Slovak Heritage Festival will contribute proceeds from their programs to the Garden State Arts Center's cultural center fund which presents theater productions free-of-charge to New Jersey's school children, seniors, and other deserving residents. The Heritage Festival thus not only pays tribute to the cultural influences from our past, it also makes a significant contribution to our present day cultural activities.

The Slovak Heritage Festival will open with a business trade show with a number of different exhibits. Chaired by Joseph J. Talafous, this year's event will focus on free trade and economic development. At noon the festival will honor his excellency, the Most Reverend Michael J. Dudick, D.D., Bishop of Passaic, NJ, for his 15th anniversary of dedicated service to the Byzantine Catholic community. A mass will be performed by Bishop Frantisek Tondra, of Spis Kapitula, Slovakia. Following the Mass, the opening ceremony which includes the Slovak fashion show, will take place on the mall. The festival will also feature food, crafts, music, a soccer tournament, and traditional Slovak dancing.

Congratulations once again on the occasion of the 20th Annual Slovak Heritage Festival. I offer my best wishes to all who are celebrating a day of pride in their ethnicity by attending the festival.●

TRIBUTE TO MR. THOMAS L. AYRES ON HIS RETIREMENT FROM THE DEPARTMENT OF VETERANS AFFAIRS

● Mr. NUNN. Mr. President, I would like for the Senate to recognize the retirement of Thomas L. Ayres from the Department of Veterans Affairs after more than 41 years of exemplary service in providing health care to the armed service members and veterans of our Nation. On September 30, 1995, Mr. Ayres will retire from his position as the Director of the Department of Veterans Affairs Medical Center in Augusta, GA.

Tom began providing health care during his service with the United States Army from 1995 until 1959 at the 279th Station Hospital in Berlin. After his service in the Army, he started his career with the Veterans' Administration by becoming a nursing assistant at the Veterans Administration Hospital in Marion, IN. From 1962 until 1969, Tom worked as a supervisory recreation specialist at the Veterans Hospital in Brecksville, OH. From 1969 until 1972, he served as a voluntary services officer at Veterans Administration Hospitals in both Madison, WI and Gainesville, FL. In 1972, Tom Ayres became a medical administration assistant at the Veterans Hospital in Madison, WI.

Since 1972, Tom Ayres has earned appointments to positions of increased responsibility within the Department of Veterans Affairs. In 1976, he became a hospital administration specialist and soon thereafter was transferred to the Veterans Affairs central office and served as the executive assistant to the Associate Chief Medical Director for Operations.

Tom Ayres received an appointment to the position of Medical Center Director of the Veterans Administration Hospital in Salisbury, NC in 1981. Nine years later, he became the director of the two-division Veterans Administration Medical Center in Augusta, GA. He also serves as the associate administrator for Veterans Affairs at the Medical College of Georgia and as a member of the Medical College of Georgia's Clinical Enterprise Executive Committee.

Throughout his long and distinguished career in providing health services for U.S. veterans throughout our great Nation, Tom has received numerous awards based on the exemplary performance of his duties. His awards include the National Daughters of American Veterans Commander Award, the Award for Valor from the Secretary of Veterans Affairs, three Superior Performance Awards, and five consecutive Executive Performance awards. In 1990, he received the Presidential Rank Award from the President of the United States.

It is important to note that his compassion and sense of civic responsibility does not start and end with his job. Tom is an active participant with the local United Way, Kiwanis Club, American Legion, Senior Executive Association, and the American College of Hospital Administrators. In addition, he serves on the Administrative Board of Trinity on the Hill Church and is a life member of the Disabled American Veterans and the Veterans of Foreign Wars.

Mr. President, I ask my colleagues to join me in thanking Thomas L. Ayres for his outstanding career spent in service to our Nation's veterans. He is a model citizen in every sense of the term. We wish him, his wife Christa, and their children and grandchildren Godspeed and every success for the future.●

IN HONOR OF JOSEPH E. BUDD, GRAND MARSHALL OF THE MIDDLESEX COUNTY PULASKI DAY PARADE

● Mr. BRADLEY. Mr. President, on September 23, 1995, a distinguished New Jerseyan, Joseph E. Budd, will be appointed the grand marshall of the Middlesex County Pulaski Day Parade Committee. This appointment is based on Joseph Budd's lifelong commitment to his community and country.

