

And we should have given that disaster relief.

Here you have virtually the same situation. We have a chance to actually do it—no more sense of the Senate; no more talking about it; no more just saying we ought to do it. With this bill we do it. We are actually being blocked by a parliamentary maneuver on the Democrat side of the aisle.

I hope the President will enter into this debate and call on Democrat colleagues of ours to say, no, let's have a vote. Let's debate the different sides of this issue of marriage tax penalty relief. There are different policy ways to handle it. Let's have that good debate, but don't tie it up with endless amendments or with what is taking place now, where we are virtually shutting the floor down because we can't get agreement. This is too important to play that sort of politics.

I hope my Democrat colleagues are actually for eliminating the marriage tax penalty. Let us have a spirited debate about their different ideas. I appreciate my colleague from Texas carrying this issue forward. We have to deal with this now. Ahead of the April 15 deadline would be the time to do it. This is the point in time to do it. People filling out their forms are seeing the marriage tax penalty they are paying. Let's tell them hope is on the way; we will be able to get this dealt with.

I appreciate my colleague doing this. I hope we can get the President involved in calling some of our Democrat colleagues to say, let's pass a bill and let's look at this issue on the merits. I know my colleague from Texas will continue to press that issue on the floor and everywhere else she can.

Mrs. HUTCHISON. I thank the Senator from Kansas for making a very good point. He is saying maybe now it is time for the President to step in and show his commitment on this issue. Maybe he can work with the distinguished Democratic minority in saying, I think this is something we ought to do, such as an emergency.

I guarantee Kervin and Marsha Johnson believe it is an emergency, as they are filling out their tax forms this week. Kervin is a D.C. police officer. His wife is a Federal employee. They were married last July. This year they will pay \$1,000 more in taxes because they got married 7 months ago.

I guarantee that Eric and Ayla Hemeon believe this is an emergency. Eric is a volunteer firefighter and works for a printing company. Ayla works for a small business. They have been married for 2 years and are expecting their first child in about a month. Last year they paid almost \$1,100 in a marriage tax penalty just because they got married and that they would not have paid if they were single. They are filling out their tax forms right now, and they would like to see the Congress give them relief from paying that \$1,100 next year so they can buy something for their new baby.

Lawrence and Brendalyn Garrison believe this is an emergency. He is a cor-

rections officer at Lorton prison. She is a teacher in Fairfax County, VA. Last year we estimate they paid nearly \$600 in a marriage tax penalty. They are really upset about it. When I talked to them last week, they said: We have been married 25 years and we think you should pass marriage tax penalty relief and make it retroactive.

I think they have a good point. They have been paying the penalty for 25 years. This is an error in the Tax Code that must be corrected.

Jerri Dahl of Arlington, TX, believes this is an emergency. He wrote me a letter and said:

It is tax time again, and I am not going to let it go by without attempting to do something about what I feel is a terrible injustice to working people. I am not joking when I tell you that my husband and I are seriously contemplating divorce in order not to be penalized financially next year.

I think we have a number of people in this country who believe this is an emergency, who, as they are writing the check to the Government, believe the Senate should act on a bill that would give them relief from a payment they should not have to make. Most people in our country believe they owe a fair share of taxes to the Government. They love this country and they want to do their part, but most people don't want to do more than they think is fair. When a single person in an office is sitting next to a married person in an office and they have the same job and make the same salary and the married person has to pay more in taxes than the single person sitting at the next desk making the same salary, that doesn't pass the test of fairness.

I commend the majority leader for attempting to bring this bill to the floor. I commend my colleague, the Senator from Kansas, the Senator from Missouri, Mr. ASHCROFT, the Senator from Michigan, Mr. ABRAHAM, and the Senator from Delaware, Mr. ROTH. They have been working on this legislation for a long time. Senator ROTH brought the bill forward last year. The President vetoed it and said it was too much. Senator ROTH came back this year. He originally had a different bill—it was a doubling of the 15-percent bracket—but he listened to many of us who said, let's go to 28 percent so people in that middle-income bracket can get relief. That is the middle-income couple who needs that money to be able to do more for their children or to buy their first house or to pay for the car.

The working people of our country deserve better government than they are getting today. They deserve better government than the Democrats shutting down the Senate because they don't want open debate on marriage tax penalty relief.

I hope tomorrow they will change. I hope they will change and say it is OK to discuss this issue. It is OK to have disagreements, but let's keep our eye on the ball. Let's come together, Democrats and Republicans, and cor-

rect the inequity in the Tax Code in this country that says a married person and a single person in the same job making the same salary should pay the same taxes.

