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Senate

The Senate met at 9:30 a.m. and was called to order by the Honorable BOB CASEY, Jr., a Senator from the State of Pennsylvania.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Today's prayer will be offered by Rabbi Milton Balkany, of New York.

PRAYER

The guest Chaplain offered the following prayer:

Let us pray.

Our Father in Heaven, snowflakes windswept to sky-piercing peaks do more than cloak mountaintops in their fine wintry vestments. Their varied crystalline structures speak of how You, the Master Artist, have sculpted our world to exemplify the beauty of contrast. Heartfelt differences are the hallmark of our times. O Lord, help us realize that division need not be the lyric of sorrow but the signature of brotherhood.

In the pursuit of truth and righteousness, disputes can compose verses of hard-won wisdom. Consider the rent of rock running through the Grand Canyon. It is a break, a fissure, a divide miles deep and, yet, is there a sight more majestic? Unity is not sameness, nor is it bland agreement. Only when Moses parted the waters was a nation set free.

We pray, O God, give us strength to grapple for the great good, defend the passion of our convictions, and still retain the devotion of brothers and sisters. Bless all of us in this hallowed hall of lawmaking with clarity of vision so that we may gaze upon the heights of our shared destiny. Amen.

PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

The Honorable BOB CASEY, Jr., led the Pledge of Allegiance, as follows:

I pledge allegiance to the Flag of the United States of America, and to the Republic for which it stands, one nation under God, indivisible, with liberty and justice for all.

APPOINTMENT OF ACTING PRESIDENT PRO TEMPORE

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will please read a communication to the Senate from the President pro tempore (Mr. BYRD).

The legislative clerk read the following letter:

U.S. SENATE,
PRESIDENT PRO TEMPORE,
Washington, DC, March 22, 2007.

To the Senate:

Under the provisions of rule I, paragraph 3, of the Standing Rules of the Senate, I hereby appoint the Honorable BOB CASEY, Jr., a Senator from the State of Pennsylvania, to perform the duties of the Chair.

ROBERT C. BYRD,
President pro tempore.

Mr. CASEY thereupon assumed the chair as Acting President pro tempore.

RECOGNITION OF THE MAJORITY LEADER

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. The majority leader is recognized.

SCHEDULE

Mr. REID. Mr. President, the Senate will immediately resume consideration of the budget resolution. There are 25 hours of debate time left. The two managers have been doing an exemplary job of managing this bill. We still have a long way to go.

As I mentioned, 25 hours remain. We will have to see how we get to tomorrow morning. As I indicated a couple of days ago, unless the managers can agree on yielding back some time, we will have to stay in all night tonight and be in a position to start voting on the so-called vote-a-rama tomorrow.

We have a number of amendments pending. I am told that we have six or seven pending now. The managers will be making a decision about which amendments will be voted on between 11:30 and about 12:45, when we can pick up another vote—around 12:45 or 1 o'clock. We anticipate other votes from 4 to 6. We may be able to back that off. As soon as the Appropriations Committee completes its work, we can start voting. So from 4 to 6—or maybe it can be 3 or 3:30 to 6.

We have a lot of committee meetings going on today all over the Senate office buildings. We are going to do our best to keep disruptions to a minimum. We cannot guarantee the meetings will not have to be interrupted. I have indicated to the Republican leader that we would not vote beyond 6 p.m. today. That may have to change. We will see if we have to come back after 8 o'clock to do what we can to clear off some of these votes. I would rather not do that, but we will discuss that with the managers and my distinguished counterpart, Senator MCCONNELL.

I suggest the absence of a quorum.

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. The clerk will call the roll.

The legislative clerk proceeded to call the roll.

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

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. Without objection, it is so ordered.

RESERVATION OF LEADER TIME

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. Under the previous order, leadership time is reserved.

CONGRESSIONAL BUDGET FOR THE UNITED STATES GOVERNMENT FOR FISCAL YEAR 2008

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. Under the previous order, the Senate will resume consideration of S. Con. Res. 21, which the clerk will report.

The legislative clerk read as follows:

A concurrent resolution (S. Con. Res. 21) setting forth the congressional budget for

● This "bullet" symbol identifies statements or insertions which are not spoken by a Member of the Senate on the floor.

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the United States Government for fiscal year 2008 and including the appropriate budgetary levels for fiscal years 2007 and 2009 through 2012.

Pending:

DeMint amendment No. 489, to establish a reserve fund for Social Security reform.

Allard amendment No. 491, to pay down the Federal debt and eliminate Government waste by reducing spending on programs rated ineffective by the Program Assessment Rating Tool.

Grassley-Dorgan amendment No. 464, to limit farm payments to $250,000 per person per year and apply the savings to renewable energy/rural development, conservation, and nutrition.

Grassley amendment No. 502, to ensure the appropriate use of funds provided for the Smithsonian Institution.

Baucus-Rockefeller amendment No. 504, to affirm the Senate's commitment to the reauthorization of the State Children's Health Insurance Program.

Cornyn amendment No. 511, to provide a deficit-neutral reserve fund for the reauthorization of the State Children's Health Insurance Program (SCHIP) that will cover kids first.

Hutchison amendment No. 517, to provide tax equity for citizens of States which do not have a State income tax by providing for a permanent extension of the State and local sales tax deduction from Federal income taxes, now scheduled to expire at the end of 2007.

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. The Senator from Texas is recognized.

AMENDMENT NO. 525

Mr. CORNYN. Mr. President, I send an amendment to the desk.

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. Without objection, the pending amendment is set aside.

The clerk will report.

The legislative clerk read as follows:

The Senator from Texas [Mr. CORNYN] for himself and Mr. GREGG, proposes an amendment numbered 525.

Mr. CORNYN. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that reading of the amendment be dispensed with.

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. Without objection, it is so ordered.

The amendment is as follows:

(Purpose: To provide reconciliation instructions to the Committee on Finance to reform entitlement programs, to reduce the national debt and to improve the standard of living for our children and grandchildren)

On page 4, line 6, decrease the amount by $2,047,000,000.

On page 4, line 7, decrease the amount by $4,291,000,000.

On page 4, line 8, decrease the amount by $6,949,000,000.

On page 4, line 9, decrease the amount by $9,936,000,000.

On page 4, line 10, decrease the amount by $13,270,000,000.

On page 4, line 15, decrease the amount by $2,047,000,000.

On page 4, line 16, decrease the amount by $4,291,000,000.

On page 4, line 17, decrease the amount by $6,949,000,000.

On page 4, line 18, decrease the amount by $9,936,000,000.

On page 4, line 19, decrease the amount by $13,270,000,000.

On page 4, line 24, decrease the amount by $2,047,000,000.

On page 4, line 25, decrease the amount by $4,291,000,000.

On page 5, line 1, decrease the amount by $6,949,000,000.

On page 5, line 2, decrease the amount by $9,936,000,000.

On page 5, line 3, decrease the amount by $13,270,000,000.

On page 5, line 7, decrease the amount by $2,047,000,000.

On page 5, line 8, decrease the amount by $6,339,000,000.

On page 5, line 9, decrease the amount by $13,288,000,000.

On page 5, line 10, decrease the amount by $23,224,000,000.

On page 5, line 11, decrease the amount by $36,494,000,000.

On page 5, line 15, decrease the amount by $2,047,000,000.

On page 5, line 16, decrease the amount by $6,339,000,000.

On page 5, line 17, decrease the amount by $13,288,000,000.

On page 5, line 18, decrease the amount by $23,224,000,000.

On page 5, line 19, decrease the amount by $36,494,000,000.

On page 19, line 12, decrease the amount by $2,000,000,000.

On page 19, line 13, decrease the amount by $2,000,000,000.

On page 19, line 16, decrease the amount by $4,100,000,000.

On page 19, line 17, decrease the amount by $4,100,000,000.

On page 19, line 20, decrease the amount by $6,500,000,000.

On page 19, line 21, decrease the amount by $6,500,000,000.

On page 19, line 24, decrease the amount by $9,100,000,000.

On page 19, line 25, decrease the amount by $9,100,000,000.

On page 20, line 3, decrease the amount by $11,900,000,000.

On page 20, line 4, decrease the amount by $11,900,000,000.

On page 25, line 12, decrease the amount by $47,000,000.

On page 25, line 13, decrease the amount by $47,000,000.

On page 25, line 16, decrease the amount by $191,000,000.

On page 25, line 17, decrease the amount by $191,000,000.

On page 25, line 20, decrease the amount by $449,000,000.

On page 25, line 21, decrease the amount by $449,000,000.

On page 25, line 24, decrease the amount by $836,000,000.

On page 25, line 25, decrease the amount by $836,000,000.

On page 26, line 3, decrease the amount by $1,370,000,000.

On page 26, line 4, decrease the amount by $1,370,000,000.

Mr. CORNYN. Mr. President, this amendment is one that I offered during the Budget Committee's deliberations. Unfortunately, the majority did not support this important amendment that reduces our Nation's debt, the bill that we will pass on to our children and grandchildren.

My amendment reduces the debt by instructing the Senate Finance Committee to find approximately $34 billion in savings over the next 5 years, and this is out of almost a $3 trillion budget.

Two years ago, Congress made some progress in getting a handle on mandatory, or entitlement, spending by passing the Deficit Reduction Act, using the reconciliation process, I believe, for the first time since about 1997.

The Deficit Reduction Act reduced the rate of growth in spending. I will say that again because it is important. It reduced the rate of growth of spending—it did not represent an actual cut in the way most Americans would think about a cut—by nearly $100 billion over the next decade. It was a very good first step in getting our fiscal house in order but, clearly, more needs to be done.

Today, the Federal budget is already heavily weighted toward entitlement spending, such as Medicare, Medicaid, and Social Security, which takes up some two-thirds of all Federal spending, which is literally on autopilot because it grows at roughly 8 percent a year. As people live longer—as we hope we will continue to do—and the baby boom generation starts to retire, entitlements will continue to eat up a larger share of our budget and we will consume more of the economy.

In the most recent long-term projections prepared by the Congressional Budget Office, CBO, outlays for Social Security, Medicare, and Medicaid combined are projected to increase to 10.5 percent of our GDP by 2015—an increase of about 2 percentage points of GDP in less than a decade. By 2030, according to the CBO, outlays for those three programs will reach about 15 percent of GDP.

The chairman of the Senate Budget Committee held a number of hearings on this fiscal timebomb earlier this year. Our Committee has received testimony from the Office of Management and Budget, the Treasury Secretary, the General Accounting Office, the Comptroller, Chairman of the Federal Reserve, and a number of think-tank representatives, and all, without regard to partisan stripe or affiliation, have highlighted the need for us to get a handle on our mandatory budget or entitlement spending.

The chairman of the Federal Reserve noted that these rising entitlement obligations will put enormous pressure on the Federal budget in the coming years.

In fact, if we do nothing over the next 30 years, we would not have a dime to pay for anything except for four areas: Social Security, Medicare, Medicaid, and part of the interest on the debt.

We will not have the resources for other important priorities, including fighting the global war on terror, securing our borders, veterans health care, and education.

As we all know, the President's budget includes a number of proposals to slow down the rate of growth in entitlement spending. I think this is a good place for the Senate Finance Committee to look at reducing the debt.

If the majority has ideas that will also help reduce the debt, my amendment gives them the opportunity to put it in action because it is an instruction to the Finance Committee to

come up with a way, in their wisdom, that they believe they can accomplish this important goal.

Last year, I offered a similar amendment on the floor. Some on the other side noted how my amendment may be a little unpopular back home. That is what happens when you go on a budget. We have been on a binge, with no limitation on spending, and it is time for the Federal Government, similar to the American family, to get on a budget. No one likes budgets, but it is the responsible thing for us to do.

I don't think it is unreasonable for us to find savings in the amount of $34 billion out of the growth of entitlement spending over the next 5 years given that under the budget during that period of time, the Federal Government will spend some $15 trillion. In other words, we are looking for $34 billion in savings over the same period of time the Federal Government will spend $15 trillion.

As Chairman Bernanke said in his written testimony to our committee:

> Addressing the country's fiscal problems will take persistence and a willingness to make difficult choices.

The Comptroller General of the United States, in his written testimony to the Budget Committee, said:

> We owe it to our country, children and grandchildren to address our fiscal and other key sustainability challenges.

As I said, this is not a partisan issue, or certainly should not be. Our distinguished chairman of the Budget Committee has been eloquent on this subject. We see on this chart, he said on February 7, 2007:

> I have said I am prepared to get savings out of long-term entitlement programs.

Unfortunately, the number reflected at the bottom of this chart is the number of savings from entitlement programs in the budget he has proposed. It is a big fat goose egg. I think we can do better.

I heard time and time again Members on a bipartisan basis say this is one area where we ought to work together to try to solve this problem for our children and grandchildren so we don't pass our debt to them for what we are spending today in these entitlement programs. But I ask: If not us, then who? And if not now, then when?

I yield the floor.

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. The Senator from North Dakota.

Mr. CONRAD. Mr. President, first of all, the chart by the Senator is factually wrong. When he puts up a zero, he is not talking about my budget because my budget has $15 billion in savings out of Medicare. So that chart, as colorful as it is, is just factually inaccurate.

No. 2, if we look at what the Senator is proposing, the majority of the Medicare savings that are in the President's budget that Senator CORNYN is picking up in his proposal are generated by either freezing or cutting market basket updates for hospitals, for nursing homes, for rehabilitation facilities, for hospice, for home health, and ambulance services in every year over the next 10 years.

MedPAC, which makes recommendations on market basket updates 1 year at a time, does not concur with many of the proposed cuts in 2008, much less the cuts over the next 10 years. For example, given the negative margins many hospitals are facing, MedPAC which is bipartisan, nonpartisan—has recommended a full market basket update in 2008 for inpatient and outpatient hospitals.

In many cases, over time, these across-the-board cuts proposed by Senator CORNYN will hurt seniors' access to health care.

There is no question about us having a serious problem with respect to the long-term entitlement challenges and what is the right way to deal with it. Frankly, I don't think any budget resolution is the place to deal with the long-term entitlement challenge. The budget resolution is only for 5 years. The contribution the budget resolution can make is to achieve balance within that period, budget balance within that period, but I believe the long-term challenges, which are challenges of 15, 20, 25 years, can only be resolved by a bipartisan working group or commission, equally represented by Democrats and Republicans, to come back to Congress with a proposal to deal not only with Medicare but Medicaid and Social Security and the other long-term fiscal imbalances we have. Senator GREGG and I have such a proposal. I think that is the right way to address these long-term problems.

We all acknowledge we are on a course that absolutely is unsustainable. As chairman of the Budget Committee, I have organized hearing after hearing after hearing to put a focus on precisely that problem. We all know in this country that we are spending far more on health care than any other country. Mr. President, 16 percent of our gross domestic product is going for health care. The next largest spender in comparison is at 11 percent of gross domestic product. That difference—the difference between 11 percent of gross domestic product and 16 percent—is $800 billion a year—a year.

To put the President's Medicare and Medicaid cuts and the cuts proposed by this amendment in perspective, consider that his budget would cut those programs by $270 billion over the period from 2008 to 2017. Those savings would be more than wiped out by the $2 trillion in tax cuts proposed by the President over that same period. They talk about helping us get back on some kind of fiscal path, but the math doesn't work. The math doesn't come close to working. They would have savings from Medicare and Medicaid of $270 billion over that 10-year period, but that is totally dwarfed by the cost of their tax cuts over that same period.

I do not believe this amendment merits our support. I do not believe this is the right policy. I do not believe cutting the reimbursement for hospitals, for nursing homes, for rehabilitation facilities, for hospice, for home health, and ambulance services is the right way to proceed.

I do believe we need separately, apart from a budget resolution, to deal with the long-term entitlement challenges, either through the kind of working group Senator GREGG and I have proposed or through a bipartisan commission. I don't think a budget resolution that will be largely supported just on one side of the aisle is the appropriate place to deal with these long-term challenges.

Mr. President, what is the time remaining?

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. The proponent of the amendment has 54 minutes remaining. The majority manager has 54 minutes remaining.

Mr. CONRAD. I yield the floor.

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. The Senator from New Hampshire.

Mr. GREGG. Mr. President, here is the problem. The budget before us does absolutely nothing in the area of addressing entitlement reform and savings and does a significant amount of spending money, a significant amount of tax increases. It raises the tax burden of the American people from its historic level 18.2 percent up to 20 percent. It raises taxes by hundreds of billions of dollars. It raises spending by tens of billions of dollars but does not address the most fundamental issue we face as a nation, which is the pending financial meltdown of this country as a result of the baby boom generation retiring, and our children cannot afford the costs.

The Senator from Texas is right, there are zero savings on the mandatory side of this budget. When the chairman gets up and says there is $15 billion of savings, he forgot to finish the sentence. There is $30 billion of spending. So actually there is a net loss on the entitlement side for the proposed budget. That has been adjusted by the amendment of Senator BAUCUS, so it is now basically a wash where we have no savings, $15 billion of savings, $15 billion of new spending in entitlement programs. So there is a zero on that account.

What is being proposed by the President is entirely reasonable. What is being proposed by Senator CORNYN is reasonable. He suggests going forward we should accurately reflect the reimbursement rate for hospitals and for providers—not doctors in this instance but for providers. It doesn't affect beneficiaries. But to call this a freeze or a cut is totally disingenuous because it is neither. Spending is going to increase dramatically in the entitlement accounts, especially in Medicare, by trillions of dollars. Only in the nomenclature of the Democratic side of the aisle is a trillion dollars of increase called a cut when it is reduced from trillions to trillions less .2 percent,

two-tenths—two-hundredths of 1 percent.

That being said, it is not even a freeze or reduction from the concept of the way it is structured. What is being proposed in the Cornyn amendment, which is reflective of the President's original proposal, which is the reimbursement rate, which is now inflated by 1.5 percent because of savings and technological advances, so the reimbursement rate is about 1.2 percent more than it should be to accurately reflect the fair reimbursement rate because the reimbursement rate is inflated by savings and benefits which providers get through cost savings and technological advantages—what is being proposed by the Cornyn amendment is we take half that inflated payment—just half of it—and put it back into making the system more solvent so our kids can afford the system and we will have a solvent system for our seniors.

That is what this is about: taking half of that inflated payment, which is about a six-tenths of 1 percent adjustment. Yes, it translates into big dollars, but as a practical matter, it is a fair adjustment, and we save it so that our kids can benefit from it by having a more affordable system and our seniors can benefit from it.

The President's program does not affect senior citizens. It affects providers. Only the wealthiest seniors citizens will be impacted by the President's program, and we will get to that amendment next, which will be the Part D premium and how that should be reimbursed by wealthy seniors.

This is a reasonable amendment. It is regrettable it wasn't included in this budget. The Senator said this budget is only going to be passed by the other side. Quite honestly, if the Senator had accepted this amendment and the Ensign amendment which will be next, which would make the Part D premium properly reimbursed, and had taken the Kyl amendment yesterday, he would have a bipartisan budget. He would have a bipartisan budget. But he wants to stick to the tax-and-spend, do-nothing-on-entitlements budget he brought to the floor. He doesn't have a bipartisan budget. We are trying to help him out. We are trying to make it bipartisan, more reasonable and, most importantly, helping out our kids and people who are going to retire by making the Medicare system more solvent.

This amendment, if it is adopted, and the next one—if those two amendments are adopted, they will address the out-year insolvency of the Medicare trust fund, which is now about $32 billion, and will reduce that insolvency between 25 percent and 35 percent. That is huge and is good news. It would be very good news if we do it. We should do it. If we don't do it, in 10, 15 years, we will have to pay the piper. The system will melt down, our kids will be stuck with the bills, and their lifestyles will be impacted in a very negative way.

Why don't we get a time agreement on this amendment so we can go to the next amendment and move on?

Mr. CONRAD. Mr. President, I don't think we are quite prepared to do that because we have others who are going to want to speak. But I think we can deal with this pretty expeditiously and come pretty close to the tentative schedule to which we agreed.

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. The Senator from North Dakota.

Mr. CONRAD. Mr. President, much of what the Senator has just said, frankly, I agree with. The truth is, we are on a completely unsustainable course. It must be dealt with. The question is how to best deal with it.

With respect to the amendment of the Senator from Texas, I got a letter from 43 of our colleagues in the Senate, including 11 Republicans, on this very subject. They said: Do not cut hospital reimbursement.

In my part of the country, hospitals are dealing with negative margins. They are losing money. If this amendment were to go forward, unfortunately, it would be devastating to hospitals, to nursing homes, to hospice care, to ambulance services, especially in the rural parts of our country, and virtually every State has rural parts.

The MedPAC statistics are very clear on this question. Yes, there are some hospitals that are enjoying positive margins. They tend to be urban hospitals that have much higher rates of reimbursement under Medicare than do rural hospitals. Let me give an example.

In my State of North Dakota, at Mercy Hospital in Devils Lake, ND, if they are treating somebody who had a heart attack, they get one-half the reimbursement of Our Lady of Mercy Hospital in New York City—one-half as much. Their costs aren't half as much, but their reimbursement is half as much. By the way, those hospitals, many of them in my State—I have over 40—are experiencing negative margins. They are losing money.

The Senator says this doesn't represent a cut. He is right in one sense. It will be more money. But in relationship to the expense, it will be less. That is the way in which it represents a cut. He is absolutely correct it will be more dollars the next year than the year before, but in relationship to the expenses, which are going up more rapidly in health care, as we all know, than the underlying rate of inflation, guess what. It will be less. That is why I use the term ''a cut.''

To say the budget before us doesn't do anything about these matters is not true.

First of all, we have $15 billion of Medicare savings in the underlying budget resolution. That is No. 1.

No. 2, we have a reserve fund called the Health Information Technology Reserve Fund. All of us know the expansion of information technology in health could lead to very significant savings. In 2005, only 15 to 20 percent of physicians' offices and 20 to 25 percent of hospitals had electronic medical records systems. According to estimates by a RAND study from 2005, our Nation's health care system could save more than $81 billion annually if we had widespread implementation of electronic medical records—$81 billion a year. That totally dwarfs the savings of the amendment of the Senator from Texas.

Mr. President, I know the Senator from Ohio is here and wishes to respond. I yield 5 minutes to the Senator from Ohio.

Mr. BROWN. Mr. President, I thank my friend, the Senator from North Dakota, for his terrific work on this budget, and I rise to oppose the Ensign amendment.

Medicare is a social contract. Individuals pay into the program during their working years, and they receive health coverage when they retire. One good way to undermine universal support, to undermine support for the program is to arbitrarily make part of the Medicare population pay a significantly higher price for the same product. Ultimately, this will drive higher income individuals out of the program to purchase their own coverage. When that begins to occur, working individuals will begin to wonder why they are paying Medicare taxes when Medicare coverage may or may not be worth their while on retirement.

Medicare, I repeat, is a social contract. Efforts to undermine it, such as this one, will fail.

It is interesting that there are Members of this body who want to raise taxes on Medicare beneficiaries while at the same time cut taxes for Donald Trump. I repeat: Raise taxes for Medicare beneficiaries but cut taxes on some of the wealthiest individuals in our country. If you want to undermine Medicare, create winners and losers among its enrollees, then that is the way to do it.

There is something else at work here, though. I came to the House of Representatives 14 years ago, and almost immediately, I saw the hostility many Members of this body and that body felt toward Medicare. In 1995, when the Republicans took control of the House of Representatives, one of the first things they did—it was their first opportunity to go after Medicare—they proposed tens of billions of dollars in cuts in Medicare in order to pay for their tax cuts for the wealthiest people. The same kind of thing here—cut Medicare to pay for tax cuts on the wealthiest people in our country. That is the kind of hostility they had. Every time they had a chance, once they were in the majority, they tried to do it.

The Speaker of the House in those days said that under his plan, Medicare would wither on the vine. So they began attempts to privatize Medicare, to shift to fee-for-service. Traditional Medicare, which had served this country well—at that point for three decades, now for four decades—they wanted to take traditional Medicare and to

privatize it and push some Medicare beneficiaries out of traditional Medicare into Medicare managed care. The Government pays more for Medicare managed care, and beneficiaries and taxpayers get less for those dollars. But it is all part of their efforts to undermine Medicare.

Maybe we should go back further than 10 years ago or 14 years ago and go back to 1965 when Medicare was created. In this body, overwhelming numbers of Republicans opposed Medicare, the creation of it. In this body and across the hall, in the House of Representatives, a huge, overwhelming majority of Republicans opposed the creation of Medicare then. They were hostile to the concept of universal coverage, of making sure every elderly person in this country had the opportunity to enroll in Medicare. They are hostile to it today, and they were hostile to it in 1995, when Speaker Gingrich said Medicare would wither on the vine. They began the attempts to cut Medicare on the one hand and to do further damage by privatizing it on the other.

We are continuing to see this assault even now. They say they are for Medicare. They run television ads saying: We would never cut Medicare; we think it is a great program. But when they come to the floor of this body, of this Senate Chamber, over and over, from every different direction, they attack one of the single greatest programs that this Government has ever created and that our people have ever had.

In 1965, half the elderly in this country had no health insurance. Today, after 41½ years of Medicare, almost everybody in our country is covered. If they had their way, they would begin to privatize, they would begin to cut, and Medicare would not be the universal program with the universal, overwhelming support of the people in this country.

If the Senate wants to reflect what the people in this country think, we should overwhelmingly defeat the Ensign amendment because it undercuts what is best about our health care system. It undercuts the universal nature of Medicare, which works for everybody. If you want to preserve Medicare, there are things we can do to fix it, to make some small adjustments. But this amendment is not the way. We should defeat the Ensign amendment.

Mr. GREGG. Mr. President, I have attempted not to respond to the Senator from Ohio because he appears to be stuck in the period of 1960, when, apparently, our position was defined by somebody who was here in 1960. I wasn't here in 1960. I probably won't be here in 2025. In fact, I am absolutely sure I won't be. But that is going to be when this Medicare system goes broke.

What I am concerned about is my children, America's children, and their children being able to afford this system when I retire and the rest of my generation retires and makes it basically unaffordable. The proposals the President has put forward are an attempt to make the system solvent, or at least more solvent. It doesn't bring it into solvency, and there are reasons for that.

The Senator from North Dakota makes a good point: Rural hospitals are not reimbursed correctly under the formula. But that is not the issue which is being raised by the Cornyn amendment. That issue, actually, will be addressed by the Grassley amendment, which I understand is going to be offered to get the reimbursement straight.

What is very obvious is that there is an inflated reimbursement rate occurring within Medicare of about 1.2 percent due to technology advancements and due to savings through efficiencies, which is inuring to the benefit of the system at the expense of the long-term life structure of the system. It is reasonable to take half that benefit—half that benefit—and apply it to make sure the system has more solvency to it.

AMENDMENT NO. 472

Mr. President, I send an amendment to the desk on behalf of Senator ENSIGN, and I ask that it be reported.

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Mr. OBAMA). Without objection, the pending amendment is set aside, and the clerk will report the amendment.

The assistant legislative clerk read as follows:

The Senator from New Hampshire [Mr. GREGG], for Mr. ENSIGN, for himself, Mr. GREGG, and Mr. GRAHAM, proposes an amendment numbered 472.

Mr. GREGG. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the reading of the amendment be dispensed with.

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

The amendment is as follows:

(Purpose: To require wealthy Medicare beneficiaries to pay a greater share of their Medicare Part D premiums)

On page 4, line 6, decrease the amount by $102,000,000.

On page 4, line 7, decrease the amount by $312,000,000.

On page 4, line 8, decrease the amount by $633,000,000.

On page 4, line 9, decrease the amount by $868,000,000.

On page 4, line 10, decrease the amount by $1,113,000,000.

On page 4, line 15, decrease the amount by $102,000,000.

On page 4, line 16, decrease the amount by $312,000,000.

On page 4, line 17, decrease the amount by $633,000,000.

On page 4, line 18, decrease the amount by $868,000,000.

On page 4, line 19, decrease the amount by $1,113,000,000.

On page 4, line 24, decrease the amount by $102,000,000.

On page 4, line 25, decrease the amount by $312,000,000.

On page 5, line 1, decrease the amount by $633,000,000.

On page 5, line 2, decrease the amount by $868,000,000.

On page 5, line 3, decrease the amount by $1,113,000,000.

On page 5, line 7, decrease the amount by $102,000,000.

On page 5, line 8, decrease the amount by $414,000,000.

On page 5, line 9, decrease the amount by $1,048,000,000.

On page 5, line 10, decrease the amount by $1,916,000,000.

On page 5, line 11, decrease the amount by $3,029,000,000.

On page 5, line 15, decrease the amount by $102,000,000.

On page 5, line 16, decrease the amount by $414,000,000.

On page 5, line 17, decrease the amount by $1,048,000,000.

On page 5, line 18, decrease the amount by $1,916,000,000.

On page 5, line 19, decrease the amount by $3,029,000,000.

On page 19, line 12, decrease the amount by $100,000,000.

On page 19, line 13, decrease the amount by $100,000,000.

On page 19, line 16, decrease the amount by $300,000,000.

On page 19, line 17, decrease the amount by $300,000,000.

On page 19, line 20, decrease the amount by $600,000,000.

On page 19, line 21, decrease the amount by $600,000,000.

On page 19, line 24, decrease the amount by $800,000,000.

On page 19, line 25, decrease the amount by $800,000,000.

On page 20, line 3, decrease the amount by $1,000,000,000.

On page 20, line 4, decrease the amount by $1,000,000,000.

On page 25, line 12, decrease the amount by $2,000,000.

On page 25, line 13, decrease the amount by $2,000,000.

On page 25, line 16, decrease the amount by $12,000,000.

On page 25, line 17, decrease the amount by $12,000,000.

On page 25, line 20, decrease the amount by $33,000,000.

On page 25, line 21, decrease the amount by $33,000,000.

On page 25, line 24, decrease the amount by $68,000,000.

On page 25, line 25, decrease the amount by $68,000,000.

On page 26, line 3, decrease the amount by $113,000,000.

On page 26, line 4, decrease the amount by $113,000,000.

Mr. GREGG. Mr. President, the Ensign amendment addresses what the Senator from Ohio started speaking on. He anticipated, I guess, this amendment.

To try to explain the way the Medicare system works today, Part A you pay for, theoretically, with your hospital insurance. Part B, which deals with doctors, you pay for, theoretically, with a premium, but the premium is subsidized to the tune of 75 percent of the cost of the premium. Part D, you don't pay for anything, for all intents and purposes, except for the insurance, to the extent you buy insurance. But the actual coverage that is federally supplied is not paid for. Part D is a drug benefit. This amendment says that high-income individuals, people with incomes over $80,000 individually and $160,000 jointly, should have to pay a fair proportion of the premium of Part D that is now being subsidized by working Americans.

Let me try to put it in context. There is a single woman working in a restaurant in downtown Des Moines or

there is a mother and father working on an assembly line in Poughkeepsie or there is a father working in a garage in New Hampshire. Those individuals, working for a living and trying to make ends meet, trying to do all the things you want to do to make your life better, are paying the cost of the drug insurance for retired Senators and for people who have extraordinary amounts of money—for example, Bill Gates' father. I don't mean to pick on Bill Gates' father, I am sure he is a nice man, but he has enough money to pay for his drug insurance under the Part D Program, as can retired Senators, in most instances. Yet those people are being subsidized by working Americans because we have this system which doesn't require people to pay any portion of the fair cost of their drug insurance. We do it under Part B, we do require high-income people to pay, but under Part D, we don't. Now, with Part B, we don't require them to pay enough, but we at least require them to pay something. Part D, we don't.

So this amendment simply says that in the Part D Program, high-income people, people with incomes over $80,000 and $160,000, should have to pay some of their cost. I find it incredible that the Senator from Ohio opposes that on the grounds of fairness to working Americans. The working Americans are the ones having to pay that cost. It is just incomprehensible to me that the other side of the aisle, which consistently talks in terms of making sure high-income people pay a fair share of the burden of the Federal Government's costs, are not willing to ask those same high-income individuals pay the fair share of the cost of Medicare. And we are not even asking for a fair share, quite honestly.

So that is what the Ensign amendment does. It is a very appropriate amendment, and it would save a significant amount of money over the long term for the Medicare trust fund. I think it is somewhere around $1 trillion. It would actually move the Medicare system toward solvency by $1 trillion over the actuarial life, which is 75 years. In the short term, it is obviously nowhere near that number. But it is a significant effort to try to put in place a good policy, a correct policy, which is that high-income individuals should pay a fairer cost of their drug benefit and at the same time use those funds to make the Medicare system more solvent for seniors who are going to be retiring in the future. It is very reasonable. It only affects 5 percent of seniors, which means 95 percent of seniors are not impacted at all and, thus, it should be done. It should be done now. We shouldn't wait to do it. We should do it now because now this problem is coming at us pretty fast. If we don't get started on it, it is like that old oil filter ad: You can pay me now or pay me later. If we wait until later, this will be extraordinarily expensive. This is one of the things we should do, along with the original Cornyn amendment. We should also do that.

Mr. CONRAD. Mr. President, I actually enjoy listening to my colleague, Senator GREGG, because he is thoughtful and passionate on these matters, and in many ways we are in very close agreement. I know it may not appear that way to people listening, but there are many things the Senator says that are absolutely true, and so that part of his presentation I want to agree with.

It is absolutely the case that we are headed on a course which is unsustainable. It is absolutely the case we cannot continue on the current path. It is absolutely the case that, in my judgment, a policy initiative along the lines of what the Ensign amendment provides is going to have to be part of an ultimate solution. In fact, I voted for such things with respect to Part B in the past. I have supported them publicly. I have campaigned on those things. But I must say, the reality here is this: We all know the budget resolution does certain things and does not do certain other things. The budget resolution, as much as we might want it to, does not determine policy outcomes such as those prescribed in the Ensign amendment or, for that matter, the Cornyn amendment. It simply doesn't have that power.

The budget resolution will give an assignment to the Finance Committee of how much money to raise, of how much money to spend. It does not tell them how to do it. Both the Cornyn amendment and the Ensign amendment seek to do something the budget resolution cannot do. They seek to prescribe, to require the Finance Committee to come up with certain policy outcomes. The Budget Committee does not have that power, it does not have that authority, and it cannot be done through a budget resolution.

Let's be square with people who are listening about what we can do and what we cannot do. The effect of these amendments, the true effect, will not be to do any of the policy prescriptions we talked about here. It will only be to reduce the amount of money for Medicare the Finance Committee has to meet the needs of the American people. That is what these amendments will do.

On the specific policy of the Ensign amendment, I am sympathetic to the basic notion. The problem is the specifics. The devil is in the details. First, as a member of the Finance Committee as well as the Budget Committee—and the Finance Committee will decide this, not the Budget Committee—on the policy of this amendment raising Part D premiums for certain higher income enrollees, I have many questions. How would CMS go about charging some people higher premiums under Part D when the premiums are set by drug plans, by private drug plans, not by CMS? How is that going to work? How can CMS require higher premiums to be collected from private plans? As we all know, there are more than 1,500 private drug plans, each with a separate premium they offer. How, conceivably, would this policy be implemented?

Premiums are important price signals for beneficiaries in the Medicare Part D Program. Under this approach, would we be setting multiple premiums for a single Part D plan? Will this not add to the complexity of the program? This seems to dramatically complicate the market-based approach of Part D.

When the administration came before the Finance Committee on this proposal, they had no answers when asked how their premium proposal would actually work and how it would affect the ability of beneficiaries to shop for plans. The administration simply had not thought through how this would all work in the real world. This is another reason why the Budget Committee in a budget resolution does not make these judgments. It simply does not because this is a policy determination that is in the authority of the Finance Committee.

While I am very sympathetic to the basic notion of income-related premiums and Medicare—I think it is going to have to be part of the long-term solution—the Budget Committee doesn't make these determinations. The Budget Committee does not make this policy. To suggest it does is simply to mislead our colleagues and mislead those who are listening. The one thing that these two amendments, the Cornyn amendment and the Ensign amendment, would do is to cut funding, reduce funding that the Finance Committee would have to provide resources under Medicare. All the other things they have talked about here, the policy prescriptions they have outlined, are a nullity. They mean nothing because the Budget Committee and the budget resolution do not make those decisions.

Let's go to the larger question of how are we going to get out of this very serious long-term entitlement crunch we face? As I have indicated, I believe the only way it is going to happen is either a working group or a commission that is bipartisan in nature, evenly divided between Republicans and Democrats, that is given the authority to come up with a plan and that they then come back to Congress on a fast-track basis for congressional approval. I believe it requires the involvement of the administration. I believe it requires the involvement of Democrats and Republicans in the Senate and the House. I believe it involves health information technology—which we have a reserve fund in this budget resolution to address, which the RAND Corporation has told us could save $80 billion a year.

I believe it involves focusing on the chronically ill; that is the 5 percent of Medicare beneficiaries who are using half of the money. We already know if we better coordinated their care, we could have substantial budget savings and get better health care outcomes. What a remarkable thing that would

be, to both save money and to get better health care outcomes. How could that be? Very simply: That 5 percent of Medicare beneficiaries who are using half of the budget, no one is managing their cases—or in most cases nobody is managing their cases. So what happens? They are seeing multiple specialists who are giving them multiple prescriptions. They are being subjected to multiple tests, none of it very well coordinated. As a result, a lot of money is wasted and in many cases they are made less healthy. How can that be?

We did a study with some 20,000 patients. We put a case manager on every one of their cases. It was very interesting. The first thing they did was go into their households and get out all the prescription drugs they were taking. On average they found they were taking 16 prescription drugs. After review of the cases, they found they could cut that in half, cut it down to eight prescription drugs. The result was, people were healthier.

Let me give an example from my own life. I went into my father-in-law's kitchen and got all the prescription drugs he was taking out on the table. Sure enough, he was taking 16 different prescription drugs. I got on the phone to the doctor, started going down the list. When I got to the third drug he said, My God, he should not be taking that. He should not have been taking that for the last 3 years.

I go further down the list, two drugs he is taking, the doctor says to me, He should never be taking those two together, they work against each other.

I said, Doctor, how does this happen?

He said, It is very simple. Your father-in-law has three doctors: a heart doctor, a lung doctor, an orthopedic specialist; he has me as his family practice physician. They are all prescribing different drugs for him. None of them know what the other is doing. He is sick and confused, his wife is sick and confused—we have chaos.

He said, I am the one who is supposed to know, but your father-in-law is getting prescriptions in the hospital pharmacy, the corner pharmacy, the pharmacy down at the beach, he is getting a mail order. As I say, he was sick and confused, his wife was sick and confused and nobody knew what was happening. He had three MRIs in the last 9 months of his life.

That is what is happening in this medical system over and over. That is where the big money is. These amendments do not do anything about it and the fact is, no budget resolution can do anything about it because the budget resolution does not decide these policy matters. It is left to the committee of authorization. It is left to the committee that has jurisdiction, and the committee that has jurisdiction on these health policy issues is not the Budget Committee, as much as I might wish it were so. The committee of jurisdiction is the Finance Committee. They are the ones that will make these policy determinations.

As well meaning as these amendments are, No. 1, they do not do what they say they are going to do and, No. 2, the thing they do accomplish is to cut funding for Medicare. And MedPAC, the nonpartisan-bipartisan professionals who make recommendations to us on Medicare policy, has said these cuts, these specific cuts would be counterproductive; that they would cut hospitals, they would cut nursing homes, they would cut hospice care, they would cut ambulance services. In rural areas where hospitals are already suffering negative margins, what these amendments might accomplish is to put those health care facilities right out of business. That is what would happen in my State, according to the hospital directors of the more than 40 hospitals in my State. They say: You pass these amendments and some of our hospitals are shutting their doors.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from New Hampshire.

Mr. GREGG. Mr. President, I appreciate the intensity of the Senator from North Dakota. I wish it would be followed up with legislative language. I have heard his talk before on Medicare and on his family situation, but he is going to be giving that same talk 10 years from now at the rate we are going around here. We are not getting anything done. These proposals would get things done.

The concept that this is going to close a hospital, a .6 percent reduction in the reimbursement rate, which is going up? That is absurd on its face. No, what is being proposed here is a legitimate effort to try to get at the underlying problem, which is the trust fund has a $32 trillion unfunded liability—trillion. That is almost the net worth of the entire country. That is almost as much in taxes as have been paid in since the country started. It is a huge problem. This budget does nothing about it, even though there has been significant rhetoric from the other side of the aisle about that. We are suggesting we do something about it.

Sure, the budget doesn't do the nuts and bolts of policy, but the budget has a lot of policy in it. You cannot on one hand say we don't do nuts and bolts of policy and then have a budget which is laden with policy—assumptions and specific language—in SCHIP, in taxes, in war fighting. It is inconsistent.

This is a reasoned approach, both of these amendments. Why shouldn't somebody making more than $160,000 a year pay some fair percentage of their drug costs so somebody who does not have that type of money can afford the drug costs down the road? Of course, they should. These two amendments are as close to apple pie as you can get if you are going to try to address the issue of Medicare. They are reasonable. If we can't do this, then we can't fix the Medicare system. That is the problem. If we do not fix the Medicare system on our watch—since we are the problem, the baby boom generation—then we have real issues. That is why we should proceed with these amendments.

I see Senator SMITH is here. I suggest we move on to his amendment so we can get on the time.

Mr. CONRAD. We can do that after I yield 5 minutes to Senator STABENOW on these amendments, and then we can.

Mr. GREGG. Why don't we agree by unanimous consent that after Senator STABENOW speaks for 5 minutes we go to Senator SMITH?

Mr. CONRAD. Fair enough.

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

The Senator from Michigan is recognized.

Ms. STABENOW. Mr. President, I thank the chairman and everyone for all the hard work they are doing on this very important budget. I am happy to talk about ways we can save dollars in Medicare without cutting access or quality under Medicare. These amendments do not do that. These amendments start from the premise that we are going to cut providers. Let's look at doctors or hospitals or home health or maybe hospice, maybe nursing homes. It says what we ought to be doing is cutting back on payments in this system, which will cut back on their ability to service people, the ability for people to get care they need.

I find it so interesting on all of these amendments that folks—my friends on the other side of the aisle—go after those who are receiving health care. Medicare is a universal system. Everyone pays in. It involves choice. You can go to an HMO or your own doctor, you can sign up for Part B and get more coverage, pay a bigger premium, Part B—it is a system that has worked, but everyone has paid in.

So this notion that somehow we are going to pick this apart on the floor of the Senate without going through the process of looking at the whole system and how we really achieve savings, really achieve savings without cutting services, is mind boggling to me.

We saw a $400 billion Medicare prescription drug benefit pass the Senate, which now costs more—we do not know how much more but costs more—by the way, unpaid for, paid for on a credit card, I guess, that we know could be less than that.

If we talk about savings in Medicare, let's negotiate prescription drug prices. That is a way to make sure that we lower the price of Medicare. Now, it would involve taking on folks who many of my friends on the other side of the aisle support, industries that benefitted from this Medicare bill. But rather than saying we are going to cut our doctors trying to service our seniors, or our hospitals trying to hold it together and treating people, or home health, rather than saying we are going to cut out services in some way, let's go to the real cost. I am happy to go to the real costs that we can address while increasing access and quality.

One is to negotiate a better deal, negotiate a better deal for prescription drugs. I hope we are going to, in fact, do that as a Congress to be able to get a better deal.

Another thing would be to take the 31 cents on every dollar in health care that is the administrative cost—most of this is generated by the Federal Government in some way—and address health information technology, which many of us have worked on, Senator SNOWE and I have legislation on, Senator KENNEDY, Senator ENZI. We have bipartisan interest. Let's tackle that, and that would increase quality and access and dramatically cut the cost.

E-prescribing of prescription drugs alone, according to the Rand Corporation, would save $80 billion, just your pharmacy being able to talk to your doctor, talk to the hospital, and so on.

I came from a meeting where people were talking about great things: the increase in quality and access, and cutting costs. So let's talk about health IT. Let's talk about generic drugs which, if we have more competition from generic drugs, we would dramatically bring down the costs of Medicare.

So there is a lot we can do that does not involve going to the folks providing care and saying: We are going to cut you one more time. We are going to cut you one more time, or going to the universal nature of a health care system. This is not a low-income system. This is a universal system where everybody in America pays in, and it is stronger because of that.

So I would say that we should reject the two amendments in front of us. But we should certainly get about the business of addressing health care costs in this country through Medicare and through other means. We spend almost twice as much of our GDP on health care than any other country, with 50 million people with no health insurance. That alone shows there is something wrong with that picture.

We know we have had increases in Medicare, no question about it. But let's look at where they are coming from. Let's look at where they are coming from. Certainly, the area of lacking prescription drug competition is a big one. Administrative costs is a big one. Let's look at where we can save costs. I know it means taking on some pretty big special interests. There has been an unwillingness to do that because there are folks who make a lot of money off of Medicare, a lot of money.

I would not suggest it is the doctors or the hospital or the hospices or home health nurses, but there are folks who make a lot of money. They do not want to see us deal with the real costs. So let's go back one more time after the providers. Let's go back one more time and try to dismantle what is a universal health care system called Medicare. It works.

Frankly, I would like to see that kind of a universal system available, that is structurally available to every American, not just find ways to cut the one part of universal health care that we have in this country. I would hope that we would leave it to the Finance Committee to wrestle with all of those issues and let us figure out how to do this right.

I would hope my colleagues would say no to these two amendments that take us backwards in providing health care for every American.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Oregon.

AMENDMENT NO. 510

Mr. SMITH. Mr. President, I appreciate the efforts of the chairman and ranking member in setting forth a budget for the United States.

I come to the floor today to speak briefly about two amendments that I have at the desk that focus on two issues relating to health care, which I think are very important. I hear a lot of support in the Chamber for the reauthorization of SCHIP. I, for one, not only want to reauthorize it but expand it.

There are all kinds of ideas for how to fund such a thing. I am here today to speak substantially about how we actually get the real dollars to accomplish that.

It is hard to do a townhall meeting in my State where the issue of health care does not come up. It should come up. Usually there is a story about a child with a health condition ranging from a cold to a broken leg, sometimes cancer, children who do not have access to health care. You see it in the papers nearly every day. Frankly, it is inexcusable in the United States of America.

So I have come today to make a proposal on the budget that is unusual for me because it involves a tax increase. I am very proud of my record in the Oregon State Senate and the U.S. Senate of opposing new taxes and voting to reduce taxes. But when it is appropriate, I have in the past voted to increase taxes on tobacco products in order to provide money for health care because of the important nexus that exists between tobacco use and public health care costs.

So today with my amendment I am proposing that Congress dedicate an increase in the tobacco products excise tax of up to 61 cents to SCHIP reauthorization.

In my home State of Oregon, 117,000 children do not have access to health insurance. We know almost half of these children are currently eligible for either Medicaid or SCHIP but they simply are not enrolled. The challenge Oregon faces is that even if they allocate adequate State funding to cover these children, they do not have enough Federal money under the current SCHIP allotment to enroll them.

Increasing the tobacco excise tax would allow Oregon to reach out, as in other States, to find those kids and get them enrolled so they have health care coverage. Oregon is one of many States that have a looming so-called shortfall. Starting in 2009 the State of Oregon will run out of money to simply cover the children who are currently enrolled, to say nothing of those who are eligible but unenrolled.

Should that happen, the State would potentially cut off new enrollments and be forced to reduce eligibility levels. So increasing the tobacco excise tax will stop that from happening. While we do not yet have an official score from the Congressional Budget Office, we do know that based on their estimates a 50-cent increase would generate an additional $26.6 billion in new revenue.

The tax now stands at 39 cents. I proposed in my amendment to increase that up to 61 cents for a total Federal tobacco tax of $1. That would be dedicated to reauthorize SCHIP. I believe if the Finance Committee chooses to utilize the full 61-cent increase, we would see at least $30 billion for SCHIP, if not the $35 billion.

Therefore, I hope my colleagues will find it in their hearts and in their mouths to vote aye when this very important vote is cast because it literally means health care for children. Many groups have supported this amendment. To name a few prominent ones: the March of Dimes, Families USA, the American Hospital Association, the National Council of Community Behavioral Health Centers, America's Health Insurance Plans, and First Focus.

AMENDMENT NO. 509

My second amendment relates to the battle against HIV/AIDS. This battle is being hindered because we are not focusing enough effort on providing early treatment to individuals who have been diagnosed with this disease. By targeting treatment earlier, we can help prevent the progression to full-blown AIDS. This is especially true for low-income individuals who may lack stable access to potential lifesaving pharmaceutical treatments and other health care services.

While Medicaid is an important provider of health care to those living with HIV/AIDS, most States require that individuals become disabled before they can qualify for coverage. In a sense, they must become sicker before they get treatment. That is simply not right. Full-blown AIDS is an incredibly costly illness to treat. It has much more of an impact on an individual's quality of life than HIV.

From a fiscal and moral standpoint it is essential that we focus more of our resources on providing early treatment to individuals with HIV. That is why I am filing an amendment to the budget resolution that would create a $500 million deficit-neutral reserve fund for demonstration projects that provide Medicaid coverage to low-income individuals diagnosed with HIV.

It is similar to the bill that I filed last week along with 20 of my colleagues that extends to all States the option of providing Medicaid coverage to these individuals.

That initiative, known as the Early Treatment for HIV Act, or ETHA, was modeled after the successful breast and cervical cancer benefit added to the Medicaid Program several years ago. The treatment authorized under my amendment would be provided in the same earlier-is-better fashion, so that more HIV/AIDS cases are prevented from reaching the point of full-blown AIDS.

My amendment would provide Congress and the Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services the opportunity to learn more about the cost-saving benefits of treating HIV in its early stages. It is expected that in addition to Medicaid, other Federal programs such as SSI and Medicare will realize significant long-term savings by preventing individuals from being disabled by AIDS.

With more and more States having financial difficulties with their AIDS drug assistance programs, it is important that we provide alternative methods of delivering treatment to those with HIV/AIDS who may be living in poverty. Most importantly, we will be able to help individuals with HIV lead healthier and longer lives. That way they can remain active participants in both the community and the workforce and improve their chances of living to one day see a cure for their illness.

Mr. President, I ask my colleagues to support this amendment. It is a reasonable and responsible placeholder to add to the Senate's budget blueprint. I look forward to working with all of you in passing this legislation should we enact it in the budget. I think we can greatly improve Medicaid services in this way to those with low incomes who are afflicted with HIV.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from North Dakota.

Mr. CONRAD. Senator ENSIGN will now be recognized for 5 minutes. We will then go to Senator WYDEN, Senator LIEBERMAN, and Senator DORGAN.

We appreciate very much Senator ENSIGN limiting his remarks to 5 minutes.

AMENDMENT NO. 472

Mr. ENSIGN. Mr. President, my amendment would impose an income test on the wealthiest seniors to ensure that they pay a greater share of their Medicare prescription drug coverage.

A couple of years ago, we had a vote in the Senate that would income-relate—in other words, means test Medicare Part B, which pays for medical services, like doctors' services. Medicare Part D is the part that pays for prescription drugs.

Mr. President, we already means test Medicare Part B. In order to put the Medicare program on better financial footing, we should extend the existing Medicare Part B income test to the Medicare prescription drug program.

It makes no sense for Bill Gates's father to have his prescription drugs paid for by a schoolteacher or a firefighter or a police officer or any other middle-income American. This amendment says that a single senior, with an annual adjusted gross income over $80,000 and couples with annual adjusted incomes of over $160,000 a year would be responsible for a greater share of their Medicare Part D premium.

I have a chart that shows that the vast majority of Medicare beneficiaries would not be impacted by this proposal. Almost 96 percent of Medicare beneficiaries would not be affected by my amendment. This means that only the wealthiest 4.3 percent of seniors enrolled in Medicare Part D will pay higher premiums in 2008. Wealthy seniors have the means. We should not be burdening our children and grandchildren with even further debt by subsidizing wealthy seniors. That is what this amendment essentially does. It says that wealthy seniors should pay more for the Medicare prescription drug benefit.

The other side of the aisle says that we should raise taxes on the wealthy. This isn't raising taxes. This is getting wealthy seniors to pay for a benefit they are receiving that they never paid for. In the past, AARP and others have said that we should not means test Medicare.

In this instance, means testing is fair. Remember, that the Medicare prescription drug benefit is a new benefit. Today's seniors did not pay into the Medicare program, through payroll taxes, with the promise of a prescription drug benefit. What this amendment says is that if you can afford to pay higher prices for the Medicare Part D premium, then you should. That is, in essence, what this amendment is about. It is about fairness. Let's treat middle-income taxpayers of today and the future in a fair way by saying wealthy seniors—such as Bill Gates' father, such as my father, such as seniors who are in the upper-income brackets—pay their fair share instead of dumping this liability on future generations of taxpayers and making them pay higher taxes because we want to subsidize seniors to the current extent.

The Medicare Part B program is already means tested. We should further means test the Medicare program by requiring Medicare beneficiaries who make over $80,000 a year as a single and $160,000 a year as a couple, responsible for a greater share of their Medicare prescription drug premium.

To show a little support, the Washington Post, which is not exactly a conservative newspaper—and usually isn't in my corner—wrote:

> One worthy proposal, contained in the Bush budget, would have imposed higher Medicare prescription premiums for higher-income beneficiaries . . . Unfortunately an amendment to that effect was defeated in the budget committee.

That was my amendment.

> If Democrats are serious about dealing with health care entitlement spending, isn't it time for them to demonstrate that?

I believe it is time to demonstrate that.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Oregon.

Mr. WYDEN. Mr. President, I begin by commending Senator CONRAD and Senator GREGG for doing an exceptionally good job bringing extraordinary professionalism and thoughtfulness to this debate, particularly because Chairman CONRAD and Senator GREGG have focused on what are the big issues for this country. Relating to the domestic side of the budget—we all know the big international issue is Iraq—the big issues are taxes and health care. One of the most attractive parts of the Conrad budget is that it lays the foundation for this country to look at big fixes to our tax system and to health care.

If we listen to all the technical lingo that comes up over the course of this discussion—pay-go, firewalls, reserve funds; perhaps the staff director, who does such a terrific job, Mary Naylor, may know about some of the intricacies of these terms—it is a complicated world of ''budgetese.'' What we do understand, however, are taxes and health care. The Bush tax cuts expire at the end of 2010. One of the reasons I support the Conrad budget is that it lays the foundation for meaningful tax reform. The Presiding Officer certainly hears this across the country: The tax system is broken. We now have three changes in the Tax Code for every working day. There have been more than 14,000 changes to the Tax Code since the last comprehensive tax reform. We are all getting ready to do our taxes again. Americans this spring will spend more money filling out tax forms than our Government spends on higher education. Senator CONRAD has pointed out the problem of tax havens and tax scams. There is an opportunity, as a result of this budget, to come together in a bipartisan way and fix the tax system. We know what needs to be done.

First, we to have clear out all the clutter, the thousands and thousands of loopholes that have been added since the last tax reform effort. Second, we have to simplify the system. I have brought to the Chamber a one-page 1040 form that is in my fair flat tax legislation that I will be reintroducing, and I have had a number of good conversations with our friend from New Hampshire about it. This is a chance for Senators to work together in a bipartisan way. The people at Money Magazine, the financial magazine, took my 1040 form and filled out their taxes in 15 minutes. It will bring about a dramatic change in American taxation. So we clean out the clutter, make the system simpler, and then keep progressivity.

There is a model for the Senate to follow. Senator GREGG and I heard a bit about it in the Budget Committee. Senator GRASSLEY and I heard a lot about it in the Finance Committee, when then-Chairman Grassley held hearings on tax reform during the last session. That is to take those principles I outlined—clear out the loopholes, hold

down the rates, simplify the system, and keep progressivity—and once again, because of this budget, fix American taxation in a bipartisan way.

It is worth noting that every witness who came before the Senate Finance Committee during the last session to talk about taxation said building on the principles of the 1986 Tax Reform Act were the way to go. Witnesses came to the Budget Committee earlier this year. They all said this was the right direction, to build on the principles of 1986. I have indicated to Senator GREGG—and I am interested in working with him; he was part of the discussions that took place in the Budget Committee—it is worth wrapping this subject up by way of saying the budget that is before us now, the Conrad budget. It allows for the Senate to come together in a bipartisan way to fix the tax system. This is eminently doable.

The President had a commission on taxation. My one-page 1040 form is 30 lines long. The President's is 34 lines long. For purposes of Government work, the two are equivalent. Democrats and Republicans can come together on this, simplify the tax system, do what was done in 1986 to clean out the clutter, hold down the rates, and keep progressivity so that everybody has a chance to get ahead.

We have heard a lot of talk about class warfare. I am sure the Presiding Officer hears a great deal about this topic as he travels around the country. What Americans want is a system that gives everybody the opportunity to get ahead. That is what we ought to be working on. That is what this budget allows.

In addition to taxes, this legislation allows for a bipartisan effort in this Congress to fix American health care, because of the reserve fund that is in the bill and constructive efforts that are going on in the Senate. In all deference to the Presiding Officer, the distinguished Senator from Illinois, and our other colleagues who are running for President of the United States, there is a feeling that this question of fixing American health care is something that will be dealt with in 2009. I am here to tell the Senate, I believe there is a good chance the Senate will come together in 2007. Five Democratic Senators and five Republican Senators sent a letter to the President, an important letter that involved both sides coming together. The Republicans who signed the letter said: If you are going to fix health care, you have to get everybody covered. If you don't get everybody covered, the costs for those who are uninsured get shifted to those who are insured. That is a statement about universal coverage. It is about 100 percent coverage. Our colleague from South Carolina, Senator DEMINT, and others, have some good ideas about how to accomplish that. Republicans moved in a way that is going to allow for a comprehensive bipartisan effort to fix health care. Democrats did as well because the Democrats who signed the letter said: We need to modernize the marketplace. We have a tax system for health care that made sense for the 1940s; it doesn't make sense for 2007. The Tax Code for health coverage disproportionately rewards the most wealthy and promotes inefficiency. That is how the Federal government is spending $250 billion. The Democrats and Republicans came together and said: We want to work in a bipartisan way. Republican Senators such as TRENT LOTT and MIKE CRAPO and BOB BENNETT and JIM DEMINT and JOHN THUNE, Democrats such as KENT CONRAD, KEN SALAZAR, Senator CANTWELL, Senator KOHL, and myself said: With all due respect to our good friend from Illinois and our colleagues who are seeking the highest office in the land, we are going to do our best to fix health care in this Congress. We have an opportunity with our letter.

The Presiding Officer knows I have introduced S. 334, the Healthy Americans Act. When I introduced that bill, the CEO of Safeway stood with me, Steve Burd, with more than 200,000 employees, as did Andy Stern, the president of the Service Employees International Union, with almost 2 million members. Back in 1993 and 1994, business and labor were fighting each other. Now they are coming together. What a remarkable transition. In 1993, the business community said: We can't afford health care reform. In 2007, the business community is saying: We can't afford not to fix health care.

We have laid a bipartisan foundation in the Conrad budget for Democrats and Republicans to come together in this session to fix health care.

An issue came up as we were going forward on the reserve fund that highlights that while I think a comprehensive fix of American health care can be done, there are going to be challenges along the way. One of them is how to deal with the CHIP program, the program that helps our youngsters. There is great support on both sides of the aisle for the CHIP program. But there have been some in the Senate who have said: We have to do CHIP and health reform together. We have to do both together, and that is the way to approach it. The universal coverage legislation isn't quite ready to go. I am hopeful it will be ready before too long and that it will be bipartisan. The Conrad budget makes it possible for Senators to come together through a reserve fund for universal coverage.

I also want to make sure that the millions of youngsters who need health care now are not forced to wait. We should not deny those youngsters justice right now, when the need, as the distinguished Senator from Illinois knows, is so great.

What we said in the budget is that after SCHIP is resolved—and I hope it will be very shortly—and we meet those urgent needs of millions of youngsters, then we proceed to the question of bipartisan efforts to ensure there is comprehensive health reform.

Those are the two big issues of our time—tax reform and health care—that relate to the domestic side of the budget. The Conrad budget leaves space for Democrats and Republicans to come together and fix our tax system and fix American health care.

(Mr. BROWN assumed the Chair.)

Mr. WYDEN. Under the Conrad budget, and the fair flat tax I have introduced, we could have a one-page 1040 form. People in the State of Ohio—I advise the Presiding Officer, our colleague from Ohio, and we are thrilled to have him in the Senate—could be filling out their taxes on a one-page form, ensuring progressivity, getting rid of the clutter, and holding down rates for everybody. Money magazine, when they took that form, said they could do it in 15 minutes. So all of the people in the State of Ohio and elsewhere who are pulling together their shoe boxes and their receipts right now in order to fill out their taxes, they could have an alternative, something based on a system we know works because Democrats and Republicans came together in 1986 in order to have such a tax system.

The Conrad budget makes it possible for us to enact tax reform even before the Bush tax cuts of 2010 expire.

On the health care side, the same bipartisan effort could occur: Democrats and Republicans could come together and fix health care. We establish a universal coverage fund, a health care reform fund, in this budget. It would allow, for example, for legislation, like the Healthy Americans Act which I introduced, that has brought together Andy Stern of the Service Employees International Union and Steve Burd, the CEO of Safeway, to say: This is where we ought to start. It would allow for the Democrats and the Republicans—who signed a letter to the President of the United States and said: We want to work with you, Mr. President, to fix health care—it would allow for that important effort.

A number of my colleagues on the Republican side have been extremely constructive in working with me and others to get that legislation before the Congress—not in 2009, when the popular wisdom suggests we will talk about health care, but in this session. But before that happens, because of the efforts in the Budget Committee that are included in the Conrad budget, we will first protect and expand the program that ensures justice for children in health care—the CHIP program.

The CHIP reauthorization will come first. Passing CHIP legislation, however, is not going to diminish our efforts to work in a bipartisan fashion on overall health reform.

Both Senator GREGG and Senator CONRAD are on the floor now. I just want to let both of them know, and our very talented staff director, Mary Naylor, that I believe they have brought extraordinary professionalism to this effort. They reflect great credit on the Senate in terms of how the two

of them and their staff work on this budget.

I urge my colleagues to support the budget that is before us particularly because it lays the foundation for the Senate to tackle the two big domestic issues of our time, taxes and health care. There are a lot of issues that come before us. Certainly Iraq is the premier issue as it relates to the international front, but the big issues at home are taxes and health care. The Conrad budget allows for Democrats and Republicans to come together on taxes, as was done in 1986 for a system that gave everybody the chance to get ahead.

I know the Presiding Officer, my friend from Ohio, has heard a lot about the whole topic of class warfare and the like. I think the Senator from Ohio hears the same thing I hear at home; that everybody ought to have the chance to get ahead. Everybody ought to have the chance to do it. We could do that with a tax reform program that is fair to all. This budget allows it, and it allows for Democrats and Republicans to come together on health care as well.

I urge my colleagues to support the budget. I commend Senator CONRAD and Senator GREGG.

Mr. President, I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from New Hampshire is recognized.

AMENDMENT NO. 525, AS MODIFIED

Mr. GREGG. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the pending amendment, which I understand is the Ensign amendment—is that correct?

The PRESIDING OFFICER. That is correct.

Mr. GREGG. Be set aside so I can send up a modification that has been cleared by the other side relative to the Cornyn amendment, and I ask unanimous consent that the Cornyn amendment be modified.

Mr. CONRAD. Mr. President, reserving the right to object, have we seen this modification? Let me just reserve on that until I have confirmation.

Is this a Cornyn amendment which is being modified?

Mr. GREGG. Cornyn amendment, as modified.

Mr. CONRAD. That is fine.

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

The amendment (No. 525), as modified, is as follows:

At the appropriate place insert the following:

On page 4, line 6, decrease the amount by $2,047,000,000.

On page 4, line 7, decrease the amount by $4,291,000,000.

On page 4, line 8, decrease the amount by $6,949,000,000.

On page 4, line 9, decrease the amount by $9,936,000,000.

On page 4, line 10, decrease the amount by $13,270,000,000.

On page 4, line 15, decrease the amount by $2,047,000,000.

On page 4, line 16, decrease the amount by $4,291,000,000..

On page 4, line 17, decrease the amount by $6,949,000,000.

On page 4, line 18, decrease the amount by $9,936,000,000.

On page 4, line 19, decrease the amount by $13,270,000,000.

On page 4, line 24, decrease the amount by $2,047,000,000.

On page 4, line 25, decrease the amount by $4,291,000,000.

On page 5, line 1, decrease the amount by $6,949,000,000.

On page 5, line 2, decrease the amount by $9,936,000,000.

On page 5, line 3, decrease the amount by $13,270,000,000.

On page 5, line 7, decrease the amount by $2,047,000,000.

On page 5, line 8, decrease the amount by $6,339,000,000.

On page 5, line 9, decrease the amount by $13,288,000,000.

On page 5, line 10, decrease the amount by $23,224,000,000.

On page 5, line 11, decrease the amount by $36,494,000,000.

On page 5, line 15, decrease the amount by $2,047,000,000.

On page 5, line 16, decrease the amount by $6,339,000,000,

On page 5, line 17, decrease the amount by $13,288,000,000.

On page 5, line 18, decrease the amount by $23,224,000,000.

On page 5, line 19, decrease the amount by $36,494,000,000.

On page 19, line 12, decrease the amount by $2,000,000,000.

On page 19, line 13, decrease the amount by $2,000,000,000.

On page 19, line 16, decrease the amount by $4,100,000,000,

On page 19, line 17, decrease the amount by $4,100,000,000.

On page 19, line 20, decrease the amount by $6,500,000,000.

On page 19, line 21, decrease the amount by $6,500,000,000.

On page 19, line 24, decrease the amount by $9,100,000,000,

On page 19, line 25, decrease the amount by $9,100,000,000.

On page 20, line 3, decrease the amount by $11,900,000,000.

On page 20, line 4, decrease the amount by $11,900,000,000.

On page 25, line 12, decrease the amount by $47,000,000.

On page 25, line 13, decrease the amount by $47,000,000.

On page 25, line 16, decrease the amount by $191,000,000.

On page 25, line 17, decrease the amount by $191,000,000.

On page 25, line 20, decrease the amount by $449,000,000.

On page 25, line 21, decrease the amount by $449,000,000.

On page 25, line 24, decrease the amount by $836,000,000.

On page 25, line 25, decrease the amount by $836,000,000.

On page 26, line 3, decrease the amount by $1,370,000,000.

On page 26, line 4, decrease the amount by $1,370,000,000.

At the end of the bill, add the following:

TITLE IV—RECONCILIATION

SEC. 401. SPENDING RECONCILIATION INSTRUCTIONS.

In the Senate, by June 1, 2007, the Finance Committee shall report to the Senate changes in laws within its jurisdiction sufficient to reduce outlays by $2,000,000,000 in 2008 and $33,800,000,000 for the period of fiscal years 2008 through 2012.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from North Dakota is recognized.

Mr. CONRAD. Mr. President, Senator ENSIGN had talked about his amendment, and I did not have a chance to, once again, respond. I would like to take that opportunity now, while we are waiting for Senator DORGAN. Perhaps Senator GREGG would want to respond to what I might say. Before we do that, maybe we should enter into an agreement with respect to the votes that will occur at 11:30.

So for that purpose, Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that at 11:30 a.m., the Senate proceed to vote with respect to the following amendments in the order listed; that there be 2 minutes for debate before each vote, equally divided, and that after the first vote, the time for the votes be limited to 10 minutes; that no amendments be in order to any of the amendments covered under this agreement: the DeMint amendment No. 489, the Allard amendment No. 491, the Baucus amendment No. 504, and the Cornyn amendment No. 511.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Is there objection?

Without objection, it is so ordered.

AMENDMENT NO. 472

Mr. CONRAD. Mr. President, let me just take a moment now to respond to Senator ENSIGN with respect to the amendment he has offered that purports to affect Part D premiums and have higher premiums for those Part D Program participants.

Let me just say, the basic concept, I am in sympathy with. The problem is, the budget resolution does not make these policy determinations. This is a determination which is made by the Finance Committee. That is the committee of jurisdiction. They are the ones who have the sole right to make these kinds of policy determinations. The Budget Committee, as much as I might want it to, does not have the authority to do that. Beyond that, the devil is in the details.

The notion you can charge higher premiums—certainly there is a way to do that, but the Senator has given us no indication of how it might be done. When the CMS came before the Finance Committee on this very issue—because this is part of the President's budget—they were asked how they would go about charging higher premiums under Part D when the premiums are not set by the Government, they are set by private drug plans.

As we all know, there are something like 1,500 Medicare drug plans. Those plans each have a separate premium they establish. So how is it that CMS is going to tell all these private drug plans they are to charge higher premiums to higher income people? Those private drug plans do not even know the income levels of the people who subscribe to their plans. So how is it, in a real-world situation, these plans would charge higher drug premiums?

Again, the Government does not set these premiums. The companies that

do set them do not have the information upon which to charge higher premiums to higher income people because they do not know what the income is of the people who subscribe to their plans.

Further, premiums are important price signals for beneficiaries in the Medicare Part D Program. So would we be setting multiple premiums for a single Part D plan? Wouldn't that add to the complexity of the program? This seems to dramatically complicate the market-based approach of Part D.

I might add, when the administration came before the Finance Committee—which is the committee of jurisdiction, which is the committee that has the authority to make these kinds of policy determinations—they had no answers to any of these questions. They just simply had not thought it through. That is one of the reasons why we leave these kinds of determinations to the committee of jurisdiction, because they have the expertise to make these determinations and to weigh the issue. The Budget Committee does not and does not have the authority to make these determinations.

Let me say my own belief is that the notion of income-relating Medicare benefits is going to have to be part of a longer term solution. But that is not going to be decided on any budget resolution. That is just a fact. All of the things Senator ENSIGN talked about will have zero effect on the Finance Committee. What will affect the Finance Committee is the number they are given of the resources that are available for Medicare.

The effect of the Cornyn amendment—and the effect of the Ensign amendment—will be to reduce the resources that are available to the Finance Committee for Medicare. What is that likely to mean? Well, it is very clear what it is likely to mean: reductions in reimbursement for hospitals, for nursing homes, for hospice care, for ambulance services. That is the real-world effect of the Cornyn amendment and the Ensign amendment.

I want to repeat that I got a letter from 43 Senators—11 of them Republicans—urging that the budget resolution not cut reimbursement to hospitals. I just remind them, if that is something they are serious about, then they are going to want to oppose the Cornyn amendment and the Ensign amendment because the real upshot of those amendments is to reduce funding to the Finance Committee for those very purposes.

Mr. President, Senator GREGG may like to take the remaining minutes here.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from New Hampshire.

Mr. GREGG. Yes, Mr. President. I thank the Senator.

Mr. President, if you are going to vote against the Ensign amendment, you are just simply saying millionaires in this country should not have to pay for their drug benefit under Medicare if they are retired and have Medicare eligibility; and all millionaires who are retired and over a certain age have Medicare eligibility for drug benefits. It is that simple.

To say the Budget Committee should not address this issue has the practical effect of saying the Budget Committee should not address policy at the Federal level. The Budget Committee, of course, has a right to address this issue and should address it. In fact, it is the proper place to address it as the initial step. In fact, you could argue that if the Budget Committee does not address it, it will never get done because the protection that comes from reconciliation, which only the Budget Committee can give an authorizing committee—that is, the Finance Committee, the Armed Services Committee, or any other committee—derives from the Budget resolution, which is authored by the Budget Committee. You probably are not going to pass these types of changes without reconciliation protection. So that is a straw dog argument of the first order.

This Ensign amendment specifically is an attempt to straighten out what was clearly an incorrect decision when Part D was put in place. The Medicare trust fund is $32 trillion out of whack. In other words, we know it is going to cost $32 trillion—that is with a ''t.''

Try to understand what that means—$1 trillion. Nobody can understand $1 trillion, but it is an amount of money that is staggering. All the taxes paid in America since our country became a government, since our country was created, amount to something like $42 trillion. The entire net worth of America—all your cars, all your stocks, all the houses Americans own—represents something like $50 trillion, or maybe it is not even that high—$47 trillion.

So we have a liability, which we have no idea how we are going to pay for, of $32 trillion. The interesting part—that is why I want to point this out again—is the drug benefit, when it was passed, aggravated the liability of the trust fund to the tune of $8 trillion. So of that $32 trillion—although this chart could be used to explain this—of that $32 trillion, $8 trillion of that unfunded liability was generated by the drug benefit. It shouldn't have been that high. One way it should have been addressed was that we should have had wealthy seniors, millionaire seniors, which is what the Ensign amendment does, paying a fair amount of the cost of that drug benefit. The Senator from North Dakota says: Well, that can't be done. Of course, it can be done. Of course, it can be done. There are all sorts of reports that are filed on CMS on the cost of reimbursement and how they are structuring these insurance plans, and there is no question but it can be done. More importantly, it should be done, as a matter of fairness, for working Americans who are carrying the burden of seniors.

I notice Senator DORGAN is here and he wants to talk, so I will reserve on that.

The point is pretty important. If you want to vote for working Americans to not have to subsidize millionaire Americans who are retired, you are going to want to vote for the Ensign amendment.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from North Dakota is recognized.

Mr. CONRAD. The Senator from North Dakota, Senator DORGAN, is now recognized until 11:30.

Mr. DORGAN. Mr. President, some would believe, and perhaps should believe, that this budget issue is very complex, very difficult and is hard to resolve. I accept all that. But there ought to be some things all of us would agree are very easy to deal with. The slam-dunks, as it were; the issues that all of us ought to say: Enough, we are not going to put up with this on the revenue side.

Let me tell my colleagues the taxes I believe we ought to be getting that we are not getting. Should we increase them? Absolutely. Those are the taxes that would have been paid under normal circumstances but now are not being paid because companies have decided they want to run their income through a tax-haven country. They want to produce in China, sell in America, and run their income through the Cayman Islands.

What is the purpose of that? To avoid paying U.S. taxes. They want all the opportunities of being an American company but none of the responsibilities to pay the taxes to help this country run, to help this country do what it should do.

