

wheeling and dealing that takes place where Senators leverage the votes for the amount of money that goes to their States as opposed to some kind of rational policy, and as opposed to the needs of the people in those States.

I am also out here as an advocate for my State of Minnesota. In the dark of night in 3 hours, all of a sudden Minnesota has \$500 million less of support. Mr. President, let me now translate this, if I can, in human terms, in personal terms.

Let me first of all just say to my colleagues that I am concerned about this because it is not just some dry formula. We are talking about 300,000 children in the State of Minnesota that are covered by medical assistance. With the kind of reductions that we are going to be faced with—about \$2.9 billion—the question becomes, What happens to those children? Mr. President, in the State of Minnesota we have a program called the TEFRA Program, which is extremely important, that allows 300,000 children with severe disabilities to be eligible for Medicaid based upon their own income and which allows families, therefore, to be able to keep those children at home.

Mr. President, the question becomes what happens to those children with disabilities and those families that provide tender loving care to those children with disabilities when we have these kind of draconian reductions in medical assistance? That is why I have some indignation about some dark-of-the-night decision that takes \$500 million more away from my State of Minnesota.

But it is not just my State. It is some of the most vulnerable citizens in America. Mr. President, 60 percent of our medical assistance funds—that is what we call it in Minnesota; we are talking about Medicaid nationally—will go to pay for nursing home care. About two-thirds of all of the seniors that are in nursing homes in Minnesota rely on some medical assistance funds.

Mr. President, I am a huge advocate of home-based care. I think people should be able to live at home in as near a normal circumstance as possible with dignity. But sometimes the nursing home is the home away from home, and the question becomes what in the world are we going to do as caregivers who care about taking care of elderly people? What is going to happen to senior citizens that are in those nursing homes? Who is going to make up the difference?

Mr. President, all too often in my State of Minnesota—and I am guessing it is the same way in Louisiana or Michigan—I am hearing at the county level commissioners say to me: Senator, what is going to happen is we are going to be asked to raise the property taxes, and we are not going to be able to do so. And if we are not going to be able to do so, we are going to redefine eligibility; we are going to reduce services, and there are going to be a lot of persons who will be hurt.

Above and beyond that, there are some 70,000 senior citizens in Minnesota who are below the poverty level, and for those senior citizens the medical assistance funds are what enable them to pay their part B premium for Medicare, which is the physician services.

So again the question becomes, why does the U.S. Senate make decisions based on wheeling and dealing to get votes, not based upon the needs of citizens in our States? Why a medical assistance formula in the dark of night which is so patently unfair to so many States, including my State of Minnesota? And above and beyond my State and above and beyond the formula the real issue is, what about the impact on the people?

I have said 10 times in this Chamber that this is a rush to recklessness. I will say it an 11th time. This is not good policy. It does not pay attention to the impact it is going to have on people's lives. This instruction to conferees which relates to this formula is extremely important.

I conclude by repeating it one more time. Our instruction is to delete any provisions that provide a greater or lesser Medicaid spending in States based upon the votes needed for the passage of legislation rather than the needs of the people in those States. Without apology, without equivocation, I am proud to advocate it for citizens in my State of Minnesota. It is not just the seniors. It is not just the children. It is not just people with disabilities. It is also a State that values good health care. We want support for our medical education. We want our rural hospitals that depend so much on the Medicare and Medicaid patient payment mix to be able to continue to provide care. We want to be able to deliver primary care out in the communities. This budget that has been worked out is not based upon any kind of understanding of health care policy that will respond to people's needs in Minnesota or Iowa or any other State.

Mr. President, how much time do I have remaining?

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator has 2 minutes and 20 seconds.

Mr. WELLSTONE. Mr. President, I yield 2 minutes and 20 seconds back to the Senator from Massachusetts when he brings this motion out.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Does the Senator yield the floor?

Mr. WELLSTONE. I yield the floor.

ORDER OF PROCEDURE

Mr. BREAUX addressed the Chair.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Chair recognizes the Senator from Louisiana.

Mr. BREAUX. Mr. President, I would just ask the Chair to state the current business before the Senate.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Chair would inform the Senator that there is no stated business before the Senate at this particular time.

Mr. BREAUX. I ask unanimous consent that I may be allowed to speak as if in morning business.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Is there objection?

Mr. DOMENICI. Reserving the right to object, but only to inquire.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from New Mexico reserves the right to object.

Mr. DOMENICI. I thought at 4:30 this afternoon Senator KENNEDY was to lay down his instruction motion.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Chair would inform the Senator from New Mexico that that was the order.

Mr. DOMENICI. And I understand under unanimous consent we agreed to let Senator WELLSTONE use part of Senator KENNEDY's time on that.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. About 8 minutes was used.

Mr. DOMENICI. So is not the subject matter—

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The motion has not been made.

Mr. DOMENICI. So we have nothing pending before the Senate at this point.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator is correct.

Mr. DOMENICI. What was the Senator's request?

Mr. BREAUX. I was going to ask to speak as if in morning business.

Mr. DOMENICI. How long?

Mr. BREAUX. Five minutes.

Mr. DOMENICI. I have no objection.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Louisiana is recognized for 5 minutes as if in morning business.

BUDGET COMPROMISE

Mr. BREAUX. Mr. President, I take this time to voice my concern about the current situation with regard to the continuing resolution that is before this Senate to try to keep the Government functioning. Throughout Washington and I think throughout the various States people who work for the Federal Government and people who have concerns about the services the Federal Government provides are wondering whether we in the Congress are going to be able to get together and make Government work or, rather, are we going to fight to the finish and nobody will be a winner, least of all the American people.

Many Federal offices right now are debating the question of whether they are essential or not, which is sort of a novel thing to have to debate as a Federal employee in offices on the Hill and other agencies because they know if they are a nonessential employee, they do not go to work tomorrow unless we fix this problem. But if they are an essential employee, they have to come to work even though they might not get paid. So it is interesting to see whether you are determined to be a Federal employee who is essential or one who is not in order to determine whether you come to work tomorrow or stay home because we in the Congress and the administration have not been able to get