That is what we are seeking today. I hope the Democrats will come back fresh tomorrow and say: We agree with you. Now is the time to do the responsible thing. Let's correct the Tax Code to say every person working in this country should pay their fair share of taxes but no more. Let's give tax relief to the hard-working married couple who has been paying a penalty for 6 months or a year or 25 years. Let's correct it now because now is the time we can.

As the majority leader said about the gas tax reduction that we also tried to give people today: If not now, when? If not this, how?

Let us be a little more forthcoming in creativity when it comes to helping the hard-working people of this country have the marriage penalty relief they deserve.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Illinois.

Mr. FITZGERALD. Thank you, Mr. President. I compliment my friend and colleague from the State of Texas for all of her hard work and leadership in trying to correct the marriage tax penalty. It is an unfair quirk in our Tax Code that we hope we can finally bring to an end at some point this year.

(The remarks of Mr. FITZGERALD pertaining to the introduction of S. 2398 are located in today's RECORD under "Statements on Introduced Bills and Joint Resolutions.")

Mr. CLELAND addressed the Chair.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Georgia is recognized.

Mr. CLELAND. I thank the Chair.

(The remarks of Mr. CLELAND pertaining to the introduction of S. 2402 are located in today's RECORD under "Statements on Introduced Bills and Joint Resolutions.")

AVIATION SECURITY

Mr. MCCAIN. Mr. President, I am an original cosponsor of Senator HUTCHISON's bill to improve aviation security. Our colleague from Texas brings unique expertise to this issue as a former member of the National Transportation Safety Board. I want to thank her for her diligence in this area over the past several years as a member of the Commerce Committee Aviation Subcommittee.

Among other things, Senator HUTCHISON's bill would make pre-employment criminal background checks mandatory for all baggage screeners at airports, not just those who have significant gaps in their employment histories. It would require screeners to undergo extensive training requirements, since U.S. training standards fall far short of European standards. The legislation would also seek tighter enforcement against unauthorized access to airport secure areas.

I cannot overemphasize the importance of adequate training and competency checks for the folks who check airline baggage for weapons and bombs. The turnover rate among this workforce is as high as 400 percent at one of the busiest airports in the country. The work is hard, and the pay is low. Obviously, this legislation does not establish minimum pay for security screeners. By asking their employers to invest more substantially in training, however, we hope that they will also work to ensure a more stable and competent workforce.

Several aviation security experts appeared before the Aviation Subcommittee at a hearing last week. They raised additional areas of concern that I expect to address as this bill proceeds through the legislative process. For instance, government and industry officials alike agree that the list of "disqualifying" crimes that are uncovered in background checks needs to be expanded. Most of us find it surprising that an individual convicted of assault with a deadly weapon, burglary, larceny, or possession of drugs would not be disqualified from employment as an airport baggage screener.

Fortunately, this bill is not drafted in response to loss of life resulting from a terrorist incident. Even so, it is clear that even our most elementary security safeguards may be inadequate, as evidenced by the loaded gun that a passenger recently discovered in an airplane lavatory during flight.

I look forward to working with Senator HUTCHISON, as well as experts in both government and industry circles, to make sure that any legislative proposal targets resources in the most effective manner. By and large, security at U.S. airports is good, and airport and airline efforts clearly have a deterrent effect. What is also clear, however, is that we cannot relax our efforts as airline travel grows, and weapons technologies become more sophisticated.

"EXXON VALDEZ" OIL SPILL

Mr. BINGAMAN. Mr. President, the Senate passed S. 711, calendar No. 235, a bill to allow for the investment of joint Federal and State funds from the civil settlement of damages from the *Exxon Valdez* oil spill, on November 19 last year, in the last hours of the First Session.

The bill states that moneys in the settlement fund are eligible for the new investment authority so long as they are allocated in a manner identified in the bill. Specifically, S. 711 provides that \$55 million of the funds remaining on October 1, 2002 shall be allocated for habitat protection programs.

The accompanying report, S. Rept. 106-124, contains a provision in the section-by-section analysis, subsection 1(e), stating that, with respect to the \$55 million for habitat protection programs, "[a]dditionally, any funds needed for the administration of the Trust

will also be deducted from these monies." I was surprised to see this provision in the report because I do not believe that it reflects the committee's intent with respect to the bill.