So let me go through some of the examples. First, let me show a picture of the Ugland House. An enterprising reporter named ''David Evans'' did some research. This picture shows a five-story building on Church Street in the Cayman Islands that is home to 12,748 corporations. Now, we have talked about that. I have spoken about it in previous months on the floor of the Senate. Why do I do that? Everyone understands that in this little building on a quiet street on the Cayman Islands, there aren't 12,748 companies. That is a legal fiction created by some lawyers to allow companies to use this address to avoid paying U.S. taxes. That is what is inside this white building: fictional addresses so companies can park income here and avoid paying taxes to the United States.

Should we shut that down? You bet your life we ought to shut it down—just like that. It ought not be controversial. Do we not believe that everybody ought to pay their fair share of taxes as a part of living in this great country? So that is one issue. That, by the way, is a current tax scam that exists and is robust. I could go through the names of companies that have many subsidiaries in tax-haven countries. I mentioned Halliburton the other day. They have 17 subsidiaries in the Cayman Islands, a country that has never imposed a corporate income tax. They also have two subsidiaries in

Liechtenstein, for God's sake. But it is not just that company. I could go through a whole list of companies that have dozens and dozens of subsidiaries they have created in tax-haven countries to avoid paying taxes in this country.

Let me give some other examples of what has been going on. This is Dortmund, Germany. This is a picture of a streetcar in Dortmund, Germany. It is interesting. Actually, an American company leased the streetcars in Dortmund, Germany. Why? Because an American company wants to run streetcars in Germany? No, not at all. These belong to city government in Germany. An American corporation leased them, and immediately leased them back to the German city, and then the company is able to claim large tax deductions that lower its tax burden in the United States. Here is what the city councilman, Manfred Jostes, said:

> It's absolutely unbelievable. I still to this day can't believe that something like this works.

A German city councilman trying to think through how is it we can lease our streetcars to an American company, they lease them back, we get a premium and never lose the opportunity to use them. The only thing that is valuable to the American company is they don't have to pay taxes because they can claim large deductions relating to this streetcar system in Germany.

It is not just streetcars. How about American companies buying town halls? Here is a picture of a town hall in a German city that I can't even pronounce. That is a huge, old town hall owned by an American company. Why? Because they like town halls in Germany? No. Because they want to be able to claim large deductions in an abusive cross-border leasing transaction with a German city for the purpose of reducing their tax obligations in this country.

Here is a railroad in Belgium owned by an American company. Because they like to run trains in Belgium? No, no. It is about reducing their taxes in our country.

How about an American company buying a German sewer system. This one—Wachovia Bank has been pretty aggressive. They bought a German sewer system, and they reportedly get $175 million in U.S. tax savings by owning a foreign sewer system. The city in Germany—Bochum, Germany, doesn't lose the use of its sewer system. The American corporation didn't buy a German sewer system because they wanted to use the sewer; they bought it because they wanted to lease it back to the German city so the U.S. company can depreciate it and reduce its tax burden to the U.S. Government. Sale and leaseback. Pretty unbelievable.

FleetBoston Financial and another investor bought Chicago's 911 emergency call system. Think of that. Chicago sets up a 911 emergency call system, then sells it to two corporations. It is a city-owned system. The companies buy it, and lease it back to Chicago. Chicago still has it. It is a sale and leaseback transaction by which an American corporation can now own and lease back the 911 emergency call system in Chicago and be able to depreciate it to save money on their tax bill. It is unbelievable to me.

When are we going to put a stop to this? Well, the Finance Committee took a look at these sale and leasebacks and owning foreign sewer systems and they said: We will stop it as of this date, but everything else is OK. It is not OK with me.

It is not OK with me that we still have companies that decide they want to move their profits to a controlled offshore foreign subsidiary, despite the fact that the subsidiary doesn't do any real business there.

It is not OK with me that we still provide large tax breaks to U.S. companies that close down a manufacturing plant in this country, fire its American workers and move those good-paying jobs to countries like China. When U.S. companies close down a U.S. manufacturing plant such as Huffy bicycles or Radio Flyer little red wagons, fires its American workers and moves those good-paying jobs overseas, U.S. tax law actually gives companies like these a large tax break. This is a slap in the face of domestic companies that do not get this break. It is a slap in the face to hardworking Americans whose jobs are cut and moved overseas.

I have forced the U.S. Senate to vote to repeal this perverse tax break several times but it still remains in place. I will offer my proposal to eliminate this ill-advised tax subsidy again and again until it is gone.

So I have legislation in three areas that will shut these things down and shut them down for good. All of that, I understand, is able to be accomplished and has a fit in this budget proposal. Senator CONRAD, I believe, has in this budget proposal provided room for the three proposals I have offered, the kinds of proposals that will finally and irrevocably shut down this nonsense.

Now, we are short of money. The fact is we are short of revenue, so how are we going to get it? Are we going to go ask some people who go to work all day and take showers at night. You know, they get dirty and work hard at a construction site, come home and have to take a shower after work rather than before work. We are going to go back to those folks and say: You know what. Our Government is short of money. We would like you to pay some more in taxes. Or are we going to go to these companies who have decided they want to own a sewer system in Germany? They want to have a ''fictional'' address on Church Street in the Cayman Islands or they want to engage in transfer pricing.

Transfer pricing schemes, by the way, where companies have their own subsidiaries and buy and sell from them and charge things such as $50 for a tractor tire or $18 for a toothbrush; dramatic overpricing on the one hand or underpricing on the other. They use this accounting scam to try to demonstrate they have earned no money in the United States and therefore owe no taxes in the United States when, in fact, they earned a lot of money and transfer-priced those profits out of our country. Another scheme. It is wholesale tax avoidance.

The question for this Senate ought to be now: Are we going to get the revenue that is owed to us from some of the largest enterprises? I have not named a lot of them. I could name a lot of them, and they should have the opportunity to be named so that their shareholders know what they are doing.

It wasn't long ago, by the way, when some of us came to the Senate floor and named the companies who decided they wanted to renounce their American citizenship. I was a part of that. The late Paul Wellstone was a part of that. Paul sat right over there at that desk at the end of that row and I remember it as if it were today, the speeches Paul would give about this issue.

The companies have decided: You know what. We want all the benefits of being an American. We were chartered here. We exist here. We appreciate being here, but we don't want the responsibility of paying taxes. That is the origin and the roots of some of this tax avoidance. But then, it went even further. There was a time when companies said: You know what. We appreciate being an American, but we can save a great deal of money if we renounce our American citizenship and move our citizenship to, let's say, the Bahamas. My thought was: You want to move your corporate citizenship to the Bahamas for the purpose of not paying American taxes; then when you get in trouble, why don't you call in the Bahamian Navy. My understanding is they have a force of 20 people. Perhaps I have understated it. But maybe then you ought to call the Bahamian military when you get in some trouble, when someone tries to expropriate your assets somewhere around the world.

I come to the floor today because I am flat sick and tired of these schemes: The hood ornament on excess here is the schemes by which town halls are now for lease or for sale, sewer systems are now for sale. Yes, action has been taken to shut some of that down prospectively. Yes, that is good. But we still have circumstances under which American corporations are owning these assets, depreciating the assets that clearly are government assets for one single purpose, and that is to avoid paying the taxes that they would otherwise owe to the United States of America.

So then who pays taxes? Well, there is the infamous woman who once said: Only the little people pay taxes. She

sort of sniffed: Only the little people pay taxes. Well, we know who does pay taxes. It is people who work, who get a W–2 form which says: Here is your income, here is your withholding, here is the obligation you have to the United States of America. No flexibility. You work, you earn an income, you pay taxes.

The word ''tax'' is not a dirty word. It is part of the price of a civilized society. We build roads. We operate schools. We provide for the defense of this Nation. We have a Center for Disease Control. We have the National Institutes of Health. We run Bethesda Hospital and Walter Reed for the veterans. We do a lot of things that are pretty wonderful, and we have built a pretty spectacular country through private sector and public sector initiatives. But in order to do that, we need a revenue base. Some of the biggest interests in this country have decided: We want to be a part of everything America has to offer, but we don't want to be a part of the revenue base. We want to find ways to own a foreign sewer system or run our income through a fictional address in the Cayman Islands. We want a large tax break for shutting down a U.S. manufacturing plant and moving those jobs overseas. We want to find a way to transfer price so that we are pricing safety pins at 100 times their value, or underpricing pianos, selling pianos for $40. That sort of transfer pricing is unbelievable. That transfer pricing has allowed some corporations to scam the Federal Government and avoid paying the taxes they owe this country. So I came to the floor today only to say this: Part of the process of a budget is to make plans about spending. What is it we need to spend? What do we have to do to invest in our country's future to strengthen our country? Then also, what kind of revenue can we expect and who shall contribute that revenue? Who is responsible for paying taxes? It is not, as the socialite sniffed, ''the little people''; it is a responsibility for all of us in this country to pay taxes. I think when we see what has been going on with tax avoidance on a massive scale—and I see those who might criticize Senator CONRAD for saying: Let's capture some of this in this budget, and they say: Well, that is not real—you bet your life it is real.

You bet your life it is real. This tax avoidance is large, and it is growing. We have a responsibility to say to those interests: Pay up. Be a part of this country. Being a part of this country is to make money in this great economy of ours, but also the responsibility to pay some taxes to this country as well.

As I indicated, I have three provisions that will be provided for as a result of the way this budget is structured. I intend to offer those as legislation in this coming year. I expect that ought to be a noncontroversial portion of the debate in this country. It ought to be the first baby step to do what is right.

I yield the floor.

AMENDMENT NO. 489

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Under the previous order, there is 2 minutes of debate prior to a vote on amendment No. 489.

Who yields time?

The Senator from South Carolina is recognized.

Mr. DEMINT. Mr. President, it is seldom in this Chamber that we have a chance to do something that is truly significant. This amendment about Social Security would allow us to do that. Both sides of the aisle, Republican and Democrat, for years have been saying we should not be spending Social Security on other things, and we should be saving it. But we have never done anything about it.

We have spent nearly $2 trillion in Social Security money on other things and have not saved one penny. My amendment allows for Congress to open the door and pave the way to stop spending Social Security funds and to save the money. Senator CONRAD and others have talked about the importance of prefunding, or advance funding, our Social Security system. This amendment will open the door for us to do that. It does not prescribe how we will do it. It does not talk about how the funds will be invested. It says they will be taken off the table and saved.

We are not talking about ownership here, private accounts or the stock market. This is all open for future discussion. The point of the amendment is to open the door and do what we have talked about for years: stop spending Social Security on other things and save it for the retirees.

Mr. BYRD. Mr. President, I oppose Social Security privatization—unequivocally and without question. The language in the DeMint amendment, which would encourage the Finance Committee to report legislation that would embrace private investment accounts within Social Security, is something that I cannot support. Therefore, I oppose the DeMint amendment.

Mrs. FEINSTEIN. Mr. President, I oppose this amendment. There is no question that we must reform our entitlement programs and change the way our Nation's finances are managed.

With this in mind, I support the premise behind this amendment: the Social Security trust fund should not be used to help reduce the Federal budget deficit.

Hundreds of billions of dollars are being taken from Social Security each year just to help pay our bills. Last year, this figure approached $200 billion.

However, this amendment has a fatal flaw. It leaves the door open for private Social Security accounts by providing participants with the option of ''prefunding of at least some portion of future benefits.''

In my view, this is unacceptable.

This body has already closed the door on the President's ill-conceived plan for private Social Security accounts.

The opposition to privatization is well-known:

Privatizing Social Security does nothing to extend the solvency of the program. Transition costs alone, over the first 20 years, would put our Nation in greater debt by as much as $4.9 trillion.

Creating private accounts would mean benefit cuts for retirees, by as much as 40 percent.

Half of all American workers today have no pension or retirement plan from their employers. That means Social Security is their only source of income.

It is critical that we protect this safety net.

We must hold the line on spending, but this has to be done in conjunction with a more responsible approach to tax policy.

The President's tax cuts have already cost more than $1 trillion and those enacted will be more than $3 trillion over the next decade.

When you combine the cost of the tax cuts with spending for the military operations in Afghanistan, Iraq, and the global war on terror—currently totaling $510 billion—the inevitable result is that our Federal budget is squeezed, while our crushing debt grows.

As we debate this budget resolution, I urge my colleagues to be mindful of the long-term impact of our spending decisions.

The looming crisis with our entitlement programs is clear. We must stop raiding the Social Security trust fund to pay our bills. But I cannot support this particular amendment which opens the door to privatizing Social Security.

I am firmly committed to opposing any Social Security reform proposals which leave the possibility of private accounts on the table. And this amendment would do just that. So I must voice my opposition, and I ask that my colleagues join me in rejecting this proposal.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Who yields time?

The Senator from Montana is recognized.

Mr. BAUCUS. Mr. President, the amendment sounds good. It is nice, bland language to provide participants with the benefits of savings and investment. But make no mistake about it, this is a stalking-horse for Social Security. That is what this is all about.

The Senator offered virtually the same amendment last year, which had the same purpose, and it was defeated 46 to 53, I think. This is privatization of Social Security. The American people rejected that; they rejected private accounts. It would cause a huge increase in the Federal deficit, a massive transfer. This amendment is disguised but would do just that.

It looks good on the surface, but this is an amendment to privatize Social Security, create private accounts for Social Security. Senators should not be fooled. Again, Senators rejected this

very same amendment last year by a large vote of 46 to 53. It should be rejected this time as well.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator's time has expired.

Mr. BAUCUS. Thank you, Mr. President.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The question is on agreeing to amendment No. 489.

Mr. GREGG. Mr. President, I ask for the yeas and nays.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Is there a sufficient second?

There is a sufficient second.

The clerk will call the roll.

The bill clerk called the roll.

Mr. DURBIN. I announce that the Senator from Delaware (Mr. BIDEN) and the Senator from South Dakota (Mr. JOHNSON) are necessarily absent.

Mr. LOTT. The following Senator is necessarily absent: the Senator from Arizona (Mr. MCCAIN).

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Are there any other Senators in the Chamber desiring to vote?

The result was announced—yeas 45, nays 52, as follows:

[Rollcall Vote No. 89 Leg.]

YEAS—45

Alexander	DeMint	Lugar
Allard	Dole	Martinez
Bennett	Domenici	McCaskill
Bond	Ensign	McConnell
Brownback	Enzi	Murkowski
Bunning	Graham	Roberts
Burr	Grassley	Sessions
Chambliss	Gregg	Shelby
Coburn	Hagel	Specter
Cochran	Hatch	Stevens
Coleman	Hutchison	Sununu
Corker	Inhofe	Thomas
Cornyn	Isakson	Thune
Craig	Kyl	Vitter
Crapo	Lott	Warner

NAYS—52

Akaka	Feinstein	Obama
Baucus	Harkin	Pryor
Bayh	Inouye	Reed
Bingaman	Kennedy	Reid
Boxer	Kerry	Rockefeller
Brown	Klobuchar	Salazar
Byrd	Kohl	Sanders
Cantwell	Landrieu	Schumer
Cardin	Lautenberg	Smith
Carper	Leahy	Snowe
Casey	Levin	Stabenow
Clinton	Lieberman	Tester
Collins	Lincoln	Voinovich
Conrad	Menendez	Webb
Dodd	Mikulski	Whitehouse
Dorgan	Murray	Wyden
Durbin	Nelson (FL)	
Feingold	Nelson (NE)	

NOT VOTING—3

Biden	Johnson	McCain

The amendment (No. 489) was rejected.

Mrs. MURRAY. I move to reconsider the vote.

Mr. DODD. I move to lay that motion on the table.

The motion to lay on the table was agreed to.

AMENDMENT NO. 491

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Under the previous order, there is now 2 minutes of debate prior to a vote on the Allard amendment No. 491.

The Senator from New Hampshire.

Mr. GREGG. Mr. President, I yield the time to the Senator from Colorado.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Colorado is recognized.

Mr. ALLARD. Mr. President, the budget spends $88 billion over 5 years on ineffective programs and raises taxes by $900 billion to do so. My amendment reduces spending by 25 percent on programs rated ineffective by OMB's program assessment rating tool. PART has evaluated almost 1,000 programs accounting for 96 percent of all Federal spending. Only 26 are rated ineffective in discretionary spending.

Chairman CONRAD will say the budget resolution cannot tell appropriators how to implement the savings. My amendment simply allows the appropriators, with a great deal of flexibility, to find those savings that are proven to exist. It also tells agencies we expect results from programs we fund.

If my colleagues vote for this amendment, we will save the taxpayers $18 billion over 5 years and pay down the Federal debt by $18 billion. I believe if we cannot trim $4 billion out of a $2.9 trillion budget on ineffective programs, we cannot honestly tell taxpayers we are serious about fiscal responsibility.

I urge my colleagues to support the amendment. I ask for the yeas and nays.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator's time has expired.

Is there a sufficient second?

There appears to be a sufficient second.

The yeas and nays were ordered.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from North Dakota.

Mr. CONRAD. Mr. President, first, the budget resolution does not make these individual policy determinations. The effect of this amendment will simply be to cut domestic discretionary spending $18 billion. Understand the programs that have been identified in the PART program are results not proven. If this did apply as the Senator suggests, here are programs affected: Border Patrol, Coast Guard search and rescue, high-intensity drug trafficking areas, LIHEAP, rural education, child abuse prevention, and treatment.

If there is a problem in those programs, they ought to be fixed. We ought not to be cutting Border Patrol, Coast Guard search and rescue, high-intensity drug trafficking areas, LIHEAP, rural education, and the rest.

I urge a ''no'' vote.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The question is on agreeing to amendment No. 491 offered by the Senator from Colorado, Mr. ALLARD.

Mr. GREGG. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that this be a 10-minute vote, and the following votes be 10-minute votes.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. That order has been granted.

The clerk will call the roll.

The legislative clerk called the roll.

Mr. DURBIN. I announce that the Senator from Delaware (Mr. BIDEN) and the Senator from South Dakota (Mr. JOHNSON) are necessarily absent.

Mr. LOTT. The following Senator is necessarily absent: the Senator from Arizona (Mr. MCCAIN).

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Mr. TESTER). Are there any other Senators in the Chamber desiring to vote?

The result was announced—yeas 33, nays 64, as follows:

[Rollcall Vote No. 90 Leg.]

YEAS—33

Allard	DeMint	Isakson
Brownback	Dole	Kyl
Bunning	Ensign	Lott
Burr	Enzi	Martinez
Chambliss	Graham	McConnell
Coburn	Grassley	Sessions
Cochran	Gregg	Shelby
Corker	Hagel	Sununu
Cornyn	Hatch	Thomas
Craig	Hutchison	Thune
Crapo	Inhofe	Vitter

NAYS—64

Akaka	Feingold	Obama
Alexander	Feinstein	Pryor
Baucus	Harkin	Reed
Bayh	Inouye	Reid
Bennett	Kennedy	Roberts
Bingaman	Kerry	Rockefeller
Bond	Klobuchar	Salazar
Boxer	Kohl	Sanders
Brown	Landrieu	Schumer
Byrd	Lautenberg	Smith
Cantwell	Leahy	Snowe
Cardin	Levin	Specter
Carper	Lieberman	Stabenow
Casey	Lincoln	Stevens
Clinton	Lugar	Tester
Coleman	McCaskill	Voinovich
Collins	Menendez	Warner
Conrad	Mikulski	Webb
Dodd	Murkowski	Whitehouse
Domenici	Murray	Wyden
Dorgan	Nelson (FL)	
Durbin	Nelson (NE)	

NOT VOTING—3

Biden	Johnson	McCain

The amendment (No. 491) was rejected.

Mr. SPECTER. Mr. President. I voted against the Allard amendment because I am not prepared to accept the blanket assessment by OMB as to which programs are effective or not effective. In addition, I don't think it is sensible to eliminate only 25 percent of the ineffective programs. In my judgment, Congress should make the assessment as to which programs are effective or ineffective and then Congress should act to eliminate all of the ineffective programs.

AMENDMENT NO. 504, AS MODIFIED

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Under the previous order, there are now 2 minutes of debate prior to a vote in relation to the Baucus amendment, No. 504. Who yields time?

The Senator from Montana.

Mr. BAUCUS. Mr. President, this request has been cleared with the two managers and the ranking members of the Finance Committee. I ask unanimous consent to modify my amendment No. 504 with the text I send to the desk.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The amendment is so modified.

The amendment is as follows:

On page 48, line 19, before ''The'' insert the following:

(a) PRIORITY.—The Senate establishes the following priorities and makes the following findings:

(1) The Senate shall make the enactment of legislation to reauthorize the State Children's Health Insurance Program (SCHIP) a top priority for the remainder of fiscal year 2007, during the first session of the 110th Congress.

(2) Extending health care coverage to the Nation's vulnerable uninsured children is an urgent priority for the Senate.

(3) SCHIP has proven itself a successful program for covering previously uninsured children.

(4) More than 6 million children are enrolled in this landmark program, which has enjoyed broad bipartisan support in Congress, among our Nation's governors, and within state and local governments.

(5) SCHIP reduces the percentage of children with unmet health care needs.

(6) Since SCHIP was created, enormous progress has been made in reducing disparities in children's coverage rates.

(7) Uninsured children who gain coverage through SCHIP receive more preventive care and their parents report better access to providers and improved communications with their children's doctors.

(8) Congress has a responsibility to reauthorize SCHIP before the expiration of its current authorization.

(b) RESERVE FUND.—

Mr. BAUCUS. Mr. President, this amendment basically confirms our commitment to reauthorize the Children's Health Insurance Program by September 30. We have to get this authorized quickly. It is the statement of the Senate that we will do so; otherwise, we lose a large number of dollars. We lose about $25 billion from the budget baseline if we do not get this done. It will wreak financial havoc on States if we do not get this done.

The program has reduced the rate of uninsured children by one-fifth. It is a great opportunity, frankly, for everyone in this body to say ''yes'' to kids. Yes, we are going to make sure our kids are covered with insurance. We are going to expand the Children's Health Insurance Program. I urge all Senators to vote yes.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from New Hampshire is recognized.

Mr. GREGG. Mr. President, we support the amendment on our side. We will be happy to do it by a voice vote if the Senator wants to, but I suspect we are going to have a rollcall vote?

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Montana is recognized.

Mr. BAUCUS. Mr. President, we can voice vote this as far as I am concerned. There was a request on my side. I don't know if there is anymore. I don't see anybody waving his hand or her hand, so it is fine with me.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The question is on agreeing to the amendment as modified.

The amendment (No. 504), as modified, was agreed to.

Mr. DURBIN. Mr. President, I move to reconsider the vote.

Mr. CRAIG. I move to lay that motion on the table.

The motion to lay on the table was agreed to.

Mr. GRASSLEY. Mr. President, the Senate just voted on an amendment that makes a good first step to putting kids first in SCHIP. However, it is all well and good to say we are putting kids first. But the amendment we just voted on is not worth the paper it is printed on if the Senate does not take the next step and back up these words with policy.

The Cornyn amendment represents actual kids-first policy. I ask Senators to support the needed next step to putting kids first. Support the Cornyn amendment.

AMENDMENT NO. 511

Mr. GREGG. I understand the next amendment will be that of Senator CORNYN, dealing with the SCHIP issue. Is that correct?

The PRESIDING OFFICER. That is correct, amendment No. 511. The Senator from Texas is recognized.

Mr. CORNYN. Mr. President, my amendment establishes a deficit-neutral reserve fund and the finance committee to report a bill that reauthorizes SCHIP, a program that covers kids first. It emphasizes helping low-income kids, increases State flexibility, and eliminates waste, fraud, and abuse. This vote is the Senate's opportunity to make sure the original intent of the SCHIP program remains intact. This is about helping low-income kids first.

I yield the floor.

Mr. SPECTER. Mr. President, I seek recognition to outline my opposition to the Cornyn amendment, Senate amendment No. 511 to the fiscal year 2008 budget resolution. While I support reducing the cost of health care, I have concerns with reducing health care insurance coverage for children in low-income families.

The Cornyn amendment sought to ensure that only children in families under 200 percent of Federal poverty level—$27,380 for a single parent or $41,300 for a family of four—should receive State Children's Health Insurance Program, SCHIP, health coverage. This would have decreased the recent SCHIP change to Pennsylvania's Cover All Children program. The Pennsylvania Cover All Children program, which was approved by the Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services, allows SCHIP funds to be used to provide insurance to children in families below 300 percent of the Federal poverty level—$41,070 for a single parent or $61,950 for a family of four.

The authorization for SCHIP is scheduled to expire this year. I look forward to working with my colleagues to reauthorize and improve this important program.

Mr. WHITEHOUSE. Mr. President, I wish to speak in support of the SCHIP amendment offered by my colleagues, Senators BAUCUS and ROCKEFELLER, and to respectfully oppose the amendment of my colleague Senator CORNYN. I also want to praise my senior Senator, JACK REED, and thank him for his tireless commitment to providing vital health care coverage to the children of Rhode Island for so many years.

Our State of Rhode Island has one of the lowest rates of uninsured adults and children in the Nation. This fact is both encouraging and troubling. It is encouraging because insured children are more likely to receive medical care for common conditions like asthma and ear infections. It is encouraging because insured children have higher school attendance rates and higher academic achievement. It is encouraging because insured individuals are more likely to receive preventive care like mammograms and other cancer screenings.

But Rhode Island's uninsured rates trouble me because, even as one of the most well-insured States in the Nation, my State is still home to nearly 120,000 uninsured Americans. And 20,000 of those are children. Even as a leader in insuring children and adults in this Nation, we are still far from where we need to be, and we are going in the wrong direction. Rhode Island witnessed a 4.2-percent increase in the number of uninsured from 2000 to 2004, coupled with a 7.3-percent drop in those covered by employer-sponsored plans.

Senator CORNYN's amendment proposes to limit the SCHIP program to children under 200 percent of the Federal poverty line. In Rhode Island, that would have meant that almost 2,700 children would not have been able to access health insurance using SCHIP funds during fiscal year 2006. And this number does not even include children under the age of 8 because Rhode Island has covered those children through its Medicaid Program up to 250 percent of poverty.

For my colleagues from larger States, 2,700 might not sound like that many children. But the Cornyn amendment would potentially result in a 7.5-percent increase in the uninsured rate for children in our State. This is unacceptable. And it is particularly unacceptable in light of the fact that 10.1 percent of Rhode Island children under 250 percent of poverty are eligible but not enrolled in Medicaid or SCHIP.

I also oppose the Cornyn amendment because I do not believe that we should use SCHIP reauthorization as a vehicle to limit coverage of parents. First, covering parents is one of the most effective ways to cover children. When States cover parents, children participate in the Medicaid Program at higher rates, they have more contact with medical professionals, and receive more preventive care. Second, kicking parents off SCHIP only increases the number of uninsured individuals in our States, and forces those individuals to seek coverage in more expensive settings like hospital emergency rooms. Lastly, the Bush administration has repeatedly approved waivers to expand insurance to parents of children covered under State Medicaid and SCHIP programs. Covering parents is a value shared on both sides of the aisle.

As we move forward with this budget, and move forward with the ongoing health care debate, we should not be looking for ways to limit the coverage that States can offer their residents,

but ways to expand coverage to new and wider populations. For savings, we should be looking at reforms that improve quality and reduce cost, not throwing kids off health care programs. SCHIP was created in an effort to provide health insurance coverage to vulnerable children. In the spirit of this program, reauthorization should provide us with an opportunity to expand the tools States can use to cover the uninsured, not as an opportunity to hurt those Americans who need help the most.

I want to make a particular point to thank Chairman CONRAD and his staff for their superb work throughout this budget process, and for the chairman's continued support of children's health insurance programs.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Who yields time? The Senator from Montana.

Mr. BAUCUS. Mr. President, we voted to affirm our commitment to the program. The amendment offered by the Senator from Texas undermines the current program. Many Senators want to expand the Children's Health Insurance Program. This undermines it. It reduces the current program and wreaks havoc with the States. They will lose their flexibility that they currently have in administering the program. It puts a huge financial burden also on States that otherwise want to provide resources for the kids in their States.

I urge strongly we do not adopt the Cornyn amendment because it undermines the current program. It is a step backward, not forward.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The question is on agreeing to the amendment.

Mr. CONRAD. Mr. President, I ask for the yeas and nays

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Is there a sufficient second? There is a sufficient second.

The clerk will call the roll.

The assistant journal clerk called the roll.

Mr. DURBIN. I announce that the Senator from Delaware (Mr. BIDEN) and the Senator from South Dakota (Mr. JOHNSON) are necessarily absent.

Mr. LOTT. the following Senator is necessarily absent: the Senator from Arizona (Mr. MCCAIN).

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Are there any other Senators in the Chamber desiring to vote?

The result was announced—yeas 38, nays 59, as follows:

[Rollcall Vote No. 91 Leg.]

YEAS—38

Alexander	Cornyn	Hatch
Allard	Craig	Hutchison
Bennett	Crapo	Inhofe
Bond	DeMint	Isakson
Brownback	Dole	Kyl
Bunning	Ensign	Lott
Burr	Enzi	Martinez
Chambliss	Graham	McConnell
Coburn	Grassley	Roberts
Cochran	Gregg	Sessions
Corker	Hagel	
Shelby	Thune	Voinovich
Thomas	Vitter	Warner

NAYS—59

Akaka	Feinstein	Nelson (NE)
Baucus	Harkin	Obama
Bayh	Inouye	Pryor
Bingaman	Kennedy	Reed
Boxer	Kerry	Reid
Brown	Klobuchar	Rockefeller
Byrd	Kohl	Salazar
Cantwell	Landrieu	Sanders
Cardin	Lautenberg	Schumer
Carper	Leahy	Smith
Casey	Levin	Snowe
Clinton	Lieberman	Specter
Coleman	Lincoln	Stabenow
Collins	Lugar	Stevens
Conrad	McCaskill	Sununu
Dodd	Menendez	Tester
Domenici	Mikulski	Webb
Dorgan	Murkowski	Whitehouse
Durbin	Murray	Wyden
Feingold	Nelson (FL)	

NOT VOTING—3

Biden	Johnson	McCain

The amendment (No. 511) was rejected.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The majority leader is recognized.

Mr. REID. Mr. President, I move to reconsider the vote and to lay that motion on the table.

The motion to lay on the table was agreed to.

Mr. REID. Mr. President, there has been some confusion as to how many votes we are going to have during this period of time. There will be one more recorded vote. I think in fairness to some people on both sides of the aisle, we will make it a 15-minute vote rather than a 10-minute vote, because some people left thinking that was the last vote.

AMENDMENT NO. 525, AS MODIFIED

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Nevada.

Mr. CORNYN. Mr. President, as the Budget chairman has said repeatedly, this does not direct the Finance Committee how to do this or to consider specific proposals. But I do believe the reforms the President has put on the table would be a good place to start looking. We know a fiscal tsunami is coming. We all talk about the wall of debt, but now is the time to act by passing this amendment. I urge my colleagues to support this amendment.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection, amendment 525 will be the pending question.

The Senator from Montana is recognized.

Mr. BAUCUS. Mr. President, this amendment should be opposed very simply because the savings, the $34 billion the Senator from Texas prescribes, could not be used as offsets to help accommodate other programs. Let's take SCHIP, for example. Because the way the Senator's amendment is written, as reconciliation instructions, the $34 billion could not be offset. That would be straight deficit reduction.

We are going to need, frankly, some wiggle room in Medicare programs to find revenue to pay for CHIP and for other Medicare adjustments. It makes no sense to straight cut $34 billion out of Medicare alone, in itself a deep cut, without some way of shoring up some of the needs we are going to have, especially SCHIP. I strongly oppose this amendment.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The question is on agreeing to amendment No. 525, as modified. The yeas and nays are ordered.

The clerk will call the roll.

The assistant legislative clerk called the roll.

Mr. DURBIN. I announce that the Senator from Delaware (Mr. BIDEN) and the Senator from South Dakota (Mr. JOHNSON) are necessarily absent.

Mr. LOTT. The following Senator is necessarily absent: the Senator from Arizona (Mr. MCCAIN).

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Are there any other Senators in the Chamber desiring to vote?

The result was announced—yeas 23, nays 74, as follows:

[Rollcall Vote No. 92 Leg.]

YEAS—23

Alexander	Cornyn	Hatch
Allard	DeMint	Inhofe
Bond	Dole	Lott
Bunning	Ensign	Martinez
Burr	Enzi	McConnell
Coburn	Graham	Sununu
Cochran	Gregg	Vitter
Corker	Hagel	

NAYS—74

Akaka	Feinstein	Obama
Baucus	Grassley	Pryor
Bayh	Harkin	Reed
Bennett	Hutchison	Reid
Bingaman	Inouye	Roberts
Boxer	Isakson	Rockefeller
Brown	Kennedy	Salazar
Brownback	Kerry	Sanders
Byrd	Klobuchar	Schumer
Cantwell	Kohl	Sessions
Cardin	Kyl	Shelby
Carper	Landrieu	Smith
Casey	Lautenberg	Snowe
Chambliss	Leahy	Specter
Clinton	Levin	Stabenow
Coleman	Lieberman	Stevens
Collins	Lincoln	Tester
Conrad	Lugar	Thomas
Craig	McCaskill	Thune
Crapo	Menendez	Voinovich
Dodd	Mikulski	Warner
Domenici	Murkowski	Webb
Dorgan	Murray	Whitehouse
Durbin	Nelson (FL)	Wyden
Feingold	Nelson (NE)	

NOT VOTING—3

Biden	Johnson	McCain

The amendment (No. 525), as modified, was rejected.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from North Dakota.

Mr. CONRAD. Mr. President, did we move to reconsider?

The PRESIDING OFFICER. We did not.

Mr. CONRAD. Mr. President, I move to reconsider the vote, and I move to lay that motion on the table.

The motion to lay on the table was agreed to.

Mr. CONRAD. Mr. President, have we reconsidered and moved to lay on the table all of the votes this morning?

The PRESIDING OFFICER. There is one——

Mr. CONRAD. Let's have a blanket move to reconsider and move to lay on the table of the votes for this morning.

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

Mr. CONRAD. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the Sanders amendment be considered from now until 1:30; that then Senator ENZI be recognized for an amendment until 2 o'clock; that Senator CARPER be recognized at 2 o'clock; that at 2:15, Senator COLEMAN be recognized——

Mr. GREGG. For an amendment.

Mr. CONRAD. For an amendment; that at 2:45, Senator LINCOLN be recognized for an amendment; and that at 3:15, Senator KYL be recognized for an hour equally divided on his amendment.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Is there objection?

Without objection, it is so ordered.

Mr. CONRAD. Further, as part of that unanimous consent, I ask unanimous consent that the Kyl amendment be voted on before 11 o'clock tomorrow, at a time to be determined by the two leaders; that there be, before the Kyl amendment, 6 minutes evenly divided; that there be a side-by-side amendment reserved on the Democratic side with the Kyl amendment, and that the same rule pertain that there be 6 minutes equally divided.

Mr. GREGG. Further, if the Senator will yield?

Mr. CONRAD. I am happy to yield to my colleague.

Mr. GREGG. That there be side-by-sides reserved for all amendments that are offered in this group, and that the initial amendment be the first amendment voted on.

Mr. CONRAD. Let me just understand that final point.

Mr. GREGG. So the offered amendment would be the first amendment voted on in the side-by-sides.

Mr. CONRAD. That the Sanders amendment would be the first amendment; is that what the Senator is saying?

Mr. GREGG. No. If there is a side-by-side, it would be the understanding that the initial amendment, the underlying amendment, would be the first one voted on.

Mr. CONRAD. No, that would not be typically the order.

Mr. GREGG. It would be an amendment like a second degree.

Mr. CONRAD. The second degree would be voted on first. So our amendment would be, in effect, the second degree, and so in the regular order it would be voted on first.

Mr. GREGG. OK. But side-by-sides reserved for all the amendments.

Mr. CONRAD. Yes, side-by-sides reserved for all the amendments. And votes would be on or in relationship to the subjects that we have identified here.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Is there objection?

Without objection, it is so ordered.

The Senator from North Dakota.

AMENDMENT NO. 502

Mr. CONRAD. Mr. President, I would like to now take up Grassley amendment No. 502 in regard to the Smithsonian. We have agreement from Senator GRASSLEY and others to take that amendment on a voice vote.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Is there objection?

Without objection, the amendment is the pending question.

Is there further debate on the amendment?

If not, the question is on agreeing to the amendment.

The amendment (No. 502) was agreed to.

Mr. CONRAD. Mr. President, I thank the Chair.

Mr. President, if the Presiding Officer could read back to me the final timing for the unanimous consent agreement we have just entered into—the GOP amendment, which is the Kyl amendment, would be offered at 3:15 this afternoon, and that would be an hour equally divided, and that would leave us at 4:15?

The PRESIDING OFFICER. That is correct.

Mr. CONRAD. Mr. President, I ask my colleague if we could then agree for 10 minutes equally divided on the Bayh amendment.

Mr. GREGG. Mr. President, we have not seen the Bayh amendment.

Mr. CONRAD. We will get a copy, and perhaps we can work that out.

Mr. President, I yield to Senator SANDERS.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Vermont.

AMENDMENT NO. 545

Mr. SANDERS. Mr. President, I send an amendment to the desk which has been shared with the other side.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will report.

The assistant legislative clerk read as follows:

The Senator from Vermont [Mr. SANDERS], for himself, and Ms. MIKULSKI, proposes an amendment numbered 545.

The amendment is as follows:

(Purpose: To restore the top marginal tax rate to pre-2001 levels on taxable income in excess of $1 million and use the increased revenue to increase funding for the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act)

On page 3, line 11, increase the amount by $10,300,000,000.

On page 3, line 12, increase the amount by $14,600,000,000.

On page 3, line 13, increase the amount by $14,800,000,000.

On page 3, line 14, increase the amount by $4,500,000,000.

On page 3, line 20, increase the amount by $10,300,000,000.

On page 3, line 21, increase the amount by $14,600,000,000.

On page 3, line 22, increase the amount by $14,800,000,000.

On page 3, line 23, increase the amount by $4,500,000,000.

On page 4, line 6, increase the amount by $10,300,000,000.

On page 4, line 7, increase the amount by $14,600,000,000.

On page 4, line 8, increase the amount by $14,800,000,000.

On page 4, line 9, increase the amount by $4,500,000,000.

On page 4, line 15, increase the amount by $10,300,000,000.

On page 4, line 16, increase the amount by $14,600,000,000.

On page 4, line 17, increase the amount by $14,800,000,000.

On page 4, line 18, increase the amount by $4,500,000,000.

On page 10, line 9, increase the amount by $10,300,000,000.

On page 10, line 10, increase the amount by $10,300,000,000.

On page 10, line 13, increase the amount by $14,600,000,000.

On page 10, line 14, increase the amount by $14,600,000,000.

On page 10, line 17, increase the amount by $14,800,000,000.

On page 10, line 18, increase the amount by $14,800,000,000.

On page 10, line 21, increase the amount by $4,500,000,000.

On page 10, line 22, increase the amount by $4,500,000,000.

Mr. SANDERS. Mr. President, this amendment is being cosponsored by Senator MIKULSKI of Maryland. This amendment is about keeping the promises the Federal Government made to the people of our country 32 years ago. It is about keeping our word to the children of this country, especially those with disabilities. It is about keeping our word to the property tax payers of this country, whose property taxes in Vermont and throughout this country are going up and up and up.

When Congress passed the Individuals with Disabilities Act in 1975, under the leadership of Senator TOM HARKIN, that legislation said the Government would provide up to 40 percent—40 percent—of the national average per-pupil expenditure for special education. Unfortunately, however, the Federal Government has not kept its word. Today, its contribution stands at barely 17 percent. The promise was 40 percent; the reality is 17 percent.

In other words, the Federal Government passed legislation doing the right thing with regard to our children in 1975, but it has not followed through in terms of the kind of funding it promised, and school districts all over this country and children all over this country are suffering from that lack of action.

When Members of Congress on both sides of the aisle talk about unfunded mandates, the inadequate funding for special education is the poster child of that problem. We told school districts we would fund special education at 40 percent, and we are funding it at 17 percent. That is wrong. That speaks poorly of Congress.

In Vermont, and I suspect all over this country, school districts are demanding we rectify that problem, that we keep the promise made so many years ago.

When the Federal Government does not keep its word, school districts in my State, school districts in the Presiding Officer's State and throughout this country are forced to do one of two things: either they do not provide the quality of special education care the special needs kids require—and that is wrong—or else their limited budgets require them to cut back on other educational programs in order to fund the expensive needs of special eduction

kids. So what ends up happening is we take money from second languages, we take money from athletics, we take money from arts, and we put it into special education, and all of the children suffer as a result of that.

The third option facing school districts—which certainly is taking place in Vermont, and I expect all over this country—is that school districts are forced to ask for higher and higher property taxes. Those property taxes are becoming so high in areas of this country that people who have lived in their homes for their entire lives are now being forced to leave their homes.

The property tax is a regressive form of taxation. It hits working families very hard and unfairly. It hits senior citizens unfairly. More and more communities around this country are forced to raise property taxes, which is putting an increased burden on middle-class families.

The amendment I am offering, which is cosponsored by Senator MIKULSKI of Maryland, is a simple and straightforward amendment. At a time when the wealthiest people in this country are becoming wealthier, at a time when the wealthiest 1 percent have not had it so good since the 1920s, at a time when property taxes on the middle class are soaring all over this country, at a time when school districts are being forced to spend more and more on special education, this amendment increases funding for special education by $44.2 billion over the next 5 years.

It finally begins to do what this Congress should have done years and years ago. It adequately funds special education. It begins to move away from the unfunded mandate that so many communities around our country are suffering from.

This amendment raises the $44.2 billion by rescinding the 2001 income tax cuts that were given to millionaires. In other words, it would restore the top income tax rate to 39.6 percent on taxable income exceeding $1 million per year.

This amendment would only apply to millionaires. Those are the only people who would be asked to pay more because we would be rescinding the 2001 income tax reductions that President Bush and the Congress gave to them.

While we ask the wealthiest people in this country to pay a little bit more, what we would be doing is lowering property taxes for the middle class all over this country and improving the quality of education that our children receive.

By using this revenue for special education, as this amendment does, the Federal Government could begin to live up to its 40 percent commitment in fiscal year 2009. Not only would we be providing a much needed boost for children with disabilities, we would also be providing property tax relief to so many families throughout this country who are in desperate need of that relief.

The bottom line of this amendment is pretty simple. It has a lot to do about which side we consider ourselves to be on. We hear a lot of rhetoric in the Congress about the importance of education. The Presiding Officer understands the importance of education. I understand the importance of education. I suspect every Member of the Senate understands the need to improve the quality of education in this country. This is an amendment about improving education for all of our children.

We hear a lot of discussion in the Senate and the Congress about the growth of special education needs among our kids—whether it is autism, ADD, or other disorders. This is an amendment which addresses in a very serious way the needs of special education.

We hear a lot about unfunded mandates and the burden of higher and higher property taxes on working families all over this country. This amendment, if passed, takes a giant step forward in rectifying this unfunded mandate and lowering property taxes. Mostly, though, this amendment is about Congress keeping its word, keeping the promise it made so many years ago. We made a promise to school districts all over this country that if they mainstreamed kids into public schools, Congress would provide 40 percent of the cost. We have not kept that promise. We have given hundreds of billions of dollars in tax breaks to millionaires and billionaires, but we have not reached out to school districts to help them with the cost of special education, the result being higher and higher property taxes. The time is long overdue for the Congress to keep the promises it made with regard to special education, and this amendment does just that.

Mr. President, I yield the floor.

Mr. GREGG. Mr. President, what is the time situation?

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from New Hampshire has 12 minutes. The Senator from Vermont has 2 minutes.

Mr. GREGG. Mr. President, the amendment of the Senator from Vermont, the Senator from across the river, as we say in New Hampshire, a Senator from the State where all our bad weather comes from, actually—the sunshine comes from New Hampshire—this amendment raises taxes by something like $44 billion. The purpose of it is to spend that money on special education.

Special education is an important program. In fact, it is so important that if you look at the priorities this administration has put in place in the education accounts since it came into office, it has increased special education funding by I think a factor that is three times greater—I believe that is the number—than the Clinton administration increased special education funding. This administration, in the first year in office, jumped special education by $1 billion. The next year, it jumped special education funding by another $1 billion, and so on and so on. The increase in special education funding under this administration has been the largest increase of any administration, both percentage-wise and in dollars, over its term.

But to raise taxes $44 billion is a pretty big tax increase. You can throw out the word ''millionaire.'' What we are talking about here are small businesspeople. Eighty-three percent of the people who would be hit by the top rate are small businesspeople. It is all rates.

He is talking about repealing the President's tax cuts that have generated so much economic activity around this country and have created a revenue stream into this Government which exceeds the historical norm. In other words, even though it is counter-intuitive to some folks, and especially to some of our editorial boards, such as The New York Times, we have actually seen an increase, a very significant increase in revenues by reducing the tax rates in this country so they are fair, so that people are willing to go out and take risks with their dollars, be entrepreneurial and, as a result, create jobs and economic activity, which is translated into income for the Federal Government.

In fact, in the last 3 years, we have received more income, larger increases in income in Federal revenue than at any time in our history, huge jumps in income, and we are now receiving more income as a Federal Government than is the historic norm—18.5 percent of gross national product in income to the Federal Government. The norm is usually 18.2 percent.

In addition, these tax rates which were put in place which are repealed under this proposal have created a more aggressive tax system. During the Clinton years, the top 20 percent of wage-earners—of income tax payers in this country paid about 81 percent of the Federal taxes. Today, that same top 20 percent—they are not the same people, because the genius of our society is that people go in and out of that group depending on how capable they are. Some people make money and get in; some people lose money and go out. But that same group, that top 20 percent, is paying almost 85 percent of the total income tax burden. So it is more progressive at the top end than it was during the Clinton years.

Even though the tax rates may be lower, the generation of income tax—people who are paying it—is more progressive, and at the lower end, the bottom 40 percent of the people who pay income taxes or who are subject to income tax in this country—they don't actually pay the money; they get money back from the earned-income tax credit—that group of individuals, the 40 percent there, is getting twice as much back under the earned-income tax credit as they did in the Clinton years. So at the top, you have people paying more. At the bottom, you have people getting more back. That is

called progressivity. So we are getting more revenue. We are getting historic highs in revenue. We are beyond the traditional amount we get in revenue, and we have a more progressive tax system.

What is the Senator from Vermont suggesting? Increase taxes by $44 billion.

Well, I have referred to this budget from the other side of the aisle as tax-and-spend. Very simply, it is a tax-and-spend budget. It adds new spending. It adds $900 billion in new taxes. It increases the debt by $2.2 trillion. It does nothing to control spending, either on the discretionary side or on the mandatory side.

If you pass this amendment, I suppose you just supersized it in the tax size. You can go into McDonald's and you can get a regular Coke. This is sort of a ''regular'' Democratic tax-and-spend bill. There are a lot of new taxes—$900 billion—but that is sort of out of the mainstream of the party. But the Senator from Vermont has decided we are going to ''supersize'' this tax increase to $44 billion. So, obviously, we oppose the amendment.

This concept of expanding funding to IDEA is a good concept, but it should come within the ordering of priorities. It shouldn't come by a dramatic tax increase. In fact, this President has shown he is going to reorder priorities to accomplish that during his term in office.

Mr. President, I reserve the remainder of our time at this point.

Mr. SANDERS. Mr. President, I always enjoy dialoguing with my neighbor from New Hampshire. Let me make just a few points. I think he understands, because if my son who lives in Claremont, NH, is accurate, what he is telling me is what Vermonters are telling me—that property taxes in New Hampshire and in Vermont and all over this country are soaring.

My friend from New Hampshire says the President and Congress are addressing special education needs, more money is going into it. But the reality is that for the last 3 years, the percentage of Federal contributions for special education has gone down. They were at a high of 18 percent. They are moving downward. They are now at 17 percent.

My friend can talk about raising taxes, and let me concede that he is right. We are raising taxes on the upper three-tenths of 1 percent because 99.7 percent of the American people would not see any increase in Federal taxes as a result of this amendment. Tens of millions of American families would see a reduction in their property taxes.

I believe that at a time when the wealthiest 1 percent have never had it so good, when we are seeing that, according to Forbes magazine, the collective net worth of the wealthiest 400 Americans—400—increased by $120 billion last year to $1.25 trillion, it is time for this Congress to start worrying about middle-class families that can't afford higher and higher property taxes, about kids with disabilities who deserve quality education, about all of our children who deserve an education, and not worry about the upper three-tenths of 1 percent.

If my friend from New Hampshire says I am raising taxes on the upper three-tenths of 1 percent, people who are millionaires and billionaires, I concede that point. I am. That is the right thing to do.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Who yields time?

Mr. GREGG. Mr. President, at this point, I believe Senator ENZI is ready to go with his amendment. Rather than tie him up and since he was also the chairman of the HELP Committee, he may have some thoughts on this issue of how we are doing on special education. But in any event, so he can get started, I yield the remaining time so Senator ENZI can go forward.

Mr. CONRAD. Mr. President, before the Senator departs, I wish to again thank him for his unfailing courtesy as we work through this budget resolution. I appreciate very much all of the constructive help he has provided as we have tried to get this done. I thank him very much.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Wyoming is recognized.

AMENDMENT NO. 497

Mr. ENZI. Mr. President, I call up Senate amendment No. 497.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will report.

The legislative clerk read as follows:

The Senator from Wyoming [Mr. ENZI] proposes an amendment numbered 497.

Mr. ENZI. I ask unanimous consent that the reading of the amendment be dispensed with.

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

The amendment is as follows:

(Purpose: To establish a 60 vote point of order for legislation that creates unfunded mandates on small business concerns)

At the end of title II, insert the following:

SEC. 2____. RESTRICTIONS ON PRIVATE SECTOR MANDATES.

(a) POINT OF ORDER.—It shall not be in order in the Senate to consider any bill, joint resolution, motion, amendment, or conference report that would increase the direct costs of private sector mandates on small business concerns (as that term is defined in section 3 of the Small Business Act (15 U.S.C. 632)) by an amount that exceeds the threshold provided in section 424(b)(1) of the Congressional Budget Act of 1974 (2 U.S.C. 658c(b)(1)).

(b) WAIVER AND APPEAL.—Subsection (a) may be waived or suspended in the Senate only by an affirmative vote of three-fifths of the Members, duly chosen and sworn. An affirmative vote of three-fifths of the Members of the Senate, duly chosen and sworn, shall be required to sustain an appeal of the ruling of the Chair on a point of order raised under subsection (a).

Mr. ENZI. Mr. President, my amendment is very simple. It establishes a 60-vote threshold for legislation that imposes unfunded mandates on small businesses as determined by the Small Business Administration, when it is in excess of $131 million, which is established in the Unfunded Mandates Reform Act. As my colleagues may know, small businesses make up 99 7/10 percent of all U.S. employers and employs 50 percent of the Nation's nonfarm private sector workers. That is according to the Small Business Administration. Congress has an obligation to make sure laws written in Washington don't unfairly burden Main Street.

The Unfunded Mandates Reform Act already requires the CBO to estimate whether Congress imposes mandates on the private sector. Right now there is a 60-vote point of order against legislation if the Federal mandates estimate has not been printed in the committee report or the CONGRESSIONAL RECORD. The fiscal year 2006 budget resolution conference agreement included a 60-vote point of order for imposing unfunded mandates on State and local governments. That is State and local governments, but it doesn't say anything about the engine of the economy: small businesses.

My colleagues will notice that I have left out big business. Big business can usually take care of itself, but small business doesn't have the people or the clout to be able to come here and point out to us the gross burdens we are putting on them. So I think the Senate should have a new 60-vote point of order that applies to legislation that creates unfunded, private sector mandates. It is time for Congress to remember that our actions here in Washington have very real monetary consequences on the small business owners in Buffalo, WY, or Conway, NH, or Main Street, Anywhere.

I came to Washington from Wyoming as a firm believer in what I call the 80/20 rule. I have found you can reach agreement on 80 percent of all the issues. I also know we are probably never going to reach agreement on the other 20 percent. But any unfunded mandates Congress imposes on the private sector should fall into—no, not the 80-percent category; I am just asking for a 60-percent category and receive strong support on both sides of the aisle that way.

This 80/20 rule was the guiding principle for my chairmanship of the HELP Committee during the 109th Congress. Senator KENNEDY and I abided by that. We avoided the highly partisan issues. We worked on the nonpartisan or the bipartisan issues. It turned out to be, instead of the most contentious committee, one of the more agreeable committees. We accomplished a tremendous amount of work. In fact, President Bush signed 27 committee bills into law. Most of those went through by unanimous consent. That is far above the 60-vote threshold I am asking for with this amendment.

We in Washington have to stop thinking our good ideas can be paid for by the wave of a wand. To that end, the Senate needs a procedural tool to remind ourselves that the policies we pass in Washington often translate to

the direct cost increases on the businesses on Main Street.

This is a commonsense proposal. I urge my colleagues to support the amendment. I am sure there are small business supporters on both sides of the aisle who can see the benefit. I will mention that, right now, there is a 60-vote point of order in the Senate on everything. It is a filibuster. With a filibuster, 60 people have to agree before you can move on. That is often a 5-day waste of time. It would be much more convenient if we could get a vote and see that there are 60 people in support and know that even a filibuster isn't going to work against it. That would allow things to move forward faster.

I am not trying to slow the process. I am trying to provide a mechanism that protects small business and allows us to get on with the business of the Senate. It seems to me to be a win-win situation for us. We do protect cities, towns, counties, States, all of their small governments and even some big governments, but we don't protect the small businessman. The small businessman is what keeps this economy moving, keeps us going. I am sure there isn't any issue that falls into that 80 percent that we all can agree on, that we cannot get 60 percent approval to move forward on. It will encourage more bipartisanship, and I think in the last election that was the main message delivered to all of us. It wasn't the base of either party that provided the impetus for any changes.

It was the independents and the folks who said: Come on, guys, get along and get something done in Washington. That is what we are trying to do with this particular measure—move things along at a faster rate and to assure that small businesses can thrive in this country and that we get agreement from 60 percent of the people in this body to move forward. This will provide needed protection to small businesses.

I ask unanimous consent that a letter from the NFIB be printed in the RECORD.

There being no objection, the material was ordered to be printed in the RECORD, as follows:

March 21, 2007.

Hon. MICHAEL ENZI,
U.S. Senate,
Washington, DC.

DEAR SENATOR ENZI: On behalf of the National Federation of Independent Business (NFIB), the nation's leading small-business advocacy group, I strongly support your amendment to the FY 2008 Budget Resolution that would raise the private sector unfunded mandate point of order from a 50 to a 60 vote threshold.

Congress needs a 60 vote threshold to force itself to think twice before adding additional unfunded mandates for several reasons. One, the regulatory burden that small businesses face is already too high. According to recent studies commissioned by the Small Business Administration the regulatory burden in 2004 was estimated to be $7,647 per employee in small businesses with fewer than 20 employees. And small firms spend 45 percent more than their larger counterparts to comply with federal regulations.

Second, this Congress has either considered or likely will consider mandates that will add to this burden. Among the proposals under consideration include legislation to increase the minimum wage, require small employers to provide paid sick leave, offer family and medical leave, and provide wage insurance.

The critical role that small business plays in our economy is another reason Congress should think before imposing new unfunded mandates. Small business produces roughly half of the private Gross Domestic Product and between 60 and 80 percent of net new jobs. Legislators should be working to strengthen small business's ability to create new jobs and grow their businesses, not working to impede their progress.

Thank you for introducing this important amendment and your continued support of small business.

Sincerely,

DAN DANNER,
Executive Vice President,
Public Policy and Political.

Mr. ENZI. Mr. President, I hope my colleagues will support this amendment. I will be happy to address any concerns. We have looked at a number of issues, historically, to see what the effect would be. We think the effect would be good legislation for small business and for the economy of this country.

I yield the floor and reserve the remainder of my time.

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Mr. SALAZAR). Who yields time?

Mr. ENZI. Mr. President, I suggest the absence of a quorum and ask that the time be equally divided.

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

The clerk will call the roll.

The legislative clerk proceeded to call the roll.

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

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

Mr. CONRAD. Mr. President, I yield 5 minutes to the Senator from Maryland, Senator CARDIN.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Maryland is recognized.

Mr. CARDIN. Mr. President, I thank Senator CONRAD for yielding me this time. I take this time to rise in support of the budget resolution and the work of Senator CONRAD and the Budget Committee. It has been said frequently it is the most difficult job here to try to put together a budget, when you are trying to deal with all the different priorities. Senator CONRAD has done an excellent job in moving the agenda of this Nation.

This budget resolution changes the fiscal priorities of America. First, it provides for fiscal discipline. The pay-go rules are real. There are difficult choices our committees will have to make. But we have made it a priority to get our budget back into balance and say that we have to make tough choices.

Secondly, there are important priority areas. I compliment the committee for making health care truly a priority, to change the direction of America. It is a national disgrace that we have 46 million people without health insurance in America. We need to do something about it. We need universal health coverage in this country. This budget moves us in that direction by making SCHIP a priority. It gives the committee the ability to expand a very successful program. SCHIP works. It provides health insurance for our children.

Over the last 10 years, we have seen improved health care outcomes as a result of the SCHIP program. We know that if a person is covered by SCHIP, they are much more likely to receive primary care and dental care. They are much less likely to use the emergency rooms and much more likely to be immunized and have preventive health care and access to prescription drugs. Those enrolled in the SCHIP program are going to be better off. This budget allows us to move that issue forward. We often talk about it.

There was a hearing before the Senate Finance Committee and a family from Maryland was there. I will quote from Mrs. Bedford. She has five children in the SCHIP program. What she said is:

> Perhaps the greatest impact MCHIP, the Maryland Children's Health Insurance Program, has had on our families medically is that we no longer have to make impossible health choices based on a financial prospective. We no longer have to decide whether a child is ''really sick enough'' to warrant a doctor's visit. We no longer have to decide whether a child ''really needs'' a certain medication prescribed by his pediatrician. The face of CHIP is families such as ours, families who work hard and play by the rules, trying to live the American dream.

This budget will allow more families to be able to be in the health program and to live the American dream. Another family in Maryland is the Diver family, where Diamonte Diver died as a result of not getting access to preventive dental care. The toothache became abscessed and spread into his brain. He had emergency surgery costing over a quarter of a million dollars. If he would have had access to preventive oral care, dental care, for $80 he could have had a tooth extraction and that would have saved money in our health care system.

By expanding the SCHIP program, more children will be covered by dental care. There are so many reasons why this budget will allow us to move forward regarding our health care priorities. In the 109th Congress, we prevented 17 States from running out of money late in the session. This budget versus the President's budget is a clear choice. The President's budget moves in the wrong direction on health care and the SCHIP program. This allows us to make it truly a national priority.

There are other parts of the budget in health care that I support, such as the long-term care reserve fund, so that we can develop a more cost-effective way to take care of long-term care needs, so families can get assisted living help or home health care, and they

don't have to spend as much money in nursing care. I could go through many priorities, whether it is veterans health care, education, or whether it is transportation. All these are important priorities that this budget allows us to move forward on in a fiscally responsible way.

I know we have had budgets that try to pull back from the pay-go requirements. I am glad we have stood up for the pay-go requirements. We have to balance the budget, but we need to change the priorities of America and move forward with health care and education, and we need to move forward with veterans and transportation. This budget allows us to do it.

I urge my colleagues to be cautious on all these amendments that are being offered. They may sound well intended, but they could jeopardize the thrust of the budget. I urge my colleagues to support the underlying resolution.

I yield back the remainder of my time.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Who yields time?

The Senator from North Dakota is recognized.

Mr. CONRAD. Mr. President, I thank Senator CARDIN, the Senator from Maryland, an extremely valuable member of the Budget Committee. He came to this Chamber after an extremely well-respected career in the House of Representatives, where he served in the most powerful committee in the House of Representatives, the Ways and Means Committee. Senator CARDIN is known as a Congressman's Congressman. He is somebody who does his homework. We have already seen that on the Budget Committee. He is already an extraordinarily valuable member there. I rely on him heavily. I cannot tell you how pleased I am to have Senator CARDIN on the Budget Committee. He has a wealth of knowledge, which has been put to good use as we have crafted this budget resolution. So I commend him and thank him publicly for the contribution he has made. This is the kind of serious-minded person this Senate needs and the Congress of the United States needs. We are delighted he is on the Budget Committee.

I would like to speak for a minute on the Enzi amendment. Senator ENZI, on the other side of the aisle, is somebody I not only like but I respect. Senator ENZI was an accountant in his private life. He brings those skills and that discipline to his job. He is well regarded on both sides of the aisle because he is serious about the job. I wish to start by saying I do like and admire the Senator from Wyoming, Mr. ENZI.

On his amendment, let me give my reactions. I think it is entirely well intended. What I worry about are the unintended consequences with this amendment. Let me say why. Currently, there is a 60-vote point of order against legislation that would impose unfunded mandates against State, local, and tribal governments above a certain threshold. That threshold right now is $66 million in any 1 year. In addition to that point of order, there is a 50-vote point of order against legislation that would have an unfunded private sector mandate above a certain threshold. That, currently, as I recall, is $131 million in a year. But that is not a 60-vote point of order; it is not a supermajority. It is a simple majority. The amendment that Senator ENZI has presented would make the private sector unfunded mandate point of order a 60-vote one, a supermajority.

I think the Senator would acknowledge that. He has altered it somewhat from what he offered in committee. It applies to the extent that the mandate affects small businesses. So this amendment could result in a budget point of order against legislation that has no Federal, State, local or tribal budget impact; but it would have an effect if a mandate affects small businesses and it has an effect of over $131 million in any year.

So far, so good. The difficulty I see with the amendment is, first, once again, the Budget Committee does not have the authority to make this kind of policy determination. We don't. I would like to. Many times as the Budget Committee chairman, I wish we had this kind of authority, but we simply don't.

If legislation such as this were adopted—and again, it can't be adopted in a budget resolution—but if it were adopted separately, my staff informs me it could affect legislation in the following areas: It could actually create a 60-vote point of order against the mental health parity legislation of Senator DOMENICI—legislation, by the way, of which Senator ENZI is a cosponsor. It could create a 60-vote point of order against the 2007 Defense authorization bill. It could create a 60-vote point of order, a supermajority hurdle, against minimum wage legislation, bankruptcy reform, pension reform, and a host of other bills.

That is the concern I have about this amendment in terms of a policy. We have not had a hearing. It requires further exploration before we would go forward with this particular amendment.

Again, the desire the Senator has to have unfunded mandates points of order on issues that would affect small business is entirely reasonable, but I am very concerned about the unintended consequences. I am very concerned about creating a 60-vote hurdle, a supermajority vote, that could affect issues such as the mental health parity legislation of Senator DOMENICI, such as the 2007 Defense authorization bill, such as the minimum wage bill, such as the bankruptcy reform legislation, such as pension reform.

I sense there is danger here, and I urge my colleagues to think about it carefully before they vote for the amendment.

I understand we are getting to the end of the time. Does Senator ENZI have time remaining?

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Senator ENZI has 8½ minutes remaining.

Mr. CONRAD. Perhaps Senator ENZI wishes to use his time at this point.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Wyoming.

Mr. ENZI. Mr. President, I appreciate the comments of the Senator from North Dakota. He and I do have a lot in common. My grandparents homesteaded in North Dakota, and he and I both have a degree from the same college. We share a respect for the process of the Senate. I certainly respect him for the way he handles the budget and the fairness with which he has done so.

I hope he and others on the other side of the aisle will take another look at this amendment and not feel any fear. I hate to have people vote on a sense that there might be something sinister. If one looks at my record in the Senate, they will find I do not do things that are sinister, but I do things that protect small business.

As I have pointed out before, a point of order can be waived. If there are 60 votes, that point of order falls, and the issue moves forward. The Senator mentioned mental health parity. Yes, I am a cosponsor of mental health parity legislation. I have helped to bring people together, to find a third way of doing it, to get it into the 80-percent category, and move it forward for the first time. I know Senator DOMENICI has been working on this issue for over 6 years, close to 10 years, to get it to the point where it is now. I certainly wouldn't do anything that would put that bill in jeopardy. It could be in jeopardy because there is already a 60-vote point of order against it we will have to waive in order to go forward.

On a lot of these small business issues, there would be a 60-vote point of order already available on it. As I mentioned before, there is already another 60-vote possibility because anybody in the Senate can filibuster an issue which can cause it to fall into a category of needing a cloture motion. When you file a cloture motion, if you were to file it today, we couldn't vote on it until Saturday, and we would be debating the qualities of that amendment until Saturday. Saturday, when we had the 60 votes to pass it, then there would be another 30 hours of debate before the actual vote on that amendment, if everybody wanted to press the time. That would take up 5 days, maybe 6 days.

Waiving a point of order takes a few moments, and we can see if there is the strength to move the issue forward and discourage filibusters.

There is some real merit to having this point of order, both to show we have a concern for small business and recognize they are the engine that drives the economy of this country and that we do need to watch out for them, protect them, and keep from putting them out of business.

I hope my colleagues will take a careful look at this amendment and see the merit in it instead of sensing that

there could be implications. I do not have any ulterior motives, other than my normal concern for small business and the feeling we need to watch out for them. It doesn't hurt to have a searching for answers, sometimes a third way, to get done what we want to do to allow small business to succeed and for us to do what we wish to do.

I hope my colleagues will take a look at this amendment and vote for it. I sense there are some who are going to vote for it anyway. I hope they follow through and vote for it.

I yield the floor and yield back the remainder of my time.

Mr. CONRAD. Mr. President, we are now awaiting the arrival of Senator CARPER. I ask the staff to call the Senator's office because we are ready to go to Senator CARPER's amendment.

Mr. President, could you give us an update on the time situation?

The PRESIDING OFFICER. At the present time, there is 4 minutes remaining to the Senator from Wyoming and 3 minutes remaining to the Senator from North Dakota on the Enzi amendment.

Mr. CONRAD. We are prepared to yield back all time on both sides of the Enzi amendment.

I see Senator COLEMAN is here. Will Senator COLEMAN be available to go forward with his amendment? Senator CARPER is not in the Chamber.

Mr. COLEMAN. Mr. President, I am ready to go forward.

Mr. CONRAD. Mr. President, I ask the manager on the other side if that is acceptable with him.

Mr. GREGG. Yes.

Mr. CONRAD. Why don't we do that. We thank Senator COLEMAN very much. We will go to Senator CARPER after Senator COLEMAN has completed.

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

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Minnesota.

AMENDMENT NO. 577

Mr. COLEMAN. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the pending amendment be laid aside so that I may send an amendment to the desk.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection, it is so ordered. The clerk will report.

The legislative clerk read as follows:

The Senator from Minnesota [Mr. COLEMAN], for himself, Ms. SNOWE, Ms. COLLINS, and Mr. ROBERTS, proposes an amendment numbered 577.

Mr. COLEMAN. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the reading of the amendment be dispensed with.

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

The amendment is as follows:

(Purpose: To provide budget levels to extend through 2012 the production tax credit for electricity produced from renewable resources; the Clean Renewable Energy Bonds; and energy tax provisions for energy efficient buildings and power plants)

On page 3, line 12, decrease the amount by $277,000,000.

On page 3, line 13, decrease the amount by $634,000,000.

On page 3, line 14, decrease the amount by $939,000,000.

On page 3, line 15, decrease the amount by $1,307,000,000.

On page 3, line 21, decrease the amount by $277,000,000.

On page 3, line 22, decrease the amount by $634,000,000.

On page 3, line 23, decrease the amount by $939,000,000.

On page 4, line 1, decrease the amount by $1,307,000,000.

On page 4, line 7, decrease the amount by $277,000,000.

On page 4, line 8, decrease the amount by $634,000,000.

On page 4, line 9, decrease the amount by $939,000,000.

On page 4, line 10, decrease the amount by $1,307,000,000.

On page 4, line 16, decrease the amount by $277,000,000.

On page 4, line 17, decrease the amount by $634,000,000.

On page 4, line 18, decrease the amount by $939,000,000.

On page 4, line 19, decrease the amount by $1,307,000,000.

On page 26, line 16, decrease the amount by $277,000,000.

On page 26, line 17, decrease the amount by $277,000,000.

On page 26, line 20, decrease the amount by $634,000,000.

On page 26, line 21, decrease the amount by $634,000,000.

On page 26, line 24, decrease the amount by $939,000,000.

On page 26, line 25, decrease the amount by $939,000,000.

On page 27, line 3, decrease the amount by $1,307,000,000.

On page 27, line 4, decrease the amount by $1,307,000,000.

Mr. COLEMAN. Mr. President, as we all know, budgets are about setting priorities for the Nation. As we continue to work on the resolution today, I offer an amendment to address a key priority for our Nation: providing for our Nation's energy future.

We all know America's energy needs are growing rapidly. We need clean energy, and high energy prices threaten our national security. This is now a national security issue. A few years ago, when I was talking about ethanol, I would get some patronizing pats on the back for taking care of some Midwest corn growers. That has changed today.

Clearly, this is a national security issue. High energy prices threaten our economic security. It is imperative then that Congress work to promote energy technology that will offer clean energy solutions and, if anything, Congress's budget should provide for new opportunities to address these issues.

Yet in addition to seeking new legislative opportunities, we must address the oncoming expiration of current energy tax incentives that promote renewable energy and energy efficiency.

At the end of 2008, tax incentives for wind, biomass, geothermal, hydropower, solar, and other clean energy technologies will expire, as well as tax provisions for energy-efficient residential and commercial buildings.

In my home State of Minnesota, we take a lot of pride in our leadership on renewable energy issues from biomass to wind. It has been said southwest Minnesota is the Saudi Arabia of wind. Our State has made a massive investment in renewables and it is paying off. Renewable energy allows Minnesota to diversify and expand. It has reduced Minnesota's carbon footprint, and has also created jobs and put our State on the leading edge of renewable technology. At one point, I believe Minnesota had half the E85 pumps.

We have had success I would like to see continue in my State and replicated across the Nation. The United States should be a leader of renewable energy in this world. But much of the success would not have been possible without a little assistance. The production tax credit, for example, has enabled the wind industry to explode over the last several years. I talked with so many folks involved in the wind energy business, farmers who farm wind today, small-town mayors who are depending on wind energy to help them. We are at the point now where there is a waiting list for wind turbines. This is a great success story that would not have been possible without the production tax credit which is set to expire at the end of 2008.

Another renewable energy incentive that is new but has generated a lot of interest is the CREBs, clean renewable energy bonds. These are enabling local governments and rural electric co-ops to make a contribution to the need for renewable energy. I know there is a case in Minnesota where several school districts actually combined to use these bonds to put up a wind turbine project. There are great renewable success stories waiting to happen, but this wind energy tool, set to expire in 2008, will be short lived if not extended.

A lot of times, we focus on the production side of the energy issue, when, in reality, promoting energy efficiency can do more than anything to lower energy prices and protect the environment in the short term. In fact, the American Council for Energy-Efficient Economy has found if a massive energy efficiency effort were undertaken, we could reduce natural gas use by 1 percent and cut prices by well over 30 percent—in fact, they said a 37-percent potential cut in prices. Energy efficiency is the quickest, cheapest, and cleanest way to bring down energy costs for consumers. Meanwhile, as consumers save money, they also reduce greenhouse gas emissions.

Although we should always look for additional policies that promote energy efficiency, Congress has passed tax provisions for energy-efficient homes and commercial buildings that have made a real impact. One such provision is a deduction for energy-efficient commercial buildings that reduce annual energy and power consumption by 50 percent, while another tax provision provides a credit to eligible contracts for construction of a qualified new energy-efficient home. Unfortunately, these, too, will expire in 2008.

At a time when Congress should be sending clear signals to the marketplace to move forward with renewable energy and energy efficiency, the very tax incentives targeted to these endeavors will expire shortly. Meanwhile, how is business supposed to make long-term, responsible decisions with such little certainty about the existence of these provisions?

That is the point. If you talk to farmers, talk to groups of farmers who are coming together, they can't get the investment, they can't pool investment, work with banks and others unless they know there is a long-term tax incentive in place. That 1 percent per kilowatt is absolutely critical, and it is set to expire in 2008.

The tremendous advantage we are making—and the Senator from North Dakota understands well—is important to our part of the country. There is the possibility of cutting the legs out from under them, and we simply should not let that happen.

From my State, there is a very clear example. My State of Minnesota has adopted—and is setting the standard—a 30 by 20, 25 requirement. In other words, cut emissions by 30 percent.

Yesterday I sat in on a conversation with the head of Xcel Energy, one of the largest energy providers in the State of Minnesota, and I said: How are you going to get to 30 percent? His answer was wind energy. Wind energy will play an important part.

It used to be a boutique form of energy, just a couple of wind farmers, but today it is an important part of the whole package, the whole piece we need to have in place in order to meet the standards that have been set that will provide for a cleaner environment and that will cut our dependence on foreign oil.

Without incorporating these extensions into its fiscal blueprint, I do not believe this budget is setting a responsible course for our Nation's energy policy. As we look for additional ways to promote renewable energy and energy efficiency, I urge my colleagues to recognize the need to ensure that we do not take a step back. If these tax incentives expire, we will be taking a terrible step back. We need to extend these energy tax provisions, and I urge support for my budget amendment.

Mr. CONRAD. Mr. President, the Senator from Minnesota offers an amendment with which I am entirely sympathetic. In fact, these are many things that I strongly support.

I would inquire of the Senator if he would be open to a different pay-for. Let me express why I am concerned about it. The pay-for the Senator has offered is section 920, and section 920 is about, at this point, fully subscribed. We are between $7 billion and $7.5 billion a year on section 920 already, I would say to the Senator. That is about as much as we can do realistically. The President, in his package, had $7.5 billion. The appropriators, in this last bill for the last year, did $6 billion.

