billion, almost half a trillion dollars, to civilian retirees.

This charade, this fraud, has got to stop. It is outrageous that the President comes to the American people and says in one breath, ''Tonight I propose that we reserve 100 percent of the surplus—that is every penny of any surplus—until we have taken all the measures necessary to strengthen the Social Security system for the 21st century.'' And then, after giving that message last week, today he comes and loots the Social Security trust fund to the tune of $113 billion in order to report a $9.5 billion surplus. Of course, all the editorial writers and news columnists are writing that we will enjoy balanced budgets as far as the eye can see. We will have surpluses as far as the eye can see, they say, when the actual deficit under the President's budget is $194.5 billion. Look on page 367 of his report and you will see nothing but deficits for as far as the eye can see—namely, the debt increasing; namely, a billion dollars a day being paid now with the lowest of interest rates that we have had in our history. That amount is going to soar when interest rates rise because spending for interest goes up, up and away under the President's budget proposal. We really are in a downward spiral of financial responsibility here in the National Government.

Now, I delight in the President's budget with respect to child care. I delight in the provisions in there for 100,000 more Border Patrol agents; 100,000 more cops; higher pay for teachers; and smaller classroom size. But we are going to have to pass a tobacco tax settlement or some other measure to get extra moneys for these particular programs. This Senator is willing to vote to pay for those programs. I am trying to put Government on a pay-as-you-go basis.

I know about fiscal responsibility. I achieved the first AAA credit rating for the State of South Carolina, the first Southern State to receive this bond rating. In 1959 I worked like the dickens to get it done. I voted for that federal balanced budget in 1968–69. The entire budget, with the costs of the war in Vietnam and the Great Society, was only $178 billion. Today, we suffer from a $1.7 trillion budget. But we balanced it then.

I was a cosponsor of Gramm–Rudman-Hollings in order to try to cut the deficits, but of course the quickest way to anonymity in public office is to cosponsor a bill with Senator GRAMM or Senator Rudman. I never heard since from it but that is how it works around here. But we did get the majority of Democratic votes, 14 votes up and down against the opposition of the majority leader, the chairman of the Budget Committee and the Democratic whip. They all opposed Gramm–Rudman-Hollings, but we had a majority of Democrats on this side of the aisle vote for Gramm–Rudman-Hollings. I even suggested at one time a value-added tax to get on top of this sea of red ink, allocated to the deficit and the debt so we wouldn't get into this waste of $1 billion a day.

I am still working now, not just on the amount of the deficit and debt but for the principle of truth, truth in budgeting. How do you get the national media, the national press, who are coconspirators in this charade, to report the truth. They are talking about conspiracy around this town with regard to special prosecutors, when in reality the conspiracy is right here, in the so-called unified budget. The budget the White House submitted today results without question in a $194.5 billion deficit if adopted as it is now submitted. It is time everyone realize this. It is time we practice truth in governing and reporting.

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. DORGAN. Madam President, I ask unanimous consent that the order for the quorum call be rescinded.

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

Mr. DORGAN. Madam President, I ask unanimous consent to speak for 10 minutes in morning business.

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

THE BUDGET FOR 1999

Mr. DORGAN. Madam President, I wanted to make a couple of comments following those of the Senator from South Carolina, Senator HOLLINGS. He knows that I certainly agree with him on the issue of the Social Security trust funds and the unified budget. There are some definitional issues about the budget.

I was at the White House this morning, at the invitation of President Clinton, when he made a presentation on the budget that he released today. Frankly, the budget contains a lot of good news. The Senator from South Carolina is correct about the unified budget. But it is also correct to say that this President, beginning in 1993, said that we are going to change courses here and we are going to set this country on a different direction. Between then and now, we have wrestled the Federal budget deficit to the ground.

Is our job over? No. There is more to be done because of the Social Security trust funds and some other issues. But this President deserves substantial credit for deciding that we are going to change courses, change directions, and wrestle this budget deficit to the ground. I must say that, in 1993, when he proposed to do that, it was very controversial because, up until then, we had seen budget after budget with deficits that continued to increase, year after year. It was 535 bad habits around here, wanting to give tax cuts and spending increases. And the deficit continued to grow, and the Federal debt continued to escalate.

In 1993, when President Clinton said let's change direction here, he proposed a couple of things that were very controversial. He said, let's really cut some Federal spending, let's really increase some taxes on a selected basis. And it became very controversial because all those folks who had stood up and talked the loudest about controlling the Federal deficit, when it came time to take the vote, where were they? They weren't here. We didn't get one vote from the other side of the aisle—even by accident. We won by one vote in the U.S. Senate and one vote in the U.S. House, and that set this country on a different course.

