

This spending bill, the Labor-HHS fiscal year 2000 appropriations bill, is the last of the 13 appropriations bills to reach the floor. It is also the largest of the nondefense discretionary appropriations bills. If the estimates about this year's spending that I have referred to are correct, we are going to dip into Social Security, and this is the bill that will push us over the edge. For this reason, I commend Senator NICKLES for bringing up this amendment on this bill at this time.

Now is the time for us to stand up and say we will not support taking any money out of the Social Security trust fund to finance the operations of Government. Making sure that Social Security funds do not go for anything other than Social Security is essential to the protection of long-term Social Security integrity.

Social Security is expected to meet all of its obligations until the year 2034—until then. Starting in 2014, however, Social Security will begin spending more than it collects. It will begin spending the trust fund, the surpluses. By saving Social Security surpluses and using those surpluses to pay down the debt, Congress will ensure the Nation is on secure economic footing when Social Security surpluses diminish and then disappear. If we do not save Social Security now, it will make it that much harder for us to meet our own obligations later.

We need to protect Social Security now for the 1 million Missourians who receive Social Security, for their children, and their grandchildren. We need to protect Social Security now, and this bill fails to do that. It certainly threatens not to do it, and it is time for us to vote in favor of the Nickles amendment, and to vote against any plan that would invade the Social Security trust fund.

It is for this reason I urge my colleagues to support the Nickles amendment calling for the full protection of our Social Security resources.

I thank the Chair.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Connecticut.

Mr. LIEBERMAN. I thank the Chair.

SPECIAL COMMITTEE ON CULTURAL MATTERS

Mr. LIEBERMAN. Mr. President, last evening after the final vote occurred, my friend and colleague from Kansas, Senator BROWNBACK, took the floor and offered an amendment which he then withdrew. I was not able, because of my personal schedule, to be here at that time. But as an original sponsor of the original legislation offered by Senator BROWNBACK, which would have created a special committee on cultural matters, I did want to simply say a few words about this.

I know this became controversial within the Senate, but I felt from the beginning that Senator BROWNBACK's intentions were not only worthy but they were relevant; that the cultural

problems which the committee, or later the task force, would have addressed are real, as every family in America knows when their children turn on the television or go to a movie or listen to a CD or play a video game.

The problems are not only real, but they are actually relevant to so many of the matters we more formally discuss on the floor of the Senate—such as the solitary explosions, violent criminal behavior, problems such as teenage pregnancies, I think all of which are affected by the messages our culture gives our children and, indeed, adults about behavior. Of course, I am talking about the hypersexual content, hyperviolent content in too much of our culture.

In this case, this effort by Senator BROWNBACK, with the withdrawal of the amendment last night, was not to culminate successfully. But the battle will go on.

Clearly, the standing committees of the Senate will—I certainly hope they will; I am confident they will—continue to pursue cultural questions because they are so important, they are so central to the moral condition and future of our country. I look forward to working on those with Senator BROWNBACK and other colleagues as we go forward.

HONORING 20TH ANNIVERSARY OF THE ESPN NETWORK

Mr. LIEBERMAN. Mr. President, I note there is a rule in the Senate against using props. I, just for a moment, ask unanimous consent for a transitional prop, if I might briefly hold this up.

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

Mr. LIEBERMAN. I thank the Chair.

This is my favorite ESPN parka. It gives you an indication of about what I am going to speak. It is in some sense as cultural as the first part of my comments. It does involve the influence of television on the American culture. But today, in this part of it, the news is good and the occasion is one to celebrate, particularly for those who may find some meaning in words that might confuse visitors from another planet, such as "en fuego" or "boo-yaah." Twenty years ago, a small cable television enterprise, tucked away in the woods of central Connecticut, introduced itself to America with these words:

If you're a fan, what you'll see in the minutes, hours and days to follow may convince you that you've gone to sports heaven.

True to that prophecy, the past 20 years have marked our national elevation into another world of sublime sports saturation.

In recognition of its outstanding contribution in shaping the sports entertainment industry, I wish to speak today—and I believe I speak for all of my colleagues, at least a great majority—in offering our kudos to an American sports institution and the pride of

Bristol, CT—the ESPN Network which turned 20 years old last month, on September 7. The folks at ESPN aired an anniversary special that night duly celebrating the network's unique constructive contribution to our culture, and yesterday there was a congressional reception in honor of that anniversary.

Those of us who attended not only had the chance to toast ESPN but to meet an extraordinary group of American heroes: boxing legend Muhammad Ali, football great Johnny Unitas, and Olympian Carl Lewis.

So I take the floor to pay tribute to one of my favorite corporate constituents, and I think one of America's favorite networks.

The story of how ESPN came to be is really an American rags to riches classic, and that network's unbreakable bond with the small Connecticut city of its founding is part of that story.

Bristol, CT, population 63,000, is a wonderful town, 20 minutes west of Hartford. Most famous previously for being the cradle of clockmaking during the industrial age, Bristol seemed an unlikely candidate to emerge as the cradle of electronics sports media, but it did. Believe it or not, ESPN probably would not exist today—certainly not in Bristol—if the old New England Whalers of the World Hockey Association had not had a disappointing season in 1978.

The Whalers' public relations director, a man named Bill Rasmussen, one of several employees to lose his job in a front-office shakeup at the end of that season, decided he had an idea he wanted to try. He was a Whalers man at heart, and he figured he could stay involved with his team by starting a new cable television channel that would broadcast Whalers games statewide. He even had a second-tier dream of someday possibly broadcasting University of Connecticut athletics statewide as well.

Rasmussen rented office space in Plainville, CT, near Bristol, and thought up the name Entertainment and Sports Programming Network, or ESPN. But before he had even unpacked in Plainville, he ran into his first problem—the town had an ordinance which prohibited satellite dishes. Undeterred, Rasmussen scrambled to nearby Bristol, found a parcel of land in an industrial park in the outskirts of the city, which he promptly bought, sight unseen, I gather, for \$18,000. The rest, as they say, is history.

Today, ESPN, from this same location, generates \$1.3 billion a year in revenues and is seen in more than 75 million American homes.

ESPN realized that second-tier dream that Rasmussen had. Earlier this year, his station provided exhaustive coverage of UConn athletics when the Huskies won the NCAA men's basketball championship—only the game was not broadcast statewide; it was broadcast worldwide.