Joseph Budd, born in Sayreville, NJ, has lived a life of exemplary citizenship. As a youth, he graduated from South River High School, where he was an all-State baseball player. He than went on to play semiprofessional baseball with Holy Trinity and Saint Mary's of South River, N.J.

After completing his education, Joseph joined the U.S. 77th Infantry Division in the Pacific theater. Joseph distinguished himself as a Sergeant of reconnaissance, receiving five battle stars and a Bronze Star in the Battle of Guam, for his outstanding bravery and superior leadership abilities.

After leaving the military, Joseph continued to play an active role in the veteran community by serving as the past commander of Veterans of Foreign War Post 8025 in Somerset, NJ, and as a member of the American Legion Post 478. In addition, Joseph is also a member of the Catholic War Veterans Post 405 in New Brunswick, NJ.

Employed by the Public Service and Gas Co. for 36 years, Joe retired as an office manager in the customer service center in 1987. Joseph Budd's strong work ethic carried over into his commitment to community service. Throughout his life, Joseph has been a committed member of a number of organizations. Joseph is the past president of the Kiwanis Club of New Brunswick, a member of the Bound Book chapter of Deborah Heart and Lung Hospital Foundation, past chairman of the Franklin Township Industrial Commission, noteworthy member of the Franklin Park Senior Citizen's Club and Retired Senior Volunteer Program of Somerset County, NJ.

Congratulations once again to Joseph Budd on his selection as the grand marshall of the Middlesex County Pulaski Day parade.●

ORDER OF BUSINESS

Mr. JEFFORDS. Mr. President, I suggest the absence of a quorum.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will call the roll.

The assistant legislative clerk proceeded to call the roll.

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

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

MEDICARE, TAX CUTS, PRIORITIES

Mr. DORGAN. Mr. President, next week the Senate Finance Committee will begin to mark up a piece of legislation dealing with Medicare and Medicaid, essentially comporting to the budget that was enacted by the U.S. Senate. The issue, as anyone who has been watching television or reading the newspaper recently knows, is Medicare, tax cuts, priorities. I would like to talk about that a little bit today.

This morning I was watching a bit of the morning shows on television and I saw the Speaker of the House and a number of others engaging in a debate about what these issues mean. There are a substantial amount of charges and countercharges going back and forth on the issue of Medicare and the tax cuts. These are important issues, there is no question about that. I do not think anyone denies the consequences of what we do will have a

substantial impact on people in this country. What I want to do today is discuss a little about the kinds of debate that we have heard in recent days on the effect or impact of both the Medicare Program and tax cuts. I thought I would do it by beginning with some comments, not from a Democrat, but from a Republican.

This is from Kevin Phillips, a Republican conservative political analyst. I want to go through some of the things he says, and the reason I do this is because the Speaker and others say this is all being distorted; it is a bunch of Democrats who want to distort what the Republicans are doing on Medicare and tax cuts. Here is what Kevin Phillips says. He says, speaking of the Republican approach, the budget, and so on:

> It is senior citizens, the poor, students, and ordinary Americans who will see programs they depend on gutted, while business, finance, and the richest 1 or 2 percent, far from making sacrifices, actually get new benefits and tax reductions.

That is an analysis by a Republican of the Republican plan.

Further, from Kevin Phillips, he says:

> If the U.S. budget deficit problem does represent the fiscal equivalent of war—and maybe it does—then what we are really looking at is one of the most flagrant examples of war profiteering this century has seen.

Again, talking about the budget initiative.

Further, Kevin Phillips, a Republican, says:

> . . . if the deficit is substantially reduced under a program like this, there'll be a second stage of further upward income redistribution from upper bracket profits in the stock and bond markets.

Two additional comments from, again, a Republican political analyst about this approach:

> Spending on Government programs from Medicare and education to home heating oil assistance is to be reduced in ways that principally burden the poor and the middle class while simultaneously taxes are to be cut in ways that predominantly benefit the top 1 or 2 percent of Americans.

