

made and there are certain steps being taken within the VA to operate more soundly. But I was shocked when I saw the President's proposal for Veterans' Administration spending for the next 6 years.

The President now says he wants to balance the budget. But how does he do it? Well, Mr. President, he takes it out of the vitally important medical care and health care services for the veterans. I joined with Chairman PETE DOMENICI to beat back efforts by our Democratic colleagues in the subcommittee to substitute the President's budget, which he claims gets us to balance. I thought it was so serious that I wanted to speak on the floor. I spoke this weekend back home in Missouri, talking about the tremendous decline that the Clinton budget proposes for Veterans' Administration spending over the next 6 years, which is almost 23 percent.

Mr. President, the Veterans' Administration cannot live with that kind of cut. That is the kind of cut that the President proposes the VA will have to follow to get to a balanced budget for the entire Government in the year 2002. At least the President agrees that we need to get to a balanced budget. But does he really mean this budget?

Well, Mr. President, it was very interesting to me to read in the newspaper on Saturday morning—in the St. Louis newspaper—a report by political correspondent, Jo Mannies, who called the White House after I presented this information and she says: "A White House aide replied that Bond was misrepresenting the facts."

Misrepresenting the facts? Mr. President, here are the facts. Under the Clinton budget, the Veterans' Administration have a budget authority that goes from \$17.3 billion in 1997, to \$15.9 billion in 1998, to \$14.5 billion, to \$13.0 billion, to \$13.29 billion, to \$13.8 billion. That comes out to be a \$12.979 billion cut in Veterans' Administration funding in that 6-year period.

Can the VA live with that? No. Secretary Jesse Brown said, when I asked him before the Appropriations Committee, "Are you planning to live with this budget?" He said, "I am not planning to live with it. I am not planning to live with your budget to green line"—which at that time was a flat line—"nor am I planning to live with the President's line." Secretary Brown went on to say, "I think his budget means something to me because he has given his word that he is going to negotiate with the veterans' community."

Really? Does the President not mean what he said when he presented the balanced budget that shows these cuts? The interesting part of the story, the White House aide Jo Mannies referred to was Lawrence Haas of the White House Office of Management and Budget. He said the Republicans were misrepresenting their plans and the President when it comes to spending for veterans.

President Clinton's 1997 budget plan contains an outline for reaching a bal-

anced budget by 2002. "The outline cites across-the-board spending cuts of equal percentages for most discretionary programs, including the VA," he said. "The outline is not a hard and fast proposal for any of the programs," he said, "because the President and the Congress review discretionary programs each year." He said that he expected changes for many of the specific programs. He said, "If past practices continue, the VA would be treated well and wouldn't experience much, if any, of a cut."

Mr. President, we have the President presenting a budget showing that he gets to balance by making a 23-percent cut in the Veterans Administration. Oh, incidentally, it is not an across-the-board cut because the President, at the same time, proposes a 28-percent increase in the spending on AmeriCorps, our national service.

Mr. President, we are left with the amazing proposition that the White House official spokesperson said that it is the official policy of the Clinton administration that you should not believe the official policy of the Clinton administration. The Clinton administration sent up a budget that shows a 23-percent cut, a \$12.9 billion cut over 6 years.

Mr. President, that is how they get there—a budget that I think has misplaced priorities. It does not make the cuts needed in Medicaid and in welfare spending, so they have to slash things like Veterans' Administration. Either they mean this and they are going to get to a balanced budget and the veterans are going to be unhappy, but they have an Office of Management and Budget saying they do not mean it. They have told the Secretary of Veterans Affairs they do not mean it.

So, Mr. President, we are left with this real question: Which numbers are lying—the numbers they presented in the budget, or the numbers they are telling the Veterans' Administration they are going to get?

I intend to work with my colleagues to make sure that the Veterans' Administration is adequately funded.

Mr. President, I yield the floor.

