. 141

WASHINGTON, TUESDAY, JANUARY 31, 1995

No. 19

Senate

(Legislative day of Monday, January 30, 1995)

The Senate met at 9:30 a.m., on the expiration of the recess, and was called to order by the President pro tempore [Mr. THURMOND].

PRAYER

The Chaplain, the Reverend Richard C. Halverson, D.D., offered the following prayer:

Let us pray:

** * * love is the fulfilling of the law.—Romans 13:10.*

Father in Heaven, when pressure becomes heavy between those who hold opposing views, we are less inclined to concentrate on issues and more inclined to think personally. Our reason tells us we are united in one purpose for the common welfare, but our emotions incline us to see those who oppose us as enemies. We thank Thee for Senate tradition which respects political adversaries and for Senate language which never fails to recognize each other as distinguished.

Grant, O God, that this tradition will always be taken seriously and this language will always be more than polite rhetoric. Keep us mindful that we debate a point not because we are stubborn and inflexible, but because we are strongly convinced that our position is the best for that objective to which we all are dedicated.

Help us to keep our cool in the realization that "** * * love is the fulfilling of the law,*" that the two great commandments are comprehended in love for God and neighbor. Never allow us to feel that love is unbecoming the dignity and decorum of this powerful body. Gracious, loving Lord, help us to conduct all our business on this floor, as well as in our offices and homes, in love.

In the name of Him who is incarnate in love. Amen.

RECOGNITION OF THE ACTING MAJORITY LEADER

The PRESIDENT pro tempore. The acting majority leader is recognized. Mr. LOTT. Thank you, Mr. President.

RESERVATION OF LEADER TIME

Mr. LOTT. Mr. President, time for the two leaders has been reserved.

SCHEDULE

Mr. LOTT. Mr. President, there will be a period for the transaction of morning business not to extend beyond 10 a.m. with Senators permitted to speak for not more than 5 minutes each with the following Senators to speak for up to the designated times of 15 minutes: Senator DOMENICI and Senator BREAUX.

The Senate will then resume consideration of House Joint Resolution 1 at 10 a.m., the balanced budget amendment to the Constitution.

There will be a recess between the hours of 12:30 p.m. and 2:15 p.m. for the weekly policy luncheons to meet.

Mr. President, I yield the floor.

Mr. COCHRAN addressed the Chair.

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Mr. JEFFORDS). The Senator from Mississippi is recognized.

FARM AND NUTRITION PROGRAMS

Mr. COCHRAN. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent to insert in the RECORD a copy of an article written by Mr. Neely Mallory in the Commercial Appeal of Memphis, TN, on Sunday, January 29, dealing with the importance of agriculture and nutrition programs.

It is a cautionary signal and call to the Congress to recognize the importance of these programs as we work through the efforts for reform, reduction in spending, balancing the budget, and the other important challenges that we are considering now in the Congress.

I ask unanimous consent that the article be printed in the RECORD.

There being no objection, the material was ordered to be printed in the RECORD, as follows:

[From the Commercial Appeal, Jan. 29, 1995]

A PROUD HARVEST

(By Neely Mallory)

The new year is barely out of the bag but the debate concerning the new farm bill already has begun in earnest. Every five years, Congress must decide whether to reauthorize a set of farm and nutrition programs that have been in place for about 60 years.

An editorial in this newspaper Jan. 2 lent its voice to a group that wants farm programs to be either abolished or significantly changed. In so doing, this newspaper has done a disservice to the thousands of Mid-South farmers who read it, the needy who benefit from food assistance programs and the American public.

As the editorial stated, there are far fewer farmers today than there were 60 years ago—but there are many more mouths to feed and bodies to clothe. The importance of food and fiber to every person on this planet has not declined one iota over these many years. Research, huge capital investments, advancing technology and successful farm programs have made this incredible jump in efficiency possible—without for one moment jeopardizing our nation's supply of reasonably priced food and fiber.

