push for cutting taxes—even if Congress restrains itself from cutting taxes or increasing spending, Gross Federal Debt will continue to rise by some $700 billion, even under CBO's rosy scenarios. Furthermore, this could all change massively, as I have pointed out, with one recession like the one suffered by the Nation in the early 1990s.

It is against this backdrop that the House recently passed what they call the ''Taxpayer Relief Act of 1998.'' According to the Joint Committee on Taxation, this House-passed tax cut would reduce Federal revenues by $80 billion over the next 5 years and by $176 billion over the next 10 years. Keep in mind that tax cuts, once enacted, are permanent and the loss in revenues to the U.S. Treasury continue not just for 5, 10, or 15 years, but forever, unless they are repealed.

So, if the Congress lost its collective mind, and if the President joined Congress in losing our collective mind and signed such a reduction in revenues, those permanent tax cuts would come to pass regardless of whether CBO's latest projections of unified budget surpluses come true or not. Furthermore, we should keep in mind that over the next 5 years, there is no budget surplus at all—none—if one excludes the Social Security Trust Fund surpluses from the calculations. In effect then, the House-passed tax bill uses Social Security to pay for its $80 billion, 5-year cost to the Treasury.

We should also keep in mind that the Gross Federal Debt is going to continue to rise even without any tax cut. It follows that such a tax cut would increase the Federal debt by $80 billion over the next 5 years; by $176 billion over the next 10 years; and by ever-increasing amounts each year thereafter.

It should be noted, Mr. President, that the House-passed tax cut bill is in direct violation of the 1990 Budget Enforcement Act. That Act, as I stated earlier in my remarks, requires that any increase in mandatory spending or any tax cuts must be fully offset under what is called the ''Pay-As-You-Go'' rules. Those rules, which have been wisely extended through the year 2006 by the Budget Enforcement Act of 1997, allow for a point of order against any such un-offset tax cut. This means that the House-passed tax bill when, and if it comes before the Senate, will be subject to a 60-vote point of order.

I hope that Senators will come to their senses on both sides of the aisle and do what they know is right for the American people and vote against any tax bill that reduces Federal revenues, keeping in mind that even if all of the projected surpluses of CBO come true over the next 11 years, and even if all of those surpluses are applied to the Federal debt, we will still have massive Gross Federal Debt, which will grow from $5.5 trillion to $6.2 trillion over this same period. To fritter away billions of dollars at this time on massive tax cuts would be the height of irresponsibility and would signal to all the world that we cannot be relied upon to rid this great Nation of not only its deficits, but also its gigantic national debt as well. And that should be our solemn goal. It is ironic that after struggling mightily to overcome the 12 years of recordbreaking, triple-digit-billion-dollar Federal budget deficits under Reagan and Bush, the Republicans are now calling for cutting Federal revenues by huge amounts based on what could turn out to be flimsy projections by the Congressional Budget Office, which, even if they come true, will have done little more than put a small dent—just a small dent—in overall Federal debt.

Mr. President, you do not need any poll to do the right thing here. I say to Senators, this is a no brainer.

Mr. President, I yield the floor and suggest the absence of a quorum.

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Mr. COATS). The clerk will call the roll.

The assistant legislative clerk proceeded to call the roll.

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

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

INTERNET TAX FREEDOM ACT

The Senate continued with consideration of the bill.

AMENDMENTS NOS. 3678 AND 3679, EN BLOC

Mr. MCCAIN. Mr. President, I send two amendments en bloc to the desk on behalf of Senator BRYAN and Senator ABRAHAM and ask for their immediate consideration.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will report.

The assistant legislative clerk read as follows:

The Senator from Arizona [Mr. MCCAIN] proposes amendments numbered 3678 and 3679, en bloc.

The amendments (Nos. 3678 and 3679), en bloc, are as follows:

AMENDMENT NO. 3678

At the end of the bill add the following new title:

SECTION 1. SHORT TITLE.

This Act may be cited as the ''Government Paperwork Elimination Act.''

SEC. 2. DIRECTION AND OVERSIGHT OF INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY.

Section 3504(a)(1)(B)(vi) of title 44, United States Code, is amended to read as follows:

''(vi) the acquisition and use of information technology, including the use of alternative information technologies (such as the use of electronic submission, maintenance, or disclosure of information) to substitute for paper, and the use and acceptance of electronic signatures.''.

SEC. 3. PROCEDURES.

(a) Within 18 months after enactment of this Act, in order to fulfill the responsibility to administer the functions assigned under chapter 35 of title 44, United States Code, the Clinger-Cohen Act of 1996 (P.L. 104–106), and the provisions of this Act, the Director of the Office of Management and Budget shall develop procedures and guidelines for executive agency use.