So the concern I have is that we wind up with a circumstance that will not accomplish what the Senator and I very much want to have happen. I would offer for his consideration that we will not be voting on his amendment right now, in any event, so there is some time for us to consider an alternative. If I could quickly offer as an alternative a reserve fund, which would give total flexibility to the committees of jurisdiction as to how to fund them, would the Senator be open to an alternative?

Mr. COLEMAN. I would note, Mr. President, that I think the underlying budget provides about $36.4 billion in section 920 funding. I think that is the figure. I know, as the Senator from North Dakota knows, that there have been a number of other proposals. I think Senator BINGAMAN's amendment uses section 920. I do think this is a priority that should have been in the underlying budget. I think it is that essential. I believe the Senator from North Dakota understands and knows the importance of the extension of these tax credits.

This will not be voted on now for a couple of hours, but I will certainly go back and explore and look at some of the possibilities. In the end, I believe this needs to be part of this budget. It is important for our Nation's energy security. It is important, certainly, from an economic perspective. And it is a win-win for everyone. So let me explore other alternatives, but I do hope my colleagues support this amendment, either with the 920 section we are looking at or we will explore whether there is another potential.

Mr. CONRAD. I thank the Senator very much.

Mr. President, the Senator is exactly right. I think in section 920, we are at about $38 billion. That is over 5 years. The $7 billion I was referencing is for 1 year. The comparison I was making is that the President had given us similar offsets of about $7.5 billion for 1 year. The appropriators, in the last major bill for last year, did $6 billion for the year. So what I am trying to communicate is that I think we are pretty close to fully subscribed there.

There is an alternative that would be a deficit-neutral reserve fund that leaves open to the committees of jurisdiction—it actually gives them more flexibility, I would say to the Senator. I would enthusiastically support that, if the Senator would consider a modification.

Mr. COLEMAN. Mr. President, I will certainly work with the Senator from North Dakota and see if we can figure out a way to get this done.

Mr. CONRAD. Mr. President, we are now ready to go to Senator CARPER.

We very much appreciate the patience Senator CARPER has shown in getting time on the Senate floor. We thank him for his valuable contributions as we work these many amendments we have already considered. Senator CARPER has been an especially constructive member, and we want to recognize him and thank him for that.

Mr. CARPER. Mr. President, I want to convey my gratitude to Senator CONRAD, our chairman, and also Senator GREGG, our former chairman, and say how much I respect and admire the way they have worked together, whether Democrats were in the majority or the Republicans were in the majority. I think they set an example for the rest of us to follow in the way we deal with each other: with mutual respect, always focusing on the issues, sometimes disagreeing, but doing so in an agreeable way, much the way the Presiding Officer handles himself in these matters.

AMENDMENT NO. 538

Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the pending amendment be set aside and that it be in order for me to call up one amendment at the desk, and that is amendment No. 538; that once it is reported by number, it be set aside and that I be recognized to speak with respect to this amendment, as already previously provided for.

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

The clerk will report the amendment.

The legislative clerk read as follows:

The Senator from Delaware [Mr. CARPER], for himself and Mr. COBURN, proposes an amendment numbered 538.

Mr. CARPER. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the reading of the amendment be dispensed with.

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

The amendment is as follows:

(Purpose: To reduce the deficit by recovering improper payments)

At the appropriate place, insert the following:

SEC. ___. DEFICIT-REDUCTION RESERVE FUND FOR REDUCTION OF IMPROPER PAYMENTS.

The Chairman of the Senate Committee on the Budget may revise the aggregates, allocations, functional totals, and other appropriate levels and limits in this resolution upon enactment of legislation that achieves savings by eliminating or reducing improper payments made by agencies reporting improper payments estimates under the Improper Payments Information Act of 2002 and uses such savings to reduce the deficit, provided that the legislation would not increase the deficit over the total of fiscal years 2007 through 2012.

Mr. CARPER. I have three amendments, Mr. President, that I will be talking about which I offered with Senator COBURN. Before I talk about the amendments, though, let me take a moment to say, as a lot of my colleagues do, I have a great deal of interest in the budget, the budget itself and also the budget process.

Part of my interest goes back to my former role as Governor of my State, where we drafted, prepared, proposed, and implemented those budgets for 8 years. During those 8 years, we balanced our budget every year. We even put money, I think almost every year, in a rainy day fund to deal with challenges that might confront my successors someday down the line. We were

able to balance the budget during those years in part because we were guided by a simple, basic principle, and that is if something is worth doing, it is worth paying for.

Balancing the budget doesn't mean sitting on our hands and doing nothing. In Delaware, while I was privileged to serve as its chief executive, we cut taxes in 7 out of 8 years, both individual personal income taxes and business taxes. We also invested in our schools to raise student achievement. We sought to improve health coverage for our children. We put in place a prescription drug assistance program. We helped make welfare pay less than work so that people would be incentivized to go to work. We enhanced our transportation infrastructure and paid down some of our debt.

It wasn't just the Governor, it was the legislature, with Democrats and Republicans working together, sort of our tradition in my little State. We set priorities, we saved money where we could, and when something was worth doing, we paid for it. We paid as we went. We balanced the budget, and we did so year after year.

When I was elected to the Senate in 2000, the Federal budget was balanced as well. In fact, our country was enjoying budget surpluses. When I came to the Senate, we were actually on track to pay off our national debt. We were on track to be debt free, as hard as that is to imagine today. I spent most of my first term in the Senate in the minority. It was a very different experience from being Governor of my State. Over the course of my first term in the Senate, I watched the majority pass budget resolution after budget resolution that ultimately dug us further into debt.

In 2000, the Federal budget was on course to run, I think, a $5.5 trillion surplus. The size of the national debt had been falling at that point for a couple of years. Over the last 6 years, we have gone, unfortunately, in the opposite direction. We have run record budget deficits and added some $1.5 trillion to our Nation's debt.

Last year, the American people said enough. This budget resolution responds to the desire of the American people to return to what I call a commonsense approach. There is an old saying—I think it is from Denis Healey, Chancellor of the Exchequer in Great Britain. He had a theory on holes. ''When you find yourself in a hole, stop digging.'' With this budget resolution, we stop digging.

This budget resolution does, once again, what budget resolutions are supposed to do. It not only charts the course to a balanced budget, it also includes enforcement mechanisms to keep Congress's feet to the fire and, I might also add, the executive branch's feet to the fire. A plan on paper to balance the budget is great, but it does no good if we throw that plan out the window as soon as we start passing spending and tax cut bills later in the year.

This budget resolution requires that new proposals to increase spending or decrease revenues be fully offset with counterbalancing cuts in spending or increases in revenue. This pay-as-you-go requirement is something that I have been advocating, along with a number of my colleagues, certainly Senator CONRAD and others, for years. I am very pleased it will soon be adopted, I hope, by the Senate.

This budget resolution takes something called budget reconciliation and restores it to its original purpose. Reconciliation is a special procedure that was created to make it easier to pass legislation that made tough choices to reduce budget deficits. However, reconciliation has been abused in some of these recent years. It has been used to speed the passage of legislation that, far from balancing the budget, actually turned around and busted the budget. It is a little like adding grease to a pig. It makes it exceedingly difficult to get a handle on our out-of-control budget problems.

I offered an amendment a couple of years ago to prohibit the use of reconciliation to expedite passage of measures that do bust the budget. I don't know if that amendment was adopted, but I am glad the Senate will soon take this important step to restore fiscal order.

This budget also includes a new long-term budget point of order. This is vitally important because our short-term budget challenges pale in comparison to our long-term budget challenges. We ought to be taking steps now to prepare for the retirement of the baby boom generation—that is my generation and maybe the generation of several of us on the Senate floor today—preparing for our retirement and preparing for the strain those retirements are going to place on programs such as Social Security, Medicare, and, I might add, Medicaid. The last thing we ought to do is take steps now that will make matters worse in the future.

The new budget point of order created by this resolution requires 60 votes for legislation that would make our long-term budget challenges substantially worse. This forces the Congress to look beyond the present, even past the next election—something we don't always do—to the future we are leaving to our children and to our grandchildren.

I commend the chairman of the Budget Committee, Senator CONRAD. He has inherited a difficult set of circumstances. He has inherited a budget pretty much out of balance. He has inherited a Tax Code that has middle-class tax increases built in, in the form of a rapidly expanding alternative minimum tax. Nonetheless, under his leadership, the Budget Committee has managed to craft what I think is a very sensible resolution. They have provided for our troops in the field. They have provided for investments at home in education, health care for our children, and they have done this in the context of a plan that holds the line on taxes and charts a course to a balanced budget over the next 5 years.

I particularly thank Senator CONRAD for managing to provide, consistent with a plan to balance the budget, vital support for passenger rail service in this country of ours. It is becoming increasingly evident every day that passenger rail is a good investment, and one I think that is getting better. It is critical to economic growth and mobility. It is necessary to address traffic congestion and to protect air quality, and it is an essential part of reducing our dependence upon foreign oil.

I will just share what I think is a pretty good ''gee whiz'' factor. We are in Washington, DC, today talking about how rail, passenger rail and freight rail, can help in terms of reducing our dependence on foreign oil. We can take a ton of freight, move it from Washington, DC, to the Northeast corridor, to Boston, MA, with 1 gallon of diesel fuel. Think about that. With 1 gallon of diesel fuel you can move a ton of freight by rail from Washington, DC, to Boston, MA.

There are real economies to be gained, real progress in terms of reducing our dependence on foreign oil. That is about as graphic an example as I can think of.

Mr. CONRAD. Mr. President, will the Senator yield for a question?

Mr. CARPER. I will be happy to yield.

Mr. CONRAD. The Senator shared that statistic with me the other day, and I would like the Senator to repeat it because I think it is very easily overlooked. Would the Senator repeat that statistic?

Mr. CARPER. With pleasure. It is possible to move 1 ton of freight by rail from Washington, DC to Boston, MA, for about a gallon of diesel fuel. That is it. There are similar kinds of efficiencies we could realize by moving people, not just tons of freight by rail but people by rail, especially in densely populated corridors. I am not one who argues—I used to be on the Amtrak board, but I am not one who argues we should run trains in places people don't want to ride them or that we should run them in sparsely populated areas. I don't know that always makes sense. But we have 75 percent of people in this country who live within 50 miles of one of our coastlines. What that does, from the Northeast, the mid-Atlantic, Southeast, gulf coast, west coast, is create a lot of densely populated corridors. They lend themselves to passenger rail, especially for trips of maybe 300 or 400 miles or less.

With respect to Amtrak funding, we need to appropriate levels of capital. That is going to be more important as we consider a comprehensive reauthorization bill for Amtrak, which I hope is going to happen later this year.

I also thank Senator CONRAD and the committee for addressing the tax gap in this bill. That is the difference between the amount of tax that is legally

owed and the amount that is actually being paid on a timely basis. The tax gap is estimated to be some $345 billion in 2001. The chairman of the Budget Committee has estimated it will amount to as much as $2 trillion over the course of the 5 years covered by this budget resolution. If we completely closed this tax gap, we would largely eliminate the Federal budget deficit. We are never going to completely close it, but we need to do more to narrow it. It is a matter of basic fairness to the great majority of Americans who do the right thing and pay their taxes they owe on a timely basis.

Together with Senator COBURN, who is the ranking member of the Financial Management Subcommittee I chair, I am offering three amendments to the budget resolution that I believe complement the initiatives in the budget resolution to address the tax gap. Our amendments deal with the spending side of the equation. Based on our work in the subcommittee, our amendments point to ways in which we can and should reduce the deficit by promoting better financial management. I think actually the administration probably agrees with what we are trying to do here.

Our first amendment deals with improper payments. Agencies across the Federal Government spend literally tens of billions of dollars every year on avoidable payment errors.

The most recent Governmentwide estimates from OMB report that agencies made about $41 billion in improper payments in fiscal year 2006, most of them overpayments. This total is likely only the tip of the iceberg, since many agencies are not in full compliance with the law that requires them to report on their payment errors—the Improper Payments Information Act.

OMB has plans in place to improve agencies' compliance with the Improper Payments Information Act. In keeping with our oversight role, our subcommittee is working with OMB to ensure that agencies comply with these plans and make consistent progress toward OMB's goal of eliminating up to $20 billion—that's about half the improper payments—in reported improper payments between now and 2011.

The first amendment Senator COBURN and I have submitted would apply such savings as we are able to realize through the elimination of improper payments to deficit-reduction.

The second amendment Senator COBURN and I have submitted touches on recovery audits, a tool at least some agencies use to recover payment errors they make.

Under current law, agencies with at least $500 million in contracts outstanding must regularly go through their books to find overpayments, double payments, and other errors they may have made in paying their contractors.

According to data released by OMB in January, just 2 months ago, agencies used recovery auditing to identify and collect millions of dollars in payment errors made to contractors. Frankly, We would like to see more of this kind of auditing work done.

I intend to work with Senator COBURN, OMB, and others to increase the amount of recovery auditing that occurs at the Federal level. The amendment Senator COBURN and I have submitted today would dedicate the savings we achieve by doing that through these efforts to deficit reduction.

Our third amendment touches on the management of Federal property. Senator COBURN and I have learned through several hearings in our subcommittee that agencies are spending a significant amount of money each year maintaining unneeded property—including buildings that are completely vacant.

Part of this problem comes from the fact that agencies still don't really know what property they own, in some cases, despite some admirable efforts undertaken by the administration. Agencies also aren't given the appropriate incentives under current law to dispose of property they no longer need.

Senator COBURN and I have been working on legislation that would give agencies additional tools and incentives that will encourage them to dispose of unneeded and vacant property. In so doing, it will enable the Federal Government and the taxpayers of this country to save the substantial costs that are incurred when we fail to dispose of these excess properties.

OMB has said that the legislation Senator COBURN and I hope to bring forward this year would help agencies unload some $11 billion in property by 2011. The amendment Senator COBURN and I have submitted today would devote this savings to deficit-reduction.

Again, I commend the Chairman of the Budget Committee and the Full Committee for a job well done. I urge my colleagues to support this budget resolution. And I urge my colleagues to join Senator COBURN and me in our efforts, I hope later today, to reduce the deficit through better financial management, by supporting these 3 amendments.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from North Dakota.

Mr. CONRAD. Mr. President, I see now that Senator LINCOLN has come to the floor. We are running a little bit ahead of schedule, which is very helpful to us. While the Senator prepares, I say this to my colleagues: It is very important for colleagues to get this message because we have agreed between the managers of the bill to the following: In addition to the outline of amendments we have between now and when we start voting, we are then going to stop voting at 6 o'clock tonight. We will then have a period this evening where Senators will be able to speak. They will not be able to offer amendments. They can speak about amendments, but they will not be able to offer the amendments. We will have blocks of 30 minutes. From 6 to 6:30, the time will be under the control of the minority. From 6:30 to 7, it will be under the control of the majority. It will alternate back and forth in that way.

So from 6 to 6:30, the minority will control a 30-minute block. From 6:30 to 7, the majority will control a 30-minute block, and so on. From 7 to 7:30, back to the minority. From 7:30 to 8, the majority. Senators and their staffs need to be aware that time will be available for speaking. You can talk on the amendments. You can talk on the budget resolution. You will not be able to offer an amendment, but you can talk about the amendment you will be offering tomorrow.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from New Hampshire.

Mr. GREGG. To clarify further from our side of the aisle, in those time slots we have already had requests for 10 speakers. We are basically allocating 15 minutes per speaker so we are well into 2½ hours of our time we will be using on our side of the aisle. If other people wish to speak, it will be after those first 10 who have already gotten in touch with us and told us they need time. Please get in touch with us if people want to say something. At that time it will be a convenient time for people who have an amendment to talk about the amendment so they can get a little more on the record about the amendment because tomorrow on the vote-arama they will be limited to 1 minute to explain their amendments.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from North Dakota.

Mr. CONRAD. I thank the Senator. I wish to send the word out to Senators on our side that time will be designated on a first come, first served basis. So Senators need to call the cloakroom or call the Budget Committee to get that time allocated.

Now we have time reserved for the Senator from Arkansas, Mrs. LINCOLN.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Arkansas is recognized.

AMENDMENT NO. 542

Mrs. LINCOLN. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent to call up amendment 542.

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

Mrs. LINCOLN. I also ask unanimous consent to add Senator MCCASKILL as a cosponsor of the amendment.

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

The clerk will report.

The legislative clerk read as follows:

The Senator from Kentucky [Mrs. LINCOLN], for herself, Ms. SNOWE, and Mrs. MCCASKILL, proposes an amendment numbered 542.

Mrs. LINCOLN. I ask unanimous consent the reading of the amendment be dispensed with.

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

The amendment is as follows:

(Purpose: To provide the Veterans Benefits Administration with additional resources and staff to more effectively meet their increasing workload and to address the unacceptably large claims backlog that continues to cause undue hardships for veterans and their families across the country)

On page 22, line 12, increase the amount by $70,000,000.

On page 22, line 13, increase the amount by $62,000,000.

On page 22, line 17, increase the amount by $8,000,000.

On page 26, line 12, decrease the amount by $70,000,000.

On page 26, line 13, decrease the amount by $62,000,000.

On page 26, line 17, decrease the amount by $8,000,000.

Mrs. LINCOLN. Mr. President, I have a special thanks to our chairman and ranking member, who have been enormously diligent on this budget issue. Chairman CONRAD has done a phenomenal job in bringing together a budget that reflects values for this country and for the American people. We are grateful to him for spending so much time, along with the members of the Budget Committee, in doing that.

I rise today to offer this amendment with my friend and colleague from Maine, Senator SNOWE. It is an amendment to the budget resolution that would provide an additional $70 million for the Veterans Benefits Administration. It is not a huge amount, but it is a necessary amount. This very much needed funding would provide the Veterans Benefits Administration with additional resources and staff to more effectively meet its increasing workload and its growing backlog of pending claims.

We have seen a tremendous pressure put on our Veterans' Administration over the last several years. The veterans of this country, who have given so selflessly to this country in their service, in return deserve the services they have been promised. It is so important that the Veterans' Administration is able to process those requests.

Chairman AKAKA and Senator MURRAY have certainly shown tremendous leadership on behalf of our veterans. I thank them from the bottom of my heart. I thank them for all they have done. I also commend my colleague Chairman CONRAD for this budget resolution which does so much in reflecting our Nation's commitment to our veterans. We know the chairman has put in here much needed resources for the VA. Those of us who believe so strongly in our veterans appreciate that.

I am here today to build off of that great work these individuals have done. Delivering timely and accurate benefits to the brave men and women who have served our Nation in uniform should be a priority for each of us. The current backlog of pending disability and compensation claims has been listed as one of the VA's highest management priorities over the past several years. Yet the backlog that exists there is growing each and every day. The number of veterans who are contacting our office, our congressional office in Arkansas, who need help in navigating the disability claims arena at the VA, is so huge. Unfortunately, the time that begins to lag becomes years—not weeks or days but years—that our veterans are not getting the services they need because of this claims process.

With an aging veteran population and more and more service men and women who are returning from overseas, the numbers of these claims will continue to increase, and the problem also becomes that our older veterans who have claims and have had claims existing for a long time, unfortunately, with newer veterans who are returning from Iraq and Afghanistan, they get pushed to the front of the line oftentimes. It is an unreasonable situation for the VA to be in.

The complexity of these claims has also increased as the health of our aging veterans has worsened and we are seeing a growing number of complex new claims that are resulting from complex combat-related injuries, such as PTSD and traumatic brain injuries.

Unfortunately, the increase in the growing complexity of these claims, coupled with the lack of resources by the VA, has contributed to an unacceptably large claims backlog that continues to cause undue hardship for our veterans and their families all across this country.

We all agree the claims process should be more timely and more accurate. While there are a number of fundamental changes that need to be made, the least we can do is better provide the VA with the resources and the staff they so desperately need.

Last year the backlog of pending compensation and pension claims was nearly 586,000. As of last week, the backlog had grown to over 647,000.

The most time-consuming and labor-intensive claims to process are the disability claims which require rating decisions. Last year the backlog of disability claims was nearly 372,000. Today it has grown to 405,000. This amendment would address the growing backlog of pending disability claims by providing $65 million to hire an additional 600 disability claims processors.

As the VA receives and adjudicates more claims, it results in a larger number of appeals. That backlog of claims also continues to grow, and that is why this amendment would provide $4 million for the Board of Veterans' Appeals to hire 32 additional full-time staff.

Additional funds are also necessary to increase training for current employees as well as any new employees to ensure consistency of claims processing and to lower error rates. That is why this amendment would provide the 1-year cost for increased training resources and quality measures with $400,000 for training and performance support systems and $400,000 for skill certification.

I was taught at an early age about the sacrifices our troops and their families have made to keep our Nation free. My father and grandfathers both served in uniform; my father in Korea as an infantryman, I had both grandfathers who served the Nation in World War I. That is why I am here today.

These veterans have given so much. They have given so much, as have their families. But to sit in waiting for years to get an answer from the VA is absolutely unacceptable, simply because we are not willing to put the staff there that needs to be there to deal with the volume of people who are coming.

I urge my colleagues to support this amendment, which would simply allow the VA to better process and award the benefits to which they are entitled by law. This does not create any new benefits. It simply gives them access to the benefits they already need and deserve.

I would ask my colleagues to check with your staff and check with your offices to see the disability claims you are dealing with for veterans in your State and see how many of them have such a lengthy time that you would love to be able to erase.

The lessons ingrained in me since my childhood have taught me that after a person has served in the military, we should make every effort, absolutely every effort, to care for them and for their families and to honor the benefits they have earned. It is the least we can do for those to whom we owe so much. It is the least we can do to reassure future generations that a grateful nation will not forget them when their military service is complete.

I urge my colleagues to support us on this amendment. We know that, as I said, the Budget Committee has done a good job in putting forth a responsible budget but one that truly recognizes the needs of our veterans. This is one small measure where we can assure the resources will be there to hire the staff, to ensure the backlog in these claims can be taken care of.

I appreciate, again, the chairman and the ranking member of the Budget Committee. I thank them for the incredible job they have done. I encourage my colleagues to support this amendment on behalf of the many veterans, with whom each and every one of us in our offices works, to ensure we can get them a timely response on their claims with the VA.

Ms. SNOWE. Mr. President, I rise today in strong support of an amendment that my friend and colleague from Arkansas, Senator LINCOLN, and myself have offered to the budget resolution, which will help to ensure that our Nation's courageous veterans receive the benefits and compensation that they have earned in a timely and efficient manner from the Department of Veterans Affairs (VA).

Every year, hundreds of thousands of America's finest look to the Veterans

Benefits Administration (VBA) to process their claims for disability compensation, pensions and other entitlements due them as a result of their unselfish and steadfast service to our Nation. However, according to a VBA Workload Report in 2006, the total number of pending compensation and pension claims increased nearly 17 percent over 2006, from 517,574 to 604,308 cases—and as of last week, the backlog had grown to 647,405 cases. On top of this, our country's aging veterans' population and influx of service men and women who will enter the VA system after returning from Iraq and Afghanistan will inexorably lead to an increase in the VBA's workload.

The lengthy delay that many veterans endure to receive their benefits from the VA is simply unacceptable. Therefore, I believe it is vital for the Department of Veterans Affairs to have the resources necessary to promptly deliver benefits to veterans by adjudicating and processing their claims in a timely and accurate fashion. Given the critical financial importance of disability payments for veterans and their families, the VA has an undeniable responsibility to maintain an effective delivery system and to take decisive and appropriate action to correct deficiencies as soon as they become evident.

On March 7, 2007, the Senate Committee on Veterans' Affairs received testimony from Rick Surratt, the Deputy National Legislative Director of the Disabled America Veterans, who highlighted the staffing shortages that have hindered the VA's ability to process claims. Surratt stated:

> Past Reductions in staffing levels degraded VA's ability to process and decide disability claims in a correct and timely manner. After falling behind, it never fully recovered. With continued growth in the volume and complexity of claims for disability benefits, VA has not requested the resources necessary to overcome the existing backlog and stay abreast of that growth. . . .

On December 4, 2006, Senator LINCOLN and I joined with 33 of our colleagues to send a letter to the President, respectfully requesting that his fiscal year 2008 budget submission to Congress includes adequate funding for additional staff and resources necessary to address the growing backlog of pending claims at the VBA. According to the President's fiscal year 2008 budget, the average length of time to process a veteran's disability claim has dropped to 177 days, and the President's new budget will lower that processing time to 145 days. Although Senator LINCOLN and I applaud the President's recent efforts to improve the veterans' claims process, we still feel that our Nation's veterans deserve much better.

Therefore, our amendment will directly address the staff and resource shortages at the VBA by providing $64.5 million in order to hire an additional 600 disability claims processors. Additionally, the Board of Veterans Appeals, whose workload has increased by 82.5 percent since 2001—to an estimated 40,000 cases by the end of 2007—has seen decreases in staff levels during the same period. As a result, a GAO report found that it took an average of 657 days to resolve these appeals. Our amendment will provide the Board of Veterans Appeals with $4.1 million to hire an additional 32 processors in order to expedite the adjudication process to acceptable levels.

I also believe that comprehensive training and skill certification programs must be implemented in order to reduce the claims backlog and ensure that processing personnel make accurate decisions. The prevalence of new and complex disability claims resulting from posttraumatic stress disorder, PTSD, and traumatic brain injury, TBI, provide further evidence of the VA's need for a larger and more advanced processing staff. Thus, our amendment will provide a 1-year cost for increased training resources and quality measures with $400,000 for training and performance support systems and $400,000 for skills certification.

I have nothing but the utmost respect for those brave Americans who served in uniform with honor, courage, and distinction. The obligation our Nation holds for its veterans is enormous, and it is an obligation that must be fulfilled every day. At a time when over 600,000 courageous men and women have returned from combat in both Iraq and Afghanistan, and over 24,000 servicemembers have been wounded since the onset of Operation Enduring Freedom and Operation Iraqi Freedom, Congress must now do everything in its power to answer our veterans' call, to ensure that they receive the benefits that they rightly earned and rightly deserve. I strongly urge my colleagues to support this amendment. Our veterans deserve nothing less.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from North Dakota.

Mr. CONRAD. I wish to thank Senator LINCOLN for this amendment. We all know there is a claim backlog that is absolutely unacceptable. According to the General Accounting Office, between fiscal years 2003 and 2006, the backlog of veterans waiting on ratings claims grew by almost 50 percent, including those filed by veterans of the Iraq and Afghanistan conflicts.

Similar problems have been cited at the Department of Defense. That is an unacceptable backlog. I wish to thank the Senator for offering this amendment, which I might add is paid for. I especially thank the Senator for that.

We now have the Senator from Wyoming.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from New Hampshire.

Mr. GREGG. I would suggest that we settle up the post-6 o'clock period, if the chairman is agreeable with that at this time, with a unanimous consent request along the lines of what the chairman earlier outlined.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from North Dakota.

Mr. CONRAD. I ask unanimous consent that we next go to the Senator from Wyoming, Mr. THOMAS, for 10 minutes. Is that acceptable to the Senator? We then go back on the previous schedule. At 4 o'clock, we recognize Senator BAYH for 10 minutes.

Mr. GREGG. The previous schedule assumed Senator KYL.

Mr. CONRAD. We would stay with the schedule we had, but at 4 o'clock we would go to Senator BAYH for 10 minutes. Then after the votes are completed, that we have the first half hour dedicated to the minority, for people with the right to speak on amendments for up to 15 minutes each. That from 6 to 6:30, the time is under the control of the minority; from 6:30 to 7, the time is under the control of the majority; from 7 to 7:30, the time is under the control of the minority, back and forth in those half-hour blocks of time. Senators would be permitted to speak. They would be able to speak on amendments but not to offer amendments during that period.

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

Mr. GREGG. Mr. President, also I would note, for the edification of our side of the aisle, our first group of speakers will be in this order: Senators DOMENICI, SPECTER—they will go 15 minutes each—starting at 6; Senator GRASSLEY and Senator HATCH, second half hour; Senator VOINOVICH and Senator BROWNBACK, the third half hour; Senator CHAMBLISS, Senator THOMAS, the fourth half hour; Senator GRAHAM, Senator BURR, the fifth half hour.

If there are Members, additional Republican Members, who wish to get time in this post-6 o'clock period, I wish they would get in touch with us.

If any of these Members whom I just listed who had gotten in touch with us—we basically listed them in the order they got in touch with us—wish to adjust their time, we will try to work with them. But that is the game plan at the moment, so everyone is on notice.

Mr. CONRAD. I say to the Senator, we may want to think about interspersing Senators because it would be unfortunate if Senators did not appear and there was a large block of time where people were waiting. We are probably going to want to work out some mechanism where Senators, if they are here, we allow them to go forward.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Iowa.

AMENDMENT NO. 464 WITHDRAWN

Mr. GRASSLEY. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent to withdraw my amendment dealing with payment limitations on farm programs.

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

Mr. CONRAD. I thank the Senator very much. He has, as always, been very courteous and very helpful in allowing the budget resolution to proceed.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Wyoming is recognized.

Mr. THOMAS. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the pending amendment be set aside.

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

AMENDMENT NO. 498

(Purpose: To strike the reserve funds)

Mr. THOMAS. Mr. President, I have an amendment numbered 498 at the desk, and I ask for its immediate consideration.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will report.

The assistant legislative clerk read as follows:

The Senator from Wyoming [Mr. THOMAS] proposes an amendment numbered 498.

On page 48, beginning with line 17, strike all through page 62, line 7.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Wyoming.

Mr. THOMAS. The reason we are here, of course, is to deal with the budget. I think that is a very important part of what we do in this Congress. It has to do with funding programs, but it has also to do with determining what our spending is going to be in the year.

Frankly, for many of us, having some idea, some control over spending is one of the key issues we face. The amendment I am offering would bring some transparency, restraint, and I hope discipline to this budgeting process. The budget resolution is supposed to provide the blueprint for Government spending and allocate dollars for appropriators in the future. That is what it is for. That is why we do it in the budget, so that for this year we will have a budget that says: Here are the programs, here are the dollars, this is what we do.

To be sure, it is a difficult task. It is always difficult, and there are limited resources and always unlimited demands and infinite requests. It is a tough job putting together a budget. However, it requires hard choices. I understand that. It is a time when we make choices among the competing priorities, and that is what budgeting is for. That is, in fact, the purpose of the budget.

I am concerned, in this budget, about the reserve funds that are placed there. This budget abdicates responsibility in a number of areas and fails to even set a cap on overall spending. The primary mechanism by which this happens is because of the so-called reserve funds.

This budget contains 22 separate funds, the purpose of which is to allow spending beyond the limits specified in the budget decision. In a vast majority of cases, the additional spending authority is totally unchecked. Not only is spending unchecked, there is actually no money in any of these reserve funds.

Of course, each of them is specified to be deficit neutral. What does that mean? What it means is that, in a budget that includes not a single penny of net spending restraint, taxes can be raised to pay for any reserve fund spending. This could be an additional $1 trillion in tax increases already assumed in the budget.

So that is the opportunity that is provided because of this reserve provision. Now, I know we have designated reserve funds in the past for various things, but the practice is not one we should encourage or continue or proliferate.

The American people sent a message last November. They want fiscal discipline. I could not agree more. And no more ''business as usual'' when it comes to spending. So we have a budget but then we have a way to say: I want to expand the budget. And we pay for it by increasing taxes. So we really say: We do not have a budget at all until we are through with the year. I cannot understand that. So I hear the folks who are saying we need to control spending.

Perhaps my friends on the other side of the aisle are not quite as conscious of that as we are. Even if we do make a miscalculation in the budget resolution, we need to move funds from one area to another, and that should be spending neutral. In other words, we should make hard choices, decrease spending in one area if we have to increase it in another.

As it is currently constructed, these reserve funds are the equivalent of a blank check signed by the American taxpayer. So these tax-and-spend funds need to be eliminated. I urge my colleagues to join me in support for this amendment.

I yield the floor.

Mr. President, I suggest the absence of a quorum.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will call the roll.

The assistant legislative clerk proceeded to call the roll.

Mr. CONRAD. I ask unanimous consent that the order for the quorum call be rescinded.

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

Mr. CONRAD. Mr. President, it is a quarter to 3. Next up is Senator KYL, to be recognized for an hour, equally divided, on an estate tax amendment. Then we will have Senator BAYH at 4 o'clock. Those are pending matters.

These are the votes which are now in order, I advise my colleagues: the Hutchison sales tax amendment, the Ensign means testing Part D, the Sanders amendment to provide additional funding for education, the Enzi amendment that involves small business, the Coleman amendment on energy, the Carper amendment, and the Lincoln amendment on veterans. Those are amendments which have already been offered. At 3 o'clock, we will be going to the Kyl amendment for an hour, equally divided.

Let me again say to colleagues and staffs who might be listening, we will be going to votes at roughly 4:15. We will then be voting until 6 o'clock. We would like to get as many of these votes concluded as we can this evening because that will reduce vote-arama tomorrow. Again, colleagues should be aware, starting at 6 o'clock, in half-hour blocks of time, there will be opportunities for colleagues to talk about their amendments they may offer tomorrow or to talk about the budget resolution itself. We will go fairly late tonight with Senators having an opportunity to speak. When we are done today, all but a half hour will be yielded back. Senator GREGG and I will have that time to wrap up. Then we will be going into vote-arama tomorrow. I believe that starts at 9:30 tomorrow morning.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from New Hampshire.

Mr. GREGG. Does the debate start at 9:30 on the half hour that is reserved?

Mr. CONRAD. We should start at 9 o'clock.

Mr. GREGG. That is fine.

Mr. CONRAD. I think we would want to start at 9 o'clock with our half hour to be equally divided between the two of us and then go right to the voting starting at 9:30. It is our intention to try to conclude by 4 o'clock. It is very important that Senators give notice to the managers about amendments they seek to have considered during vote-arama.

Let me break this down. From 9:30 to 4—that is 6½ hours—we can do about three votes an hour. We would be talking about 19 votes. We could probably get in 19, perhaps 20 votes in that time. That is realistic. That is hard, but it can be done.

It is going to be incredibly important, for us to finish this budget resolution tomorrow, that colleagues show restraint with amendments they insist on considering. We have already considered many amendments. Senators have had a full opportunity for debate and discussion. Goodness knows, we took dozens of Senators' suggestions in drafting this budget resolution. I am asking—I am speaking to my side of the aisle—Senators to show real restraint in terms of the amendments they insist on because we must conclude our business by 4 o'clock tomorrow. If we do not, it is going to go on into some other time, either on into tomorrow tonight or on into Saturday. Maybe we could stay here all Friday night. Wouldn't that be fun? Please, this is the time to show discipline.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from New Hampshire.

Mr. GREGG. Mr. President, I have agreement with Senator THOMAS that his amendment will be voted on on Friday. That is not a part of the next tranche of votes. It will be in order on Friday to be voted on. He therefore no longer wishes to speak this evening. He made his points just now.

I would advise Senator GRAHAM and Senator BURR that they have both moved up on the list. It looks to me that we will have seven votes, maybe eight or nine potentially in order starting at 4:15.

I suggest the absence of a quorum.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will call the roll.

The bill clerk proceeded to call the roll.

Mr. CONRAD. I ask unanimous consent that the order for the quorum call be rescinded.

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

AMENDMENTS NOS. 538 AND 542

Mr. CONRAD. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent to agree to the Carper amendment No. 538 and the Lincoln amendment No. 542.

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

The amendments (Nos. 538 and 542) were agreed to.

Mr. CONRAD. I thank the Chair and my colleagues. That helps us make progress. It reduces the number of votes that will have to be considered when we get to votes in the 4:15 time range.

This may be a good time to again alert colleagues that we are looking to a series of votes starting at roughly 4:15. Votes will end at 6 o'clock. There will then be half-hour blocks of time available to the minority and the majority in alternating half hours for people to speak on their amendments or on the budget resolution.

We now are awaiting Senator KYL for his amendment. At the end of that hour, which will be evenly divided between the sides, we will have Senator BAYH recognized for 10 minutes.

I suggest the absence of a quorum.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will call the roll.

The bill clerk proceeded to call the roll.

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

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Ms. KLOBUCHAR). Without objection, it is so ordered.

Mr. GRASSLEY. Madam President, lately we have heard a lot about the alternative minimum tax. It is a problem around here we have talked about and not done much about over a long period of time, whether Republicans have controlled this body or Democrats have controlled this body. Most often, we talk about the difficulties of really fixing the alternative minimum tax. Obviously, then, it is not a new problem. It has been with us for several decades.

The individual minimum tax, the precursor to the alternative minimum tax, as we call it now, dates from 1969. Congress then discovered, somehow, 155 taxpayers with incomes greater than $200,000 a year were not paying any taxes because they could legally avoid those taxes. So it was calculated that everybody ought to be paying a little minimum tax, and that is where the alternative minimum tax comes from. At that particular time, it was affecting about one taxpayer in half a million. Now, clearly, the situation has changed in the last 38 years.

Although not its only flaw, the alternative minimum tax's most significant defect is it is not indexed for inflation. This failure to index the exemption and rate brackets—the parameters of the alternative minimum tax system—is also a bipartisan problem. Though $200,000 was not an incredible amount of money in 1969, the situation is different today. I am not saying $200,000 is not a lot of money today, because it is, but $200,000 today will not buy what it would buy in 1969.

In 2004—the most recent year for which the Internal Revenue Service has complete tax data—instead of having 155 people paying this tax, more than 3 million families and individuals were hit by the alternative minimum tax. This chart I have in the Chamber has the numbers for every State in the Union. I am not going to go down those numbers now because we do not have time. But you can see, State by State by State, there are tens of thousands of people paying the alternative minimum tax who were never intended to pay it, even though we have taken some action in recent years so yet more people are not paying the alternative minimum tax.

This does not even begin to hint at what will happen if we do not continue to protect taxpayers from the alternative minimum tax. Barring an extension of the hold harmless contained in the 2006 tax bill, the alternative minimum tax exemptions will return to their pre-2001 levels. At the end of 2006, provisions allowing nonrefundable personal tax credits to offset AMT tax liability expired. If further action is not taken, it is estimated the alternative minimum tax will claim 35 million families and individuals by the end of this decade.

Now, think of that: A tax originally conceived to counter the actions of just 155 taxpayers could hit 35 million filers in just a few years, and I am talking about just around the corner. Some analyses show that in the next decade, it may be less costly to repeal the regular income tax than it would be to repeal the alternative minimum tax.

The AMT is a problem that has been developing for almost 40 years. On numerous occasions, Congress has made adjustments to the exemptions and the rates, though not as part of a sustained effort to keep the AMT from further absorbing our Nation's middle class until 2001. We did repeal it in 1998, but President Clinton vetoed it. We never, then, were able to get it repealed. So I am arguing for repeal.

Despite the temporary measures we have taken, the alternative minimum tax is still a very real threat to millions of taxpayers who were never supposed to be subject to the minimum tax. That the AMT has grown grossly beyond its original purpose, which was to ensure the wealthy were not exempt from an income tax, is indisputable, and that the AMT is inherently flawed would seem to be common sense.

Despite widespread agreement that something needs to be done about the AMT, agreement on what exactly to do is not very widespread. A major factor in the disagreement relates to the massive amount of money the AMT is supposed to be bringing into the Federal Government over the next few years—but remember, supposed to be bringing in from taxpayers who were never supposed to pay it in the first place. In 2004, AMT filers paid more than $12.8 billion into the Treasury.

If we do not extend the most recent AMT hold-harmless provisions that expired at the end of 2006, that number is projected to balloon to a much greater amount, and long-term budget forecasts currently show this greater amount coming into the Treasury.

When forecasters put their projections together, they are working under the assumption that the hold harmless which was extended in last year's tax bill will not be extended, that we will not take care of this problem. So they are guessing there is a whole bunch of revenue coming in from people who were never intended to pay it in the first place. Because of this, budget planners make the assumption that revenues will be much higher than everyone who is frustrated with the AMT thinks they ought to be. The reason for this is that the AMT ''balloons'' the revenue base, as it is projected to increase revenues as a percentage of gross national product. There is a great deal of evidence to support this.

Now, the nonpartisan Congressional Budget Office has consistently forecast the ballooning of AMT revenues year after year. This chart I have in the Chamber shows that with the red line. It takes into consideration that we are going to bring revenue in from people who were never supposed to pay it in the first place.

I just want to note that although the Tax Increase Prevention and Reconciliation Act of 2005 was signed into law after this analysis was published, the 2006 tax bill extended the AMT hold harmless only through December 31 of last year, and this chart shows Federal revenues all the way to the year 2050. It is important to note the long-term effects of the AMT on the revenue base because that is what is at issue: the basic idea that we are going to receive a lot of revenue from middle-income taxpayers who were never intended to pay it—which is part of that red line we have to get rid of because why tax people if they were not supposed to be taxed? The law is corrected from time to time to keep it from happening.

There may be some doubters who hesitate to attribute this ballooning of revenues to the AMT. But this next chart illustrates the drastic expansion of the AMT under current law over the next 43 years.

The Congressional Budget Office's report also states:

> [B]y 2050, roughly 15 percent of individual income tax liability would be generated by the AMT, compared with about 2 percent today.

This is what will happen if we do not do anything.

The problem with all of the projections showing the AMT ballooning revenues is that these projections are used

to put together the budget we have before us. Now, this is not a Senator CONRAD problem. This is not a Democratic problem. This is a bipartisan problem. Republican and Democratic budgeteers rely on the same source of revenue—or I should say a source of revenue the Congressional Budget Office says is going to come in from people who were never intended to pay it.

This means the central problem in dealing with the alternative minimum tax is money. There are some people who say we can only solve the AMT if we offset the revenue and it can be found elsewhere to replace the money the AMT is currently forecast to collect. But we never intended to collect it from the people who we suppose are going to pay it. Anyone who says this sees the forecasts showing revenues being pushed up as a percentage of gross domestic product and wants big government to keep them up there.

These arguments are especially ridiculous when one considers that the alternative minimum tax was never meant to collect so much revenue. It is a failed policy in many ways.

The alternative minimum tax has even failed in its objective to ensure no citizen, no matter how wealthy, was able to completely avoid the Federal income tax, because in 2004, the Commissioner of IRS, Mr. Everson, informed the Finance Committee that the same number of taxpayers, as a percentage of the tax-filing population at large, continues to pay no Federal income tax. It boils down to the fact that the class of 155 people the law was set up for in the first place, in 1969, is even finding ways out of getting hit by the alternative minimum tax, and doing it legally because we have 2,366 taxpayers with incomes of $200,000 or more who do not use the medical and dental deduction had no income tax and no alternative minimum tax. The AMT has failed in every way except the ability to make Government bigger, or at least make it look bigger, and for those who think you ought to have an offset, to keep it big. The AMT has failed. While it may be hard for some to turn down taxpayers' money, whether we are supposed to collect it or not, no one has trouble spending the money—even the blue smoke money that is in that red line there.

It is simply unfair to expect taxpayers to pay a tax they were never intended to pay, and it is even more unfair to expect them to continue to pay for that tax once we get rid of it. The reform or repeal of the AMT should not be offset because it is money we were never supposed to collect in the first place.

The way to solve this problem is to look on the other side of the ledger, to the spending side. Budget planners need to take off their rose-colored glasses, because that never materializes, and if it does, you are going to ruin the middle class. So take off your rose-colored glasses when looking at long-term revenue projections and read the fine print.

In general, it is a good idea to spend money within your means, and this is true in this case for the Government as well. If we start trying to spend revenues we expect to collect in the future because of the alternative minimum tax, we are living beyond our means. We need to stop assuming record levels of revenue are available to be spent and recognize the alternative minimum tax is a phony revenue source.

As we consider how to deal with the alternative minimum tax, we must first remember we do not have the option of not dealing with it. The problems will only get worse every year and make any solution even more difficult. We must also be clear the revenue the AMT would not collect as a result of repeal or reform should not be offset as a condition of a repeal or reform. We shouldn't call it lost revenue because it is revenue we never had to begin with.

A few weeks ago I presented to this body a joint tax estimate of how various proposed fixes to the AMT will impact revenues expected to be collected under current law. I noted at that time that full repeal aside, each of these proposals will still allow the alternative minimum tax to bring in hundreds of billions of dollars into the Treasury. If you consider any proposal aside from full repeal, you are saying hundreds of thousands, if not millions, of taxpayers out there deserve to bear the burden of the AMT. In other words, the middle class that is so talked about on this floor of this Senate to protect, the only way they are going to be protected is the extent to which we do away with this tax.

Suppose we are able to continue enacting 1- or 2-year temporary patches, as we have done. First, this strategy assumes Congress will have the time and the inclination to spend time dealing with the alternative minimum tax every year or two. This means whatever the issue of the day might be—Iraq, unemployment, natural disasters—Congress will have to stop dealing with those other problems and return to a problem we should never have had to deal with in the first place. Is the alternative minimum tax an issue that we as a legislative body want to revisit every year? Wouldn't it be better to solve it once and for all, particularly since it is phantom revenue, taxing middle-class Americans who were never supposed to pay it in the first place? Remember, only 155 taxpayers were targeted with this tax in 1969.

Second, every time Congress attempts to enact or extend a temporary fix, the same revenue issues are going to come up. Budget projections create the illusion of forgone revenues given up because of an alternative minimum tax hold harmless. Every time a patch is considered, there is another chance for taxpayers to be subject to this stealth tax increase.

Clearly, there is only one way to fix the AMT so no taxpayer is subjected to what has become a complete policy failure. We must completely repeal the individual AMT. There is a bipartisan consensus that only complete repeal is an adequate solution to this problem. Chairman BAUCUS, along with this Senator, Senator CRAPO, Senator KYL, Senator ROBERTS, Senator SCHUMER of New York, and Senator SMITH last month introduced the Individual Alternative Minimum Tax Repeal Act.

We must repeal the AMT and we must do it without offsetting any revenue the AMT is expected to collect in the future. I have made this point before, but it is important. The alternative minimum tax was never intended to be a significant source of revenue. It was only meant to hit a few people who could legally avoid paying the tax with the idea that everybody living in America ought to pay a little bit of income tax for the privilege of benefiting from this great economy we have. Despite this, the alternative minimum tax will balloon revenues to historically high levels if something isn't done, as my colleagues can see right there on the chart.

If we consider the AMT to be a fundamentally unfair tax, any tax that would replace it would be equally unfair. Anyone who wants equity to be a fundamental value represented in our Tax Code and who wants fair treatment for this country's middle-class taxpayers must support my amendment for complete repeal of the individual income tax.

I filed an amendment that repeals the AMT. I am going to push this body to speak on this proposal for these reasons: We need to get Members who say they support AMT repeal to show their support for the record; second, to eliminate the mythical budgeting that results from assuming current levels of AMT revenues; third, to show the American people we will walk the walk on the AMT repeal and not just talk the talk.

I know some who oppose my amendment will argue two points: that there is $180 billion in the budget for tax relief; and secondly, we can't afford the repeal of AMT.

As to the first point, the purpose of the Baucus amendment, which I supported yesterday, was to deal with less than half of the tax relief that expires in the year 2010. In a sense, Members have indicated where they want that money to go, and that revenue loss is built into the post-2010 period.

As to the second point, we can afford to repeal the AMT because revenues remain at or above record levels in the outyears with the AMT gone. Honest budgeting would recognize it as fictional in any event.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Arizona is recognized.

AMENDMENT NO. 583

Mr. KYL. Madam President, I send an amendment to the desk and ask for its immediate consideration.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will report.

The bill clerk read as follows:

The Senator from Arizona [Mr. KYL] proposes an amendment numbered 583.

Mr. KYL. I ask that further reading of the amendment be dispensed with.

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

The amendment is as follows:

AMENDMENT NO. 583

(Purpose: To reform the death tax by setting the exemption at $5 million per estate, indexed for inflation, and the top death tax rate at no more than 35% beginning in 2010; to avoid subjecting an estimated 119,200 families, family businesses, and family farms to the death tax each and every year; to promote continued economic growth and job creation; and to make the enhanced teacher deduction permanent)

On page 3, line 11, decrease the amount by $20,000,000.

On page 3, line 12, decrease the amount by $388,000,000.

On page 3, line 13, decrease the amount by $886,000,000.

On page 3, line 14, decrease the amount by $17,390,000,000.

On page 3, line 15, decrease the amount by $14,602,000,000.

On page 3, line 20, decrease the amount by $20,000,000.

On page 3, line 21, decrease the amount by $388,000,000.

On page 3, line 22, decrease the amount by $886,000,000.

On page 3, line 23, decrease the amount by $17,390,000,000.

On page 4, line 1, decrease the amount by $14,602,000,000.

On page 4, line 7, increase the amount by $10,000,000.

On page 4, line 8, increase the amount by $40,000,000.

On page 4, line 9, increase the amount by $472,000,000.

On page 4, line 10, increase the amount by $1,246,000,000.

On page 4, line 16, increase the amount by $10,000,000.

On page 4, line 17, increase the amount by $40,000,000.

On page 4, line 18, increase the amount by $472,000,000.

On page 4, line 19, increase the amount by $1,246,000,000.

On page 4, line 24, increase the amount by $20,000,000.

On page 4, line 25, increase the amount by $398,000,000.

On page 5, line 1, increase the amount by $926,000,000.

On page 5, line 2, increase the amount by $17,862,000,000.

On page 5, line 3, increase the amount by $15,848,000,000.

On page 5, line 7, increase the amount by $20,000,000.

On page 5, line 8, increase the amount by $418,000,000.

On page 5, line 9, increase the amount by $1,345,000,000.

On page 5, line 10, increase the amount by $19,207,000,000.

On page 5, line 11, increase the amount by $35,054,000,000.

On page 5, line 15, increase the amount by $20,000,000.

On page 5, line 16, increase the amount by $418,000,000.

On page 5, line 17, increase the amount by $1,345,000,000.

On page 5, line 18, increase the amount by $19,207,000,000.

On page 5, line 19, increase the amount by $35,054,000,000.

On page 25, line 16, increase the amount by $10,000,000.

On page 25, line 17, increase the amount by $10,000,000.

On page 25, line 20, increase the amount by $40,000,000.

On page 25, line 21, increase the amount by $40,000,000.

On page 25, line 24, increase the amount by $472,000,000.

On page 25, line 25, increase the amount by $472,000,000.

On page 26, line 3, increase the amount by $1,246,000,000.

On page 26, line 4, increase the amount by $1,246,000,000.

Mr. KYL. Madam President, let me discuss this amendment briefly. It is cosponsored by Senator THUNE from South Dakota. It is called the Kyl-Thune death tax reform amendment.

Yesterday we had a vote on an amendment that included several items, including death tax reform, and I believe some people might have voted against that because items in the bill included a continuation of the current rates for the capital gains tax and the tax on dividends. Because of that fact, we decided to make this basically a clean vote.

The only thing this bill deals with other than death tax reform is the continuation for teachers of the teacher tax deduction which we make permanent. This is the deduction that allows a teacher, when she pays or he pays for some items that are then taken to school to help the kids with their lessons, when they pay for those out of their own pocket—we think there should be a $250 deduction to help defray the cost of those items. That is all that is in this amendment now.

This Kyl-Thune amendment provides room in the budget resolution to enact meaningful tax reform. Obviously, I still believe repeal of the death tax is the best option. We have been trying to find agreement on a permanent reform, because planning for death tax now is a nightmare for families, and it is a nightmare right now because of the way this law is being phased out and then comes back with a vengeance to its previous form. It is a bonanza for the insurance companies, to be sure, and they are leading the opposition to the death tax reform. But they are wrong.

As a matter of fact, when the lobbyists for the insurance industry came to my office to argue this, I said: Before you make your argument, let me ask you to assume for a moment we have found a way to eliminate death. Now, you represent the undertakers; go ahead and make your case. That is the case with the insurance companies. They are making a lot of money on the backs of people who have to spend money to plan against the death of the person in their family who runs the farm or has the small business.

There is a far better way to use all of that money that is spent each year on avoiding the tax or preparing to pay for it. As a matter of fact, what we have found is there is almost an equal amount of money that is spent complying with the avoidance costs as there is in collection for the Government. Alicia Munnell, who was a member of President Clinton's Council of Economic Advisers, estimated the costs of complying with the estate tax laws are roughly the same as the revenue raised. The estate tax is expected to raise about $28 billion in fiscal year 2006. If the estate tax generates a dollar in compliance costs for every dollar in revenue, then obviously the aggregate cost of the tax is about $56 billion. The point is, for every dollar of revenue raised by the estate tax, another dollar is simply wasted to comply with or avoid the tax. Maybe I shouldn't say ''wasted.'' It does go to the insurance companies. So let me strike ''wasted.''

But the bottom line is we can do better. What this amendment does is to allow the budget to accommodate estate tax reform. I didn't pick my bill, even though I happen to think it is the best reform bill; I took a bill that has been provided by the senior Senator from Louisiana and has been supported by people on the other side of the aisle such as the junior Senator from Arkansas. What the budget would do is accommodate that particular death tax reform. It could accommodate other death tax reform as well, so long as it was within the amount of money we have provided here. The amount of money in this amendment is a total of about $32 billion over 5 years, and that needs to be added to the amount the Baucus amendment already provides for estate tax reform which would be a total of about $61.7 billion over a 5-year period.

The bill that was provided or written by the senior Senator from Louisiana provides a $5 million exemption indexed for inflation, which I think is a perfectly appropriate amount, a family business carve-out, which is very difficult to do legally, and a 35-percent top rate. That is where I differ, because 35 percent is still a very high top rate. It also recaptures the benefit of the $5 million exemption for estates valued over $100 million. The revenue provided for the death tax reform in the 5-year budget window is about $31.7 billion, as I said. The teacher deduction is about another $400 million, for a total of about $32 billion.

As I said, the amendment is structured so when it is combined with the Baucus amendment approved yesterday, the total amount of revenue would be sufficient to accommodate the Landrieu reform bill. If you take both amendments together, the Baucus amendment and Kyl-Thune, as I said, the total amount is about $61.7 billion, not offset with additional revenues. As a matter of fact, I don't believe existing law extensions—and, indeed, this is precisely what we would be talking about here—should have to be offset, particularly where they are actually provisions that enhance economic activity, just as extensions of existing mandatory spending need not be offset.

The amendment approved yesterday included an estate tax provision that

frankly I very strongly disagree with. In fact, some would say it is an insult to every family business or every family farm that is seeking relief. Not surprisingly, it is strongly endorsed by the insurance industry, because it provides for a 45-percent rate. Now, if you have a 45-percent rate, you are going to want to plan against that. You do not want to have to pay that rate on the estate that is left after your death. As a result, since the Government has taken about half your property above the exempt amount, you are going to want to plan against that. That is why I think we can do better than that, and this proposal does that.

Remember, the budget that has been proposed here allows increases on taxes on almost every single taxpayer, a total of about $736 billion over 5 years, which is, I believe, about 3 times larger than the biggest tax increase ever enacted in our history. The amount adopted yesterday by the chairman of the Finance Committee took the budget out of balance. It created a deficit, in other words, of about $6 billion in the year 2012. We believe the spending restraint we are capable of, combined with a very strong economy, will enable us to balance the budget by 2012 without increasing taxes.

Now, it is true the budget before us makes it impossible, because of the amount of spending in it, to balance the budget without a record level of tax increase. Unfortunately, that includes a confiscatory tax on thousands of American families. The budget resolutions don't dictate policy to the Finance Committee, but it would certainly be our intention to work with Senator LANDRIEU, Senator PRYOR, and Senator LINCOLN, who has been very much a leader in this area, and others to craft an estate tax reform proposal that would provide an exemption of at least $5 million indexed for inflation and provide workable relief for the smallest estates and farms, and a top rate that is no higher than 35 percent—hopefully lower.

We believe that this can be accomplished and that, as a result, my colleagues who might have opposed this amendment yesterday because it included the capital gains and dividend tax rates should be in a position to support the resolution that will be voted on today because of the fact that it accommodates a proposal supported by Members of both the majority and minority. It will be voted on tomorrow; I misspoke. I would like to have it voted on today.

A couple of other items, and I see my colleague, the Senator from South Dakota is here. I want him to speak to this. There are a couple of misconceptions I wish to address. According to the Joint Tax Committee, the total number of estate tax returns projected for 2011 alone is 131,000. By 2015, about 177,000 estates will file tax returns in that year alone. These are the numbers for each year. Some people had the idea that these were the numbers over 5 or 10 years; no, this is for each year.

The first misconception is that it doesn't apply to that many people. An awful lot of people need to file these returns. Secondly, the death tax, similar to other taxes, is very sensitive with respect to economic growth. When businesses can put this money back into their business and create jobs, rather than pay the estate planning to insurance companies, it helps our economy as well as helping the business grow. An entrepreneur or an investor will have a very big disincentive to grow their business, regardless of the amount of the exemption, above that exempted amount if the tax rate imposed on new growth over and above the exemption is too high.

We can argue about what the tax rate ought to be. But I think almost everybody would agree the tax rate of 45 percent is confiscatory. What incentive does somebody have to grow his business beyond the exempt amount if the Government will take nearly half of everything over that exempt amount?

A couple of other points. We have historical evidence that the estate tax reduces capital stock in the U.S. economy. This is part of the reason we have grown so well in recent years, because of the downward projection on the estate tax and the hope that it will be eventually eliminated.

In a report by the Joint Economic Committee, they projected the estate tax reduced the stock of capital in the economy by approximately $847 billion, or 3.8 percent, over the last 60 years. That is a ton of money. By comparison, it has raised, during that same period, less than that—only $761 billion. So it has taken far more out of the private sector and hasn't added that much to the Government sector. This is money that could have been put to productive use.

I mentioned the fact that the avoidance costs are about equal to the take for the Government as well. That is another reason for this reform.

I will close with this point: Americans understand the rates now are confiscatory, that it is unfair; and even people who understand that they will never be subject to the estate tax appreciate its effect on others and understand it is an unfair tax. In a Gallup Poll from an April 2006, 58 percent of respondents said—and they called it the ''inheritance tax'' and didn't use the words ''death tax.'' They said the inheritance tax is unfair, and this confirms results of polls taken in both previous years. It is always called ''the most unfair tax'' when you list it among all the other taxes.

What is interesting about the Gallup Poll is that even though it was taken in April while Americans were filing their taxes, the death tax was called unfair—or the ''inheritance tax''—by more people than the despised alternative minimum tax that was discussed by the ranking member of the Finance Committee. Only 42 percent of respondents said the AMT was unfair. Yet it is affecting a lot more people than the estate tax. One reason people say it is unfair is because of the confiscatory rate, which is 46 percent this year. In the 2005 poll, when the rate was 47 percent, 81 percent of respondents said the estate tax is ''an extreme form of taxation'' and that the rate was unfair.

Finally, I note—and this was interesting to me as somebody who has studied politics a little bit—after the last election in the exit polls, voters were asked whether they thought the death tax was somewhat unfair or very unfair. They were broken into Kerry voters and Bush voters. Not unsurprisingly, 89 percent of Bush voters believed the death tax is somewhat unfair or very unfair. But 71 percent of Kerry voters also found the death tax at least somewhat unfair or very unfair.

So this is a view shared by most Americans of all political stripes, and it is time for us to reform the death tax, if not repeal it.

What we have done with this amendment—the Kyl-Thune amendment—is accommodate that reform in the budget. I hope my colleagues, when we have an opportunity to vote on it, will support it. I want the Senator from South Dakota to speak, but I would like a minute at the conclusion to talk about the support also coming not just from other small business organizations but from minority business organizations and others, to demonstrate the breadth of support around the country for reform of this very unfair tax.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from North Dakota is recognized.

Mr. CONRAD. Through no fault of the Senator from Arizona, we are actually into my time on his amendment. As I said to the Senator from Arizona, I am prepared to yield some of my time so that some of his other speakers have a chance. Also, I don't want to completely give away my time because I need to respond. Maybe we can work out an agreement so that those people who are here can speak, and I would like to have 10 minutes. I was supposed to have a half hour, but I would like to retain at least 10 minutes.

Senator GRASSLEY indicated he would like a minute. He is not here at the moment, so perhaps we can go to Senator THUNE. We have 22 minutes. If I am to retain 10, that leaves 12 minutes. I don't know how the Senator wants to divvy up that time.

Mr. KYL. I appreciate the courtesy of the chairman of the committee. If Senator GRASSLEY takes a minute, and we have three other Senators who take 4 minutes, that gives me a minute to say thank you and that would do it. I propose that as a unanimous consent request.

Mr. CONRAD. Can we identify the Senators? Senator GRASSLEY for a minute, Senator THUNE for 4 minutes, Senator DEMINT for 4 minutes, and Senator GRAHAM for 4 minutes, and a minute to Senator KYL. That would leave me 8 minutes. That is fair enough.

Mr. KYL. I thank the Senator.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Is there objection?

Without objection, it is so ordered.

The Senator from South Dakota is recognized.

Mr. THUNE. Madam President, I thank the Senator from North Dakota for accommodating us. I thank the Senator from Arizona for his leadership on this issue. I have supported his efforts for some time to get rid of the death tax. I have supported getting rid of this unfair tax going back to my days as a Member of the House of Representatives.

Last year, I came down to the Senate floor and gave examples of real-life family farms that are facing the effects of the death tax. I wanted to remind Senators of two of those family farms. I think sometimes it gets lost. We think we are dealing with these concepts in the abstract, but they affect real people. These stories are real, and the effect of the tax is real as well.

The first example is a 3,000-acre family farm operation in central South Dakota. In my State, that is a medium-sized operation. A death occurred in this family and, as a result, $750,000 will likely be paid in taxes. This is a huge amount of money for a farm operation in my State, where land values can make an operation look a lot more valuable on paper than they are in reality.

In other words, farmers such as this can often be described as ''land rich'' but ''cash poor.'' All their value is in the land. When a massive death tax bill comes due, the only option is often to sell the land to pay the unfair and unjust tax. Thus, a family legacy comes to an end.

The second example is a 10,000-acre operation in north central South Dakota. Similar to so many farms and ranches in my State, the parents who have run the place for decades are getting older. Their kids would like to continue in the business, but the death tax on that farm would likely be $1.5 million. That would make it virtually impossible for the kids to stay on the farm and keep that family farm operation going. I find it extremely disturbing that our Federal Tax Code could influence a family's ability to keep their family farm from being broken up and sold off.

The budget resolution is more than a list of numbers. It is a statement of our priorities. These priorities are going to impact real people. I believe our budget should show we are prioritizing family farms, family ranches, and small businesses. We can show that these family small businesses are a priority by making room in the budget for permanent, meaningful death tax reform.

The death tax is a completely unfair tax because Americans pay their fair share of taxes throughout their life on what they earn, what they own, what they buy, only to see the IRS take one last bite when they die.

It is also unfair because the Donald Trumps and Paris Hiltons of the world have teams of lawyers and accountants to make sure they pay little or no death tax. But the family-owned operations and small businesses I talked about are the ones that end up paying.

It is for these reasons that Congress acted a few years ago to repeal the death tax, but because of some strange rules that can only be devised in a place such as the Senate, the death tax comes back to life in the year 2011.

I believe we need to enact permanent, meaningful death tax reform this year. This amendment takes us down that path. I hope my colleagues on both sides will support it. I credit the Senator from Arizona for drafting this in a way that is consistent with the proposal offered last year by a colleague on the other side. I hope Members on both sides can support this, and I hope, once and for all, we will get rid of this unfair and unjust tax.

I yield back whatever time I have.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from South Carolina is recognized.

Mr. DEMINT. Madam President, I rise to speak in support of Senator KYL's amendment. A few years ago, Congress did something that was very helpful to America. We voted to completely phase out the death tax. I think we have discovered in the debate that this is not about just rich people, it is about people who own small businesses and small farms. I had a number of examples to give, but we are short on time. There is one family that had a printing business for 97 years; they have already paid the death tax once. They are getting ready to pay it again. We have the opportunity to change that.

Now that we have voted to phase this out, it is not fair that in 2010, if a small business owner dies, that person can leave their family their entire business without any estate taxes; but if that same person died in 2011, they could lose up to half their estate. We don't need for this to happen. I certainly support Senator KYL's compromise idea. But tomorrow I will call up amendment No. 576—I will not call it up today—which will completely eliminate the death tax for another 5 years. So that what happens in 2010 will continue to 2015. I hope all my colleagues will consider this and do the right thing for small businesses and farms.

I reserve the remainder of my time.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from South Carolina is recognized.

Mr. GRAHAM. Madam President, we had the same discussion yesterday when Senator KYL made a very articulate argument as to why we as a Congress need to act, and this budget is a good opportunity to act, to get the death tax resolved in a way that will allow people to plan for their families and their businesses.

America is in a terrible spot. If you die New Year's Eve 2010, right now, there is no estate tax liability for those who die on that day. If you live until January 1, 2011, unless we act, the estate tax comes back in full force. That is an unconscionable place to put the American public. Total repeal is apparently not possible. I would love to do that.

Senator KYL's proposal would allow us to buy some more time. He has taken a Democratic proposal—about a $5 million exemption and a 35-percent top rate—to see if we can get the body to allow it within our budget resolution to accommodate the extension of the death tax on those terms.

My good friend from North Dakota, who is a joy to work with, is very concerned about the debt, and he should be concerned about it. But when you talk about the tax cuts and tax relief that we provided in the capital gains area and dividends area, I would argue that the revenue being generated to this Government is on par with historical averages, that the Government is not being deprived of revenue, that the tax cuts since 2003 have helped keep this economy humming, and that we are getting a lot of revenue because we cut taxes. And if we raise taxes or we take the extenders off the table, which this budget will do unless we change it, then we are going to cripple an economy that has created a lot of jobs and make ourselves less competitive.

The death tax side is what kind of society we want. There has been a budget submitted by the President that is balanced, that has an extension of the death tax—under OMB, I think it is $50 billion out of balance 5 years from now—but you can accommodate these tax provisions and balance the budget.

I urge my colleagues, if we don't do this now before the end of this year, sooner rather than later, let's see if we can come together as a body to come up with a compromise on the death tax that will give Americans the certainty they need when it comes to planning their affairs and come up with a compromise that will reward those who have done well, who have worked hard, and they can leave their money behind to their families and their communities rather than it all be sent to Washington or a lot of it be sent to Washington and people they don't know.

I think Senator KYL's amendment is a great opportunity for this body to address a real problem, a growing problem, and that is the fact that no one in America can with certainty plan for their demise and take care of their family because the Congress is refusing to act in a responsible manner. This amendment will help solve that problem.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from North Dakota is recognized.

Mr. CONRAD. Madam President, the Senator has accurately described a situation that makes no earthly sense with respect to the estate tax. There is no death tax in America. There is none. There is an estate tax that applies to estates of over a certain value. Right now, less than 1 percent of estates are affected. By the time we get to 2009, in

which the exemption level will rise to $3.5 million per person—so a couple with $7 million in an estate, anything below $7 million will pay absolutely nothing—it will be down to three-tenths of 1 percent of estates paying any tax.

Then we have this truly bizarre situation in which the next year, the estate tax is repealed in 2010, and then in 2011 it snaps back and the exemption, instead of the $3.5 million we had in 2009, falls to $1 million.

The amendment by Senator BAUCUS that was adopted yesterday prevents the amount of the estate tax exemption from shrinking to $1 million per person. He at least puts a floor and says it will not drop below the $3.5 million, and that $3.5 million will be adjusted for inflation.

He also had the extension of the middle-class tax cuts—the marriage penalty relief, the 10-percent bracket, the childcare credit. That left us with no money left in 2012.

The problem with the amendment that is now offered by our colleague from Arizona, Senator KYL, is that it is not paid for. That is the problem. It puts us back into deficit in 2012. Here we have spent all this time and all this work digging out of the deficit ditch, and this amendment puts us right back in, to the tune of about a $16 billion deficit in 2012.

We have had speeches all week about how important it was to show some fiscal discipline and to stop deficit spending, to balance the books, to balance the budget. We are there. We have a budget now that is balanced in 2012. But this amendment offered by Senator KYL, as meritorious as it may be in the eyes of some colleagues, as high a priority as they have said it is, wasn't a sufficiently high priority for them to pay for it. It wasn't of enough importance for them to offer the offsets, whether it is spending offsets or revenue offsets, to cover the cost. The result is they have put us back into deficit in 2012.

For that reason, I will strenuously oppose the Kyl amendment, and I give notice to colleagues that, I am told, there will be an alternative to accomplish much the same purpose, but one that is paid for, and I understand that will be offered tomorrow when this amendment is voted on.

We have had hours and hours of speeches on the floor about the need to address the fiscal condition of the country, about the need to first balance the budget and then deal with the long-term entitlement challenges.

Look, this is going the other way. This is going the other way. This is additional loss of tax revenue without any offset, without any replacement, either in spending cuts or alternative revenue. So what it does is balloons the debt by over $30 billion and puts the budget of 2012 back into deficit. That would be a mistake.

I reserve the remainder of my time.

I yield 3 minutes to the Senator from Michigan.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Michigan.

Ms. STABENOW. Madam President, I rise also to oppose this amendment. The first point that comes to mind for me is, here they go again. I say that with all due respect to my friend from Arizona. But we are seeing more, as the Budget chairman has said, of the strategy that got us into the hole that this budget is trying to dig us out of.

It is important to emphasize again what the Budget chairman has said. Here is what has happened in terms of numbers of estates that even qualified as taxable estates back in 2000. It was 50,000. It has dropped to 13,000, and as of 2009, it will be 7,000 estates in the entire country that will even qualify for this tax.

How much is that? We are talking about only .2 percent of estates, 7,000. The Baucus amendment that we adopted yesterday says that for those, it is not going to change. That number is not going to go back up. There will be a continuation of the current exemption level. So we are talking about .2 percent of the estates being taxed.

I think almost without exception—I can't speak for every colleague on the Senate floor, but I know on this side of the aisle, colleagues are very sympathetic and support our family farmers. I have a lot of them in my State, and I know you do, Madam President, in your State as well, small businesses, family-owned businesses. They build up the business, and they want to be able to pass that business on. With great pride, the families are engaged and involved. We are not interested in seeing anybody lose their family farm or their family business. That is why we have supported extending the exemptions so that less than .2 percent of estates are taxed or eligible to be taxed.

Frankly, there have been some of us on this side of the aisle who have had amendments over the years—I have cosponsored amendments—that would exempt family-owned enterprises. If that is what people want to do, I think there would be a lot of interest in doing something like that.

But I think behind all the talk of our family farmers and small businesses is another picture of a few extremely wealthy families in this country whose children or aunts, uncles, sisters, brothers—someone may benefit through an inheritance. They may have not contributed at all to building that wealth and may never have to work a day in their life or contribute to this country. The question is, Should they have to contribute in some way with the only tax, for instance, they might pay is the estate tax?

I see my time is coming to a close. I want to share one more chart. What we are concerned about, what I am concerned about, is the fact that last year, the tax cuts that have already been given have already disproportionately affected the very wealthy, the most blessed people in this country. Anyone earning more than $1 million a year last year, in 2006, had a tax cut of over $118,000, which is more than what the average person in Michigan or anyone in this country makes in a year.

So what we are objecting to is this is not helping family farmers and small businesses. This is about a tax system and a series of tax cuts that are out of whack that have created the situation where, if you are working hard every day on that family farm, in that small business, or if you are working every day building great American automobiles, such as a lot of folks in my State, you didn't see any tax cut or not much of a tax cut. But if you are somebody who would benefit in that top .2 percent who gets the estate tax cut we are talking about, you are already being given some pretty big gifts from the current tax system.

I urge a ''no'' vote.

Mr. GRASSLEY. Madam President, this budget proposal does not allow the Senate to address the unfair burden of the death tax. By 2011, the tax will affect all farms and businesses worth more than $1 million at a tax rate as high as 55 percent. In the State of Iowa alone, according to the USDA, we have more than 20,000 farms worth more then $1 million. Those families may be land rich, but they are cash poor, and they have to spend too much money today to plan on how to survive the unfair death tax. These are not big farms. With land prices today, you can have as few as 350 acres in Iowa to have a million dollars in value.

If the Senate fails to put money in the budget today and we leave the death tax in place in its punitive form, our failure to amend this budget will create the economic uncertainty that could dismantle our farms and small businesses in rural America. I will be voting ''yes'' on the Kyl amendment. It puts money in the budget. It is the responsible thing to do.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Arizona.

Mr. KYL. Madam President, if I may take 1 minute to make two quick points. I note that the chart of the Senator from Michigan uses the figures for the last year of the Bush tax cuts to show in the very best light the impact of reductions of a number of estates that pay the estate tax. It is a fairly low number, a relatively low number, and it will continue to be low if Republicans have their way.

Unfortunately, the next 2 years, years after which the Bush tax cuts expire, in the year 2011, the number goes back up to 131,000 and in the year 2015, according to the Joint Tax Committee, nearly 177,000 estates will file estate tax returns.

The second point is that the bottom line is that the 1 year cited by the Senator from Michigan does get down to a fairly low number because of the Republican tax cuts. Then they expire, and the number shoots back up.

The only other point I wish to make is our budget amendment is designed to accommodate a bill offered by the senior Senator from Louisiana which was

not offset at all because those of us who support reform of the death tax appreciate its significance in the lives of Americans and the priority to eliminate or to reduce that tax.

Ms. STABENOW. Madam President, will my friend yield for a question?

Mr. KYL. I suspect I am out of time, but I am happy to yield.

Mr. CONRAD. What is the time situation?

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Arizona has 3 minutes 34 seconds.

Mr. KYL. Off your time.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from North Dakota has no time remaining.

Mr. CONRAD. No, no, no. Somehow the timekeeping is not correct. I think the Senator had 1 minute remaining, which I think he has used.

Mr. KYL. Madam President, I think that is correct.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. We are looking at the time clocks. You both seem to agree, so that is fine.

Mr. CONRAD. Madam President, let me conclude on this matter.