TRIBUTE TO DR. W. JAMES RIVERS

Mr. THURMOND. Mr. President, it is no secret that a career dedicated to the service of others is a calling that garners minimal financial reward and often little recognition. Individuals will labor their whole lives working to make the world a slightly better place, only to receive few, if any, accolades or commendations. Today, I want to take this opportunity to recognize one person who has dedicated his life to God and his fellow man, Dr. W. James Rivers, and whose commitment to both has made South Carolina a better place to live.

Dr. Rivers' calling to the ministry did not come until he was in his thirties, but he knew early on that he

wanted to dedicate his life to serving others. Upon his graduation from the University of South Carolina, he earned a commission in the United States Air Force and found himself on the Korean Peninsula, where the United States and the United Nations were waging a war against the expansionist Communists of North Korea and China. The fighting in this conflict was brutal and it was not long before the young officer was in the thick of it, and during his time in Korea, he flew 50 combat missions against our enemies. When a cease-fire agreement was finally reached, and the shooting finally stopped, James Rivers decided to remain in the Air Force and climbed to the rank of captain; however, in 1958, he heard the Lord's call, resigned his commission, and began the process of becoming a minister.

After returning to school, Dr. Rivers began his second career of service, this time to God, which began with a 4-year stint ministering at Dutch Fork Baptist Church. In 1967, Dr. Rivers moved from Columbia, SC, to my hometown of Aiken, where he became the pastor of Millbrook Baptist Church. For the past 29 years, he has ministered to the needs of his flock with great compassion, and has proven to be an effective leader for his church, performing more than 1,400 baptisms, and more than 1,000 marriages. Additionally, under his direction, Millbrook Baptist Church has more than trebled in size, added both a Christian Activities Center and educational building, and has established three mission churches in other States. It takes a man of great spirit, ability, and energy to accomplish such impressive tasks.

Mr. President, Dr. W. James Rivers will be retiring from his career as a minister on May 19, and in recognition of his many years of selfless service, the mayor of Aiken has set aside that Sunday as Jim Rivers Day. I am pleased to join my fellow Aikenites and South Carolinians in recognizing and thanking Dr. W. James Rivers for all his contributions to our State. We are grateful for all his hard work and proud to claim him as a leader of our community.

CONCLUSION OF MORNING BUSINESS

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Morning business is now closed.

WHITE HOUSE TRAVEL OFFICE LEGISLATION

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Under the previous order, the Senate will now resume consideration of H.R. 2937, which the clerk will report.

The legislative clerk read as follows:

A bill (H.R. 2937) for the reimbursement of attorney fees and costs incurred by former employees of the White House Travel Office with respect to the termination of their employment in that office on May 19, 1993.

The Senate resumed consideration of the bill.

Pending:

Dole amendment No. 3952, in the nature of a substitute.

Dole amendment No. 3953 (to amendment No. 3952), to provide for an effective date for the settlement of certain claims against the United States.

Dole amendment No. 3954 (to amendment No. 3953), to provide for an effective date for the settlement of certain claims against the United States.

Dole motion to refer the bill to the Committee on the Judiciary with instructions to report back forthwith.

Dole amendment No. 3955 (to the instructions to the motion to refer), to provide for an effective date for the settlement of certain claims against the United States.

Dole amendment No. 3961 (to amendment No. 3955), to provide for the repeal of the 4.3-cent increase in fuel tax rates enacted by the Omnibus Budget Reconciliation Act of 1993.

Mr. BOND. Mr. President, I suggest the absence of a quorum.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will call the roll.

The bill clerk proceeded to call the roll.

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

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

The Senator from Texas.

Mr. GRAMM. Mr. President, I want to talk today about repealing the gasoline tax, and I want to talk about it from two angles:

No. 1, the gasoline tax we adopted in 1993, where the money went to general revenue, was an unfair and discriminatory tax that should be repealed.

No. 2, I want to talk briefly about gasoline prices, something that all of Washington talks about but no one actually does anything about. By passing the pending amendment, by repealing the 4.3-cent-a-gallon tax on gasoline, we can bring the price of gasoline down by about \$1 a tank whenever you fill up your car, your truck, or your van.

