

BALANCE THE BUDGET

Mr. COVERDELL. Mr. President, I, too, commend all the Members of the Senate and the House that have labored to try to resolve this dilemma, but I take just a moment, if I might, Mr. President, and step back from it.

I have just returned from Georgia, and many of the citizens I talked to are somewhat concerned. There is an anxiousness as to just what is happening here. I think it is very important that we remember that the ultimate issue that has driven all of these events for the last several days is whether or not the United States is going to balance its budget or not after 30 years of not doing so.

Just the other evening, in a very historic vote, 52 to 47, the U.S. Senate passed a balanced budget, the first one in 3 decades. The House has done the same.

The President has said he will veto this balanced budget, which is perplexing because, first of all, if any message came out of the last election it was that the American people want their budgets balanced. They deal with it in their family, they deal with it in their business, and they simply do not understand a Federal Government that cannot manage itself. They want the budgets balanced.

The President, in 1992, as he ran for President, promised the American people that he would balance the budget in 5 years. The proposal that he has been sent balances the budget in 7 years.

This Congress, the 104th Congress, came from the elections to balance the budgets. They have fulfilled that promise. It is time for the President to do the same. He has said repeatedly, as I said, in 1992 he was for a balanced budget in 5 years. He then said he would submit a balanced budget in 10 years. I think he has mentioned every number in between at one time or another.

The point is that he has never—never—submitted a budget in balance, which is, of course, why, when his budget came before the Senate, it was rejected, on one occasion, 99 to 0, and on the next, 96 to 0.

This is not just a contest or philosophies and the like, Mr. President. The Bipartisan Entitlement Commission appointed by the President, chaired by a member of his own party, Senator KERREY of Nebraska, cochaired by Senator DANFORTH of Missouri, told the Nation in the beginning of this year that within a decade—that is on all of our watch—within a decade all the vast resources of the United States will be consumed by only five of our programs.

It is almost difficult to imagine all the vast resources of the United States being consumed by just five programs, but they are. They are Social Security, Medicare, Medicaid, Federal retirement, and the interest on our debt—and then there is nothing else. That would be a travesty, for this generation to be the first generation of Americans that gave the country to the future

crippled and unable to manage itself. How could we even imagine doing that to future generations, the children and grandchildren yet to come? No generation of Americans has ever willfully—willfully given the future a country crippled, stumbling into the next century.

As sober a message as that is, we need to be reminded that if we seize control of our destiny, if we manage these financial affairs as proposed in this balanced budget, we will enter the next century with more opportunity than one could even imagine or has ever known or seen before. We will be putting resources back in the American family because we will lower the devastating interest rates they pay on their home mortgage, on their car, on borrowing, on their student loans. We will dramatically shorten the lines for employment because we will have an expanding economy with vast new opportunities. And, I might say, we should remember that, as the world's greatest power, we will then enter the new century with the muscle to back it up. What would some of these world rogues rather see than the United States crippled economically, stumbling into that century? We should never give them that opportunity.

I saw a fact sheet just the other day and I have asked it be expanded. The balanced budget that we have submitted, if ratified, would save, over the next 7 years, my State of Georgia \$333 million in debt service. It would save my capital city, in which I live, \$121 million in debt service.

As I said a moment ago, it will save every Georgia family nearly \$2,000 to \$3,000. That means we, in effect, will have increased their disposable income between 10 percent and 20 percent. Who else is getting a raise like that? What a bonus we could give the American family by simply being responsible.

So, while we are talking about shutdown and the like, and the disputes and the meetings that are going on, let us just remember, this is about a Congress that is intent on balancing the budget of the United States so we can save the integrity of the Union for the future, for a new century.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Maine.

CONGRESSIONAL PAY

Ms. SNOWE. Mr. President, I rise today on an issue that is related to this shutdown, and that is the issue of pay. I want to express my very deep disappointment that we have not been able to bring up the legislation which I proposed that would treat the pay for Members of Congress and the President in the same manner the pay is being treated for Federal employees who are currently working and who will find their paycheck is suspended during this period of a shutdown.

I worked on this legislation in conjunction with the Senate majority

leader, who supports it, and with Senator BOXER, who proposed similar legislation for future shutdowns. I wanted to be sure that this issue also applied to this current shutdown, so my legislation would make it retroactive.

I have 24 Members of the Senate who support this legislation, who have co-sponsored it. Besides myself, the Senate majority leader, Senator BOXER, Senators THOMAS, WARNER, KEMPTHORNE, GRASSLEY, MCCAIN, COHEN, ABRAHAM, CHAFEE, JEFFORDS, PRESSLER, NICKLES, SIMPSON, SPECTER, HUTCHISON, DOMENICI, DEWINE, KASSEBAUM, BROWN, CRAIG, COATS, and HARKIN.

Here we stand today. We have had a session yesterday and we had a session today and we will have sessions tomorrow, hopefully, to resolve this shutdown.

In the meantime, there is a tremendous disparity between Federal employees who are working, like our staffs, and other Federal employees, and those, of course, who are furloughed, and Members of Congress and the President. You might ask, what is the disparity? The fact is, Members of Congress will not face any disruption in their pay, yet those Federal employees who are working are going to face a disruption. Their pay will lapse during this period of time.

You might ask, why such a discrepancy? That is a very good question. That is why I proposed this legislation. Unfortunately, we cannot reach a consensus among all Senators about bringing this legislation up for immediate consideration. I find it somewhat ironic, because at the beginning of this Congress, setting off in a new direction and a new course, the very first bill that this Senate and this House considered was the Congressional Accountability Act. That would require that the laws that apply to the rest of society would also apply to the U.S. Congress.

I cannot think of a greater example than right here, where we could put our money where our mouth is. Yet, unfortunately, we are back to the same old procedures and business as usual. We are still preserving the status quo when it comes to how Members of Congress are treated, and the President, vis-a-vis the rest of society. In this case, it happens to be Federal employees.

I would think every Senator would support this legislation. After all, hundreds of thousands of Federal employees and their families are going to face serious economic disruption, hardships, inconveniences. Yet Members of Congress will not. I do not see the equity in such an example. I do not see the fairness. I do not see the responsibility. Because each of us, individually and collectively, has a responsibility to this institution and to preserving the integrity of this institution.

The very thing we should be preserving is the public's confidence in the way we do business. Obviously, it has