(1) The procedures shall be compatible with standards and technology for electronic signatures as may be generally used in commerce and industry and by State governments, based upon consultation with appropriate private sector and State government standard setting bodies.

(2) Such procedures shall not inappropriately favor one industry or technology.

(3) An electronic signature shall be as reliable as is appropriate for the purpose, and efforts shall be made to keep the information submitted intact.

(4) Successful submission of an electronic form shall be electronically acknowledged.

(5) In accordance with all other sections of the Act, to the extent feasible and appropriate, and described in a written finding, an agency, when it expects to receive electronically 50,000 or more submittals of a particular form, shall take all steps necessary to ensure that multiple formats of electronic signatures are made available for submitting such forms.

SEC. 4. AUTHORITY AND FUNCTIONS OF THE DIRECTOR OF THE OFFICE OF MANAGEMENT AND BUDGET.

In order to fulfill the responsibility to administer the functions assigned under chapter 35 of title 44, United States Code, the Clinger-Cohen Act of 1996 (P.L. 104–106), and the provisions of this Act, the Director of the Office of Management and Budget shall ensure that, within five years of the date of enactment of this Act, executive agencies provide for the optional use of electronic maintenance, submission, or disclosure of information where practicable, as an alternative information technology to substitute for paper, and the use and acceptance of electronic signatures where practicable.

SEC. 5. ELECTRONIC STORAGE OF FORMS.

Within 18 months of enactment of this Act, in order to fulfill the responsibility to administer the functions assigned under chapter 35 of title 44, United States Code, the Clinger-Cohen Act of 1996 (P.L. 104–106), and the provisions of this Act, the Director of the Office of Management and Budget shall develop procedures and guidelines for executive agency use to permit employer electronic storage and filing of forms containing information pertaining to employees.

SEC. 6. STUDY.

In order to fulfill the responsibility to administer the functions assigned under chapter 34 of title 44, United States Code, the Clinger-Cohen Act of 1996 (P.L. 104–106), and the provisions of this Act, the Director of the Office of Management and Budget, shall conduct an ongoing study of paperwork reduction and electronic commerce, the impact on individual privacy, and the security and authenticity of transactions due to the use of electronic signatures pursuant to this Act, and shall report the findings to Congress.

SEC. 7. ENFORCEABILITY AND LEGAL EFFECT OF ELECTRONIC RECORDS.

Electronic records submitted or maintained in accordance with agency procedures and guidelines established pursuant to this title, or electronic signatures or other forms of electronic authentication used in accordance with such procedures and guidelines, shall not be denied legal effect, validity or enforceability because they are in electronic form.

SEC. 8. DISCLOSURE OF INFORMATION.

Except as provided by law, information collected in the provision of electronic signature services for communications with an agency, as provided by this Act, shall only be used or disclosed by persons who obtain, collect, or maintain such information as a business or government practice, for the purpose of facilitating such communications, or with

the prior affirmative consent of the person about whom the information pertains.

SEC. 9. APPLICATION WITH OTHER LAWS.

Nothing in this title shall apply to the Department of the Treasury or the Internal Revenue Service, to the extent that—

(1) it involves the administration of the internal revenue laws; and

(2) it conflicts with any provision of the Internal Revenue Service Restructuring and Reform Act of 1998 or the Internal Revenue Code of 1986.

SEC. 10. DEFINITIONS.

For purposes of this Act:

(1) EXECUTIVE AGENCY.—The term ''executive agency'' has the meaning given that term in section 105 of title 5, United States Code.

(2) ELECTRONIC SIGNATURE.—The term ''electronic signature'' means a method of signing an electronic message that—

(A) identifies and authenticates a particular person as the source of such electronic message; and

(B) indicates such person's approval of the information contained in such electronic message.

(e) FORM, QUESTIONNAIRE, OR SURVEY.—The term ''form'', ''questionnaire'', and ''survey'' include documents produced by an agency to facilitate interaction between an agency and non-government persons.

AMENDMENT NO. 3679

(Purpose: To add the provisions of S. 2326, as ordered reported by the Committee on Commerce, Science, and Transportation and as further modified, as a separate title to the bill)

(The text of amendment No. 3679 is printed in today's RECORD under ''Amendments Submitted.'')

Mr. MCCAIN. Mr. President, these two amendments are not relevant, but they are acceptable to both sides.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The question is on agreeing to the amendments en bloc.

The amendments (Nos. 3678 and 3679) were agreed to.

Mr. MCCAIN. I move to reconsider the vote, and I move to lay that motion on the table.