Five years later, we now see daylight with the Federal deficits, and the deficits in future years are well under control. In fact, in the long-term, even with Social Security funds out of the calculation, we will reach a balanced budget.

Mr. HOLLINGS. Will the Senator yield briefly?

Mr. DORGAN. I yield to my friend.

Mr. HOLLINGS. The Senator is right on target with respect to giving the President credit. There is no question, we increased taxes, cut spending, and cut the number of Federal employees. And in increasing the taxes, I will never forget the colleague from Texas, when he stated on the floor—regarding increasing taxes on Social Security—that they were going to be hunting us Democrats down in the streets and shooting us like dogs. I will never forget that. They not only projected a recession and a depression, but that Social Security tax increase, which I don't see anybody putting into a bill or talking about today—but at that particular time, taking on that hard choice, as they talked about, without a single Republican vote, was very, very difficult. But we faced the fire, and to President Clinton's credit, now we have the economy headed in the right direction. My comments on the unified budget and deficit is to make sure we don't go in the other direction.

Mr. DORGAN. The Senator is certainly correct. The last thing we want to do is step back into the hole we were in before. Just the hint of a budget surplus in the future has persuaded a legion of people here to talk about new tax breaks on the one hand or new spending on the other hand. We ought rather to decide to have discipline. Let's accept the good news that we have wrestled the Federal budget deficit to the ground. Let's work to keep it there, instead of getting right back into the same fiscal mess we were in before.

I know some will dispute my recitation of the facts. But there is no dispute that, in 1993, we had a huge vote in the Senate. And we passed that deficit reduction bill by one vote, which sent this country on a different course. That vote indicated that we cared

about bringing down Federal budget deficits. We knew they hurt this country and we did something about it.

Everybody else wants to talk about it and shout about it and chant about it. But when it comes time to vote, the question is, who is going to stand up and, on behalf of the country's future, say, count me in, I want to cast a vote that is tough; I am willing to cast a vote that is hard, politically. In fact, some colleagues who voted the same way I did are not here in the Senate anymore because they cast that vote.

I just think it is important for all of us to understand that this President and enough Members of Congress, in the Senate and the House, 5 years ago, said that we are going to change direction and put this country on a course of fiscal policy that will wrestle the Federal budget deficit to the ground, and we have done that.

Now, the fact is, there are some people around here who handle good news like a chronic toothache. You could not get them to smile for any reason. But things are better. The budget is better, the economy is up, unemployment is down, inflation is down, the deficit is down, crime is down, welfare is down. Does that cause a smile? No. It is as if they are in a dental chair getting a root canal. They have to be crabby about something. I just saw a press conference by colleagues who are continuing to be crabby about what is going on in this country.

The fact is, this country is on a better course, moving in a better direction, and the news is better. Most of the American people understand that.

The President's budget, incidentally, is not perfect. I have some disagreement with portions of it. But, on the whole, I think it is an awfully good blueprint for this country. The President proposes some things that I think make a lot of sense.

The President proposes that we increase some spending in certain areas, and he pays for it with cuts in other areas. Let me describe one area where he proposes an increase in spending.

President Clinton proposes a 50 percent increase in funding over the next 5 years for the National Institutes of Health. There is not a family in this Chamber, or listening to these proceedings, that hasn't been touched by heart disease, stroke, cancer, AIDS, those scourges that kill Americans and ruin families.

Guess what is happening down at the National Institutes of Health? I have been down there. I have gone through the Lung and Blood Institute and National Cancer Institute. It is remarkable what is going on. It is breathtaking. If you take a look at the money we are investing in research on heart disease, the money that we are investing in research on cancer, to find a cure for AIDS, arthritis, diabetes, and so many other things, it is breathtaking.

One of the wonderful things I saw at the National Institutes of Health—without digressing too far—when I went into the building was, they had something called a ''healing garden,'' a little healing garden. They described the plants and vegetation they have collected from all over the world—50,000 to 60,000 plants and shrubs they have collected. They described the research they are doing to find the healing properties of plants.

Two thousand years ago, in China, if somebody got a headache, like some of my colleagues have about the fiscal policy of this country, what did they do? They would chew on a little willow bark. We do the same thing today, except we get the willow bark in pill form and call it ''aspirin.''

The most exciting thing is not the combination of chemicals and compounds, but the research on the healing properties of shrubs and bushes and plants. It is remarkable. It is wonderful what is going on.

The fact is, when we invest a dollar, a million dollars, or a billion dollars in health research, we provide enormous hope for the people of this country that we can begin to cure cancer. And we have done that with respect to some forms of cancer. We provide enormous hope to people around the country that we can deal with heart disease and stroke, the biggest killers in this country, in a much different way.