Historically, Government has understood that gasoline taxes are inherently discriminatory since the level of gasoline usage varies greatly depending on where you live. The average resident of a State like Texas spends almost twice as much money on gasoline as the average resident of a State like New York. People who live in rural areas, by the very nature of their living in rural areas, travel great distances and use a lot of gasoline and diesel in their cars and trucks. As a result, government has concluded that taxing gasoline as a source of general revenue is inherently discriminatory. It discriminates against people who live in rural areas as compared to urban areas, it discriminates against people who have to travel great distances to work, and it discriminates against people who live in the Western part of the country where you have more open spaces and people generally drive more.

To try to deal with the inherently unfair nature of a gasoline tax as a source of general revenue, what we have normally done is to dedicate the

gasoline tax to pay for roads and bridges. Since the 1950's, it has in essence become a user fee: the people who use the roads the most pay the most gasoline taxes, and they are the largest beneficiaries.

Before we adopted the Clinton gas tax, we had never, since we started the highway trust fund, imposed a permanent gasoline tax that was not dedicated to highway building. The Clinton gas tax is unique in that it is a permanent tax on gasoline where the money goes not to road building, so that the people who are paying the taxes are the principal beneficiaries, but instead goes to the general revenue. In fact, if you look at the Clinton budget since 1993, you will see that the money basically goes to social programs and social welfare. In 1993, through the Clinton gasoline tax, we imposed a new general tax on gasoline—paid for by people who have to drive their cars and their trucks great distances to earn a living—in order to pay for benefits going to people who by and large do not work.

We, therefore, created through this gasoline tax an incredible redistribution of income and wealth—the Clinton gasoline tax imposed a new burden on people who drive to work for a living in order to subsidize people who by and large do not go to work.

We have an opportunity in the pending amendment to solve this problem by repealing this gasoline tax thereby eliminating this burden on people that have to drive their cars and trucks great distances to earn a living. In my State, it is not uncommon for someone to live 40 miles from where they work and, as a result, a gasoline tax imposes a very heavy burden on them.

We have an opportunity to eliminate that inequity by repealing the 4.3-cent-a-gallon tax on gasoline, a permanent gas tax that, for the first time ever, went into general revenues to fund social programs instead of paying for highway construction.

Now, everybody is talking about rising gasoline prices—the President has asked for an investigation by the Justice Department and we are holding hearings all over Capitol Hill. Yet, we all know one thing for certain: if we really want to lower the price of gasoline this week, there is only one thing that we can do—repeal the Clinton gasoline tax.

If we repeal the gasoline tax today in the Senate, if the House passed it tomorrow, and if the President signed it on Thursday, on Friday morning every filling station in America would lower their posted price by 4.3 cents a gallon and everybody in America who fills up their car, their truck, or their van with gasoline would save about \$1 a tank. This is something that we can do, it is something that we have the power to do, but the question is: Do we have the will to do it?

I would like to remind my colleagues, and I would like to remind anybody who is listening, that I offered the

amendment to repeal the Clinton gasoline tax 19 days ago. My effort to offer that amendment was stopped by the Democratic leadership in the Senate who decided not to allow this amendment to come up for a vote.

The President now says he would sign the bill repealing his gasoline tax and our Democratic colleagues in the Senate say that they too are for it. My guess is, if we had a vote today, 80 Members of the Senate would vote to repeal this gasoline tax. Yet, for 19 days we have denied lower gas prices to the American people. We have denied the equity that would come from repealing this gasoline tax which, for the first time since the creation of the highway trust fund, taxes people who drive their cars and trucks to work in order to subsidize welfare for people who do not work. For 19 days, despite the fact that almost everybody agrees this is something we should do, we have not done it.

Unless some kind of an agreement is worked out, at 2:15 p.m. today we are going to vote on breaking the Democratic filibuster of the gasoline tax repeal amendment.

If you want to repeal the gasoline tax, then you should vote to end debate and let us have a vote on actually repealing the gasoline tax.

I hope the American people will make note of how individual Senators vote, and will remember that people who want to repeal the gasoline tax are going to vote to end the debate. After 19 days of stalling, after 19 days of perpetuating an inequitable tax, after 19 days of artificially holding up gasoline prices, I hope our Democratic colleagues in the Senate are ready to let this Senate do its will.

