

When you arrive at an answer, remember that it was Congress that ran up a debt exceeding \$4.8 trillion.

To be exact, as of the close of business yesterday, Monday, January 30, the Federal debt, down to the penny, at \$4,803,795,968,326.50—meaning that every man, woman, and child in American now owes \$18,235.29 computed on a per capita basis.

Mr. President, to respond once more to the pop quiz question—how many million in a trillion: There are a million million in a trillion, and you can thank the U.S. Congress for the existing Federal debt of \$4.8 trillion.

#### OPPOSE EFFORTS TO ROLL BACK MOTOR-VOTER LAW

Mr. WELLSTONE. Mr. President, the National Voter Registration Act of 1993, often called the motor-voter bill, was one of the most important pieces of bipartisan legislation approved by the 103d Congress. Recently, several Senators have suggested they intend to try to delay final implementation of motor-voter, or to repeal it outright. Today a hearing was to be held on these issues in the Rules Committee. That hearing has now been postponed indefinitely. I hope as an indication of waning enthusiasm for this proposal. We must resist any efforts to weaken or to delay final implementation of this landmark measure, which is providing access for so many Americans to one of their most fundamental rights: the right to vote.

Most States have moved forward quickly, responsibly, and effectively to implement the motor-voter bill at very low cost, with only a few States resisting. States which have recently implemented the motor-voter provisions have seen tremendous increases in the number of people registering to vote. For example, since the first of the year Florida has been averaging over 3,000 new voter registrations per day from people getting driver's licenses. Approximately 3,700 voters were registered in Washington State in the first week of motor-voter operation through the combined use of motor-voter procedures, registration by mail, and agency-based registration. In Georgia, over 18,000 people have been registered since the new procedures went into effect on January 1, 1995. In Kentucky, in the first 10 days of implementation of the act, over 10,000 new voters were registered, and over 15,000 changes of address for voters were completed through the motor-voter procedures. Since Minnesota implemented its own motor-voter process in 1987, our Secretary of State estimates that we have registered over 700,000 voters using those procedures. We must not reverse this extraordinary progress, which is allowing many more people to participate in our political system.

In order to protect the fundamental right to vote of all U.S. citizens regardless of their State of residence, the U.S. Justice Department has filed suit against three States—California, Illi-

nois, and Pennsylvania—which have so far refused to implement the motor-voter procedures. As Attorney General Reno observed in the complaints against these three States, when Congress enacted the motor-voter bill we were exercising our constitutional right to regulate Federal elections under article I, section 4. States cannot simply ignore the direct statutory directives of Congress as the Attorney General said just after the law suits were filed:

Congress has the authority to regulate Federal elections, and it used that authority when it passed the law. We now must use the authority that Congress gave us to enforce it.

The motor-voter law enacted last year was designed to protect potential voters in all States, and not just in States where elected officials choose to obey properly enacted Federal laws. It is in our national interest to ensure access to the voting booth for all, whether you live in Minnesota, California, or Alaska.

In light of the importance of the Motor-Voter Act, and the support it is receiving from around the country, I ask unanimous consent that the following editorial appearing in the Washington Post on January 25, 1995 be reprinted in the CONGRESSIONAL RECORD, along with the full text of my statement.

The 1993 National Voter Registration Act was passed with bipartisan support because many of our colleagues understood how important the right to vote is in our society. The motor-voter law is part of a long line of landmark protections for the right to vote, starting with the adoption of the 15th amendment to the Constitution, through the enactment of the 1965 Voting Rights Act, and culminating with its passage. We must not return to the days when access to the voting booths in our country was limited by serious barriers to registration. We must stand up for the fundamental right to vote. I urge my colleagues to join me in opposing any effort to undermine the motor-voter law, or to delay its full implementation.

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

#### WHY RESIST THE 'MOTOR VOTER' LAW?

On Monday the Justice Department filed suit against California, Illinois and Pennsylvania for refusing to comply with the National Voter Registration Act, popularly known as the "motor voter law." The 1993 law requires that states allow people to register to vote when they get their driver's licenses, when they apply for social service and other government benefits, and by mail. The law was a good idea. Its purpose was to streamline the U.S. voter registration system, which is unusually cumbersome by the standards of most other democracies.

What are the arguments being made against the law? A group of Republican governors that includes California's Pete Wilson, who has already sued to have the law overturned, objects on four principal counts: (1) that voter registration is a state responsibility and the federal government has no right to impose prescriptions as specific as

those contained in the new law; (2) that the law is another unfunded mandate requiring states to spend their own money to achieve a purpose dictated by Congress; (3) that it is also a ploy by Democrats to strengthen the party's electoral chances, since many of those whom easier registration might add to the voter pool are groups inclined to vote against the GOP; and (4) that the law could facilitate voter fraud.

The issue of the power of the federal government on this particular matter will now be settled by the courts, but Attorney General Janet Reno made a plausible point when she argued that "Congress has the authority to regulate federal elections, and it used that authority when it passed this law." As for the mandates argument, it's true that the Congressional Budget Office estimated the new law would have a cost, though less than an average of \$1 million in each state annually. This has not bothered most states. On the third point (that the GOP would be hurt and the Democrats helped), the evidence is not so clear. Back in 1989, for example, Newt Gingrich urged his party to support eased voter registration "not only because it's good policy but also because it's good politics." Since young people are disproportionately unregistered and since many in their ranks lean Republican, he said, the party might actually gain from an expanded electorate. Mr. Gingrich is not a fan of this law, but that was a good point. As for fraud, registration at motor vehicle offices and by mail already works fine in many parts of the country, including in the District.

Both political parties should want to take their chances with the broadest possible electorate. The governors ought to reconsider.

#### HOMICIDES BY GUNSHOT IN NEW YORK CITY

Mr. MOYNIHAN. Mr. President, I rise to announce to the Senate that during the past week, 14 people were killed with firearms in New York City, bringing this year's total to 58.

A recent national study released by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention indicated that homicide is the second leading cause of death among teenagers aged 15 to 19. If current nationwide trends continue, it is estimated that annual deaths from gunshot wounds will surpass annual deaths from automobile accidents by 2003. In New York State, as in the District of Columbia and five other States, this has already occurred. In 1992, there were 2,345 gunshot-related deaths in New York State, compared with 1,959 motor vehicle-related deaths.

By the middle of the century, we recognized that traffic accidents constituted perhaps the greatest of the Nation's public health problems. So we did something about it. We passed the Motor Vehicle Safety Act in 1966 and increased the use of seatbelts, padded dashboards, and, more recently, airbags. As a result, traffic death and injury was reduced by 30 percent, even as the number of miles driven by Americans increased dramatically. Estimates suggest that we prevented as many as 250,000 deaths.

We should apply our experience in reducing traffic fatalities to reducing the