This is not some wild-eyed radical liberal saying this. This is an observation from Kevin Phillips, a conservative Republican political analyst.

Finally, from Mr. Kevin Phillips, ''In short,'' he says, again speaking of the Republican budget which is now in place:

> In short, aid to dependent grandmothers, children, college students, and city dwellers is to be slashed while aid to dependent corporations, stock brokers, generals, and assorted James Bond imitators survives or even grows worse.

Those are the comments, not from someone who is partisan on this side of the aisle. Those are comments I have read from a political analyst who is a Republican.

What of this debate about Medicare? The proposal in the budget to cut the Medicare Program $270 billion below what is needed to finance the Medicare Program is a proposal to cut $270 billion. The analysis is that $89 billion is needed for the trust fund. So the question is, if you are going to cut $181 billion more than is necessary in Medicare to make it solvent, where does that money go? How is that money used?

The answer to that is, of course, the extra money being cut in Medicare is to finance a tax cut. From the Department of Treasury, Office of Tax Analysis, this pie chart shows what Kevin Phillips said in the earlier comments.

Who is going to get the benefits of the tax cut? This says that the top 12 percent of the income earners in this country will get over 50 percent of the tax benefits. Families with over $100,000 of income will receive 51.5 percent of the tax benefits.

We just had a vote on an amendment I offered, a-sense-of-the Senate resolution saying let us limit the tax cut to those who earn less than $100,000 a year. To the extent we save money by limiting the tax cut to those who have $100,000 or less, let us then be able to use that savings to reduce the cut in Medicare.

The vote was, predictably I think, 43 to 54. The amendment was defeated.

The point is that over half the tax cut is going to go to families with over $100,000 in income. This at a time when we are up to our necks in debt, when we are told the deficit is such a serious problem that we have to take a big hunk out of Medicare, $270 billion.

It turns out we have to take a big hunk out of Medicare, according to some, in order to finance this half of the tax cut, and that is the dilemma and that is the political debate.

Is it just pure partisan politics? No. It is a debate about priorities. We only have the tax bill that the House of Representatives passed to go on, but if you take a look at what was passed by the House of Representatives, what you will see is that if you are a household between 0 and $30,000, or in other words a household with less than $30,000 in income, you will get a tax cut for the year of $124. If your income is $200,000 or more, you will get a tax cut of $11,200.

Whenever one points this out—this comes from the Department of Treasury information—whenever someone points this out someone else jumps up and says, ''Class warfare. Class warfare. You are trying to divide people.''

I am not trying to divide anybody. I am just trying to figure out who gets what from these proposals. This is a classic cake and crumbs approach to a legislative profile. You give the cake to the big shots—if you have a lot of money you get to eat a big piece of this cake—and if you do not have much, they will wipe a few crumbs off the table for you and say, ''By the way, everybody gets something here. This is a wonderful deal for everybody.''

Well, this graph shows it is not a wonderful deal for everybody. The fact is the bulk of the tax cut is going to inure to the benefit of the wealthiest Americans.

The interesting discussion about Medicare is this: Medicare was a very controversial program when first conceived. When first proposed in the U.S. Senate, 95 percent of the Republicans voted against the Medicare Program. ''Socialism,'' they said. ''We do not like it. We do not want anything to do with it. It is bad public policy.'' I understand that. The old definition of a conservative is someone who never wants to do anything for the first time. I understand all of that.

The fact is, despite the fact that most all in their party opposed it 30 years ago, I would guess, if you had a vote on the very simple proposition, ''Is Medicare good and should we keep Medicare?'' I would guess now 95 percent in the Republican Party would probably vote yes. They have changed their mind. I think most of them would say that they were wrong to oppose Medicare initially because Medicare has proven to be an enormously important program.

Over half of the senior citizens in this country had no health care coverage before we adopted Medicare. Then in the fifties, the forties, and in the thirties, back in the days when we had no Medicare coverage for senior citizens, when getting sick when you were a senior citizen was a circumstance where you feared that you would be held hostage by virtue of being unable to pay for a medical bill or get medical help when you were critically ill. Half of the senior citizens in this country had no health care coverage.

