Mr. DOLE. Mr. President, regular order.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator cannot proceed. The only item in order is to ask that the quorum be rescinded.

Ms. MOSELEY-BRAUN. Mr. President, I would do that. I was asking the question, whether now is the time that the motion to rescind the quorum call might possibly not be objected to.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Is the Senator seeking consent to rescind the call for the quorum?

Ms. MOSELEY-BRAUN. Mr. President, yes.

Mr. ASHCROFT. Mr. President, I object.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will call the roll.

The assistant legislative clerk continued with the call of the roll.

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 President, I ask unanimous consent that the order for the quorum call be rescinded.

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

UNANIMOUS-CONSENT AGREEMENT

Mr. ASHCROFT. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the following Senators be recognized to speak in the following order for the allotted times: Senator WELLSTONE, 10 minutes; Senator MOSELEY-BRAUN for 10 minutes; Senator ASHCROFT for 10 minutes; Senator BYRD for 10 minutes.

I further ask that following the conclusion of Senator BYRD's statement, the majority leader be recognized to speak and then proceed to various wrap-up items that have been cleared by the two leaders.

Following those items, the Senate would stand in adjournment under the provisions of Senate Concurrent Resolution 20.

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

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 President, I ask unanimous consent that the order for the quorum call be rescinded.

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

THE RESCISSIONS BILL

Mr. WELLSTONE. Mr. President, I shall be very brief and will be followed by the Senator from Illinois.

Mr. President, let me try to give the morning and part of this afternoon some context. We had a bill, which was about 120 pages long, come over from the House at about 9 o'clock today. This was the rescissions package voted on about 10 o'clock last night in the House of Representatives. It is my really strong view as a Senator that it is important to be able to review legislation, especially when we are talking about the cuts that directly affect people's lives. Sometimes, Mr. President, we get into the statistics and numbers and we forget the faces.

I had voted for the rescissions package passed out of the Senate earlier. I voted against the conference report because of changes that had been made. It is no secret to any Senator in here that I feel especially strongly, as do many other Senators feel very strongly, about several programs—but it is not programs. It is really about people.

I spoke about the Low-Income Home Energy Assistance Program, and I had an amendment and wanted to introduce an amendment that would have restored about a 20-percent cut in the LIHEAP. In my State of Minnesota there are 110,000 households and 300,000 people who are depending on this. I come from a cold weather State. It is a small grant, but for many people it is the difference between heating and eating.

I say to the Presiding Officer, the Senator from Idaho, because I know what kind of Senator he is and I think we respect each other whether we agree or disagree, I met with people in their living rooms. I saw the fear in their eyes. I know how strongly these people depend on this assistance, especially in such a cold weather State. And I said I would fight for these people, and that is what I have done. Because what happened last night in this final package is that we did not have the original Senate version, but we cut it 20 percent, some $315 million.

In addition, I fought for a counseling program for elderly people, to make sure they could not be ripped off. It was consumer protection. This was coverage that people asked for in addition to Medicare, to fill in the gap.

Then I discovered there were some additional cuts in dislocated worker programs. The Senator from Illinois spoke eloquently, of course, about a program she had worked on, just a small amount of money for school infrastructure, for kids.

So what I said today was I wanted the opportunity to go through this bill. I wanted an opportunity to talk about it. I wanted an opportunity to introduce amendments. The first amendment would have been offset, and I gave examples of some of the waste in the travel administrative budget in defense. That money would have been transferred so we would not have the same cut in the Low-Income Home Energy Assistance Program.

I must say, Mr. President, looking at this in a slightly larger context, I find it unconscionable. Really, what we might be talking about, as we extend this rescissions bill into the future—this is a grim precedent of where we are going, since this is where the rubber meets the road. We could be seeing the cuts in the outyears for low-income energy assistance, for children, for education, for counseling for seniors to make sure they do not get ripped off with health insurance—all used to finance tax cuts that go in the main to wealthy, high-income people. Cuts in programs for dislocated workers, job training, you name it. All in the name of tax cuts? We do not go after any of the subsidies for the oil companies but we cut low-income energy assistance? We do not go after any of the military contractors, any of the waste there, but we make cuts in low-income energy assistance, job training programs for kids, counseling programs for elderly people, for consumer protection.

To me it was unacceptable.

I just want to respond to one or two points that the majority leader made, and then I will conclude my remarks.

This was not something just done on Friday. I just got this bill. I am not going to be bulldozed over as a Senator. I want to look and see what is in this piece of legislation. That is the responsible thing to do. And it certainly is true that those people, be they elderly people with disabilities, be they children, working poor people who are affected by low-income energy assistance may not have all the clout and make all the money and make all the contributions, deserve representation here in the U.S. Senate.

The cuts, I believe, are unconscionable. So this was not something I just come to on Friday. This has been a priority issue for me as a Senator from a cold weather State where many people are affected by these cuts for a long, long time. And will continue to be so.

Second, I care fiercely about the assistance for people in Oklahoma and California. We will be back to this bill. We all know it. Of course, we will be back to this bill. And, of course, there will be relief, and I have voted for that relief and will continue to do so. We all know we are going to be back on this piece of legislation—and we must. I hope there will be some discussion in the meantime and we can work out some reasonable compromise.

Finally, I have the utmost respect for the manager of the bill, the Senator from Oregon, and certainly for the Senator from West Virginia. But as to what happens in the future, we cannot be bound by the priorities and the parameters of what the House of Representatives is doing in these kinds of budget resolutions. We can make changes next year. I just simply tried to say today, and I will say it over and over again—I will shout it from the mountain top, from the floor of the Senate, if that is what is necessary—that these are distorted priorities. To ask some of the most vulnerable citizens in this country to tighten their belts when they cannot, to cut low-income energy assistance for people in my State, a cold weather State, and not even look for offsets? Not to restore that kind of funding? That is unacceptable to me.

So, I have no doubt that we will be back on this.

My final point would have been that by amendment, I would have on the first amendment talked about other