First, I thank Senator KYL. Second, let me make clear, the reason the estate tax is going to run out is because of the Bush tax cuts. The Bush tax cuts, as passed by the Congress, led to this bizarre situation where it is a $3.5 million exemption in 2009, and then it is fully repealed in 2010. Then it goes to $1 million a person in 2011. That was the action of the Republican Congress in conjunction with the Bush administration. They are the ones who created this problem.

We adopted, as part of this resolution, the Baucus amendment yesterday that will prevent in 2011 the exemption from falling to $1 million a person and will instead keep it at $3.5 million per person, which means $7 million for a couple can be shielded without paying any taxes. That is indexed for inflation. So just in terms of who did what, the fact is, the Republican Congress is the one that constructed this bizarre circumstance in which the estate tax is repealed in 2010 and then comes back in 2011 with only $1 million per person shielded.

Let me conclude by saying this: Look, the problem with this amendment, they say it is a priority, but they have no money to pay for it. The result is that we are faced with a circumstance in which it all gets added to the deficit and the debt.

We addressed this in the Baucus amendment yesterday, the problem with the estate tax, but this amendment is not paid for. This amendment will take us back into deficit in 2012.

Mr. CONRAD. Madam President, I see that the Senator from Indiana is on the Senate floor. He has the time at 4 p.m. under his control. I wish to thank the Senator from Indiana for his graciousness in accepting a change in the time. We had earlier told him he would be up for 3 p.m., and he very graciously accepted this change to 4 p.m., which I appreciate very much.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Indiana is recognized.

Mr. BAYH. Madam President, first, let me say to my colleague that I have learned over the years that flexibility is an important attribute around the Senate. Punctuality is, on the other hand, too rare, so I am glad we could combine both today.

AMENDMENT NO. 526

Madam President, I call up amendment No. 526, and I ask for its immediate consideration.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will report the amendment.

The legislative clerk read as follows:

The Senator from Indiana [Mr. BAYH], for himself, and Ms. SNOWE, proposes an amendment numbered 526.

Mr. BAYH. Madam President, I ask unanimous consent that further reading of the amendment be dispensed with.

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

The amendment is as follows:

(Purpose: Makes permanent the tuition tax deduction and is fully offset by closing a portion of the tax gap through enhanced information reporting requirements)

On page 3, line 11, decrease the amount by $120,000,000.

On page 3, line 12, decrease the amount by $776,000,000.

On page 3, line 13, decrease the amount by $178,000,000.

On page 3, line 14, increase the amount by $349,000,000.

On page 3, line 15, increase the amount by $742,000,000.

On page 3, line 20, decrease the amount by $120,000,000.

On page 3, line 21, decrease the amount by $776,000,000.

On page 3, line 22, decrease the amount by $178,000,000.

On page 3, line 23, increase the amount by $349,000,000.

On page 4, line 1, increase the amount by $742,000,000.

On page 4, line 24, increase the amount by $120,000,000.

On page 4, line 25, increase the amount by $776,000,000.

On page 5, line 1, increase the amount by $178,000,000.

On page 5, line 2, decrease the amount by $349,000,000.

On page 5, line 3, decrease the amount by $742,000,000.

On page 5, line 7, increase the amount by $120,000,000.

On page 5, line 8, increase the amount by $896,000,000.

On page 5, line 9, increase the amount by $1,074,000,000.

On page 5, line 10, increase the amount by $725,000,000.

On page 5, line 11, decrease the amount by $17,000,000.

On page 5, line 15, increase the amount by $120,000,000.

On page 5, line 16, increase the amount by $896,000,000.

On page 5, line 17, increase the amount by $1,074,000,000.

On page 5, line 18, increase the amount by $725,000,000.

On page 5, line 19, decrease the amount by $17,000,000.

Mr. BAYH. Madam President, as you and I have discussed just as recently as today, the cost of a college education is an increasingly important challenge to middle-class families across Minnesota, Indiana, and the rest of our country. Unfortunately, it is a challenge that too many families today cannot meet, but it is an important one that we equip them to meet.

For example, 80 percent of the new jobs that will be created over the next decade are estimated to require some level of higher education. The estimates also show us that a college graduate can expect to make fully 75 percent more than someone with only a high school diploma. Yet the escalating cost of a college degree is putting it beyond the ability of middle-class families to afford.

Just as an example, over the past 4 years alone the cost of a private college education has gone up 28 percent. Over that same period of time, the cost of a 4-year public university has gone up 55 percent. Regrettably, this will, the estimates show, lead 4.4 million qualified students across our country to give up their dream of pursuing a college education. That is simply not right, and we need to do something about it. Today, we have that opportunity.

If we don't act, the college tuition deduction currently in place will expire at the end of next year, making matters even worse than they are today. We can't let that happen. We must act now. Congress acted so late last year to extend the college deduction another year that the IRS was unable to include it on this year's tax forms, meaning that possibly tens of thousands of American families and students who qualified for the credit will get out their tax form, not see it there, and not get the relief to which they are entitled. We have to do better than that, and under our amendment we will.

Our amendment will make permanent the $4,000 deduction for college tuition and fees, and it is flexible, applying to both undergraduates, 4-year institutions, as well as 2-year institutions. It is squarely targeted at the middle class. Individuals making up to $65,000 a year and families making up to $130,000 a year will qualify for the full $4,000 deduction. Individuals making up to $80,000 a year and families making up to $160,000 a year will qualify for up to $2,000 in assistance.

It is also fully paid for. It will cost $5.6 billion over the next 5 years, but it is offset by a variety of provisions to close the tax gap included in the President's budget. So it meets a pressing national need facing our middle class, but it does so in a way that is fiscally responsible.

In conclusion, at a time when too many of our middle class are asking who in Washington speaks for them, at a time when they realize full well that the wealthy can take care of themselves and that we have many programs targeted to the less fortunate but nothing really targeted for the middle class, this effort squarely meets a major challenge confronting middle-

class families and says to them that we speak for their concerns as well.

At a time when too many of our citizens are saying that Washington is irrelevant, that there is too much political fighting and partisanship and procedural bickering, and all that kind of stuff, this is something that speaks directly to one of their major concerns, and it is about time we did something about it. Today, we have that opportunity.

I thank all those who have helped bring us to this moment. One of our colleagues, Senator SCHUMER, has been a relentless champion of making college more affordable for middle-class families for many years now. We wouldn't be here without his leadership. I thank also Senator SNOWE, who is the principal cosponsor of this legislation, and I know full well of your personal concern about this as well, Madam President.

So Democrats and Republicans alike, this is something we can work on together, make the government relevant, help the middle class, and do it in a fiscally responsible way. I urge its adoption.

Madam President, I yield the floor.

Mr. GREGG. Madam President, what is the Senator's offset for this? As I understand it, it is money selected from the tax gap; is that correct?

Mr. BAYH. That is correct.

Mr. GREGG. Well, obviously, I agree with the Senator's initiative relative to the education tax credit. That was in the original Bush tax cuts, which have done so much good for this economy and for people who have benefitted from them, and tuition tax credits is a big part of that benefit. People going to college are more readily able to afford it as a result of the President putting that in his plan, and I think we should extend it.

I regret that the amendment we offered earlier, which did extend it, was voted down, the Kyl amendment. The Senator has now come forward with a rifle shot on this item. The tax gap is an illusory number. It doesn't exist. We have already more than used it. It has sort of gotten to be like Customs fees around here, where a few years ago they just kept getting used over and over again.

As a practical matter, however, we are certainly going to be supportive of this proposal, and if the Senator doesn't need a vote on it, we will take a voice vote.

Mr. CONRAD. Madam President, I would inquire of the Senator, would he be willing to take a voice vote?

Mr. BAYH. I would.

Mr. CONRAD. Madam President, I ask unanimous consent that we go to a voice vote on the Bayh amendment.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Is there further debate on the amendment?

If not, the question is on agreeing to amendment No. 526.

The amendment (No. 526) was agreed to.

Mr. CONRAD. Madam President, I move to reconsider the vote.

Mr. GREGG. I move to lay that motion on the table.

The motion to lay on the table was agreed to.

Mr. CONRAD. Madam President, I thank the Senator from Indiana. I thank him for working with us to get this amendment worked out, and I want to also thank my colleague, the ranking member of the committee, for his cooperation once again.

We now are prepared to start voting, are we not?

Mr. GREGG. I was going to suggest, Madam President, that if the chairman was ready, we should start voting now. Why wait?

Mr. CONRAD. Madam President, let me note that we might need to get an agreement on how we proceed. However, I think we should put colleagues on notice that very shortly we are going to start voting.

Madam President, I suggest the absence of a quorum.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will call the roll.

The legislative clerk proceeded to call the roll.

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

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

AMENDMENT NO. 545, AS MODIFIED

Mr. CONRAD. Madam President, I ask unanimous consent that the Sanders amendment, No. 545, be modified with the changes at the desk.

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

The amendment, as modified, is as follows:

On page 3, line 11, increase the amount by $10,300,000,000.

On page 3, line 12, increase the amount by $14,600,000,000.

On page 3, line 13, increase the amount by $14,800,000,000.

On page 3, line 14, increase the amount by $4,500,000,000.

On page 3, line 20, increase the amouunt by $10,300,000,000.

On page 3, line 21, increase the amount by $14,600,000,000.

On page 3, line 22, increase the amount by $14,800,000,000.

On page 3, line 23, increase the amount by $4,500,000,000.

On page 4, line 6, increase the amount by $10,300,000,000.

On page 4, line 7, increase the amount by $14,600,000,000.

On page 4, line 8, increase the amount by $14,800,000,000.

On page 4, line 9, increase the amount by $4,500,000,000.

On page 4, line 15, increase the amount by $10,300,000,000.

On page 4, line 16, increase the amount by $14,600,000,000.

On page 4, line 17, increase the amount by $14,800,000,000.

On page 4, line 18 increase the amount by $4,500,000,000.

On page 4, line 8, increase the amount by $14,800,000,000.

On page 4, line 9, increase the amount by $4,500,000,000.

On page 4, line 15, increase the amount by $10,300,000,000.

On page 4, line 16, increase the amount by $14,600,000,000.

On page 4, line 17, increase the amount by $14,800,000,000.

On page 4, line 18, increase the amount by $4,500,000,000.

On page 17, line 12, increase the amount by $10,300,000,000.

On page 17, line 13, increase the amount by $10,300,000,000.

On page 17, line 16, increase the amount by $14,600,000,000.

On page 17, line 17, increase the amount by $14,600,000,000.

On page 17, line 20, increase the amount by $14,800,000,000.

On page 17, line 21, increase the amount by $14,800,000,000.

On page 17, line 24, increase the amount by $4,500,000,000.

On page 17, line 25, increase the amount by $4,500,000,000.

Mr. CONRAD. Madam President, I ask unanimous consent that we proceed to vote in relation to the following amendments in the order listed; that there be 2 minutes equally divided prior to each vote; and that after the first vote, time be limited to 10 minutes on each succeeding vote, with no second-degree amendments in order to any of the amendments covered under this agreement, except where we might have a side-by-side, as indicated.

The first amendment would be the Hutchison amendment No. 517, as modified; the second amendment would be the Ensign amendment No. 472; the third amendment would be the Sanders amendment No. 545, as modified; and the fourth amendment would be the Enzi amendment No. 497.

Mr. GREGG. Reserving the right to object, and I don't expect to object, but I want to be sure Senator HUTCHISON has signed off on the modification.

Mrs. HUTCHISON. I have.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Is there objection?

The Chair hears none, and, it is so ordered.

Mr. CONRAD. Madam President, let's do this. The Hutchison amendment we don't have at the desk as modified, so we need to revise the unanimous consent to make the Ensign amendment No. 472 the first amendment in the tranche to be voted on, then going to the Sanders amendment, and then the Enzi amendment. Hopefully, momentarily, we will have worked out getting the Hutchison amendment, as modified, to the desk.

So that would mean we would first proceed to the Ensign amendment, and I notice that Senator ENSIGN is here.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Is there objection to the plan, as modified?

The Chair hears none, and it is so ordered.

The Senator from Texas is recognized.

AMENDMENT NO. 517, AS MODIFIED

Mrs. HUTCHISON. Madam President, I have the modification to my amendment, and I would send it to the desk and ask that it be the replacement for my amendment.

Madam President, we can have a vote on my amendment or we can have a voice vote, at the pleasure of the chairman.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The amendment is so modified.

The amendment, as modified, is as follows:

At the appropriate place insert the following:

SEC. ___. DEFICIT-NEUTRAL RESERVE FUND FOR EXTENSION OF THE DEDUCTION FOR STATE AND LOCAL SALES TAXES.

The Chairman of the Senate Budget Committee may revise the aggregates, allocations, and other levels in this resolution for a bill, joint resolution, motion, amendment, or conference report that would provide for extension of the deduction for State and local sales taxes, provided that such legislation would not increase the deficit over the total of fiscal years 2007 through 2012.

Mr. CONRAD. Madam President, I will modify the unanimous consent request so that we go immediately to the Hutchison amendment on a voice vote.

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

Is there further debate on the amendment?

If not, the question is on agreeing to amendment No. 517.

The amendment (No. 517), as modified, was agreed to.

Mr. CONRAD. Madam President, I would like to at this moment thank the gentlewoman from Texas for working with us to get this amendment modified. It was very helpful to the work of the committee. We appreciate very much her cooperation.

Mrs. HUTCHISON. Madam President, I would say to the distinguished chairman that I appreciate his willingness to work with us. It is a very important amendment to eight States in this country. Senator CANTWELL was very much a part of the whole negotiation, and I commend her and her staff for helping us to do this, and I appreciate the fact that it has passed and is now a part of the budget. I would also like to thank the other cosponsors of this amendment, Senator CORNYN, Senator ENZI, Senator MURKOWSKI, Senator CORKER, Senator ALEXANDER, and Senator ENSIGN.

Mr. CONRAD. Madam President, I, too, thank Senator CANTWELL. She was very helpful to us in getting this so that we didn't have to have a vote and so the amendment could be adopted. I thank the two Senators.

AMENDMENT NO. 472

We now proceed to the Ensign amendment.

Mr. GREGG. Madam President, I ask for the yeas and nays.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The yeas and nays have been ordered. Is there a sufficient second?

There appears to be a sufficient second.

Who yields time?

Mr. ENSIGN. Madam President, am I correct, there is 1 minute on each side?

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator is correct. There is 1 minute on each side.

Mr. ENSIGN. Madam President, very simply, this amendment is the same as the means testing on Part B. Part D of Medicare seniors never paid for during their lifetime. This is a brand new entitlement, something they never paid for. We are asking the younger workers to pay basically for millionaires to be able to get prescription drugs. What my amendment says is we should means test those so wealthier seniors will have to pay more of their fair share for prescription drugs. That is very simply what this amendment does.

I think 59 Senators voted before to make sure Part B was means tested—once again, a benefit they never paid for. This amendment does the same thing for Medicare Part D. Let's not ask a schoolteacher or a firefighter to pay for millionaires to have prescription drugs. Let's do something fiscally responsible and call on the Finance Committee to enact this very important amendment to the prescription drug program.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Montana.

Mr. BAUCUS. Madam President, this amendment fails to distinguish between Part B premium and Part D. This amendment calls for means testing Part D. What does that honestly mean? It will create massive confusion among seniors. Why? The Government sets the Part B premium. The private sector sets the Part D drug premium. There are 1,500 plans and each of them is different. Some premiums are a few dollars, some are $100.

You think seniors were confused with Part D when it first came out? That is a picnic compared to the confusion this amendment is going to create. Think of all the confusion the seniors are going to have to face, trying to figure out is their premium means tested compared to their friends' premium next door? This is massively complex for seniors. There is so much confusion for seniors that the amendment should not be agreed to.

I urge Senators to vote against this confusion.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The question is on agreeing to amendment No. 472. The yeas and nays have been ordered and the clerk will call the roll.

The assistant journal clerk called the roll.

Mr. DURBIN. I announce that the Senator from Delaware (Mr. BIDEN) and the Senator from South Dakota (Mr. JOHNSON) are necessarily absent.

Mr. LOTT. The following Senators are necessarily absent: the Senator from Oklahoma (Mr. INHOFE) and the Senator from Arizona (Mr. MCCAIN).

Further, if present and voting, the Senator from Oklahoma (Mr. INHOFE) would have voted "yea."

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Are there any other Senators in the Chamber desiring to vote?

The result was announced—yeas 44, nays 52, as follows:

[Rollcall Vote No. 93 Leg.]

YEAS—44

Alexander	Crapo	Lugar
Allard	DeMint	Martinez
Bennett	Dole	McConnell
Bond	Domenici	Murkowski
Brownback	Ensign	Roberts
Bunning	Enzi	Sessions
Burr	Graham	Shelby
Chambliss	Grassley	Stevens
Coburn	Gregg	Sununu
Cochran	Hagel	Thomas
Coleman	Hatch	Thune
Collins	Hutchison	Vitter
Corker	Isakson	Voinovich
Cornyn	Kyl	Warner
Craig	Lott	

NAYS—52

Akaka	Harkin	Obama
Baucus	Inouye	Pryor
Bayh	Kennedy	Reed
Bingaman	Kerry	Reid
Boxer	Klobuchar	Rockefeller
Brown	Kohl	Salazar
Byrd	Landrieu	Sanders
Cantwell	Lautenberg	Schumer
Cardin	Leahy	Smith
Carper	Levin	Snowe
Casey	Lieberman	Specter
Clinton	Lincoln	Stabenow
Conrad	McCaskill	Tester
Dodd	Menendez	Webb
Dorgan	Mikulski	Whitehouse
Durbin	Murray	Wyden
Feingold	Nelson (FL)	
Feinstein	Nelson (NE)	

NOT VOTING—4

Biden	Johnson
Inhofe	McCain

The amendment (No. 472) was rejected.

AMENDMENT NO. 545, AS MODIFIED

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Under the previous order, there will now be 2 minutes of debate equally divided on amendment No. 545, as modified.

The Senator from Vermont.

Mr. SANDERS. Madam President, in 1975, Congress made a promise to provide 40 percent of the funding for special education. Congress has not kept that promise on that unfunded mandate. Today, we are providing a little over 17 percent of the costs of special education, and that percentage has gone down over the last 3 years. The result is higher and higher property taxes for the middle-class and working families of our country.

This amendment is very simple. It rescinds the 2001 personal income tax reduction that was given to people with at least $1 million in income—the wealthiest three-tenths of 1 percent of the population—and puts the $44 billion raised over 5 years into special education.

Madam President, 99.7 percent of Americans would see no increase in their Federal taxes from this amendment. But it would lower property taxes for millions of middle-class and working families, improve the quality of education and, most importantly, keep the promise made to school districts all over this country.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from New Hampshire is recognized.

Mr. GREGG. Madam President, in a bill which is already a big-spending, big-tax bill, this would supersize the tax element of the bill. This is sort of like when you go into McDonald's, you

can order a regular, a large, or a super size. This is a supersized tax increase, $44 billion of new taxes, and 83 percent of the people who are going to pay it are small businesspeople, small businesspeople across this country.

We have done a great—not a great job; we have done a strong job in the area of IDEA. This administration has had larger increases in IDEA spending than any administration in history, dramatic increases. We still need to go further, but you do not go further by increasing taxes by $44 billion on America's workers.

I hope we will vote down this amendment.

I ask for the yeas and nays.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Is there a sufficient second?

There appears to be a sufficient second.

The question is on agreeing to amendment No. 545, as modified.

The yeas and nays have been ordered, and the clerk will call the roll.

The assistant legislative clerk called the roll.

Mr. DURBIN. I announce that the Senator from Delaware (Mr. BIDEN) and the Senator from South Dakota (Mr. JOHNSON) are necessarily absent.

Mr. LOTT. The following Senators are necessarily absent: the Senator from Oklahoma (Mr. INHOFE) and the Senator from Arizona (Mr. MCCAIN).

Further, if present and voting, the Senator from Oklahoma (Mr. INHOFE) would have voted ''nay.''

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Are there any other Senators in the Chamber desiring to vote?

The result was announced—yeas 38, nays 58, as follows:

[Rollcall Vote No. 94 Leg.]

YEAS—38

Akaka	Feingold	Menendez
Bayh	Feinstein	Mikulski
Bingaman	Harkin	Murray
Boxer	Inouye	Obama
Brown	Kennedy	Pryor
Byrd	Kerry	Reed
Cardin	Klobuchar	Reid
Casey	Kohl	Rockefeller
Clinton	Lautenberg	Sanders
Conrad	Leahy	Schumer
Dodd	Levin	Stabenow
Dorgan	Lieberman	Whitehouse
Durbin	McCaskill	

NAYS—58

Alexander	Dole	Nelson (NE)
Allard	Domenici	Roberts
Baucus	Ensign	Salazar
Bennett	Enzi	Sessions
Bond	Graham	Shelby
Brownback	Grassley	Smith
Bunning	Gregg	Snowe
Burr	Hagel	Specter
Cantwell	Hatch	Stevens
Carper	Hutchison	Sununu
Chambliss	Isakson	Tester
Coburn	Kyl	Thomas
Cochran	Landrieu	Thune
Coleman	Lincoln	Vitter
Collins	Lott	Voinovich
Corker	Lugar	Warner
Cornyn	Martinez	Webb
Craig	McConnell	Wyden
Crapo	Murkowski	
DeMint	Nelson (FL)	

NOT VOTING—4

Biden	Johnson
Inhofe	McCain

The amendment (No. 545), as modified, was rejected.

Mr. GREGG. I move to reconsider the vote.

Mr. ENZI. I move to lay that motion on the table.

The motion to lay on the table was agreed to.

AMENDMENT NO. 497

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Under the previous order, there will now be 2 minutes of debate equally divided on amendment No. 497.

The Senator from Wyoming.

Mr. ENZI. Madam President, my amendment is very simple. It establishes a 60-vote threshold for legislation that imposes an unfunded mandate on small businesses which exceeds $131 million, as determined by the Small Business Administration.

We do it for municipalities. We do it for States. We do it for tribes. We do not do it for small businesses. Small businesses make up 99.7 percent of all U.S. employers and employ 50 percent of the Nation's nonfarm private sector workers. We have an obligation to make sure laws written in Washington do not unfairly burden Main Street.

Now, checking back, I found that bills that adversely affect small business usually get hung up on cloture, which is a form of point of order but a very lengthy one. The ones that take care of small business frequently get a huge vote.

Now, it is possible to mention there will be things coming up, such as mental health parity—I am a cosponsor on that one; I can assure you that is one where small business will not be given a bad deal—the Department of Defense. We can override any waiver. In this body, it takes 60 votes to do cloture. This will speed up the process.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from North Dakota.

Mr. CONRAD. Madam President, this amendment is absolutely well intended, but it will create unintended consequences. This will give the Budget Committee authority over nonbudgetary matters. This amendment, if it were adopted, would create a supermajority point of order against Senator DOMENICI's mental health parity bill. It would give a supermajority point of order against the Defense authorization bill. It would give a supermajority point of order against the minimum wage bill, against bankruptcy reform, against pension reform.

This amendment should not be adopted. I urge my colleagues to vote no.

Mr. ENZI. Madam President, do I have time remaining?

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator's time has expired.

Mr. CONRAD. Madam President, I ask for the yeas and nays.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Is there a sufficient second?

There appears to be a sufficient second.

The question is on agreeing to amendment No. 497.

The clerk will call the roll.

The assistant journal clerk called the roll.

Mr. DURBIN. I announce that the Senator from Delaware (Mr. BIDEN) and the Senator from South Dakota (Mr. JOHNSON) are necessarily absent.

Mr. LOTT. The following Senators are necessarily absent: the Senator from Oklahoma (Mr. INHOFE) and the Senator from Arizona (Mr. MCCAIN).

Further, if present and voting, the Senator from Oklahoma (Mr. INHOFE) would have voted ''yea.''

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Mr. WHITEHOUSE). Are there any other Senators in the Chamber desiring to vote?

The result was announced—yeas 47, nays 49, as follows:

[Rollcall Vote No. 95 Leg.]

YEAS—47

Alexander	DeMint	McConnell
Allard	Dole	Murkowski
Bennett	Domenici	Nelson (NE)
Bond	Ensign	Roberts
Brownback	Enzi	Sessions
Bunning	Graham	Shelby
Burr	Grassley	Smith
Chambliss	Gregg	Snowe
Coburn	Hagel	Specter
Cochran	Hatch	Stevens
Coleman	Hutchison	Sununu
Collins	Isakson	Thomas
Corker	Kyl	Thune
Cornyn	Lott	Vitter
Craig	Lugar	Warner
Crapo	Martinez	

NAYS—49

Akaka	Feinstein	Nelson (FL)
Baucus	Harkin	Obama
Bayh	Inouye	Pryor
Bingaman	Kennedy	Reed
Boxer	Kerry	Reid
Brown	Klobuchar	Rockefeller
Byrd	Kohl	Salazar
Cantwell	Landrieu	Sanders
Cardin	Lautenberg	Schumer
Carper	Leahy	Stabenow
Casey	Levin	Tester
Clinton	Lieberman	Voinovich
Conrad	Lincoln	Webb
Dodd	McCaskill	Whitehouse
Dorgan	Menendez	Wyden
Durbin	Mikulski	
Feingold	Murray	

NOT VOTING—4

Biden	Johnson
Inhofe	McCain

The amendment (No. 497) was rejected.

Mr. CONRAD. Mr. President, I move to reconsider the vote, and I move to lay that motion on the table.

The motion to lay on the table was agreed to.

AMENDMENT NO. 498

Mr. CONRAD. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the Senate proceed to consider the Thomas amendment No. 498 and that there be 2 minutes of debate equally divided and the vote time be limited to 10 minutes, with no second-degree amendment in order.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Is there objection? Without objection, it is so ordered.

Under the previous order, there will now be 2 minutes of debate equally divided on amendment No. 498.

The Senator from Wyoming is recognized.

Mr. THOMAS. Mr. President, the amendment I am offering will bring some transparency—

Mr. GREGG. Could we get order, Mr. President?

The PRESIDING OFFICER. May we have order in the Senate, please.

The Senator from Wyoming.

Mr. THOMAS. The amendment will bring transparency and discipline, but not order, to this budget process. The budget resolution is supposed to provide a blueprint for Government spending and allocate dollars for appropriators to spend in particular areas. However, this budget goes away from that responsibility in a number of areas and fails to even set up a cap for overall spending. It does so by including a number of unlimited reserve funds that amount to no more than a blank check signed by the American taxpayer. There is no end to what can be spent.

My amendment would strike these reserve funds from the budget. We owe it to the American people to give them a budget that means something, that let's them know up front how much we are spending and how we are going to pay for it. I urge my colleagues to support this amendment.

Mr. President, I yield back the remainder of my time.

Mr. CONRAD. Mr. President, there are no blank checks here. Reserve funds simply say that the committee of jurisdiction has to report a bill, and they have to pay for it. Nothing happens unless the committee reports and unless they pay for it.

Now, this amendment would knock out every reserve fund—every one that has been put in by Republican Senators, every one that has been put in on this side. It would knock out the reserve fund for SCHIP, children's health care. It would strike the reserve fund for veterans. It would strike the reserve funds for tax relief, for education, for energy, for the farm bill, for Medicare, for housing, for childcare, for mental health parity. It would knock out Senator CORNYN's reserve fund for immigration, and on and on.

I urge a ''no'' vote on this amendment.

Mr. President, I ask for the yeas and nays.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Is there a sufficient second? There is a sufficient second.

The question is on agreeing to amendment No. 498.

The clerk will call the roll.

The assistant legislative clerk called the roll.

Mr. DURBIN. I announce that the Senator from Delaware (Mr. BIDEN) and the Senator from South Dakota (Mr. JOHNSON) are necessarily absent.

Mr. LOTT. The following Senators are necessarily absent: the Senator from Oklahoma (Mr. INHOFE) and the Senator from Arizona (Mr. MCCAIN).

Further, if present and voting, the Senator from Oklahoma (Mr. INHOFE) would have voted ''yea.''

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Are there any other Senators in the Chamber desiring to vote?

The result was announced—yeas 29, nays 67, as follows:

[Rollcall Vote No. 96 Leg.]

YEAS—29

Allard	Crapo	Lott
Bennett	DeMint	Martinez
Bond	Ensign	McConnell
Brownback	Enzi	Murkowski
Bunning	Graham	Sessions
Burr	Grassley	Shelby
Coburn	Gregg	Thomas
Cochran	Hagel	Vitter
Corker	Hatch	Voinovich
Craig	Kyl	

NAYS—67

Akaka	Feingold	Obama
Alexander	Feinstein	Pryor
Baucus	Harkin	Reed
Bayh	Hutchison	Reid
Bingaman	Inouye	Roberts
Boxer	Isakson	Rockefeller
Brown	Kennedy	Salazar
Byrd	Kerry	Sanders
Cantwell	Klobuchar	Schumer
Cardin	Kohl	Smith
Carper	Landrieu	Snowe
Casey	Lautenberg	Specter
Chambliss	Leahy	Stabenow
Clinton	Levin	Stevens
Coleman	Lieberman	Sununu
Collins	Lincoln	Tester
Conrad	Lugar	Thune
Cornyn	McCaskill	Warner
Dodd	Menendez	Webb
Dole	Mikulski	Whitehouse
Domenici	Murray	Wyden
Dorgan	Nelson (FL)	
Durbin	Nelson (NE)	

NOT VOTING—4

Biden	Johnson
Inhofe	McCain

The amendment (No. 498) was rejected.

Mr. CONRAD. Mr. President, I would have preferred not to have to offer this amendment, but Senator COLEMAN has an amendment that would extend several energy tax incentives, including the clean, renewable energy bond program, and tax incentives for energy-efficient buildings and powerplants.

I am in entire agreement with the Senator on that matter. The problem is, he has paid for it out of section 920, and the 920 pool of money is about evaporated. So the effect of his amendment would be to cut veterans, homeland security, and law enforcement; and I can assure colleagues that will be dropped in conference if it is adopted here.

Instead, to try to accomplish the goal, I have offered those same provisions, paid for by a deficit-neutral reserve fund. That gives the committees of jurisdiction the widest latitude to pay for the initiatives that are deserving and important.

AMENDMENT NO. 598

Mr. CONRAD. I send the amendment to the desk.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection, the pending amendment is set aside.

The clerk will report.

The legislative clerk read as follows:

The Senator from North Dakota (Mr. CONRAD) proposes an amendment numbered 598.

Mr. CONRAD. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that reading of the amendment be dispensed with.

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

The amendment is as follows:

(Purpose: To create a deficit-neutral reserve fund for extending certain energy tax incentives)

At the end of title III, insert the following:

SEC. ____. DEFICIT-NEUTRAL RESERVE FUND FOR EXTENSION OF CERTAIN ENERGY TAX INCENTIVES.

The Chairman of the Senate Committee on the Budget may revise the aggregates, allocations, and other levels in this resolution for a bill, joint resolution, motion, amendment, or conference report that would extend through 2015 energy tax incentives, including the production tax credit for electricity produced from renewable resources, the Clean Renewable Energy Bond program, and the provisions to encourage energy efficient buildings, products and power plants, provided that such legislation would not increase the deficit over the total of fiscal years 2007 through 2012.

Mr. CONRAD. The Senator from Minnesota has a minute.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Minnesota is recognized.

Mr. COLEMAN. Mr. President, we agree on the goals. We need clean energy. We need clean energy. We need renewable energy, wind energy, biomass, and geothermal. The problem is, with the reserve fund there is no certainty. You cannot take the reserve fund to the bank. That would only say if we find offsets in the future to make the extension, we can do that. It is as if I give you $15, and if you find $15 for me some day, you can pay me. If you want the projects to go forth and you believe in wind and biomass and other renewables and you want them to be financed, you need certainty. The 920 fund can provide you the certainty.

This doesn't move the ball forward. We are still at ground zero. If you believe in renewables and clean energy, I urge you to vote against this and support my amendment.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from North Dakota.

Mr. CONRAD. Mr. President, I wish my colleague was right. The 920 offset is a fantasy. This will never survive conference because the 920 pool is gone.

I urge colleagues to vote for the first amendment, the Conrad amendment, that provides a funding mechanism that will survive conference.

I ask unanimous consent that we go to the vote.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Is there objection?

The Senator from New Mexico.

Mr. DOMENICI. What was the manager's request?

Mr. CONRAD. I was asking that we pay for these very worthwhile initiatives with a deficit-neutral reserve fund instead of using section 920.

Mr. DOMENICI. I heard all of that, and I know what the Senator from Minnesota is trying to do because I encouraged him to do it. Rather than let him lose by making a mistake, I wonder if we could look at the amendment of the Senator from North Dakota. I looked at it, and I didn't see a reserve fund. Can we take 1 minute and look at it? I would like to encourage Senator COLEMAN to accept the Senator's proposal.

Can the Senator from North Dakota tell me again what he thinks he did?

Mr. CONRAD. Yes. What I have done is I have tried to convince my colleague—we absolutely share the same goal.

Mr. DOMENICI. Yes.

Mr. CONRAD. What I have done is offered a deficit-neutral reserve fund that gives the committees the greatest latitude to actually fund it. Mr. President, 920, which is his offset, is oversubscribed, and if we go to conference with it, we will be dropped like a hot rock.

Mr. COLEMAN. Mr. President, I note that there are 235 reserve funds in this budget with over $200 billion over 5 years. The problem is, again, if we believe in getting this done, and we adopt it with the reserve fund, there is no way we can go to the bank and say we are going to have this because it is simply a promise without anything.

The reality of the 920 can give certainty if we can get it through conference. Let's fight for it in conference. Let's not do anything that has no effect.

Mr. CONRAD. Mr. President, let's be clear. What 920 means is that we will cut veterans, we will cut homeland security, we will cut law enforcement. That is a losing proposition for us, I say to my colleague, especially given the fact that we are already at over $7.5 billion a year in section 920. The President, when he identified the possibilities, only identified $7.5 billion available. That is the money that has already been used.

I urge my colleagues to vote yes on the Conrad amendment so we can fund these important priorities.

I urge we go to the vote. I ask for the yeas and nays.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Is there a sufficient second?

There is a sufficient second.

The question is on agreeing to amendment No. 598. The clerk will call the roll.

The legislative clerk called the roll.

Mr. DURBIN. I announce that the Senator from Delaware (Mr. BIDEN) and the Senator from South Dakota (Mr. JOHNSON) are necessarily absent.

Mr. LOTT. The following Senators are necessarily absent: the Senator from Oklahoma (Mr. INHOFE) and the Senator from Arizona (Mr. MCCAIN).

Further, if present and voting, the Senator from Oklahoma (Mr. INHOFE) would have voted ''nay.''

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Mr. NELSON of Florida). Are there any other Senators in the Chamber desiring to vote?

The result was announced—yeas 54, nays 42, as follows:

[Rollcall Vote No. 97 Leg.]

YEAS—54

Akaka	Byrd	Collins
Baucus	Cantwell	Conrad
Bayh	Cardin	Dodd
Bingaman	Carper	Domenici
Boxer	Casey	Dorgan
Brown	Clinton	Durbin
Feingold	Lieberman	Reid
Feinstein	Lincoln	Rockefeller
Harkin	Lugar	Salazar
Inouye	McCaskill	Sanders
Kennedy	Menendez	Schumer
Kerry	Mikulski	Smith
Klobuchar	Murray	Stabenow
Kohl	Nelson (FL)	Tester
Landrieu	Nelson (NE)	Thune
Lautenberg	Obama	Webb
Leahy	Pryor	Whitehouse
Levin	Reed	Wyden

NAYS—42

Alexander	Crapo	Martinez
Allard	DeMint	McConnell
Bennett	Dole	Murkowski
Bond	Ensign	Roberts
Brownback	Enzi	Sessions
Bunning	Graham	Shelby
Burr	Grassley	Snowe
Chambliss	Gregg	Specter
Coburn	Hagel	Stevens
Cochran	Hatch	Sununu
Coleman	Hutchison	Thomas
Corker	Isakson	Vitter
Cornyn	Kyl	Voinovich
Craig	Lott	Warner

NOT VOTING—4

Biden	Johnson
Inhofe	McCain

The amendment (No. 598) was agreed to.

Mr. CONRAD. Mr. President, I move to reconsider the vote, and I move to lay that motion on the table.

The motion to lay on the table was agreed to.

Mr. GREGG. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that there now be 2 minutes equally divided, that we go to the vote, and that the yeas and nays be deemed ordered on the Coleman amendment.

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

There are 2 minutes of debate equally divided.

The Senator from Minnesota.

Mr. COLEMAN. Mr. President, if you voted for the Conrad amendment before, if you believe in wind energy and biomass and renewables, then you should vote for my amendment. The argument of the Senator from North Dakota is this will never make it out of conference committee, but that is not an argument against what we are trying to do. So let's put that to the test.

If you believe this is the right policy and you want to tell those folks who want to do wind energy and who want to do biomass that you are going to support them, you should support my amendment.

Ms. SNOWE. Mr. President, I thank Senator COLEMAN for offering this amendment because it is critical that the Federal budget prioritizes the energy policy initiatives that are working for our Nation.

This amendment would include budget authority for the extension of the tax incentives for energy efficient commercial buildings, which has been estimated that by 2010 will save 7 trillion cubic feet, Tcf, of natural gas. To put this figure in context, the United States imported 4.3 Tcf of natural gas in 2005.

Furthermore, we must recognize that investments into commercial and residential buildings provides cost savings for decades. The life of an average American vehicle is roughly 12 years, for commercial buildings the estimated lifetime is 75 years and for residential buildings the lifetime is 100 years. It is vital that we encourage the investment into energy efficiency for these buildings in order to receive the aggregate energy savings.

Recently, Senator KERRY and I, as chair and ranking member of the Senate Committee on Small Business and Entrepreneurship, heard small business representatives articulate the success of these incentives. However, it is clear that businesses need sufficient lead time to make these investments, reduce risk, and ensure that businesses adopt the most energy efficient infrastructure. This budget must affirm and reflect upon the fact that energy efficiency is the most cost-effective solution to our energy crisis. As the former Assistant Secretary for Energy and Energy Efficiency and Renewable Energy and current director of Google's Climate Change and Energy Initiatives, Dan Reicher, stated to the Finance Committee last month, ''Energy Efficiency is the real low-hanging fruit in the U.S. and global economy.

Furthermore, I am encouraged that this amendment would include a 5-year extension for the renewable production tax credit. On December 14, 2006, I joined Senators BINGAMAN and DOMENICI and 39 other Senators, in writing the President to request that he include a 5-year extension of the renewable energy production tax credit, PTC, for 5 years. The current PTC is due to expire on December 31, 2008, and this does not allow renewable energy businesses to adequately prepare for the long-term. This problem was analyzed in a special report in the Economist, which stated that ''America's incentives for clean energy'' are ''relatively modest compared to Europe's.'' Furthermore, the article illustrates that ''what one politician can mandate, another can terminate—and therein lies one of the biggest risks for clean energy. American politicians have periodically allowed a tax break for wind generation to expire, for example. This caused the industry to falter several times, before the credit was renewed again.''

This country must make a long-term commitment to energy policies that are effective. I am pleased to support this amendment.

Mr. CONRAD. Mr. President, all those who voted ''yes'' on the Conrad amendment should now vote ''no'' on the Coleman amendment, since we have funded it and done it in the right way.

The Coleman amendment would fund these priorities by cutting veterans, by cutting homeland security, by cutting law enforcement. You better vote ''no'' on the Coleman amendment.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The question is on agreeing to amendment No. 577. The yeas and nays have been ordered.

The clerk will call the roll.

The assistant legislative clerk called the roll.

Mr. DURBIN. I announce that the Senator from Delaware (Mr. BIDEN) and the Senator from South Dakota (Mr. JOHNSON) are necessarily absent.

Mr. LOTT. The following Senators are necessarily absent: the Senator from Georgia (Mr. CHAMBLISS), the Senator from Oklahoma (Mr. INHOFE), and the Senator from Arizona (Mr. MCCAIN).

Further, if present and voting, the Senator from Oklahoma (Mr. INHOFE) would have voted ''nay.''

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Are there any other Senators in the Chamber desiring to vote?

The result was announced—yeas 42, nays 53, as follows:

[Rollcall Vote No. 98 Leg.]

YEAS—42

Allard	DeMint	McConnell
Bennett	Dole	Murkowski
Bond	Ensign	Roberts
Brownback	Enzi	Sessions
Bunning	Graham	Shelby
Burr	Grassley	Smith
Coburn	Gregg	Snowe
Cochran	Hagel	Specter
Coleman	Hatch	Stevens
Collins	Hutchison	Thomas
Corker	Isakson	Thune
Cornyn	Lott	Vitter
Craig	Lugar	Voinovich
Crapo	Martinez	Warner

NAYS—53

Akaka	Feingold	Murray
Alexander	Feinstein	Nelson (FL)
Baucus	Harkin	Nelson (NE)
Bayh	Inouye	Obama
Bingaman	Kennedy	Pryor
Boxer	Kerry	Reed
Brown	Klobuchar	Reid
Byrd	Kohl	Rockefeller
Cantwell	Kyl	Salazar
Cardin	Landrieu	Sanders
Carper	Lautenberg	Schumer
Casey	Leahy	Stabenow
Clinton	Levin	Sununu
Conrad	Lieberman	Tester
Dodd	Lincoln	Webb
Domenici	McCaskill	Whitehouse
Dorgan	Menendez	Wyden
Durbin	Mikulski	

NOT VOTING—5

Biden	Inhofe	McCain
Chambliss	Johnson	

The amendment (No. 577) was rejected.

Mr. GREGG. Mr. President, I move to reconsider the vote and I move to lay that motion on the table.

The motion to lay on the table was agreed to.

Mr. GREGG. Mr. President, we are now going to go to a period we have discussed before, where people will be speaking on various amendments but not offering them. The speaking order on our side, and we are presuming this is going to start about 6:30, will be a half hour on our side, then a half hour to the majority, then a half hour to our side, and then the majority, back and forth. The people we expect to speak are in this order: Senator SPECTER, as soon as we start, and Senator DOMENICI after Senator SPECTER. Then, after the majority response or period, it will be Senator HATCH, probably around 7:30, and then a combination of Senator MURKOWSKI and Senator ALLARD around 7:45. Then the majority position. Then it will be Senator CHAMBLISS and a group around 8:30; Senator BROWNBACK around 9:30, and Senator VOINOVICH around 9:45. All those times may move up depending on what happens, with Members either coming or going or not showing up, but that is the present lineup.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from North Dakota is recognized.

Mr. CONRAD. Mr. President, because we are now 20 minutes past the time we anticipated being able to start the discussions and the debate, obviously everything is moved back 20 minutes. Previously, the GOP time was to run from 6 to 6:30. That will need to now run from about 6:25 to 6:55. That will be the time in which our side would start. First will be Senator MENENDEZ, then Senator SALAZAR, and then Senator DURBIN, each one of them for 10 minutes. Then we will go back to the Republican side. Then we will come back to our side at roughly 8 o'clock with Senator LIEBERMAN and Senator CASEY.

I hope it is recognized that if Senators who have time are not here and there are other Senators who are here, that will be worked out and the Senators who are available will go ahead and use the time and be reasonable with others so we can accommodate as many Senators as possible this evening.

The other important thing to say is, tomorrow morning we are going to start at 9 o'clock. We will have a half hour equally divided between Senator GREGG and myself. Then we will start voting at 9:30. That is going to be a series of 10-minute votes after the first one. In addition to that, we need to indicate to Members, there are 75 votes pending. We can do about 3 votes an hour. That means 25 hours of voting. If everyone insists on their amendment, we will be here until 9 o'clock the next morning. That is the reality. Senators can decide their own fate. If every Senator insists on every amendment they have noticed, that is 75 amendments, we will be voting for 25 straight hours. I hope colleagues understand the consequences.

I thank the Chair.

Mr. GREGG. Mr. President, I wish to reinforce the point made by the chairman, which is there has to be reason in this process. We have been through these vote-athons before. We know they tend to be a little chaotic. Quite honestly, there are a lot of people who come in late with ideas that are good ideas, but let's be reasonable and make sure there is an orderly process, and let's cut this list down to something that is manageable so we can all get back to our districts or our homes and enjoy the weekend with our families.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Pennsylvania is recognized.

AMENDMENT NO. 506

Mr. SPECTER. Mr. President, I have sought recognition to discuss briefly two amendments to the budget resolution. The first amendment, which I offer on behalf of Senator HARKIN and myself, relates to funding for the National Institutes of Health. The NIH has undertaken miraculous research which has led to breakthroughs on many maladies confronting this country and which benefit the world. Dr. Zerhouni testified on Monday of this week and brought forth statistics showing there has actually been a decrease in cancer in the last 2 years, a decrease in heart disease, and a decrease in strokes. We could go through the long list of ailments where the NIH research has been overwhelmingly successful.

I ask unanimous consent at the conclusion of my comments that the list of the diseases be printed in the CONGRESSIONAL RECORD.

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

(See exhibit 1.)

Mr. SPECTER. The budget constraints have led to a cut in NIH funding in recent years. The proposed budget by the administration would cut NIH funding by more than $500 million. In one of the recent budget cuts, the National Cancer Institute, illustratively, was cut by some $50 million.

In 1970, President Nixon declared war on cancer and, had that war been prosecuted with the same intensity as our other wars, cancer would have been cured.

My chief of staff, Carey Lackman, a beautiful young woman of 48, died of breast cancer. One of my best friends, a very distinguished Federal judge, Edward Becker, of Philadelphia, chief judge emeritus, died within the year of prostate cancer.

As is fairly well known, I suffer from Hodgkin's. I made a good recovery. All the tests are said to be symptom free. But I was for increasing NIH funding long before I had a personal problem. I have been on the Appropriations Subcommittee of Labor, Health and Human Services, and Education since I was elected to the Senate in 1980 and have had the opportunity to chair the subcommittee. With the leadership of Senator HARKIN and myself, NIH funding has been increased from some $12 billion to almost $30 billion.

We are offering this amendment simply to restore NIH funding to where it would have been had there been an accommodation for biomedical inflation. The cuts have been tremendous, but we have restored the 4.5-percent biomedical inflation rate for fiscal year 2006, which costs $1.3 billion; for fiscal year 2007, which costs $1.1 billion; for fiscal year 2008, which costs another $1.1 billion.

We also provide increases for the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention and restored health professional training programs for nurses and doctors to the 2005 level.

This, in the aggregate, when reduced by the assumption for health care programs in the budget resolution, comes to an increase in funding of $2.183 billion.

I ask unanimous consent this schedule be printed at the conclusion of my remarks, along with the chronology of funding amendments offered on the increase of NIH funding.

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

(See exhibit 2.)

Mr. SPECTER. I would say that this is absolutely minimal to not fall backward. Earlier this week, in addition to Dr. Zerhouni's testimony, we heard testimony from research applicants, and they are falling off. We are losing the best and the brightest of the talent. So this is minimal, just to tread water.

AMENDMENT NO. 505

I now turn to a second amendment which I propose to offer, and that is an amendment which deals with legislation to reform asbestos litigation. There have been efforts made to deal with the avalanche of asbestos injury cases, with the attendant bankruptcies and with tens of thousands of people left unable to collect for very serious, sometimes deadly, injuries because companies have gone into bankruptcy.

On a number of occasions, the Supreme Court of the United States has urged Congress to deal with this problem. In the 109th Congress, the Judiciary Committee undertook an enormous job, reported out a comprehensive reform bill after many hearings and complicated markups—all of that is part of the record, which I will not repeat now.

In the intervening period of time, $140 billion that had been available for a trust fund has been reduced very substantially by the formation of bankruptcy trusts. So we are now compelled to recast the legislation. We are now looking at a reduced trust fund, and we are looking at dealing only with victims of mesothelioma, which is a deadly ailment.

Last year, notwithstanding the humongous effort of the Committee, asbestos legislation was defeated on a technical point of order requiring 60 votes. We got 59. Senator INOUYE had stated he was going to vote with us, but his wife was ill, and we did not survive the challenge on the budget point of order.

The very heavy, crowded calendar precluded our being able to bring it up again. This year we have offered an amendment to the budget resolution which would establish a reserve fund for asbestos legislation, eliminating a point of order under section 302 of the Budget Act. And we have restructured the legislation to make it ironclad that the Federal Government will not have to pay anything because we are creating a fund, which we did not do last year, so that the only money contributed will be from the trust fund.

That trust fund is established by the manufacturers who are interested in avoiding the crush of litigation and the attendant costs. We have found that the so-called transaction costs, attorneys' fees, amount to about 58 cents on the dollar, and only 42 cents are going to people who are injured.

We have restructured the bill to defer cases where people do not have tangible damages, and we are looking at those with mesothelioma. We are dealing with an award—without a showing of liability, simply the damages of mesothelioma—of $1,100,000, an amount that was established last year after considerable negotiation, and I think it is fair to say it has been accepted as a reasonable figure.

So that what will be presented to the body—I am hopeful we can yet work this out. We have gotten consent from staff on one side of the aisle, we are working with staff on the other side of the aisle, and we think we have answered conclusively the concerns that were raised.

Senator LEAHY was a cosponsor last year when I was chairman and he was ranking. He is the chairman of Judiciary now and has agreed to be a cosponsor as we move this bill forward. So I think we have the votes to get this resolved, but doubtless there will be a necessity for a cloture vote. We are going to have to get 60 votes to carry this bill forward.

What I am looking for, what the sponsors are looking for, is not having so many hurdles that it becomes a practical impossibility to have the Senate consider this issue on the merits. But we are long past due, having been tangling with this issue for some 25 years. Legislation was defeated last year on a technicality. I hope we can eliminate the technicalities this year, and the amendment will address one. Then we will face the 60-vote threshold on cloture.

We will seek to structure a bill that will meet with the approval of the Senate and the House of Representatives.

EXHIBIT 1

DISEASES

Aids
Autism
Stroke
Obesity
Alzheimer's
Parkinson's
Spinal Muscular Atrophy
Scleroderma
ALS
Muscular Dystrophy
Diabetes
Osteoporosis
Cancers:
- Breast, Cervical and Ovarian
- Lymphoma
- Multiple Myeloma
- Prostate
- Pancreatic
- Colon
- Head and Neck
- Brain
- Lung
- Mesothelioma

Pediatric Renal Disorders
Multiple Sclerosis
Deafness and Other Communication Disorders
Glaucoma
Macular Degeneration
Sickle Cell Anemia
Heart Disease
Spinal Cord Injury
Sudden Infant Death Syndrome
Arthritis
Schizophrenia and Other Mental Disorders
Polycystic Kidney Disease
Hepatitis
Cooley's Anemia
Primary Immune Deficiency Disorders

EXHIBIT 2

BUDGET AMENDMENT TALKING POINTS

Your amendment: Would add $2.2 billion to Function 550—Health—for increases in NIH, CDC and Health Professions Training Programs. This increase would be offset by an across-the-board cut of 0.23 percent.

Budget Resolution: The budget resolution assumes the FY'07 funding level for NIH and provides an unspecified $1.637 billion increase for all health programs.

Amendment assumptions:

NIH increases required: to restore NIH plus FY'06 biomedical inflation—4.5%, $1.3 billion; to restore NIH plus FY'07 biomedical inflation—3.7%, $1.1 billion; to restore NIH plus FY'08 biomedical inflation—3.7%, $1.1 billion.

NIH funding: $28,948,845,000—FY'07 comparable appropriation; $28,948,845,000—Budget resolution assumption for the NIH or the same as the FY'07 amount; $32,448,845,000—FY'08 with your amendment, +$3.5 billion over the FY'07 comparable appropriation.

Year	Appropriation	Over previous fiscal year	Percentage
1995	$11,299,522,000	$362,000,000	
1996	11,927,562,000	628,040,000	5.6
1997	12,740,843,000	813,281,000	6.8
1998	13,674,843,000	934,000,000	7.3
1999	15,629,156,000	1,954,313,000	14.3
2000	17,820,587,000	2,191,431,000	14.0
2001	20,458,130,000	2,637,543,000	14.8
2002	23,296,382,000	2,838,252,000	13.9
2003	27,066,782,000	3,770,400,000	16.2
2004	27,887,512,000	820,730,000	3.0
2005	28,495,157,000	607,645,000	2.2
2006	28,311,848,000	−183,309,000	−0.6
2007	28,948,845,000	−636,997,000	2.2
2008.			
Request	28,621,241,000	−327,604,000	−1.1
Budget Res	28,948,845,000	0	0
Amended	32,448,845,000	+3.500 billion	12

SEQUENCE ON NIH FUNDING

In 1981, NIH funding was less than $3.6 billion. For FY04, NIH funding totals $28 billion.

A substantial investment in the NIH is crucial to continue the progress we have made over the last several years to turn our investment into cures for diseases over the next decade. We have seen innumerable breakthroughs in the knowledge of and treatment for diseases such as cancer, Alzheimer's disease, Parkinson's disease, severe mental illnesses, diabetes, osteoporosis, heart disease, and many others.

In FY'98, you and Sen. Harkin sought to add $1.1 billion to the health function during the Budget Resolution. The amendment was defeated 63–37. Despite this, you were able to provide a $1 billion increase for the NIH in FY98.

In FY'99, you and Sen. Harkin again offered an amendment to the Budget Resolution to add $2 billion to the health function. The amendment was again defeated, this time by a vote of 57–41. But, you still provided an additional $2 billion to the NIH for FY99, which at the time was the largest increase in history.

In FY'00, you and Sen. Harkin offered an amendment to the Budget Resolution to add $1.4 billion to the health function, over and above the $600 million increase which had already been provided by the Budget Committee. The amendment was defeated by a vote of 47–52.

In FY'01, you and Senator Harkin offered an amendment to the Budget Resolution to add $1.6 billion to the health function. This amendment passed by a vote of 55–45. This victory brought the NIH increase to $2.7 billion for FY'01. However, after late night negotiations with the House, the funding for

NIH was cut by $200 million below that amount, bringing the total increase to $2.5 billion.

In FY'02, you and Senator Harkin, along with nine other Senators offered an amendment to add an additional $700 million to the resolution to achieve your goal of doubling. The vote was 96–4. The Senate Labor-HHS Subcommittee reported a bill recommending $23.7 billion, an increase of $3.4 billion over the previous year's funding. But during conference negotiations with the House, we fell short of that amount by $410 million.

The FY'03 omnibus appropriations bill contained an increase of $3.7 billion, which achieved your doubling effort.

In FY'04, you and Senator Harkin offered an amendment to the budget resolution to add $2.8 billion in additional funding for Public Health Service programs as follows: $1.8 billion for NIH, $600 million for CDC, and $400 million for the Health Resources and Services Administration. The vote was 97–1.

On September 10, 2003, during floor debate on the Labor-HHS bill, you and Senators Harkin and Feinstein offered an amendment to the FY04 Labor-HHS bill to provide a $2.5 billion increase for the NIH. The amendment was defeated by a vote of 52–43—the amendment required 60 votes because the increase was designated as an emergency. The final conference agreement contained $27.9 billion for NIH, an increase of $1 billion over the FY'03 appropriation.

In FY'05, you, Senator Harkin, and Senator Collins offered an amendment to the budget resolution to add $2,000,000,000 to discretionary health spending, including NIH—the amendment passed 72–24. The final conference agreement for NIH included $28.6 billion, an increase of $800 million.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from New Mexico.

Mr. DOMENICI. Mr. President, I might say to the distinguished Senator from Pennsylvania, little did I know when I agreed tonight to switch places and follow him, instead of the reverse order, that I would hear about, once again, this never-ending litigation that is once again brought to the Senate floor by the distinguished Senator from Pennsylvania. What a distinguished stalwart you are, Senator.

Never give up. Never say no. Never say die. Just keep on keeping on. Sure enough, even the big, giant elk fall. That is what they talk about in the forest, as they look out there among the great pines and the great big, giant elk, that sooner or later the tree will fall and the elk will fall.

Frankly, I do not know of anybody better than you to say, if you are after them, you will get them, whatever it is. In this case, I listened to you, like I have listened and expressed willingness last time, with no interest, no big interest in my State to give you a Senator on your side, by saying I want to be part of trying to get this solved. I await your presentation to us, to have an opportunity to see if we can sign up now.

Having said that, Senator SPECTER, I am going to speak for a very few minutes about this budget that is before us. I had kind of sworn I would not get involved very much in budget activities on the floor. I think you probably, as much as anyone, have noticed a real lack of—or an absence of—Domenici verbiage on budgets. Because I have done it for so many years, I decided others ought to take over and take charge, and they would have plenty without me having to stick myself in the middle of it.

But I did think, if I were going to look at this year at what happened, what is the difference between the Democrats and Republicans being in control, which is essentially what everybody ought to know is the big difference. And then you ought to say: Well, what difference is there in the budget because the Democrats took over? And it is their budget, there is no doubt about it.

They may claim they did not inherit what is in this budget, but the truth of the matter is, they are going to fix it, if it is going to be fixed. They are not going to do nothing, they are going to try to do something. You are going to look and see what it is they tried to do, and from that you are going to have to try to draw some conclusions.

So it is a very difficult time to put a budget together. I do not stand here tonight as a superpolitical critiquer or criticizer of the Democrats who are trying to put this together. But I do think, from time to time, it is important that somebody like me who has been through this for about 25 years—I think that is about the minimal that I was involved in putting budgets together—and during much of that time I was either ranking or chairman having to put it together and learn about it.

I believe we must continue to look at things and expose and express, which is what I am doing. I am not being critical, I am exposing and expressing what I see vis a vis what the leadership on the other side has claimed they have done.

I believe we must continue to protect the middle class. The middle-class working families must have our help and our protection. They are the backbone of our country. It is the middle class that distinguishes America from all other democracies, and that is why we are able to remain so strong as a living democracy, is because we have such a large, powerful majority of Americans who belong to the middle class, the middle-class working families.

Unfortunately, the budget we are presented this year will do very little for the hard-working middle class. The budget we are presented does little for the hard-working middle class. If enacted, the budget would allow tax breaks that we gave to the middle class to expire, causing an enormous tax burden to be placed on these families.

You do not have to do much, if you have tax cuts that are running along and the tax cuts are going to expire. Then all you have to do is not extend them and sometime later on the taxpayers are going to find out that their taxes are different because, in fact, what had happened to them under the tax structure before will not happen to them come the end of the tax year.

If enacted, the budget would allow the tax breaks we gave to the middle class to expire, causing an enormous tax burden to be placed on these families. Simply put, the budget increases taxes on the middle class. I realize we made a step in the right direction by adopting the Baucus amendment yesterday. That was planned by the majority that it take place in that way.

He offered a tax amendment, and I was happy to vote in favor of that, which permanently extended the tax relief for the 10-percent tax brackets and extended the child tax credit, the adoption credit and dependent care credit and the marriage penalty relief.

However, there is still a great deal of work left to be accomplished. While we have provided tax relief for the lowest brackets, we have not addressed the middle class, which faces a tax increase and a loss of some substantial deductions such as the education tuition deduction.

The budget does not extend the capital gains tax and the dividend tax relief. If we do not extend the capital gains deduction, we will be creating a dangerous situation that may prevent the economy from progressing. This might be a very good test of whether those kinds of taxes, capital gains and dividends tax relief, have anything positive to do with the economy.

Obviously, so far in this process it is obvious that the other side is not going to do anything to extend those taxes, which many think were very important to the continuation of the growth at a steady pace for part of the last 5 years. If we do not extend the capital gains reduction, we will be creating a dangerous situation that may prevent the economy from progressing in a normal manner.

I am not predicting that. I learned a long time ago not to predict too much because I predicted how bad things would turn out when certain taxes were changed, and it didn't happen at all.

But I do believe there is too big a change in this budget resolution that it will not have any effect upon the taxpayers of the United States and ultimately on the economy and on the growth of the economy.

Business owners need certainty so they can focus on long-term planning instead of shooting from the hip on a yearly basis. If we do not extend the capital gains relief, we are putting America's business in the position I have described. One can clearly see that on a national level, the middle class stands to lose the most under this proposal. In New Mexico, the impact of repealing the current tax relief would be felt widely by the middle class. More than 93,000 New Mexico investors, including senior citizens, would pay more because of an increase in the tax rates on capital gains and dividends.

I am also sorry to say that this budget resolution does not thoroughly address the alternative minimum tax. I am sure the proponent of the budget knows that. The alternative minimum

is a devil of a tax. It grew from a little tiny thing with a few people affected to a monster that affects millions of people. With each year, it gets bigger in number. Instead, this budget provides a 2-year alternative minimum patch, not a cure. The 2006 alternative minimum tax applied to 3.5 million taxpayers. Absent legislative action, the AMT will affect significantly more middle-income taxpayers. By 2007, up to 23 million taxpayers could be subject to the AMT.

Maybe I am just telling them what they already know and they plan to fix it. They better think about it. It is an awful big number, and it is rather ominous. There will be plenty of Americans who will note it come tax-paying time, there is no question. Today, they don't know, but in about 6 months, they will know. About a year after that, they will know again. Absent legislative action, the AMT will affect significantly more middle-income taxpayers. By 2007, up to 23 million taxpayers could be subject to the alternative minimum tax.

This is another tax which the middle class will bear the brunt of. The reverberations of this inaction will be seen all over the country and will especially be evident in a State such as New Mexico. This budget does not provide any permanent type of tax relief for America's middle-class people. I believe we still have time and a great opportunity to address this issue right now in a bipartisan manner. I am willing to continue to work to see what we can do to help the middle class in this budget.

Added to the nonexistent middle-class tax relief, this budget fails to address the 800-pound gorilla in the room—otherwise known as entitlement spending. After 2010, spending related to the aging and the baby boom generation will begin to raise the growth rate of total outlays. The annual growth rate of Social Security spending is expected to increase from about 4.5 percent in 2008 to 6.5 percent by 2017. In addition, because the cost of health care is likely to continue rising rapidly, spending on Medicare and Medicaid is projected to grow even faster, in the range of 7 or 8 percent annually. Total outlays for Medicare and Medicaid are projected to more than double by 2017, increasing by 124 percent, while nominal GDP is expected to grow by only 63 percent. The budget currently under consideration does not offer solutions, much less address entitlement spending or reform.

In the area of energy policy, this budget is a mixed bag. On the positive side, I am pleased that it assumes $1.6 billion for the Department of Energy's Energy Efficiency and Renewable Energy Program—a $440 million increase above the fiscal year 2006 enacted level.

This is a critical program within DOE where our Nation's work on next-generation fuels is put to the test. Increasing our fuel diversity and fuel efficiency is a top priority for me this year, as it was in the Energy bill of 2005. In that bipartisan bill, we passed the first-ever renewable fuel standard. This has literally brought thousands of jobs to the American people and billions of gallons of homegrown renewable fuel to the American fuel tank. I will be seeking to further these advancements through legislation with Senator BINGAMAN and the Energy Committee.

I am also relieved and pleased that the budget includes an increase for fossil energy research and development. This is key to many small producers, geologists, and to the overall fiscal strength of my home State. It is a mistake to misinterpret this funding as an unnecessary incentive for the oil and gas industry. This research and development helps advance technologies to recover more domestic oil and gas, and that is a good thing.

I am disappointed, however, that this budget rejects the President's proposal to permit oil and gas leasing in the Arctic National Wildlife Refuge and does not assume savings from the proposal. We all agree that we should reduce our dependence on foreign oil. Many of us agree that we should do that by conserving energy, increasing fuel efficiency, and using homegrown biofuels. Where we often disagree is that I believe, in the near term, we should also be producing more domestic oil and gas.

I have proposed and passed the idea of domestic energy in the form of an offshore bill dealing with the Gulf of Mexico. I believe we should be doing more offshore. I believe this budget should include ANWR. The chairman of the Budget Committee has indicated he is concerned that our Nation depends on imports for 60 percent of our oil. It concerns me, too. But it equally concerns me that we are locking up billions of barrels of American resources while relying on foreign, volatile regions for our oil.

I cannot support this budget in its current form because it will increase taxes on the middle class and does not offer any meaningful solution for entitlement spending and it offers an incomplete energy policy. I remain willing to work hard to address areas of concern and am confident that if others will come to the table and talk and negotiate, we could strengthen this budget.

I thank the Chair and yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from New Jersey.

Mr. MENENDEZ. Mr. President, I have a different view than my distinguished colleague from New Mexico. This week, what we are seeing is the proof of new leadership in this Congress. I am proud, as a member of the Budget Committee, that we have a budget resolution before us that provides a blueprint for how we can build a stronger nation—a nation that will not be drowning in debt but can save for its children's future, a nation that will not undermine the education of its young people but that invests in building global competitiveness from start to finish, a nation that will not abdicate its responsibility to provide health insurance to those most in need but that is committed to covering every child, and a nation that will not neglect the needs of its soldiers and veterans but that will provide the level of care their sacrifices deserve.

Our budgets are indicative of the values we hold, individually and collectively. In this budget, one thing is very clear: We see a different set of priorities and values for our Nation. From health care to education to our veterans to the safety of our communities, Americans will see that this budget charts a new course. Perhaps most importantly, however, this budget reaches all of these priorities in a framework that is fiscally responsible. With this budget, we will end the days of spending now and figuring how to pay for it later. Instead of making lofty promises we cannot afford, instead of pretending we can have it all while we are sinking deeper and deeper into debt, instead of leaving a multibillion-dollar mess for our grandchildren to clean up years from now, with this budget we make a clear declaration: We must pay for what we spend as we go along, not push it off for another day. This is something Americans do every day. It is how all of us conduct our personal daily lives. Yet, until recently, it is something which Congress has been incapable of. With this budget, we have a chance to change that.

Without question, one of our highest priorities is the health care of our Nation's most vulnerable children. I find it embarrassing that some in Washington, those who have some of the best health care coverage in the world, have proposed to cut coverage to America's neediest children. Yesterday, we defeated an amendment that would have jeopardized the health care of children and parents all over America. I know the battle is not over, but let me assure my colleagues, we will win the fight so children across this country will have the health insurance they deserve. I applaud the Budget Committee chairman for working to make this funding a priority in the resolution.

I am proud of the Senate's support for the Baucus amendment to increase funding for SCHIP. I am proud that a majority of this Chamber realized we had a responsibility to fix the shortcomings of the President's budget that would have had millions of children across the Nation not insured and that we ensured America's neediest children have the care and health coverage they need.

In this budget, we make it clear who our focus is. We will no longer follow blindly down the President's path to provide costly tax breaks for the wealthiest Americans while we rack up trillions in debt for future generations to pay off. That is why I am proud this

budget includes an amendment by Senator BAUCUS to extend key tax provisions which will benefit millions of students and hard-working families but which do not drown us in debt. The message is clear: We Democrats believe we can extend tax credits that help students afford college. We can ensure families continue to claim the child tax credit. We can provide income tax relief, and we don't have to do it while sweeping the cost under the rug for another day.

In this budget, we provide a light at the end of the tunnel for so many children, teachers, and administrators who have been strained to meet requirements without resources, who have seen promises broken year after year. With this budget, we start to fix the many holes in our education funding. This budget funds education $9.2 billion above the President's request. We increase grant aid so that students who rely on Perkins loans, work study, and other grants will continue to have the extra assistance that will help them earn their degree.

For me, this is not a policy debate; it is real life. I would not be here in the Senate today without the help of Pell and Perkins when I was trying to go to college. Having grown up poor, in a tenement, and being the first of my family to do so, that educational opportunity created a foundation that helped me achieve what I have today. I want to make that a birthright for each and every one of our children who has the ability and is willing to work hard and give something back to their country.

We provide the largest increase in elementary and secondary education since 2002. We will have done more in this budget resolution in 3 months than has been done by the administration in the past 4 years so that we can start to fill the massive shortfalls that have plagued our schools and denied opportunities to students. We restore programs such as Safe and Drug-Free Schools, education technology, and other critical investments that have been on the chopping block year after year.

Our budget also marks a turning point for an area which has been shamefully neglected—the care of our Nation's veterans. I recently visited veterans at the VA hospital in East Orange, NJ, and soldiers who have returned from Iraq and Afghanistan currently at Fort Dix and service men and women from across the country, not just New Jersey. I have seen how without adequate funding our VA system has become overloaded, new veterans hang in limbo, and soldiers who have made unimaginable sacrifices are left wondering just how much the Nation values their services.

Too many of our soldiers are trapped in a system that keeps them in limbo. They are too injured to serve, yet they cannot be fully discharged until their paperwork has been processed and their health determinations have been decided. The time they spend waiting can grow from weeks to months and, yes, even years. It is appalling. It is unacceptable. We have to work to improve this process.

This budget allows for that. It would increase veterans funding $3.5 billion above and beyond the President's request. It will ensure funding is dedicated to improving the claims backlog that is plaguing our discharge process.

Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent for an additional 2 minutes.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Is there objection?

Without objection, it is so ordered.

Mr. MENENDEZ. I worked to include language in the markup that ensures improving this backlog is a top priority, and I commend the effort by Senator LINCOLN to dedicate funding to fixing the flawed claims process. This budget will do what should have been done long before our troops began coming home from Iraq and Afghanistan—begin to repair a broken system that has failed our veterans.

Our budget will also ensure that as we wage a war abroad, we do not forget our fight here at home to protect our Nation. This budget not only rejects the President's shortsighted proposal to slash more than $1 billion from first responder programs, but it provides much needed increases for homeland security grants, including enough to fund port security grants at their authorized level of $400 million, doubling rail and transit security, and doubling chemical security funds.

We also restore the President's cuts to the COPS Program, which would have left almost no funds to help law enforcement hire additional officers and improve technology. We reject the President's proposal to slash firefighter grants in half and eliminate SAFER grants. This budget means the difference between shortchanging our police and fire departments and providing them the resources to meet the challenges in our communities.

Finally, the bottom line is our Nation will see a difference when we pass this budget. They will see a brighter outlook down the road. The Nation is watching. They have called on us to focus and change the priorities and values we have seen in previous resolutions by the previous majority. This budget ultimately encompasses the values of Americans across this country.

I commend Chairman CONRAD for his work on crafting this budget. It was difficult. It is a careful balance. But at the end of the day, it accomplishes the key investments that are most important to the Nation's future, to its vitality, to the human capital, to our children—our greatest asset and also our most fragile asset.

I urge my colleagues to continue to reject the amendments that undermine the ability for this new blueprint and to adopt the resolution tomorrow so we can build a stronger Nation.

With that, Mr. President, I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Mr. SANDERS). The Senator from Colorado.

Mr. SALAZAR. Mr. President, I rise to discuss the budget resolution that is currently before the Senate today. This is my third year in the Senate, and this is the third budget resolution I have had the opportunity to consider. But this is the first time I can say I am proud of the resolution before us. It is long overdue. We have not had a budget for 2 years, and we are still operating under the budget resolution passed in 2005.

The circumstances surrounding the budget are not ideal. Our fiscal situation in this country has deteriorated significantly year after year over the past 6 years. We know we cannot fully fund every good program, and we are still facing deficits even as we move closer and closer to the demographic tidal wave that will soon overtake the Social Security and Medicare Programs. But, to their immense credit—to the immense credit of the chairman of the Budget Committee, Senator CONRAD—they have crafted a very good, strong budget resolution. The budget resolution before us provides a blueprint that will enable us to fund our most important Federal programs, provide new tax relief and extend expiring tax provisions, and bring the budget into balance within 5 years. It will do all that without raising taxes.

Still, one of the most important parts of this budget is not a program or a tax cut; it is a simple principle: If you want to take money out of the budget, either by increasing funding for Federal programs or by cutting taxes, you have to pay for it. You have to pay for it—it is a simple principle but a very important principle that will assure we restore fiscal discipline to the Congress. This pay-go provision is one I have long supported and one I am very proud to support with Senator CONRAD and other Members of this body.

The budget resolution would create a 60-vote point of order against any new spending for tax cuts that are not fully paid for—that are not fully paid for. The simple rule is essential if we are to exercise the fiscal restraint that will be necessary to restore sanity to the budgetary process and to set our Nation's fiscal circumstances back on the right path.

I believe this budget strikes the right balance for America—between the fiscal restraint that is embodied in pay-go and the need to fund our Government and between the need to keep taxes on middle-class families low and the importance of facing up to our looming budgetary challenges from a position of fiscal strength. This budget accomplishes those important goals.

On the spending side, I am particularly pleased the budget resolution provides adequate funding for a wide range of programs that are important to the people of America and to the people of Colorado. Some of those priorities include children's health, education, veterans health, and law enforcement.

These issues have never been more important to America than they are today.

On children's health, an estimated 9 million children in America do not have health insurance today. This is a staggering statistic: 9 million children in America are without health insurance. They do not have health insurance; therefore, they do not have access to quality health care. These children will be denied the opportunities of learning, to grow up in stable family environments, and to become productive members of our communities.

On education, America is quickly losing ground to other nations in this global economy. The Federal Government must help local schools provide students with the skills they need to compete on a national and international basis.

On veterans health, we are all familiar with the consequences of the failure to provide our veterans with the quality care the Nation owes them. We currently have over 630,000 veterans of both Iraq and Afghanistan. We owe it to them as a nation to ensure they receive the best care our Government can provide because that is what we promised to each and every one of them and their families.

On law enforcement, we all know how important it is for our citizens to feel safe and to be secure in the fact their Government is doing everything it can to protect them in their homes and in their communities. That means more effective Federal homeland security programs, and it means more police officers in our neighborhoods.

The budget resolution before us gives these and a range of other critical national priorities the full support they deserve.

For example, this budget provides $552 million for the COPS Program. The COPS Program itself has helped put 1,300 police officers on the streets in communities of my State of Colorado.

This budget provides $43.1 billion for veterans programs, including veterans health—with a $3.5 billion increase over the President's budget request.

This budget provides $9.2 billion in discretionary education spending above the President's budget request.