So in those areas of the budget—for example, the increase in direct investment in the National Institutes of Health—does that funding make sense? I think it does. Would people come here and say that the investment in medical research is worthless?

What about the woman that stood up at a town meeting and said, ''I had new knees put in and a new hip and cataract surgery, and I feel like a million dollars.'' Where did all that come from?

Fifty years ago, she would have been in a wheelchair, unable to walk or see. Now when someone's heart muscle plugs up and they have the breathtaking surgery that opens it up, they feel, when they are recovered, stronger than ever and they can go on for the next 10, 20 years and extend their lives.

The point is this: There are certain things we do that make a lot of sense. This President says, let's continue the investment in the National Institutes of Health and increase that investment and save lives in this country through the breakthroughs that will come from research and medicine. That makes a lot of sense to me.

The President says, among other things, let us save Social Security first, a point just discussed by my colleague from South Carolina. I know there are some people who never liked Social Security, and have never thought it was a good program.

They have a right to feel that way. But that is not the way the American people feel.

About 60 some years ago, we created a Social Security program, and I must say that the mathematics of it were quite interesting. Life expectancy, then, was 63 years of age. Social Security was created with a retirement of 65 years of age. That all works out pretty well. If you are expected to live until 63 and get retirement at 65, that system is pretty well financed. Now the life expectancy is not 63; it has gone to 77 or 78. So things have changed.

There are future challenges to the Social Security system because of that. We have to make some changes to put it on a sound basis for the long term. But what the President has said makes a lot of sense as a matter of priority. He has an answer to those who would rush off to provide tax breaks because they are popular, or who want to take the best 10 programs and add funding to them. The President has said that we should, as a priority in fiscal policy, save Social Security first.

That makes a lot of sense. We are going to have a debate on that in the Congress. Is that the priority? Or will we hear something different, as we have heard today, from those naysayers on fiscal policy, those who would be unhappy no matter what is happening? Will we hear that no, that is not a priority, saving Social Security is not a first priority, not even second or not even tenth priority? Will we hear people say that their priority is to give more tax breaks to their friends?

Let us decide that the responsible thing for the future of this country would be to embrace the principle the President has put forward. Let us save Social Security first.

The President talked in his budget message today about the priority for education. He is absolutely correct about that priority as well. He has talked about decreasing class size, and hiring 100,000 more teachers. He has talked about creating tax credits to help modernize crumbling schools. All of those things make sense to me.

President Clinton has paid for these proposals by cutting other funding and rearranging priorities. Instead of in the aggregate saying we are going to add substantial funding, he has done it within the confines of what we can and should spend relative to the budget agreement, the bipartisan agreement of last year.

The budget is not perfect. There are things in it that I don't like and there are some things not in it that should have been in it.

But this President has submitted a budget plan that is a responsible set of priorities for this country's future. This President should get some credit. And those in this Congress who have supported deficit reduction, both the 1993 bill and the bipartisan agreement last year, deserve some credit too for a budget outlook that is much, much different now than anyone would have expected 2 or 3 years ago.

THE HIGHWAY BILL

Madam President, let me make one further point about the priorities for the Congress this year.

We must bring to the floor of this Senate, sooner rather than later, the

highway funding bill. I know there has been a lot of juggling back and forth about whose fault it is that we haven't considered this bill sooner. But the fact is, the highway bill was supposed to have been done last year by the Senate, and it ought to be done now.

We were told it was going to be one of the first items of business. Now we are told by the budgeteers that it must wait to follow the budget. To me, that approach is a big mistake. Let me tell you why.

If we delay the highway bill until after we have finished the budget this year, we will have delayed the highway bill, which we should have passed last year, until well after the middle of this year.

States like mine, North Dakota, in the Northern region of this country, will be terribly disadvantaged once again if we do not pass this bill soon. Northern states have a short construction season. They need to commit most of their money in the spring in order for necessary work to get done before winter sets in again. The plans for highway building and bridge building, in my state and many other states, are on hold because this Congress has yet to pass this bill. That is why the Congress must act quickly in this matter.

This is a jobs issue. It is an issue about investment in our infrastructure. Highways and bridges are vitally important to economic development in every state. The longer the highway plans are on hold, the longer people have to wait to make their investment decisions.

So I say to the majority leader and others, when the leaders of the Senate are planning what the Senate should do tomorrow, the next day, or the next week, I hope they will decide to bring the highway bill to the Senate floor.

This country needs a highway bill. We have it in our grasp to bring a highway bill to the floor and to debate it and pass it.

