

see it be shaped when we go into a new century, that you would like to see it be shaped when you turn it over to your kids or your grandkids.

Do we want a Government that is \$5 trillion, \$6 trillion, \$7 trillion in debt? I do not think so. Despite all of the rhetoric, despite all the talk every year, the same thing has gone on, and I guess that is how you really measure it—by results, not by talk, not by whether it is CBO or whether it is OMB, but what are the results. And the results are that the debt has gone up each year.

So we have a chance to make fundamental change, fundamental change in at least four areas. One of them is to balance the budget, a change you would not think we would even need to make, a change to make income and outgo the same. Can you imagine that? That is the way it has to be with families, the way it has to be with businesses. But we have not done that. We have spent more than we have taken in, and we put it on the credit card.

Someone asked recently in a letter to a column called Ask Marilyn, and they talked about the problem with a credit card.

Let me quote from it.

Let's suppose you have an income of \$125,760 that comes not from work but from the contributions of all your friends and relatives who work. You're not satisfied with what \$125,760 can buy this year, so you prepare for yourself a budget of \$146,060 and charge the \$20,300 difference to your credit card, on which you're already carrying an unpaid balance of \$452,248—boosting that to \$472,548, on which you pay interest daily.

Multiply that little scenario by 10 million, and you have the national budget.

The second thing we can do is strengthen and save Medicare. We can do that. We can do that. Reform welfare, we can pass that here. We can reform welfare for the very first time. We can reduce the burden to taxpayers.

Now, why is this the right thing to do? It is because that is what we said we would do when we came. That is what we told voters we would do when we came. That was in the contract for America. The President said he was going to do those four things when he ran. But he did not do it. So, that is what we need to do. These are key issues and these are attainable goals.

There is great opposition to change always, mostly from people who have put the programs that are now in place in place, from people who talk about the failure of the present program and use as an example what is wrong now and the reason why we cannot change based on programs that are already in place and have been put in place by the folks that are opposing change. That is where we are.

So, we need to make changes if we expect some different results. But guess what? Folks want to continue to do the same thing and anticipate that the results will be different. It will never happen.

What are good things to be gained? Of course, we balance the budget. We will do something about that interest that is going on. The largest line item can go to something else, can be used for tax deductions, can be used for many things, put more money into the private sector because it will not take it out of the private sector to fulfill this. It would change the interest rates, reduce the interest rates. But maybe most of all it shows some responsibility in fiscal responsibility in terms of our future and the future of our kids.

Welfare: We need to change the pattern of welfare. Everybody believes we ought to have welfare programs to help the people who need help, but then to help them back in, help them back in to the private economy. We need to move it to the States. The States are the laboratories that develop effective distribution systems.

Medicare: We all want Medicare to continue to serve the elderly. It will not unless we make changes. There is no question that you have to make a change; there is some question, I suppose, how you do it. But it will go broke if we do not do something. We need to have choices. Why should not the elderly have choices? We have been able to contain some, the increased costs in health care costs—not in Medicare, not in Medicaid. It continues to go up at 10 percent. We can do that.

Tax reductions: We ought to leave more money into the pockets of families. We ought to leave more money in businesses to be reinvested in jobs for the economy. We have a chance to do these things and a chance to do them in the next 2 or 3 weeks. Mr. President, I hope that my associates will take that opportunity and cause that to happen.

I yield the floor.

Mr. ASHCROFT addressed the Chair.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Missouri.

SAVING OUR CHILDREN

Mr. ASHCROFT. Mr. President, this week we will have an opportunity to save our children's future. Time and time again there are individuals that have come to the floor of the Senate to speak to this deliberative body about the rights of the children. But the truth of the matter is, we have been spending the inheritance of our children, not just their inheritance, but also we have been spending their yet unearned wages at an alarming rate. We need to begin consideration of a budget reconciliation bill which indeed will save our children from having their resources consumed in advance of their having earned them.

Our current national debt is \$5 trillion. Children born this year will have to pay interest of about \$200,000 over their lifetime. That is just interest—not principal. When we think about the children, I think we ought to think carefully about what we do to the chil-

dren when we displace the costs of our consumption to the next generation, to the children born and yet unborn. For decades now the Federal Government has spent beyond its means and lived beyond its resources. It has done so at the expense of the next generation.