This budget provides $50 billion for the State Children's Health Insurance Program, SCHIP. That is 10 times what the President has proposed, and it starts us effectively down the road of making sure all the children of America, in fact, have health insurance.

This budget protects our communities and our cities and our counties by making sure the community development block grants, which are so important, are provided $3.8 billion. This represents a very significant increase over the President's budget request, which slashed the community development block grants.

This budget provides $1.6 billion for the Department of Energy account that, among other things, will fund the National Renewable Energy Lab at a level $385 million above what the President requested.

The budget also provides a $15 billion increase for agricultural funding between 2008 and 2012 to give our farmers and our ranchers in the forgotten part of America—our rural communities—the assistance they need to remain vibrant.

The budget also rejects the President's proposed cuts to the Payment In Lieu of Taxes Program, the PILT Program, restoring PILT funding to fiscal year 2006 levels.

On the revenue side, this budget sets the stage for meaningful middle-class tax relief and for aggressive action to close the tax gap. As a new member of the Senate Finance Committee, I will do my part to help make the chairman's goals a reality. For example, I strongly support the chairman's decision to include 2 years of AMT relief for middle-class households. That is 1 more year than was set forth in the President's budget request. This will ensure that 20 million—20 million—middle-class taxpayers are not unfairly subjected to the AMT for the next 2 years. I am also especially encouraged that Chairman CONRAD has made a point to emphasize the need to go after corporate tax shelters and offshore tax havens as a way of reducing the tax gap. It is simply not fair to ask hard-working, middle-class Americans to pay their fair share in taxes while we allow large corporations to consistently abuse the Tax Code for their own profit. I commend Chairman CONRAD and the members of the Budget Committee for their vigilance in this arena.

Finally, I believe the budget's deficit-neutral reserve fund for tax relief provides an excellent mechanism for extending several critical tax credits and deductions that will expire in coming years in a fiscally responsible way. The renewable energy production tax credits are an example of that in an amendment we just successfully adopted.

At the end of the day, in 2012, this budget will be balanced. A dramatic reversal of our fiscal fortunes will occur because of the resolution that is before us today. We need a responsible budget blueprint for Congress, and we need it now. This resolution provides that blueprint, and I am proud to stand behind it. I will vote for it. I urge my colleagues to also support it.

Mr. President, I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Illinois.

Mr. DURBIN. Mr. President, it is my understanding that the majority has until 7:25 under a previous order entered into; is that correct?

The PRESIDING OFFICER. That is correct.

Mr. DURBIN. Mr. President, I rise today to support the budget resolution that Senator CONRAD has so ably put together. Working with his colleagues on the Budget Committee, Chairman CONRAD has brought to us a budget that puts America's priorities first, and he has done so in a responsible way.

As I have said many times before, a budget is an expression of values: you choose what to spend your money on and you choose how much of it to spend now instead of later. As families all across America sit down at the kitchen table to create their own family budgets, they decide what they have to pay for now—the house, the car, the electricity, the gas—and then how much they can spend on other things without going too far into debt.

Creating a budget for the Federal Government is really quite similar in many ways: this week the Senate will decide what we have to pay for now—the war, our veterans, health care, education—and then how much we can spend on other things without making our record-shattering debt situation any worse.

I will take a few moments to describe what I think are these key investment priorities, and then I will talk for a moment about how I think we are addressing these priorities in a responsible way.

This budget includes substantial funding for many of America's top priorities, but I will take the time to highlight just three: veterans, health care, and education.

The Senate budget resolution allocates $43.1 billion for veterans in fiscal year 2008 alone. That is $3.5 billion more than President Bush recommended in his budget request. With more and more weary soldiers returning from the wars in Iraq and Afghanistan, with the deplorable conditions in Walter Reed waiting for the injured when they return, and with ongoing issues in States like Illinois where veterans benefits are lacking, supporting the troops when it really counts—when the checks are being cut—is something that we simply must do. This budget gets it right.

This budget also gets it right when it comes to paying for health care, both here and around the world.

For health care around the world, there is no greater funding need than for the fight against global HIV/AIDS. In this area, I commend President Bush for showing real leadership over the course of his, Presidency. But his budget request neglected one of our most cost effective tools against this plague—the Global Fund to Fight AIDS, Tuberculosis and Malaria. The Senate budget resolution includes $940 million for the Global Fund, an increase of $640 million over the President's request. Even more is needed, but this is a good start. To fight HIV/AIDS or make progress on other critical health and development challenges, we must make these necessary investments.

Here at home, the budget resolution provides for up to $50 billion for is the SCHIP program over 5 years. The Bush budget request is $2 billion. It is clear that the Bush administration has not

made affordable health care for our Nation's neediest children a real priority. The Democrats have.

Since the creation of the SCHIP program 10 years ago, more than 6.2 million children have been covered by this vital program, including over 290,000 children in my home State of Illinois.

As the first State to provide health insurance to all children, Illinois has been a leader in the fight to change the course of health care in this country. Since 1993, SCHIP and other Federal programs have helped make it possible for Illinois to provide health insurance to more than 313,000 children who didn't have it before.

How big is the need for better investments in our children's health? In a study of over 20 developed nations released last week by UNICEF, the United States ranked as one of the worst places to be a child. What does that say about us as a country and our commitment to our children—our future? What does it say about this Government's priorities over the last 6 years?

UNICEF looked at six dimensions of child well being. Of the five categories for which the United States was ranked, our country ranked in the bottom third in four categories. In fact, we were next to last in the ''family and peer relationships'' and ''behaviors and risks'' categories. And we were dead last in ''health and safety.''

We must make the commitment and investment in the health and well-being of our children to ensure their success—not create circumstances that make it more difficult for them to realize their potential. I think that this budget starts to correct our course, providing more investment in our kids where it is desperately needed.

This budget also proves that the Democrats in Congress believe that there are few better investments in the future of this country—in the future of our children—than education. The budget resolution includes $62.3 billion for education in fiscal year 2008. That is $6.1 billion more than the Bush request. We absolutely must make this investment now in order to reap the benefits in the future. Our kids deserve nothing less.

As we have allocated robust funding for our Nation's top priorities, we have done so in a fiscally responsible way. Under Chairman CONRAD's leadership, this resolution would take us several steps down the road towards fiscal sanity after years of endless deficit spending that placed today's tax cuts for the wealthy on the future credit cards of our children.

First, the resolution would create an annual budget surplus by 2012. Since we currently find ourselves with more debt than the Nation has ever accumulated before—just as the baby boomers are getting ready to retire—balancing the budget is fundamentally important.

Second, the resolution reduces both spending and the debt as a share of GDP over the 5-year life of the resolution. We have a long way to go towards paying off our $9 trillion in debt, but this is a good start.

Third, the resolution restores a strong pay-go rule that the Republicans had allowed to expire. Congress will be able to spend money on critical needs if it chooses to, but we will have to pay for that spending at the same time. Likewise, we will be able to cut taxes if we want to, but we will have to pay for that as well.

Fourth, the resolution provides 2 years of middle-class tax cuts through continued relief from the alternative minimum tax. Whereas the President's budget called for a huge tax increase on the middle class in 2009 by refusing to provide AMT relief for more than 1 year—a decision that would lead to a substantial tax increase for 25.7 million middle-class Americans—this budget extends that relief for another year to ensure that the middle class does not become ensnared in this tax that was meant to ensure the wealthy paid their fair share of taxes.

In total, this budget provides a valuable blueprint that should help guide the Senate in providing funding for our Nation's priorities while ensuring that we do so responsibly. I urge my colleagues to support it.

Mr. HATCH. Mr. President, I understand the time until 8 is relegated to us. I ask unanimous consent that the distinguished Senator from Colorado be given up to 7 minutes and then the rest of the time be turned over to me.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Is there objection?

Mr. HATCH. Mr. President, I intend to reserve some time for the distinguished Senator from Alaska.

Ms. MURKOWSKI. I thank the Chair. I wanted to make sure I was still in the queue.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Colorado is recognized.

Mr. ALLARD. Mr. President, I thank the Senator from Utah for yielding. I appreciate his work and the leadership he brings forward here in the Senate from the great State of Utah.

I am going to vote against the budget, and this is the main reason why: It raises taxes by $900 billion over 5 years and a projected $3.3 trillion over 10 years. That translates into a tax increase of $2,641 per household annually over the next decade.

It includes 22 reserve funds that could be used to raise taxes by hundreds of billions of dollars more. It increases discretionary spending by nearly 9 percent in fiscal year 2008, and does not terminate one single program. It completely ignores the impending tsunami of Social Security, Medicare, and Medicaid costs. It encourages rules that bias the budget toward tax increases.

I had an amendment earlier today that we voted on which looked at ineffective programs as described by the Office of Management and Budget. This was in response to legislation we passed over a decade ago, and we instructed the agencies to look at setting goals and objectives and then coming forward and seeing how they met these. OMB looked at these and said there were 26 out of over 1,000 programs where they didn't meet those goals. If you took these 26 programs, we were looking at $88 billion over a 5-year period of time.

I had an amendment that said: Let's give instructions to the appropriators to go into these various areas and see if we can't come up with $18 billion of reduced spending and programs that have been classified by OMB. These are civil servants working for the Federal Government. They don't have a political agenda, just strictly looking at the program objectively. I was disappointed the amendment did not pass.

Tomorrow I plan on introducing an amendment that is going to call for reconciliation for a 1-percent elimination of fraud, waste, and abuse in a number of mandated programs which does not include—does not include—armed services, veterans, and Social Security. The purpose is to improve the economy, efficiency, and effectiveness of Federal programs and to reduce the Federal debt.

The other amendment, on the savings we voted on earlier this year, was money that was directed toward reducing the Federal debt. This amendment tomorrow will instruct the authorizing committees to reduce spending by 1 percent by eliminating waste, fraud, and abuse. The amendment reduces waste, fraud, and abuse in mandatory programs by $13 billion in the first budget year, and $71 billion over 5 years. All of the savings will be used to reduce the debt.

This amendment carries across the finish line work that Congress started in 2003. In the fiscal year 2004 budget resolution, the Congress directed the Comptroller General to submit a comprehensive report identifying instances in which the committees of jurisdiction may make legislative changes to improve the economy, the efficiency, and effectiveness of Federal programs within their jurisdiction.

In compliance with our request, GAO—again staffed by professionals who do not carry a political agenda—submitted a 300-plus page report chock full of specific examples of legislative changes with the potential to yield budgetary savings. What have we done with that 300-page report that we requested? Nothing, absolutely nothing.

My amendment picks up where we left off and encourages the authorizing committees to improve the economy and the efficiency and effectiveness of programs under their jurisdiction. So in my effort to eliminate waste and to bring about good stewardship of taxpayer dollars, I ask the Members of this body to support it. It is not a partisan issue. Oversight is a key function of Congress, and when we set up these pieces of legislation to set up reasonable oversight as Members of the Senate, we need to be prepared to carry

those recommendations forward when they come to our attention. I hope this amendment will enjoy broad and bipartisan support. Both amendments were supported by Citizens Against Government Waste. I think it is one small step we can do to at least bring about an effort to reduce fraud, waste, and abuse, and these programs have been clearly identified by both this particular amendment, by GAO, and the previous amendment by OMB.

I ask my fellow Senators to join me in voting for this amendment.

Mr. President, I yield the remaining time to the Senator from Utah.

Mr. HATCH. Mr. President, I would like to take a few minutes to talk about an amendment I will offer tomorrow to ensure that as the budget debate continues, Congress works to protect Medicare beneficiaries' coverage choices, especially coverage choices for those beneficiaries living in rural areas and low-income Medicare beneficiaries.

My amendment is simple. It would establish a budget-neutral reserve fund so that if Congress implements improvements to Medicare, Medicaid, or CHIP, it may not do so in a way that leads to fewer coverage choices for Medicare beneficiaries. It also may not reduce the benefits of those beneficiaries who are enrolled in Medicare Advantage plans.

Let me give my colleagues a little bit of history on the Medicare Advantage program which was established by the 2003 Medicare law.

Under Medicare Advantage, health plans receive a monthly payment to provide beneficiaries all of the benefits covered by traditional Medicare.

But Medicare Advantage plans provide a lot more to beneficiaries.

Medicare Advantage plans provide a range of additional benefits not available in traditional Medicare—benefits such as vision and dental care, physical exams, and hearing aids.

Mdicare Advantage plans also have chronic care management programs to help beneficiaries with chronic illnesses such as diabetes or congestive heart failure better manage their conditions and stay healthy.

Now, health plans participating in Medicare is not a new thing.

They've served Medicare beneficiaries for many years going all the way back to the 1970s through programs authorized by Congress.

For the most part though, up through the late 90s, Medicare health plans were largely available only in urban areas.

Going back now for a decade, back to the Balanced Budget Act of 1997, the fact that beneficiaries in rural areas had few, if any , choices, led Congress to take actions to promote plan availability in those areas.

Yes, these actions included increasing payment rates to address the fact that Medicare payments in urban areas were higher—in some cases a lot higher—than payments in rural areas.

I know my home Sate of Utah had difficulty keeping Medicare+Choice plans in the state primarily because payment rates were too low.

Ironically, many Utahns wanted to participate in these plans because they were the only ones offering supplement benefits such as vision care, preventive benefits and prescription drugs to Medicare beneficiaries at the time.

But due to low payments and adverse selection, both Medicare+Choice plans dropped Utah beneficiaries and as a result, my constituents had limited choices for Medicare coverage until the Medicare Modernization Act created the Medicare Advantage program.

So let me show you what beneficiary choices look like today.

The top map shows where plans were available in 2003.

The white space means that only traditional Medicare was available.

In 2007, beneficiaries—whether they live in an urban area or rural area—could chose from different Medicare Advantage plans, and all beneficiaries have more choices.

All beneficiaries can now choose a Medicare Advantage plan that offers them important additional benefits and lower out-of-pocket costs.

Now here is a good example of the benefits of Medicare Advantage—all beneficiaries may choose a plan that has no cost-sharing for breast cancer screening.

We all know the importance of breast cancer screening.

Beneficiaries with diabetes can choose a plan that offers them diabetes self-management services without any cost-sharing.

On cost sharing, according to CMS, millions of beneficiaries can enroll in a plan that limits their out-of-pocket costs to $1,000 a year.

For low-income beneficiaries, protection from high out-of-pocket costs, which they don't have in fee-for-service, is a valuable benefit.

We know that many low income beneficiaries rely on their plans for this protection.

According to CMS, 57 percent of Medicare Advantage beneficiaries have incomes between $10,000 and $30,000 compared to 46 percent of fee-for-service beneficiaries.

Another area I want to talk about is quality. Data from the Medicare Current Beneficiary Survey show that Medicare Advantage beneficiaries are more likely to obtain preventive services, including flu and pneumonia shots and cancer screenings.

Surveys also show that beneficiaries are satisfied with their plans.

So let me conclude by urging my colleagues to keep in mind the following:

Beneficiaries across the nation—whether they live in a rural state like Utah or an urban area like New York City—now have more coverage choices.

These choices offer beneficiaries more benefits and lower out-of-pocket costs.

Beneficiaries are satisfied.

Let's not forget that it was through policy decisions supported by Members on both sides of the aisle that helped achieve those results, and those results, in my opinion, are worth protecting for beneficiaries' sake.

I urge my colleagues to support my amendment.

Mr. President, today we are debating the size and composition of the Federal budget for fiscal year 2008.

This is a critical debate. And it is one that future generations will look to in order to determine where we went wrong or where we went right. Just as adherence to a budget can make or break a family or small business, so too can Congress's development of and adherence to a budget make or break our economy.

Whether it is a family budget, or the congressional budget, it must be based on an honest assessment of the facts. The budget must make reasonable projections about what money is coming in and what money is going out.

A budget must face hard facts, not hide from them.

When I hear from my constituents in Utah, they talk about the need for tax cuts that benefit families and small businesses.

They talk about fixing Social Security and Medicare.

The 2006 annual reports for those programs showed their unfunded liabilities to be $84 trillion in today's dollars. That was up $7 trillion over the previous year.

With 77 million baby boomers about to retire, this is a serious problem.

We need a budget that is serious about the challenges we face, the revenues we can anticipate, and the expectations of the American people.

We need a budget that swings for the fences, but this budget is playing small ball.

It is big spending, without any big ideas, and the result will be big tax hikes on the American people.

After reviewing the bill before us today, I must candidly admit this budget falls short of realistic spending and revenue projections. You could even go so far as to say it's filled with deception and fantasy.

Simply put, this budget is not honest. It spends more than is brought in. And a lot of the revenues it projects are not really there.

If my constituents in Utah budgeted like this, they would have a serious problem making ends meet.

The proponents of this budget claim that it is the cure to everything that ails us.

But Americans know snake-oil when they see it.

This miracle cure will lead to one of two maladies—over time, it will greatly increase the deficit or it will require massive tax increases.

Consideration of this budget would not be possible without the good fortune of our booming economy. Perversely, however, this budget provides a recipe for destroying the extraordinary growth created by this economy.

I don't believe it is an exaggeration to say—the economy is booming and revenues are up. In fact, revenues are up substantially.

They are up because of sound fiscal policy.

They are up because of progrowth tax cuts that have increased productivity and wages.

It is easy to forget and sometimes our memories are short. But, in the autumn of 2001, our economy was in shambles.

We were hit with a one-two punch, and we were down on the mat.

The booming economy of the late 1990s went bust. When the dot-com bubble burst, billions of dollars in equity were lost, and millions of people began looking for work.

And then in the midst of that recession, our Nation was attacked.

It was not a foregone conclusion that a nation at war, already suffering a considerable economic downturn, would emerge with its head held high and an economy on the rebound.

But we did.

And we did so because President Bush and Congress held strong in pushing through tax cuts and stimulus tax incentive bills that have benefited each and every American.

I know that some of my colleagues want to maintain the illusion that our economy is two-tiered; they say that it is great for the rich who are making out like bandits, and terrible for everyone else. And the 2001 and 2003 tax cuts have the lead roles in this melodrama.

However, the numbers tell a much different story.

Americans are paying taxes—a lot of taxes.

Between 2004 and 2006, we saw an inflation-adjusted 20 percent tax revenue increase. This was the largest 2-year revenue increase since 1965.

Tax revenues, at 18.4 percent of gross domestic product, are above the 20, 40, and even 60 year historical averages. That is not enough for Democrats, however, who want to soak the rich, but will wind up drenching the middle class.

The real devil to them is the tax cut for capital gains and dividends.

Supposedly, these capital gains and dividends tax cuts were skewed toward the rich.

These class warriors need to take a vacation in the reality-based community.

Here's the real deal.

First off, stock ownership is not something just for the wealthy.

Sometimes I think that my colleagues are using talking points written in 1933.

Today, stock ownership is for the middle class.

When you turn on college basketball this weekend, you will see commercials enticing people to hire companies to manage their stock portfolios.

They are not being marketed to monocle-wearing, sports car driving, plutocrats.

They are not being marketed on ''Masterpiece Theatre.''

They are being marketed to average families. You will see people at work, people making burgers on the backyard grill, and people with families living in the suburbs buying stocks and bonds, generating capital gains and dividends to save for their children's college educations.

It is not just folks in affluent areas of the country who benefit from lower capital gains rates.

A policeman in Salt Lake City, a lineman at an auto plant in Michigan or a schoolteacher in California—all have pensions that are invested in the stock market.

And they all benefit from capital freed by these tax cuts.

In 2003, our capital gains tax rates were set at 20 percent and 10 percent.

Congress reduced these rates to 15 percent and 5 percent.

And what were the revenue estimates?

The Congressional Budget Office expected that revenues would expand somewhat—from $50 billion to $68 billion.

It turns out CBO was a bit off.

Capital gains revenues doubled.

Let me repeat that.

Capital gains receipts jumped from $50 billion to $103 billion.

So here is the final take on these tax cuts: They turbocharged the economy. They created jobs. Good jobs. They have led to increased revenues. And they will continue to do so, as long as we do not choke them off with the tax increases contemplated by this budget.

But this budget is a recipe for undoing our economic expansion and growth.

Some people have characterized this budget as smoke and mirrors.

That is too generous.

Smoke and mirrors suggests that the supporters of this budget are at least embarrassed about its future implications.

It suggests that they are trying to pull the wool over the eyes of hard-working Americans.

But there is no subtext to this budget. It is not an esoteric document. The tax and spend message is right there on the surface.

It is not exactly the same as Democratic presidential candidate Walter Mondale going to San Francisco and gleefully promising to raise our taxes.

But it comes close.

It certainly looks like we are going to get another dose of this San Francisco treat from the Democratic majority. I guess some things never change.

This is a big spending budget.

And it is a big taxing budget.

Tax and spend.

Where have we heard that before?

Make no mistake about it.

The fact that the Senate adopted Senate amendment No. 492, sponsored by the chairman of the Finance Committee, Senator Baucus, does not change the character of this budget.

It was an important amendment. But in the end, by omission it actually emphasized the high taxing assumptions embedded in this budget.

It did nothing to help alleviate the substantial tax hikes that most middle class Americans will face under this budget.

It did nothing to protect the capital gains rates that are so critical for retirement savings and continued economic growth.

I know that the criticism of this budget as more tax and spend politics must have bothered some of my colleagues because it prompted them to offer and vote for this amendment.

Just a few months ago, many of us were campaigning on a promise of fiscal responsibility.

Promises, promises.

The authors of this budget seemed to have lost their appetite for fiscal responsibility the minute they stepped off the campaign bus.

And so here they are reverting to instinct.

Next year, the Senate appropriators will be able to spend $16 billion more than the President recommended. And over 5 years, that number grows to $146 billion.

We are going to see discretionary spending rise to 4.2 percent—higher than the inflation rate. And trust me. They will spend every penny.

We are about to get some sense of Democratic fiscal discipline, when the House of Representatives takes up the national security supplemental spending bill.

Among the national security priorities in that bill will be: $25 million going to spinach growers. $74 million going to peanut storage.

And the list goes on and on.

All told, the House supplemental appropriations bill will be larded up with $21 billion in spending unrelated to national security.

This is certainly an unusual way to go about fiscal responsibility and taking care of our troops.

And it is just a taste of things to come.

The increases in spending contemplated in this budget might all be great news for civil engineers in West Virginia. But for future generations who will have to pay the bill associated with this budget, it is not great news.

Now, concerning the AMT. This budget also gives us a 2-year AMT patch.

Earlier this year, a number of my Democratic colleagues criticized the President for failing to provide a permanent solution to the AMT. Yet this budget does nothing to fix the underlying problem.

As inadequate as this fix is, there is a more nagging question. How are we going to pay for all of this?

Do you remember that campaign promise?

A Democratic Congress will restore fiscal responsibility by restoring pay-go. It will require offsets for any new spending or tax cuts.

OK. So where are those offsets coming from?

Here is where this budget leaves the land of wishful thinking and enters the realm of unfortunate delusion.

We are going to pay for it with—drumroll please—the tax gap. Yes, the magical, wonderful, tax gap. The difference between the amount of money collected by the Government and the amount of money owed. The solution to all of life's problems.

To balance this budget, there is an assumption of 3 percent more revenue over 5 years than the President assumed. And where is that revenue coming from?

The tax gap! Of course! Why didn't we think of that?

You see, this budget does not contain even $1 of mandatory savings. Yet we are going to provide AMT relief, and we are going to increase Federal spending.

And we will pay for it by closing some tax loopholes and putting an IRS agent in every small business in the country to make certain that not one dime of potential revenue goes uncollected.

Some people have called the tax gap the pot of gold at the end of the rainbow. Well, it is a pot at least.

Here is our best estimate—in 2001 the net tax gap was about $290 billion. Over 5 years, the tax gap is $2 trillion. Wouldn't that be nice? The tax gap is the deus ex machina that will come in and save this budget mess.

But everyone admits those are very unreliable numbers. Could we be doing better when it comes to collecting taxes? Certainly. We should be collecting more revenue.

But what is a realistic estimate?

Our tax collection system, imperfect as it is, already is the envy of the rest of the world.

So what is a reasonable estimate of how much we can expect from the tax gap?

The President proposed in his budget 16 different options for closing the tax gap. And they would raise $29 billion over 10 years.

That's it. And not one person in this body seriously believes that we can collect anything near the amount needed to balance this budget.

So we have a $110 billion AMT fix. Fifty billion dollars of this falls in the first year. I cannot even conceive of a tax gap revenue offset that would cover $50 billion in 1 year, unless Congress raises the tax rates.

We have $146 billion more in spending over 5 years. We have no reductions in spending. And the tax gap is not paying for it. So who is? Let me be absolutely clear. You will be paying for it. I will be paying for it. We all will be paying for it. Each and every American is going to pay for this budget. We are going to pay for it through higher taxes. We are going to pay for it by working more hours for less money. And ultimately, we will pay for it as economic growth and productivity sag under increased spending, higher taxes, and declining economic growth.

There is only one way for this budget to work. It has to assume that we will not extend the 2001 and 2003 tax cuts.

Make no mistake about it. This means a tax increase on every middle class American.

This plan will not just kill the goose laying the golden eggs. It is going to wring its neck, stamp on it, and throw its limp lifeless body in the river.

If we in Congress do eventually get our act together and balance the Federal budget over the next few years, it will be despite this budget, not because of this budget. It will be because our economy continues to grow. Because of sound fiscal policy, because of the tax cuts, because businesses will continue to open, jobs will continue to be created, and tax revenue will continue to go up.

We have seen this pattern repeated decade after decade in this country.

Unfortunately, this budget relies on assumptions that have proven to be false time after time. It assumes that we will balance the Federal budget through massive tax increase. It sets aside no room to extend the 2001 and 2003 tax cuts.

In President Clinton's first term, he raised taxes by $241 billion. That was quite an achievement.

For those of you who have forgotten, and I know that my constituents in Utah definitely have not, it was the single biggest tax increase in American history.

And 1 year later the party responsible for this fiscal lunacy was tossed unceremoniously out of Congress.

Yet this Congress is set to run circles around President Clinton.

This budget assumes a $916 billion tax hike over 5 years. That is real money. And I imagine it will be unacceptable to many of my colleagues. This is fiscal irresponsibility of the highest magnitude. We need to be straight with the American people.

I know that the majority is in a bit of a jam. In some ways, I feel sorry for them. They promised to fix AMT. They made promises to special interest groups to hike spending. They made promises about fiscal responsibility and budget balancing.

And what did they say about taxes? You could hear crickets chirping when that subject came up. And today they are still sitting awkwardly, avoiding the obvious. Yet it is ordinary Americans who are going to be left holding the bag.

This budget is writing checks that the majority cannot cash without asking the American people to pay higher taxes. The most offensive part of this plan is that they know it, and are just hoping to skate by.

Call it what you want—a caper, a swindle, fiddling while Rome is burning, Wizard of Oz budget, robbing Peter to pay Paul. The fact is, this budget is a boondoggle. The people of Utah deserve better, future generations deserve better, and the American people deserve better.

While I am here, I would like to express my support for the Sessions amendment No. 473, which would refocus alternative minimum tax relief toward families.

Unlike the situation we had a few years ago when a majority of this body supported the alternative minimum tax, I doubt if we could now find a single member of the Senate who supports the AMT as it currently exists. In fact, this insidious tax has so encroached upon our tax system, and threatens to do so much more damage to the American taxpayer, that I would be surprised if we could find even one Senator who would not support total repeal or major reform of this flawed tax.

Despite widespread contempt for the alternative minimum tax, it is clear that the AMT already has gotten a vice-like grip on our fiscal system. Unfortunately, we are already so reliant on the massive revenue the AMT generates and is expected to bring in over the next few years, that making major changes to this tax seems out of reach, absent major tax reform.

Therefore, recent budgets considered by the Senate have included provision for legislation only to help mitigate the effect of the AMT on most American taxpayers, and not to repeal it. This lessening effect has been brought about by temporary laws that raised the thresholds of the tax for 1 year in order to limit the reach of the alternative minimum tax on middle class taxpayers.

For example, the so-called ''AMT patch'' that is in effect for calendar year 2006 raised the threshold for married taxpayers filing joint returns to $62,550 from $45,000. The thresholds for taxpayers in other filing brackets were also increased accordingly, but again for only 1 year.

According to the staff of the Joint Committee on Taxation, the 2006 AMT patch has kept the AMT at bay for nearly 20 million taxpayers. However, this relief ran out at the end of 2006. For the current tax year, we now need to pass legislation to hold off the alternative minimum tax for millions of middle-class taxpayers.

While the budget resolution before us ostensibly provides for a 2-year AMT patch, the details are fuzzy about how we will pay for this relief. For now, however, I will set aside my concerns about that issue and focus on another important one, and that is the issue brought up by the amendment of the Senator from Alabama.

The Sessions amendment would change the focus of how we approach relief from the alternative minimum tax. I strongly support this change, for if we cannot repeal the AMT immediately, our relief efforts should be focused first on the most egregious causes of alternative minimum tax liability.

Tax liability under the AMT can arise for a number of different reasons. However, one of the most common reasons why taxpayers find themselves

subject to AMT is because they have children. As hard as it might be to believe, dependency exemptions are not allowed against the alternative minimum tax.

Another leading cause of taxpayers being thrown in to the alternative minimum tax is the fact that State and local taxes are not deductible under the AMT. There seems to be a common misconception that the State and local tax deduction problem is the biggest factor in determining AMT liability.

In fact, according to the staff of the Joint Committee on Taxation, more taxpayers face the ravages of the AMT because of their personal exemptions being denied than for any other reason. JCT projects that for 2007, absent relief, more than 23 million tax returns will be thrown into AMT because of the personal exemption preference, where less than 20 million will be hit by AMT because of State and local taxes. In subsequent years, the difference is even more pronounced.

The Sessions amendment is a simple one. It essentially says that since we do not have the resources to repeal the AMT all at once, we should prioritize our relief by first fixing the problem that causes families with children to face the alternative minimum tax before we attack other problems, such as the one caused by the lack of deductibility of State and local taxes.

Many families in my home State of Utah find themselves increasingly at risk of the alternative minimum tax. In fact, unless we act soon, an increasingly high percentage of married families with children—not just in Utah, but all over the Nation—will find themselves in the clutches of the AMT.

And many of these are not high income families. Seventy-one percent of all married taxpayers with children earning between $75,000 and $100,000 will be AMT taxpayers this year, in the absence of relief. For those families with children making between $100,000 and $200,000, the amount is 97 percent. The rate of AMT paying for single taxpayers is much lower, only 9 percent for those making between $75,000 and $100,000, and 36 percent for those making between $100,000 and $200,000.

Although I am the first to agree that we should repeal the entire alternative minimum tax, that is probably not possible this year. Given that we must choose partial relief, it makes sense to me that we should first give the relief to families with children. Let's first remove the personal exemption as an AMT tax preference item. This amendment is profamily, and I urge my colleagues to join me in supporting it.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Alaska.

AMENDMENT NO. 551

Ms. MURKOWSKI. Mr. President, I rise tonight to speak about an amendment that I will be modifying, amendment No. 551, that will increase funding for renewable energy development in this country. This amendment is offset. It is intended to provide funds for three areas of renewables that have the potential, I believe, to do great benefit for this Nation's electrical power generation, all without generating any greenhouse gases or having any negative environmental consequences.

My colleague, Senator STEVENS, and I are seeking to raise funding for geothermal power, for ocean energy, and for small hydroelectric development.

I first wish to say I understand this budget resolution does raise funding for renewables and energy efficiency, and I applaud that effort, even though it falls somewhat short of the levels of funding we were hoping for when we passed the Energy Policy Act of 2005 a couple years ago.

But I fear the budget shortchanges three areas of great potential energy, and that is, again, the area of geothermal, ocean energy, and small hydroelectric development. By this amendment, I wish to make a clear statement that this Senator wants to see money not just restored but increased for geothermal energy research and development and funding provided for research and development of all forms of ocean energy—current, tidal, wave projects—and also for the small hydroelectric developments, those that do not involve the damming of major river systems but instead use water from lake taps, creeks, or from run-of-river projects to generate the power.

We know that renewable energy is certainly growing in popularity and endorsements, and I very strongly support funneling additional Federal funds for research and development into the areas of wind, solar, biomass, coalbed methane, landfill gas, and all the other types of renewable energy projects we authorized in the Energy Policy Act of 2005.

But we largely have not done as well with geothermal funding and certainly have done far less to promote ocean and small hydroenergy developments.

On the geothermal issue, funding in recent years has dipped precipitously. This year, the Department of Energy is proposing no funding for geothermal. Last week, they did agree to effectively make a total of $5 million of new money available to study one possible area of geothermal, and this is in the area of heat mining, but this is just for the remainder of this fiscal year. After that, there is no funding.

This cut in funding, this zeroing out comes as MIT has released a report on the ''Future for Geothermal Energy.'' That report suggests enhanced geothermal system technology could provide 100,000 megawatts of baseload power, all without greenhouse gas emissions by 2050 if the Government increases its research commitment to resource characterization and assessment.

The cut in funding also comes just as the Department of Energy has had a major success in proving the ability to convert low-temperature geothermal resources—this is subsurface water that is far below the boiling point, perhaps as low in temperature as 160 degrees—to power generation. This success in using new types of heat exchanges to drive power generation came about and was perfected in Alaska.

We have a location, Chena Hot Springs Resort, outside Fairbanks. The owner, Bernie Karl, has been dogged in his approach to making this happen, to defy the critics and the odds stacked against him to install the first low-temperature generation working process. This project has won accolades and engineering awards in the past year.

Mr. Karl did what everybody said he couldn't do. Some in the Energy Department seem to feel this project perhaps is not representative of anything other than this nice minor energy project in Alaska. But they don't seem to recognize that about 70 percent of the villages in Alaska and in many small towns in the American West all lie above potentially similar low water, shallow ground geothermal resources. They are sitting right on top of the resource. So in a State such as Alaska, where electricity can cost 80 cents per kilowatt hour generated by diesel fuel—this is how most of my villages are getting their fuel now—geothermal power at an operating cost of perhaps one-sixth to one-eighth of that amount is potentially a godsend. But there is no money in the budget to fund anything to support the geothermal energy.

There is also nothing to encourage traditional geothermal assessment and production, which has proven its worth in States from Nevada and California to the Intermountain West.

By specifically adding money to this budget and specifically saying that this addition is intended to provide an additional $50 million to geothermal for this year, it increases greatly the chances that appropriators later this year will not only restore but perhaps boost funding for geothermal energy.

On the ocean energy front, the Electric Power Research Institute estimates that this country has the potential from wave power to generate 2,100 terawatt hours of power, and if we were to capture 15 percent of that power, it would equal all of the hydroelectric generation in this country today.

We know that in a State such as Alaska, where we are surrounded literally on three sides by water, ocean energy is a huge potential source of power. But it is also an enormous source of power along the east coast, if we perfected devices to capture it so we have the economies of scale that make this power truly economic. Look at the west coast with California. We have the potential for so much with ocean energy.

Ocean energy is clean. It has no air emissions, minimal visual impacts, and it could provide plentiful power for everything from freshwater desalination to hydrogen production. It could help economic development by providing a

cheaper, more plentiful supply of power in so many areas across this country.

So my amendment is intended to provide $50 million of funding for ocean energy research in fiscal year 2008. It would be a powerful statement that Congress supports this form of clean renewable energy.

A final component of the amendment seeks to encourage a $25 million expenditure for small hydro development. Again, this is not damming rivers to produce electricity but tapping non-fish-bearing lakes or diverting water from creeks to fuel smaller hydro units. These projects have little or no environmental impact on wildlife but can produce large amounts of greenhouse-gas-free energy. But the minimal grant and research assistance to continually improve the turbines will be quite beneficial.

In Alaska, we have over 100,000 rivers and large creeks. So we are a location, again, where small hydro can supply a large share of our future electrical needs, as it has done without environmental consequences for about 100 years, especially if we have this additional Federal assistance.

I come to the floor tonight to encourage adoption of an amendment that will help to encourage additional funding for renewable energy for those, I believe, neglected areas of the renewable energy portfolio.

I mentioned the amendment is fully offset. The $125 million total comes from the function 920 portion of the budget, miscellaneous allowances portion of our budget.

I will not belabor this further except to encourage my colleagues to support this amendment as a way of sending a clear signal that we support additional funding for renewable energy and for a wider portfolio of renewable energy projects. We don't want to repeat the mistakes of the past, where we limit support to a few technologies so that we in Congress essentially pick the winners and the losers. By adding additional research and development assistance for geothermal, ocean energy, and small hydro, we can increase the possibilities that will allow these renewables to blossom. This comes at a modest impact on the budget, but I believe it could pay a huge benefit for our energy production in the future.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Connecticut.

Mr. LIEBERMAN. Mr. President, I rise to discuss two amendments that I have offered. The first would enable our Nation to better support our military and our veterans.

On September 11, 2001, our Nation was attacked by radical Islamist terrorists and the long war began. It is a war different than any we have fought before because of the willingness of our enemies to attack innocent Americans at home by killing themselves. Someone else has said they hate us more than they love their own lives. But it is also a war that is similar to other long wars we have fought throughout American history in which we were pitted against a great evil, an evil that threatened not just the security of our society but the ideals and values that form the bedrock of our way of life.

In the Civil War, we fought against the evil of slavery. In World War II, we fought against the evil of fascism. In the Cold War, we fought against the evil of communism, and today we are fighting a world war against the evil of Islamist terrorism.

In each of these past struggles, our Nation fully mobilized. We rallied as only a free people are capable of doing. Millions and millions of citizens bound together, shoulder to shoulder in defense of our freedom, with a shared sense of service, sacrifice, and support of our troops. Our sacrifices went far beyond the battlefield, they suffused our society. In each of these past struggles I have mentioned, those Americans who were not asked to put on a uniform nonetheless shared in the burdens imposed by war. That is how democracies should go to war.

Today, we find ourselves engaged in another global struggle for freedom, a struggle that stretches from the mountains of Afghanistan to the streets of Baghdad, from the jungles of Southeast Asia to the deserts of Somalia, and from the nightclubs of Bali to the subways of London. The fact is that though our military is fully engaged in this war, most of the rest of America is not.

Five years after September 11, very little has been asked of most of the American people. Instead of mobilizing as a nation, the burden of this war has fallen disproportionately on the few, on our soldiers, our brave men and women in uniform. They are the ones who have put their lives on the line so that freedom may prevail. In this Chamber and across our land, there have been great differences of opinion about how we should pursue the war in Iraq, but there has been great unity of opinion that our troops there should be honored. We must support them.

That has become a common banner under which all of us have rallied time and again. We support our troops. We say it on the floor of this Chamber almost every day. We support our troops. We say it on television and radio. We support our troops. We put it on the bumpers of our cars. We support our troops. But I ask my colleagues, can we honestly say we really have done all we can and should to support our troops? I think the answer is clear: No, we can't. We have not.

Look at the facts. Our Army and Marine Corps are stretched to the breaking point, short on personnel, training, and equipment. Our Navy has fallen dangerously below 300 ships. Our Air Force is forced to cut 57,000 people in uniform in the next 5 years. Everybody in this Chamber knows—and all Americans know, too—about the terrible conditions of Walter Reed's Building 18 and the larger crisis in health care for our soldiers and our veterans lurking just beneath it. No one can possibly look at our troops and our veterans today and feel satisfied that we are doing all we should to support them.

I know some say these problems are only temporary, that once we leave Iraq, everything is going to be fine for our troops and our military. But this war is not just about Iraq; it is a global conflict with Islamist extremists who have declared war on most of the rest of the world. Even if the war in Iraq ended tomorrow and all our troops could magically be withdrawn, tens of thousands of our soldiers will still be needed in Afghanistan, throughout the Middle East, in the Balkans, in the Horn of Africa, and everywhere else freedom is being challenged. Even if the war in Iraq ended tomorrow, our military would still be twice as busy as it was during the Cold War, confronting the inhumane and brutal threat of radical Islam and guarding against the rise of a hostile superpower elsewhere in the world.

Let me put the matter I am discussing in the context of American history, the history of America at war, and the extent to which our Government has mobilized and our people have shared the sacrifice.

During the Second World War, our Government raised taxes, and we spent as much as 30 percent of our gross domestic product to defeat fascism and nazism. During the war in Korea, we raised taxes again and spent 14 percent of our GDP on our military. During Vietnam, we raised taxes—again because we needed to—and we spent 9 percent of our GDP on the military. Today, in the midst of a war against a brutal and unconventional enemy, in a dangerous world, we have cut taxes and are spending less than 5 percent of our gross domestic product to support our military.

We need to confront the reality that the defense of freedom is not cheap. Our soldiers know that, their families know that, but we as a society don't seem to know that. We are failing to pay the full price which it is our obligation as citizens of this great democracy to pay to protect our security and our liberty. In contrast to past wars, we are failing as a society to share in shouldering the cost of this war against Islamist extremists.

In his 1942 State of the Union Address, just a few weeks after the deadly surprise attack on Pearl Harbor, President Franklin Roosevelt spoke to our Nation about the sacrifice demanded of a democracy that is sending its bravest into harm's way to defend our way of life, and I quote: ''War costs money,'' President Roosevelt said. ''That means taxes and bonds and bonds and taxes. In a word, it means an all-out war by individual effort and family effort in a united country.''

We have a responsibility in this Congress in our time to give our troops the support they need in the world war we are engaged in against the terrorists

who attacked us on September 11—and attempt to do so again—and that means, and I quote Roosevelt again, ''an all-out war by individual effort and family effort in a united country.''

Every American has a responsibility to share in the burden our soldiers are now carrying in defense of our freedom. We simply must pay the cost of this war more adequately and equitably than we are today. It is not an acceptable answer to push the sacrifice of this war against terrorism onto our children and grandchildren through deficit spending, as we have been doing. It is not an acceptable answer to pay the cost of this war by squeezing some important domestic programs, as we have been doing. It is a false choice, I would argue, to suggest we must skimp at home in order to protect our security abroad. We are a great nation, a great economy, and we are capable of doing both. That was the America of Franklin Roosevelt, the America of Harry Truman, the America of John F. Kennedy, and the America of Ronald Reagan, and that must be the America of today.

Of course everyone in this Chamber supports our troops. Now it is time to translate that support into national policy. It is time to put our money where our mouth is. That is why I filed an amendment to enact a support-our-troops tax to help pay for the war against radical Islam. Because we are each threatened by this inhumane enemy, each of us should contribute a little more to guarantee its defeat and our survival.

The support-our-troops tax I have introduced and envision would be a progressive increase for all Americans who pay income taxes. The revenues from this tax would only be able to be spent for our troops and the care of our veterans and must be on top of any other funds that would otherwise have been appropriated for them.

My amendment today and the tax increase it proposes will not weaken our resilient economy, it will not deprive the American people of the many comforts they enjoy, but it will begin to restore a sense of shared service and sacrifice to our people and a sense of fiscal responsibility to our Government. It will begin to provide all that is required by our military to achieve victory in the long war in which we are engaged.

We all prefer lower taxes, but we live in a time in history that requires more than what we prefer—a moment when we must appreciate what kind of Nation we are, the blessings of liberty we enjoy, and we must understand what we must do together to preserve the security and freedom we cherish.

I have decided not to ask for a vote on this amendment tomorrow. In fact, I would say that I filed it as a plea, as an opening argument to my colleagues to join together in doing what is right and necessary to give our troops and veterans the support they deserve. My purpose is to begin a legislative effort that I hope will ultimately succeed in securing the additional revenues our troops and our veterans need.

We will not solve this problem today, but we cannot afford to put it off much longer. It is imperative that this Congress address the need for a genuine national mobilization, a sharing of sacrifice in order to prevail in the long war we are fighting. Let us truly put meaning in the declaration that we, each and every American, support our troops as they put their lives at risk for us.

I also will offer a second amendment I have introduced, and this one I have done with Senator COLLINS, the ranking member of our Homeland Security Committee. It would strengthen targeted areas of our homeland security effort. In this case, I will call up this amendment at the appropriate time and hope it is accepted by unanimous consent with the support of the chairman and ranking member of the Budget Committee. Let me take just a moment to explain what it does.

The administration's budget proposal for fiscal year 2008 underfunds critical homeland security priorities, and while the committee resolution currently before the Senate is a major improvement over the President's request and returns key homeland security programs to their fiscal year 2007 funding levels—understand I am saying returns these programs to the levels they are funded at now, not increases them—I believe it still must be strengthened in two critical areas.

This amendment I have introduced with Senator COLLINS would add an extra $731 million to this budget resolution for two specific grant programs.

First, it would direct $400 million for grants to improve the capabilities of first responders to communicate with one another across jurisdictional and geographic lines. The remaining $331 million would go toward the Emergency Management Performance Grants Program that helps emergency managers throughout our country plan and prepare for disaster. We propose to pay for these investments with an across-the-board budget cut to administrative accounts, thereby adding nothing to the budget deficit.

More, not less, must be done to strengthen an all-hazards approach to homeland security to ensure we are prepared to respond to terrorist attacks like 9/11 as well as natural disasters like Katrina.

Last week, in passing S. 4, the Improving America's Security Act, the Senate voted to authorize a $3.3 billion interoperability grant program over 5 years, beginning with $400 million in fiscal year 2008, next year. This amendment that Senator COLLINS and I are introducing would keep that promise by enabling the appropriation of that $400 million for the advancement of a system by which our first responders can communicate with each other with certainty in a time of disaster.

Similarly, the Senate, in S. 4, last week substantially increased funding for the Emergency Management Performance Grants Program to help ensure that our States and localities are prepared for all hazards. I ask my colleagues to support this bipartisan amendment so we can fulfill the promise we made to our first responders and emergency planners when we passed S. 4 last week.

Mr. President, this amendment strengthens targeted areas of our homeland security effort which were neglected by the budget proposal from the White House. And while the committee resolution currently on the floor is a major improvement over the President's inadequate request, and returns key programs to their fiscal year 2007 funding levels, I believe that it still must be strengthened in this critical area. My amendment would add an extra $731 million to this budget resolution for two specific grant programs for first responders and emergency managers that will help them plan, train, exercise, prepare for, and respond to catastrophic events. I propose to pay for these new investments with an across-the-board budget cut to administrative accounts, thereby adding nothing to the Federal deficit.

Mr. President, September 11, 2001 changed our lives forever. We face new threats and must prepare accordingly. But the administration's budget proposal indicates it has turned its back on the lessons of September 11, 2001. And the Federal response to Hurricane Katrina and the subsequent mismanaged recovery proved for all to see that we are still a nation unprepared for catastrophe. More, not less, must be done to strengthen an all-hazards approach to ensure that we are prepared to respond to terrorist attacks as well as natural disasters. The President's budget request does not reflect that imperative, which is why I proposed to the Budget Committee chairman and ranking member an additional $3.4 billion above the President's proposal.

Given the financial limitations before us, however, I have decided to offer this scaled-down amendment. Of the $731 million in additional spending I am proposing, $400 million would be for grants to improve the capabilities of first responders to communicate with one another across jurisdictional and geographic lines. The remaining $331 million would be directed toward the Emergency Management Performance Grants, EMPG, Program that helps emergency managers plan and prepare for disaster.

We know our first responders don't have the training, equipment, and frequently the manpower they need to do their jobs properly. Most don't even have the basic capability to communicate with one another across jurisdictional and functional lines, and the response to Hurricane Katrina showed us that, sometimes during a major catastrophe, they can't communicate at all. Yet the President's budget continues a 4-year trend in cuts to first responders—a 40-percent reduction since

2004. And the President proposes nothing at all for fiscal year 2008 to promote interoperable communications specifically.

Most of my colleagues in the Senate know that a sustained Federal commitment is needed to improve the ability of our first responders to communicate with one another in the face of disaster. Unfortunately, time and again, disasters occur, and police, firefighters, and emergency medical workers are unable to exchange information with each other. Lives are lost as a result.

That is what happened on 9/11. The story of the communication breakdown among New York City's first responders is well known. And it is well known because it cost the lives of some of the bravest Americans who rushed to the aid of their fellow citizens. But it occurred at each of the 9/11 disaster sites.

Then came Katrina. The storm decimated communications infrastructure throughout Mississippi and Louisiana, and once again, difficulties in communicating among officials and first responders significantly impeded rescue and relief efforts.

Like many of the homeland security challenges we face, achieving nationwide operability and interoperability will require significant resources. While we don't know the exact price tag, we do know the costs will be significant, which is why we created a dedicated interoperability grant program for first responders in S. 4—the Senate-passed 9/11 Commission recommendation implementation bill, also known as the Improving America's Security Act of 2007.

That legislation authorizes $3.3 billion over 5 years beginning with $400 million in fiscal year 2008. The amendment I am introducing would match this amount in the budget resolution before us today.

Secondly, the EMPG Program is a long-standing and effective program whose cost is shared equally between Federal and State governments. EMPG grants are an essential building block in preparing for disasters of all types. They support critical functions such as the planning, training, and exercising that undergird almost all other preparedness efforts, whether for natural disasters or acts of terrorism. EMPG grants are therefore a distinct and important complement to those homeland security grants focused primarily on preventing, preparing for and responding to terrorism.

By enabling States to create better plans, EMPG grants also help ensure that the other money provided by the Federal Government is spent more effectively.

The former head of the National Emergency Management Association, who also is the Director of Emergency Management for the State of Alabama, testified before the Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs Committee that having EMPG funds available for planning actually saves money for States, localities, and the Federal Government. For example, in one county in Alabama, where EMPG funds were used to develop a debris removal plan, the county was able to cut the cost in half of having debris removed after a disaster compared to other counties that did not have similar plans. If you spread those savings over millions of cubic feet of debris, the savings—of costs that would have otherwise been reimbursed by the Federal Government—really add up. In other words, the more we plan, the more efficiently we can utilize the funding that is available.

Again, like the interoperability grants, the Senate has already recognized the importance of the EMPG Program in S. 4, which substantially increases the authorized funding for EMPG to help ensure that our States and localities are prepared for all hazards. We should begin to fulfill the promise of S. 4 here.

Mr. President, we must learn the dual lessons of September 11, 2001, when terrorists attacked us on our shores killing 3,000 innocent civilians, and August 29, 2005, when a predicted and catastrophic hurricane leveled much of the gulf coast, causing 1,300 deaths, billions of dollars worth of damage, and untold amounts of grief.

Our enemies are ruthless and choose their own battlefields, and nature will strike in unpredictable ways, year after year. Yet many of our Nation's security gaps remain wide open. There is no cheap way to be better prepared.

I urge my colleagues to support this amendment so that we can fulfill the promise we made to our first responders and emergency planners when we passed S. 4 last week.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Georgia.

Mr. CHAMBLISS. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that following Senator CASEY, I be allowed to speak for up to 10 minutes, that I be followed by Senator ISAKSON for up to 10 minutes, and Senator GREGG for up to 10 minutes.

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

The Senator from Pennsylvania.

Mr. CASEY. Mr. President, I rise tonight to speak about an amendment that I believe will pave the way to expand quality preschool education for our Nation's children. I believe, as so many people in this Senate believe, that we must invest in our children in the dawn of their lives, as Hubert Humphrey said many years ago. The reason we must do that is, if we don't invest in them in the dawn of their lives, we can't expect them to be healthy, we can't expect them to learn and to grow and to have all the benefits that we hope any of our children would have as they move into school and begin to move into the future together.

I thank Senator CONRAD for the work he has done on this budget resolution and allowing us the ability to offer amendments like this. In particular, on this subject matter both Senator KENNEDY and Senator DODD not only have done great work over many years, but in particular this year, and their staffs have helped on this issue as well. I appreciate that.

My amendment is simple. It creates a deficit-neutral reserve fund for expanding preschool education to children of low-income families. It is my hope the Congress can come together in a bipartisan way on legislation to expand access to preschool education for children, especially children of low-income families—but it would not be so limited. We could also cover children of lower and middle-income families as well.

Mr. President, you know well—you have spoken about this—we already have two great programs that help our children among several but two that I will mention tonight. We have Head Start and the Child Care Development Block Grant Program. These are programs that we know work. They deliver results for those children and for our country. So I believe both Head Start and the Child Care Development Block Grant Program are good investments for those children, for their families, and for our future. I believe Head Start and the Child Care Development Block Grant Program should receive the funding they need from Congress this year in this budget.

At the same time, I also believe a preschool program for early learning that I speak of tonight will complement and add to and enhance the ability of these other programs to help our children. I also believe that by setting up a deficit-neutral reserve fund, this amendment will eventually require offsets. But I also think when we do that we are speaking not just of a program that should work but a program that will be fiscally responsible and maintain fiscal discipline.

I want to make sure that in this amendment, in this budget process we are engaged in right now, that we leave flexibility for the Health, Education, Labor and Pensions Committee and the Senate itself to create a preschool assistance program for the States. I believe this amendment does that. I hope this flexibility will allow us to work across the aisle in a bipartisan fashion on the parameters of this program and its eventual costs.

Early childhood education has been a priority of mine for many years and had been a priority of mine in State government as the auditor general and State treasurer of Pennsylvania. In the Senate it will continue to be a top priority for me. I have been a strong advocate for improving the quality and safety of childcare in my home State of Pennsylvania, and I will continue to do that in the Senate.

We know this: study after study shows that investments in pre-K are not just good for that child and not just good for that child's family but, of course, for the State in which they live and for our whole country. We hear a

lot of talk in this Chamber about growing the economy, making sure people have the ability to be entrepreneurs, to invest and to grow and to make money and to build our economy. That is great and we all support that. But if we really are serious about growing the economy of America today and into the future, I believe we must invest in our children. We know these programs pay dividends for our children and for our future.

I believe the Bush administration should not only put together the right kind of budget—and I have been critical of many aspects of the President's proposal—but I think the administration should increase funds for Head Start, not cut them. It should increase funds for the Child Care Development Block Grant Program, and at the same time we must help our States in their efforts to establish quality prekindergarten education programs so that all children, no matter what their background, can enter school ready to learn.

Investments in our children and early childhood education should be a top national priority, something that should have bipartisan support. I believe it will and it does. By working to make sure that every child is ready to learn when they enter school and by nurturing our children during their early years, we make an investment that pays dividends to the child and for the country.

I urge all my colleagues to support this amendment.

Mr. BYRD. Mr. President, I am concerned about the use of the so-called function 920 account to offset amendments to the budget resolution.

The budget resolution sets the aggregate level of discretionary spending for the coming fiscal year. Within that maximum level of discretionary spending, the budget resolution displays certain nonbinding levels of discretionary spending that are divided between 20 major functions, including function 050 for defense, function 150 for international affairs, function 400 for transportation, function 550 for health, and so on. Function 920 is a kind of catch-all account, which displays the budget effects from initiatives that cannot be easily categorized into the other budget functions, such as an across-the-board spending cut.

When a Senator offers an amendment to increase spending in one discretionary account, such as function 400 for transportation or function 550 for health, and then directs the Appropriations Committee to find unspecified savings in the function 920 account, it creates an expectation for increased resources when none are produced. Such amendments do not increase the maximum level of discretionary spending allowed by the budget resolution falsely raise expectations that more money is available for certain spending programs. In reality, this is a shell game amounting to shifting funds around without any actual consequence.

Function 920 has a legitimate accounting purpose. That purpose, however, is not to create the illusion of progress for public consumption and a press release.

Mr. ROCKEFELLER. Mr. President, amendment No. 591 would create a deficit neutral reserve fund and would allow for legislative action by the Finance Committee to improve the child support enforcement system as long as the costs were offset.

The child support program has collected more than $23 billion for 17 million children participating in the program. The Congressional Research Service found that this program is one of the most important safety net programs reducing poverty rates for working families.

Unfortunately the Deficit Reduction Act, DRA, made deep cuts in this enforcement funding. A preliminary estimate by the Congressional Budget Office indicates that $11 billion in child support payments will go uncollected over the next 10 years, even if States backfill half of the lost Federal funds.

Child support payments allowed more than 300,000 families to close their Temporary Assistance to Needy Families cases in 2004. Families go on welfare less often and leave sooner when they receive reliable support payments. In addition, Federal costs for Medicaid, food stamps, and other means-tested programs decrease when both parents support their children.

The child support program collected $4.58 in private dollars for every $1 spent by Federal, State, and county governments. The Office of Management and Budget rated the child support program as one of the most effective government programs.

As States implement the cuts in the DRA, fewer children will receive reliable support from their parents. States and counties will collect support less consistently and it will take longer to establish paternity and support orders. Employer outreach initiatives will be curtailed. Domestic violence services and initiatives to help low-income fathers work and stay involved with their children will be reduced or eliminated. Interstate enforcement will be less dependable.

As program resources are reduced, a State's ability to meet Federal performance measures will deteriorate. A downward spiral in performance will further decrease State program funds and increase penalty risks. Counties in particular rely on performance incentive funding to operate. The performance gap will widen between States and counties able to backfill funds and those that cannot.

Mr. CRAIG. Mr. President, I have sought recognition to comment on veterans funding in this budget resolution. The Democrats have put forward a resolution that proposes to increase veterans discretionary spending by 18 percent—this is on top of a 12 percent increase that was included in last month's joint funding resolution. I have also heard that billions more will be proposed for veterans in the war supplemental.

Spending proposals of this magnitude in any area of Government should rightfully raise a few eyebrows and be met with a healthy level of scrutiny. Veterans programs are no exception. Taxpayers will continue to support higher veterans expenditures only to the extent we can assure them that those expenditures are absolutely necessary, will not be wastefully spent, and will meet our highest priorities. The Budget Committee chairman stated as much in his opening remarks on Tuesday.

Let me be clear. I am absolutely committed to providing the highest quality of care to our veterans. I have supported a 70 percent increase in VA medical care since President Bush took office. I have spoken frequently about not sparing any expense when it comes to getting the highest quality of care to our Iraq and Afghanistan veterans and veterans with disabilities. I have even introduced legislation that allows all veterans with service-connected disabilities to seek care outside of the VA system if that is what they prefer.

But what I see in this resolution is an effort to use the legitimate needs of our war wounded as a pretext to support funding increases that are beyond reason and that actually may harm the care provided to the veterans who are our No. 1 priority.

Let me point out a couple of areas where I think this budget fails our highest priority veterans and taxpayers.

The Democrats' budget proposes an extra $1.1 billion to allow new ''Priority 8'' veterans to enroll for VA health care. Now who are these Priority 8 veterans? Priority 8 veterans are veterans with no service-connected disabilities and higher incomes. They were granted comprehensive access to VA health care back in 1996 at a time when we thought their care could be provided on a budget-neutral basis. We were wrong. Priority 8 veterans then enrolled in such large numbers that quality and timely health care to VA's service-disabled and indigent patients began to be compromised.

In January 2003, Secretary Principi used authority granted to him by Congress to suspend new enrollment of Priority 8 veterans. His rationale was simple:

VA is maintaining its focus on the health care needs of its core group of veterans—those with service-connected disabilities, the indigent and those with special health care needs.

Taking the action he did on the eve of the war in Iraq was the right thing to do. He rightly instituted a policy that focused our limited resources on those for whom VA was established—our war injured and veterans who need VA the most.

All I have been hearing from the Democrats for the last 2 years is how we must not make our OIF/OEF veterans wait in lines for mental health

care, TBI treatment, or other specialty care. I agree! That is why their proposal puzzles me. At a time of war, when we're trying to get quicker access to VA care for our OIF/OEF and service-disabled veterans, how does allowing an increase in the patient load help matters? Where is the sense of priority here? It is like we are trying to keep a ship afloat by pouring tons of water onto the deck. It doesn't make sense.

For those who think that simply providing more money permits VA to automatically increase its capacity to see new patients, think again. It takes time to hire quality medical personnel. It takes time to find space to accommodate additional medical appointments and patients. Since 2003 VA has been able to improve the amount of time it takes to schedule primary and specialty care appointments so that more than 94 percent of such appointments are scheduled within 30 days of the veteran's desired date. Why would we risk longer waiting times for our OIF/OEF veterans and service-disabled veterans?

Furthermore, is this new spending fiscally prudent at a time when VA budgets have been growing at double-digit rates? There are 24 million veterans in the United States; only 5.3 million use VA health care now. Have the longterm cost implications of opening the system to all veterans been considered in this budget? Have we contemplated the multibillion dollar unfunded liability we are creating here if millions more Priority 8 veterans show up for free care?

Let me move on to another area that concerns me.

The chairman of the Budget Committee made it a point to show how his budget meets or exceeds the recommendations of the independent budget. That is all well and good, but when the IB is used to set budget policy for the Congress, then a fair evaluation of the budget numbers is in order. Let's look at one account in particular—general operating expenses. The Budget Committee chairman quite proudly stated that his budget meets the IB recommendation of $2.23 billion for this account.

The largest portion of this account funds the administration of VA's benefits programs, to include its backlogged claims processing system. The administration has submitted a proposal that would provide VBA with the highest number of claims processors in its history. In fact, the President's budget will result in what will have been a 61 percent increase in claims processing staff since 1997. While I support the President's budget, it is time we tried a new approach to fixing the backlog of disability claims. Simply providing more and more money to fix the problem does not solve the problem.

What do we have with the Democrats' budget? On top of the President's record increase, the IB recommends an extra $700 million: roughly $100 million for new information technology spending, and $600 million for additional staff. According to unofficial VA estimates, 600 million would buy over 10,000 VBA employees, almost double the size of the existing bureaucracy? VA cannot accommodate a staffing influx of this size in 1 year. It would have to lease hundreds of thousands of square feet and additional facilities all over the country. More money would be needed for communication services, utilities, personal computers and IT support staff.

Is this rational? Have the long-term costs been factored in? Was VA's ability to provide space for these employees factored in? Does the incoming workload command a bureaucracy of that enormous size? As ranking member of the Veterans' Affairs Committee, I have not seen any data to substantiate a request of that magnitude. I have even asked the authors of the IB to justify the number, but have yet to receive a response.

We are not talking about chump change here. If an error was made by the IB, and I suspect one was, then we should fix it before it is perpetuated.

Let me conclude with this final observation. VA has been criticized in recent years for its very public budget gaffes. The General Accountability Office rightly condemned VA for ''errors in estimation'' and ''inaccurate assumptions'' that led to the VA funding shortfall of 2005. I would caution my colleagues that we, in this budget resolution, may be repeating those same mistakes by providing money that VA could not prudently spend. It may be politically expedient to reflexively throw more money at problems. But let's also not forget about our obligations to the American taxpayer.

MORNING BUSINESS

Mr. CASEY. I ask unanimous consent that there now be a period of morning business with Senators permitted to speak therein for 10 minutes each.

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

GENOCIDE ACCOUNTABILITY ACT OF 2007

Mr. DURBIN. Mr. President, I rise to speak about S. 888, the Genocide Accountability Act. It is a bipartisan bill I have introduced with Senator TOM COBURN of Oklahoma, Senator PATRICK LEAHY of Vermont, and Senator JOHN CORNYN of Texas.

This Genocide Accountability Act is the first legislation produced by the Judiciary Committee's new Subcommittee on Human Rights and the Law, which I chair and Senator COBURN serves as ranking member.

I wish to thank organizations that have endorsed this act, including Africa Action, the American Jewish World Service, Amnesty International USA, the Armenian Assembly of America, the Armenian National Committee of America, the Genocide Intervention Network, Human Rights First, Human Rights Watch, Physicians for Human Rights, Refugees International, and the Save Darfur Coalition.

Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent to have printed in the RECORD a letter from the organizations I have just mentioned supporting this legislation.

There being no objection, the material was ordered to be printed in the RECORD, as follows:

MARCH 15, 2007.

Hon. RICHARD J. DURBIN,
Hon. TOM COBURN,
Subcommittee on Human Rights and the Law, Senate Committee on the Judiciary, Washington, DC.

DEAR CHAIRMAN DURBIN AND RANKING MEMBER COBURN: We write to express our strong support for the Genocide Accountability Act. We believe this legislation, a product of the Subcommittee on Human Rights and the Law's inaugural hearing on genocide, is necessary in order to enable the United States to lead the world in bringing perpetrators of the most serious human rights crimes to justice. We look forward to its swift enactment into law.

Winston Churchill once remarked that the extermination of Jews in Europe was ''a crime without a name.'' That inspired Raphael Lemkin to name it, and he then devoted his life to codifying the crime of genocide in international law. Lemkin's work culminated in the United Nations Convention on the Prevention and Punishment of the Crime of Genocide. The most serious human rights crime had a name, but since 1988, when the United States formally ratified the treaty, genocide has been a crime under U.S. law only in the narrowest of circumstances.

The Genocide Implementation Act (18 U.S.C. 1091), enacted in 1987 as a prerequisite to the United States becoming a party to the Genocide Convention, provides jurisdiction over the crime of genocide only in circumstances where the perpetrator is a U.S. citizen or the crime took place in the United States. Since the time that law was enacted, the world's pledge that it would ''never again'' tolerate mass slaughter has been mocked again and again—in Bosnia, in Rwanda and now in Darfur. As the violence in Darfur rages into its fifth year, the United States must do all it can to deter those who act with seeming impunity, including by removing any barriers to prosecution in this country of those responsible for genocide.

The Genocide Accountability Act would accomplish this by enabling the Department of Justice to prosecute foreign nationals suspected of genocide who are present in the United States. This is not merely a theoretical concern. The Justice Department has already identified individuals who may have participated in the Rwandan and Bosnian genocides and are currently living in the United States under false pretenses, but current law fails to provide jurisdiction to charge them with that crime.

Like the pirate and the slave trader, perpetrators of genocide are rightly considered to be the enemies of all mankind. The United States must not remain passive when those

suspected of genocide enter or are found in its territory. By eliminating barriers to prosecution, as the United States has done in the cases of hostage-taking, torture, and other serious crimes, the Genocide Accountability Act will ensure that perpetrators of genocide do not evade accountability when they are present in the United States. We welcome its introduction and strongly urge its enactment into law.

Sincerely,

Africa Action, American Jewish World Service, Amnesty International USA, Arab American Institute, Armenian National Committee of America, Center for American Progress Action Fund, Genocide Intervention Network, Human Rights First, Human Rights Watch, Open Society Policy Center, Physicians for Human Rights, Refugees International, Save Darfur Coalition.

Mr. DURBIN. Mr. President, I thank Senator LEAHY for allowing the creation of this new subcommittee in Judiciary that is known as Human Rights and the Law. It is the first time in the 218-year history of the Senate such a committee has been designated, and I am honored to serve as its chair.

After our first hearing on genocide in Darfur, we decided it was time to close the legal loopholes that prevent the U.S. Justice Department from prosecuting people in our country who have committed genocide. This legislation is a result of our first hearing. We heard about these gaps in the law and found them hard to believe. Unlike the laws of torture, piracy, material support for terrorism, terrorism financing, hostage taking, and many other Federal crimes, laws related to genocide do not allow the arrest and prosecution in the United States of people who are not U.S. citizens, or who have not committed the act of genocide in our Nation. Of course, those are few and far between. There is no reason to treat genocide, perhaps the worst crime known to humanity, differently than any of these crimes.

During the Human Rights Subcommittee's hearings, we heard from Romeo Dallaire. He is now a member of the Canadian Senate, and he was the general in charge of the U.N. peacekeeping force in Rwanda in 1994. He tried desperately to stop that genocide, and many people refused to even listen. Two notable exceptions were former colleagues in the Senate: my predecessor, Senator Paul Simon of Illinois, and a man whom I respect very much and recently retired, Senator Jim Jeffords of Vermont. They appealed to the Clinton administration to send troops into Rwanda—just a small force to stop the massacre—but sadly, the administration did not respond. President Clinton has said it was the worst mistake of his administration. His candor and honesty are appreciated, but we should learn from that mistake.

Despite all of the world's solemn promises, today in Darfur, in western Sudan, another genocide rages. In a region of 6 million people, hundreds of thousands have been killed, and over 2 million people have been displaced. For them, the commitment of ''never again'' rings very hollow. Earlier this month, Sudan's President Omar Hassan al-Bashir sent a letter to the U.N. Secretary General rejecting the core elements of the plan to send U.N. peacekeepers to Darfur. Bashir claimed that U.N. and African peacekeeping forces have no authority to protect civilians in his country, saying Sudan bears the primary responsibility.

Four years into the genocide, the claim that the Khartoum regime will protect civilians in Darfur is not only implausible, it is offensive. President Bashir has thumbed his nose at the international community. The question is: How will we respond, once having declared a genocide?

Last week a U.N. human rights team reporting on Darfur called for U.N. Security Council intervention, tougher sanctions, and criminal prosecution of guilty parties. They also called for the international community's response to the genocide in Darfur immediately.

The U.N. human rights team is led by Jody Williams, a genuine American hero who won the Nobel Peace Prize for her efforts to ban landmines. Upon completing her investigation of Darfur, Ms. Williams had a message for the international community. She said:

If you're not prepared to act on what you say, don't say it.

Jody Williams is right. We have to do more than just talk about genocide in Darfur. Today, joined by Senator SAM BROWNBACK, a Republican of Kansas, and 30 of my colleagues, I sent a letter to the President urging him to put the question of meaningful multilateral sanctions to a vote before the U.N. Security Council. We have been told in the past that one of the permanent members of this council may veto the resolution. I say: So be it. Let that nation stand up in front of the world and say they are going to veto this effort to stop this mass murder.

We recognize there are political risks to advancing this strategy, but it is time to weigh those risks against the damage that is being done and the verdict of history. It is our moral obligation to do everything we can to stop this genocide in Darfur.

Another important step is to make clear the commitment of the United States to hold accountable those who are guilty of this ultimate crime. It is hard to imagine that individuals in the Sudanese Government whom we have identified as being involved in genocide have come to the United States and have been treated as visiting dignitaries, and have traveled with impunity around our Nation. It is hard to imagine we would turn our back on the fact of what they have done in their own home country.

I am pleased the International Criminal Court is moving forward with this investigation into the Darfur genocide, but that does not excuse the United States from its obligation to prosecute war criminals who seek safe haven or even travel in the United States.

It is not just Darfur. The Justice Department has identified individuals who participated in the Rwandan and Bosnian genocides living now in the United States under false pretenses. How can we let the United States be a safe haven for those who are guilty of genocide around the world? The fact is the law is on their side. American law doesn't give us the authority to arrest and prosecute these individuals, and that is why I have introduced this legislation, to change the law and let them know they can no longer seek a safe haven in the United States.

The Genocide Accountability Act says if you commit genocide anywhere in the world and come to the United States, America will hold you accountable under the law. This is the first legislation produced by the Human Rights Subcommittee. There will be more bills to follow. But I doubt the subcommittee or any other committee in Congress will face another issue as compelling as this genocide in Darfur.

In 1862, 1 month before he signed the Emancipation Proclamation, President Abraham Lincoln sent a message to Congress proposing to end slavery. His words reach us even today when he said:

We—even we here—hold the power and bear the responsibility.

Those words remain true. We here, even now, hold the power and bear the responsibility to do all we can to stop this genocide. Enacting the Genocide Accountability Act is an important step to ending impunity for perpetrators of genocide.

Mr. President, I urge my colleagues to support this legislation. I ask unanimous consent that the letter which was sent to the President be printed in the RECORD.

Mr. President, I yield the floor.

There being no objection, the letter was ordered to be printed in the RECORD, as follows:

U.S. SENATE,
Washington, DC, March 22, 2007.

The President,
The White House,
Washington, DC.

DEAR MR. PRESIDENT: We write to you as Members of Congress who are deeply concerned about the ongoing genocide in Darfur and equally frustrated by the inability or unwillingness of the international community to put a halt to it. Last August, the United Nations Security Council passed UNSC Resolution 1706, which expanded the mandate of the United Nations Mission in Sudan to include Darfur and stated that over 20,000 military and civilian police personnel were to be deployed as peacekeepers in the region. Over six months have passed and fewer than 200 UN personnel have been deployed because of the Sudanese government's refusal to comply with what the Security Council has authorized.

History demonstrates that Sudan's leadership does not respond to this type of request. We believe that it is time for the Security Council to enact a new resolution, imposing multilateral economic sanctions on the Sudanese government and targeted sanctions on individuals named by the UN Commission of inquiry as being responsible for crimes against humanity.

We recognize that previous U.S.-led efforts to move stronger resolutions at the Security

Council have been deterred by the threat of a veto by one or more of the Permanent Members. We frankly urge you to introduce and push for a vote on a resolution imposing multilateral sanctions regardless. Let a country stand before the community of nations and announce that it is vetoing the best effort we can muster to build the leverage necessary to end ongoing mass murder.

There are political risks to advancing this strategy, but we urge you to weigh those risks against the verdict of history if we fail to try. If the Security Council does not act, the United States should engage with our allies to create a coalition that will impose economic penalties on the Sudanese government. The United States has already implemented a number of unilateral sanctions, and we understand that you are considering still more, a development that we would applaud. However. the real key to changing Khartoum's behavior most likely lies in multilateral sanctions, especially those aimed at the Sudanese oil industry.

We encourage you to put this matter before the United Nations Security Council as soon as possible. A threatened veto should not silence us.

We know that you share our commitment to this issue and we commend your courage in recognizing this genocide for what it is. We look forward to continuing our efforts until a timely solution to the crisis in Darfur is found.

Sincerely,

Dick Durbin, Joe Biden, Carl Levin, Russell D. Feingold, Bill Nelson, Joe Lieberman, Mary Landrieu, Sam Brownback, John E. Sununu, Mel Martinez, Jack Reed, Tom Harkin, Barbara A. Mikulski, Barack Obama, Robert Menendez, Dianne Feinstein, John Cornyn, Susan Collins, Wayne Allard, Mark Pryor, Richard Burr, Sherrod Brown, Olympia Snowe, Frank R. Lautenberg, Amy Klobuchar, Mike Crapo, Maria Cantwell, Elizabeth Dole, Patty Murray, Hillary Rodham Clinton, Chris Dodd, Jim Webb, John F. Kerry, Pat Roberts.