The motion to lay on the table was agreed to.

AMENDMENT NO. 3678

Mr. ABRAHAM. Mr. President, I want to take a moment to discuss language that has been added to this legislation, the ''Government Paperwork Elimination Act.'' In May, I introduced S. 2107 to enhance electronic commerce and promote the reliability and integrity of commercial transactions through the establishment of authentication standards for electronic communications. S. 2107 was reported by the Committee on Commerce, Science, and Transportation last month.

After the bill was reported, it was discovered that the bill was erroneously referred to the Commerce Committee and should have been referred to the Committee on Governmental Affairs. S. 2107 deals with Federal government information issues and, according to the parliamentarian, falls directly within the jurisdiction of Governmental Affairs. I understand a similar bill had been approved by Governmental Affairs last Congress.

Obviously, this was discovered late in the session. Nevertheless, Senator THOMPSON, the chairman of the Governmental Affairs Committee, worked with me to develop language which combines language from the bill reported by his Committee last Congress and S. 2107. I want to thank my colleague from Tennessee for his help and insight. He spent a great deal of time assisting me with this legislation and, in my opinion, his language makes many improvements to the original bill.

Mr. THOMPSON. Mr. President, I thank my colleague from Michigan for his hard work on and dedication to information technology issues. The Committee on Governmental Affairs which I chair has had a long and involved history with this issue.

This language which we are discussing today seeks to take advantage of the advances in modern technology to lessen the paperwork burdens on those who deal with the Federal government. This is accomplished by requiring the Office of Management and Budget, through its existing responsibilities under the ''Paperwork Reduction Act'' and the ''Clinger-Cohen Act,'' to develop policies to promote the use of alternative information technologies, including the use of electronic maintenance, submission, or disclosure of information to substitute for paper, and the use and acceptance of electronic signatures.

The Federal government is lagging behind the rest of the nation in using new technologies. Individuals who deal with the Federal government should be able to reduce the cumulative burden of meeting the Federal government's information demands through the use of information technology. This language hopefully will provide the motivation that the Federal government needs to make this possible for our nation's citizens.

I thank Senator ABRAHAM for offering us the opportunity to work with him on this important issue.

MORNING BUSINESS

Mr. MCCAIN. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that there now be a period of morning business, with Senators permitted to speak for up to 10 minutes each.

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

Mr. MCCAIN. I suggest the absence of a quorum.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will call the roll.

The assistant legislative clerk proceeded to call the roll.

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

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Mr. GORTON). Without objection, it is so ordered.

Mr. KENNEDY. Mr. President, as I understand, we are in morning business for up to 10 minutes. I ask unanimous consent to be able to proceed for 15 minutes.

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

PATIENTS' BILL OF RIGHTS

Mr. KENNEDY. Mr. President, we are reaching the final days of this Congress, and the leadership is deciding about which measures the Senate is going to consider during these final few days.

As I mentioned previously, we have identified a number of different pieces of legislation that I don't believe, and I don't think the American people believe rise up in importance as to protecting the families of this country with the kinds of protections that we would have with our Patients' Bill of Rights. But, we have been unable to have this legislation up before the Senate, to have it debated and discussed, and to have a resolution by this body in a timely way.

As I have mentioned on other occasions, it is Friday afternoon at 2 o'clock and most Americans are still working. The Senate should be, on an issue of this importance, still here and debating these issues and resolving these matters in ways which I think, with a full debate and an open discussion, resolve these matters in favor of the families, in favor of the patients, in favor of this country.

It is a very basic and fundamental issue—whether we are going to have the medical professionals—the doctors and nurses—make the ultimate judgment in terms of health care, or whether those decisions are going to be made by the HMOs, the insurance companies, and their accountants.

For all Americans who are participating in these HMOs, they have paid the premiums and they expect their medical treatment will be decided by medical professionals, and not accountants in the insurance industry.

I doubt very much whether these HMOs—when they are out recruiting new members to join and pay their premiums from their hard-earned money which they work for every single day—are saying, ''Well, we want you to know that the people who are going to be making decisions about your health care are going to be the accountants, and not the doctors we are referencing in our pamphlets.''

Mr. President, this morning in the Wall Street Journal on the front page there was a rather ominous report. This is from this morning, Friday, October 2nd, on the front page of the Wall Street Journal: ''Politicians seek to profit from the debate over health-care policies.''

This is the debate—the one issue—that is before the U.S. Senate, the Patients' Bill of Rights. There are other health care issues. But this is the health care issue that commands the wide-range support of over 180 different organizations reflecting all of the various medical professionals—all the