Agriculture and related businesses contribute more than \$40 billion annually to the Mid-South economy alone. Farming may not be the nation's principal occupation, but it is, nevertheless, an important one. About one job out of six in the United States is somehow farm or food related. Certainly, the jobs and economic activity created by farmers drive this region's economy.

Farm programs are not the relics critics would lead the public to believe. Farm programs have changed, evolved with every farm bill and with changing economic conditions. In the 1930s, those programs were designed to keep farmers in place and to prevent shortages of food and fiber for a hungry nation. In the 1990s, these programs are a crucially important component of industrial policy that enables U.S. agriculture to remain viable in a world market where its

• This "bullet" symbol identifies statements or insertions which are not spoken by a Member of the Senate on the floor.



Printed on recycled paper containing 100% post consumer waste

S 1795

comparative advantage is taken away by foreign subsidies.

Today's commercial farm is a high-tech, capital-intensive enterprise. The implications of this evolution in farm organization and management are not understood nearly as well as they should be. The relatively large gross sales of farming operations lead many people to believe that farmers have no need for government programs. The truth of the matter is that the narrow margins on sales of agriculture commodities are simply not adequate to compensate for the tremendous risk associated with today's capital-intensive farming. Neither a prudent farmer nor his banker would consider making the kind of investment currently necessary for commercial agriculture production in the absence of either a farm program that provides the producer with a safety net or much higher market prices that are commensurate with the investment and risk involved.

There is a rather badly misplaced belief that the new General Agreement on Tariffs and Trade will do away with agriculture subsidies around the world, after which U.S. agriculture should be able to take advantage of its competitive edge. If, in fact, GATT did away with subsidies, U.S. agriculture would be generally well positioned, with its vast agriculture land resources, favorable climate, unequalled technology and excellent processing, handling and transportation infrastructure.

The United States offered during the early stages of GATT negotiations to end agriculture subsidization, but no other country would hear of it. They cannot compete with us without government help. The final agreement requires very minimal changes in the subsidy programs of other nations. So U.S. agriculture will continue to be confronted with a system of foreign subsidies that undermines our comparative advantage in agriculture production and marketing.

It is no accident or quirk of fate that every American enjoys the lowest-cost and best available supply of food and fiber in the world. This prized result came about because of American ingenuity and successful farm programs that have enabled U.S. farmers to compete worldwide and produce an abundant supply of food and fiber for domestic consumption. And it has happened in spite of foreign subsidies, tremendous natural disasters and the huge financial risk associated with farming.

The agriculture reforms suggested in this newspaper's editorial already have been set in motion. A massive reorganization and downsizing of the U.S. Department of Agriculture and the total revision of the federal crop insurance program are but two examples. Farm program spending (which makes up less than 1 percent of the entire federal budget) has been cut by two-thirds since 1986. This is not "trimming," as the editorial suggests; this is slicing and dicing. If the rest of this nation's federal spending had been reduced by half as much as agriculture, we would be running a federal surplus.

A review of farm programs is certainly in order during 1995 as Congress considers new farm legislation. We would be the first to admit that farm programs are not perfect, and that some farmers have taken improper advantage of them. But on balance, it is safe to say that farmers are no more or less likely to cheat than any other person. Responsible lawmakers should not ignore the plain success of U.S. farm and nutrition programs. Abolition or weakening of programs whose success can be measured every day does not qualify as needed reform. It would be imperiling a 21-million-job industry.

I believe the new secretary of Agriculture and those in Congress responsible for writing the laws will know the difference between so-

called reform and preserving an industry-government partnership that returns enormous benefits to the American public.

Mr. COCHRAN. Mr. President, I thank my good friend for permitting me to make that unanimous-consent request.

Mr. DOMENICI. The Senator is welcome.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Under the previous order, the Senator from New Mexico [Mr. DOMENICI] is recognized for up to 15 minutes.

