

We as the minority will have to continue protecting our rights, whether it is the CBI, this bill now before us, whether it is bankruptcy. Whatever the legislation that is going to be brought forward, we must have our input. That is all we are asking. We are not asking we win every amendment. Some amendments we recognize the majority does not want to vote upon. But that is not the way you conduct a legislative body, just avoid all issues that are tough votes.

We need more tough votes. We would all be better off, individually, in our respective States and the country, if we had more tough votes.

I suggest the absence of a quorum.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will call the roll.

The legislative assistant proceeded to call the roll.

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 President, I ask unanimous consent that the order for the quorum call be rescinded.

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

ARMENIA

Mr. REED. Mr. President, I rise to express my regret over the tragic situation in Armenia. As we all know, a few days ago gunmen broke into their Parliament and killed the Prime Minister and several other officials of the Armenian Government. Later today Senator ABRAHAM will introduce a resolution which will express our condolences to the people of Armenia and our expression of support for their continued struggle to create a viable and strong democratic tradition in their country.

As I said, late yesterday afternoon in Yerevan, the capital of Armenia, several gunmen broke into their Parliament and killed eight Government officials and wounded seven others. They then held hostages for 24 hours, and only after the intercession of the President of Armenia in negotiations did they relent, release the hostages, and then surrender to the authorities.

Among those killed were Prime Minister Vazgen Sarkisian, Parliament speaker Karen Demirchian, deputy speakers Yuri Bakhshian and Ruben Miroian, Energy Minister Leonard Petrosian, senior economic official Mikhail Kotanian and lawmakers Genrikh Abramian and Armenak Armenakian. These gentlemen gave their lives as they were pursuing a democratic future for the people of Armenia.

It appears the gunmen were not part of any larger conspiracy. They were family members who were bent on a path of individual retribution and revenge. But the tragic incident reminds us of the fragility of constitutional government and democracy around the world, particularly in Armenia.

Armenia declared its independence in September of 1991. It has been struggling to ensure a free and fair electoral

process. Today, Armenians continue to be determined to ensure democracy will be the rule in their country. I had the occasion to travel there two years ago.

We all know one of the great points of friction in the area is the area of Nagorno-Karabakh, an ethnically Armenian territory which was controlled for years by Azerbaijan. Recently, we have seen progress. Indeed, the Prime Minister was one of the key figures in forging a dialogue between the Government of Azerbaijan and the Government of Armenia. His tragic loss, I hope, is not a setback for that process.

Deputy Secretary of State Strobe Talbott had just left Armenia in his efforts to try to prompt further discussions between Azerbaijan and Armenia. He has now returned there to ensure it is clear to the Government and people of Armenia that America will stand with them.

Today is an opportunity to send our message of support, our message of condolence; also, our message of further support for the people of Armenia as they confront the challenges of democracy.

I join my colleague, Senator ABRAHAM, and others supporting this legislation to, once again, signal to the world and the people of Armenia that we stand with them in this time of tragedy, and will in the future on more hopeful days.

Mr. President, I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Texas.

DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA APPROPRIATIONS ACT, 2000—CONFERENCE REPORT

Mrs. HUTCHISON. Mr. President, I ask that the Chair lay before the Senate the conference report to accompany the D.C. Labor-HHS appropriations bill.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The report will be stated.

The legislative assistant read as follows:

The committee on conference on the disagreeing votes of the two Houses on the amendment of the Senate to the bill, H.R. 3064, have agreed to recommend and do recommend to their respective Houses this report, signed by a majority of the conferees.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection, the Senate will proceed to the consideration of the conference report.

(The conference report is printed in the House proceedings of the RECORD of October 27, 1999.)

Mrs. HUTCHISON. Mr. President, I want to talk a little bit about the bill as a whole. There is going to be a joint effort between two subcommittees on the Appropriations Committee—my subcommittee, the D.C. appropriations subcommittee, on which Senator DURBIN is the ranking member, and then the Labor-HHS spending bill, which has Senator SPECTER as the chairman and Senator HARKIN as the ranking mem-

ber. In addition, this bill contains the 1-percent across-the-board spending cut that is necessary for us to come into our budget caps and save the Social Security surplus intact.

First, I want to talk about the bigger bill because I think we should understand this is a very important achievement that we will make if Congress passes this bill and sends it to the President.

This bill marks, for the first time in 30 years, that we will pass all of our spending bills, and there will be no raid on the Social Security trust funds. The Social Security trust funds will be left intact so that people who have paid in will get back not only what they have paid in, but they will be given Social Security benefits after they are eligible. No longer will we dip into the Nation's retirement fund to pay for today's spending needs. This is a significant achievement.

For the record, this bill will be voted on on Tuesday. We will debate today and Monday. On Tuesday, I hope we will send this bill to the President, and I hope the President will sign it.

Some have complained about the across-the-board spending cuts. I think we can afford one penny of savings on every dollar to preserve the retirement needs of America. I do not think that is too much to ask of this Congress. After all, there is a little waste in Federal Government.

The inspectors general within the Departments across Government have already identified \$16 billion in funds that have been misspent. The Governmental Affairs Committee, working with the General Accounting Office, has identified nearly \$200 billion in savings in Federal overpayments, erroneous payments, and wasteful practices.

With this waste, I believe we can take a 1-percent cut to preserve the integrity of Social Security to cover the programs that are worthy and use our taxpayer dollars more efficiently. With \$216 billion in waste, we can cover the programs that need to be covered if our administrators have any integrity and if they are, in fact, competent. I hope they are. I do not think it is too much to ask. After all, when any family sees it is not going to meet its income and its spending needs, what does it do? It does not just spend anyway. Hopefully, it does not borrow. It sits down and determines where it can cut. I wager most families in America have had to make more than a 1-percent cut in their budgets when they have run into an emergency and do not have the funds to spend.

I now turn to the provisions in the District of Columbia portion of this bill. This is our second attempt to get a District of Columbia funding bill the President will sign. I believe we have reached a solution that is acceptable to all the relevant parties.

Senator DURBIN has been very productive; he has been responsible; he has been a real player in this process. In