

more fair even as we make it more simple. But at the same time let us decide that that Tax Code ought to be neutral on the subject of moving jobs. The Tax Code ought not be tilted in favor of taking your jobs and leaving the United States of America.

Those are the kinds of issues that I think we as a Senate will have to confront in the rest of 1996. I know it is an election year, and I know some predict that not much can be done because we have all the tensions, and so on. The businesses of this country will not wait for an election. We will be hard pressed to explain to someone who is struggling out there at the minimum wage that, well, we cannot really deal with this now because there is an election coming. That is just something we cannot deal with. There is too much controversy, and we just are not able to do it. That is going to be lost on a lot of people who are trying very hard to make a living day after day.

There is not in this Senate one side of the aisle that cares a lot about people and the other side that does not. That is not the case I am trying to make. But there has been a confluence of public policies in the last year and a half that represent a more extreme view of where we ought to head—the notion that somehow the only thing that makes the American engine work is if you pour in some petroleum from the top. It is classically the old trickle-down approach; if you help everybody at the top, somehow everybody at the bottom gets damp or somebody at the bottom benefits.

Hubert Humphrey, who was our neighbor over in Minnesota, a wonderful man, said, "I have a different view of this. My view is the 'percolate up' theory in our country. You give everyone in this country a little opportunity to be able to do well and things percolate up and make this American engine run." He said "This trickle down, that is the approach where if you give the horse some hay, at some point maybe the sparrows will have something to eat."

We ought to understand in this country that the American economic engine works best when all of the American people are working. The incentive in the minimum wage is to try to be fair to those at the bottom of the economic ladder. And it is not fair to say after 6 years, 6 years of freezing you, because you lose purchasing power year after year, that we are going to continue to do that. That is not fair. And it is not fair to those on the minimum wage that our Tax Code on tax day contains a provision that says, "By the way, the job you aspire to"—you are on minimum wage, but you aspire to a better job, a manufacturing job perhaps—"is gone, because in our Tax Code we paid somebody to take it out of America." That is not fair either.

There are provisions, it seems to me, that we can and ought to agree on as Democrats and as Republicans that represent a fair economic approach

which would benefit this country, all people of this country, even those who do not have the capability of sending an army of special interest folks to surround this Chamber as we debate their favorite issue.

Mr. President, we will have a great deal of discussion on these issues this week, I am certain, and my hope is that we will, on the first question I asked today, answer with reasonable unanimity: Should there be a minimum wage? I hope most Members of this Chamber will answer yes.

And if they answer yes, then let us spend the rest of the time asking the question: If there should be a minimum wage, then what is a fair level for that minimum wage? Is it fair having it frozen for 6 years? When the top of the economic ladder gets a 23 percent pay increase to an average \$3 million a year, is it fair then to say to the bottom, at the lowest rung of the economic ladder, "By the way, we will freeze your pay for 6 years?" I do not think that is the answer most people would come to if you think about it reasonably and you think about it in the context of what would be best for the millions of people in this country at the bottom who are struggling very hard to make ends meet.

I yield the floor.

Mr. President, I make a point of order that a quorum is not present.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will call the roll.

The assistant legislative clerk proceeded to call the roll.

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

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

UNANIMOUS-CONSENT AGREEMENT—S. RES. 241

Mr. COVERDELL. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that Senate Resolution 241 be temporarily set aside until Tuesday, April 16, at a time to be determined by the majority leader after consultation with the Democratic leader.

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

Mr. COVERDELL. Mr. President, under the previous order, I am recognized during morning business for a period of 90 minutes. I ask unanimous consent that during this period I be permitted to yield portions of my time to other Members without losing my right to the floor.

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

TAX DAY

Mr. COVERDELL. Mr. President, if he were still alive, President Roosevelt would say April 15 is "a day that will live in infamy." We have all come to know this very special day as one of great dread in our country, as we come to grips with the enormous burden

every American family, every Georgia family, every citizen comes face to face with—the direct burden of Government and the enormous consumption of the wages of labor that are consumed by the U.S. Government and government in general.

Depending on what you count, today Americans work from January 1 until about June 31 for the Government before they are able to keep the first dime for themselves, their families, their educations, their dreams. I think Thomas Jefferson must surely have many times rolled in his grave because he could never, ever have anticipated that there would come a time that nearly half the resources of those who labor for it are removed from those families and those individuals and sent to some government to redetermine what ought to be done with the wages of the person who earned it.

To just quickly summarize—and I am going to yield to my good colleague from Tennessee—but in my own State, I have asked that a picture be made of the average Georgia family. This is the perfect day to reveal what that picture looks like—April 15. That average family earns about \$40,000 a year. Both spouses work and they have two children. Remember, now, they earn around \$40,000 a year. They spend \$4,183 in Federal income tax liability of the \$40,000. They spend \$3,118 in FICA taxes. They spend another \$844 in other direct and indirect Federal taxes. They forfeit \$5,061 in local taxes, State and local. This family's share of the new regulatory apparatus we have been building for the last some 30-odd years—this is an unbelievable figure—is \$6,615. This family's share of added interest costs because of our \$5 trillion national debt is \$2,957. That comes to \$22,778, 51 or 52 percent of all wages. Every average family in Georgia is working half time for somebody else—the Government.

America depends on these families to raise the country. We ask them to house the country, to educate the country, to feed it and clothe it, transport it, and see to its health. But we only leave them half of all their earnings to do this great work that we have depended upon for so long. The end result is middle America, the average hard-working family, has been marginalized, has been literally pushed to the wall because of the consumption, the insatiable consumption of Government.

I would have to say this is also the result of certain elitists in our country that have concluded that this average family in Georgia is unable to make decisions for itself and that decisions about its future, its health, its welfare are best made by some Washington wonk in the belly of one of these buildings in the Capital City, and it is better that their wages come here so that some bright person can determine how best this family ought to be preparing for its future and its needs.