

As a result of that e-mail, Meijer, which does not sell guns, but does sell ammunition, hunting licenses and other supplies, implemented a gun safety campaign at all of their stores. Sporting-good employees now wear buttons reading, "Is your home gun safe? Trigger lock 'em" and trigger locks are displayed prominently at the sporting-goods counter. In addition, Meijer reduced the price of trigger locking devices to encourage more purchases.

I am pleased that Joe Yax took this initiative, and I think he and Meijer should be commended for their efforts. Corporate responsibility is a necessity if we are going to reduce gun violence. Nevertheless, while Mr. Yax did what he could to improve gun safety, it is not enough. It's time for Congress to follow the lead of Mr. Yax and act to make sure our own children—America's children—are safer.

MEDICARE LOCKBOX

Mr. ASHCROFT. Mr. President, I am pleased to speak for a few moments to call attention and applaud the actions of the House of Representatives this week in taking a fundamentally important step toward protecting both the Medicare and Social Security programs.

I want all Americans to know that the full House passed Medicare Lockbox legislation—H.R. 3859, sponsored by Representative WALLY HERGER—by an overwhelming 420-2 margin. What months ago some inside the Beltway said was impossible has happened—one chamber of Congress has spoken in an almost unanimous voice to protect the Medicare and Social Security surpluses.

For decades, Congress and the President have used Social Security and Medicare surpluses to finance additional government deficits. Last year, for the first time since 1957, Congress balanced the budget without spending a penny of the Social Security surplus.

When Congress accomplished this important goal, I immediately set my sights on a higher goal—that is, to protect the Medicare Part A surplus in the same manner. So on November 18, 1999, I introduced S. 1962, the Social Security and Medicare Safe Deposit Box Act. The bill the House passed yesterday is very similar to my legislation, and I am encouraged about the prospects of passing the Medicare Lockbox in the Senate and seeing it signed into law.

We need to ensure that the payroll taxes Americans contribute to pay for Social Security and Medicare are used solely to pay Social Security and Medicare benefits. Any surpluses in these accounts should be used to reduce publicly-held debt. It is wrong for Washington to spend this money on additional government programs or to finance additional government deficits.

The Medicare lockbox will wall off the surpluses in the Social Security

and Medicare Part A Trust Funds, barring Congress from even considering a budget that used Social Security or Medicare surpluses to finance deficits in the rest of the government; only a three-fifth vote in the Senate and a majority in the House could override the new rule.

It will impose discipline and clarity on the spending practices in Washington. If Congress or the President wants to spend Medicare Part A or Social Security surpluses, Congress will need to have a separate vote to suspend the Lockbox protections in order to do so.

Not only have nearly all Republicans and Democrats in the House endorsed the Lockbox concept; Vice President AL GORE announced several weeks ago that he, too, supports erecting a wall of protection around the Medicare surplus. His support is welcome, and his assistance in helping to pass this measure is eagerly anticipated.

I urge the leadership on both sides of the aisle to agree to call up and pass the Medicare Lockbox. By doing this, we will send the powerful message that protecting both Medicare and Social Security is our highest priority.

It is essential that we make this change. Social Security is scheduled to go bankrupt by 2037. Medicare is projected to become insolvent even sooner, in 2023. It is vitally important that we ensure that the government not spend monies dedicated for the trust funds that sustain these essential programs.

While protecting the Medicare surplus seemed to be an unattainable goal just a few short years ago, this goal is now within our reach. In addition to funding the government for fiscal year 2000 without spending a penny out of the Social Security trust fund, CBO's new projections will demonstrate that we will have enough revenue available to protect the \$22 billion Part A Medicare surplus as well.

It is imperative that we limit spending this year so that we do not dip into the Medicare surplus in FY 2001 and in years to come.

Both Medicare and Social Security are funded out of payroll taxes specifically delineated for their respective purposes, and are supposed to be reserved for those purposes. If there are surpluses in these accounts, if these accounts take in more money than is necessary for their stated purposes in a specific year, then that money should not suddenly be available for general government spending.

Any and all surpluses in those two accounts should be reserved for their stated purpose, or be used to help shore up those accounts. The Medicare Lockbox promotes honest accounting, and requires the government to use funds for their advertised purposes.

Lockboxing Social Security and Medicare surpluses is an essential first step in securing the long term financial solvency of Medicare and Social Security.

The Medicare Lockbox will change the way business is done in Washington. I commend the House and Congressman HERGER for taking the first step in protecting the Medicare Part A trust fund.

The House bill is not perfect, but it will protect all of the Medicare Part A and Social Security trust funds. It also has the support of 420 members of the House of Representatives. The overwhelming support for the Medicare lockbox in the House should send a powerful signal to the Senate to take up and pass this bill.

Passing this law will be the next step on our journey to secure the long term solvency of Social Security and Medicare.

THE VERY BAD DEBT BOXSCORE

Mr. HELMS. Mr. President, at the close of business yesterday, Wednesday, June 21, 2000, the Federal debt stood at \$5,653,964,505,301.84 (Five trillion, six hundred fifty-three billion, nine hundred sixty-four million, five hundred five thousand, three hundred one dollars and eighty-four cents).

One year ago, June 21, 1999, the Federal debt stood at \$5,589,358,000,000 (Five trillion, five hundred eighty-nine billion, three hundred fifty-eight million).

Five years ago, June 21, 1995, the Federal debt stood at \$4,898,069,000,000 (Four trillion, eight hundred ninety-eight billion, sixty-nine million).

Ten years ago, June 21, 1990, the Federal debt stood at \$3,177,422,000,000 (Three trillion, one hundred seventy-seven billion, four hundred twenty-two million).

Fifteen years ago, June 21, 1985, the Federal debt stood at \$1,761,470,000,000 (One trillion, seven hundred sixty-one billion, four hundred seventy million) which reflects a debt increase of almost \$4 trillion—\$3,892,494,505,301.84 (Three trillion, eight hundred ninety-two billion, four hundred ninety-four million, five hundred five thousand, three hundred one dollars and eighty-four cents) during the past 15 years.

CAMPAIGN FINANCE TASK FORCE CHIEF PROSECUTOR INVESTIGATES VICE PRESIDENT GORE REGARDING CAMPAIGN CONTRIBUTIONS

Mr. SESSIONS. Mr. President, I want to share some thoughts tonight about a major development concerning the investigation involving the financing of the Vice President's 1996 reelection campaign. First, however, I would like to say that this matter should have been over some time ago, but the Attorney General declined to appoint an Independent Counsel. The Justice Department attorneys who were involved in the investigation of the campaign financing matter have recently testified before the Subcommittee of the Judiciary Committee, which is chaired by Senator SPECTER and of which I am a