I believe the Senate is ready to repeal the gasoline tax and I am confident that we will vote to repeal it if the Democrats will just let us. After 19 days of the Democrats stalling, I am ready to vote, and I am sure the American people are also ready for us to vote.

I yield the floor.

Mrs. BOXER addressed the Chair.

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Mr. KYL). The Senator from California.

Mrs. BOXER. Thank you very much, Mr. President. Some of the things that Senators are saying about the gas tax are being perceived as grandstanding positions in my state of California. The people of California know, because the experts in the industry have told them, that they may never see the effect of the tax repeal. As Senator CONRAD has stated, the experts believe the benefit will go to the refiners. What could happen is that we would lose \$30 billion from deficit reduction.

It seems to me most people understand this. I think it is really important to find out the causes of this runup in prices. I have written to Hazel O'Leary and asked her to undertake an investigation. The President acted to sell some of the Strategic Petroleum Reserve in an effort to add to the supply. There was an article in the Los

Angeles Times that traced the increase in prices, and it concluded that prices kept rising regardless of inventories.

So I think the American people are a lot smarter than some would believe in this Senate. I think they understand that repealing this 4-cent tax has could result in huge deficit increases. I think they understand that the gas price runup has many causes. Repealing the 4-cent tax does not guarantee that the people will see any benefit.

What is interesting to me is the way my Republican friends want to pay for this repeal. It seems it has seen various proposals come forward. The first one was the majority leader on the other side, DICK ARMEY, who suggested we cut education to pay for this gas tax repeal. Thank goodness that proposal was shot down. It seems to me unbelievable to cut back in education when we know that the future of our Nation depends upon how well our children are educated and that the best jobs go to the best educated. So that Republican idea seems to be buried.

Then we were going to sell broadcast spectrum, but then they found out that any income generated by the auction would not be seen for many years.

And now there is a proposal to place a charge on banks and savings institutions, to better prepare them in case there is another crisis in savings and loans and bank failures.

So I think every plan that I have seen is quite wanting. There are a lot of tax loopholes out there I would like to see closed. Let us look at some of those.

So I think as we get to this vote on the gas tax it is going to be interesting to hear the debate. What is the most important thing for the country, a repeal of a 4-cent tax that may never see its way to the consumers' pockets?

I would love to be able to guarantee that it would go to the consumers' pockets. It would be an interesting proposal to try to work on something like that. But let us hear the debate.

It is a very important issue, I think in many ways symbolic of whether our actions match our rhetoric around here. So I am looking forward to the debate.

Mr. President, I also heard that the Senator from Missouri was attacking the President on funding for veterans, and I find that very, very interesting since the President vetoed the appropriations bill that included veterans' funding because of unwise policy riders inserted by the Congress. Also, the President felt this Congress was not being fair to veterans because it cut hospital programs promised by previous administrations. I have a case in point in my own State where we are supposed to build a veterans hospital at Travis Air Force Base and this Republican Congress deleted those funds. The President has it in his budget.

I would be happy to join with the Senator from Missouri to make sure our veterans are taken care of. I would love to start with the hospital at Trav-

is, which the veterans need to have and the President has supported.

So I find it interesting that colleagues from the other side come down and blast the President for not supporting this country and not presenting a budget that meets this country's needs when, in fact, if you look at the President's budget versus the budget of the Republicans that just got through the Budget Committee on which I serve, what you see very clearly is that the Republicans go after Medicare; they go after Medicaid; they go after the earned income tax credit, resulting in a tax increase on the working middle income and poor; and that the Democrats, behind this President, are willing to make investments, investments in education, investments in the environment, investments in medical research and in advanced technology research. That is what the future is about. So I look forward to all these debates and I hope we will have them soon.

At this time I yield the floor and I suggest the absence of a quorum.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will call the roll.

The bill clerk proceeded to call the roll.

