

I also say to the World Jewish Congress and Edgar Bronfman and Israel Singer, they are to be commended for never losing faith in continuing their effort. Without their persistence, we never would have reached the point where we now have a proposal to put \$4.7 billion forward in a humanitarian fund to be administered by a number of organizations in countries that will play a part in determining those people who are most in need. That fund would be administered over a period of some 15 years. Without the World Jewish Congress and its leadership, its perseverance, we never would have achieved the results I am speaking to today. That is, the publication of the names of those people who had dormant accounts, going back to 1945, nor would we have achieved the setting up of this humanitarian fund to aid those who are elderly and most in need.

I thank the Chair and I suggest the absence of a quorum.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will call the roll.

The legislative clerk proceeded to call the roll.

Mr. FEINGOLD. 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 President, I ask unanimous consent that the order for the quorum call be rescinded.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. FEINGOLD. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent to speak as if in morning business for 20 minutes.

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

(The remarks of Mr. FEINGOLD pertaining to the introduction of S. Res. 80 are located in today's RECORD under "Submission of Concurrent and Senate Resolutions.")

THE VERY BAD DEBT BOXSCORE

Mr. HELMS. Mr. President, at the close of business yesterday, Tuesday, April 29, 1997, the Federal debt stood at \$5,348,144,848,321.78. (Five trillion, three hundred forty-eight billion, one hundred forty-four million, eight hundred forty-eight thousand, three hundred twenty-one dollars and seventy-eight cents)

Five years ago, April 29, 1992, the Federal debt stood at \$3,887,187,000,000. (Three trillion, eight hundred eighty-seven billion, one hundred eighty-seven million)

Ten years ago, April 29, 1987, the Federal debt stood at \$2,266,610,000,000. (Two trillion, two hundred sixty-six billion, six hundred ten million)

Fifteen years ago, April 29, 1972, the Federal debt stood at \$1,063,005,000,000. (One trillion, sixty-three billion, five million) which reflects a debt increase of more than \$4 trillion—\$4,285,139,848,321.78 (Four trillion, two hundred eighty-five billion, one hundred thirty-nine million, eight hundred forty-eight thousand, three hundred twenty-one dollars and seventy-eight cents) during the past 15 years.

Mr. COVERDELL addressed the Chair.

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Ms. COLLINS). The Senator from Georgia is recognized.

Mr. COVERDELL. Madam President, if I might inquire as to the matter of business before the Senate?

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senate is in a period for the transaction of morning business at this time.

Mr. COVERDELL. Madam President, I ask unanimous consent that we dispense with the period of morning business and return to S. 543.

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

VOLUNTEER PROTECTION ACT OF 1997—MOTION TO PROCEED

The Senate continued with the consideration of the motion to proceed.

Mr. COVERDELL. Madam President, I guess only those who have just tuned in would be aware of the fact that we have been discussing an attempt since Monday afternoon, from Monday afternoon until Wednesday at 3 p.m., to allow the Senate to proceed to S. 543. The other side has decided to filibuster this legislation and has now twice blocked our attempts to end debate and move on to the bill. Although we are getting closer, we might say, well, maybe if there are five more votes like the one today, we will finally end the debate; the bill being a very narrow, specific proposal that tries to respond to the call of the President and three former Presidents to encourage voluntarism in America.

To revisit for a moment what was going on in Philadelphia, it was Gen. Colin Powell who said that "the multiple crises confronting children in America have the potential to explode our society." I am going to reread the quote of General Powell.

"The multiple crises confronting children have the potential to explode our society," as General Powell called on his fellow Americans to make an extraordinary personal commitment to serve as mentors to at-risk youth.

Earlier today I pointed out that volunteers being called on today are often called on to participate in situations that are less than normal environments; that the potential for volatility and miscommunication and misunderstanding is very high.

S. 543 has perhaps more importance today than it did over a decade ago when it was first envisioned in this Congress because it gives the volunteer a shield, a modest shield I might add, from certain kinds of liability. It does not protect the volunteer from willful or wanton misconduct. For example, if a volunteer were driving an automobile and inebriated, there would be no protection whatsoever. But for the everyday routine activity, it would protect the volunteers.

Here we have General Powell saying to his fellow Americans, make an extraordinary personal commitment to serve as mentors to at-risk youth. And here we are having spent 3 days trying

to pass one modest proposal to help those volunteers step forward and we are systematically choked and throttled. What a great response to General Powell and to the Nation, calling on Americans to come forward and then we have a boot on their neck right here in the Nation's Capitol in this Chamber.

It goes on to say:

Together with President Clinton, former Presidents Bush, Carter, Ford, 30 Governors and 100 mayors participating in a conference on volunteering—

Conference on volunteering—

Powell said that as many as 15 million young Americans need mentors to help them overcome the adversities they face.

Well, by logical conclusion, that means we have to have many millions of Americans to come forward to take care of just this audience—15 million young Americans need mentoring. That does not include the senior citizens who need mentoring, who need Meals on Wheels, who need somebody to come by and visit in the evening. That does not include the young people who are involved in youthful sports like Little League baseball or Pop Warner football. That does not include the Americans that would travel to the Midwest to assist in filling sandbags, who would help clean out the muck and debris that will follow this flood.

In other words, it requires millions upon millions of Americans to step forward. And yet a cursory review of the data demonstrates conclusively that because of legal threats, the number of volunteers is dropping. It is going in the wrong direction in terms of what General Powell and Presidents Clinton and Bush are asking. There are not more Americans stepping forward; there are less. And a principal reason there are less is that they do not mind volunteering, but they do mind putting their entire family's assets—their checking accounts, their home, their business—in a legal lottery.

I told the story this morning of the situation where a charity, a nonprofit, had a gym for youth to use after school and a youngster broke his arm when he dropped the weights. The organization did not have any resources to speak of, but the volunteer receptionist did. Guess who got sued. Right, the volunteer receptionist. Those kinds of things get around, and before long you have more and more Americans saying, "I want to volunteer, but I don't want to jeopardize my family."

General Powell said these children are at risk of growing up physically or psychologically abused. They are at risk of growing up addicted to the pathologies and the poisons of the street. They are at risk of bringing children into the world before they themselves have grown up. They are at risk of never growing up at all.

Madam President, I have been joined by two of my most esteemed colleagues, Senator ASHCROFT of Missouri and Senator THOMAS of Wyoming. I am going to call on Senator ASHCROFT to make a few remarks, but I would just