Mr. MURKOWSKI. I think the committee did speak clearly in the actual legislative language of the bill, which requires that the new investment authority be allocated "consistent with the resolution of the Trustees adopted March 1, 1999 concerning the Restoration Reserve." Among other things, this resolution separates the remaining funds into two distinct "pots" of money: a \$55 million pot which can be used for habitat acquisition; and a \$115 million "pot" that will be used for research and monitoring activities.

As the Trustees have explained the resolution to me, the cost of administration for habitat acquisition will come from the \$55 million and the cost of administration for the monitoring and research will come from the \$115 million. Therefore, I am confident that the actual legislative language of the bill is clear and that this was the committee's intent. This provision was very important to me in drafting this bill because I have always been concerned about the tens-of-millions of dollars the Trustees have spent on administration of the funds.

We prepared a statement to clarify this matter last November. It should have appeared in the RECORD at the point where the bill was passed (S15162-S15163). Regrettably, the statement was mislaid and did not appear where it should have.

THE VERY BAD DEBT BOXSCORE

Mr. HELMS. Mr. President, at the close of business yesterday, Monday, April 10, 2000, the Federal debt stood at \$5,761,021,041,671.35 (Five trillion, seven hundred sixty-one billion, twenty-one million, forty-one thousand, six hundred seventy-one dollars and thirty-five cents).

Five years ago, April 10, 1995, the Federal debt stood at \$4,869,423,000,000 (Four trillion, eight hundred sixty-nine billion, four hundred twenty-three million).

Ten years ago, April 10, 1990, the Federal debt stood at \$3,083,479,000,000 (Three trillion, eighty-three billion, four hundred seventy-nine million).

Fifteen years ago, April 10, 1985, the Federal debt stood at \$1,729,371,000,000 (One trillion, seven hundred twenty-nine billion, three hundred seventy-one million).

Twenty-five years ago, April 10, 1975, the Federal debt stood at \$510,599,000,000 (Five hundred ten billion, five hundred ninety-nine million) which reflects a debt increase of more than \$5 trillion—\$5,250,422,041,671.35 (Five trillion, two hundred fifty billion, four hundred twenty-two million, forty-one thousand, six hundred seventy-one dollars and thirty-five cents) during the past 25 years.

ADDITIONAL STATEMENTS

IN RECOGNITION OF EDGAR A. SCRIBNER

• Mr. LEVIN. Mr. President, I rise today to pay tribute to a friend of mine who is also a friend to the working men and women of Michigan, Edgar A. Scribner. Ed recently retired from his position as President of the Metropolitan Detroit AFL-CIO.

Ed Scribner began his working career with the Detroit Free Press in 1950, a career which was interrupted from 1952-1954 when he served his country in Korea with the United States Army. He has always been an active supporter of the rights of workers, and was elected Vice President of Teamster Local Union #372 in 1962. He also served his local as Trustee and President, and was selected for additional leadership positions with Michigan Teamsters Joint Council #43. In 1988, he was first elected President of the Metropolitan Detroit AFL-CIO, a position he has held until this year.

Ed's contribution to community life has truly known no bounds. He has worked tirelessly on behalf of numerous charities and took a leadership role on behalf of United Community Services, metro Detroit's Torch Drive agency. In 1992, duty called Ed in a new direction when he was elected to the Board of Governors of Wayne State University, helping one of the nation's leading urban research universities find new ways to serve metropolitan Detroit.

Through it all, as a labor leader, a humanitarian, and an education leader, Ed's calling card has been his sincerity. Those who know him have come to appreciate the genuine affection he holds for people. While he's never been reluctant to take a stand concerning the big issues of his day, Ed has never forgotten that in the end it's all about people and making their lives better.

Caring about people has been a way of life for Ed Scribner, not just a job. So I have no doubt that even in his retirement, Ed will continue to serve his community in many ways. I am sure that his children, and especially his grandchildren, will keep him at least as busy as his commitments to the many non-profit and educational institutions with which he is currently involved. And I also know that the men and women of the AFL-CIO can count on Ed to continue to stand with them in their ongoing efforts on behalf of the working people of our nation.

Mr. President, I know my colleagues will join me in extending congratulations and best wishes to Ed Scribner, President of the Metropolitan Detroit AFL-CIO, on the occasion of his retirement. •

RECOGNITION OF FRANKLIN MIDDLE SCHOOL PRINCIPAL RICK OTTO

• Mr. GORTON. Mr. President, for the past seven years, the children at