Mr. DOMENICI. Will the Chair advise me when I have used 10 minutes?

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Chair will so advise.

(The remarks of Mr. DOMENICI pertaining to the introduction of S. 298 are located in today's RECORD under "Statements on Introduced Bills and Joint Resolutions.")

PROTECTION OF MEDICARE

Mr. KENNEDY. Mr. President, yesterday the Speaker of the House addressed the American Hospital Association. His comments should be reviewed by every Member of the Senate and by the American people as well, because they are an unmistakable preview of what we can expect if the constitutional amendment before us is enacted and of what the Republican Contract on American really means.

The Speaker said that Medicare would be "rethought from the ground up." He said that he would "make every decision within the context of getting to a balanced budget."

I am not surprised by the Speaker's words, because the fact is that you can't balance the budget, protect defense spending, and provide billions in tax cuts for the rich without savage cuts in the Medicare Program. If Social Security is kept off limits, the Treasury Department estimates that Medicare would have to be cut by \$77 billion by 2002—an almost unthinkable 31 percent of projected program outlays. If Social Security is also cut, the reductions would still be 21 percent of program costs—nearly \$2,000 less Medicare for every senior citizen.

Speaker GINGRICH and the other authors of the Republican contract don't seem to know or care how dependent senior citizens are on Medicare. Even without any Medicare cuts, senior citizens spent an average of \$2,800 out of their own pockets for health care last year. This is four times what nonelderly Americans spent. Just 7 years ago, in 1987, senior citizens had to spend 15 percent of their income for medical care—and that was too much. Today, that proportion has soared to 23 percent—almost \$1 in every \$4 of limited incomes that are already stretched to pay for food, housing, heat, clothing, and other essential expenses of daily living. Senior citizens should be paying less for medical care, not more.

A word we are hearing more and more from our friends on the other side of the aisle is restructuring the Medicare Program. All of us are interested

in improvements in Medicare, but restructuring is a barely disguised euphemism for forcing seniors into managed care and cutting benefits. Senior citizens should have the opportunity to join managed care plans—as many do today. They should be entitled to share in any savings from managed care in the form of better benefits and lower premiums—as many do today. But we should vigorously oppose any scheme to balance the budget by cutting Medicare and forcing senior citizens into managed care programs that deny them the freedom to go to the doctor of their choice.

When Speaker GINGRICH and his allies talk about a balanced budget, they don't seem to be very concerned about the budgets of American families—and particularly the limited budgets of our senior citizens. When they talk about freedom from big Government, they don't seem to be very concerned about the freedom of senior citizens to go to the doctor of their choice. But I say those are the budgets and the freedoms that we ought to be protecting, not attacking.

The distinction between Medicare and Social Security is a false one, because Medicare is a part of Social Security. Social Security and Medicare are the twin pillars of retirement security for millions of senior citizens. Like Social Security, Medicare is a sacred compact between the Government and the people. It says, "Work hard all your life, pay your dues, and we will guarantee you security in your old age." We have an obligation to protect that compact, not only for today's senior citizens but for their children and their grandchildren, for all of us, if we are fortunate, will some day be old.

When Republicans in other years tried to break the promise of Social Security, senior citizens and their families all over this country told them that the answer was "no." And the Congress responded. Today, it is time to say to NEWT GINGRICH and his friends that, when it comes to breaking the promise of Medicare, the answer is just as resounding and just as unequivocal. And once again, the answer is "no."

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Under the previous order, the Senator from Louisiana [Mr. BREAU] is recognized to speak for up to 15 minutes.

WELFARE REFORM SUMMIT

Mr. BREAU. I thank the Chair. Mr. President, I would like to take this time to comment on the event that occurred this weekend on Saturday and congratulate the President of the United States for calling, for the first time, a bipartisan summit on the issue of welfare reform.

The President of the United States, President Clinton, spent almost 5 hours sitting in an all-day meeting at the Blair House, and in that meeting were Republican Governors, Democratic