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

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

Mr. LEVIN. Mr. President, the bill before us has amendments which have been debated involving a great number of very important issues including issues relative to the gas tax repeal, minimum wage, and the so-called TEAM bill. The fact that those are much more public issues and have been the subject of much greater public debate has caused many to overlook the substance of the underlying bill to reimburse the attorney fees of former Travel Office employees.

There have been some comments made on the floor that the underlying bill, H.R. 2937, is an important bill because it is fair, right, and remedial. Some have said it is noncontroversial. Then the debate moves on to the more publicly debated issues—the gas tax, the minimum wage, and the TEAM Act, which have had greater public notice. Then little is said further about the Travel Office bill.

I have questions about the implications of what we would be doing if we passed this Travel Office bill. As best as I can determine, if we pass this bill, it would be the first time in our history that we will have passed legislation to pay the attorney fees of someone who has been indicted. In order to be indicted, a grand jury has to determine that there is probable cause that the person committed the alleged crime. It is a system that we use thousands of times a year across this country. In order to be indicted, a prosecutor must present evidence to a grand jury to show that there is probable cause that a crime has been com-

mitted and that the person at issue is the one who committed the crime. That is what has happened in the case, or what did happen in the case of Billy Dale. The grand jury determined that there was probable cause that he committed a crime against the United States and that he should stand trial.

Once a person is indicted, the prosecutor must meet a higher standard of proof—proof beyond a reasonable doubt the indicted individual committed the crime. That is the way the system works. Then it goes to a trial. A judge is usually presented with a motion for a directed verdict, or might be presented with a motion for a directed verdict, arguing that there is insufficient evidence before the court to permit a reasonable juror to find that person is guilty of the crime beyond a reasonable doubt. It is my understanding that there was a motion for a directed verdict in Billy Dale's case and that the judge denied the motion for a directed verdict.

With this legislation, what we are then doing is taking the unprecedented step of saying that in this case we believe that the prosecutor who presented a case to a grand jury and the judge who denied a motion for a directed verdict was so wrong that the taxpayers should pay Billy Dale's attorney fees. If we do that in this case, there is no reason why we will not be asked to do that in hundreds of other cases.

What is the precedent that we are setting for evaluating whether or not we should be paying attorney fees in cases where persons are indicted and whose cases go to a jury? In other words, where there is a motion for a directed verdict which is denied and who are then acquitted.

We have not had 1 hour of hearings in the Senate on this bill. There is no Senate committee report on this bill. The committee report that is before us is a House committee report which does not even discuss the nature of the indictment, the facts surrounding the indictment, nor the basis for it. It just ignores some very critical facts.

There are about 5,000 Federal criminal defendants each year who are either acquitted or have their cases dismissed after indictment. Do we want to open ourselves to the possibility of reviewing each and every one of those cases to decide whether or not the grand jury and the U.S. attorney acted properly, and whether a judge was correct in denying the motion for a directed verdict? Are we going to set up a special subcommittee of the Judiciary Committee to consider attorney fees for indicted but acquitted individuals? Will we have some criteria to guide us in the future?

I do not want to get into a litany of the recent acquittals that would make many of us blush in equating them with unfair prosecution. But the fact that somebody is acquitted does not mean that a prosecution was unfair.

Some may argue, "Well, here the acquittal came in a matter of a few

hours, and that confirms the unfairness of the situation." Is that the standard—quick acquittals? Are we then going to subject the Treasury of the United States to claims for attorney fees?

For the past 15 years or so, I, along with Senator COHEN, have been sponsoring reauthorizations of the independent counsel law. That law has a provision in it for payment of attorney fees for persons who are investigated. But it has a very clear and explicit condition—in fact, a couple of them.

First, the attorney fees would be paid only if they would have been incurred but for the use of the independent counsel.

Second, they will not be paid to any person who has been indicted. It is explicit in the independent counsel law. Attorney fees are not available to persons who have been indicted by the independent counsel.

When we added that provision in 1982, there was no question by any witness at our hearing or any advocate for the statute about paying attorney fees for indicted individuals, and yet in this bill, this underlying bill, we are crossing a very significant line. We are talking about using taxpayer dollars to do it. To the best of our information, it is the first time it will be done, and it is being done without a Senate hearing or a Senate committee report laying forth criteria as to what will be the future standards.

