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Senate

(Legislative day of Wednesday, February 22, 1995)

The Senate met at 12 noon, on the expiration of the recess, and was called to order by the President pro tempore [Mr. THURMOND].

PRAYER

The guest Chaplain, the Reverend Paul Lavin, of St. Joseph's Catholic Church, offered the following prayer:

In Psalm 72 we read:

O God, give your judgment to those who govern. That they may govern your people with justice, That the mountains may yield their bounty for the people, and the hills their great abundance. That they may defend the oppressed among the people, save the poor and crush the oppressor.

Let us pray:

Good and gracious God. You guide and govern everything with order and love.

Look upon the men and women of this U.S. Senate and fill them with Your wisdom.

May these Senators and those who work with them always act in accordance with Your will and may their decisions be for the peace and well-being of our Nation and of all the world. Amen.

RESERVATION OF LEADER TIME

The PRESIDENT pro tempore. Under the previous order, leadership time is reserved.

MORNING BUSINESS

The PRESIDENT pro tempore. Under the previous order, there will now be a period for the transaction of morning business for not to extend beyond the hour of 12:30 p.m., with Senators permitted to speak therein for not to exceed 10 minutes each.

Mr. DORGAN addressed the Chair.

The PRESIDENT pro tempore. The Senator from North Dakota is recognized.

THE SCHOOL LUNCH PROGRAM

Mr. DORGAN. Mr. President, we are hearing a great deal these days about something called the Contract With America. It was constructed by the Republican Party prior to the 1994 election and was designed by them to be a road map or a political device by which they could tell the American people what they stand for and what they hoped to accomplish. Some of the contract makes good sense. Some of it continues and retains the same kinds of policies that we on the Democratic side of the aisle have been pushing for some years. But some parts of the contract make no sense at all.

I stand on the Senate floor today to talk about something that soon will come to the floor from the other body as a result of action they took last week. The House Economic and Educational Opportunities Committee passed a bill that repeals the School Lunch Act and replaces it with block grants to the States. It also eliminates the requirement that poor children get free school lunches. And, third, it eliminates Federal nutrition standards.

I say to my friends on other side of the aisle who constructed this that there is reason for us to differ on some things and that there is room to differ on many issues. We, for example, differ on the subject of whether this country should build star wars. Some say the Contract With America says, "let us—despite the fact that the Soviet Union is gone, vanished, done—build star wars again. Let us spend tens of billions of dollars building a star wars program."

They also say, "let us cut taxes; in fact, let us cut taxes and give the ma-

jority of the benefits to the rich." It will reduce the revenue to the Federal Government by three-quarters of a trillion dollars in the next 10 years, if we do what the Contract With America wants us to do on revenues.

So there is room to disagree on these proposals. But there is much more room to disagree on another proposal at a time when some are saying, "let us cut taxes, especially for wealthier Americans, and let us build star wars because we apparently have the money to do that."

There is much more room for disagreement on the notion that we ought to decide at this time in our country's history to repeal the School Lunch Act and to eliminate the requirement that the poor children get free school lunches. I can recall—as I told my colleagues last week—sitting in a hearing one day and hearing a young boy named David Bright from New York City. His family had been down and out, down on their luck. They had no place to live, so they lived in a homeless shelter. He described for us the rats in the homeless shelter, the living conditions, and what it is like for a 9-year-old boy to be hungry in school. What he—this young boy—said to the Hunger Committee when he testified:

No young boy like me should have to put his head down on his desk at school in the afternoon because it hurts to be hungry.

It was some years ago that young David told us that. But I have not forgotten what he said or how he said it. How many in this Chamber have ever hurt because they were hungry in the afternoon? Not very many, I might say, and probably none. But young children do, if they come from families that are disadvantaged. Young children do when they come from families with no parents. Young children do when they come from homes without money to buy breakfast or nutritious lunches.

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



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