We passed Medicare, and I am proud that I am part of a group whose heritage is to fight for things that are progressive. Ninety-nine percent of the senior citizens in this country now no longer have to live in fear that they may not be able to get treatment for health care needs because they now have the Medicare Program.

Is it a perfect program? Gosh, no. We have lots of problems with it. We have had hearings about fraud. We have had hearings about waste. But the fact is that most senior citizens and others who have used Medicare would tell us that the Medicare Program has been a wonderful boon to them.

It has cost us a lot more than we expected, for a couple of reasons. Senior citizens are living a lot longer. Senior citizens are living an enormous amount of time. Prior to the 1960's they did not have that kind of lifespan. Now they do.

What happened in addition to the fact that people are living longer is that medical technology has made breathtaking breakthroughs. Now when someone's knee gives out, they can get a new knee. When their hip gives out and they need a new hip, or when they eat food that plugs up the heart muscle, somebody can open up their chest, give them an operation, unplug the heart muscle and the arteries, and they are back out.

So it is not unusual to run into a senior citizen that just had open heart surgery, or has a new knee, or has a new hip, or cataract surgery, is 75 years old, and feels like a million dollars. It is all very expensive, but it is wonderful. It is a condition of success in many respects. But it has been an expensive program, there is no question about that.

The question before the Congress is, What kind of adjustments are necessary to make it solvent? It is interesting that the trustees of the Medicare commission say, well, the Medicare Program is going to be insolvent by the year 2002 unless some adjustments are made.

The majority party wants to get some money out of Medicare. They called all of the trustees up to the Capitol Building and made a big show. And they said, ''Medicare is going broke.'' In 23 of the last 25 years when the trustees made their report, they said, ''Here is the date by which Medicare will be insolvent.'' This was not the first time that happened. This happens every year. But it is the first time that anybody has called the trustees up to make a big show out of it. In every year, 23 out of 25 years, what has happened is the trustees say, ''Here is the date by which Medicare will be insolvent.'' Every year the Congress has made adjustments to make it solvent. This year we are going to do that. We are going to make an adjustment that deals with about $89 billion over a long period of time to make the Medicare system solvent.

But we are not going, on this side of the aisle at least, to agree with those who believe you ought to cut $270 billion rather than the $89 billion and take the extra $170 billion or so and use it to provide a tax cut, half of which will go to people or families with incomes over $100,000 a year. That is how this boils down.

When you finally condense all of the crowd noise and all of the bellicose debates, when you finally condense it down to the simple point, the point is this: We believe that adjustments to Medicare ought to be made to make the Medicare system solvent. That takes about $89 billion to do. We do not believe, we do not support, and we will not accept notions that we ought to cut the Medicare Program an extra $170 billion below what is necessary to serve the senior citizens who will be eligible in the next 7 years in order to provide a tax cut, the bulk of which will go to upper-income people.

There is ample room for disagreement on priorities and policies. The debate about priorities ought to be thoughtful, not thoughtless. It ought not be a circumstance whenever someone stands up to talk about this difference in priorities that someone says, ''Well, this is just raw politics. It is all nonsense.'' It is not raw politics, and it is not nonsense. It is about priorities, what we believe in, what we fight for, and what we think is important for the future of this country. That is what this is all about.

I see the Senator from West Virginia just came to the floor. He has served in this Chamber for a good long while and in a very distinguished way. He has seen these policies and programs come and go. He, perhaps more than any other, understands that some programs are good and they make this country better. They make this a better place in which to live. Some were not so good and did not work out, and we have changed programs. We have repealed programs. But the Medicare Program, I think, has been an enormously beneficial program for this country. And those who had the courage to stand up when so many others said no, those who had the courage to do that and help develop this program for this country, have my unending gratitude.

There was an old saying around here a long time ago that, ''Any jackass can kick a barn door down, but it takes a carpenter to build one.'' It may be even an old West Virginia saying. I do not know. But I understand what that difference is. The talent to build is a substantially different talent than the talent to destroy.