Someone said, ''Well, gee, there are 100 or 200 amendments to the highway bill.'' So that means it should have been brought up yesterday or the day before, and maybe we would have gotten rid of 20 of those amendments.

Let us, day by day, make progress on the highway bill so the American people know that this Congress views transportation investment as a high priority.

Madam President, I yield the floor. 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. Madam 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 REQUESTS—S. 1575

Mr. COVERDELL. Madam President, I ask unanimous consent that the Senate proceed to the immediate consideration of Calendar No. 301, S. 1575, the Ronald Reagan airport legislation.

I further ask unanimous consent that there be one amendment in order to be offered by myself, Senator COVERDELL, relative to a modification of the original bill.

I ask unanimous consent that the total time for debate be limited to 2 hours equally divided between Senator MCCAIN and HOLLINGS, or their designees, and following the debate the Senate proceed to vote on or in relation to the amendment to be followed by third reading and a vote on passage of S. 1575.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Is there objection?

Mr. DASCHLE. Madam President, reserving the right to object, this is very similar of course to the offer made last week.

I guess I will just ask: What is wrong with regular order? What is wrong with bringing a bill to the Senate floor, having a good debate, allowing the opportunity to offer amendments, and proceed under the rules of the Senate? Why do we need this gag rule with regard to this piece of legislation? Many of us are confused about that. And, unfortunately, many of the objections raised are being, in my view, misinterpreted by some of my colleagues on the other side of the aisle. All we want is an opportunity to offer amendments and to have a good debate.

Some have suggested that this opposition is cynical. I don't know that the opposition expressed in the last several days by local officials including the mayor of Alexandria, Kerry Donley, by the Chairman of the Metropolitan Washington Airport Authority, Chris Zimmerman, by the former Governor of Virginia, Linwood Holton, are cynical in their opposition to this piece of legislation. We are simply raising concerns about whether or not this is the right thing to do.

But that again argues, it seems to me, that we need the opportunity to have a good debate. This should not be done in 2 hours and with just one amendment. I give the distinguished Senator credit for his persistence and his determination to see this legislation through—but as I understand it, the one amendment to be offered by our Republican colleague is the one that literally takes the name ''Washington'' out of the title and instead puts in the name ''Reagan.'' We ought to have a discussion about that.

I suggest that perhaps there are other airports that should be considered to be renamed rather than Washington National Airport. For instance, it seems to me that Dulles International Airport might be a better candidate. We could have two airports named after two Presidents in the Washington area, ''Washington'' and ''Reagan,'' without affecting the first President of the United States. But we ought to have an opportunity to debate it. We ought to have an opportunity to discuss it and consider other amendments.

We have suggested as well that nothing would honor this former Ronald Reagan more than the opportunity to directly address a concern that he raised while he was President: the need to reform the IRS. Legislation to do just that passed 426 to 4 in the House of Representatives last year. We ought to pass it unanimously here in the Senate before more and more Americans are adversely affected by actions taken by IRS. Since we failed to act last November, one and a half million Americans have been adversely affected by actions taken by the IRS.

So let's deal with that legislation. Let's offer that as an amendment in tribute. We could even refer to it as the ''Ronald Reagan IRS reform amendment.''

I would just hope that we don't proceed as the first order of business imposing a gag rule on the Senate not allowing the opportunity for regular order, not having an opportunity to debate, to listen and respond to local officials.

How ironic that in the name of Ronald Reagan we carelessly demonstrate a lack of sensitivity to the local officials that Ronald Reagan said ought to be paramount in governmental decisionmaking. Unfortunately, we are attempting to override the objections that local decisionmakers have about what name should be placed at Washington National Airport. Do we really want to do that? Again, how ironic it would be if we did.

So, Madam President, for all those reasons I would simply ask unanimous consent that the Senator's request be modified to provide for three first-degree amendments to be in order per side during the consideration of that bill.

Mr. COVERDELL. I object.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Does the Senator agree to modifying his request?

Mr. COVERDELL. No. I object.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Objection is heard.

Mr. DASCHLE. Madam President, regrettably, under those circumstances I would have to object to the distinguished Senator's request as well.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Objection is heard.

The Senator from Georgia.

Mr. COVERDELL. Madam President, first let me say this to my good friend, my distinguished colleague, the minority leader. It is incorrect to suggest that we are not talking about debate. We want to move to the bill and debate its merits, both for or against it. It is true that perhaps I, more than any other, am objecting to the concept of taking a memorial statement to a former President and turning it into a free-for-all about IRS or other issues. I just do not think that is appropriate. I can understand. And if we have a local official, a former Governor, who is opposed to it, then during the course of