Some people say, well, this bill is just for a half-million dollars. We closed down an agency of the Government last year that had a total budget of \$1.2 million. That was the Administrative Conference of the United States. We said we could not afford the \$1.2 million for that agency. So we cannot treat this expenditure as if it does not matter. It does.

And also problematical is the fact that there is no requirement that the taxpayer pay only reasonable attorney fees. For instance, if the citizen Billy Dale here paid \$500 an hour for his attorney, should we be reimbursing him at that rate? I cannot support that. But the bill is silent in terms of reasonableness of attorney fees. We have limits on attorney fees in all the other statutes that I know about. In the independent counsel law we require that the court determine that the fees paid to eligible persons be reasonable and market rate.

And by the way, as I mentioned before, the independent counsel law does not permit an attorney fee to be paid to someone who has been indicted. But where the attorney fee is permitted there is a requirement that the attorney fee be reasonable and market rate. That requirement is not present here. In the Equal Access to Justice Act we limit the amount paid to an attorney to \$150 an hour, and that act applies where a court determines that a government's civil case against a small business had no substantial justification. There is no requirement like that

in this bill. I think that is a disservice to the American taxpayers as well.

In addition, there is no ceiling in this bill on the overall total. If Mr. Dale's attorneys are going to say that they worked 100 hours, we are going to presumably sock the taxpayers for 100 hours even though there has been no judgment as to whether or not the 100 hours was an appropriate length of time, and maybe it only should have been 50 hours.

In an earlier bill that was introduced, Senator HATCH did have a ceiling on the amount the taxpayers would have to pay. But the bill before us does not do that. There is no ceiling. It is unlimited. So let us look again at what the underlying bill does. First, it authorizes the use of taxpayer dollars to reimburse the legal expenses of an individual indicted for the commission of a Federal crime.

Congress has never, to the best of my knowledge, authorized that type of payment. Second, the bill authorizes the payment of all legal expenses incurred without any requirement that the expenses were necessary, appropriate or reasonable in amount. The bill does not place a ceiling on the amount of money that may be paid. It creates an open-ended entitlement.

So even though the amount may seem small, we are opening a wide door here to the Federal Treasury and we should take more care before we are doing so.

At this point, I would make a parliamentary inquiry of the Chair.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator will state the inquiry.

Mr. LEVIN. I ask the Chair whether or not the bill before us is a private bill?

The PRESIDING OFFICER. It is a private bill.

Mr. LEVIN. Mr. President, the Senate is at a regrettable impasse. For several weeks now, Democrats have been trying to bring an increase in the minimum wage to a vote on the Senate floor. We were repeatedly blocked by parliamentary maneuverers. The majority insisted on lumping a number of unrelated matters together and resisted the right of the minority to offer any amendments to any of matters involved. This is a very unfortunate circumstance. We should deal with each of these matters, the minimum wage increase, the TEAM Act, the proposed repeal of the gasoline tax, and the matter related to the White House Travel Office separately, debate them, amend them according to the will of the Senate, and then pass or defeat each. Instead, in an effort to score political points in a contest with the President, the majority has used parliamentary rules to produce distorted results. First, four different bills were bundled together in one, and if the effort to shut off debate had succeeded, with no ability to amend except very narrowly. For example, it might have proven impossible to offer an amendment to the gas tax repeal provision to try to as-

sure that the benefit goes to the consumer and not to the oil companies. It might also have proven impossible to amend the provision to attempt to assure that the repeal is adequately paid for and does not increase the federal deficit. Now, we face yet another amendment without the ability to amend it and yet another effort to cut off debate.

The minimum wage issue is straightforward. It's about whether or not we are truly committed to helping working people earn a living wage. Recently, we have begun to hear more concern expressed about jobs and wages for the working family in America. Some have newly discovered the problems that working families face today: The declining purchasing power of their wages, increasing health care costs, and the high cost of child care are among those most important. But, for some of us, and for the American people, these are not new issues.