Someone asked a foreman of a crew that was putting up a building, ''What kind of people do you have to hire to put up a building?'' Well, ''You have to hire skilled workers.'' ''What kind of people would you hire if you were tearing down a building?'' He said, ''Oh, that is not a problem to get those kind of workers. That does not require any skill.''

It is the builders, in my judgment, of this country, who have done the things to make this a better place in which to live that we must pay tribute to. One way to pay tribute to them is to take a look at a program like Medicare and say, ''This is an enormous contribution to this country.'' Let us fix it. Let us make sure it works. But let us not do anything in any way that pulls out the foundation or the structure that supports this wonderful program.

That is what this debate is about. It is going to be a tough one. There are going to be a lot of charges flying back and forth. But when you condense it all down to its rudimentary elements, it is very simple: We support the $89 billion adjustment necessary to make this Medicare Program solvent for the long term. We do not support taking extra money out of Medicare to provide a very substantial tax cut, most of which will go to the affluent of this country. That is bad public policy, and it is a wrong priority for the future of this country.

Mr. President, I yield the floor.

Mr. BYRD addressed the Chair.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from West Virginia is recognized to speak for up to 10 minutes.

Mr. BYRD. Mr. President, I thank the Chair. I thank the distinguished Senator from North Dakota [Mr. DORGAN]. I thank him also for the consistency with which he is fighting this battle, for his support of the programs that are needed to help the elderly and, in helping the elderly, they help the young as well.

My thoughts go back to a time when the elderly did not have any safety net, nor did anyone else. There were no welfare checks, no Social Security checks, no Federal aid to education, no student loans. And when people became too old to work, they had nowhere else to go except over the hill to the poorhouse or stand at the gates of their children with their hats in their hands and hope to be taken in by their children.

Mr. President, the Senator is doing a great service to the country and for the Senate in calling attention to the arguments that are being made here and the threats that are directed toward the Medicare Program. And for what reason? To pay for a tax cut. It is folly, f-o-l-l-y, pure folly to talk about giving a tax cut, with the kind of deficits we now have in this country, and it is going to be a tax cut for the wealthy. I am opposed to that. I am opposed to any tax cut at this time for anybody—wealthy, middle class, or anybody else. That money ought to be applied against the deficit or applied against the cost of the Medicare Program.

It is easy to tear down, as the Senator very aptly said, easy to tear down. Anybody can tear down. It is hard to build. What he said brought to mind a bit of verse:

I saw them tearing a building down,
A group of men in a busy town;
With a ho-heave-ho and a lusty yell,
They swung a beam and a sidewall fell.

I asked the foreman, ''Are these men skilled,
The type you would hire if you had to build?''
He laughed, and then he said, ''No, indeed;
Just common labor is all you need.
I can easily wreck in a day or two,
That which takes builders years to do.''

I thought to myself as I walked away,
Which of these roles am I trying to play?
Am I a builder who works with care,
Building my life by the rule and square?

Am I shaping my deeds by a well-laid plan,
Patiently building the best I can?
Or am I a wrecker who walks the town,
Content with the labor of tearing down?

I am afraid that is what we see at play here. The wreckers are busy.

It is late September and the Senate is entering the season of fiscal ''sound and fury.'' Political leaders in Washington will have to come to grips with all of the rhetorical promises made to reduce the deficit to zero in 7 years, and actually legislate the details which will achieve that end. In this fiscal year, that means substantial savings will have to be made in many important domestic programs, but clearly the most sensitive of these are the third-rail issues of American politics—Social Security and Medicare.

Substantial savings must be found in Medicare in order to meet the deficit reduction targets called for in the budget resolution. The majority party has attempted to justify a very large cut in the medicare program—some

$270 billion dollars, I believe—by claiming that the medicare trust fund is in danger of collapse.

In the first place, $270 billion is more than triple what is actually needed to stabilize the fund. In the second place, the savings will not be applied to the ''trust fund'' part of Medicare. The savings proposed to allegedly salvage the trust fund are actually going to be given away in the form of tax cuts—some $245 billion dollars worth of them—that mainly will benefit the well-to-do in our society.