ADDITIONAL STATEMENTS

HONORING JOHN COOPER

• Mr. THUNE. Mr. President, today I wish to recognize former South Dakota Game, Fish and Parks Department Secretary John Cooper, who received the Outdoor Life Conservation Award from Outdoor Life magazine. This prestigious award reflects his tremendous service to South Dakota and his commitment to wildlife conservation.

Mr. Cooper has been honorably serving the State of South Dakota for over 30 years. He spent 22 years with the Law Enforcement Division of the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, where he worked tirelessly to conserve and protect South Dakota's diverse wildlife. In 1995, he was appointed Secretary of South Dakota's Department of Game, Fish and Parks, a position that he held until earlier this year. He also spent years leading committees for the Association of Fish and Wildlife Agencies and in 2006 served as its president. In addition to his government duties, Mr. Cooper served as an editor and columnist for Dakota Outdoors magazine for 14 years.

Mr. Cooper's service to South Dakota has been, and will continue to be, vital to the health and wellbeing of our State. It gives me great pleasure to rise with Mr. Cooper and to offer my congratulations for this well-deserved award. I wish him continued success in the years to come.•

HONORING THE REV. DR. JOHN LOUIS WRIGHT

• Mr. CARDIN. Mr. President, today I wish to honor my dear friend and fellow Marylander, the Rev. Dr. John Louis Wright, for his exemplary 35 years of service as pastor of First Baptist Church of Guilford and for his work as a community leader and civil rights activist.

Pastor Wright is a native of Baltimore City and a shining product of the Baltimore City public school system. Since 1972, he has served as pastor of the First Baptist Church of Guilford, shepherding the church through periods of tremendous growth while faithfully serving its members and the surrounding community.

As a civil rights leader, Pastor Wright is a life member of the NAACP, and he has served as both president of the Howard County Chapter of the NAACP and the Maryland NAACP. He currently serves as director of the Maryland Baptist Aged Home.

Following Hurricane Floyd in 1999, Pastor Wright spearheaded flood relief efforts in North Carolina though the ''Twelve Baskets Ministry,'' bringing much needed supplies to people left homeless by the hurricane.

Preventing handgun violence is an issue of particular importance to Pastor Wright. A 1997 graduate of the Federal Bureau of Investigation's Citizens' Academy in Baltimore, he is a member of the Maryland State Governor's Commission on Handgun Violence and Marylanders Against Handgun Violence.

Pastor Wright's efforts reach far beyond our shores. He has traveled around the world, sharing his warmth and wisdom in countries as diverse as Egypt, Israel, South Africa, Switzerland, and China. While in Israel, Pastor Wright continued his work by baptizing people in the Jordan River.

I am extremely proud of Pastor Wright's 35 years of dedicated service to his church and community and wish him many more years of continued success and good health.•

HONORING LARRY E. GABRIEL

• Mr. THUNE. Mr. President, today I wish to honor South Dakota Secretary of Agriculture Larry E. Gabriel. This month, Secretary Gabriel retired after nearly 7 years in office since his appointment in May of 2000.

Secretary Gabriel was born and raised on a ranch in western South Dakota and received his bachelor of science degree in agricultural economics at South Dakota State University. While in college, he was recognized as the 1969 Doane's Outstanding Agricultural Economics Student.

Throughout his career, Secretary Gabriel has spent many years committed to public service, including roles as Haakon County Commissioner from 1975 to 1982 and State legislator from 1983 to 1998. He spent 6 years as the house majority leader while in the South Dakota House of Representatives, and currently serves as a member of the hospital board in Philip, SD.

Secretary Gabriel's dedication to South Dakota agriculture has made a defining impact in strengthening and sustaining the economy of our State. His strong support of rural economic development and assistance to young producers has brought increased vitality and prosperity to our agriculture industry.

I also would like to recognize Secretary Gabriel's wife Charlotte and his family for their support and sacrifice which allowed him to serve South Dakota for over 30 years.

It is with great honor that I remember and honor the service provided by Secretary Larry E. Gabriel to South Dakota. May he always be recognized for his lifetime of service to South Dakota agriculture. On behalf of a grateful State, I wish Secretary Gabriel all the best in his retirement.•

MESSAGES FROM THE PRESIDENT

Messages from the President of the United States were communicated to the Senate by Mr. Williams, one of his secretaries.

EXECUTIVE MESSAGES REFERRED

As in executive session the Presiding Officer laid before the Senate messages from the President of the United States submitting sundry nominations which were referred to the appropriate committees.

(The nominations received today are printed at the end of the Senate proceedings.)

MESSAGE FROM THE HOUSE

At 12:10 p.m., a message from the House of Representatives, delivered by Ms. Niland, one of its reading clerks, announced that the House has passed the following bills, in which it requests the concurrence of the Senate:

H.R. 327. An act to amend title 38, United States Code, to direct the Secretary of Veterans Affairs to develop and implement a comprehensive program designed to reduce the incidence of suicide among veterans.

H.R. 740. An act to amend title 18, United States Code, to prevent caller ID spoofing, and for other purposes.

H.R. 797. An act to amend title 38, United States Code, to improve compensation benefits for veterans in certain cases of impairment of vision involving both eyes, to provide for the use of the National Directory of New Hires for income verification purposes, to extend the authority of the Secretary of Veterans Affairs to provide an educational

assistance allowance for qualifying work study activities, and to authorize the provision of bronze representations of the letter ''V'' for the graves of eligible individuals buried in private cemeteries in lieu of Government-provided headstones or markers.

H.R. 1130. An act to amend the Ethics in Government Act of 1978 to extend the authority to withhold from public availability a financial disclosure report filed by an individual who is a judicial officer or judicial employee, to the extent necessary to protect the safety of that individual or a family member of that individual, and for other purposes.

H.R. 1284. An act to increase, effective as of December 1, 2007, the rates of compensation for veterans with service-connected disabilities and the rates of dependency and indemnity compensation for the survivors of certain disabled veterans.

MEASURES REFERRED

The following bills were read the first and the second times by unanimous consent, and referred as indicated:

H.R. 327. To amend title 38, United States Code, to direct the Secretary of Veterans Affairs to develop and implement a comprehensive program designed to reduce the incidence of suicide among veterans; to the Committee on Veterans' Affairs.

H.R. 740. An act to amend title 18, United States Code, to prevent caller ID spoofing, and for other purposes; to the Committee on the Judiciary.

H.R. 797. To amend title 38, United States Code, to improve compensation benefits for veterans in certain cases of impairment of vision involving both eyes, to provide for the use of the National Directory of New Hires for income verification purposes, to extend the authority of the Secretary of Veterans Affairs to provide an educational assistance allowance for qualifying work study activities, and to authorize the provision of bronze representations of the letter ''V'' for the graves of eligible individuals buried in private cemeteries in lieu of Government-provided headstones or markers; to the Committee on Veterans' Affairs.

H.R. 1130. An act to amend the Ethics in Government Act of 1978 to extend the authority to withhold from public availability a financial disclosure report filed by an individual who is a judicial officer or judicial employee, to the extent necessary to protect the safety of that individual or a family member of that individual, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs.

H.R. 1284. An act to increase, effective as of December 1, 2007, the rates of compensation for veterans with service-connected disabilities and the rates of dependency and indemnity compensation for the survivors of certain disabled veterans; to the Committee on Veterans' Affairs.

EXECUTIVE AND OTHER COMMUNICATIONS

The following communications were laid before the Senate, together with accompanying papers, reports, and documents, and were referred as indicated:

EC–1130. A communication from the Staff Director, United States Commission on Civil Rights, transmitting, pursuant to law, a report relative to probable violations of the Antideficiency Act; to the Committee on Appropriations.

EC–1131. A communication from the Secretary, Federal Trade Commission, transmitting, pursuant to law, a report relative to the actions taken by the Commission under the Fair Debt Collection Practices Act during fiscal year 2006; to the Committee on Banking, Housing, and Urban Affairs.

EC–1132. A communication from the Principal Deputy Associate Administrator, Office of Policy, Economics and Innovation, Environmental Protection Agency, transmitting, pursuant to law, the report of a rule entitled ''6-Benzyladenine; Exemption from the Requirement of a Tolerance'' (FRL No. 8117–9) received on March 20, 2007; to the Committee on Environment and Public Works.

EC–1133. A communication from the Principal Deputy Associate Administrator, Office of Policy, Economics and Innovation, Environmental Protection Agency, transmitting, pursuant to law, the report of a rule entitled ''Approval and Promulgation of Air Quality Implementation Plans; Illinois'' (FRL No. 8290–5) received on March 20, 2007; to the Committee on Environment and Public Works.

EC–1134. A communication from the Principal Deputy Associate Administrator, Office of Policy, Economics and Innovation, Environmental Protection Agency, transmitting, pursuant to law, the report of a rule entitled ''New York: Incorporation by Reference of State Hazardous Waste Management Program'' (FRL No. 8278–2) received on March 20, 2007; to the Committee on Environment and Public Works.

EC–1135. A communication from the Principal Deputy Associate Administrator, Office of Policy, Economics and Innovation, Environmental Protection Agency, transmitting, pursuant to law, the report of a rule entitled ''Protection of Stratospheric Ozone: Listing of Ozone Depleting Substitutes in Foam Blowing'' ((RIN2060–AN11)(FRL No. 8291–3)) received on March 20, 2007; to the Committee on Environment and Public Works.

EC–1136. A communication from the Principal Deputy Associate Administrator, Office of Policy, Economics and Innovation, Environmental Protection Agency, transmitting, pursuant to law, the report of a rule entitled ''Treatment of Data Influenced by Exception Events'' ((RIN2060–AN40)(FRL No. 8289–5)) received on March 20, 2007; to the Committee on Environment and Public Works.

EC–1137. A communication from the Principal Deputy Associate Administrator, Office of Policy, Economics and Innovation, Environmental Protection Agency, transmitting, a document recently issued by the Agency related to its regulatory programs entitled ''RCRA Section 3103 Guidance Manual''; to the Committee on Environment and Public Works.

EC–1138. A communication from the Director, Office of Personnel Management, transmitting, the report of a legislative proposal intended to facilitate the part-time reemployment of annuitants; to the Committee on Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs.

EC–1139. A communication from the Director, Administrative Office of the United States Courts, transmitting, pursuant to law, two reports relative to the United States Courts; to the Committee on the Judiciary .

EC–1140. A communication from the Principal Deputy, Office of the Under Secretary of Defense (Personnel and Readiness), transmitting, pursuant to law, the report of an officer authorized to wear the insignia of the grade of major general in accordance with title 10, United States Code, section 777; to the Committee on Armed Services.

EC–1141. A communication from the General Counsel, Department of Defense, transmitting, legislative proposals for the consideration of the Congress; to the Committee on Armed Services.

EC–1142. A communication from the Principal Deputy, Office of the Under Secretary of Defense (Personnel and Readiness), transmitting, pursuant to law, the report of an officer authorized to wear the insignia of the grade of rear admiral (lower half) in accordance with title 10, United States Code, section 777; to the Committee on Armed Services.

EC–1143. A communication from the Acting Director, Office of Sustainable Fisheries, Department of Commerce, transmitting, pursuant to law, the report of a rule entitled ''Fisheries of the Exclusive Economic Zone Off Alaska; Pacific Cod by Vessels Catching Pacific Cod for Processing by the Inshore Component in the Central Regulatory Area of the Gulf of Alaska'' (ID No. 022607C) received on March 22, 2007; to the Committee on Commerce, Science, and Transportation.

EC–1144. A communication from the Acting Director, Office of Sustainable Fisheries, Department of Commerce, transmitting, pursuant to law, the report of a rule entitled ''Fisheries of the Exclusive Economic Zone Off Alaska; Pacific Cod by Catcher Vessels Less than 60 ft. LOA Using Jig or Hook-and-Line Gear in the Bogoslof Pacific Cod Exemption Area in the Bering Sea and Aleutian Islands Management Area'' (ID No. 022607B) received on March 22, 2007; to the Committee on Commerce, Science, and Transportation.

EC–1145. A communication from the Secretary of Commerce, transmitting, pursuant to law, the Department's Performance and Accountability Report for fiscal year 2006; to the Committee on Commerce, Science, and Transportation.

EC–1146. A communication from the Senior Legal Advisor, Office of General Counsel, Federal Energy Regulatory Commission, transmitting, pursuant to law, the report of a rule entitled ''Preventing Undue Discrimination and Preference in Transmission Service'' (Docket Nos. RM05–17–000 and RM05–25–000) received on March 22, 2007; to the Committee on Energy and Natural Resources.

EC–1147. A communication from the Attorney, Office of Energy Efficiency and Renewable Energy, Department of Energy, transmitting, pursuant to law, the report of a rule entitled ''Alternative Fuel Transportation Program; Alternative Compliance'' (RIN1904–AB66) received on March 21, 2007; to the Committee on Energy and Natural Resources.

EC–1148. A communication from the Executive Director, Federal Energy Regulatory Commission, transmitting, pursuant to law, the report of a rule entitled ''Annual Update of Filing Fees'' (RIN1902–AD18) received on March 22, 2007; to the Committee on Energy and Natural Resources.

EC–1149. A communication from the Acting Chair, Federal Subsistence Board, Department of the Interior, transmitting, pursuant to law, the report of a rule entitled ''Subsistence Management Regulations for Public Lands in Alaska, Subpart C and D—2007–2008 Subsistence Taking of Fish and Shellfish Regulations'' (RIN1018–AU57) received on March 22, 2007; to the Committee on Environment and Public Works.

EC–1150. A communication from the Acting Assistant Secretary for Fish, Wildlife and Parks, Department of the Interior, transmitting, pursuant to law, the report of a rule entitled ''Endangered and Threatened Wildlife and Plants; Designation of Critical Habitat for Spikedace and the Loach Minnow'' (RIN1018–AU33) received on March 22, 2007; to the Committee on Environment and Public Works.

EC–1151. A communication from the Director, Fish and Wildlife Service, Department of the Interior, transmitting, pursuant to law, the report of a rule entitled ''Final Rule Designating the Greater Yellowstone Area Population of Grizzly Bears as a Distinct Population Segment; Removing the Yellowstone

Distinct Population Segment of Grizzly Bears from the Federal List of Endangered and Threatened Wildlife'' (RIN1018–AT38) received on March 22, 2007; to the Committee on Environment and Public Works.

EC–1152. A communication from the Secretary of Health and Human Services, transmitting, pursuant to law, a report relative to the Administration's position on several health system reform proposals; to the Committee on Finance.

EC–1153. A communication from the Assistant Legal Adviser for Treaty Affairs, Department of State, transmitting, pursuant to the Case-Zablocki Act, 1 U.S.C. 112b, as amended, the report of the texts and background statements of international agreements, other than treaties (List 2007–33—2007–40); to the Committee on Foreign Relations.

EC–1154. A communication from the Director, Regulations Policy and Management Staff, Department of Health and Human Services, transmitting, pursuant to law, the report of a rule entitled ''Current Good Manufacturing Practice Regulation and Investigational New Drugs'' (Docket No. 2005N–0285) received on March 22, 2007; to the Committee on Health, Education, Labor, and Pensions.

EC–1155. A communication from the Director, Regulations Policy and Management Staff, Department of Health and Human Services, transmitting, pursuant to law, the report of a rule entitled ''Substances Approved for Use in the Preparation of Meat and Poultry Products; Announcement of Effective Date'' (Docket No. 1995N–0220) received on March 22, 2007; to the Committee on Health, Education, Labor, and Pensions.

EC–1156. A communication from the Director, Regulations Policy and Management Staff, Department of Health and Human Services, transmitting, pursuant to law, the report of a rule entitled ''Current Good Manufacturing Practice Regulation and Investigational New Drugs; Withdrawal'' (Docket No. 2005N–0285) received on March 22, 2007; to the Committee on Health, Education, Labor, and Pensions.

EC–1157. A communication from the Director, Federal Emergency Management Agency, Department of Homeland Security, transmitting, pursuant to law, a report relative to the cost of response and recovery efforts in the State of Oklahoma; to the Committee on Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs.

EC–1158. A communication from the Director, Federal Emergency Management Agency, Department of Homeland Security, transmitting, pursuant to law, a report relative to the cost of response and recovery efforts in the State of Illinois; to the Committee on Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs.

EC–1159. A communication from the Director, Regulations Management, Department of Veterans Affairs, transmitting, pursuant to law, the report of a rule entitled ''Traumatic Injury Protection Rider to Servicemembers' Group Life Insurance'' (RIN2900–AM36) received on March 22, 2007; to the Committee on Veterans' Affairs.

EC–1160. A communication from the Director, Regulations Management, Department of Veterans Affairs, transmitting, pursuant to law, the report of a rule entitled ''Medical: Informed Consent—Designate Health Care Professionals to Obtain Informed Consent'' (RIN2900–AM21) received on March 22, 2007; to the Committee on Veterans' Affairs.

EC–1161. A communication from the Secretary of Health and Human Services, transmitting, pursuant to law, a report relative to the impact and effectiveness of projects funded by the Administration for Native Americans in fiscal year 2005; to the Committee on Indian Affairs.

REPORTS OF COMMITTEES

The following reports of committees were submitted:

By Mr. BYRD, from the Committee on Appropriations:

Special Report entitled ''Further Revised Allocation to Subcommittees of Budget Totals for Fiscal Year 2007'' (Rept. No. 110–36).

By Mr. BYRD, from the Committee on Appropriations, without amendment:

S. 965. An original bill making emergency supplemental appropriations for the fiscal year ending September 30, 2007, and for other purposes (Rept. No. 110–37).

INTRODUCTION OF BILLS AND JOINT RESOLUTIONS

The following bills and joint resolutions were introduced, read the first and second times by unanimous consent, and referred as indicated:

By Mr. BURR (for himself and Mr. COLEMAN):

S. 957. A bill to provide for the collection and maintenance of amniotic fluid and placental stem cells for the treatment of patients and research; to the Committee on Health, Education, Labor, and Pensions.

By Mr. SESSIONS (for himself, Mrs. MURRAY, Mr. COCHRAN, Mr. KERRY, Mr. LOTT, Mr. AKAKA, Mr. BURR, Mr. DODD, Mr. DOMENICI, Mr. BINGAMAN, and Mrs. LINCOLN):

S. 958. A bill to establish an adolescent literacy program; to the Committee on Health, Education, Labor, and Pensions.

By Mrs. CLINTON (for herself, Mr. REID, Mr. ALEXANDER, Ms. MIKULSKI, Mr. MENENDEZ, Mr. DODD, and Mr. DURBIN):

S. 959. A bill to award a grant to enable Teach for America, Inc., to implement and expand its teaching program; to the Committee on Health, Education, Labor, and Pensions.

By Mrs. CLINTON (for herself, Mr. SPECTER, Ms. MIKULSKI, Mrs. BOXER, Mr. BIDEN, Ms. LANDRIEU, Mr. KENNEDY, and Mrs. HUTCHISON):

S. 960. A bill to establish the United States Public Service Academy; to the Committee on Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs.

By Mr. NELSON of Nebraska (for himself, Mr. STEVENS, and Mr. BROWNBACK):

S. 961. A bill to amend title 46, United States Code, to provide benefits to certain individuals who served in the United States merchant marine (including the Army Transport Service and the Naval Transport Service) during World War II, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Veterans' Affairs.

By Mr. BINGAMAN (for himself, Mr. DOMENICI, Mr. TESTER, Mr. BUNNING, Mr. SALAZAR, Mr. OBAMA, and Mr. WEBB):

S. 962. A bill to amend the Energy Policy Act of 2005 to reauthorize and improve the carbon capture and storage research, development, and demonstration program of the Department of Energy and for other purposes; to the Committee on Energy and Natural Resources.

By Mr. MENENDEZ:

S. 963. A bill to authorize the Secretary of Education to make grants to educational organizations to carry out educational programs about the Holocaust; to the Committee on Health, Education, Labor, and Pensions.

By Mr. SCHUMER:

S. 964. A bill to require States and Indian tribes to designate specific highway routes for the transportation of hazardous materials and the long-distance transportation of solid waste; to the Committee on Commerce, Science, and Transportation.

By Mr. BYRD:

S. 965. An original bill making emergency supplemental appropriations for the fiscal year ending September 30, 2007, and for other purposes; from the Committee on Appropriations; placed on the calendar.

By Mr. SCHUMER:

S. 966. A bill to enable the Department of State to respond to a critical shortage of passport processing personnel, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Foreign Relations.

By Mr. AKAKA:

S. 967. A bill to amend chapter 41 of title 5, United States Code, to provide for the establishment and authorization of funding for certain training programs for supervisors of Federal employees; to the Committee on Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs.

By Mrs. BOXER (for herself, Mr. SMITH, Mr. DURBIN, and Mr. BROWN):

S. 968. A bill to amend the Foreign Assistance Act of 1961 to provide increased assistance for the prevention, treatment, and control of tuberculosis, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Foreign Relations.

By Mr. DODD (for himself, Mr. DURBIN, and Mr. KENNEDY):

S. 969. A bill to amend the National Labor Relations Act to modify the definition of supervisor; to the Committee on Health, Education, Labor, and Pensions.

By Mr. SMITH (for himself, Mr. DURBIN, Mr. LAUTENBERG, Mr. COLEMAN, Mr. LIEBERMAN, Mr. BROWNBACK, Mr. BAYH, Mr. KYL, Mr. THUNE, Ms. MIKULSKI, and Mr. MENENDEZ):

S. 970. A bill to impose sanctions on Iran and on other countries for assisting Iran in developing a nuclear program, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Finance.

By Mr. BOND (for himself and Mr. HARKIN):

S. 971. A bill to establish the National Institute of Food and Agriculture, to provide funding for the support of fundamental agricultural research of the highest quality, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Agriculture, Nutrition, and Forestry.

By Mr. LAUTENBERG (for himself, Mr. KENNEDY, Mrs. MURRAY, Mr. SCHUMER, Mrs. BOXER, Mr. HARKIN, and Mr. BROWN):

S. 972. A bill to provide for the reduction of adolescent pregnancy, HIV rates, and other sexually transmitted diseases, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Health, Education, Labor, and Pensions.

By Mr. DORGAN (for himself, Mr. GRASSLEY, Mr. DURBIN, and Ms. COLLINS):

S. 973. A bill to amend the Mandatory Victims' Restitution Act to improve restitution for victims of crime, and for other purposes; to the Committee on the Judiciary.

By Ms. COLLINS (for herself, Mr. BAYH, Mr. LEVIN, Mr. GRAHAM, Mr. COCHRAN, Ms. SNOWE, Mr. HARKIN, Ms. STABENOW, Mr. DURBIN, and Mr. SCHUMER):

S. 974. A bill to amend title VII of the Tariff Act of 1930 to provide that the provisions relating to countervailing duties apply to nonmarket economy countries, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Finance.

SUBMISSION OF CONCURRENT AND SENATE RESOLUTIONS

The following concurrent resolutions and Senate resolutions were read, and referred (or acted upon), as indicated:

By Mr. HAGEL (for himself, Mr. MCCAIN, Mr. KERRY, Mr. WARNER, Mr. ALLARD, Mr. BIDEN, Mr. GRASSLEY, Ms. LANDRIEU, Mr. LUGAR, Mr. HARKIN, Mr. INHOFE, Mrs. CLINTON, Ms. COLLINS, Mr. DODD, Mr. ROBERTS, Mr. REED, Mr. DOMENICI, Mr. SALAZAR, Mr. VOINOVICH, Mr. LEVIN, Mr. VITTER, Ms. MIKULSKI, Mr. BURR, Mr. NELSON of Nebraska, Mr. BINGAMAN, Mr. LIEBERMAN, Mr. FEINGOLD, Mr. SCHUMER, Ms. CANTWELL, Mr. BROWN, Mr. DURBIN, Ms. MURKOWSKI, Mr. KENNEDY, Mr. SPECTER, Mrs. MCCASKILL, Mr. BROWNBACK, Mr. OBAMA, Mr. CRAPO, Mr. PRYOR, Mr. STEVENS, Mr. NELSON of Florida, Mr. SUNUNU, Mr. TESTER, Mr. CRAIG, Mr. CONRAD, Mr. GRAHAM, Mr. BYRD, Mr. LAUTENBERG, Mr. INOUYE, Mr. AKAKA, Mr. BAUCUS, Mrs. FEINSTEIN, Mrs. BOXER, Mr. COLEMAN, Mr. CHAMBLISS, Mr. CORKER, Mr. ENSIGN, Mr. MCCONNELL, Ms. STABENOW, Mr. LOTT, Mr. CARDIN, Ms. SNOWE, Mr. DORGAN, Mr. ENZI, and Mr. ALEXANDER):

S. Res. 117. A resolution commemorating the 25th anniversary of the construction and dedication of the Vietnam Veterans Memorial; to the Committee on Veterans' Affairs.

By Mr. LEVIN (for himself, Ms. COLLINS, and Mr. BIDEN):

S. Res. 118. A resolution urging the Government of Canada to end the commercial seal hunt; to the Committee on Foreign Relations.

By Mr. REID (for himself and Mr. MCCONNELL):

S. Res. 119. A resolution to authorize testimony by a former detailee of the Committee on the Judiciary; considered and agreed to.

By Mr. CHAMBLISS (for himself and Ms. LANDRIEU):

S. Res. 120. A resolution designating March 22, 2007, as National Rehabilitation Counselors Appreciation Day; considered and agreed to.

By Mr. BROWNBACK (for himself and Mr. ROBERTS):

S. Con. Res. 23. A concurrent resolution expressing the sense of Congress that provisions that provoke veto threats from the President should not be included on bills that appropriate funds for the implementation of recommendations of the Base Closure and Realignment Commission; to the Committee on Appropriations.

ADDITIONAL COSPONSORS

S. 22

At the request of Mr. WEBB, the name of the Senator from Montana (Mr. TESTER) was added as a cosponsor of S. 22, a bill to amend title 38, United States Code, to establish a program of educational assistance for members of the Armed Forces who serve in the Armed Forces after September 11, 2001, and for other purposes.

S. 117

At the request of Mr. OBAMA, the name of the Senator from Washington (Ms. CANTWELL) was added as a cosponsor of S. 117, a bill to amend titles 10 and 38, United States Code, to improve benefits and services for members of the Armed Forces, veterans of the Global War on Terrorism, and other veterans, to require reports on the effects of the Global War on Terrorism, and for other purposes.

S. 206

At the request of Mrs. FEINSTEIN, the name of the Senator from Louisiana (Ms. LANDRIEU) was added as a cosponsor of S. 206, a bill to amend title II of the Social Security Act to repeal the Government pension offset and windfall elimination provisions.

S. 288

At the request of Mr. KERRY, the names of the Senator from Massachusetts (Mr. KENNEDY) and the Senator from West Virginia (Mr. ROCKEFELLER) were added as cosponsors of S. 288, a bill to amend titles 10 and 14, United States Code, to provide for the use of gold in the metal content of the Medal of Honor.

S. 368

At the request of Mr. BIDEN, the name of the Senator from Michigan (Mr. LEVIN) was added as a cosponsor of S. 368, a bill to amend the Omnibus Crime Control and Safe Streets Act of 1968 to enhance the COPS ON THE BEAT grant program, and for other purposes.

S. 369

At the request of Mr. SCHUMER, the name of the Senator from Ohio (Mr. BROWN) was added as a cosponsor of S. 369, a bill to provide for a medal of appropriate design to be awarded by the President to the next of kin or other representative of those individuals killed as a result of the terrorist attacks of September 11, 2001.

S. 469

At the request of Mr. BAUCUS, the names of the Senator from Louisiana (Ms. LANDRIEU) and the Senator from Michigan (Ms. STABENOW) were added as cosponsors of S. 469, a bill to amend the Internal Revenue Code of 1986 to make permanent the special rule for contributions of qualified conservation contributions.

S. 474

At the request of Mrs. HUTCHISON, the names of the Senator from Hawaii (Mr. AKAKA), the Senator from Tennessee (Mr. ALEXANDER), the Senator from Colorado (Mr. ALLARD), the Senator from Utah (Mr. BENNETT), the Senator from New Mexico (Mr. BINGAMAN), the Senator from Missouri (Mr. BOND), the Senator from Kansas (Mr. BROWNBACK), the Senator from North Carolina (Mr. BURR), the Senator from Mississippi (Mr. COCHRAN), the Senator from Minnesota (Mr. COLEMAN), the Senator from Maine (Ms. COLLINS), the Senator from Tennessee (Mr. CORKER), the Senator from Idaho (Mr. CRAPO), the Senator from New Mexico (Mr. DOMENICI), the Senator from Nevada (Mr. ENSIGN), the Senator from Iowa (Mr. GRASSLEY), the Senator from Nebraska (Mr. HAGEL), the Senator from Utah (Mr. HATCH), the Senator from Oklahoma (Mr. INHOFE), the Senator from Hawaii (Mr. INOUYE), the Senator from Massachusetts (Mr. KENNEDY), the Senator from Connecticut (Mr. LIEBERMAN), the Senator from Mississippi (Mr. LOTT), the Senator from Florida (Mr. MARTINEZ), the Senator from Arizona (Mr. MCCAIN), the Senator from Missouri (Mrs. MCCASKILL), the Senator from Kentucky (Mr. MCCONNELL), the Senator from Maryland (Ms. MIKULSKI), the Senator from Alaska (Ms. MURKOWSKI), the Senator from Nebraska (Mr. NELSON), the Senator from Florida (Mr. NELSON), the Senator from Arkansas (Mr. PRYOR), the Senator from Kansas (Mr. ROBERTS), the Senator from West Virginia (Mr. ROCKEFELLER), the Senator from Colorado (Mr. SALAZAR), the Senator from Alabama (Mr. SESSIONS), the Senator from Alabama (Mr. SHELBY), the Senator from Oregon (Mr. SMITH), the Senator from Maine (Ms. SNOWE), the Senator from Pennsylvania (Mr. SPECTER), the Senator from Alaska (Mr. STEVENS), the Senator from Montana (Mr. TESTER), the Senator from Wyoming (Mr. THOMAS), the Senator from South Dakota (Mr. THUNE), the Senator from Louisiana (Mr. VITTER), the Senator from Virginia (Mr. WARNER), the Senator from Virginia (Mr. WEBB), the Senator from Rhode Island (Mr. WHITEHOUSE), the Senator from California (Mrs. BOXER), the Senator from Ohio (Mr. BROWN), the Senator from Maryland (Mr. CARDIN), the Senator from Pennsylvania (Mr. CASEY), the Senator from New York (Mrs. CLINTON), the Senator from Connecticut (Mr. DODD), the Senator from California (Mrs. FEINSTEIN), the Senator from New Jersey (Mr. MENENDEZ), the Senator from Washington (Mrs. MURRAY), the Senator from Nevada (Mr. REID), the Senator from Michigan (Ms. STABENOW) and the Senator from Oregon (Mr. WYDEN) were added as cosponsors of S. 474, a bill to award a congressional gold medal to Michael Ellis DeBakey, M.D.

S. 491

At the request of Mr. SCHUMER, the name of the Senator from Colorado (Mr. SALAZAR) was added as a cosponsor of S. 491, a bill to clarify the rules of origin for certain textile and apparel products.

S. 579

At the request of Mr. HATCH, the name of the Senator from Utah (Mr. BENNETT) was added as a cosponsor of S. 579, a bill to amend the Public Health Service Act to authorize the Director of the National Institute of Environmental Health Sciences to make grants for the development and operation of research centers regarding environmental factors that may be related to the etiology of breast cancer.

S. 580

At the request of Mr. HATCH, the name of the Senator from Utah (Mr. BENNETT) was added as a cosponsor of S. 580, a bill to amend the National Trails System Act to require the Secretary of the Interior to update the feasibility and suitability studies of four national historic trails, and for other purposes.

S. 604

At the request of Mr. LAUTENBERG, the name of the Senator from California (Mrs. BOXER) was added as a cosponsor of S. 604, a bill to amend title 10, United States Code, to limit increases in the certain costs of health

care services under the health care programs of the Department of Defense, and for other purposes.

S. 626

At the request of Mr. KENNEDY, the name of the Senator from Ohio (Mr. BROWN) was added as a cosponsor of S. 626, a bill to amend the Public Health Service Act to provide for arthritis research and public health, and for other purposes.

S. 638

At the request of Mr. ROBERTS, the name of the Senator from North Carolina (Mr. BURR) was added as a cosponsor of S. 638, a bill to amend the Internal Revenue Code of 1986 to provide for collegiate housing and infrastructure grants.

S. 644

At the request of Mrs. LINCOLN, the name of the Senator from Idaho (Mr. CRAPO) was added as a cosponsor of S. 644, a bill to amend title 38, United States Code, to recodify as part of that title certain educational assistance programs for members of the reserve components of the Armed Forces, to improve such programs, and for other purposes.

S. 694

At the request of Mr. BAUCUS, his name was added as a cosponsor of S. 694, a bill to direct the Secretary of Transportation to issue regulations to reduce the incidence of child injury and death occurring inside or outside of light motor vehicles, and for other purposes.

S. 721

At the request of Mr. ENZI, the name of the Senator from Washington (Mrs. MURRAY) was added as a cosponsor of S. 721, a bill to allow travel between the United States and Cuba.

S. 749

At the request of Mr. NELSON of Florida, the name of the Senator from Mississippi (Mr. COCHRAN) was added as a cosponsor of S. 749, a bill to modify the prohibition on recognition by United States courts of certain rights relating to certain marks, trade names, or commercial names.

S. 773

At the request of Mr. WARNER, the name of the Senator from Georgia (Mr. ISAKSON) was added as a cosponsor of S. 773, a bill to amend the Internal Revenue Code of 1986 to allow Federal civilian and military retirees to pay health insurance premiums on a pretax basis and to allow a deduction for TRICARE supplemental premiums.

S. 823

At the request of Mr. OBAMA, the name of the Senator from Ohio (Mr. BROWN) was added as a cosponsor of S. 823, a bill to amend the Public Health Service Act with respect to facilitating the development of microbicides for preventing transmission of HIV/AIDS and other diseases, and for other purposes.

S. 829

At the request of Ms. MIKULSKI, the name of the Senator from Georgia (Mr. CHAMBLISS) was added as a cosponsor of S. 829, a bill to reauthorize the HOPE VI program for revitalization of severely distressed public housing, and for other purposes.

S. 881

At the request of Mrs. LINCOLN, the name of the Senator from Pennsylvania (Mr. SPECTER) was added as a cosponsor of S. 881, a bill to amend the Internal Revenue Code of 1986 to extend and modify the railroad track maintenance credit.

S. 935

At the request of Mr. NELSON of Florida, the name of the Senator from Texas (Mrs. HUTCHISON) was added as a cosponsor of S. 935, a bill to repeal the requirement for reduction of survivor annuities under the Survivor Benefit Plan by veterans' dependency and indemnity compensation, and for other purposes.

AMENDMENT NO. 489

At the request of Mr. DEMINT, the name of the Senator from Wyoming (Mr. ENZI) was added as a cosponsor of amendment No. 489 proposed to S. Con. Res. 21, an original concurrent resolution setting forth the congressional budget for the United States Government for fiscal year 2008 and including the appropriate budgetary levels for fiscal years 2007 and 2009 through 2012.

AMENDMENT NO. 491

At the request of Mr. ALLARD, the name of the Senator from New Hampshire (Mr. GREGG) was added as a cosponsor of amendment No. 491 proposed to S. Con. Res. 21, an original concurrent resolution setting forth the congressional budget for the United States Government for fiscal year 2008 and including the appropriate budgetary levels for fiscal years 2007 and 2009 through 2012.

AMENDMENT NO. 504

At the request of Mr. BAUCUS, the names of the Senator from Iowa (Mr. GRASSLEY), the Senator from Michigan (Ms. STABENOW), the Senator from New Jersey (Mr. MENENDEZ), the Senator from Arkansas (Mrs. LINCOLN), the Senator from Wisconsin (Mr. FEINGOLD), the Senator from Delaware (Mr. BIDEN), the Senator from New York (Mrs. CLINTON), the Senator from Michigan (Mr. LEVIN), the Senator from Connecticut (Mr. DODD) and the Senator from California (Mrs. BOXER) were added as cosponsors of amendment No. 504 proposed to S. Con. Res. 21, an original concurrent resolution setting forth the congressional budget for the United States Government for fiscal year 2008 and including the appropriate budgetary levels for fiscal years 2007 and 2009 through 2012.

At the request of Mr. HATCH, his name was added as a cosponsor of amendment No. 504 proposed to S. Con. Res. 21, supra.

AMENDMENT NO. 511

At the request of Mr. CORNYN, the name of the Senator from Nebraska (Mr. HAGEL) was added as a cosponsor of amendment No. 511 proposed to S. Con. Res. 21, an original concurrent resolution setting forth the congressional budget for the United States Government for fiscal year 2008 and including the appropriate budgetary levels for fiscal years 2007 and 2009 through 2012.

AMENDMENT NO. 517

At the request of Mrs. HUTCHISON, the names of the Senator from Tennessee (Mr. ALEXANDER), the Senator from Tennessee (Mr. CORKER) and the Senator from Nevada (Mr. ENSIGN) were added as cosponsors of amendment No. 517 proposed to S. Con. Res. 21, an original concurrent resolution setting forth the congressional budget for the United States Government for fiscal year 2008 and including the appropriate budgetary levels for fiscal years 2007 and 2009 through 2012.

AMENDMENT NO. 518

At the request of Mr. SMITH, the names of the Senator from Illinois (Mr. DURBIN), the Senator from Alaska (Mr. STEVENS), the Senator from New York (Mrs. CLINTON), the Senator from Maine (Ms. COLLINS), the Senator from California (Mrs. FEINSTEIN), the Senator from Wisconsin (Mr. FEINGOLD), the Senator from Vermont (Mr. LEAHY), the Senator from Connecticut (Mr. LIEBERMAN), the Senator from Virginia (Mr. WARNER), the Senator from Florida (Mr. MARTINEZ), the Senator from Ohio (Mr. VOINOVICH) and the Senator from Hawaii (Mr. INOUYE) were added as cosponsors of amendment No. 518 intended to be proposed to S. Con. Res. 21, an original concurrent resolution setting forth the congressional budget for the United States Government for fiscal year 2008 and including the appropriate budgetary levels for fiscal years 2007 and 2009 through 2012.

AMENDMENT NO. 521

At the request of Mr. ALLARD, the name of the Senator from New Hampshire (Mr. GREGG) was added as a cosponsor of amendment No. 521 intended to be proposed to S. Con. Res. 21, an original concurrent resolution setting forth the congressional budget for the United States Government for fiscal year 2008 and including the appropriate budgetary levels for fiscal years 2007 and 2009 through 2012.

STATEMENTS ON INTRODUCED BILLS AND JOINT RESOLUTIONS

By Mr. SESSIONS (for himself, Mrs. MURRAY, Mr. COCHRAN, Mr. KERRY, Mr. LOTT, Mr. AKAKA, Mr. BURR, Mr. DODD, Mr. DOMENICI, Mr. BINGAMAN, and Mrs. LINCOLN):

S. 958. A bill to establish an adolescent literacy program; to the Committee on Health, Education, Labor, and Pensions.

Mr. SESSIONS. Mr. President, today Senator MURRAY and I are pleased to introduce the Striving Readers Act, for the eight million middle and high school students across this country who are not reading well enough to

succeed in school. I thank Senator MURRAY for her longstanding leadership on this issue, as well as the Alliance for Excellent Education, the International Reading Association, and the National Association of Secondary School Principals. I also thank my colleagues, Republican and Democrat, who have agreed to cosponsor the bill Senator COCHRAN, Senator KERRY, Senator LOTT, Senator AKAKA, Senator BURR, Senator DODD, Senator DOMENICI, Senator BINGAMAN, and Senator LINCOLN. I thank them for their support and for demonstrating that improving reading and writing in every grade is something we all can get behind.

This important bill will help schools in every State ensure our adolescents read and write well enough to learn in school, graduate on time, and succeed in college and the workplace. Better literacy is the cornerstone to improving student achievement in all subjects, lowering dropout rates, and ensuring students do well when they go on to college or the workforce. A recent study by the American College Testing Program (ACT) found that students with better literacy skills in high school do better in their math, science, and social studies courses both in high school and in college.

The Striving Readers Act marks an important effort to improve reading for the older student. Last year, Congress appropriated $1 billion for the Reading First program available for every State to ensure children read by the third grade. That was an important step, and we have seen 4th grade reading scores rise nationally because of it. However, research shows that many readers who test well in 4th grade do not carry that knowledge into upper grades. We must not risk squandering the investment Congress has already made for younger students.

Seventy percent of our middle and high school students read below grade level. That means we must continue our support for ongoing programs that reflect the needs of the older student for more advanced vocabulary and comprehension skills. All students, throughout their K–12 educational experience, deserve adequate support to ensure they graduate on time with appropriate skills and knowledge that meet the demands of the 21st century.

To be sure, some problems with the Reading First program have surfaced. Let me assure you that the Striving Readers bill addresses those problems to ensure the law and its implementation are fair, transparent, and driven by research, not special interests. Interestingly, many in my State have told me that the law is good and showing results; the problems have come with poor implementation.

Low literacy skills don't just cost the student; they cost our economy because students don't learn what they should in school. The National Center for Education Statistics found that 53 percent of undergraduates require remediation. One-half of these students required a remedial writing course, and 35 percent took remedial reading. That means community colleges spend $1.4 billion every year catching kids up to where they should have been when they graduated. The Mackinac Center for Public Policy reports an estimated $16.6 billion in remediation costs to the U.S. economy each year. This means that America's businesses and colleges are spending $16.6 billion teaching high school graduates skills they should have learned in high school.

America's declining competitiveness in the global economy is due in part to sub-par literacy skills. International comparisons of reading performance placed American 11th graders close to the bottom, behind students from the Philippines, Indonesia, Brazil, and other developing nations. Our high school graduates continue to lag, as employers move jobs overseas, not for the low-cost labor alone, but also to tap into the highly literate, motivated, and technologically skilled workers that other nations can offer them.

The Striving Readers Act will help our Nation raise its literacy levels and compete in a global arena. We can do this. Research shows that adolescents with lagging literacy skills can master college material if they receive good literacy instruction in school.

Specifically, the Striving Readers bill would do the following:

Help States create statewide literacy initiatives, share data on student progress with parents and the public, and improve teacher training and professional development in literacy so that all students receive high quality instruction.

Help districts and schools create plans to improve literacy, including targeted interventions for students far below grade level, top notch assessments for all students, training for teachers in every subject to incorporate literacy strategies, and regular data to improve teaching and learning.

Allow districts and schools to hire and place literacy coaches, train parents to support the literacy development of their child, and connect learning inside the classroom with learning that takes place outside the classroom.

Ensure States, districts, and schools participate in a rigorous evaluation that demonstrates student progress.

Require the Federal Government to complete an overall evaluation of the program to determine its impact on the Nation's middle and high schools.

I am proud to say that my State has been working on this issue for a long time. In 1998 Alabama launched the Alabama Reading Initiative (ARI), a statewide program designed to ensure every student in grades K to 12 is proficient in reading. We provide ongoing, research-based training to teachers in all subjects so that every educator can help students struggling to read. Fortunately, the Alabama Reading Initiative is now in every elementary school in the State. Unfortunately, fewer middle and high schools have been able to take part, due to limited funding. This is true in other States as well.

For those schools in the program we have seen great gains. ARI schools have made great progress, and those that have had the benefit of additional funding from the Federal Reading First program have shown even more rapid, dramatic gains. Many of you have heard of the outstanding impact of the Alabama Reading Initiative, primarily for younger children. It is time for us to develop new methods to meet the needs of students in the upper grades who are reading and writing below grade level. I applaud Alabama's leadership on this important issue as they work to expand the Alabama Reading Initiative into middle and high schools, and I am honored to offer legislation to promote this effort on the national level. I would like to thank Governor Riley for his commitment to the Alabama Reading Initiative, and Dr. Katherine Mitchell, whose enthusiasm and hard work has made the success of ARI a reality for Alabama's children. Alabama has become a model for the Nation, and I am so proud of the progress they have made.

The Federal Government cannot and should assume the responsibility for education from the States. But we can develop research, supply seed money, and provide leadership to help States make advancements, without unnecessary mandates. We can leverage success in places like Alabama to shine a light for others.

We know that, given the right instruction and opportunity, children can learn to read and write well and use that knowledge to achieve at higher levels of education. I hope that our colleagues in the Senate will join Senator MURRAY and me in supporting the Striving Readers Act. And I hope we will authorize Striving Readers as part of No Child Left Behind so that children in every State have the reading skills they need to succeed in school, college, and the workplace.

Ms. MURRAY. Mr. President, today Senator SESSIONS and I are pleased to introduce the Striving Readers Act. This bipartisan bill will help America's middle and high school students gain the literacy skills they need to succeed in school and graduate ready for college and the workplace.

I want to thank Senator SESSIONS for his work on this issue and for shining a light on his State's success in raising literacy achievement. I also want to thank our original cosponsors Senators AKAKA, BINGAMAN, DODD, KERRY, LINCOLN, BURR, COCHRAN, DOMENICI, and LOTT for partnering with us. Finally, I offer thanks to our staff, Kathryn Young and Liz Stillwell, who have worked on this bill, and the Alliance for Excellent Education, the International Reading Association, and the National Association of Secondary School Principals for their work.

Our bill addresses a serious problem. Today 8 million middle and high school

students across the Nation cannot read well enough to succeed in school. This contributes to their likelihood to disengage and drop out. Those that do graduate too often falter when they begin college or work and then need remediation.

All around the country educators and stakeholders are working to improve literacy, and this bill gives us a way to support their efforts. We know that literacy is at the base of every academic subject, and it is crucial to student academic success.

Our bill will engage and reinvigorate those students on the brink of failure. The Striving Readers Act constitutes a comprehensive effort to give States, districts, and schools the resources they need to ensure every student reads and writes well enough to succeed. It would provide grants to every State to develop State literacy initiatives that guide and support districts and schools to improve reading and writing. It would provide grants to districts and schools to assist students who are below grade level and to train teachers in core subjects in literacy strategies for all students. It would also provide new information on what works for struggling readers by conducting evaluations of programs.

This bill could not come at a more important time. In Washington State, 66 percent of 8th graders read below ''Proficient'' on the National Assessment of Educational Progress. These students, who are at the bottom in terms of achievement, are more likely to drop out than those at the top. Among this group, minority students' scores are of particular concern. Seventy-three percent of Washington State's African-American students and 85 percent of Hispanic students read below the ''Proficient'' level. These students are falling behind, and they need our support.

I'm pleased to report that my State has made great efforts to remedy the problem of low literacy levels. My State launched the Washington State Reading Initiative in 2003 to provide support to struggling readers in every grade, including middle and high school. Since then, our K–12 Reading Model has attracted national attention as a systematic reform model. Our program includes statewide training for teachers to identify and provide intervention for students at all grade levels. My State trains teachers in all subjects to teach reading strategies to students. And my State provides guidance to teachers and administrators for applying best practices in classrooms. But they should not have to continue these efforts alone.

The challenges we face in Washington are not unique; every State struggles with adolescent literacy. Nationally 71 percent of 8th graders and 65 percent of 12th graders read below grade level. It should not surprise us, then, that only 34 percent of American teenagers graduate with the skills they need to do well in college or in the workforce.

If we are to remain globally competitive, Congress must authorize and fund a significant adolescent literacy investment for every State. The Striving Readers Act would fulfill this need. As a country, we currently only substantially support reading initiatives through the third grade. International comparisons of reading performance placed American 11th graders close to the bottom, behind students from the Philippines, Indonesia, Brazil, and other developing nations. The Striving Readers Act will help support these middle and high schoolers and help our Nation raise its literacy levels to compete in a global market.

Students are not the only ones who pay the price for low literacy achievement. With every student who falls behind, our economy suffers. The National Center for Education Statistics found that 53 percent of undergraduates require remediation. One-half of these students required a remedial writing course, and 35 percent took remedial reading. That means community colleges spend $1.4 billion every year catching kids up to where they should have been when they graduated. The Mackinac Center for Public Policy reports that America's businesses and colleges are spending $16.6 billion each year to teach graduates what they should have learned in middle and high school. This is a costly consequence of failing to intervene in a timely manner. We must not continue to make this mistake at the expense of students' futures.

The good news is that research shows we can help struggling students make progress. For example, research shows that adolescents with lagging literacy skills can master college material if they receive high quality literacy instruction in school. In fact, a recent study by ACT found that students with better literacy skills in high school do better in their math, science, and social studies courses—both in high school and in college. Better literacy is the foundation for improving student achievement in all subjects, lowering dropout rates, and ensuring students do well when they go on to college or the workforce. The Striving Readers bill provides a path for this.

Specifically, the Striving Readers bill would: Help States create statewide literacy initiatives, share data on student progress to parents and the public, and improve teacher training and professional development in literacy so that all students receive high quality instruction.

Help districts and schools create plans to improve literacy, including targeted interventions for students way below grade level, top notch assessments for all students, training for teachers in every subject to incorporate literacy strategies, and regular data to improve teaching and learning.

Allow districts and schools to hire and place literacy coaches, train parents to support the literacy development of their child, or connect learning inside the classroom with learning that takes place outside the classroom.

Ensure States, districts, and schools participate in a rigorous evaluation that demonstrates student progress.

Require the Federal Government to complete an overall evaluation of the program to determine its impact on the Nation's middle and high schools.

The Striving Readers Act comprises a necessary and urgent investment in adolescent students. We created the Reading First program to strengthen students' reading skills in the elementary grades. While I do have major concerns with the implementation of this program, the intent of the law and the commitment to elementary reading skills is undoubtedly positive. But with reading proficiency stagnating after 4th grade, it is clear that we need a significant investment in the higher grades as well. In crafting the Striving Readers bill, we took steps to correct and guard against implementation concerns, and I believe that this bill will provide the critical resources, training, and evaluation to implement high quality adolescent literacy initiatives around the country.

I introduced the PASS Act, first in 2003, and in subsequent legislation, to take a comprehensive approach to improving student achievement in our Nation's high schools, including use of literacy and math coaches, as well as research-based support for high schools with the most need. The Striving Readers Act will complement this and allow States and schools to effectively address the literacy needs of adolescents in 4th grade and up.

Now is the time to invest in literacy for older students and make their success a reality. This issue cannot wait any longer. I hope that my colleagues in the Senate will join Senator SESSIONS and me in supporting the Striving Readers Act. And I hope we will authorize Striving Readers as part of No Child Left Behind so that children in every State have the reading skills they need to succeed in school, college, and the workplace.

By Mrs. CLINTON (for herself, Mr. REID, Mr. ALEXANDER, Ms. MIKULSKI, Mr. MENENDEZ, Mr. DODD, and Mr. DURBIN):

S. 959. A bill to award grant to enable Teach for America, Inc., to implement and expand its teaching program; to the Committee on Health, Education, Labor, and Pensions.

Mrs. CLINTON. Mr. President, I rise today to introduce legislation to increase the number of high-need school districts and communities served by Teach For America. My legislation will address the need to build a pipeline of talented teachers to prepare our children to compete in the global economy.

As the teaching population ages, more and more schools will face significant shortages of qualified and motivated teachers. Schools across the country will need to replace at least 1 million teachers over the next ten

years. Our Nation's inner cities and rural communities will be even harder hit as their teachers move to suburban schools or leave the teaching profession altogether. That is why I am sponsoring the Teach For America Act.

Teach For America is the national corps of exceptional recent college graduates of all academic majors who commit two years to teach in public schools. Teach For America's corps members and alumni become lifelong leaders in the effort to ensure that all children in our Nation have an equal chance to succeed in life. Since its inception in 1990, more than 12,000 individuals have joined Teach For America, directly impacting the lives of over 2 million students in under-resourced schools across the country.

This legislation will help Teach For America grow to over 7,500 corps members in 32 communities teaching over 600,000 low-income students every day. It will do so by providing funding for Teach For America to expand its program of recruiting, selecting, training, and supporting new teachers.

Teach For America's alumni lead the way for fundamental long-term change across the country. After their two years of service, 63 percent of Teach For America alumni remain in education as teachers, principals, school founders and policy advisors. Others, equipped with insight gained through their classroom experience, go on to work in a variety of fields—including law, medicine, and social work—and continue to increase opportunities for children living in low-income communities.

The Teach For America Act addresses the need to effectively build a corps of dedicated, talented college graduates to teach and make a lasting impact in our underserved communities. I am hopeful that my Senate colleagues from both sides of the aisle will join me in moving this legislation to the floor without delay.

By Mrs. CLINTON (for herself, Mr. SPECTER, Ms. MIKULSKI, Mrs. BOXER, Mr. BIDEN, Ms. LANDRIEU, Mr. KENNEDY, and Mrs. HUTCHISON):

S. 960. A bill to establish the United States Public Service Academy; to the Committee on Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs.

Mrs. CLINTON. Mr. President, I rise today to introduce legislation that will create an undergraduate institution designed to cultivate a generation of young leaders dedicated to public service. The United States Public Service Academy Act, (The PSA Act), will form a national academy to serve as an extraordinary example of effective, national public education.

The tragic events of September 11 and the devastation of natural disasters such as Hurricanes Katrina and Rita underscore how much our Nation depends on strong public institutions and competent civilian leadership at all levels of society.

We must take a step forward in the 110th Congress with a positive agenda to ensure competent civilian leadership and improve our Nation's ability to respond to future emergencies and to confront daily challenges. That is why Senator SPECTER and I have come together to sponsor the PSA Act.

This legislation will create the U.S. Public Service Academy to groom future public servants and build a corps of capable civilian leaders. Modeled after the military service academies, this academy will provide a four-year, federally-subsidized college education for more than 5,000 students a year in exchange for a five year commitment to public service.

The PSA Act will meet critical national needs as the baby-boomer generation approaches retirement. Already, studies show looming shortages in the Federal civil service, public education, law enforcement, the non-profit sector and other essential areas. Academy graduates will help to fill the void in public service our Nation will soon face by serving for five years in areas such as public education, public health, and law enforcement.

Unfortunately our young people are priced out of public service careers all too often with the average college graduate owing more than $20,000 in student loans. A recent study conducted by the Higher Education Research Institute found that more than two-thirds of the 2005 freshman class expressed a desire to serve others, the highest rate in a generation. By providing a service-oriented education at no cost to the student, the PSA Act will tap into the strong desire to serve that already exists among college students while erasing the burden of enormous college debt.

The establishment of a United States Public Service Academy is an innovative way to strengthen and protect America by creating a corps of well-trained, highly-qualified civilian leaders. I am hopeful that my Senate colleagues from both sides of the aisle will join me today to move this legislation to the floor without delay.

By Mr. BINGAMAN (for himself, Mr. DOMENICI, Mr. TESTER, Mr. BUNNING, Mr. SALAZAR, Mr. OBAMA, and Mr. WEBB):

S. 962. A bill to amend the Energy Policy Act of 2005 to reauthorize and improve the carbon capture and storage research, development, and demonstration program of the Department of Energy and for other purposes; to the Committee on Energy and Natural Resources.

Mr. BINGAMAN. Mr. President, I am pleased to be able to introduce the Department of Energy Carbon Capture and Storage Research, Development, and Demonstration Act of 2007, along with my co-sponsors, Senators DOMENICI, TESTER, BUNNING, SALAZAR, OBAMA, and WEBB. This bipartisan bill reauthorizes and improves the carbon capture and storage program at the Department of Energy that was first explicitly authorized in the Energy Policy Act of 2005. With the attention that the topic of global warming has been getting, it is becoming ever clearer that we need answers to the practical questions of what needs to occur so that we can decide on the role that carbon capture and storage will play in our future energy system. This bill, as well as a bill that has previously been referred to the Committee on Energy and Natural Resources, S. 731, begins to lay the foundation for a bipartisan and effective approach to these issues.

I ask unanimous consent that the full text of the bill be printed in the RECORD.

There being no objection, the bill was ordered to be printed in the RECORD, as follows:

S. 962

Be it enacted by the Senate and House of Representatives of the United States of America in Congress assembled,

SECTION 1. SHORT TITLE.

This Act may be cited as the ''Department of Energy Carbon Capture and Storage Research, Development, and Demonstration Act of 2007''.

SEC. 2. CARBON CAPTURE AND STORAGE RESEARCH, DEVELOPMENT, AND DEMONSTRATION PROGRAM.

Section 963 of the Energy Policy Act of 2005 (42 U.S.C. 16293) is amended—

(1) in the section heading, by striking ''**RESEARCH AND DEVELOPMENT**'' and inserting ''**AND STORAGE RESEARCH, DEVELOPMENT, AND DEMONSTRATION**'';

(2) in subsection (a)—

(A) by striking ''research and development'' and inserting ''and storage research, development, and demonstration''; and

(B) by striking ''capture technologies on combustion-based systems'' and inserting ''capture and storage technologies related to energy systems'';

(3) in subsection (b)—

(A) in paragraph (3), by striking ''and'' at the end;

(B) in paragraph (4), by striking the period at the end and inserting ''; and''; and

(C) by adding at the end the following:

''(5) to expedite and carry out large-scale testing of carbon sequestration systems in a range of geological formations that will provide information on the cost and feasibility of deployment of sequestration technologies.''; and

(4) by striking subsection (c) and inserting the following:

''(c) PROGRAMMATIC ACTIVITIES.—

''(1) ENERGY RESEARCH AND DEVELOPMENT UNDERLYING CARBON CAPTURE AND STORAGE TECHNOLOGIES.—

''(A) IN GENERAL.—The Secretary shall carry out fundamental science and engineering research (including laboratory-scale experiments, numeric modeling, and simulations) to develop and document the performance of new approaches to capture and store carbon dioxide.

''(B) PROGRAM INTEGRATION.—The Secretary shall ensure that fundamental research carried out under this paragraph is appropriately applied to energy technology development activities and the field testing of carbon sequestration activities, including—

''(i) development of new or improved technologies for the capture of carbon dioxide;

''(ii) modeling and simulation of geological sequestration field demonstrations; and

''(iii) quantitative assessment of risks relating to specific field sites for testing of sequestration technologies.

''(2) FIELD VALIDATION TESTING ACTIVITIES.—

''(A) IN GENERAL.—The Secretary shall promote, to the maximum extent practicable, regional carbon sequestration partnerships to conduct geologic sequestration tests involving carbon dioxide injection and monitoring, mitigation, and verification operations in a variety of candidate geological settings, including—

''(i) operating oil and gas fields;

''(ii) depleted oil and gas fields;

''(iii) unmineable coal seams;

''(iv) saline formations; and

''(v) deep geologic systems that may be used as engineered reservoirs to extract economical quantities of heat from geothermal resources of low permeability or porosity.

''(B) OBJECTIVES.—The objectives of tests conducted under this paragraph shall be—

''(i) to develop and validate geophysical tools, analysis, and modeling to monitor, predict, and verify carbon dioxide containment;

''(ii) to validate modeling of geological formations;

''(iii) to refine storage capacity estimated for particular geological formations;

''(iv) to determine the fate of carbon dioxide concurrent with and following injection into geological formations;

''(v) to develop and implement best practices for operations relating to, and monitoring of, injection and storage of carbon dioxide in geologic formations;

''(vi) to assess and ensure the safety of operations related to geological storage of carbon dioxide; and

''(vii) to allow the Secretary to promulgate policies, procedures, requirements, and guidance to ensure that the objectives of this subparagraph are met in large-scale testing and deployment activities for carbon capture and storage that are funded by the Department of Energy.

''(3) LARGE-SCALE TESTING AND DEPLOYMENT.—

''(A) IN GENERAL.—The Secretary shall conduct not less than 7 initial large-volume sequestration tests for geological containment of carbon dioxide (at least 1 of which shall be international in scope) to validate information on the cost and feasibility of commercial deployment of technologies for geological containment of carbon dioxide.

''(B) DIVERSITY OF FORMATIONS TO BE STUDIED.—In selecting formations for study under this paragraph, the Secretary shall consider a variety of geological formations across the United States, and require characterization and modeling of candidate formations, as determined by the Secretary.

''(4) PREFERENCE IN PROJECT SELECTION FROM MERITORIOUS PROPOSALS.—In making competitive awards under this subsection, subject to the requirements of section 989, the Secretary shall give preference to proposals from partnerships among industrial, academic, and government entities.

''(5) COST SHARING.—Activities under this subsection shall be considered research and development activities that are subject to the cost-sharing requirements of section 988(b).

''(d) AUTHORIZATION OF APPROPRIATIONS.—There are authorized to be appropriated to carry out this section—

''(1) $90,000,000 for fiscal year 2007;

''(2) $105,000,000 for fiscal year 2008; and

''(3) $120,000,000 for fiscal year 2009.''.

By Mr. MENENDEZ:

S. 963. A bill to authorize the Secretary of Education to make grants to educational organizations to carry out educational programs about the Holocaust; to the Committee on Health, Education, Labor, and Pensions.

Mr. MENENDEZ. Mr. President, I rise today to introduce the Simon Wiesenthal Holocaust Education Assistance Act. This important legislation would provide competitive grants for educational organizations to make Holocaust education more accessible and available throughout this Nation.

I would like to thank Senators LAUTENBERG and SPECTER for co-sponsoring this bill, and I commend my former colleague in the House, Congresswoman MALONEY, for her leadership on this issue.

In January, the United Nations held a ceremony to commemorate the 62nd anniversary of the liberation of Auschwitz and the second annual International Day of Commemoration in memory of the victims of the Holocaust. This event served as a reminder that people of all faiths strongly condemn the systematic, state sponsored genocide conducted by the Nazi regime.

We will forever remember the approximately six million Jewish men, women and children, as well as millions of others who faced persecution and death. And we extend our gratitude to all who risked their lives trying to save others. We also honor Simon Wiesenthal, who dedicated his life to making sure that those who perpetrated the horrors of the Holocaust were brought to justice.

After six decades, many of our youth may view the Holocaust as an event that occurred in the distant past. But the truth is this issue is part of our present day society.

Just 3 months ago, Iran held a conference in Tehran to debate whether or not the Holocaust actually happened, and the Iranian government has established a fact finding commission to examine the issue further. Such despicable acts are an insult to the millions of people who were brutalized and murdered by the Nazis and to all who stand against genocide around the world. Clearly, false and destructive messages regarding the Holocaust are still being perpetuated, and such events highlight the importance of Holocaust education abroad and within our own Nation.

Unfortunately, we have also seen that anti-Semitism continues to threaten the safety and well-being of Jewish men and women throughout the world. In February, a Polish member of the European Parliament published a booklet espousing anti-Jewish sentiments, and in Croatia, an investigation has begun after small sugar packets bearing Hitler's image and containing Holocaust jokes were found in some cafés. These tragic events underscore the need to be proactive in combating such bigotry and educating our youth.

Although some States now require the Holocaust to be taught in public schools, the Simon Wiesenthal Holocaust Education Assistance Act goes further and makes grants available to organizations that instruct students, teachers, and communities about the dangers of hate and the importance of tolerance in our society. This legislation would give educators the appropriate resources and training to teach accurate historical information about the Holocaust and convey the lessons that the Holocaust can teach us today.

We must recognize that by remembering the millions who were murdered in the Holocaust, we create a sense of responsibility to stop genocide wherever it takes place.

It is in our common interest to raise our voices against anti-Semitism and against all hatred and discrimination. Funding accurate educational programs on the Holocaust is a step toward winning this battle.

So as America stands with Israel and all followers of the Jewish faith in condemning anti-Semitism, let us do everything in our power to end discrimination and educate future generations about the danger of hatred and bigotry.

I urge my colleagues to support this legislation.

By Mr. AKAKA:

S. 967. A bill to amend chapter 41 of title 5, United States Code, to provide for the establishment and authorization of funding for certain training programs for supervisors of Federal employees; to the Committee on Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs.

Mr. AKAKA. Mr. President, I rise today to reintroduce the Federal Supervisor Training Act to enhance Federal employee and manager performance, and, in turn, agency performance.

Our Nation's public servants administer a vast array of programs designed to meet the needs of the citizens of this country, and indeed the world. These employees deserve the support and guidance of trained managers who empower them to perform effectively. Furthermore, employees must have a clear understanding of their roles and responsibilities. Training programs help managers and supervisors improve their communication skills and promote stronger manager-employee relationships.

While the Federal Government encourages management and supervisory training, the development and implementation of training programs is left to the discretion of individual agencies. This leads to inconsistent guidance on training and sometimes inadequate training due to an agency's other priorities and limited resources. Meaningful training matters. Training should not be discretionary for agencies.

Given the growing number of Federal managers who are eligible to retire, and the need to attract a robust, well-skilled workforce, it is important that employees, who are expected to manage and supervise, have the tools to do so effectively.

In January 2007, the Office of Personnel Management (OPM) released the 2006 Federal Human Capital Survey,

which showed that the federal government's employees and senior managers and leaders still face communication problems. For example, according to the survey: only 49 percent of Federal employees have a high level of respect for senior leaders in their agencies, only 41 percent say they are satisfied with their leaders' policies and practices, and only 47 percent of Federal employees said they were satisfied with the information they get from management.

Upon the release of the survey, OPM Director Linda Springer wrote, ''As many senior leaders retire, the Federal Government also faces a challenge—and opportunity—to improve the effectiveness of the leadership corps across Government. We must develop the kinds of leaders who can ensure a talented and committed Federal workforce now and in the future. Our leaders will need to adapt the workplaces and opportunities they offer to attract the best and the brightest from diverse talent pools.''

Good leadership begins with strong management training. It is time to ensure that Federal managers receive appropriate training to supervise federal employees. I believe the Federal Supervisor Training Act will help us reach that goal. My bill will bridge the training gap that exists now and help ensure that Federal managers have the necessary skills to communicate with and manage Federal employees.

The Federal Supervisor Training Act has three major training components. First, the bill will require that new supervisors receive training in the initial 12 months on the job, with mandatory retraining every three years on how to work with employees to develop performance expectations and evaluate employees. Current managers will have three years to obtain their initial training. Second, the bill requires mentoring for new supervisors and training on how to mentor employees. Third, the measure requires training on the laws governing and the procedures for enforcing whistleblower and anti-discrimination rights.

In addition, my bill will: set standards that supervisors should meet in order to manage employees effectively, assess a manager's ability to meet these standards, and provide training to improve areas identified in personnel assessments.

I am delighted by the support my bill has received from the Government Managers Coalition, which represents members of the Senior Executives Association, the Federal Managers Association, the Professional Managers Association, the Federal Aviation Administration Managers Association, and the National Council of Social Security Management Associations; the American Federation of Government Employees; the National Treasury Employees Union; the International Federation of Professional and Technical Engineers; the AFL–CIO, Metal Trades Department, as well as the Partnership for Public Service. I believe this broad support, from employee unions to management associations to outside good government groups demonstrates the need of mandatory training programs and passage of this bill. I urge my colleagues to support this important legislation.

I ask unanimous consent that the text of this bill be printed in the RECORD.

There being no objection, the text of the bill was ordered to be printed in the RECORD, as follows:

S. 967

Be it enacted by the Senate and House of Representatives of the United States of America in Congress assembled,

SECTION 1. SHORT TITLE.

This Act may be cited as the ''Federal Supervisor Training Act of 2007''.

SEC. 2. MANDATORY TRAINING PROGRAMS FOR SUPERVISORS.

(a) IN GENERAL.—Section 4121 of title 5, United States Code, is amended—

(1) by inserting before ''In consultation with'' the following:

''(a) In this section, the term 'supervisor' means—

''(1) a supervisor as defined under section 7103(a)(10);

''(2) a management official as defined under section 7103(a)(11); and

''(3) any other employee as the Office of Personnel Management may by regulation prescribe.'';

(2) by striking ''In consultation with'' and inserting ''(b) Under operating standards promulgated by, and in consultation with,''; and

(3) by striking paragraph (2) (of the matter redesignated as subsection (b) as a result of the amendment under paragraph (2) of this subsection) and inserting the following:

''(2)(A) a program to provide interactive instructor-based training to supervisors on actions, options, and strategies a supervisor may use in—

''(i) developing and discussing relevant goals and objectives together with the employee, communicating and discussing progress relative to performance goals and objectives and conducting performance appraisals;

''(ii) mentoring and motivating employees and improving employee performance and productivity;

''(iii) effectively managing employees with unacceptable performance;

''(iv) addressing reports of a hostile work environment, reprisal, or harassment of, or by, another supervisor or employee; and

''(v) otherwise carrying out the duties or responsibilities of a supervisor;

''(B) a program to provide interactive instructor-based training to supervisors on the prohibited personnel practices under section 2302 (particularly with respect to such practices described under subsection (b)(1) and (8) of that section) and the procedures and processes used to enforce employee rights; and

''(C) a program under which experienced supervisors mentor new supervisors by—

''(i) transferring knowledge and advice in areas such as communication, critical thinking, responsibility, flexibility, motivating employees, teamwork, and professional development; and

''(ii) pointing out strengths and areas for development.

''(c)(1) Not later than 1 year after the date on which an individual is appointed to the position of supervisor, that individual shall be required to have completed each program established under subsection (b)(2).

''(2) After completion of a program under subsection (b)(2) (A) and (B), each supervisor shall be required to complete a program under subsection (b)(2) (A) and (B) at least once during each 3-year period.

''(3) Each program established under subsection (b)(2) shall include provisions under which credit shall be given for periods of similar training previously completed.

''(d) Notwithstanding section 4118(c), the Office of Personnel Management shall prescribe regulations to carry out this section, including the monitoring of agency compliance with this section.''.

(b) REGULATIONS.—Not later than 180 days after the date of enactment of this Act, the Office of Personnel Management shall prescribe regulations in accordance with subsection (d) of section 4121 of title 5, United States Code, as added by subsection (a) of this section.

(c) EFFECTIVE DATE AND APPLICATION.—

(1) IN GENERAL.—The amendments made by this section shall take effect 180 days after the date of enactment of this Act and apply to—

(A) each individual appointed to the position of a supervisor, as defined under section 4121(a) of title 5, United States Code, (as added by subsection (a) of this section) on or after that effective date; and

(B) each individual who is employed in the position of a supervisor on that effective date as provided under paragraph (2).

(2) SUPERVISORS ON EFFECTIVE DATE.—Each individual who is employed in the position of a supervisor on the effective date of this section shall be required to—

(A) complete each program established under section 4121(b)(2) of title 5, United States Code (as added by subsection (a) of this section), not later than 3 years after the effective date of this section; and

(B) complete programs every 3 years thereafter in accordance with section 4121(c) (2) and (3) of such title.

SEC. 3. MANAGEMENT COMPETENCY STANDARDS.

(a) IN GENERAL.—Chapter 43 of title 5, United States Code, is amended—

(1) by redesignating section 4305 as section 4306; and

(2) inserting after section 4304 the following:

''§ 4305. Management competency standards

''(a) In this section, the term 'supervisor' means—

''(1) a supervisor as defined under section 7103(a)(10);

''(2) a management official as defined under section 7103(a)(11); and

''(3) any other employee as the Office of Personnel Management may by regulation prescribe.

''(b) The Office of Personnel Management shall issue guidance to agencies on standards supervisors are expected to meet in order to effectively manage, and be accountable for managing, the performance of employees.

''(c) Each agency shall—

''(1) develop standards to assess the performance of each supervisor and in developing such standards shall consider the guidance developed by the Office of Personnel Management under subsection (b) and any other qualifications or factors determined by the agency;

''(2) assess the overall capacity of the supervisors in the agency to meet the guidance developed by the Office of Personnel Management issued under subsection (b); and

''(3) develop and implement a supervisor training program to strengthen issues identified during such assessment.

''(d) Every year, or on any basis requested by the Director of the Office of Personnel Management, each agency shall submit a report to the Office on the progress of the agency in implementing this section.''.

(b) TECHNICAL AND CONFORMING AMENDMENTS.—

(1) TABLE OF SECTIONS.—The table of sections for chapter 43 of title 5, United States Code, is amended by striking the item relating to section 4305 and inserting the following:

''4305. Management competency standards.
''4306. Regulations.''.

(2) REFERENCE.—Section 4304(b)(3) of title 5, United States Code, is amended by striking ''section 4305'' and inserting ''section 4306''.

By Mrs. BOXER (for herself, Mr. SMITH, Mr. DURBIN, and Mr. BROWN):

S. 968. A bill to amend the Foreign Assistance Act of 1961 to provide increased assistance for the prevention, treatment, and control of tuberculosis, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Foreign Relations.

Mrs. BOXER. Mr. President, today, I rise to introduce the bipartisan Stop TB Now Act of 2007. I am joined in this effort by Senators GORDON SMITH, DICK DURBIN, and SHERROD BROWN.

For 8 years, I have worked with Senator SMITH to fight the spread of international tuberculosis. I appreciate his help on this bill. I am also grateful for the support of Senate Majority Whip DICK DURBIN, as well as Senator BROWN, who was the leader on international TB issues when he was a member of the House of Representatives.

The need for this legislation is clear. Tuberculosis kills 1.6 million people per year—1 person every 15 seconds. One-third of the world is infected with the bacteria that causes TB and an estimated 8.8 million individuals develop active TB each year. And tuberculosis is a leading cause of death among women of reproductive age and of people who are HIV-positive.

While developing nations are most heavily impacted by TB, there is also a concern here at home. My State of California has more TB cases than any other State in the country and 10 of the top 20 U.S. metro areas with the highest TB rates are in California.

The best way to treat TB is through DOTS, which stands for directly observed treatment, short course. This treatment ensures a steady and uninterrupted supply of drugs to prevent the spread of multi-drug resistant TB. It costs just $20–100 per person to treat regular TB with DOTS. But it costs 1,400 times that amount to treat a person with multi-drug resistant TB.

Today, we face an even more dangerous problem—the outbreak of extremely drug resistant TB. In some cases, this form of TB is untreatable. In one South African town, 53 TB patients were found to have XDR–TB. All but one died. We must fully fund international TB control efforts because drug-resistant TB happens when people fail to complete treatment.

