

networks to provide two-way telephone service and with utilities and fixed wireless companies getting into the business. In fact, I would say this shifting of assets in under three years is a fitting testament to the act's ability to move America's telecommunications policy forward—a true commitment and investment by Wall Street.

Mr. President, I firmly believe the act's goals of local competition and consumer choices will be fulfilled, and America will be better off. The best way to ensure that investment continues is to keep the law in full force.

When the act passed in 1996, Congress also knew that it would take a while to sort out the rules to produce local competition. More importantly, Congress knew that whatever rules the FCC adopted would be challenged in court. Congress was correct on both counts. This does not mean the law is flawed. To the contrary, this reflects the complexity of the issues and the intensity of the competition. Remember, it took a decade to write the law, and it will take time to implement it. I believe, though, that the majority of Members who worked on the act understand its success cannot be measured over a one or two year period. Courtroom battles did cloud the course toward local competition. This litigation did slow the pace for customer choice, but I am pleased to report that just 2 weeks ago the Supreme Court upheld most of the FCC's local telephone interconnection rules and affirmed that the local phone companies must open their markets in a meaningful way. It is my hope that opportunities for competition will now move forward swiftly and be afforded a proper chance to flourish in the marketplace.

Mr. President, Americans today are witnessing a convergence of technologies that was but a dream in 1996. Cable lines will provide American households with local telephone service and high speed Internet access. This is good. Traditional telephone companies will offer cable video service. This is good. More Americans are using wireless phones for personal and professional convenience. This is good. More Americans have personal computers with an ever-growing range of capabilities. This is good. The Internet is exploding as a means of commerce, research, or for just saying hello to a far-away friend. This is good. Television viewing will become an interactive experience with digital transmission, enabling consumers to personalize their own video programming or to go directly to a web site. This is good.

Mr. President, all of these significant and solid activities tells me something—Congress got it right 3 years ago. Patience will lead to other applications in the future that I, and some of my other colleagues, cannot even imagine right now. Mr. President, this is the kind of communications marketplace Americans deserve.

During this continued period of transition, it will be important for Con-

gress to make sure that the Federal Communications Commission is properly structured. That it has the right tools to foster and further the ongoing evolution. Chairman Kennard's analogy—old regulatory models are a thing of the past, much like the old, black rotary phones—rings true. The FCC indeed must change, and Congress should start empowering the FCC rather than criticizing its individual decisions.

Mr. President, the Telecommunications Act is beginning to deliver the benefits of competition to the American consumer. The process of achieving the act's central goals is well on its way. I do not believe any of us want to turn back the clock to 1996 and take away all the new technologies, new companies, and new choices that have emerged and are now coming our way. Let's not put stumbling blocks on this path to progress. Let's keep America moving forward.

TRIBUTE TO THE HONORABLE SANDRA K. STUART ASSISTANT SECRETARY OF DEFENSE FOR LEGISLATIVE AFFAIRS

Mr. LOTT. Mr. President, I would like to take this opportunity to recognize the outstanding work of the Honorable Sandra K. Stuart as the Assistant Secretary of Defense for Legislative Affairs. After nearly five years in this position, Ms. Stuart is leaving government service to pursue other opportunities in the private sector. She definitely will be missed by many of my colleagues on both sides of the aisle.

I have enjoyed working with Ms. Stuart on a wide range of matters affecting the Department of Defense. I always found her to be extremely knowledgeable and very effective in representing the Department's views. Despite the sometimes contentious nature of national security matters, Ms. Stuart always maintained a friendly and constructive approach to her work which served our Nation very well.

Ms. Stuart had the difficult tasks of coordinating the Department of Defense's legislative agenda. She has deftly balanced a wide range of Defense-related issues, including Bosnia, missile defense, health care, readiness, acquisition reform, and modernization. Because Ms. Stuart earned the trust and confidence of those with whom she worked, she was able to promote the Department's views very effectively in Congress.

Ms. Stuart's experience with the Congress predated her current position as the Assistant Secretary of Defense for Legislative Affairs. Before joining the Department of Defense in 1993, Ms. Stuart served as Chief of Staff to Representative Vic Fazio of California who recently retired from Congress. In addition to managing his Congressional staff, Ms. Stuart handled appropriations matters before the House Committee on Appropriations.

Ms. Stuart's legislative experience also includes work as an Associate

Staff Member of the House Budget Committee and as the Chief Legislative Assistant to Representative BOB MATSUI of California.

Ms. Stuart is a graduate of the University of North Carolina at Greensboro and attended the Monterey College of Law. She is the mother of two sons, Jay Stuart, Jr. and Timothy Scott Stuart. She is married to D. Michael Murray.

Ms. Stuart earned the respect of every Member of Congress and their staffs through hard work and her straightforward nature. As she now departs to share her experience and expertise in the civilian sector, I call upon my colleagues on both sides of the aisle to recognize her outstanding and dedicated public service and wish her all the very best in her new challenges.

THE VERY BAD DEBT BOXSCORE

Mr. HELMS. Mr. President, now that we are back to doing the people's business, it may be of interest that despite the so-call budget surplus, the federal debt continues to increase by an average of \$248 million a day. Some "surplus"!

Congress and the Administration have been BUSILY creating new federal programs which in turn appear to absorb more taxpayer money than produce desired benefits for the American people. If we continue with this spend—spend—spend mentality, the American people's average portion of the federal debt will further escalate from its present sum of \$20,650.78.

With these thoughts in mind, Mr. President, I begin where I left off in the 105th Congress:

At the close of business yesterday, Monday, February 22, 1999, the federal debt stood at \$5,617,212,277,099.84 (Five trillion, six hundred seventeen billion, two hundred twelve million, two hundred seventy-seven thousand, ninety-nine dollars and eighty-four cents).

Five years ago, February 22, 1994, the federal debt stood at \$4,540,132,000,000 (Four trillion, five hundred forty billion, one hundred thirty-two million).

Ten years ago, February 22, 1989, the federal debt stood at \$2,722,208,000,000 (Two trillion, seven hundred twenty-two billion, two hundred eight million).

Fifteen years ago, February 22, 1984, the federal debt stood at \$1,454,396,000,000 (One trillion, four hundred fifty-four billion, three hundred ninety-six million).

Twenty-five years ago, February 22, 1974, the federal debt stood at \$467,489,000,000 (Four hundred sixty-seven billion, four hundred eighty-nine million) which reflects a debt increase of more than \$5 trillion—\$5,149,723,277,099.84 (Five trillion, one hundred forty-nine billion, seven hundred twenty-three million, two hundred seventy-seven thousand, ninety-nine dollars and eighty-four cents) during the past 25 years.