

Look at the Republican budget now being presented to the Senate. Hard as it may be to believe, this Republican budget is going to cut the 900 FBI agents proposed by President Clinton. It is going to reduce, as well, the number of personnel in the Drug Enforcement Agency. It is going to reduce by over 400 the proposal by the President to put more guards at the borders to stop drugs. It completely eliminates the President's proposal for 500 new ATF agents to keep an eye on gun dealers who are selling to criminals. The President proposes 1,000 new prosecutors for enforcement, the same enforcement you heard Charlton Heston, Wayne LaPierre, and other folks on that side talk about. We need more enforcement, and the Republican bill doesn't provide a penny for this Presidential initiative for more enforcement.

You can't have it both ways. Your rhetoric has to catch up with reality. The Budget Committee room is a dance studio where we have the Republican majority side-stepping the George W. Bush tax cut, saying, we are not sure we want to go with that—a Texas two-step if I have ever seen one—and waltzing away from a commitment for more enforcement to stop gun crime in America.

That isn't going to wash, folks. People across America will look at this and say that is not a recipe for America's future, it is a recipe for disaster—on the economic front and when it comes to bringing peace to our neighborhoods and schools.

So I certainly hope those who watch C-SPAN will not be lulled to sleep, as Billy Crystal suggested, but will, rather, see there are some pretty important issues being developed and debated. I hope before this all ends, we will stick with the economic plan that moves America forward, that provides opportunity for more and more Americans, for businesses and for home ownership, that we will dedicate ourselves to a sensible reduction in our debt rather than a risky, dangerous, and massive tax cut, as Governor Bush has proposed.

I hope we will follow Chairman Greenspan's advice and keep this economy moving in such a way that we create opportunity for everybody.

When it comes to gun safety, let's do both. Let's close the gun show loophole. Let's have trigger locks for the safety of guns. Let's not let the Sunday morning talk show rhetoric about enforcement die by Sunday evening. On Monday through Friday when we are in session, that rhetoric should be very much alive. I sincerely hope that during the course of this debate we can put together a bipartisan majority to achieve it.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Connecticut.

Mr. DODD. Mr. President, what is the business before the Senate?

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Under the previous order, there are 30 seconds remaining in morning business.

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#### EXTENSION OF MORNING BUSINESS

Mr. DODD. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that morning business be extended for another 15 minutes.

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

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#### FLAG DESECRATION AMENDMENT

Mr. DODD. Mr. President, I rise today in opposition to the resolution which will be before us later this afternoon dealing with the issue of flag burning. I will spend a few minutes to express to my colleagues and to others who may be interested at least my point of view on this. We have debated it in this Chamber a number of times over the past decade or more. We have it before us again today. I wish to take a few minutes to explain my views on this issue and how I intend to vote when the matter comes before us.

This is no ordinary resolution. It is no ordinary debate. When we speak of amending the Bill of Rights of our Constitution, we ought to do so with great care.

Our Bill of Rights has existed now for more than 200 years, and, despite literally thousands of proposals to amend it, our forebearers, and those who occupied this Chamber over the years, saw fit to not on a single occasion amend the Bill of Rights of the U.S. Constitution. It is a remarkable record when you consider the trials and tribulations this Nation has been through—a great depression, great world wars, a great civil war which ravaged this Nation. Despite more than 11,000 attempts to amend the Constitution—many of them to amend the Bill of Rights—none of our predecessors, and none of the Congresses that have preceded us, saw fit during all of those great trials and tribulations to amend the Bill of Rights of the United States.

Today, we are being asked to change that 209-year history and to amend the Bill of Rights to deal with the outrageous, indefensible behavior of those who would burn the symbol of our freedom, the symbol of our Constitution, the symbol of our democracy, the great flag of the United States. It goes without saying that every Member of this Chamber and the other body, and the overwhelming majority of Americans would find flag burning offensive and abhorrent. As many of our colleagues, I believe it ought to be a crime—whether it is criminal intent to incite violence or commit a theft. But to truly honor our Nation's history and the veterans, we must not only protect our flag but, in my view, we must also protect the Constitution and the freedoms promised by that flag.

Our former colleague, Senator John Glenn of Ohio, who served this Nation as a combat pilot in Korea, as an astro-

naut, and as Senator, well known to most Americans, well known by all of our colleagues, put it very well. I would like to quote it: "There is one way to weaken the fabric of your country, and it is not through a few misguided souls burning our flag. It is by retreating from the principles that the flag stands for. And that will do more damage to the fabric of our Nation than 1,000 torched flags could ever do. . . . History and future generations will judge us harshly, as they should, if we permit those who would defile our flag to hoodwink us into also defiling our Constitution. The Framers of the Constitution, in their boundless wisdom and notable humility, understood that succeeding generations may see fit to amend this cornerstone document. But those amendments should be limited, in James Madison's words, to "great and extraordinary occasions."

Regrettably, Madison's edict has not been heeded by many who have come after him. In this Congress alone, more than 50 proposed amendments to the Constitution have been introduced—including one to make it easier to amend the Constitution in the future.

But collectively our Nation has paid heed to the caution urged by Madison and others of his day. It is reassuring to know that, of the 11,000 amendments introduced since ratification of the Bill of Rights 209 years ago, only 17 have been adopted.

Clearly, there is no great and extraordinary occasion warranting ratification of the amendment proposed in the Senate today. Flag burning is rare, thank God. It is despicable. It is reprehensible. But it does not present a constitutional crisis for our Nation.

Indeed, in the entire history of our Nation, there have been only about 200 reported incidents of flag burning, an average of less than one a year for each of our Nation's history—one a year, 200 cases in a nation of 260 million people today. And we have less than roughly one case a year for the 200-year history of our Nation.

I would submit that the despicable acts of a few misguided miscreants do not cry out for this Congress to be the first in history to restrict the liberties of all Americans by narrowing the Bill of Rights.

Some argue that even one flag burned would be enough to warrant ratification of this proposed amendment. They say that, without such an amendment, we effectively sanction flag-burning. But toleration is not approval. We do not as a nation sanction everything which we do not punish. Indeed, I would submit that the heart of the greatness of our democracy is that we tolerate that which we disapprove of. We permit and protect that which we find most offensive and obnoxious. They will continue, and probably grow, unfortunately, in number in a disgraceful effort to attract attention to themselves. What will such a possibility portend for the respect we all have for our beloved Constitution?