To stop the spread of tuberculosis, the international community came together last year to develop the Global Plan to Stop TB, a comprehensive assessment of the resources and actions needed to cut the number of TB deaths in half by 2015.

My bill will bring U.S. policy in line with this plan by authorizing $330 million for fiscal year 2008 and $450 million for fiscal year 2009. for foreign assistance programs that combat international TB. The bill also authorizes $70 million for fiscal year 2008 and $100 million for fiscal year 2009 for the Centers for Disease Control programs to combat international TB.

TB kills more people than any other curable disease in the world. We have a moral obligation to take the steps necessary to meet this challenge.

By Mr. DODD (for himself, Mr. DURBIN, and Mr. KENNEDY):

S. 969. A bill to amend the National Labor Relations Act to modify the definition of supervisor; to the Committee on Health, Education, Labor, and Pensions.

Mr. DODD. Mr. President, I rise today to introduce the Re-empowerment of Skilled and Professional Employees and Construction Tradeworkers Act, or RESPECT Act, a bill to amend the National Labor Relations Act to modify the definition of supervisor. I am pleased to be joined by Senators DURBIN and KENNEDY as original cosponsors and would like to acknowledge Congressman ANDREWS for championing this legislation in the House of Representatives.

The RESPECT Act would make vital changes to the definition of supervisor to ensure that no employee is unjustly denied his or her right to join a labor union. This is a very simple bill just four lines of text making a few definitional changes to the National Labor Relations Act (NLRA). Yet the livelihoods of thousands, possibly millions, of workers are at stake in those few lines. Workers designated as supervisors may not join a union or engage in collective bargaining. As a result, some employers have sought to deny many workers their right to organize by unfairly classifying them as supervisors. And unfortunately, President Bush's appointees on the National Labor Relations Board (NLRB) have upheld these unfair classifications.

The NLRB has struggled for years with the definition of supervisor. Twice in the last ten years, its attempts to define supervisory status have been reviewed and rejected by the Supreme Court. But despite this, the NLRB refused to hear oral arguments for the three decisions it handed down last October—Oakwood Healthcare, Inc., Golden Crest Healthcare Center, and Croft Metals, Inc. These decisions are known collectively as the Kentucky River decisions, after the 2001 Supreme Court case of NLRB v. Kentucky River.

The NLRB ruled that many charge nurses are supervisors, even though they have no authority to hire, fire, or discipline other employees. In the course of their responsibilities to provide the best care possible to their patients, many rank-and-file nurses occasionally rotate through a limited oversight role, such as assigning other nurses to patients based on workload or a nurse's particular specialty. But on a pretext as slim as that, employers would keep their workers from unionizing altogether.

In the Oakwood decision, the hospital argued that 127 of its 181 nurses were supervisors. Though the NLRB found that only 12 were in fact supervisors, its decision left the door open for widespread abuse. Under its ruling, only 10 percent of a worker's time in a supervisory capacity is enough to lock him or her out of a union.

Following that precedent, another hospital declared a ludicrous number of its registered nurses to be supervisors—and an NLRB Regional Director agreed. 17 of 20 registered nurses in the Intensive Care Unit were declared supervisors; 6 of 7 in the Medical Unit; 9 of 11 in Neonatal Intensive Care; and in the Inpatient Rehabilitation Unit—all 7. Fictitious classifications like these show just how far some will go to keep workers from bargaining fairly. And, sadly, they demonstrate just how far the NLRB will go to facilitate these false and unfair classifications.

Though recent NLRB decisions have targeted nurses, the dangerous precedent they set threatens the rights of workers in countless industries. The NLRB has opened a Pandora's box: Laborers who sometimes work with assistants, or skilled craftsmen who take apprentices, can be barred from unions by the same false logic that prevents nurses from organizing.

These decisions are written on more than paper. They're written on real lives, on workers in the thousands and millions, on the dignity of their labor, the health of their children, and the security of their old age. For them, legal fiction becomes painful fact: Without their fair seat at the table, workers will possibly see lower wages, longer hours, more dangerous working conditions, and threats to their healthcare and retirement.

The services they provide will suffer as well. Take the case of nurses: Many fear retribution if they speak out on their own about unsafe practices that could endanger patients' lives. Instead, many rely on their unions to provide a strong, unified voice for improved patient care. It's in our interest to keep that voice strong—just one example of how healthy unions benefit us all.

The bill introduced today, the RESPECT Act, offers a commonsense step to protect workers' rights. It deletes the terms ''assign'' and ''responsibly to direct'' from the definition of supervisor—terms that the NLRB drastically expanded to justify its rulings. The bill also would require that, to be classified as a supervisor, an employee must actually be one by specifying that an employee must spend the majority of his or her worktime in a supervisory capacity.

That's hardly a radical innovation—in fact, it returns us to Congress's original intent. In 1947, the Senate Committee Report on amendments to

the National Labor Relations Act stated that:

> the committee has not been unmindful of the fact that certain employees with minor supervisory duties have problems which may justify their inclusion in that act. It has therefore distinguished between straw bosses, leadmen, set-up men, and other minor supervisory employees, on the one hand, and the supervisor vested with. . .genuine management prerogatives.

Clearly, Congress did not intend to deny the right to organize to those workers whose jobs require only occasional and minor supervisory duties. The RESPECT Act restores that sensible precedent.

It's not by chance that the rise of the labor movement coincided with the rise of the largest and strongest middle class the world has ever seen. The achievements of the labor unions have made it possible for many working men and women to send their children to college, to store up savings for sickness, injury, and old age—to move from deprivation to dignity. The labor movement greatly contributed to the strengthening of the American middle class.

Organized labor was opposed at every step—sometimes by intimidation, sometimes by violence, sometimes by propaganda. Today it is opposed by specious reasoning and twisted definitions of a kind I've rarely seen in public life. I hope my colleagues will be moved to support this bill out of their respect for honesty alone. But add the fact that the security and dignity of so many of their constituents depend on the right to organize and bargain, and the case becomes as clear as day. I urge my colleagues to support this bill.

I ask unanimous consent that the text of the bill be printed in the RECORD.

There being no objection, the text of the bill was ordered to be printed in the RECORD, as follows:

S. 969

Be it enacted by the Senate and House of Representatives of the United States of America in Congress assembled,

SECTION 1. SHORT TITLE.

This Act may be cited as the ''Re-empowerment of Skilled and Professional Employees and Construction Tradesworkers Act'' or the ''RESPECT Act''.

SEC. 2. AMENDMENT OF THE NATIONAL LABOR RELATIONS ACT.

Section 2(11) of the National Labor Relations Act (29 U.S.C. 152(11)) is amended—

(1) by inserting ''and for a majority of the individual's worktime'' after ''interest of the employer'';

(2) by striking ''assign,''; and

(3) by striking ''or responsibly to direct them,''.

Mr. DURBIN. Mr. President, I come to the floor to join Senator DODD and Senator KENNEDY in introducing the Re-empowerment of Skilled Professional Employees and Construction Tradesworkers Act, also known as the RESPECT Act.

This legislation will amend the National Labor Relations Act to modify the definition of ''supervisor.'' It is necessary because of recent rulings by the National Labor Relations Board, which has determined that millions of workers do not fall within the definition of ''supervisor.'' An employee who is deemed a ''supervisor'' under the National Labor Relations Act does not have collective bargaining rights or other labor protections.

The NLRB rulings in these so-called Kentucky River cases have an enormous impact on nurses. According to the amicus brief filed by the American Nurses Association and United American Nurses, AFL–CIO, in these cases, ''[o]f the more than 2.1 million people working as registered nurses in the United States in the year 2002, 15.6 per cent were union members. Registered nurses covered by a collective bargaining agreement can earn approximately 11 per cent more per week than non-unionized nurses. . . .''

There are 800,000 nurses in this country—40,000 nurses in my home State of Illinois alone. We owe it to these nurses to find a workable definition of the term ''supervisor'' so that they and other professional employees and construction tradesworkers receive the labor protections that Congress intended.

The supervisor exclusion was created in 1947 when Congress adopted the Taft-Hartley amendments to the National Labor Relations Act. The Act defines ''supervisor'' as:

> [A]ny individual having authority, in the interest of the employer, to hire, transfer, suspend, lay off, recall, promote, discharge, assign, reward, or discipline other employees, or responsibly to direct them, or to adjust their grievances, or effectively to recommend such action, if in connection with the foregoing the exercise of such authority is not of a merely routine or clerical nature, but requires the use of independent judgment.

The interpretation and application of this definition has resulted in years of litigation before the NLRB and courts of appeals. The United States Supreme Court last spoke on the issue in 2001. In NLRB v. Kentucky River Community Care, Inc., 532 U.S. 706 (2001), it reviewed the Board's test for determining supervisory status and rejected the Board's interpretation. The Supreme Court's decision left open the interpretation of the term ''supervisor'' and three cases were filed before the National Labor Relations Board to address this issue: Oakwood Healthcare, Inc., Case 7–CA–22141, Golden Crest Healthcare Center, Cases 18–RC–16415 and 18–RC–16416, and Croft Metals, Inc., Case 15–RC–8393.

The NLRB refused to hear oral argument in these cases despite the fact that its attempt to define supervisory status had been reviewed and rejected by the Supreme Court and it has been more than 5 years since the Court's decision in Kentucky River. In July, I joined Senator KENNEDY and other Democrats in a letter to the Chairman of the NLRB to urge that the Board reconsider its decision not to allow oral arguments in these cases. The NLRB refused.

In October 2006, the Board issued its rulings and expanded the meaning of the definition of ''supervisor'' by expanding the meaning of the terms ''assign'' and ''responsibly to direct.'' The NLRB rulings override the intent of Congress not to exclude minor supervisory officials, professionals, skilled craftpersons, and nurses from labor protections.

Last December, I noted that several States are suffering from nursing shortages. This legislation is necessary to alleviate the nursing crisis. More than 72 percent of hospitals experience nursing shortages, and 1.2 million nursing positions need to be filled within the next decade. By denying nurses the right to collectively bargain, pay will surely decrease and the working environment of these nurses will deteriorate, thereby driving even more nurses out of the profession and discouraging individuals from entering the field.

I urge my colleagues to join Senators DODD, KENNEDY, and I in supporting the RESPECT Act—an important effort to help American nurses, other skilled professional employees, and construction tradesworkers.

By Mr. SMITH (for himself, Mr. DURBIN, Mr. LAUTENBERG, Mr. COLEMAN, Mr. LIEBERMAN, Mr. BROWNBACK, Mr. BAYH, Mr. KYL, Mr. THUNE, Ms. MIKULSKI, and Mr. MENENDEZ):

S. 970. A bill to impose sanctions on Iran and on other countries for assisting Iran in developing a nuclear program, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Finance.

Mr. SMITH. Mr. President, I rise today to address a serious concern more than 20 years in the making. In large part because of the secrecy over its nuclear program, America's National Security Strategy for 2006 identifies Iran as one of the greatest challenges to the United States. The Senate recognized this threat in January 2006 by unanimously condemning Iran's refusal to comply with its nuclear nonproliferation obligations. Last September, this body unanimously passed mandatory sanctions on persons who knowingly helped Iran acquire or develop weapons of mass destruction. And all the while, Tehran continued its pursuit of a nuclear program that, unchecked, will lead to a nuclear-armed Iran.

I cannot overestimate the threat that this poses to the security of the United States and our allies. Since the revolution that brought it to power, the theocracy that rules over Iran has demonstrated its contempt for the democratic ideals on which our country is based. It has held its own people hostage in an effort to maintain absolute control over their destiny. And it has spewed forth hate-filled rhetoric at regular intervals about the very existence of the state of Israel—a valued American ally in the Middle East.

After years of vigorous diplomacy by Britain, France, and Germany failed to

persuade the Iranians to give up their nuclear program, the United Nations Security Council passed a resolution in December 2006 calling for the suspension of all enrichment-related activities. Iran ignored that demand, and instead, responded by stepping up their nuclear program. Inaction in the face of such an egregious challenge is a mockery of the international institutions where diplomatic solutions are tried and tested. Now is the time to use every tool in our arsenal short of military force to stop the Iranian regime from developing nuclear weapons, and to send the message that the international community will not tolerate flagrant violations of our combined will.

I have heard the calls of my colleagues that all efforts should be made to avoid military intervention in Iran. I agree with them entirely. But Mr. President, I will not stand idle while up to 3,000 centrifuges in Natanz enrich uranium that one day soon could tip a warhead aimed at the U.S. or our allies around the world.

Today I am introducing legislation designed to persuade Tehran to give up its nuclear ambitions. The Iran Counter-Proliferation Act of 2007 will significantly strengthen our economic sanctions against Iran and any entities that choose to support the regime. I am pleased that Senator DURBIN has joined me in this effort, as well as Senators COLEMAN, LAUTENBERG, BROWNBACK, LIEBERMAN, KYL, BAYH, and THUNE.

This legislation urges the Administration to pursue measures in the international financial sector to restrict financing in Iran and encourages foreign state-owned entities to cease investment in Iran's energy sector. It prohibits all imports from and exports to Iran. It forbids any action that would extend preferential trade treatment to Iran or that would lead to Iranian accession to the WTO. And it freezes assets of senior Iranian officials and their families. By cutting off Iran's access to the hard currency it needs, we can increase the cost of their decision to pursue its nuclear program.

The legislation also singles out Russia—a country that has contributed significantly to the development of Iran's nuclear program and has significant financial ties with Tehran. Among other restrictions, the bill prevents the United States from moving forward with a multi-billion dollar nuclear cooperation agreement with Moscow until the President certifies that Russia has suspended its nuclear assistance and the transfers of any conventional weapons and missiles to Iran. The Russians may feel this is unfair, particularly in light of their recent announcement they would suspend the delivery of nuclear fuel to Iran's Bushehr reactor. I am pleased with this decision and hope that it is the beginning of a new view in Moscow of Iran's nuclear program. But we must remember that over the past decade, Russia has periodically suspended its nuclear assistance to Iran only to resume this assistance at a later date.

The Iran Counter-Proliferation Act also seeks to bring to light the names of companies that continue to feel it is appropriate to do business with the mullahs in Tehran. It requires the Administration to submit an annual report to Congress listing any foreign investments in Iran's energy sector since January 1 of this year and a determination on whether such investment is sanctionable under the Iran Sanctions Act. And it requires a report listing companies with American operations, whether or not they are incorporated in the United States, which invest in Iran.

In a further effort to highlight the cost to Iran of ignoring the demands of the international community, this legislation will reduce our contributions to the World Bank by the percentage of total money the World Bank loans to entities in Iran. The United States does not support these loans, and I urge those countries contributing the most to the World Bank to oppose such loans in the future.

Finally, Mr. President, the Iran Counter-Proliferation Act calls on the Administration to designate the Iranian Revolutionary Guard as a Foreign Terrorist Organization and to add it to the Treasury's list of Specially Designated Global Terrorists. Funding is increased for the Office of Terrorism and Financial Intelligence to strengthen the Treasury's efforts to combat unlawful or terrorist financing.

It is critical for us to realize that our problems with Iran are not with the Iranian people, whose legitimate aspirations to live freely in a normal, prosperous country should be recognized. As such, this legislation designates $10 million in funding to enhance our friendship with the people of Iran by identifying young Iranians to visit the United States under U.S. exchange programs.

The time for action is now. I hope my colleagues agree with me that we must use every available tool short of military force to compel the Iranian regime to abandon completely, verifiably, and irreversibly their pursuit of a nuclear weapons capability. I recognize that sanctions are not always popular, but we need to give them a chance to work. By doing nothing, we limit our future options in addressing this significant threat to the United States.

I ask unanimous consent that the full text of the legislation be printed in the RECORD.

I urge my colleagues to support the Iran Counter-Proliferation Act of 2007.

There being no objection, the text of the bill was ordered to be printed in the RECORD, as follows:

S. 970

Be it enacted by the Senate and House of Representatives of the United States of America in Congress assembled,

SECTION 1. SHORT TITLE.

This Act may be cited as the ''Iran Counter-Proliferation Act of 2007''.

SEC. 2. FINDINGS.

Congress makes the following findings:

(1) For more than 20 years, Iran has pursued a secret nuclear program that is intended to produce a nuclear weapons capability for Iran.

(2) The Government of Iran has consistently misled the United Nations, the International Atomic Energy Agency, and the United States as to the objectives and scope of its nuclear activities.

(3) Iran has refused to comply with United Nations Security Council Resolution 1737, adopted on December 23, 2006, which called for the suspension of all enrichment-related and reprocessing activities and is advancing work at its largest nuclear facility.

(4) The International Atomic Energy Agency is unable to verify the absence of undeclared nuclear material and activities in Iran and its Director-General has stated that Iran could be 6 months to a year away from acquiring the material necessary to make a nuclear weapon.

(5) An Iranian nuclear weapons capability poses a grave threat to the security of the United States and its allies around the world.

(6) It is in the national security interests of the United States to prevent Iran from acquiring a nuclear weapons capability.

(7) The United States should use all political, economic, and diplomatic tools at its disposal to prevent Iran from acquiring a nuclear weapons capability.

(8) Nothing in this Act should be construed as giving the President the authority to use military force against Iran.

SEC. 3. SENSE OF CONGRESS.

The following is the sense of Congress:

(1) The United States should pursue vigorously all measures in the international financial sector to restrict Iran's ability to conduct international financial transactions, including prohibiting banks in the United States from handling indirect transactions with Iran's state-owned banks and prohibiting financial institutions that operate in United States currency from engaging in dollar transactions with Iranian institutions.

(2) The United States Trade Representative or any other Federal official should not take any action that would extend preferential trade treatment to, or lead to the accession to the World Trade Organization of, any country that is determined by the Secretary of State to offer government-backed export credit guarantees to companies that invest in Iran or any country in which the government owns or partially owns an entity that invests in Iran.

(3) Iran should comply fully with its obligations under United Nations Security Council Resolution 1737, and any subsequent United Nations resolutions related to Iran's nuclear program, and in particular the requirement to suspend without delay all enrichment-related and reprocessing activities, including research and development, and all work on all heavy water-related nuclear activities, including research and development.

(4) The United Nations Security Council should take further measures beyond Resolution 1737 to tighten sanctions on Iran, including preventing new investment in Iran's energy sector, as long as Iran fails to comply with the international community's demand to halt its nuclear enrichment campaign.

(5) The United States should encourage foreign governments to direct state-owned entities to cease all investment in Iran's energy sector and all imports to and exports from Iran of refined petroleum products and to persuade, and, where possible, require private entities based in their territories to cease all investment in Iran's energy sector and all imports to and exports from Iran of refined petroleum products.

(6) Administrators of Federal and State pension plans should divest all assets or holdings from foreign companies and entities that have invested or invest in the future in Iran's energy sector.

(7) Iranian state-owned banks should not be permitted to use the banking system of the United States.

(8) The Secretary of State should designate the Iranian Revolutionary Guards as a Foreign Terrorist Organization under section 219 of the Immigration and Nationality Act (8 U.S.C. 1189) and the Secretary of the Treasury should place the Iranian Revolutionary Guards on the list of Specially Designated Global Terrorists under Executive Order 13224 (66 Fed. Reg. 186; relating to blocking property and prohibiting transactions with persons who commit, threaten to commit, or support terrorism).

SEC. 4. DEFINITIONS.

In this Act:

(1) APPROPRIATE CONGRESSIONAL COMMITTEES.—The term ''appropriate congressional committees'' has the meaning given that term in section 14(2) of the Iran Sanctions Act of 1996 (Public Law 104–172; 50 U.S.C. 1701 note).

(2) INVESTMENT.—The term ''investment'' has the meaning given that term in section 14(9) of the Iran Sanctions Act of 1996 (Public Law 104–172; 50 U.S.C. 1701 note).

(3) IRANIAN DIPLOMATS AND REPRESENTATIVES OF OTHER GOVERNMENT AND MILITARY OR QUASI-GOVERNMENTAL INSTITUTIONS OF IRAN.—The term ''Iranian diplomats and representatives of other government and military or quasi-governmental institutions of Iran'' has the meaning given that term in section 14(11) of the Iran Sanctions Act of 1996 (Public Law 104–172; 50 U.S.C. 1701 note).

(4) FAMILY MEMBER.—The term ''family member'' means, with respect to an individual, the spouse, children, grandchildren, or parents of the individual.

SEC. 5. CLARIFICATION AND EXPANSION OF DEFINITIONS.

(a) PERSON.—Section 14(13)(B) of the Iran Sanctions Act of 1996 (Public Law 104–172; 50 U.S.C. 1701 note) is amended—

(1) by inserting ''financial institution, insurer, underwriter, guarantor, and other business organization, including any foreign subsidiary, parent, or affiliate of the foregoing,'' after ''trust,''; and

(2) by inserting '', such as an export credit agency'' before the semicolon.

(b) PETROLEUM RESOURCES.—Section 14(14) of the Iran Sanctions Act of 1996 (Public Law 104–172; 50 U.S.C. 1701 note) is amended by striking ''petroleum and natural gas resources'' and inserting ''petroleum, petroleum by-products, liquefied natural gas, oil or liquefied natural gas, oil or liquefied natural gas tankers, and products used to construct or maintain pipelines used to transport oil or liquefied natural gas''.

SEC. 6. RUSSIA NUCLEAR COOPERATION.

(a) IN GENERAL.—Notwithstanding any other provision of law, and in addition to any other sanction in effect, beginning on the date that is 15 days after the date of the enactment of this Act, the policies described in subsection (b) shall apply with respect to Russia, unless the President makes a certification to Congress described in subsection (c).

(b) POLICIES.—The policies described in this subsection are the following:

(1) AGREEMENTS.—The United States may not enter into an agreement for cooperation with Russia pursuant to section 123 of the Atomic Energy Act (42 U.S.C. 2153).

(2) LICENSES TO EXPORT NUCLEAR MATERIAL, FACILITIES, OR COMPONENTS.—The United States may not issue a license to export directly or indirectly to Russia any nuclear material, facilities, components, or other goods, services, or technology that would be subject to an agreement under section 123 of the Atomic Energy Act (42 U.S.C. 2153).

(3) TRANSFERS OF NUCLEAR MATERIAL, FACILITIES, OR COMPONENTS.—The United States may not approve the transfer or retransfer directly or indirectly to Russia of any nuclear material, facilities, components, or other goods, services, or technology that would be subject to an agreement under section 123 of the Atomic Energy Act (42 U.S.C. 2153).

(c) CERTIFICATION.—The certification described in this subsection means a certification made by the President to Congress on or after the date that is 15 days after the date of the enactment of this Act that the President has determined that—

(1) Russia has suspended all nuclear assistance to Iran and all transfers of advanced conventional weapons and missiles to Iran; or

(2) Iran has completely, verifiably, and irreversibly dismantled all nuclear enrichment-related and reprocessing-related programs.

(d) TERMINATION OF POLICIES.—The policies described in subsection (b) shall remain in effect until such time as the President makes the certification to Congress described in subsection (c).

SEC. 7. ECONOMIC SANCTIONS RELATING TO IRAN.

(a) IN GENERAL.—Notwithstanding any other provision of law, and in addition to any other sanction in effect, beginning on the date that is 15 days after the date of the enactment of this Act, the economic sanctions described in subsection (b) shall apply with respect to Iran, unless the President makes a certification to Congress described in subsection (c).

(b) SANCTIONS.—The sanctions described in this subsection are the following:

(1) PROHIBITION ON IMPORTS.—No article that is grown, produced, or manufactured in Iran may be imported directly or indirectly into the United States.

(2) PROHIBITION ON EXPORTS.—

(A) IN GENERAL.—Except as provided in subparagraph (B), no article that is the growth, product, or manufacture of the United States may be exported directly or indirectly to Iran.

(B) EXCEPTION FOR FOOD AND MEDICINE.—The prohibition in subparagraph (A) does not apply to exports to Iran of food and medicine grown, produced, or manufactured in the United States.

(3) ACCESSION TO WTO.—The United States Trade Representative or any other Federal official may not take any action that would extend preferential trade treatment to, or lead to the accession to the World Trade Organization of—

(A) Iran; or

(B) any other country that is determined by the Secretary of State to be—

(i) engaged in nuclear cooperation with Iran, including the transfer or sale of any item, material, goods, or technology that can contribute to uranium enrichment or nuclear reprocessing activities of Iran; or

(ii) contributing to the ballistic missile programs of Iran.

(4) FREEZING ASSETS.—

(A) IN GENERAL.—At such time as the United States has access to the names of Iranian diplomats and representatives of other government and military or quasi-governmental institutions of Iran, the President shall take such action as may be necessary to freeze immediately the funds and other assets belonging to anyone so named, the family members of those so named, and any associates of those so named to whom assets or property of those so named were transferred on or after January 1, 2007. The action described in the preceding sentence includes requiring any United States financial institution that holds funds and assets of a person so named to report promptly to the Office of Foreign Assets Control information regarding such funds and assets.

(B) ASSET REPORTING REQUIREMENT.—Not later than 14 days after a decision is made to freeze the property or assets of any person under this paragraph, the President shall report the name of such person to the appropriate congressional committees.

(5) UNITED STATES GOVERNMENT CONTRACTS.—The United States Government may not procure, or enter into a contract for the procurement of, any goods or services from a person that meets the criteria for the imposition of sanctions under section 5(a) of the Iran Sanctions Act of 1996 (Public Law 104–172; 50 U.S.C. 1701 note).

(c) CERTIFICATION DESCRIBED.—The certification described in this subsection means a certification made by the President to Congress beginning on the date that is 15 days after the date of the enactment of this Act that the President has determined that Iran has completely, verifiably, and irreversibly dismantled all nuclear enrichment-related and reprocessing-related programs.

(d) TERMINATION OF SANCTIONS.—The sanctions described in subsection (b) shall remain in effect until such time as the President makes the certification to Congress described in subsection (c).

SEC. 8. LIABILITY OF PARENT COMPANIES FOR VIOLATIONS OF SANCTIONS BY FOREIGN ENTITIES.

(a) IN GENERAL.—In any case in which an entity engages in an act outside the United States that, if committed in the United States or by a United States person, would violate the provisions of Executive Order 12959 (60 Fed. Reg. 89) or Executive Order 13059 (62 Fed. Reg. 162), or any other prohibition on transactions with respect to Iran imposed under the authority of the International Emergency Economic Powers Act (50 U.S.C. 1701 et seq.), the parent company of the entity shall be subject to the penalties for the act to the same extent as if the parent company had engaged in the act.

(b) APPLICABILITY.—Subsection (a) shall not apply to a parent company of an entity on which the President imposed a penalty for a violation described in subsection (a) that was in effect on the date of the enactment of this Act if the parent company divests or terminates its business with such entity not later than 90 days after such date of enactment.

(c) DEFINITIONS.—In this section:

(1) ENTITY.—The term ''entity'' means a partnership, association, trust, joint venture, corporation, or other organization.

(2) PARENT COMPANY.—The term ''parent company'' means an entity that is a United States person and—

(A) the entity owns, directly or indirectly, more than 50 percent of the equity interest by vote or value in another entity;

(B) board members or employees of the entity hold a majority of board seats of another entity; or

(C) the entity otherwise controls or is able to control the actions, policies, or personnel decisions of another entity.

(3) UNITED STATES PERSON.—The term ''United States person'' means—

(A) a natural person who is a citizen of the United States or who owes permanent allegiance to the United States; and

(B) an entity that is organized under the laws of the United States, any State or territory thereof, or the District of Columbia, if natural persons described in subparagraph (A) own, directly or indirectly, more than 50 percent of the outstanding capital stock or other beneficial interest in such entity.

SEC. 9. ELIMINATION OF CERTAIN TAX INCENTIVES FOR OIL COMPANIES INVESTING IN IRAN.

(a) IN GENERAL.—Subsection (h) of section 167 of the Internal Revenue Code of 1986 (relating to amortization of geological and geophysical expenditures) is amended by adding at the end the following new paragraph:

''(6) DENIAL WHEN IRAN SANCTIONS IN EFFECT.—

''(A) IN GENERAL.—If sanctions are imposed under section 5(a) of the Iran Sanctions Act of 1996 or section 7 of the Iran Counter-Proliferation Act of 2007 (relating to sanctions with respect to the development of petroleum resources of Iran) on any member of an expanded affiliated group the common parent of which is a foreign corporation, paragraph (1) shall not apply to any expense paid or incurred by any such member in any period during which the sanctions are in effect.

''(B) EXPANDED AFFILIATED GROUP.—For purposes of subparagraph (A), the term 'expanded affiliated group' means an affiliated group as defined in section 1504(a), determined—

''(i) by substituting 'more than 50 percent' for 'at least 80 percent' each place it appears, and

''(ii) without regard to paragraphs (2), (3), and (4) of section 1504(b).''.

(b) EFFECTIVE DATE.—The amendment made by subsection (a) shall apply to expenses paid or incurred on or after January 1, 2007.

SEC. 10. WORLD BANK LOANS TO IRAN.

(a) REPORT.—Not later than 180 days after the date of the enactment of this Act, and every 180 days thereafter, the Secretary of the Treasury shall submit to the appropriate congressional committees a report on—

(1) the number of loans provided by the World Bank to Iran;

(2) the dollar amount of such loans; and

(3) the voting record of each member of the World Bank on such loans.

(b) REDUCTION OF CONTRIBUTION OF THE UNITED STATES.—The President shall reduce the total amount otherwise payable on behalf of the United States to the World Bank for fiscal year 2008 and each fiscal year thereafter by an amount that bears the same ratio to the total amount otherwise payable as—

(1) the total of the amounts provided by the Bank to entities in Iran, and for projects and activities in Iran, in the preceding fiscal year, bears to

(2) the total of the amounts provided by the Bank to all entities, and for all projects and activities, in the preceding fiscal year.

(c) ALLOCATION OF AMOUNTS NOT CONTRIBUTED TO THE WORLD BANK.—There is authorized to be appropriated to the United States Agency for International Development for fiscal year 2008 and each fiscal year thereafter an amount equal to the revenues made available as a result of the application of subsection (b). Funds appropriated pursuant to this subsection shall be made available for the Child Survival and Health Programs Fund to carry out programs relating to maternal and child health, vulnerable children, and infectious diseases other than HIV/AIDS.

SEC. 11. INCREASED CAPACITY FOR EFFORTS TO COMBAT UNLAWFUL OR TERRORIST FINANCING.

(a) FINDINGS.—The work of the Office of Terrorism and Financial Intelligence of the Department of Treasury, which includes the Office of Foreign Assets Control and the Financial Crimes Enforcement Center, is critical to ensuring that the international financial system is not used for purposes of supporting terrorism and developing weapons of mass destruction.

(b) AUTHORIZATION.—There is authorized to be appropriated to the Secretary of the Treasury for the Office of Terrorism and Financial Intelligence—

(1) $59,466,000 for fiscal year 2008; and

(2) such sums as may be necessary for each of the fiscal years 2009 and 2010.

(c) AUTHORIZATION AMENDMENT.—Section 310(d)(1) of title 31, United States Code, is amended by striking ''such sums as may be necessary for fiscal years 2002, 2003, 2004, and 2005'' and inserting ''$85,844,000 for fiscal year 2008 and such sums as may be necessary for each of the fiscal years 2009 and 2010''.

SEC. 12. NATIONAL INTELLIGENCE ESTIMATE ON IRAN.

As required under section 1213 of the John Warner National Defense Authorization Act for Fiscal Year 2007 (Public Law 109–364; 120 Stat. 2422), the Director of National Intelligence shall submit to Congress an updated, comprehensive National Intelligence Estimate on Iran.

SEC. 13. EXCHANGE PROGRAMS WITH THE PEOPLE OF IRAN.

(a) SENSE OF CONGRESS.—It is the sense of Congress that the United States should seek to enhance its friendship with the people of Iran, particularly by identifying young people of Iran to come to the United States under United States exchange programs.

(b) EXCHANGE PROGRAMS AUTHORIZED.—The President is authorized to carry out exchange programs with the people of Iran, particularly the young people of Iran. Such programs shall be carried out to the extent practicable in a manner consistent with the eligibility for assistance requirements specified in section 302(b) of the Iran Freedom Support Act (Public Law 109–293; 120 Stat. 1348).

(c) AUTHORIZATION.—Of the amounts available under the heading ''Educational and Cultural Exchange Programs'', under the heading ''Administration of Foreign Affairs'', under title IV of the Science, State, Justice, Commerce, and Related Agencies Appropriations Act, 2006 (Public Law 109–108; 119 Stat. 2321), there is authorized to be appropriated to the President to carry out this section $10,000,000 for fiscal year 2008.

SEC. 14. RADIO BROADCASTING TO IRAN.

The Broadcasting Board of Governors shall devote a greater proportion of the programming of the Radio Farda service to programs offering news and analysis to further the open communication of information and ideas to Iran.

SEC. 15. INTERNATIONAL REGIME FOR THE ASSURED SUPPLY OF NUCLEAR FUEL FOR PEACEFUL MEANS.

(a) SENSE OF CONGRESS.—It is the sense of Congress that—

(1) the Concept for a Multilateral Mechanism for Reliable Access to Nuclear Fuel, proposed by the United States, France, the Russian Federation, the Federal Republic of Germany, the United Kingdom, and the Netherlands on May 31, 2006, is welcome and should be expanded upon at the earliest possible opportunity;

(2) the proposal by the Government of the Russian Federation to bring one of its uranium enrichment facilities under international management and oversight is also a welcome development and should be encouraged by the United States;

(3) the offer by the Nuclear Threat Initiative (NTI) of $50,000,000 in funds to support the creation of an international nuclear fuel bank by the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) is also welcome, and the United States and other member states of the IAEA should pledge collectively at least an additional $100,000,000 in matching funds to fulfill the NTI proposal; and

(4) the Global Nuclear Energy Partnership, initiated by President Bush in January 2006, is intended to provide a reliable fuel supply throughout the fuel cycle and promote the nonproliferation goals of the United States.

(b) POLICY.—It is the policy of the United States to support the establishment of an international regime for the assured supply of nuclear fuel for peaceful means under a multilateral authority, such as the International Atomic Energy Agency.

(c) CONTRIBUTIONS TO IAEA.—

(1) IN GENERAL.—Subject to the requirements of paragraph (2), the President is authorized to make voluntary contributions on a grant basis to the International Atomic Energy Agency (referred to in this subsection as the ''IAEA'') for the purpose of supporting the establishment of an international nuclear fuel bank to maintain a reserve of low-enriched uranium for the production of reactor fuel to provide to eligible countries in the case of a disruption in the supply of reactor fuel by normal market mechanisms.

(2) REQUIREMENTS FOR CONTRIBUTIONS.—Before making a contribution under paragraph (1), the President shall certify to the Committee on Foreign Affairs of the House of Representatives and the Committee on Foreign Relations of the Senate that—

(A) the IAEA has received pledges in a total amount of not less than $100,000,000 from other governments or entities for the purpose of supporting the establishment of the international nuclear fuel bank referred to in paragraph (1);

(B) the international nuclear fuel bank referred to in paragraph (1) will be under the oversight of the IAEA or another multilateral authority; and

(C) the international nuclear fuel bank will provide nuclear reactor fuel to a country only if—

(i) at the time of the request for nuclear reactor fuel, the country is in full compliance with its IAEA safeguards agreement and has an additional protocol for safeguards in force;

(ii) in the case of a country that at any time prior to the request for nuclear reactor fuel has been determined to be in noncompliance with its IAEA safeguards agreement, the IAEA Board of Governors determines that the country has taken all necessary actions to satisfy any concerns of the IAEA Director General regarding the activities that led to the prior determination of noncompliance;

(iii) the country agrees to use the nuclear reactor fuel in accordance with its IAEA safeguards agreement; and

(iv) the country does not operate uranium enrichment or spent-fuel reprocessing facilities of any scale.

(3) AUTHORIZATION OF APPROPRIATIONS.—There is authorized to be appropriated $50,000,000 to carry out this section for fiscal year 2008. Amounts appropriated for this section are authorized to remain available until September 30, 2010.

SEC. 16. REPORTING REQUIREMENTS.

(a) FOREIGN INVESTMENT IN IRAN.—Not later than 180 days after the date of the enactment of this Act, and every 180 days thereafter, the Secretary of the Treasury shall submit to the appropriate congressional committees a report on—

(1) any foreign investments made in Iran's energy sector since January 1, 2007; and

(2) the determination of the President on whether each such investment qualifies as a sanctionable offense under section 5(a) of the Iran Sanctions Act of 1996 (Public Law 104–172; 50 U.S.C. 1701 note).

(b) INVESTMENT BY UNITED STATES COMPANIES IN IRAN.—Not later than 180 days after the date of the enactment of this Act, and annually thereafter, the Secretary of the Treasury shall report to the appropriate congressional committees the names of persons

that have operations or conduct business in the United States that have invested in Iran and the dollar amount of each such investment.

(c) INVESTMENT BY FEDERAL THRIFT SAVINGS PLAN IN IRAN.—Not later than 180 days after the date of the enactment of this Act, and annually thereafter, the Executive Director of the Federal Retirement Thrift Investment Board shall report to the appropriate congressional committees on any investment in entities that invest in Iran from the Thrift Savings Fund established under section 8437 of title 5, United States Code.

(d) LIST OF DESIGNATED FOREIGN TERRORIST ORGANIZATIONS.—Not later than 180 days after the date of the enactment of this Act, the Secretary of State and the Secretary of the Treasury shall report to the appropriate congressional committees on the efforts of the Secretary of State and the Secretary of the Treasury to place the Iranian Revolutionary Guards on the list of designated Foreign Terrorist Organizations under section 219 of the Immigration and Nationality Act (8 U.S.C. 1189) and the list of Specially Designated Global Terrorists under Executive Order 13224 (66 Fed. Reg. 186; relating to blocking property and prohibiting transactions with persons who commit, threaten to commit, or support terrorism).

(e) ESTABLISHMENT OF INTERNATIONAL REGIME.—Not later than 180 days after the date of the enactment of this Act, the President shall submit to the Committee on Foreign Affairs of the House of Representatives and the Committee on Foreign Relations of the Senate a report on the activities of the United States to support the establishment of an international regime for the assured supply of nuclear fuel for peaceful means under a multilateral authority, such as the International Atomic Energy Agency.

(f) EXPORT CREDITS.—Not later than 90 days after the date of the enactment of this Act, and every 90 days thereafter, the Secretary of the Treasury shall report to the appropriate congressional committees on the export credits issued by foreign banks to persons investing in the energy sector of Iran, and any fines, restrictions, or other actions taken by the President to discourage or prevent the issuance of such export credits.

Mr. DURBIN. Mr. President, today, my colleagues, Senator GORDON SMITH, Senator FRANK LAUTENBERG, and I join together to introduce bipartisan legislation to use economic and diplomatic measures to help convince the Iranian Government to turn away from its path toward the development of nuclear weapons.

The Iran Counter-Proliferation Act of 2007 would strengthen our economic sanctions regime against Iran until Iran completely, verifiably, and irreversibly dismantles all nuclear enrichment and reprocessing programs.

The bill, for example, would penalize foreign oil companies with U.S. subsidiaries doing business in Iran and would forbid the awarding of U.S. Government contracts to those who have violated our existing sanctions against Iran.

The bill reiterates the requirement to produce a National Intelligence Estimate on Iran mandated in last year's Defense Authorization bill.

In addition to these measures, the bill addresses Russia's role in exporting nuclear and military technology to Iran.

Nuclear cooperation agreements with Russia would be prohibited if that country continues to assist Iran in developing nuclear weapons. The United States could not enter into such an agreement with Moscow, absent a Presidential certification that Russia's assistance to Iran has ceased.

This week has brought some promising news. Undersecretary of State for Political Affairs Nicholas Burns testified before the Senate Banking Committee that Russia has begun applying pressure on Iran to abandon its nuclear ambitions. That is most welcome, and if the President provides the verification that Russia's nuclear assistance to Iran has ceased—and that this is a sea change and not merely a contract dispute—then our other negotiations with Russia can proceed unimpeded.

I firmly believe that we should offer positive incentives if Iran does change course and abandon its programs to develop nuclear weapons. Iran has energy needs, and we hope that they will join us and the community of nations in the peaceful acquisition of those resources.

This legislation authorizes $50 million to the International Atomic Energy Agency to support the establishment of an international nuclear fuel bank, a concept originally proposed by Congressman TOM LANTOS. This bank would maintain a reserve of low-enriched uranium for reactor fuel and make it available to countries in full compliance with IAEA safeguards which do not operate uranium enrichment or spent-fuel reprocessing facilities. It is our hope that Iran will become one of these nations.

Because members of the American public are our best ambassadors and America itself is the strongest evidence of the benefits of freedom and prosperity, this bill increases the authorization for funding for young Iranians to come to the United States as part of exchange programs.

I support efforts to engage with Tehran's leaders regarding Iraq. They should recognize that they, too, have a vested interest in regional peace and security. This bill is aimed at an issue which we cannot compromise: the Iranian acquisition of nuclear weapons.

Iran's leaders face a choice of whether to pursue a legitimate goal of peaceful nuclear power for their citizens or a dangerous strategy to develop nuclear weapons. We must provide the economic and political pressure as well as incentives to help Iran choose the path to legitimacy and nuclear nonproliferation. This legislation will help achieve that goal.

By Mr. BOND (for himself and Mr. HARKIN):

S. 971. A bill to establish the National Institute of Food and Agriculture, to provide funding for the support of fundamental agricultural research of the highest quality, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Agriculture, Nutrition, and Forestry.

Mr. BOND. Mr. President, I rise today to introduce legislation with Sen. HARKIN to establish the National Institute of Food and Agriculture to support fundamental agricultural research of the highest quality. I present this to begin a critical discussion about how we are going to ensure the United States capitalizes on new technology to maximize the benefits and minimize the costs of our agricultural production.

We remain the world leader in food and fiber production. We do it safely and through technology and the hard work of the American farmer. In the past half century, the number of people fed by a single U.S. farm has grown from 19 to 129. Our farmers and farm leaders are on the cutting edge of developing new technology. And we have seen the innovations continue to come down the pike. This has made it possible for one farmer to feed 129 people.

In addition, we export $60 billion worth of agricultural products, and we do so at less cost and at less harm to the environment than any of our competitors around the world, again, because of new practices, diligence on the part of farmers, and new technology.

In a world that has a decreasing amount of soil available for cultivation, we have a growing population and we still have 800 million children who are hungry or malnourished throughout the world. Unless we maximize technology and new practices, production will continue to overtax the world's natural resources.

Many people legitimately have raised concerns regarding new diseases and pests and related food safety issues. And they are growing. The ability of U.S. agriculture producers to maintain our world leadership in this environment is only as solid as our willingness to commit to forward-looking investments.

Now, we also know from past experience that with new technology the doors are being opened to novel new uses of renewable agricultural products in the fields of energy, medicine, and industrial products. In the future, we can make our farm fields and farm animals factories for everyday products, fuels, and medicines in a way that is efficient and better preserves our natural resources. Advances in the life sciences have come about, such as genetics, proteomics, and cell and molecular biology. They are providing the base for new and continuing agricultural innovations.

It was only about a dozen years ago that farmers in Missouri came to me to tell me about the potential that genetic engineering and plant biotechnology had for improving the production of food, and doing so with less impact on the environment, providing more nutritious food. Since that time, I have had a wonderful, continuing education, not in how it works but what it can do.

We know now, for example, that in hungry areas of the world as many as half a million children go blind from Vitamin A deficiency, and maybe a

million die from this deficiency. Through plant biotechnology, the International Rice Research Institute in the Philippines and others have developed Golden Rice, taking a gene from the sunflower, a beta-carotene gene, and they enrich the rice. The Golden Rice now has that Vitamin A, and that is going to make a significant difference in dealing with malnutrition.

We also know that in many areas of the world, where agricultural production has overtaxed the land, where drought has cut the production, where virus has plagued production, the way we can make farmers self-sufficient and restore the farm economy in many of these countries, is through plant biotechnology. But this is just the beginning. This legislation I am introducing today seeks to lay the foundation for tremendous advances in the future.

This legislation stems from findings and recommendations produced by a distinguished group of scientists working on the Agricultural Research, Economics and Education Task Force, which I was honored to be able to include in the 2002 farm bill. The distinguished task force was led by Dr. William H. Danforth, of St. Louis, the brother of our former distinguished colleague, Senator Jack Danforth. Dr. Bill Danforth has a tremendous reputation in science and in education, with a commitment to human welfare and is known worldwide. He was joined by Dr. Nancy Betts, the University of Nebraska; Mr. Michael Bryan, president of BBI International; Dr. Richard Coombe, the Watershed Agricultural Council; Dr. Victor Lechtenbert, Purdue University; Dr. Luis Sequeira, the University of Wisconsin; Dr. Robert Wideman, the University of Arkansas; and Dr. H. Alan Wood, Mississippi State University.

I extend my congratulations and my sincere gratitude to Dr. Danforth and his team for providing the basis and the roadmap to ensure we have the mechanisms in place to solve the problems and capitalize on the opportunities in agricultural research. The full report of the task force can be found at www.ars.usda.gov/research.htm.

In summary, that study concludes that it is absolutely necessary we reinvigorate and forward focus our technology to meet the responsibilities of our time. New investment is critical for the world's consumers, the protection of our natural resources, the standard of living for Americans who labor in rural America, and for the well-being of the hungry people and the needy people throughout the world.

This legislation is supported by the some 22 Member and Associate Member Societies of the Federation of American Societies for Experimental Biology, as well as the Institute of Food Technologists, American Society of Agronomy, Crop Science Society of America, Soil Science Society of America, the Council for Agricultural Research, the National Coalition for Food and Agricultural Research, the American Soybean Association, National Cattlemen's Beef Association, National Chicken Council, National Corn Growers Association, National Farmers Union, National Milk Producers Federation, National Pork Producers Council, National Turkey Federation, Association of American Veterinary Medical Colleges and the United Fresh Fruit and Vegetable Association.

I look forward to pursuing this vision in the 110th Congress. I invite my colleagues who are interested in science and research to review this report, to look at this measure, to join with me and Senator HARKIN to talk about moving forward on what I think will be a tremendous opportunity to improve agriculture and its benefits to all our populations.

I ask unanimous consent that the text of the bill be printed in the RECORD.

There being no objection, the material was ordered to be printed in the RECORD, as follows:

S. 971

Be it enacted by the Senate and House of Representatives of the United States of America in Congress assembled,

SECTION 1. SHORT TITLE.

This Act may be cited as the ''National Institute of Food and Agriculture Act of 2007''.

SEC. 2. FINDINGS AND PURPOSES.

(a) FINDINGS.—Congress finds that—

(1) the task force established under section 7404 of the Farm Security and Rural Investment Act of 2002 (7 U.S.C. 3101 note; 116 Stat. 457)—

(A) conducted an exhaustive review of agricultural research in the United States; and

(B) evaluated the merits of establishing 1 or more national institutes focused on disciplines important to the progress of food and agricultural science;

(2) according to findings and recommendations provided to Congress by the task force—

(A) agriculture in the United States faces critical challenges, including impending crises in the food, agricultural, and natural resource systems of the United States;

(B) exotic diseases and pests threaten crops and livestock;

(C) the United States faces a public health epidemic due to the increasing number of overweight and obese Americans;

(D) agriculturally-related environmental degradation is a serious problem for the United States and other parts of the world;

(E) certain animal diseases threaten human health; and

(F) agricultural producers in the United States of several primary crops are no longer the world's lowest-cost producers;

(3) to meet those critical challenges, it is essential that the United States ensure that the agricultural innovation that has been so successful in the past continues in the future;

(4) agricultural innovation has resulted in hybrid and higher-yielding varieties of basic crops and enhanced the global food supply by increasing yields on existing acres;

(5) since 1960, the global population has tripled, but there has been no net increase in the quantity of land in the United States under cultivation;

(6) as of the date of enactment of this Act, only 1.5 percent of the population of the United States provides food and fiber to partially supply the needs of the United States;

(7)(A) agriculture, fundamental agricultural research, and fundamental sciences play a major role in maintaining the health and welfare of all people of the United States and maintaining the land and water of the United States; and

(B) that role must be expanded;

(8) research that leads to understandings of the ways in which cells and organisms function is critical to continued innovation in agriculture in the United States;

(9) future innovations developed as a result of those understandings are dependent on fundamental scientific research and would be enhanced by ideas and technologies from other fields of science and research;

(10) opportunities to advance fundamental knowledge of benefit to agriculture in the United States have never been greater;

(11) many of those new opportunities are the result of amazing progress in the life sciences during recent decades, attributable in large part to the provision made by the Federal Government through the National Institutes of Health and the National Science Foundation;

(12) new technologies and new concepts have expedited advances in the fields of genetics, cell and molecular biology, and proteomics;

(13) much of that scientific knowledge is ready to be used in agriculture and food sciences through a sustained, disciplined research effort at an institute dedicated to conducting that research;

(14) publicly-sponsored research is essential to continued agricultural innovation—

(A) to mitigate or harmonize the long-term effects of agriculture on the environment;

(B) to enhance the long-term sustainability of agriculture; and

(C) to improve the public health and welfare;

(15) competitive, peer-reviewed fundamental agricultural research is best suited to promoting the research from which breakthrough innovations that agriculture and society require will come;

(16) it is in the national interest to dedicate additional funds on a long-term, ongoing basis to an institute dedicated to funding competitive, peer-reviewed grant programs that support and promote the highest caliber of fundamental agricultural research;

(17) the capability of the United States to be internationally competitive in agriculture is threatened by inadequate investment in research;

(18) to be successful over the long term, grant-receiving institutions must be adequately reimbursed for costs of conducting agricultural research if the institutions are to pursue that kind of research; and

(19) to meet those challenges, address those needs, and to provide for vitally needed agricultural innovation, it is in the national interest to provide sufficient Federal funds over the long term to fund a significant program of fundamental agricultural research through an independent national institute.

(b) PURPOSE.—The purpose of this Act is to establish a national institute—

(1) to ensure that the technological superiority of agriculture in the United States effectively serves the people of the United States in the coming decades; and

(2) to support and promote fundamental agricultural research of the highest caliber to achieve the goals of—

(A) increasing the international competitiveness of agriculture in the United States;

(B) developing foods and expanding knowledge to improve diet, nutrition, and health, and to combat obesity;

(C) decreasing the dependence of the United States on foreign sources of petroleum by—

(i) developing biobased fuels and products;

(ii) enhancing methods of production at biobased fuels refineries;

(iii) reducing energy consumption at biobased fuel refineries; and

(iv) increasing the use of coproducts of biobased fuels production;

(D) creating new and more useful products from plants and animals;

(E) improving food safety to reduce the incidence of foodborne illness in the United States;

(F) improving food security by protecting plants and animals in the United States from insects, diseases, and the threat of bioterrorism;

(G) enhancing agricultural sustainability;

(H) improving the environment;

(I) strengthening the economies of rural communities in the United States;

(J) improving farm profitability and the viability and competitiveness of small and moderate-sized farms;

(K) strengthening national security by improving the agricultural productivity of subsistence farmers in developing countries to combat hunger and the political instability that hunger produces;

(L) assisting in modernizing and revitalizing the agricultural research facilities of the United States at institutions of higher education, independent, nonprofit research institutions, and consortia of those institutions, through capital investment; and

(M) achieving such other goals, and meeting such other needs, as the Secretary or the Institute determines to be appropriate.

SEC. 3. DEFINITIONS.

In this Act:

(1) COUNCIL.—The term ''Council'' means the Standing Council of Advisors established by section 4(d)(1).

(2) DEPARTMENT.—The term ''Department'' means the Department of Agriculture.

(3) DIRECTOR.—The term ''Director'' means the Director of the Institute.

(4) FUNDAMENTAL AGRICULTURAL RESEARCH; FUNDAMENTAL SCIENCE.—The terms ''fundamental agricultural research'' and ''fundamental science'' mean research or science that, as determined by the Secretary—

(A) advances the frontiers of knowledge so as to lead to practical results or to further scientific discovery; and

(B) has an effect on agriculture, food, human health, or another purpose of this Act as described in section 2(b).

(5) INSTITUTE.—The term ''Institute'' means the National Institute of Food and Agriculture established by section 4(a).

(6) MULTIDISCIPLINARY GRANT.—The term ''multidisciplinary grant'' means a grant provided to 2 or more collaborating investigators to carry out coordinated, multidisciplinary research programs involving multiple disciplines that has been approved by the Institute.

(7) PROJECT GRANT.—The term ''project grant'' means a grant provided to 1 or more principal investigators to conduct research that has been approved by the Institute.

(8) SECRETARY.—The term ''Secretary'' means the Secretary of Agriculture.

(9) STATE.—The term ''State'' means—

(A) each of the several States of the United States;

(B) the District of Columbia;

(C) the Commonwealth of Puerto Rico;

(D) Guam;

(E) American Samoa;

(F) the Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands;

(G) the Federated States of Micronesia;

(H) the Republic of the Marshall Islands;

(I) the Republic of Palau; and

(J) the United States Virgin Islands.

(10) UNITED STATES.—The term ''United States'', when used in a geographical sense, means all of the States.

SEC. 4. ESTABLISHMENT; COMPOSITION.

(a) ESTABLISHMENT.—There is established within the Department an agency to be known as the ''National Institute of Food and Agriculture''.

(b) LOCATION.—The location of the Institute shall be determined by the Secretary.

(c) COMPOSITION.—The Institute shall be composed of the Council (including committees and offices established under section 5) and the Director.

(d) STANDING COUNCIL OF ADVISORS.—

(1) ESTABLISHMENT.—There is established a Standing Council of Advisors.

(2) COMPOSITION.—The Council shall be composed of 25 members, including—

(A) the Director; and

(B) 24 members appointed by the Secretary, with the concurrence of the Director, of whom—

(i) 12 members shall be highly-qualified scientists who, as determined by the Secretary—

(I) are not employees of the Federal Government;

(II)(aa) have expertise in the fields of agricultural research, science, food and nutrition, or related appropriate fields; and

(bb) represent a diversity of those fields;

(III) are appropriate for membership on the Council solely on the basis of established records of distinguished service; and

(IV) collectively represent the views of agricultural research and scientific leaders in all regions of the United States; and

(ii) 12 stakeholders shall be distinguished members of the public, as determined by the Secretary, including—

(I) representatives of agricultural organizations and industry; and

(II) individuals with expertise in the environment, subsistence agriculture, energy, food and nutrition, and human health and disease.

(3) TERM.—The members of the Council shall serve staggered, 4-year terms, as determined by the Secretary.

(4) MEETINGS.—The Council shall meet at the call of the Director and the Secretary, but not less often than annually.

(5) CHAIRPERSON AND VICE CHAIRPERSON.—The Council shall elect a Chairperson and Vice Chairperson from among the members of the Council.

(6) DUTIES.—The Council shall—

(A) assist the Director in—

(i) establishing research priorities of the Institute; and

(ii) reviewing, judging, and maintaining the relevance of the programs of the Institute;

(B) review all proposals approved by the scientific committees established under section 5(a)(1) to ensure, to the maximum extent practicable, that the purposes of this Act are being met; and

(C) through the meetings described in paragraph (4), provide an interface between scientists and stakeholders to ensure, to the maximum extent practicable, that the Institute is coordinating national goals with realistic scientific opportunities.

(e) DIRECTOR.—

(1) IN GENERAL.—The Institute shall be headed by a Director, who shall be an individual who is—

(A) a distinguished scientist; and

(B) appointed by the President (after taking into consideration recommendations provided by the Council), by and with the advice and consent of the Senate.

(2) TERM.—The Director shall serve for a single, 6-year term.

(3) COMPENSATION.—The Director shall receive basic pay at the rate provided for level II of the Executive Schedule under section 5513 of title 5, United States Code.

(4) SUPERVISION.—The Director shall report directly to the Secretary.

(5) AUTHORITY AND RESPONSIBILITIES OF DIRECTOR.—

(A) IN GENERAL.—Except as otherwise specifically provided in this Act, the Director shall—

(i) exercise all of the authority provided to the Institute by this Act (including any powers and functions delegated to the Director by the Council);

(ii) in consultation with the Council, formulate programs in accordance with policies adopted by the Institute;

(iii) establish committees and offices within the Institute in accordance with section 5;

(iv) establish procedures for the peer review of research funded by the Institute;

(v) establish procedures for the provision and administration of grants by the Institute in accordance with this Act;

(vi) assess the personnel needs of agricultural research in the areas supported by the Institute, and, if determined to be appropriate by the Director or the Secretary, for other areas of food and agricultural research; and

(vii) cooperate with the Council to plan programs that will help meet agricultural personnel needs in the future, including portable fellowship and training programs in fundamental agricultural research and fundamental science.

(B) FINALITY OF ACTIONS.—An action taken by the Director in accordance with this Act (or in accordance with the terms of a delegation of authority from the Council) shall be final and binding upon the Institute.

(C) DELEGATION AND REDELEGATION OF FUNCTIONS.—

(i) IN GENERAL.—Except as provided in clauses (ii) and (iii), the Director may, from time to time and as the Director considers to be appropriate, authorize the performance by any other officer, agency, or employee of the Institute of any of the functions of the Director under this Act, including functions delegated to the Director by the Council.

(ii) POLICYMAKING FUNCTIONS.—The Director may not redelegate policymaking functions delegated to the Director by the Council.

(iii) CONTRACTS, GRANTS, AND OTHER ARRANGEMENTS.—The Director may enter into contracts and other arrangements, and provide grants, in accordance with this Act—

(I) only with the prior approval of the Council or under authority delegated by the Council; and

(II) subject to such conditions as the Council may specify.

(iv) REPORTING.—The Director shall promptly report each contract or other arrangement entered into, each grant awarded, and each other action of the Director taken, under clause (iii) to the Committee on Agriculture, Nutrition, and Forestry of the Senate and the Committee on Agriculture of the House of Representatives.

(6) STATUS ON COUNCIL.—

(A) IN GENERAL.—The Director shall be an ex officio member of the Council.

(B) COMPENSATION AND TENURE.—Except with respect to compensation and tenure, the service of the Director on the Council shall be coordinated with the service of other members of the Council.

(C) VOTING; ELECTION.—The Director shall be—

(i) a voting member of the Council; and

(ii) eligible for election by the Council as Chairperson or Vice Chairperson of the Council.

(7) STAFF.—

(A) IN GENERAL.—Subject to this paragraph, the Director shall recruit and hire such senior staff and other personnel as are

necessary to assist the Director in carrying out this Act.

(B) SENIOR STAFF.—Each individual hired as senior staff of the Director shall—

(i) be a highly accomplished scientist, as determined by the Director;

(ii) be recruited from the active scientific community; and

(iii) be appointed and serve on the basis of 4-year, rotating appointments.

(C) TEMPORARY STAFF.—Staff hired by the Director under this paragraph may include scientists and other technical and professional personnel hired for limited terms, or on temporary bases, including individuals on leave of absence from academic, industrial, or research institutions to work for the Institute.

(D) COMPENSATION.—

(i) IN GENERAL.—Except as provided in clause (ii), subject to such policies as the Council shall periodically prescribe, the Director may fix the compensation of staff hired under this paragraph without regard to the provisions of chapter 51 and subchapter III of chapter 53 of title 5, United States Code, relating to classification of positions and General Schedule pay rates.

(ii) MAXIMUM RATE OF PAY.—The rate of pay for an individual hired under this paragraph shall not exceed the rate payable for level V of the Executive Schedule under section 5316 of title 5, United States Code.

(8) REPORTING AND CONSULTATION.—The Director shall—

(A) periodically report to the Secretary with respect to activities carried out by the Institute; and

(B) consult regularly with the Secretary to ensure, to the maximum extent practicable, that—

(i) research of the Institute is relevant to agriculture in the United States and otherwise serves the national interest; and

(ii) the research of the Institute supplements and enhances, and does not replace, research conducted or funded by—

(I) other agencies of the Department;

(II) the National Science Foundation; or

(III) the National Institutes of Health.

SEC. 5. COMMITTEES AND OFFICES OF INSTITUTE.

(a) STANDING SCIENTIFIC COMMITTEES.—

(1) IN GENERAL.—The Director may establish such number of standing scientific committees within the Institute as the Director determines to be appropriate.

(2) COMPOSITION.—A standing scientific committee established under paragraph (1) shall consist of such members of the Council appointed under section 4(d)(2)(B)(i) as the Director may select.

(3) TERM.—Members of a standing scientific committee established under paragraph (1) shall serve for staggered, 4-year terms, as determined by the Director.

(4) REVIEW OF PROPOSALS.—

(A) IN GENERAL.—A standing scientific committee shall apply rigorous merit review to research proposals received by the Institute to ensure, to the maximum extent practicable, that research funded by the Institute is scientifically of high quality.

(B) DETERMINATION OF SCIENTIFIC MERIT.—A research proposal received by the Institute and reviewed by a standing scientific committee under subparagraph (A) shall be—

(i) assigned a score based on the scientific merit of the proposal, as determined by the standing scientific committee; and

(ii) if approved by the standing scientific committee, forwarded, along with the score, to the Council for final review.

(C) DECLINATION OF PROPOSALS.—If the Council determines that a research proposal forwarded under this paragraph does not meet standards of scientific review established by a standing scientific committee or any similar standard established by the Director, the Council shall decline to recommend the research proposal for funding by the Institute.

(5) AD HOC REVIEW MEMBERS.—The Director may supplement a standing scientific committee under this subsection with 1 or more ad hoc reviewers in a case in which a research proposal received by the Institute requires specialized knowledge not represented on that or any other standing scientific committee.

(b) OFFICES.—

(1) OFFICE OF ADVANCED SCIENCE AND APPLICATION.—

(A) ESTABLISHMENT.—The Director shall establish within the Institute an Office of Advanced Science and Application (referred to in this paragraph as the ''Office'').

(B) DUTIES.—The Office shall—

(i) closely monitor national needs and advances in research with the goal of identifying pressing problems for which solutions are realistically achievable through research;

(ii) coordinate creative talent from diverse disciplines to bridge potential gaps between fundamental agricultural research and high-priority, practical needs; and

(iii) recommend to the Director ways in which existing fundamental agricultural research may be applied to the most urgent problems addressed by the Institute.

(C) STAFF.—

(i) IN GENERAL.—The Office shall employ a small, focused staff of rotating experts in science and agriculture.

(ii) TALENT POOL; TERM.—Primary staff of the Office—

(I) shall be appointed from the ranks of active scientists; and

(II) shall serve terms of not to exceed 3 years.

(D) INTENSIVE STUDY GROUPS.—The Office shall—

(i) focus primarily on the most urgent problems addressed by the Institute; and

(ii) assemble such intensive study groups as are necessary to address those problems.

(E) REPORTS.—The Office shall submit to the Director and the Council periodic reports that—

(i) describe the activities being carried out by the Office; and

(ii) recommended new research priorities for the Office, as appropriate.

(2) OFFICE OF SCIENTIFIC ASSESSMENT AND LIAISON.—

(A) ESTABLISHMENT.—The Director shall establish within the Institute an Office of Scientific Assessment and Liaison (referred to in this paragraph as the ''Office'').

(B) DUTIES.—The Office shall—

(i) monitor the effectiveness of the scientific expenditures by the Institute;

(ii) oversee the coordination of research efforts of the Institute with those of other programs;

(iii) assess the effectiveness of programs of the Institute by evaluating—

(I) the quality of the science funded by the Institute, using such tools as are readily available; and

(II) the contributions of the Institute to the national research effort, including ways in which the Institute collaborates and cooperates with the Department and with other Federal agencies; and

(iv) encourage cooperative approaches among various research agencies within the Federal Government.

(3) OFFICE OF SCIENTIFIC PERSONNEL.—

(A) ESTABLISHMENT.—The Director shall establish within the Institute an Office of Scientific Personnel (referred to in this paragraph as the ''Office'').

(B) DUTIES.—The Office shall—

(i) cooperate with scientific and agricultural experts to assess—

(I) the number of scientists in agriculture and related fields in the United States; and

(II) how many additional scientists in agriculture and related fields are needed to meet the purposes of this Act; and

(ii) generate and maintain data that may assist the Director and the Council in planning appropriate Institute fellowship and training programs.

(4) ADDITIONAL OFFICES.—The Director may establish such additional offices within the Institute as the Director or the Council determines to be necessary to carry out the duties of the Institute under this Act.

SEC. 6. DUTIES.

(a) IN GENERAL.—The Institute shall provide competitive, peer-reviewed grants in accordance with section 8(b) to support and promote the highest quality of fundamental agricultural research, including grants to fund research proposals submitted by—

(1) individual scientists;

(2) research centers composed of a single institution or multiple institutions; and

(3) other individuals and entities from the private and public sectors, including researchers of the Department and other Federal agencies.

(b) REPORT TO CONGRESS.—Not later than December 31, 2008, and biennially thereafter, the Institute shall submit to the Secretary, the Committee on Agriculture, Nutrition, and Forestry of the Senate, and the Committee on Agriculture of the House of Representatives a comprehensive report that describes the research funded and other activities carried out by the Institute during the period covered by the report.

SEC. 7. POWERS.

(a) IN GENERAL.—The Institute shall have such authority as is necessary to carry out this Act, including the authority—

(1) to promulgate such regulations as the Institute considers to be necessary for governance of operations, organization, and personnel;

(2) to make such expenditures as are necessary to carry out this Act;

(3) to enter into contracts or other arrangements, or modifications of contracts or other arrangements—

(A) to provide for the conduct, by organizations or individuals in the United States (including other agencies of the Department, Federal agencies, and agencies of foreign countries), of such fundamental agricultural research, research relating to fundamental science, or related activities as the Institute considers to be necessary to carry out this Act; and

(B) at the request of the Secretary, for the conduct of such specific fundamental agricultural research as is in the national interest or is otherwise of critical importance, as determined by the Secretary, with the concurrence of the Institute;

(4) to make advance, progress, and other payments relating to research and scientific activities without regard to subsections (a) and (b) of section 3324 of title 31, United States Code;

(5) to acquire by purchase, lease, loan, gift, or condemnation, and to hold and dispose of by grant, sale, lease, or loan, real and personal property of all kinds necessary for, or resulting from, the exercise of authority under this Act;

(6) to receive and use donated funds, if the funds are donated without restriction other than that the funds be used in furtherance of 1 or more of the purposes of the Institute;

(7) to publish or arrange for the publication of research and scientific information to further the full dissemination of information

of scientific value consistent with the national interest, without regard to section 501 of title 44, United States Code;

(8)(A) to accept and use the services of voluntary and uncompensated personnel; and

(B) to provide such transportation and subsistence as are authorized by section 5703 of title 5, United States Code, for individuals serving without compensation;

(9) to prescribe, with the approval of the Comptroller General of the United States, the extent to which vouchers for funds expended under contracts for scientific or engineering research shall be subject to itemization or substantiation prior to payment, without regard to the limitations of other laws relating to the expenditure and accounting of public funds;

(10) to arrange with and reimburse the Secretary, and the heads of other Federal agencies, for the performance of any activity that the Institute is authorized to conduct; and

(11) to enter into contracts, at the request of the Secretary, for the carrying out of such specific agricultural research as is in the national interest or otherwise of critical importance, as determined by the Secretary, with the consent of the Institute.

(b) TRANSFER OF RESEARCH FUNDS OF OTHER DEPARTMENTS OR AGENCIES.—Funds available to the Secretary, or any other department or agency of the Federal Government, for agricultural or scientific research shall be—

(1) available for transfer, with the approval of the Secretary or the head of the other appropriate department or agency involved, in whole or in part, to the Institute for use in providing grants in accordance with the purposes for which the funds were made available; and

(2) if so transferred, expendable by the Institute for those purposes.

(c) RESTRICTION ON ACTIVITIES.—The Institute—

(1) shall be a grant-making entity only; and

(2) shall not—

(A) conduct fundamental agricultural research or research relating to fundamental science; or

(B) operate any laboratory or pilot facility.

SEC. 8. BUDGET CONSIDERATIONS.

(a) BUDGETARY MANAGEMENT GOALS.—The Director, in coordination with the Secretary, shall manage the budget of the Institute to achieve the goals of—

(1) providing sufficient funds over a period of time to achieve the purposes of this Act;

(2) fostering outstanding scientific talent, and directing that talent toward work on issues relating to agriculture; and

(3) adequately reimbursing grant-receiving institutions for costs to encourage the pursuit of agriculturally-related research.

(b) BUDGETARY GUIDELINES FOR GRANTS.—

(1) IN GENERAL.—To achieve the goals described in subsection (a), the Institute shall, to the maximum extent practicable, ensure that grants awarded for each fiscal year comply with the guidelines described in paragraphs (2) and (3).

(2) PROJECT GRANTS.—With respect to project grants, to the maximum extent practicable—

(A) the Institute shall award approximately 1,000 new project grants annually;

(B) the average project grant amount, including overhead, shall be approximately $225,000 for each fiscal year, as adjusted in accordance with the Consumer Price Index for all-urban consumers, United States city average, as published by the Bureau of Labor Statistics;

(C) a project grant shall be provided for a maximum period of 5 years, with an average award duration of 3.5 years;

(D) the Institute shall require the recipients of a project grant to submit appropriate reports on research carried out using funds from the project grant; and

(E) the Institute shall provide such number of training project grants as the Director or the Institute determines to be appropriate.

(3) MULTIDISCIPLINARY GRANTS.—With respect to multidisciplinary grants, to the maximum extent practicable—

(A) for each of fiscal years 2008 through 2011, the Institute shall provide 10 multidisciplinary grants;

(B) for fiscal year 2012 and subsequent fiscal years, the Institute shall provide multidisciplinary grants to fund not fewer than 40 research centers, on the conditions that—

(i) sufficient funds are available; and

(ii) a sufficient number of qualified research proposals are received;

(C) the research centers provided multidisciplinary grants may be composed of a single institution or multiple institutions;

(D) the average multidisciplinary grant amount, including overhead, shall be approximately $3,000,000 for each fiscal year, as adjusted in accordance with the Consumer Price Index for all-urban consumers, United States city average, as published by the Bureau of Labor Statistics;

(E) a multidisciplinary grant shall be provided for a maximum period of 5 years;

(F) in the aggregate, multidisciplinary grants provided under this paragraph for a fiscal year shall represent approximately 15 percent of the total grants provided by the Institute for the fiscal year, on the condition that a sufficient number of qualified research proposals are received for the fiscal year; and

(G) merit review of the research proposal relating to the multidisciplinary grant is conducted to ensure, to the maximum extent practicable, that only quality research proposals are funded.

(c) INDIRECT COSTS.—As part of a project grant or multidisciplinary grant provided under this Act, the Institute shall pay indirect costs of conducting research, including the costs of overhead, to the recipient of the grant at a rate that is not less than any standard negotiated rate applicable to similar grants made by the National Institutes of Health or the National Science Foundation, as of the date of enactment of this Act, as determined by the Secretary.

SEC. 9. FUNDING.

(a) IN GENERAL.—Of the funds of the Commodity Credit Corporation, the Secretary shall use to carry out this Act—

(1) for fiscal year 2008, $245,000,000 for project grants, of which not more than $20,000,000 shall be made available for administrative expenses incurred by the Institute;

(2) for fiscal year 2009, $515,000,000, of which—

(A) not less than $450,000,000 shall be made available for project grants;

(B) not less than $30,000,000 shall be made available for multidisciplinary grants; and

(C) not more than $35,000,000 shall be available for administrative expenses incurred by the Institute;

(3) for fiscal year 2010, $780,000,000, of which—

(A) not less than $675,000,000 shall be made available for project grants;

(B) not less than $60,000,000 shall be made available for multidisciplinary grants; and

(C) not more than $45,000,000 shall be made available for administrative expenses incurred by the Institute;

(4) for fiscal year 2011, $935,000,000, of which—

(A) not less than $800,000,000 shall be made available for project grants;

(B) not less than $90,000,000 shall be made available for multidisciplinary grants; and

(C) not more than $45,000,000 shall be made available for administrative expenses incurred by the Institute; and

(5) for fiscal year 2012 and each fiscal year thereafter, $966,000,000, of which—

(A) not less than $800,000,000 shall be made available for project grants;

(B) not less than $120,000,000 shall be made available for multidisciplinary grants; and

(C) not more than $46,000,000 shall be made available for administrative expenses incurred by the Institute.

(b) LIMITATION.—For fiscal year 2012 and each subsequent fiscal year, administrative expenses paid by the Institute shall not exceed 5 percent of the total expenditures of the Institute for the fiscal year.

Mr. HARKIN. Mr. President, today, Senator BOND and I are introducing the National Institute of Food and Agriculture Act of 2007. The 2002 farm bill created a Research, Education and Economics Task Force within the Department of Agriculture (USDA)to evaluate agricultural research. A key recommendation of this task force was to create a National Institute for Food and Agriculture (NIFA) within USDA in order to support fundamental food and agricultural research to ensure that American agriculture remains competitive now and in the future. This bill does exactly that. The NIFA would be a grant-making agency that funds food and agricultural research through a competitive, peer-reviewed process. These funds would be in addition to, not as a substitute for, current research programs at USDA's Agricultural Research Service (ARS) and Cooperative State Research, Education, and Extension Service (CSREES).

American agriculture must ensure that our Nation continues to produce safe and nutritious food for an increasing population.

Other challenges include renewable energy production, rural development, food safety, nutrition and quality, and conserving the environment. The Senate Committee on Agriculture, Nutrition, and Forestry held a hearing on agricultural research on March 7 of this year, and it became clear to me that what we need in agricultural research is not only more resources, but also more competitive funding while at the same time, preserving the capacity funding necessary for intramural research, extension and education at USDA and at our land-grant institutions. The NIFA Act of 2007 contains $3.4 billion of mandatory funding for the next 5 years to provide the food and agriculture sector with the innovation needed to confront these and other challenges facing American farmers and consumers of food and agriculture products now and in the future. Over a 10-year period, this legislation would provide for research a little over 1 percent of total mandatory funding at the Department of Agriculture. One percent is certainly a relatively modest investment given the public benefits of agricultural research, the results of which we reap every day as we consume a safe and affordable food supply, and as we look to increase farm-based renewable energy and biobased products. If we do not invest in research

now, increased globalization and competition from foreign markets will become real threats to U.S. agriculture. I encourage my colleagues to join me in supporting the National Institute of Food and Agriculture Act of 2007.