It is true that steps will need to be taken to make sure that Medicare remains solvent for future generations. Both political parties need to explain that to the people. There is no getting around it. Medicare must undergo changes if it is to continue to be a viable public health care program. But, we poison the water for acceptance by the public of the changes that must come to make the Medicare system healthy if we obfuscate, hype, and over-simplify this issue. On the one hand, if we leave the impression with senior citizens that no changes are necessary, we close off the avenue for large-scale acceptance of reasonable change. In fact, the status quo cannot prevail. The program is growing too fast, and with the baby boomers headed for eligibility in the next decade, the Medicare Program has to be altered to accommodate larger numbers of recipients. We must not leave the impression that the status quo can be protected by any political party or any President. A reality check has to come.

On the other hand, to falsely claim that huge savings are needed right now, and then to further claim, falsely, that those savings will go toward the salvation of Medicare, when, in fact, those savings will only be used to hand out tax cuts to special interests and the most comfortable in our society is an outrage, a breaking of faith with the elderly, and a sure way to lay the groundwork for the utter failure of any reasonable and real fix of Medicare when it has to be enacted.

The $270 billion worth of cuts mandated by the writers of the budget resolution is a bogus number. It was picked for no other reason, I believe, than the convenience of allowing room for the promised tax cuts while making the budget arithmetic come out balanced.

That number is a fabrication by the ''powers that be'' in the current Congress. It reflects nothing more than a policy decision here in Washington to raise monthly premiums on seniors for Part B Medicare benefits so that there will be dollars enough to hand around in tax cuts. I deplore the hype and the scare tactics about collapsing funds and vanishing Medicare programs and the absolute necessity of making $270 billion dollars worth of cuts in Medicare. While it is true we will have to eventually make some savings in the fund, nothing but a political decision to make room for tax cuts, in my judgment, is driving cuts in the Medicare Program of this magnitude.

To make matters worse, the details of the plan to cut Medicare will be wrapped in a reconciliation bill, under a 20-hour time limit, with little opportunity to debate or amend the proposal. After weeks of misinformation, claims, counter claims, hype, scare tactics, media manipulation, general confusion, and false premises, this extremely sensitive and crucial program important to millions of our elderly population will be dispatched on the Senate floor under the tightest of time limits in a massive deficit reduction package.

Now, I turned down the President of the United States when he urged me to go along with putting health care reform into the reconciliation bill. I also turned down that request on the part of the then majority leader, Mr. Mitchell. I am opposed to putting huge Medicare cuts and tax cuts into the reconciliation bill for the same reason that I opposed including health care reform on that occasion. I said it was a matter so complex, so costly it ought to be debated fully by the Senate. That is why we are here—to debate such matters. To put massive bills of that nature into a reconciliation bill is to deny the American people the information and to deny Senators the information to which they are entitled if they are to make sound judgments. But apparently that is what is going to be done.

The details will be obscured by the smoke of the rhetoric and, in short the American people will never know what hit them until it is too late, as usual.

As if there has not already been enough confusion and misrepresentation over reforming medicare, now we hear reports of further chicanery in the budget wars over the issue.

Apparently some in the other body have gotten ''cold feet'' over trading cuts in medicare for cuts in taxes and have opted to play the ''magic asterisk'' game in the reconciliation process. The Congressional Budget Office apparently has told the Republican leadership that, even with a substantial rise in medicare payments by beneficiaries, the $270 billion in medicare budget savings the Republicans need to get from medicare in order to pay for their tax cut, has still not materialized. So, the Republicans are reviving an old canard called a ''look-back'' sequester in the House—the ''look-back'' sequester—in order to achieve the additional cuts needed.

Beware, America's seniors! Beware! A ''look-back'' sequester is the gimmick of all gimmicks in the arcane language of Federal Budgetese.

The ''look-back'' says in plain English—we need more of that these days, plain English. I am for making English the national language.

I realize I may be politically incorrect in making such a statement, but I studied Muzzey when I was in grade school. Muzzey's ''History of the American People.'' And the very first sentence in Muzzey's history book said, ''America is the child of Europe.''