The last time we gave minimum wage workers a raise was 5 years ago April 1. The current minimum wage is \$4.25. In the last 5 years, because of inflation, the buying power of that wage has fallen 50 cents and is now 29 percent lower than it was in 1979—17 years ago.

With this amendment, the hourly minimum wage would rise to \$4.70 this year, and to \$5.15 next year. Close to 12 million American workers would take a step forward toward a more equitable living wage.

Remarkably, there are some in this Congress who not only oppose an increase to a fair level: Some would eliminate the minimum wage completely. But, I think that they comprise a tiny extreme minority. The last increase had overwhelming bipartisan support. On November 8, 1989, the Senate passed the increase by a vote of 89 to 8. Supporting that increase were the current GOP and Democratic leaders. In the House, this bill passed by a vote of 382 to 37. Voting "yes" were the current Speaker of the House and the Democratic leader. And, the bill was signed into law by President George Bush.

Discounting inflation, a Rand study shows that the median income of families fell more than \$2,700 over 4 years to about \$27,000 in 1993. But people at the lower rungs of the economic ladder have it the worst.

Rand's researchers found that between 1989 and 1993, the top fifth of the economic spectrum earned nearly 10 times what those in the bottom fifth earned. The gap between the top and the bottom is very wide—and getting wider.

These figures illustrate that although our economy is growing and unemployment is relatively low, working families are confronting difficult and uncertain times. This amendment would provide a modest boost in earnings for many of these households.

A higher minimum wage could help reverse the growing wage inequality

that has occurred since the 1970's especially among women.

While some claim a moderate increase in the minimum wage will cost jobs, leading economists find little evidence of loss of employment. Instead, they find that a ripple effect could expand the impact beyond the immediate minimum wage work force. Some workers in low-wage jobs who currently earn more than the minimum wage may see an increase in their earnings as minimum wages rise.

As the richest nation on Earth, our minimum wage should be a living wage. But it isn't close. When a father or mother works full-time, 40 hours a week, year-round, they should be able to lift their family out of poverty.

The current minimum wage is actually about \$2 an hour less than what a family of four needs to live above the poverty line. At \$4.25 an hour, you earn \$680 a month, gross. That is \$8,160 per year.

Adults who support their families would be the prime beneficiaries of our proposal to raise the minimum wage. Nearly two-thirds of minimum wage earners are adults and more than one-third are the sole breadwinners. Nearly 60 percent of the full-time minimum wage earners are women. Often these are women bringing home the family's only paycheck.

In 32 States over 10 percent of the work force would benefit directly from an increase in the minimum wage. In Michigan, 324,000 workers, almost 12 percent of the work force are making the minimum wage. Some 435,000 workers earn less than \$5.15 per hour.

Mr. President, the bottom line is work should pay, and the current minimum wage is not enough to live on. The minimum wage is a floor beneath which no one should fall. But we should make sure that standing on the floor, a person can reach the table. A full-time minimum wage job should provide a minimum standard of living in addition to giving workers the dignity that comes with a paycheck. Hard-working Americans deserve a fair deal.

Mr. President, it is ironic that many who are the strongest line-item veto proponents and who, last year, indeed were proposing a version of line-item veto which would have caused bills to be carved up into hundreds of separate bills for the President's signature or veto, now are trying to do the reverse. They are taking clearly unrelated matters and lumping them together while blocking important relevant amendments. We need to get on with the business of the Nation. We should address the gas tax proposal, the minimum wage increase, and the other matters before the Senate in separate bills, allow Senators to propose their amendments, debate the issues, vote, and send legislation to the President for his signature or veto. The only reason this is being wrapped up in one big package and hamstrung it with parliamentary entanglements, is Presidential politics. I predict it will not benefit those who

concocted the strategy. Our Nation deserves better.

Mr. President, I did want to spend a few minutes this morning pointing out some of the difficulties that I think will be created if we pass this underlying bill without criteria being established, without a Senate committee report, without a requirement that fees be reasonable, without a limit on the amount of the authorization here, the obligation of the Federal Treasury. There are some precedents that are being set here if we pass this bill as is, which should not be set without further deliberation by the Senate because of the implications to the Treasury of thousands of people who have been indicted who are either then acquitted or whose cases are dismissed who might also be able to make claims under the precedent that could arguably be set by this bill.

