

We know these communities. Washington doesn't.

It's time for President Clinton to allow the states to give it our best shot. We couldn't do worse than Washington. I know we'll do much, much better.

APPOINTMENT BY THE VICE PRESIDENT

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Chair, on behalf of the Vice President, pursuant to Public Law 94-304, as amended by Public Law 99-7, appoints the Senator from Wisconsin [Mr. FEINGOLD] to the Commission on Security and Cooperation in Europe.

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 President, I ask unanimous consent that the order for the quorum call be rescinded.

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Mr. COCHRAN). Without objection, it is so ordered.

LOW-INCOME ENERGY ASSISTANCE

Mr. WELLSTONE. Mr. President, yesterday I came out on the floor to speak about the energy assistance program. I need not repeat most of what I said, yesterday. But I thought I would try to be brief and summarize.

Mr. President, I am a Senator from a cold-weather State, Minnesota. By cold-degree days, we have the third coldest days in the country behind Alaska and North Dakota. Last year in my State about 330,000 people received some energy assistance so that they would not go cold. Many of them were elderly households, many of them were households with children, and many of them were households with minimum wage workers with an average rent of around \$350. Let us think about this as a kind of cold weather lifeline program, almost more of a survival supplement than an income supplement, designed to ensure that people will not go cold.

Mr. President, right now as I speak on the floor of the U.S. Senate, in my State of Minnesota, without exaggeration I can say that there are some people with no heat with the temperatures around zero. Last weekend when Sheila and I were home the temperature was about 50 below wind chill. There are people in the United States of America, in my State, and in other cold-weather States as well, I am sure, Mr. President, who are now living in one room. That is all they are able to heat—one room. There are some people with no oil or propane in their tank. Mr. President, there are some Minnesotans who are trying to heat their home by just turning on their oven. There are also people in my State—I am joined by my colleague from Iowa—who right now are not able to purchase the food they need or the prescription drugs they

need because of the money they are now spending for energy maintenance to make sure they do not go cold, because they have such limited means.

In the United States of America right now, in Minnesota, Iowa, and other cold-weather States, there are people who are cold, and I am positive, I am positive as I speak here today, that somebody will freeze to death and then we will take action. It will be too late.

Mr. President, this is the problem. Last year, by the end of December, about \$1 billion had been allocated out to our States for assistance. This is not a 1-year program. It does not do any good to tell people they will be able to receive some assistance so they do not get cold in June or July. Time is not neutral. The total cost of the energy assistance program nationally was less than one B-2 bomber. It was \$1.3 billion last year, \$900 million right now. This is the problem. It was eliminated on the House side. But Senator DASCHLE—and, I might add, other Senators as well, Republicans included, Senator SPECTER being one really good example, and I know Senator HATFIELD cares fiercely about this, and I could list others as well; Senator SMITH from New Hampshire—many people, many from the cold-weather States. We know now what has happened. It has become a moral issue.

Last year by the end of December, about \$1 billion had gone out, and I think this year about \$230 million has gone out nationwide. In my State of Minnesota, by this time last year, about \$25 million—right now, \$9 million. We have long waiting lists of people who have no assistance or people who have received only \$100 when last year they received \$350. What is going to happen to them next month or the month afterwards?

So, Mr. President, I will yield in just a moment for a question from my colleague. I just want to make it clear where we are right now. It is extremely important that if there is a continuing resolution—and there should be because there should not be any Government shutdown—it is extremely important that we have the language to accelerate the allocation of this money.

If you did just 75 percent of last year, I say to my colleague, that would be over \$900 million. We must get this out to our States now so people do not freeze to death. There cannot be one Senator or Representative, regardless of party, that could really disagree with this proposition. If this does not happen, Mr. President, with the wording of the continuing resolution at the end of this week, it has to happen at the beginning of next week. And if there is no continuing resolution, I would say to the administration you have the authority because we already have the money. This is forward funded. We already have the money. You have the authority to release that money.

However we get the job done, for God's sake, let us get the job done. That is really what I am saying.

I feel very strongly about any issue, not because I believe this is the only issue that our country is confronted with, not because I do not fully appreciate the overall budget debate and the difficult choices that all of us have to make, not because I do not care fiercely about what will happen in Bosnia and for the safety of our soldiers and that they will be able to make a difference there. Sometimes, in all these statistics and all this alphabet soup, OMB, CBO, baseline budget—you are familiar with what I am talking about—it is just disconnected from the reality of people's lives.

This is such a time. I am a Senator from a cold-weather State, Minnesota, and I will do whatever I need to do as a Senator to get the funding out to my State, and for that matter other cold-weather States, so that people, be they seniors, be they children, be they individuals with disabilities, or be they low-wage families, are able to get some assistance so they can heat their homes now.

Right now, too many of our citizens are cold. Too many of our citizens are without heat. This is wrong. This is a moral issue. We must do something about this, and it is within our power to do something about this today. We have to take action.

I know the Senator from Iowa had a question.

Mr. HARKIN. I just wondered if the Senator will yield.

First of all, Mr. President, I thank the Senator from Minnesota for being a leader on this issue. Both the other day when he took the floor and he spoke about it and again today—I did not catch all of the Senator's remarks; I was on my way over to the floor, but I wanted to just ask the Senator if he was aware of all of the ramifications in the States that are taking place right now. I know the Senator spoke very eloquently about what is happening in Minnesota and the fact that this money is not getting out. But there are some really kind of disingenuous things going on out there. If the Senator will bear with me, I will explain it and then I will follow it with a question.

I am told that in some States in the Midwest, because of the fact that they do not have the necessary funds for the heating program, the Low-Income Heating Energy Assistance Program, they put the word out that they have just enough money to meet emergency situations, that it is being interpreted in some States as saying an emergency is if an elderly person has been notified by the utility that they are cutting off the utilities. That is the emergency. If you get your utility cut off, then you get it.

I ask the Senator, take a typical elderly person in Minnesota or Iowa, from the Midwest, it is colder than the dickens. They are living in a small town of 900 people, 1,000 people like the small towns where I come from. They are living in a small house—usually it