During the debate over the current plans to limit the size and growth in spending, I have been reminded of the philosopher's words, "They sought to heal by incantations a cancer which requires the surgeon's knife." We cannot react to the countries' fiscal crisis by saying a few rosy words. We cannot make a few incantations and heal the problem we have in terms of the finances and resources of this country. We need to take the surgeon's knife.

It is important to note that the surgeon's knife is an instrument of therapy, not an instrument of destruction. It is an instrument which will provide for better health. I believe we will do that, and we will make responsible—yes—difficult choices. We take the knife to the cancer and we take the knife where it is necessary to pare back the increase that would otherwise happen too frequently, with the kind of wasteful increase we have had in the past.

We have to stop an ever-increasing spiral of debt, a spiral which is a spiral of abuse against the next generation. In the past few months, we have made some difficult choices surrounded by the familiar incantations of those still clinging to the discredited and irresponsible philosophy of spending without consequence or budgeting without accountability.

Mr. President, I believe in the purpose for which we were sent to Washington. The people were demanding and expecting that we would balance the budget and they are expecting that we will end business as usual. They are expecting us to listen to them. We must continue. We have made progress, but we must continue on this historic journey toward meeting their demand—we represent them. We must fulfill their expectation by passing a balanced budget reconciliation bill that puts us on a path to fiscal responsibility.

Now, there are those who came here in this session of the Congress who decided that two rules have to be changed; therefore, we cannot call the budget balanced. They say now, we must use different figures, different procedures than we would have used in the past. I think it is time for us to balance the budget according to the rules and to get that behind us. There are other things we might do in the future to improve our fiscal health.

Let us take this directive from the American people. Let us balance the budget. We could put our heads in the sand rather than to face this Nation's fiscal realities. We could produce a plan, I suppose, that would allow minor changes. We could only tinker with the operations so that we stave off the Medicare bankruptcy for several months or a couple of years. We need

to set our system on a sound footing for long-term growth and development. Congress could continue the ingrained habit of treating taxpayers' funds as the key to the candy store. We could wait until the year 2015 to address our problems like the national debt. In 2015, at the rate of current spending, the Government would only be able to spend on four entitlement programs and interest on the national debt—that would take the entirety of the budget.

Then there would be no money for defense for the country, no law enforcement, no food safety, no highways. It would all be just for the entitlements and interest. We cannot do that. We must act now. We must protect the children. We must protect their opportunities.

We live in a global economy where productivity and competitiveness are the hallmarks. We will succeed, we will sink or swim based on whether or not we are productive and competitive. We cannot swim with a debt load on the back of each citizen in the next century so great that they cannot compete in the world marketplace.

Some people say, "Well, instead of controlling spending, we could always raise taxes." The largest tax increase in history was pushed through in 1993. Now the President says he raised taxes too much. I think we all felt that he raised taxes too much.

I know we could find a lot of things that we want to do instead of balance the budget—people did not send us here for that. They sent us here to balance the budget, and it is time that we do it, because the Government sets a standard.

Over the last 30 years, tragically, we have been setting a standard of irresponsibility, a standard of undisciplined spending. We are like the parents who never set a standard for their children. The children are witnessing this Government spend, spend, and spend without accountability. It is time that we meet the challenge of bringing responsibility and accountability back to Government. It is time we stopped saying an incessant "yes." It is time we have the tough character to say "no" to protect the children—to take a responsible path.

During the 104th Congress we passed a budget resolution to balance the budget in 7 years. We voted to phase out or consolidate numerous outdated programs, commissions, agencies, initiatives. We voted to reform the failed welfare system by giving the people the power to eliminate poverty and hopelessness in their own backyards.

Mr. President, rather than trying to gain short-term political advantage by shamelessly frightening elderly Americans with empty rhetoric and misinformation, we instead are moving to protect, preserve, and strengthen Medicare for the long haul. We are working to bring efficiencies, normally only found in the marketplace of late, into the Medicare system to give people a

sense of choice and, in doing so, yes, to restrain some of the growth—but still make it possible for people to have good health care.

