

that this country understands that you need help, that you are not alone, and this legislation and this Congress, by enacting this legislation, wants to do that and do it quickly.

The Senator from North Dakota, Senator CONRAD, makes a very important point. I associate myself with that point—that between now and next Tuesday, or Wednesday, when we take that legislation to the floor of the Senate, I hope very much that we will see those who have been adding and probably those who might want to add additional amendments to decide not to do that on this very important bill.

Mr. WELLSTONE. Will the Senator yield?

Mr. CONRAD. If I can follow up on Senator DORGAN's comments, then I would be happy to yield further.

Last night I accepted an award on behalf of the Grand Forks Fire Department for the extraordinary heroism they demonstrated when this fire was burning out of control and they were prevented from fighting that fire as they normally would by the floodwaters. And yet they took on an extraordinary circumstance; with live wires in the floodwaters, they could not know, as they moved to rescue people who were in those buildings, if they would be electrocuted, and they went forward, they did their jobs, and they rescued more than 20 people. And because of their bravery not a single life was lost. We lost some buildings. We did not lose a single life.

Last night the Firefighters of America gave to me, on behalf of the Grand Forks Fire Department, an award. I might say those firefighters who risked their lives to save others were doing it at the very time their own homes were being destroyed. Forty-three of those firefighters had their homes destroyed while they were saving other people's lives.

I can tell you, those people are wondering, why is it when we have a disaster that impacts our area people want to put on amendments that have nothing to do with disaster relief? They cannot understand it. We did not do that when the shoe was on the other foot. When other States were hit by disaster, we did not offer other amendments. I hope that cooler heads would prevail here and that we would find other vehicles for Senators to offer their amendments that they believe are important but leave the disaster bill clean so the people who are trying to rebuild their lives from an extraordinary set of disasters have a chance to rebuild their lives. That is not too much to ask.

Mr. WELLSTONE. Will the Senator yield for a minute?

Mr. JEFFORDS addressed the Chair. The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Vermont.

Mr. JEFFORDS. Mr. President, I wish to proceed to the motion to proceed to S. 4. However, I would ask unanimous consent that the Senator DODD be allowed to talk for 2 minutes and 1 minute to—

Mr. CONRAD. Mr. President, I had not yielded the floor.

Mr. JEFFORDS. I believe the Senator gave up the floor.

Mr. CONRAD. No; I had not yielded the floor. I was yielding for a question from my colleague from Minnesota.

Mr. WELLSTONE. I will be brief. Minnesota is one of these States, too, and every day we come here and speak briefly because we just keep trying to pitch away.

Could I ask one question? I think the Senator recognizes I would rather give a statement. I will not. But is it not true that when you talk to people in North Dakota—I certainly find this to be the case in Minnesota—they just do not understand at all how it can be that we just do not get this to them and how there can be this discussion of amendments having to do with budget cuts in education and budgets cuts in any number of other areas?

I say to the Senator, if I could get his attention for a moment, the most difficult thing for me is to try to explain to people how it could be we are at this impasse and that we cannot get the help to people as quickly as possible. In terms of how they live their own lives, people do not understand this kind of discussion about strategy and tactics and they feel as if we are just playing with their lives.

Does the Senator have trouble explaining to people why it is we cannot get this done for them?

Mr. CONRAD. I just say to my colleague by way of a quick answer that in Grand Forks two-thirds of the people are refugees. They cannot be in their own homes. They have been gone now for nearly 2 weeks. They still do not know in many parts of the city when they will return. And when they hear that there are amendments not related to disaster that are slowing down the disaster bill, they are just bewildered by what we are doing here. I must say there are times when I wonder what we are doing here. And again, I just hope that our colleagues would desist from offering amendments that are not disaster related to a disaster bill.

I thank the Chair and yield the floor.

Mr. JEFFORDS addressed the Chair.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Vermont.

Mr. JEFFORDS. I will proceed on the motion to proceed but I would ask unanimous consent that the Senator from Connecticut be allowed to speak for 2 minutes out of order and that upon completion I be able to resume my management of the bill.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection, it is so ordered. The Senator from Connecticut.

DEBTBUSTERS BALANCING THE BUDGET

Mr. DODD. Mr. President, very briefly, I may not even take the 2 minutes. I just wanted to inform my colleagues that about a week ago, Congressman

CHRIS SHAYS, of Connecticut, and I hosted a program called Debtbusters with a group of 200 of our constituents. We invited people to come together to sit down in groups and try to balance the Federal budget in 5 years. This is an exercise designed by the Concord Coalition, and it is the first time such an event has been done on a bipartisan basis. I highly recommend it to my colleagues.

It is a fascinating exercise to watch people act as Members of Congress over a period of 2 or 3 hours, faced with the choices that many of us have to make here in Washington as we work toward a balanced budget by the year 2002. It was a tremendously worthwhile exercise. I want to commend the Concord Coalition for organizing it, for putting together the questionnaire. It was not perfect. Anyone who writes questions and makes choices obviously is going to bring some bias to it. But overall I found it to be rather fair and interesting. I would also like to commend the citizens of Connecticut, specifically the citizens of Stamford and the surrounding area, for taking the time out of their weekends to come together and work in such a constructive spirit.

It was curious to see the choices that people made. People, when they sat down and had to work with six or seven or eight other people from their community with many different ideas and issues, were able to compromise and come to conclusions and even give up on things they cared about very, very much. It was instructive. It did not solve the budget problem. But last Saturday I was impressed that, on a gloriously sunny day, people came out and spent the 2 or 3 hours to try and resolve these issues. I thought my colleagues might find it interesting.

As we are about to hopefully reach some sort of budget agreement ourselves, I believe it is worthwhile to appreciate what average citizens are able to do, just as I said, in a few hours on a bright sunny Saturday morning.

Mr. President, I thank my colleague from Vermont for making the time available and I yield back any time I have.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Vermont.

FAIR LABOR STANDARDS ACT AMENDMENTS—MOTION TO PROCEED

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

Mr. JEFFORDS. Mr. President, we are now proceeding on the motion to proceed to S. 4, the Family Friendly Workplace Act. First of all, I wish to commend Senator DEWINE, who is the chairman of the subcommittee which very dexterously handled this bill in committee. I would also like to thank Senator ASHCROFT, the original author of the bill, who has done so much to bring, not only the attention of Congress to the problems we are addressing in the Family Friendly Workplace Act,