Mr. President, that is true. Muzzey did not care much about being politically correct. He would have been hooted out of town these days. But he believed in giving the historical facts. So do I. I do not give a hoot about political correctness. I will take my stand with Muzzey! America was the child of Europe. And I will take my stand with making English the national language.

The ''look-back'' says in plain English, if our savings plan does not achieve $270 billion in medicare savings, the Secretary of Health and Human Services is instructed to identify the shortfall each year and then to arbitrarily make sufficient cuts in the succeeding year to eliminate the previous year's shortfall. That is legislative and political ''kick the can'' at its worst.

Members of Congress were elected to make these choices and to make them in ways that are understandable and acceptable to the public they represent. Gimmicks like ''look-back'' sequesters deny the American public the opportunity to hear a reasoned debate and to weigh in on decisions they elected us to make. It is a totally spineless way to make cuts in vital programs and it is painless only for the shaky-kneed legislators who employ it.

I urge the Majority Party in the Senate to reject this return to budget gimmickry, David Stockman type magic asterisks, process fixes, and responsibility-shirking convolutions, and engage instead in an honest debate, utilizing plain English language, with the American people about what needs to be done to balance the budget and also assure the solvency of medicare for future users.

I further urge the Senate Finance Committee not to unduly tax Medicare recipients in order to parcel out generous tax breaks for those who do not have to worry about how to pay their doctor bills and afford their medications.

We will never keep deficit reduction on track if we begin the effort by failing to come clean with the people about how hard it will be to carry out the plan. It really comes down, Mr. President, to a matter of trust. If we trust the intelligence and reasonableness of the American people by telling them the truth, they just may—they just may—begin to trust us and give us their support in crafting the hard solutions to our budget and deficit problems.

Mr. President, I yield the floor, and 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. BYRD. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the order for the quorum call be rescinded.

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

Mr. BYRD. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent to proceed for an additional 5 minutes.

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

Mr. BYRD. My friend, who is presiding in the chair, the distinguished Senator from New Hampshire [Mr. SMITH], was interested in the remarks I made a few minutes earlier, and he asked me about Muzzey, whether or not he was the author of the book on American history. He was. He was the author. As I recall, the book was copyrighted, I believe, around 1927, 1928, 1929, or 1930.

I used to memorize the chapters in that history book at night by the light of a kerosene lamp. I told my fellow classmates in the early grades about Nathaniel Greene, Francis Marion the ''Swamp Fox,'' Daniel Morgan, and about Nathan Hale.

I often carry on conversations with the young pages here. And as each new page group comes to the Senate, I generally ask them several questions. And I will stop to tell them stories. When I walk into that Cloakroam, they will gang up around me like a bunch of little birds with their mouths open wanting to be fed, and they ask, ''Can you tell us a story today?''

Well, generally my first question of these new young pages is ''Have you ever heard of Nathan Hale?'' And normally they have never heard of Nathan Hale. I was pleased that this year—I believe there were as many as three in the group who had heard of Nathan Hale.

Mr. DODD. Would my friend and colleague yield?

Mr. BYRD. Of course. With great pleasure.

Mr. DODD. Mr. President, I walked on the floor here. Coincidentally, the distinguished former leader and senior Senator from West Virginia mentions Nathan Hale. I live in the town in the State of Connecticut where Nathan Hale taught in East Haddam, CT.

Coincidentally, in approximately 30 minutes the high school choral group from the Nathan Hale High School of East Haddam, CT, will be meeting with me on the steps of the Capitol here and later will be performing at the Kennedy Center.

I chose them as a choral group from my State. Each State gets to name a choral group. So it is serendipity that as I walked onto the floor, my wonderful friend of so many years mentions Nathan Hale.

In fact, I say to my colleague, I live in a renovated schoolhouse on the banks of the Connecticut River. It was the successor school to the one-room schoolhouse in which Nathan Hale taught in East Haddam, CT.

So I appreciate immensely my colleague's reference to a Connecticut son of whom we are deeply proud for his steadfastness, his loyalty, his patriotism, and his regret that he had but only one life to give to his country. I thank my colleague for referencing him.