We all know that in the next 7 years of reform, the amount spent per capita in the Medicare system under these reform plans goes from \$4,800 per year to \$6,700 per year, and that kind of an increase per capita is a substantial one. It will allow us to attend to the current health needs, without continuing to jeopardize the future of the fund.

Mr. President, we want to let the American people keep more of what they earn. American families deserve it. American families have seen their tax burden grow from as little as 2 percent in 1950 to nearly 50 percent today. We want to give families the opportunity and responsibility of spending their own money so they can help themselves rather than have the Government always taking their resources and deploying it in a governmental scheme which seldom meets the need and frequently undermines and erodes the values for which families stand.

It is important for families to decide what is in their best interest, rather than having a governmental bureaucracy always deciding what is in their best interest.

When the families of American people express their belief that Government is out of control, as they did in last November's election, they are correct. For too long this body has assembled to satisfy the appetites of narrow interests at the public's expense. The American people are fed up with a Congress that spends the yet unearned wages of the next generation.

The resounding mandate from the electorate is to dramatically reduce Government spending, to shrink the size of the Federal Government, to stop the Government from interfering with the ability of individuals to make decisions for themselves, for their families, their property, and their lives.

That means that the attitude of "Washington knows best" must come to an end. It means that the Congress must exercise the same kind of fiscal responsibility and restraint in making its difficult decisions that every family in this country has exercised when budgeting around their kitchen tables. We say that we will not buy the things that we cannot afford. We do not spend the money we do not have, and that is a virtue that ought to be imposed upon the Government.

In conclusion, over the next couple of weeks, all Senators, both Democrats and Republicans, will have the opportunity during the debate on the budget reconciliation bill, and other measures, to send a message to the American people. Let us make it a message of responsibility and integrity and accountability. Let us say that we have heard them; that they have sent us here to do a job, not necessarily an easy job, it is not a job that requires no courage, or a job that requires no judgment. They have sent us here to do a tough job, but

it is a job, the toughness of which they face on a daily basis in their own lives and businesses.

Let us do that job. We have a duty to America and the next generation to tackle the tough decisions and not to hide our heads in the political sands. So let us come together to a point of reconciliation. Let us come to a point of decision on a bill that will set us on a steady path, a responsible path of accountability, of integrity and responsibility, a path of a balanced budget. It is within our grasp in the next 2 days. Let us make sure we take advantage of this opportunity.

Mr. President, I yield the floor.

Mr. ROCKEFELLER addressed the Chair.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from West Virginia.

Mr. ROCKEFELLER. Mr. President, I ask unanimous-consent to speak—I had not realized that there was a 10-minute limit. When I created the speech, which is talking about something which has not been talked about before on the floor, I did it for the purpose of trying to enlighten the membership. So if I go over just a couple of minutes, will that put me in severe jeopardy with the Presiding Officer?

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Another Presiding Officer will be here by that point.

Mr. ROCKEFELLER. That is true.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. So the Senator from West Virginia might want to seek a unanimous consent agreement first.

Mr. ROCKEFELLER. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that I, with discipline and with good intent, have the time which I might require for my remarks.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Is there objection? Without objection, it is so ordered.

PROMISES MADE SHOULD BE PROMISES KEPT

Mr. ROCKEFELLER. Mr. President, I rise to report to the entire U.S. Senate and, in fact, I am talking to my colleagues—hopefully, everybody is listening, probably not—about just how low, frankly, some are willing to stoop.

As we all know, we will soon see a gigantic budget bill with the impossible name of "reconciliation" on the floor. Under the special rules, the Senate will have very little time to discuss, let alone try to alter, this mammoth Government bill. That is why I stand here today. I want to take the time to shine a piercing light on one of the darkest, most hidden and most underhanded parts of the mammoth budget bill about to land on everybody's desk.

Using that familiar label of tax relief, the provision is an attempt to line the pockets of a select group of companies, some of which I shall name in a few moments, at the expense of something as critical as health benefits for the most vulnerable, the oldest, the weakest, and the most deserving group