I yield the floor, and I note the absence of a quorum.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will call the roll.

The assistant legislative clerk proceeded to call the roll.

Mr. LOTT. 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—H.R. 2202

Mr. LOTT. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent the Secretary of the Senate be directed to request the House of Representatives to return to the Senate H.R. 2202, the illegal immigration reform bill, so that the Senate's actions of yesterday, requesting the conference and appointing conferees, can be executed.

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

RECESS

Mr. LOTT. Mr. President, I move the Senate now recess under the previous order until the hour of 2:15 p.m.

The motion was agreed to, and, at 2:15 p.m., the Senate recessed until 2:16 p.m.; whereupon, the Senate reassembled when called to order by the Presiding Officer (Mr. JEFFORDS).

WHITE HOUSE TRAVEL OFFICE LEGISLATION

The Senate continued with the consideration of the bill.

CLOTURE MOTION

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Under a previous order, the clerk will report the cloture motion.

The legislative clerk read as follows:

CLOTURE MOTION

We, the undersigned Senators, in accordance with the provisions of rule XXII of the Standing Rules of the Senate, do hereby

move to bring to a close debate on the Dole amendment, No. 3961:

Bob Dole, Trent Lott, Craig Thomas, Larry E. Craig, R.F. Bennett, Mark Hatfield, Ben N. Campbell, Spencer Abraham, Nancy Landon Kassebaum, Don Nickles, Chuck Grassley, Conrad Burns, John Ashcroft, Jim Inhofe, P. Gramm, W.V. Roth, Jr.

CALL OF THE ROLL

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The mandatory quorum call has been waived.

VOTE

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The question is, Is it the sense of the Senate that debate on amendment No. 3961 shall be brought to a close? The yeas and nays are required. The clerk will call the roll.

The legislative clerk called the roll.

Mr. FORD. I announce that the Senator from Delaware [Mr. BIDEN], the Senator from Nebraska [Mr. KERREY], and the Senator from Rhode Island [Mr. PELL] are necessarily absent.

I further announce that the Senator from Rhode Island [Mr. PELL] is absent on official business.

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Ms. SNOWE). Are there any other Senators in the Chamber desiring to vote?

The yeas and nays resulted—yeas 54, nays 43, as follows:

[Rollcall Vote No. 112 Leg.]

YEAS—54

Abraham	Faircloth	Mack
Ashcroft	Frist	McCain
Baucus	Gorton	McConnell
Bennett	Gramm	Murkowski
Bond	Grams	Nickles
Brown	Grassley	Pressler
Burns	Gregg	Roth
Campbell	Hatch	Santorum
Chafee	Hatfield	Shelby
Coats	Helms	Simpson
Cochran	Hutchison	Smith
Cohen	Inhofe	Snowe
Coverdell	Jeffords	Specter
Craig	Kassebaum	Stevens
D'Amato	Kempthorne	Thomas
DeWine	Kyl	Thompson
Dole	Lott	Thurmond
Domenici	Lugar	Warner

NAYS—43

Akaka	Ford	Mikulski
Bingaman	Glenn	Moseley-Braun
Boxer	Graham	Moynihan
Bradley	Harkin	Murray
Breaux	Heflin	Nunn
Bryan	Hollings	Pryor
Bumpers	Inouye	Reid
Byrd	Johnston	Robb
Conrad	Kennedy	Rockefeller
Daschle	Kerry	Sarbanes
Dodd	Kohl	Simon
Dorgan	Lautenberg	Wellstone
Exon	Leahy	Wyden
Feingold	Levin	
Feinstein	Lieberman	

NOT VOTING—3

Biden	Kerrey	Pell
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The PRESIDING OFFICER. On this vote, the yeas are 54, the nays are 43. Three-fifths of the Senators duly chosen and sworn not having voted in the affirmative, the motion is rejected.

MORNING BUSINESS

Mr. DOMENICI. Madam President, I ask unanimous consent that there now