Mr. BYRD. I thank my friend, Senator DODD. Plato thanked the gods for having been born a man, he thanked the gods for having been born a Greek, and he thanked the gods for having been born in the age of Sophocles.

Mr. President, I thank the benign hand of destiny for allowing me to live in an age in which the distinguished Senator from Connecticut, CHRISTOPHER DODD, is a Member of this body. I am glad that he chanced to come by the floor just as I was talking about the patriot Nathan Hale.

Nathan Hale was a young schoolteacher, 21 years of age, and when George Washington called for a volunteer to go behind the British lines to draw pictures of the British fortifications, Nathan Hale volunteered to go on this dangerous mission. He disguised himself as a Dutch schoolmaster.

He went behind the British lines. He was successful in drawing pictures of the fortifications and accumulating information that would be of benefit to General George Washington. But upon the evening before Hale was to return, he was discovered carrying the documents, and was arrested. The next morning, he was brought up before the scaffold. His request for a Bible was denied.

There he stood in full view of the stark, wooden coffin in which his body was soon to be placed. The British officer, whose name was Cunningham, said, ''Have you anything to say?''

Hale, whose hands were tied behind him, said, ''I only regret that I have but one life to lose for my country.''

The British commander said, ''String the rebel up.''

I do not find that great story in history books anymore. What I used to call history is, I think, probably today more aptly designated ''social studies.'' There is nothing wrong with social studies, of course, but we also need history. Young people need heroes to emulate, and we used to have such heroes in American history.

Well, I just tell that story for the benefit of those who may be a little startled at my looking askance at so-called ''political correctness.'' Take it away. Give me history. Give me Muzzey!

I thank the Chair.

Mr. DODD addressed the Chair.

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Mr. SMITH). The Senator from Connecticut.

Mr. DODD. Mr. President, first of all, let me commend our colleague from West Virginia, not only because he made reference to our favorite son of East Haddam, CT, a schoolteacher. In fact, the distinguished senior Senator from West Virginia has, over the years, enjoyed my Christmas greetings card which, on numerous occasions, has the schoolhouse in East Haddam as the cover.

I appreciate his reference to Nathan Hale, of whom we are very proud in Connecticut and the Nation. I also appreciate, once again, his reminding the Members of this body and the Nation at large of the importance of history and social studies and people who have sacrificed great things, who have given us the opportunity to enjoy this Nation today.

Too often, those stories are minimized or scorned or treated lightly. It is the lives of heroes, the lives of great individuals which have made the difference. Events do not happen without great individuals, and we do not pay enough attention to them.

MEDICARE

Mr. DODD. Mr. President, I want to take a few minutes today if I can, and talk about our upcoming proposal on Medicare, which is a subject of great interest, and ought to be, in the country. I think it is important to place into context this debate.

Regardless of where one stands on the specifics of these issues as they come out, it is important that we all understand that we are talking about the single largest transfer of wealth in the history of our country with this proposal, some $270 billion that will have to be moved from the Medicare Program. We are talking simultaneously about a $245 billion tax cut. There is nothing quite like this in the annals of this country's history.

I say that, not to in any way suggest that in and of itself one ought to oppose this, but rather to raise what I hope will be the interests of the American public as we engage in this discussion, because they are the ones who will be affected. Not the Members of this body because, frankly, most of us have health care programs and have income levels which will basically make us immune from the kind of potential tragedies and difficulties that most Americans will face if they lose a safety net of health care.

It is in their interest, and it is certainly a program that has been tremendously successful in assisting millions of people over the last 30 years to avoid the catastrophic problems associated with the predictable health problems that people face.

What disturbs me is the fact that we are going to have almost no hearings on this at all. In fact, only 1 day of hearings have been scheduled in the entire Congress on an issue that I think is certainly as important as any that this body will debate or discuss this year, only 1 day of hearings on the single largest transfer of wealth in the history of the United States.

Mr. President, the world looks on this body, and we often refer to it ourselves, as the greatest deliberative body in the world. Yet, I say with all due respect to those in the majority that to hold only 1 day of discussions on legislation that will affect today 37 million direct beneficiaries of Medicare, not to mention the families of these Medicare recipients and, frankly,