By Mr. LAUTENBERG (for himself, Mr. KENNEDY, Mrs. MURRAY, Mr. SCHUMER, Mrs. BOXER, Mr. HARKIN, and Mr. BROWN):

S. 972. A bill to provide for the reduction of adolescent pregnancy, HIV rates, and other sexually transmitted diseases, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Health, Education, Labor, and Pensions.

Mr. LAUTENBERG. Mr. President, I rise to introduce the Responsible Education About Life or ''REAL'' Act along with my cosponsors Senators KENNEDY, MURRAY, SCHUMER, BOXER, and HARKIN.

The REAL Act aims to reduce adolescent pregnancy, HIV rates, and other sexually transmitted diseases, by providing Federal funds for comprehensive sex education in schools.

Comprehensive sex education is medically accurate, age appropriate education that includes information about both contraception and abstinence. It is an approach that tells our kids the truth.

The REAL act will help young people make smart choices and give them all the information—not just the ''abstinence only'' side of the story.

For years, taxpayer dollars have been flooded into unproven ''abstinence-only'' programs—while no federal program is dedicated to comprehensive sex education.

Under the Bush administration, Federal support for ''abstinence-only'' education has expanded rapidly.

The proof is in the numbers. In the last 4 years, the Federal government has spent over $680 million dollars on ''abstinence only'' programs. This year President Bush is asking for another $204 million dollars for ''abstinence only'' education despite little evidence that these programs actually work.

Would you like to know how much money the government has devoted to comprehensive sex education programs over this same time? Zero dollars.

Much of the taxpayer funds going to ''abstinence-only'' programs are essentially being wasted.

After years of ''abstinence only'' programs, the United States still has the highest rates of teen pregnancy in the industrialized world and approximately 50 young Americans a day, an average of two an hour, are infected with HIV.

We have tried denying young people information about contraception and STD prevention and now it is time to provide them with medically accurate comprehensive sex education.

Comprehensive sex education simply works better.

It is a fact that teenagers who receive sex education that includes discussion of contraception are more likely to delay sexual activity than those who receive abstinence-only education.

The American public knows what works. Parents do not want sexual education programs limited to abstinence in schools. More than eight in 10 Americans favor comprehensive sexuality education programs that include information about contraception over those that only promote abstinence.

The stakes are high: of the 19 million cases of sexually transmitted diseases every year in the United States, almost half of them strike young people between the ages of 15 and 24.

These aren't just numbers. These are our sons and daughters whose health and well-being are jeopardized when ideology comes before sound public policy.

That is why we are introducing this legislation today. It's time for a more balanced approach; it's time to protect out kids, and it's time to get REAL.

The REAL Act is step in a more effective direction. It brings sex education up-to-date in a way that will reflect the serious issues and real life situations millions of young people find themselves in every year.

Young people have a right to accurate and complete information that could protect their health and even save their lives. I urge my colleagues to support the REAL Act and make it possible to give young people the tools to make safe and responsible decisions.

I ask unanimous consent that the text of the bill be printed in the RECORD.

There being no objection, the material was ordered to be printed in the RECORD, as follows:

S. 972

Be it enacted by the Senate and House of Representatives of the United States of America in Congress assembled,

SECTION 1. SHORT TITLE.

This Act may be cited as the ''Responsible Education About Life Act''.

SEC. 2. FINDINGS.

The Congress finds as follows:

(1) The American Medical Association (''AMA''), the American Nurses Association (''ANA''), the American Academy of Pediatrics (''AAP''), the American College of Obstetricians and Gynecologists (''ACOG''), the American Public Health Association (''APHA''), and the Society of Adolescent Medicine (''SAM'') support responsible sexuality education that includes information about both abstinence and contraception.

(2) Recent scientific reports by the Institute of Medicine, the American Medical Association, and the Office on National AIDS Policy stress the need for sexuality education that includes messages about abstinence and provides young people with information about contraception for the prevention of teen pregnancy, HIV/AIDS and other sexually transmitted diseases (''STDs'').

(3) Government-funded abstinence-only-until-marriage programs are precluded from discussing contraception except to talk about failure rates. An October 2006 report from the Government Accountability Office concluded that the current administration of abstinence-only-until-marriage programs by the Department of Health and Human Services (''HHS'') fails to require medical accuracy of the vast majority of funded programs and that no regular monitoring of medical accuracy is being carried out by HHS. The Government Accountability Office also reported on the Department's total lack of appropriate and customary measurements to determine if funded programs are effective. In addition, a separate letter from the Government Accountability Office in October 2006 to the Secretary of Health and Human Services Michael Leavitt contained a legal finding that the Department was in violation of Federal law, in particular section 317P(c)(2) of the Public Health Services Act (42 U.S.C. 247b–17(c)(2)), for not requiring abstinence-only-until-marriage programs to provide full and medically accurate information about the effectiveness of condoms. The Department has argued that the abstinence-only-until-marriage programs are exempt from the law; however, the Government Accountability Office disagrees.

(4) A 2006 statement from the American Public Health Association (''APHA'') ''recognizes the importance of abstinence education, but only as part of a comprehensive sexuality education program . . . APHA calls for repealing current federal funding for abstinence-only programs and replacing it with funding for a new Federal program to promote comprehensive sexuality education, combining information about abstinence with age-appropriate sexuality education.''.

(5) The Society for Adolescent Medicine (''SAM'') in a 2006 position paper found the following: ''Efforts to promote abstinence should be provided within health education programs that provide adolescents with complete and accurate information about sexual health, including information about concepts of healthy sexuality, sexual orientation and tolerance, personal responsibility, risks of HIV and other STIs and unwanted pregnancy, access to reproductive health care, and benefits and risks of condoms and other contraceptive methods... Current funding for abstinence-only programs should be replaced with funding for programs that offer comprehensive, medically accurate sexuality education''.

(6) Research shows that teenagers who receive sexuality education that includes discussion of contraception are more likely than those who receive abstinence-only messages to delay sexual activity and to use contraceptives when they do become sexually active.

(7) Comprehensive sexuality education programs respect the diversity of values and beliefs represented in the community and will complement and augment the sexuality education children receive from their families.

(8) The median age of puberty is 13 years and the average age of marriage is over 26 years old. American teens need access to full, complete, and medically and factually accurate information regarding sexuality, including contraception, STD/HIV prevention, and abstinence.

(9) Although teen pregnancy rates are decreasing, the United States has the highest teen pregnancy rate in the industrialized world with between 750,000 and 850,000 teen pregnancies each year. Between 75 and 90 percent of teen pregnancies among 15- to 19-year olds are unintended.

(10) A November 2006 study of declining pregnancy rates among teens concluded that the reduction in teen pregnancy between 1995 and 2002 is primarily the result of increased use of contraceptives. As such, it is critically important that teens receive accurate, unbiased information about contraception.

(11) More than eight out of ten Americans believe that young people should have information about abstinence and protecting themselves from unplanned pregnancies and sexually transmitted diseases.

(12) The United States has the highest rate of infection with sexually transmitted diseases of any industrialized country. In 2005, there were approximately 19,000,000 new

cases of sexually transmitted diseases, almost half of them occurring in young people ages 15 to 24. According to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, these sexually transmitted diseases impose a tremendous economic burden with direct medical costs as high as $14,100,000,000 per year.

(13) Each year, teens in the United States contract an estimated 9.1 million sexually transmitted infections. Each year, one in four sexually active teens contracts a sexually transmitted disease.

(14) Nearly half of the 40,000 annual new cases of HIV infections in the United States occur in youth ages 13 through 24. Approximately 50 young people a day, an average of two young people every hour of every day, are infected with HIV in the United States.

(15) African-American and Latino youth have been disproportionately affected by the HIV/AIDS epidemic. Although African-American adolescents ages 13 through 19 represent only 15 percent of the adolescent population in the United States, they accounted for 73 percent of new AIDS cases reported among teens in 2004. Although Latinos ages 20 through 24 represent only 18 percent of the young adults in the United States, they accounted for 23 percent of the new AIDS cases in 2004.

SEC. 3. ASSISTANCE TO REDUCE TEEN PREGNANCY, HIV/AIDS, AND OTHER SEXUALLY TRANSMITTED DISEASES AND TO SUPPORT HEALTHY ADOLESCENT DEVELOPMENT.

(a) IN GENERAL.—Each eligible State shall be entitled to receive from the Secretary of Health and Human Services, for each of the fiscal years 2008 through 2012, a grant to conduct programs of family life education, including education on both abstinence and contraception for the prevention of teenage pregnancy and sexually transmitted diseases, including HIV/AIDS.

(b) REQUIREMENTS FOR FAMILY LIFE PROGRAMS.—For purposes of this Act, a program of family life education is a program that—

(1) is age-appropriate and medically accurate;

(2) does not teach or promote religion;

(3) teaches that abstinence is the only sure way to avoid pregnancy or sexually transmitted diseases;

(4) stresses the value of abstinence while not ignoring those young people who have had or are having sexual intercourse;

(5) provides information about the health benefits and side effects of all contraceptives and barrier methods as a means to prevent pregnancy;

(6) provides information about the health benefits and side effects of all contraceptives and barrier methods as a means to reduce the risk of contracting sexually transmitted diseases, including HIV/AIDS;

(7) encourages family communication about sexuality between parent and child;

(8) teaches young people the skills to make responsible decisions about sexuality, including how to avoid unwanted verbal, physical, and sexual advances and how not to make unwanted verbal, physical, and sexual advances; and

(9) teaches young people how alcohol and drug use can effect responsible decisionmaking.

(c) ADDITIONAL ACTIVITIES.—In carrying out a program of family life education, a State may expend a grant under subsection (a) to carry out educational and motivational activities that help young people—

(1) gain knowledge about the physical, emotional, biological, and hormonal changes of adolescence and subsequent stages of human maturation;

(2) develop the knowledge and skills necessary to ensure and protect their sexual and reproductive health from unintended pregnancy and sexually transmitted disease, including HIV/AIDS throughout their lifespan;

(3) gain knowledge about the specific involvement of and male responsibility in sexual decisionmaking;

(4) develop healthy attitudes and values about adolescent growth and development, body image, gender roles, racial and ethnic diversity, sexual orientation, and other subjects;

(5) develop and practice healthy life skills including goal-setting, decisionmaking, negotiation, communication, and stress management;

(6) promote self-esteem and positive interpersonal skills focusing on relationship dynamics, including, but not limited to, friendships, dating, romantic involvement, marriage and family interactions; and

(7) prepare for the adult world by focusing on educational and career success, including developing skills for employment preparation, job seeking, independent living, financial self-sufficiency, and workplace productivity.

SEC. 4. SENSE OF CONGRESS.

It is the sense of Congress that while States are not required to provide matching funds, they are encouraged to do so.

SEC. 5. EVALUATION OF PROGRAMS.

(a) IN GENERAL.—For the purpose of evaluating the effectiveness of programs of family life education carried out with a grant under section 3, evaluations of such program shall be carried out in accordance with subsections (b) and (c).

(b) NATIONAL EVALUATION.—

(1) IN GENERAL.—The Secretary shall provide for a national evaluation of a representative sample of programs of family life education carried out with grants under section 3. A condition for the receipt of such a grant is that the State involved agree to cooperate with the evaluation. The purposes of the national evaluation shall be the determination of—

(A) the effectiveness of such programs in helping to delay the initiation of sexual intercourse and other high-risk behaviors;

(B) the effectiveness of such programs in preventing adolescent pregnancy;

(C) the effectiveness of such programs in preventing sexually transmitted disease, including HIV/AIDS;

(D) the effectiveness of such programs in increasing contraceptive knowledge and contraceptive behaviors when sexual intercourse occurs; and

(E) a list of best practices based upon essential programmatic components of evaluated programs that have led to success in subparagraphs (A) through (D).

(2) REPORT.—A report providing the results of the national evaluation under paragraph (1) shall be submitted to the Congress not later than March 31, 2011, with an interim report provided on a yearly basis at the end of each fiscal year.

(c) INDIVIDUAL STATE EVALUATIONS.—

(1) IN GENERAL.—A condition for the receipt of a grant under section 3 is that the State involved agree to provide for the evaluation of the programs of family education carried out with the grant in accordance with the following:

(A) The evaluation will be conducted by an external, independent entity.

(B) The purposes of the evaluation will be the determination of—

(i) the effectiveness of such programs in helping to delay the initiation of sexual intercourse and other high-risk behaviors;

(ii) the effectiveness of such programs in preventing adolescent pregnancy;

(iii) the effectiveness of such programs in preventing sexually transmitted disease, including HIV/AIDS; and

(iv) the effectiveness of such programs in increasing contraceptive knowledge and contraceptive behaviors when sexual intercourse occurs.

(2) USE OF GRANT.—A condition for the receipt of a grant under section 3 is that the State involved agree that not more than 10 percent of the grant will be expended for the evaluation under paragraph (1).

SEC. 6. DEFINITIONS.

For purposes of this Act:

(1) The term ''eligible State'' means a State that submits to the Secretary an application for a grant under section 3 that is in such form, is made in such manner, and contains such agreements, assurances, and information as the Secretary determines to be necessary to carry out this Act.

(2) The term ''HIV/AIDS'' means the human immunodeficiency virus, and includes acquired immune deficiency syndrome.

(3) The term ''medically accurate'', with respect to information, means information that is supported by research, recognized as accurate and objective by leading medical, psychological, psychiatric, and public health organizations and agencies, and where relevant, published in peer review journals.

(4) The term ''Secretary'' means the Secretary of Health and Human Services.

SEC. 7. APPROPRIATIONS.

(a) IN GENERAL.—For the purpose of carrying out this Act, there are authorized to be appropriated such sums as may be necessary for each of the fiscal years 2008 through 2012.

(b) ALLOCATIONS.—Of the amounts appropriated under subsection (a) for a fiscal year—

(1) not more than 7 percent may be used for the administrative expenses of the Secretary in carrying out this Act for that fiscal year; and

(2) not more than 10 percent may be used for the national evaluation under section 5(b).

By Mr. DORGAN (for himself, Mr. GRASSLEY, Mr. DURBIN, and Ms. COLLINS):

S. 973. A bill to amend the Mandatory Victims' Restitution Act to improve restitution for victims of crime, and for other purposes; to the Committee on the Judiciary.

Mr. DORGAN. Mr. President, I am pleased today to be joined by Senators GRASSLEY, DURBIN and COLLINS in reintroducing the Restitution for Victims of Crime Act. This legislation will give Justice Department officials the tools they say are needed to help them do a better job of collecting court-ordered Federal restitution and fines. It is virtually identical to the bill we introduced in June of last year.

Recent information from the Justice Department suggests the many victims of crime and their families continue to face a significant challenge in trying to recover a sense of emotional and financial security after a crime has been perpetrated against them.

By law, victims of Federal crimes are generally entitled to ''full and timely restitution'' for losses from a convicted offender. Unfortunately new Justice Department data show that the amount of uncollected Federal criminal debt is still spiraling upward—jumping from some $41 billion in fiscal year 2005 to nearly $46 billion at the end of fiscal year 2006. This is a hike of some $5 billion in uncollected Federal

criminal debt int he past fiscal year alone. Criminal debt ordered by Federal courts in North Dakota that remained uncollected at the end of fiscal year 2006 totaled $18.7 million, up almost $4 million from the preceding year.

Crime victims should not have to worry if those in charge of collecting court-ordered restitution on their behalf are making every possible effort to do so. We believe that passing the Restitution for Victimis of Crime Act would greatly help Federal criminal justice officials in this task.

Our bill includes provisions that will remove many existing impediments to increased collections. It will also provide new tools to help Federal criminal justice officials prevent criminal defendants from spending or hiding their ill-gotten gains and other financial assets by setting up pre-conviction procedures for preserving assets for victims' restitution.

I hope that my Senate colleagues will help us get the legislation enacted at the first available opportunity. This will send a clear and much-needed message to white collar and other criminals: if you commit a crime you will be held accountable and will not be allowed to benefit in any way from your criminal activity and ill-gotten gains. I also believe this bill will reassure many innocent victims of Federal crime that the justice system is working hard to recover court-ordered restitution that is owed to such victims.

I understand that criminal debt collection can be a tough job. It may be impossible to collect the full amount of restitution owed to victims in some cases. Clearly criminal debt collections may be more difficult in cases where convicted criminals are in prison, ill-gotten gains are already gone or these criminals are without any other financial means to pay their full restitution.

However, victims of crime in this country should expect Federal law enforcement officials tasked with collecting outstanding restitution to do a better job. At the very least, crime victims should not be concerned that their prospects for financial restitution are being diminished because criminal offenders are frittering away their ill-gotten gains on lavish lifestyles and the like. But, as I have mentioned before, past Government Accountability Office (GAO) investigations rightly give many crime victims real reason to worry. GAO's work made clear that more financial assets could be recovered but for a failure of some criminal justice officials to make criminal debt collection a top priority.

At my request, the GAO reviewed five white-collar financial fraud cases and concluded that the Justice Department's prospects were ''not good for collecting additional restitution from offenders'' owed to the victims—even though one or more of the criminal offenders involved had reported earning millions of dollars in income, having millions in net worth and/or were spending thousands of dollars monthly on entertainment and clothing prior to the judgments entered against them. In addition, the GAO found that certain offenders had taken expensive trips overseas, had fraudulently obtained millions of dollars in assets and converted those assets for personal use, had established businesses for their children, or held homes worth millions of dollars that were located in upscale neighborhoods. Despite all of this reported wealth, GAO found that only a small fraction of court-ordered restitution owed to victims had been collected.

The legislation that Senator GRASSLEY and I are re-introducing today is based on a comprehensive package of recommendations by the Justice Department that stem in large part from the work of the Task Force on Improving the Collection of Criminal Debt. Justice Department officials believe these changes will remove many of the current impediments to better debt collection.

For example, Justice Department officials described a circumstance where they were prevented by a court from accessing $400,000 held in a criminal offender's 401(k) plan to pay a $4 million restitution debt to a victim because that court said the defendant was complying with a $250 minimum monthly payment plan and that payment schedule precluded any other enforcement actions. Our bill would remove impediments like this in the future.

This legislation will address another major problem identified by the GAO for officials in charge of criminal debt collection; that is, many years can pass between the date a crime occurs and the date a court orders restitution. This gives criminal defendants ample opportunity to spend or hide their ill-gotten gains. Our bill sets up pre-conviction procedures for preserving assets for victims' restitution. These tools will help ensure that financial assets traceable to a crime are available when a court imposes a final restitution order on behalf of a victim. These tools are similar to those already used successfully in some States and by Federal officials in certain asset forfeiture cases.

Key provisions of the bill would do the following:

Clarify that court-ordered Federal criminal restitution is due immediately in full upon imposition, just like in civil cases and that any payment schedule ordered by a court is only a minimum obligation of a convicted offender.

Allow Federal prosecutors to access financial information about a defendant in the possession of the U.S. Probation Office—without the need for a court order.

Clarify that final restitution orders can be enforced by criminal justice officials through the Bureau of Prisons' Inmate Financial Responsibility Program.

Ensure that if a court restricts the ability of criminal justice officials to enforce a financial judgment, the court must do so expressly for good cause on the record. Absent exceptional circumstances, the court must require a deposit, the posting of a bond or impose additional restraints upon the defendant from transferring or dissipating assets.

Help ensure better recovery of restitution by requiring a court to enter a pre-conviction restraining order or injunction, require a satisfactory performance bond, or take other action necessary to preserve property that is traceable to the commission of a charged offense or to preserve other nonexempt assets if the court determines that it is in the interest of justice to do so.

Under the bill, a criminal defendant is allowed to challenge a court's prejudgment asset preservation order. For example, a defendant may challenge a post-indictment restraining order if he or she can show that there is no probable cause to justify the restraint or the order does not provide the accused with adequate resources for attorney fees or reasonable living expenses.

Permit the Attorney General to commence a civil action under the Anti-Fraud Injunction Statute to enjoin a person who is committing or about to commit a Federal offense that may result in a restitution order; and permit a court to restrain the dissipation of assets in any case where it has power to enjoin the commission of a crime, not just banking or health care fraud as permitted under current law.

Allow the United States under the Federal Debt Collections Procedure Act to use prejudgment remedies to preserve assets in criminal cases that are similar to those used in civil cases when it is needed to preserve a defendant's assets for restitution. Such remedies, including attachment, garnishment, and receivership, are not currently available in criminal cases because there is no enforceable debt prior to an offender's conviction and judgment.

Clarify that a victim's attorney fees may be included in restitution orders, including cases where such fees are a foreseeable result from the commission of the crime, are incurred to help recover lost property or expended by a victim to defend against third-party lawsuits resulting from the defendant's crime.

Allow courts at their discretion to order immediate restitution to those that have suffered economic losses or serious bodily injury or death as the result of environmental felonies. Under current law, courts can impose restitution in such cases as a condition of probation or supervised release but this means that many victims of environment crimes must wait for years to be compensated for their losses, if at all.

The Restitution for Victims of Crime Act has previously been endorsed by a number of organizations concerned about the well-being of crime victims, including: The National Center for Victims of Crime, Mothers Against Drunk

Driving, the National Organization for Victims Assistance (NOVA), the National Alliance to End Sexual Violence, Parents of Murdered Children, Inc., Justice Solutions, the National Network to End Domestic Violence, the National Coalition Against Domestic Violence, and the National Association of VOCA Assistance Administrators (NAVAA). Most recently, the National Crime Victim Law Institute shared its support for our bill.

Last year, United States Attorney Drew Wrigley in Fargo, North Dakota said this legislation ''represents important progress toward ensuring that victims of crime are one step closer to being made whole.''

Senator GRASSLEY and I look forward to working with these groups and others to move this bill forward in the legislative process. With the Justice Department's help, we can make criminal debt collection a top priority for all Federal criminal justice officials once again.

By Ms. COLLINS (for herself, Mr. BAYH, Mr. LEVIN, Mr. GRAHAM, Mr. COCHRAN, Ms. SNOWE, Mr. HARKIN, Ms. STABENOW, Mr. DURBIN, and Mr. SCHUMER):

S. 974. A bill to amend title VII of the Tariff Act of 1930 to provide that the provisions relating to countervailing duties apply to nonmarket economy countries, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Finance.

Ms. COLLINS. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the text of the bill be printed in the RECORD.

There being no objection, the bill was ordered to be printed in the RECORD, as follows:

S. 974

Be it enacted by the Senate and House of Representatives of the United States of America in Congress assembled,

SECTION 1. SHORT TITLE.

This Act may be cited as the ''Stopping Overseas Subsidies Act''.

SEC. 2. APPLICATION OF COUNTERVAILING DUTIES TO NONMARKET ECONOMIES AND STRENGTHENING APPLICATION OF THE LAW.

(a) IN GENERAL.—Section 701(a)(1) of the Tariff Act of 1930 (19 U.S.C. 1671(a)(1)) is amended by inserting ''(including a nonmarket economy country)'' after ''country'' each place it appears.

(b) USE OF ALTERNATE METHODOLOGIES INVOLVING CHINA.—Section 771(5)(E) of the Tariff Act of 1930 (19 U.S.C. 1677(5)(E)) is amended by adding at the end the following: ''If the administering authority encounters special difficulties in identifying and calculating the amount of a benefit under clauses (i) through (iv) with respect to an investigation or review involving the People's Republic of China, without regard to whether the administering authority determines that China is a nonmarket economy country under paragraph (18) of this section, the administering authority shall use methodologies to identify and calculate the amount of the benefit that take into account the possibility that terms and conditions prevailing in China may not always be available as appropriate benchmarks. In applying such methodologies, where practicable, the administering authority should take into account and adjust terms and conditions prevailing in China before using terms and conditions prevailing outside of China. If the administering authority determines that China is a nonmarket economy country under paragraph (18) of this section, the administering authority shall presume, absent a demonstration of compelling evidence to the contrary, that special difficulties exist in calculating the amount of a benefit under clauses (i) through (iv) with respect to an investigation or review involving China and that it is not practicable to take into account and adjust terms and conditions prevailing in China, and the administering authority shall use terms and conditions prevailing outside of China.''.

(c) EFFECTIVE DATE.—The amendments made by subsections (a) and (b) apply to petitions filed under section 702 of the Tariff Act of 1930 (19 U.S.C. 1671a) on or after October 1, 2006.

(d) ANTIDUMPING PROVISIONS NOT AFFECTED.—The amendments made by subsections (a) and (b) shall not affect the status of a country as a nonmarket economy country for the purposes of any matter relating to antidumping duties under subtitle B of title VII of the Tariff Act of 1930 (19 U.S.C. 1673 et seq.).

(e) RULE OF CONSTRUCTION.—The amendments made by subsections (a) and (b) shall not be construed to affect the interpretation of any provision of law as in effect on the day before the date of the enactment of this Act with respect to the application of countervailing duties to nonmarket economy countries.

SEC. 3. REVOCATION OF NONMARKET ECONOMY COUNTRY STATUS.

(a) AMENDMENT OF DEFINITION OF ''NONMARKET ECONOMY COUNTRY''.—Section 771(18)(C)(i) of the Tariff Act of 1930 (19 U.S.C. 1677(18)(C)(i)) is amended to read as follows:

''(i) Any determination that a foreign country is a nonmarket economy country shall remain in effect until—

''(I) the administering authority makes a final determination to revoke the determination under subparagraph (A); and

''(II) a joint resolution is enacted into law pursuant to section 3 of the Stopping Overseas Subsidies Act.''.

(b) NOTIFICATION BY PRESIDENT; JOINT RESOLUTION.—Whenever the administering authority makes a final determination under section 771(18)(C)(i)(I) of the Tariff Act of 1930 (19 U.S.C. 1677(18)(C)(i)(I)) to revoke the determination that a foreign country is a nonmarket economy country—

(1) the President shall notify the Committee on Finance of the Senate and the Committee on Ways and Means of the House of Representatives of that determination not later than 10 days after the publication of the administering authority's final determination in the Federal Register;

(2) the President shall transmit to the Congress a request that a joint resolution be introduced pursuant to this section; and

(3) a joint resolution shall be introduced in the Congress pursuant to this section.

(c) DEFINITION.—For purposes of this section, the term ''joint resolution'' means only a joint resolution of the 2 Houses of the Congress, the matter after the resolving clause of which is as follows: ''That the Congress approves the change of nonmarket economy status with respect to the products of _____ transmitted by the President to the Congress on _____.'', the first blank space being filled in with the name of the country with respect to which a determination has been made under section 771(18)(C)(i) of the Tariff Act of 1930 (19 U.S.C. 1677(18)(C)(i)), and the second blank space being filled with the date on which the President notified the Committee on Finance of the Senate and the Committee on Ways and Means of the House of Representatives under subsection (b)(1).

(d) INTRODUCTION.—A joint resolution shall be introduced (by request) in the House of Representatives by the majority leader of the House, for himself, or by Members of the House designated by the majority leader of the House, and shall be introduced (by request) in the Senate by the majority leader of the Senate, for himself, or by Members of the Senate designated by the majority leader of the Senate.

(e) AMENDMENTS PROHIBITED.—No amendment to a joint resolution shall be in order in either the House of Representatives or the Senate, and no motion to suspend the application of this subsection shall be in order in either House, nor shall it be in order in either House for the presiding officer to entertain a request to suspend the application of this subsection by unanimous consent.

(f) PERIOD FOR COMMITTEE AND FLOOR CONSIDERATION.—

(1) IN GENERAL.—If the committee or committees of either House to which a joint resolution has been referred have not reported the joint resolution at the close of the 45th day after its introduction, such committee or committees shall be automatically discharged from further consideration of the joint resolution and it shall be placed on the appropriate calendar. A vote on final passage of the joint resolution shall be taken in each House on or before the close of the 15th day after the joint resolution is reported by the committee or committees of that House to which it was referred, or after such committee or committees have been discharged from further consideration of the joint resolution. If, prior to the passage by one House of a joint resolution of that House, that House receives the same joint resolution from the other House, then—

(A) the procedure in that House shall be the same as if no joint resolution had been received from the other House, but

(B) the vote on final passage shall be on the joint resolution of the other House.

(2) COMPUTATION OF DAYS.—For purposes of paragraph (1), in computing a number of days in either House, there shall be excluded any day on which that House is not in session.

(g) FLOOR CONSIDERATION IN THE HOUSE.—

(1) MOTION PRIVILEGED.—A motion in the House of Representatives to proceed to the consideration of a joint resolution shall be highly privileged and not debatable. An amendment to the motion shall not be in order, nor shall it be in order to move to reconsider the vote by which the motion is agreed to or disagreed to.

(2) DEBATE LIMITED.—Debate in the House of Representatives on a joint resolution shall be limited to not more than 20 hours, which shall be divided equally between those favoring and those opposing the joint resolution. A motion further to limit debate shall not be debatable. It shall not be in order to move to recommit a joint resolution or to move to reconsider the vote by which a joint resolution is agreed to or disagreed to.

(3) MOTIONS TO POSTPONE.—Motions to postpone, made in the House of Representatives with respect to the consideration of a joint resolution, and motions to proceed to the consideration of other business, shall be decided without debate.

(4) APPEALS.—All appeals from the decisions of the Chair relating to the application of the Rules of the House of Representatives to the procedure relating to a joint resolution shall be decided without debate.

(5) OTHER RULES.—Except to the extent specifically provided in the preceding provisions of this subsection, consideration of a joint resolution shall be governed by the

Rules of the House of Representatives applicable to other bills and resolutions in similar circumstances.

(h) FLOOR CONSIDERATION IN THE SENATE.—

(1) MOTION PRIVILEGED.—A motion in the Senate to proceed to the consideration of a joint resolution shall be privileged and not debatable. An amendment to the motion shall not be in order, nor shall it be in order to move to reconsider the vote by which the motion is agreed to or disagreed to.

(2) DEBATE LIMITED.—Debate in the Senate on a joint resolution, and all debatable motions and appeals in connection therewith, shall be limited to not more than 20 hours. The time shall be equally divided between, and controlled by, the majority leader and the minority leader or their designees.

(3) CONTROL OF DEBATE.—Debate in the Senate on any debatable motion or appeal in connection with a joint resolution shall be limited to not more than 1 hour, to be equally divided between, and controlled by, the mover and the manager of the joint resolution, except that in the event the manager of the joint resolution is in favor of any such motion or appeal, the time in opposition thereto shall be controlled by the minority leader or his designee. Such leaders, or either of them, may, from time under their control on the passage of a joint resolution, allot additional time to any Senator during the consideration of any debatable motion or appeal.

(4) OTHER MOTIONS.—A motion in the Senate to further limit debate is not debatable. A motion to recommit a joint resolution is not in order.

(i) RULES OF HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES AND SENATE.—Subsections (c) through (h) are enacted by the Congress—

(1) as an exercise of the rulemaking power of the House of Representatives and the Senate, respectively, and as such subsections (c) through (h) are deemed a part of the rules of each House, respectively, but applicable only with respect to the procedure to be followed in that House in the case of joint resolutions described in subsection (c), and subsections (c) through (h) supersede other rules only to the extent that they are inconsistent therewith; and

(2) with full recognition of the constitutional right of either House to change the rules (so far as relating to the procedure of that House) at any time, in the same manner and to the same extent as in the case of any other rule of that House.

SEC. 4. STUDY AND REPORT ON SUBSIDIES BY PEOPLE'S REPUBLIC OF CHINA.

(a) STUDY.—The United States International Trade Commission shall conduct a study, under section 332 of the Tariff Act of 1930 (19 U.S.C. 1332), regarding how the People's Republic of China uses government intervention to promote investment, employment, and exports. The study shall comprehensively catalog, and when possible quantify, the practices and policies that central, provincial, and local government bodies in the People's Republic of China use to support and to attempt to influence decision-making in China's manufacturing enterprises and industries. Chapters of this study shall include, but not be limited to, the following:

(1) Privatization and private ownership.

(2) Nonperforming loans.

(3) Price coordination.

(4) Selection of industries for targeted assistance.

(5) Banking and finance.

(6) Utility rates.

(7) Infrastructure development.

(8) Taxation.

(9) Restraints on imports and exports.

(10) Research and development.

(11) Worker training and retraining.

(12) Rationalization and closure of uneconomic enterprises.

(b) REPORT.—The Congress requests that—

(1) not later than 9 months after the date of the enactment of this Act, the International Trade Commission complete its study under subsection (a), submit a report on the study to the Committee on Ways and Means of the House of Representatives and the Committee on Finance of the Senate, and make the report available to the public; and

(2) not later than 1 year after the report under paragraph (1) is submitted, and annually thereafter through 2017, the International Trade Commission prepare and submit to the committees referred to in paragraph (1) an update of the report and make the update of the report available to the public.

SUBMITTED RESOLUTIONS

SENATE RESOLUTION 117—COMMEMORATING THE 25TH ANNIVERSARY OF THE CONSTRUCTION AND DEDICATION OF THE VIETNAM VETERANS MEMORIAL

Mr. HAGEL (for himself, Mr. MCCAIN, Mr. KERRY, Mr. WARNER, Mr. ALLARD, Mr. BIDEN, Mr. GRASSLEY, Ms. LANDRIEU, Mr. LUGAR, Mr. HARKIN, Mr. INHOFE, Mrs. CLINTON, Ms. COLLINS, Mr. DODD, Mr. ROBERTS, Mr. REED, Mr. DOMENICI, Mr. SALAZAR, Mr. VOINOVICH, Mr. LEVIN, Mr. VITTER, Ms. MIKULSKI, Mr. BURR, Mr. NELSON of Nebraska, Mr. BINGAMAN, Mr. LIEBERMAN, Mr. FEINGOLD, Mr. SCHUMER, Ms. CANTWELL, Mr. BROWN, Mr. DURBIN, Ms. MURKOWSKI, Mr. KENNEDY, Mr. SPECTER, Mrs. MCCASKILL, Mr. BROWNBACK, Mr. OBAMA, Mr. CRAPO, Mr. PRYOR, Mr. STEVENS, Mr. NELSON of Florida, Mr. SUNUNU, Mr. TESTER, Mr. CRAIG, Mr. CONRAD, Mr. GRAHAM, Mr. BYRD, Mr. LAUTENBERG, Mr. INOUYE, Mr. AKAKA, Mr. BAUCUS, Mrs. FEINSTEIN, Mrs. BOXER, Mr. COLEMAN, Mr. CHAMBLISS, Mr. CORKER, Mr. ENSIGN, Mr. MCCONNELL, Ms. STABENOW, Mr. LOTT, Mr. CARDIN, Ms. SNOWE, Mr. DORGAN, Mr. ENZI, and Mr. ALEXANDER) submitted the following resolution; which was referred to the Committee on Veterans' Affairs:

S. RES. 117

Whereas 2007 marks the 25th anniversary of the construction and dedication of the Vietnam Veterans Memorial in Washington, D.C.;

Whereas the memorial displays the names of more than 58,000 men and women who lost their lives between 1956 and 1975 in the Vietnam combat area or are still missing in action;

Whereas every year millions of people in the United States visit the monument to pay their respects to those who served in the Armed Forces;

Whereas the Vietnam Veterans Memorial has been a source of comfort and healing for Vietnam veterans and the families of the men and women who died while serving their country; and

Whereas the memorial has come to represent a legacy of healing and demonstrates the appreciation of the people of the United States for those who made the ultimate sacrifice: Now, therefore, be it

Resolved, That the Senate—

(1) expresses its support and gratitude for all of the men and women who served honorably in the Armed Forces of the United States in defense of freedom and democracy during the Vietnam War;

(2) extends its sympathies to all people in the United States who suffered the loss of friends and family in Vietnam;

(3) encourages the people of the United States to remember the sacrifices of our veterans; and

(4) commemorates the 25th anniversary of the construction and dedication of the Vietnam Veterans Memorial.

SENATE RESOLUTION 118—URGING THE GOVERNMENT OF CANADA TO END THE COMMERCIAL SEAL HUNT

Mr. LEVIN (for himself, Ms. COLLINS, and Mr. BIDEN) submitted the following resolution; which was referred to the Committee on Foreign Relations:

S. RES. 118

Whereas on November 15, 2006, the Government of Canada opened a commercial hunt for seals in the waters off the east coast of Canada;

Whereas an international outcry regarding the plight of the seals hunted in Canada resulted in the 1983 ban by the European Union of whitecoat and blueback seal skins and the subsequent collapse of the commercial seal hunt in Canada;

Whereas the Marine Mammal Protection Act of 1972 (16 U.S.C. 1361 et seq.) bars the import into the United States of any seal products;

Whereas in February 2003, the Ministry of Fisheries and Oceans in Canada authorized the highest quota for harp seals in Canadian history, allowing nearly 1,000,000 seals to be killed over a 3-year period;

Whereas more than 1,000,000 seals have been killed over the past 3 years;

Whereas harp seal pups can legally be hunted in Canada as soon as they have begun to molt their white coats at approximately 12 days of age;

Whereas 95 percent of the seals killed over the past 5 years were pups between just 12 days and 12 weeks of age, many of which had not yet eaten their first solid meal or taken their first swim;

Whereas a report by an independent team of veterinarians invited to observe the hunt by the International Fund for Animal Welfare concluded that the seal hunt failed to comply with basic animal welfare regulations in Canada and that governmental regulations regarding humane killing were not being respected or enforced;

Whereas the veterinary report concluded that as many as 42 percent of the seals studied were likely skinned while alive and conscious;

Whereas the commercial slaughter of seals in the Northwest Atlantic is inherently cruel, whether the killing is conducted by clubbing or by shooting;

Whereas many seals are shot in the course of the hunt, but escape beneath the ice where they die slowly and are never recovered, and these seals are not counted in official kill statistics, making the actual kill level far higher than the level that is reported;

Whereas the commercial hunt for harp and hooded seals is a commercial slaughter carried out almost entirely by non-Native people from the East Coast of Canada for seal fur, oil, and penises (used as aphrodisiacs in some Asian markets);

Whereas the fishing and sealing industries in Canada continue to justify the expanded seal hunt on the grounds that the seals in

the Northwest Atlantic are preventing the recovery of cod stocks, despite the lack of any credible scientific evidence to support this claim;

Whereas two Canadian government marine scientists reported in 1994 that the true cause of cod depletion in the North Atlantic was over-fishing, and the consensus among the international scientific community is that seals are not responsible for the collapse of cod stocks;

Whereas harp and hooded seals are a vital part of the complex ecosystem of the Northwest Atlantic, and because the seals consume predators of commercial cod stocks, removing the seals might actually inhibit recovery of cod stocks;

Whereas certain ministries of the Government of Canada have stated clearly that there is no evidence that killing seals will help groundfish stocks to recover; and

Whereas the persistence of this cruel and needless commercial hunt is inconsistent with the well-earned international reputation of Canada: Now, therefore, be it

Resolved, That the Senate urges the Government of Canada to end the commercial hunt on seals that opened in the waters off the east coast of Canada on November 15, 2006.

Mr. LEVIN. Mr. President, Canada's commercial seal hunt is the largest slaughter of marine mammals in the world. According to the Humane Society of the United States (HSUS), over one million seals have been killed for their fur in the past three years. In 2006 alone, more than 350,000 seals were slaughtered, most of them between 12 days and 12 weeks old.

Canada officially opened another seal hunt on November 15, 2006, paving the way for hundreds of thousands of baby seals to be killed for their fur during the spring of 2007. Today, I am joined by Senator COLLINS and Senator BIDEN in submitting a resolution that urges the Government of Canada to end this senseless and inhumane slaughter.

A study by an independent team of veterinarians in 2001, found that the seal hunt failed to comply with basic animal welfare standards and that Canadian regulations with regard to humane killing were not being enforced. The study concluded that up to 42 percent of the seals studied were likely skinned while alive and conscious. The United States has long banned the import of seal products because of widespread outrage over the magnitude and cruelty of the hunt.

It makes little sense to continue this inhumane industry that employs only a few hundred people on a seasonal, part-time basis and only operates for a few weeks a year, in which the concentrated killings takes place. In Newfoundland, where over 90 percent of the hunters live, the economic contribution of the seal hunt is marginal. In fact, exports of seal products from Newfoundland account for less than one-tenth of one percent of the province's total exports.

Canada is fortunate to have vast and diverse wildlife populations, but these animals deserve protection, not senseless slaughter. Americans have a long history of defending marine mammals, best evidenced by the Marine Mammal Protection Act of 1972. Polls show that close to 80 percent of Americans and the vast majority of Europeans oppose Canada's seal hunt. In fact, close to 70 percent of Canadians surveyed oppose the hunt completely, with even higher numbers opposing specific aspects of the hunt, such as killing baby seals.

The U.S. Government has opposed this senseless slaughter, as noted in the attached, January 19, 2005, letter from the U.S. Department of State, in response to a letter Senator COLLINS and I wrote to President Bush, urging him to raise this issue during his November 30, 2004, visit with Canadian Prime Minister Paul Martin.

The clubbing of baby seals can not be defended or justified. Canada should end it, just as we ended the Alaska seal hunt more than 20 years ago.

I ask unanimous consent that the January 19, 2005, letter from the U.S. State Department and the text of the resolution be printed in the RECORD.

There being no objection, the letter was ordered to be printed in the RECORD, as follows:

DEPARTMENT OF STATE,
Washington, DC. January 19, 2005.

Hon. CARL LEVIN,
U.S. Senate,
Washington, D. C.

DEAR SENATOR LEVIN: This is in response to your letter to the President of November 24, 2004, regarding Canadian commercial seal hunting. The White House has requested that the Department of State respond. We regret the delay in responding. Unfortunately, this letter was not received in the Department of State until mid-December, well after the referenced meeting between President Bush and Prime Minister Paul Martin of Canada.

We are aware of Canada's seal hunting activities and of the opposition to it expressed by many Americans. Furthermore, we can assure you that the United States has a longstanding policy opposing the hunting of seals and other marine mammals absent sufficient safeguards and information to ensure that the hunting will not adversely impact the affected marine mammal population or the ecosystem of which it is a part. The United States policy is reflected in the Marine Mammal Protection Act of 1972 (MMPA) which generally prohibits, with narrow and specific exceptions, the taking of marine mammals in waters or lands subject to the jurisdiction of the United States and the importation of marine mammals and marine mammal products into the United States.

The United States has made known to the Government of Canada its objections and the objections of concerned American legislators and citizens to the Canadian commercial seal hunt on numerous occasions over recent years. The United States has also opposed Canada's efforts within the Arctic Council to promote trade in sealskins and other marine mammal products.

We hope this information is helpful to you. Please do not hesitate to contact us if we can be of assistance in this or any other matter.

Sincerely,

NANCY POWELL,
(For Paul V. Kelly, Asst. Secretary, Legislative Affairs).

SENATE RESOLUTION 119—TO AUTHORIZE TESTIMONY BY A FORMER DETAILEE OF THE COMMITTEE ON THE JUDICIARY

Mr. REID (for himself and Mr. MCCONNELL) submitted the following resolution; which was considered and agreed to:

S. RES. 119

Whereas, the Committee on the Judiciary has received a request from an attorney in the Office of the General Counsel of the Federal Bureau of Investigation for a declaration from a former detailee of the Committee, Steven M. Dettelbach, for use in the Department of Justice's administrative proceeding styled In re George A Runkle. Jr., OARM–WB No. 06–2;

Whereas, by the privileges of the Senate of the United States and Rule XI of the Standing Rules of the Senate, no evidence under the control or in the possession of the Senate can, by administrative or judicial process, be taken from such control or possession but by permission of the Senate;

Whereas, when it appears that evidence under the control or in the possession of the Senate is needed for the promotion of justice, the Senate will take such action as will promote the ends of justice consistent with the privileges of the Senate: Now, therefore, be it

Resolved, That the former detailee of the Committee on the Judiciary, Steven M. Dettelbach, is authorized to provide a declaration for use in the administrative proceeding In re George A. Runkle, Jr., OARM–WB No. 06–2.

SENATE RESOLUTION 120—DESIGNATING MARCH 22, 2007, AS NATIONAL REHABILITATION COUNSELORS APPRECIATION DAY

Mr. CHAMBLISS (for himself, Ms. LANDRIEU) submitted the following resolution; which was considered and agreed to:

S. RES. 120

Whereas rehabilitation counselors conduct assessments, provide counseling, support to families, and plan and implement rehabilitation programs for those in need;

Whereas the purpose of the professional organizations in rehabilitation is to promote the improvement of rehabilitation services available to persons with disabilities through quality education and rehabilitation research for counselors;

Whereas the various professional organizations, including the National Rehabilitation Association (NRA), Rehabilitation Counselors and Educators Association (RCEA), the National Council on Rehabilitation Education (NCRE), the National Rehabilitation Counseling Association (NRCA), the American Rehabilitation Counseling Association (ARCA), the Commission on Rehabilitation Counselor Certification (CRCC), the Council of State Administrators of Vocational Rehabilitation (CSAVR), and the Council on Rehabilitation Education (CORE) have stood firm to advocate up-to-date education and training and the maintenance of professional standards in the field of rehabilitation counseling and education;

Whereas on March 22, 1983, Martha Walker of Kent State University, who was President of the NCRE, testified before the Subcommittee on Select Education of the House of Representatives, and was instrumental in bringing to the attention of Congress the need for rehabilitation counselors to be qualified; and

Whereas the efforts of Martha Walker led to the enactment of laws that now require rehabilitation counselors to have proper credentials in order to provide a higher level of quality service to those in need: Now, therefore, be it

Resolved, That the Senate—

(1) designates March 22, 2007, as National Rehabilitation Counselors Appreciation Day; and

(2) commends all of the hard work and dedication that rehabilitation counselors provide to individuals in need and the numerous efforts that the multiple professional organizations have made to assisting those who require rehabilitation.

SENATE RESOLUTION 23—EXPRESSING THE SENSE OF CONGRESS THAT PROVISIONS THAT PROVOKE VETO THREATS FROM THE PRESIDENT SHOULD NOT BE INCLUDED ON BILLS THAT APPROPRIATE FUNDS FOR THE IMPLEMENTATION OF RECOMMENDATIONS OF THE BASE CLOSURE AND REALIGNMENT COMMISSION

Mr. BROWNBACK (for himself, Mr. ROBERTS) submitted the following concurrent resolution; which was referred to the Committee on Appropriations:

S. CON. RES. 23

Whereas Congress and President George W. Bush approved the final recommendations of the Defense Base Closure and Realignment Commission under the 2005 round of defense base closure and realignment;

Whereas these recommendations propose major changes in the positioning of United States military personnel;

Whereas the Department of Defense is moving rapidly to implement these recommendations;

Whereas the communities near military installations that are slated to receive major troop increases have already invested time and capital in making preparations for upcoming increases in population; and

Whereas funding these recommendations on an annual basis is absolutely necessary for their implementation and the economic confidence of the communities that are expecting increases in population: Now, therefore, be it

Resolved by the Senate (the House of Representatives concurring), That it is the sense of Congress that Congress should not include provisions that provoke veto threats from the President in bills that appropriate funds for the implementation of recommendations of the Base Closure and Realignment Commission.

AMENDMENTS SUBMITTED AND PROPOSED

SA 525. Mr. CORNYN (for himself and Mr. GREGG) proposed an amendment to the concurrent resolution S. Con. Res. 21, setting forth the congressional budget for the United States Government for fiscal year 2008 and including the appropriate budgetary levels for fiscal years 2007 and 2009 through 2012.

SA 526. Mr. BAYH (for himself, Ms. SNOWE, and Mrs. LINCOLN) submitted an amendment intended to be proposed by him to the concurrent resolution S. Con. Res. 21, supra.

SA 527. Ms. MURKOWSKI (for herself and Mr. STEVENS) submitted an amendment intended to be proposed by her to the concurrent resolution S. Con. Res. 21, supra; which was ordered to lie on the table.

SA 528. Mr. BIDEN submitted an amendment intended to be proposed by him to the concurrent resolution S. Con. Res. 21, supra; which was ordered to lie on the table.

SA 529. Mr. BIDEN submitted an amendment intended to be proposed by him to the concurrent resolution S. Con. Res. 21, supra; which was ordered to lie on the table.

SA 530. Mr. DEMINT submitted an amendment intended to be proposed by him to the concurrent resolution S. Con. Res. 21, supra; which was ordered to lie on the table.

SA 531. Mr. DEMINT submitted an amendment intended to be proposed by him to the concurrent resolution S. Con. Res. 21, supra; which was ordered to lie on the table.

SA 532. Mr. DEMINT submitted an amendment intended to be proposed by him to the concurrent resolution S. Con. Res. 21, supra; which was ordered to lie on the table.

SA 533. Mr. DEMINT submitted an amendment intended to be proposed by him to the concurrent resolution S. Con. Res. 21, supra; which was ordered to lie on the table.

SA 534. Mr. DEMINT submitted an amendment intended to be proposed by him to the concurrent resolution S. Con. Res. 21, supra; which was ordered to lie on the table.

SA 535. Mr. WARNER (for himself, Mr. WEBB, and Mr. LIEBERMAN) submitted an amendment intended to be proposed by him to the concurrent resolution S. Con. Res. 21, supra; which was ordered to lie on the table.

SA 536. Mr. CHAMBLISS (for himself and Mr. ISAKSON) submitted an amendment intended to be proposed by him to the concurrent resolution S. Con. Res. 21, supra; which was ordered to lie on the table.

SA 537. Mr. WEBB (for himself, Mr. DURBIN, Mr. KERRY, Mrs. BOXER, Mr. WYDEN, Ms. MIKULSKI, and Mr. REID) submitted an amendment intended to be proposed by him to the concurrent resolution S. Con. Res. 21, supra; which was ordered to lie on the table.

SA 538. Mr. CARPER (for himself and Mr. COBURN) submitted an amendment intended to be proposed by him to the concurrent resolution S. Con. Res. 21, supra.

SA 539. Mr. CARPER (for himself and Mr. COBURN) submitted an amendment intended to be proposed by him to the concurrent resolution S. Con. Res. 21, supra; which was ordered to lie on the table.

SA 540. Mr. CARPER (for himself and Mr. COBURN) submitted an amendment intended to be proposed by him to the concurrent resolution S. Con. Res. 21, supra; which was ordered to lie on the table.

SA 541. Mr. SMITH submitted an amendment intended to be proposed by him to the concurrent resolution S. Con. Res. 21, supra; which was ordered to lie on the table.

SA 542. Mrs. LINCOLN (for herself, Ms. SNOWE, and Mrs. MCCASKILL) submitted an amendment intended to be proposed by her to the concurrent resolution S. Con. Res. 21, supra.

SA 543. Mr. DORGAN submitted an amendment intended to be proposed by him to the concurrent resolution S. Con. Res. 21, supra; which was ordered to lie on the table.

SA 544. Mr. DORGAN submitted an amendment intended to be proposed by him to the concurrent resolution S. Con. Res. 21, supra; which was ordered to lie on the table.

SA 545. Mr. SANDERS (for himself and Ms. MIKULSKI) proposed an amendment to the concurrent resolution S. Con. Res. 21, supra.

SA 546. Mr. THUNE (for himself, Mrs. LINCOLN, and Mr. PRYOR) submitted an amendment intended to be proposed by him to the concurrent resolution S. Con. Res. 21, supra; which was ordered to lie on the table.

SA 547. Mr. GRASSLEY submitted an amendment intended to be proposed by him to the concurrent resolution S. Con. Res. 21, supra; which was ordered to lie on the table.

SA 548. Mr. GRASSLEY submitted an amendment intended to be proposed by him to the concurrent resolution S. Con. Res. 21, supra; which was ordered to lie on the table.

SA 549. Mrs. DOLE submitted an amendment intended to be proposed by her to the concurrent resolution S. Con. Res. 21, supra; which was ordered to lie on the table.

SA 550. Mr. ALLARD submitted an amendment intended to be proposed by him to the concurrent resolution S. Con. Res. 21, supra; which was ordered to lie on the table.

SA 551. Ms. MURKOWSKI submitted an amendment intended to be proposed by her to the concurrent resolution S. Con. Res. 21, supra; which was ordered to lie on the table.

SA 552. Mrs. DOLE submitted an amendment intended to be proposed by her to the concurrent resolution S. Con. Res. 21, supra; which was ordered to lie on the table.

SA 553. Mrs. DOLE submitted an amendment intended to be proposed by her to the concurrent resolution S. Con. Res. 21, supra; which was ordered to lie on the table.

SA 554. Mr. DEMINT submitted an amendment intended to be proposed by him to the concurrent resolution S. Con. Res. 21, supra; which was ordered to lie on the table.

SA 555. Mr. DEMINT submitted an amendment intended to be proposed by him to the concurrent resolution S. Con. Res. 21, supra; which was ordered to lie on the table.

SA 556. Mr. DEMINT submitted an amendment intended to be proposed by him to the concurrent resolution S. Con. Res. 21, supra; which was ordered to lie on the table.

SA 557. Mr. DEMINT submitted an amendment intended to be proposed by him to the concurrent resolution S. Con. Res. 21, supra; which was ordered to lie on the table.

SA 558. Mr. DEMINT submitted an amendment intended to be proposed by him to the concurrent resolution S. Con. Res. 21, supra; which was ordered to lie on the table.

SA 559. Mr. DEMINT submitted an amendment intended to be proposed by him to the concurrent resolution S. Con. Res. 21, supra; which was ordered to lie on the table.

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SA 562. Mr. DEMINT submitted an amendment intended to be proposed by him to the concurrent resolution S. Con. Res. 21, supra; which was ordered to lie on the table.

SA 563. Mr. DEMINT submitted an amendment intended to be proposed by him to the concurrent resolution S. Con. Res. 21, supra; which was ordered to lie on the table.

SA 564. Mr. DEMINT submitted an amendment intended to be proposed by him to the concurrent resolution S. Con. Res. 21, supra; which was ordered to lie on the table.

SA 565. Mr. DEMINT submitted an amendment intended to be proposed by him to the concurrent resolution S. Con. Res. 21, supra; which was ordered to lie on the table.

SA 566. Mr. DEMINT submitted an amendment intended to be proposed by him to the concurrent resolution S. Con. Res. 21, supra; which was ordered to lie on the table.

SA 567. Mr. DEMINT submitted an amendment intended to be proposed by him to the concurrent resolution S. Con. Res. 21, supra; which was ordered to lie on the table.

SA 568. Mr. DEMINT submitted an amendment intended to be proposed by him to the concurrent resolution S. Con. Res. 21, supra; which was ordered to lie on the table.

SA 569. Mr. DEMINT submitted an amendment intended to be proposed by him to the concurrent resolution S. Con. Res. 21, supra; which was ordered to lie on the table.

SA 570. Mr. DEMINT submitted an amendment intended to be proposed by him to the

concurrent resolution S. Con. Res. 21, supra; which was ordered to lie on the table.

SA 571. Mr. DEMINT submitted an amendment intended to be proposed by him to the concurrent resolution S. Con. Res. 21, supra; which was ordered to lie on the table.

SA 572. Mr. COLEMAN (for himself and Ms. KLOBUCHAR) submitted an amendment intended to be proposed by him to the concurrent resolution S. Con. Res. 21, supra; which was ordered to lie on the table.

SA 573. Mr. BAUCUS (for himself and Mr. GRASSLEY) submitted an amendment intended to be proposed by him to the concurrent resolution S. Con. Res. 21, supra; which was ordered to lie on the table.

SA 574. Mrs. FEINSTEIN (for herself and Mr. KYL) submitted an amendment intended to be proposed by her to the concurrent resolution S. Con. Res. 21, supra; which was ordered to lie on the table.

SA 575. Mr. LEVIN submitted an amendment intended to be proposed by him to the concurrent resolution S. Con. Res. 21, supra; which was ordered to lie on the table.

SA 576. Mr. DEMINT submitted an amendment intended to be proposed by him to the concurrent resolution S. Con. Res. 21, supra; which was ordered to lie on the table.

SA 577. Mr. COLEMAN (for himself, Ms. SNOWE, Ms. COLLINS, Mr. ROBERTS, and Mr. GRAHAM) proposed an amendment to the concurrent resolution S. Con. Res. 21, supra.

SA 578. Mr. DEMINT (for himself and Mr. KYL) submitted an amendment intended to be proposed by him to the concurrent resolution S. Con. Res. 21, supra; which was ordered to lie on the table.

SA 579. Ms. SNOWE submitted an amendment intended to be proposed by her to the concurrent resolution S. Con. Res. 21, supra; which was ordered to lie on the table.

SA 580. Mr. NELSON, of Florida submitted an amendment intended to be proposed by him to the concurrent resolution S. Con. Res. 21, supra; which was ordered to lie on the table.

SA 581. Mr. BROWNBACK submitted an amendment intended to be proposed by him to the concurrent resolution S. Con. Res. 21, supra; which was ordered to lie on the table.

SA 582. Mr. HAGEL (for himself, Mr. COLEMAN, and Mr. ROBERTS) submitted an amendment intended to be proposed by him to the concurrent resolution S. Con. Res. 21, supra; which was ordered to lie on the table.

SA 583. Mr. KYL (for himself and Mr. THUNE) proposed an amendment to the concurrent resolution S. Con. Res. 21, supra.

SA 584. Mr. COLEMAN (for himself and Mr. COBURN) submitted an amendment intended to be proposed by him to the concurrent resolution S. Con. Res. 21, supra; which was ordered to lie on the table.

SA 585. Mr. GREGG (for himself and Mrs. CLINTON) submitted an amendment intended to be proposed by him to the concurrent resolution S. Con. Res. 21, supra; which was ordered to lie on the table.

SA 586. Mr. OBAMA (for himself, Mr. MENENDEZ, Mr. DURBIN, Mr. FEINGOLD, Mr. BINGAMAN, Mr. SALAZAR, and Mr. KENNEDY) submitted an amendment intended to be proposed by him to the concurrent resolution S. Con. Res. 21, supra; which was ordered to lie on the table.

SA 587. Mr. BINGAMAN (for himself, Ms. CANTWELL, Mr. SALAZAR, Mr. FEINGOLD, Mr. MENENDEZ, Mr. SANDERS, Mr. TESTER, Mr. BAUCUS, Mr. KERRY, Mrs. BOXER, Mr. DURBIN, and Ms. KLOBUCHAR) submitted an amendment intended to be proposed by him to the concurrent resolution S. Con. Res. 21, supra; which was ordered to lie on the table.

SA 588. Mr. CASEY submitted an amendment intended to be proposed by him to the concurrent resolution S. Con. Res. 21, supra; which was ordered to lie on the table.

SA 589. Mr. DORGAN (for himself and Ms. SNOWE) submitted an amendment intended to be proposed by him to the concurrent resolution S. Con. Res. 21, supra; which was ordered to lie on the table.

SA 590. Mr. DORGAN (for himself, Ms. COLLINS, Mr. FEINGOLD, and Mr. BIDEN) submitted an amendment intended to be proposed by him to the concurrent resolution S. Con. Res. 21, supra; which was ordered to lie on the table.

SA 591. Mr. ROCKEFELLER submitted an amendment intended to be proposed by him to the concurrent resolution S. Con. Res. 21, supra; which was ordered to lie on the table.

SA 592. Mrs. DOLE submitted an amendment intended to be proposed by her to the concurrent resolution S. Con. Res. 21, supra; which was ordered to lie on the table.

SA 593. Mr. BURR submitted an amendment intended to be proposed by him to the concurrent resolution S. Con. Res. 21, supra; which was ordered to lie on the table.

SA 594. Mr. BUNNING (for himself, Mr. MCCONNELL, and Mr. GRASSLEY) submitted an amendment intended to be proposed by him to the concurrent resolution S. Con. Res. 21, supra; which was ordered to lie on the table.

SA 595. Mr. BUNNING submitted an amendment intended to be proposed by him to the concurrent resolution S. Con. Res. 21, supra; which was ordered to lie on the table.

SA 596. Mr. REED (for himself, Ms. COLLINS, Mr. KENNEDY, Ms. SNOWE, Mr. KERRY, Mr. WHITEHOUSE, Mr. BIDEN, Mr. SANDERS, Mr. SCHUMER, Mr. LIEBERMAN, Mr. PRYOR, Mrs. CLINTON, and Mr. DODD) submitted an amendment intended to be proposed by him to the concurrent resolution S. Con. Res. 21, supra; which was ordered to lie on the table.

SA 597. Ms. SNOWE submitted an amendment intended to be proposed by her to the concurrent resolution S. Con. Res. 21, supra; which was ordered to lie on the table.

SA 598. Mr. CONRAD proposed an amendment to the concurrent resolution S. Con. Res. 21, supra.

SA 599. Mr. OBAMA (for himself, Mr. BUNNING, Mr. BINGAMAN, Mr. LUGAR, and Mrs. BOXER) submitted an amendment intended to be proposed by him to the concurrent resolution S. Con. Res. 21, supra; which was ordered to lie on the table.

SA 600. Mr. BINGAMAN (for himself, Mr. DOMENICI, Mr. ROCKEFELLER, Mr. DURBIN, and Mr. KERRY) submitted an amendment intended to be proposed by him to the concurrent resolution S. Con. Res. 21, supra; which was ordered to lie on the table.

SA 601. Mr. PRYOR (for himself and Mr. NELSON, of Florida) submitted an amendment intended to be proposed by him to the concurrent resolution S. Con. Res. 21, supra; which was ordered to lie on the table.

SA 602. Mr. KENNEDY submitted an amendment intended to be proposed by him to the concurrent resolution S. Con. Res. 21, supra; which was ordered to lie on the table.

SA 603. Mr. DORGAN submitted an amendment intended to be proposed by him to the concurrent resolution S. Con. Res. 21, supra; which was ordered to lie on the table.

SA 604. Mrs. BOXER submitted an amendment intended to be proposed by her to the concurrent resolution S. Con. Res. 21, supra; which was ordered to lie on the table.

SA 605. Mr. KENNEDY submitted an amendment intended to be proposed by him to the concurrent resolution S. Con. Res. 21, supra; which was ordered to lie on the table.

SA 606. Mr. LOTT submitted an amendment intended to be proposed by him to the concurrent resolution S. Con. Res. 21, supra; which was ordered to lie on the table.

SA 607. Mr. CHAMBLISS (for himself and Mr. GRAHAM) submitted an amendment intended to be proposed by him to the concurrent resolution S. Con. Res. 21, supra; which was ordered to lie on the table.

SA 608. Mr. ENSIGN submitted an amendment intended to be proposed by him to the concurrent resolution S. Con. Res. 21, supra; which was ordered to lie on the table.

SA 609. Mr. GRAHAM (for himself and Mr. LIEBERMAN) submitted an amendment intended to be proposed by him to the concurrent resolution S. Con. Res. 21, supra; which was ordered to lie on the table.

SA 610. Mr. PRYOR (for himself and Ms. KLOBUCHAR) submitted an amendment intended to be proposed by him to the concurrent resolution S. Con. Res. 21, supra; which was ordered to lie on the table.

SA 611. Mr. PRYOR submitted an amendment intended to be proposed by him to the concurrent resolution S. Con. Res. 21, supra; which was ordered to lie on the table.

SA 612. Mr. LIEBERMAN submitted an amendment intended to be proposed by him to the concurrent resolution S. Con. Res. 21, supra; which was ordered to lie on the table.

SA 613. Mr. SPECTER submitted an amendment intended to be proposed by him to the concurrent resolution S. Con. Res. 21, supra; which was ordered to lie on the table.

SA 614. Mr. GRAHAM submitted an amendment intended to be proposed by him to the concurrent resolution S. Con. Res. 21, supra; which was ordered to lie on the table.

SA 615. Mr. KERRY (for himself and Mr. ROCKEFELLER) submitted an amendment intended to be proposed by him to the concurrent resolution S. Con. Res. 21, supra; which was ordered to lie on the table.

SA 616. Mr. KERRY (for himself and Ms. SNOWE) submitted an amendment intended to be proposed by him to the concurrent resolution S. Con. Res. 21, supra; which was ordered to lie on the table.

SA 617. Mr. CASEY submitted an amendment intended to be proposed by him to the concurrent resolution S. Con. Res. 21, supra; which was ordered to lie on the table.

SA 618. Mr. GRASSLEY (for himself, Mr. GREGG, Mr. DEMINT, and Mr. KYL) submitted an amendment intended to be proposed by him to the concurrent resolution S. Con. Res. 21, supra; which was ordered to lie on the table.

SA 619. Mr. CHAMBLISS (for himself, Mrs. FEINSTEIN, Mr. ISAKSON, and Mr. GRAHAM) submitted an amendment intended to be proposed by him to the concurrent resolution S. Con. Res. 21, supra; which was ordered to lie on the table.

SA 620. Mr. WARNER (for himself, Mr. WEBB, and Mr. LIEBERMAN) submitted an amendment intended to be proposed by him to the concurrent resolution S. Con. Res. 21, supra; which was ordered to lie on the table.

TEXT OF AMENDMENTS

SA 525. Mr. CORNYN (for himself and Mr. GREGG) proposed an amendment to the concurrent resolution S. Con. Res. 21, setting forth the congressional budget for the United States Government for fiscal year 2008 and including the appropriate budgetary levels for fiscal years 2007 and 2009 through 2012; as follows:

On page 4, line 6, decrease the amount by $2,047,000,000.

On page 4, line 7, decrease the amount by $4,291,000,000.

On page 4, line 8, decrease the amount by $6,949,000,000.

On page 4, line 9, decrease the amount by $9,936,000,000.

On page 4, line 10, decrease the amount by $13,270,000,000.

On page 4, line 15, decrease the amount by $2,047,000,000.

On page 4, line 16, decrease the amount by $4,291,000,000.
On page 4, line 17, decrease the amount by $6,949,000,000.
On page 4, line 18, decrease the amount by $9,936,000,000.
On page 4, line 19, decrease the amount by $13,270,000,000.
On page 4, line 24, decrease the amount by $2,047,000,000.
On page 4, line 25, decrease the amount by $4,291,000,000.
On page 5, line 1, decrease the amount by $6,949,000,000.
On page 5, line 2, decrease the amount by $9,936,000,000.
On page 5, line 3, decrease the amount by $13,270,000,000.
On page 5, line 7, decrease the amount by $2,047,000,000.
On page 5, line 8, decrease the amount by $6,339,000,000.
On page 5, line 9, decrease the amount by $13,288,000,000.
On page 5, line 10, decrease the amount by $23,224,000,000.
On page 5, line 11, decrease the amount by $36,494,000,000.
On page 5, line 15, decrease the amount by $2,047,000,000.
On page 5, line 16, decrease the amount by $6,339,000,000.
On page 5, line 17, decrease the amount by $13,288,000,000.
On page 5, line 18, decrease the amount by $23,224,000,000.
On page 5, line 19, decrease the amount by $36,494,000,000.
On page 19, line 12, decrease the amount by $2,000,000,000.
On page 19, line 13, decrease the amount by $2,000,000,000.
On page 19, line 16, decrease the amount by $4,100,000,000.
On page 19, line 17, decrease the amount by $4,100,000,000.
On page 19, line 20, decrease the amount by $6,500,000,000.
On page 19, line 21, decrease the amount by $6,500,000,000.
On page 19, line 24, decrease the amoont by $9,100,000,000.
On page 19, line 25, decrease the amount by $9,100,000,000.
On page 20, line 3, decrease the amount by $11,900,000,000.
On page 20, line 4, decrease the amount by $11,900,000,000.
On page 25, line 12, decrease the amount by $47,000,000.
On page 25, line 13, decrease the amount by $47,000,000.
On page 25, line 16, decrease the amount by $191,000,000.
On page 25, line 17, decrease the amount by $191,000,000.
On page 25, line 20, decrease the amount by $449,000,000.
On page 25, line 21, decrease the amount by $449,000,000.
On page 25, line 24, decrease the amount by $836,000,000.
On page 25, line 25, decrease the amount by $836,000,000.
On page 26, line 3, decrease the amount by $1,370,000,000.
On page 26, line 4, decrease the amount by $1,370,000,000.

SA 526. Mr. BAYH (for himself, Ms. SNOWE, and Mrs. LINCOLN) submitted an amendment intended to be proposed by him to the concurrent resolution S. Con. Res. 21, setting forth the congressional budget for the United States Government for fiscal year 2008 and including the appropriate budgetary levels for fiscal years 2007 and 2009 through 2012; as follows:

On page 3, line 11, decrease the amount by $120,000,000.
On page 3, line 12, decrease the amount by $776,000,000.
On page 3, line 13, decrease the amount by $178,000,000.
On page 3, line 14, increase the amount by $349,000,000.
On page 3, line 15, increase the amount by $742,000,000.
On page 3, line 20, decrease the amount by $120,000,000.
On page 3, line 21, decrease the amount by $776,000,000.
On page 3, line 22, decrease the amount by $178,000,000.
On page 3, line 23, increase the amount by $349,000,000.
On page 4, line 1, increase the amount by $742,000,000.
On page 4, line 24, increase the amount by $120,000,000.
On page 4, line 25, increase the amount by $776,000,000.
On page 5, line 1, increase the amount by $178,000,000.
On page 5, line 2, decrease the amount by $349,000,000.
On page 5, line 3, decrease the amount by $742,000,000.
On page 5, line 7, increase the amount by $120,000,000.
On page 5, line 8, increase the amount by $896,000,000.
On page 5, line 9, increase the amount by $1,074,000,000.
On page 5, line 10, increase the amount by $725,000,000.
On page 5, line 11, decrease the amount by $17,000,000.
On page 5, line 15, increase the amount by $120,000,000.
On page 5, line 16, increase the amount by $896,000,000.
On page 5, line 17, increase the amount by $1,074,000,000.
On page 5, line 18, increase the amount by $725,000,000.
On page 5, line 19, decrease the amount by $17,000,000.

SA 527. Ms. MURKOWSKI (for herself and Mr. STEVENS) submitted an amendment intended to be proposed by her to the concurrent resolution S. Con. Res. 21, setting forth the congressional budget for the United States Government for fiscal year 2008 and including the appropriate budgetary levels for fiscal years 2007 and 2009 through 2012; which was ordered to lie on the table; as follows:

On page 11, line 9, increase the amount by $125,000,000.
On page 11, line 10, increase the amount by $56,000,000.
On page 11, line 14, increase the amount by $50,000,000.
On page 11, line 18, increase the amount by $13,000,000.
On page 11, line 22, increase the amount by $6,000,000.
On page 31, line 2, decrease the amount by $125,000,000.
On page 31, line 7, decrease the amount by $56,000,000.
On page 31, line 12, decrease the amount by $50,000,000.
On page 31, line 17, decrease the amount by $13,000,000.
On page 31, line 22, decrease the amount by $6,000,000.

SA 528. Mr. BIDEN submitted an amendment intended to be proposed by him to the concurrent resolution S. Con. Res. 21, setting forth the congressional budget for the United States Government for fiscal year 2008 and including the appropriate budgetary levels for fiscal years 2007 and 2009 through 2012; which was ordered to lie on the table; as follows:

On page 18, line 12, increase the amount by $40,000,000.
On page 18, line 13, increase the amount by $11,000,000.
On page 18, line 17, increase the amount by $18,000,000.
On page 18, line 21, increase the amount by $9,000,000.
On page 23, line 12, increase the amount by $60,000,000.
On page 23, line 13, increase the amount by $13,000,000.
On page 23, line 17, increase the amount by $18,000,000.
On page 23, line 21, increase the amount by $12,000,000.
On page 23, line 25, increase the amount by $9,000,000.
On page 24, line 4, increase the amount by $8,000,000.
On page 26, line 12, decrease the amount by $100,000,000.
On page 26, line 13, decrease the amount by $24,000,000.
On page 26, line 17, decrease the amount by $36,000,000.
On page 26, line 21, decrease the amount by $21,000,000.
On page 26, line 25, decrease the amount by $9,000,000.
On page 27, line 4, decrease the amount by $8,000,000.

SA 529. Mr. BIDEN submitted an amendment intended to be proposed by him to the concurrent resolution S. Con. Res. 21, setting forth the congressional budget for the United States Government for fiscal year 2008 and including the appropriate budgetary levels for fiscal years 2007 and 2009 through 2012; which was ordered to lie on the table; as follows:

On page 23, line 12, increase the amount by $598,000,000.
On page 23, line 13, increase the amount by $72,000,000.
On page 23, line 17, increase the amount by $167,000,000.
On page 23, line 21, increase the amount by $150,000,000.
On page 23, line 25, increase the amount by $120,000,000.
On page 24, line 4, increase the amount by $90,000,000.
On page 26, line 12, decrease the amount by $598,000,000.
On page 26, line 13, decrease the amount by $72,000,000.
On page 26, line 17, decrease the amount by $167,000,000.
On page 26, line 21, decrease the amount by $150,000,000.
On page 26, line 25, decrease the amount by $120,000,000.
On page 27, line 4, decrease the amount by $90,000,000.

SA 530. Mr. DEMINT submitted an amendment intended to be proposed by him to the concurrent resolution S. Con. Res. 21, setting forth the congressional budget for the United States Government for fiscal year 2008 and including the appropriate budgetary levels for fiscal years 2007 and 2009

through 2012; which was ordered to lie on the table; as follows:

On page 47, line 25, strike ''direct spending'' and all that follows through ''or revenue'' on page 48, line 1.

SA 531. Mr. DEMINT submitted an amendment intended to be proposed by him to the concurrent resolution S. Con. Res. 21, setting forth the congressional budget for the United States Government for fiscal year 2008 and including the appropriate budgetary levels for fiscal years 2007 and 2009 through 2012; which was ordered to lie on the table; as follows:

At the end of title II, add the following:

SEC. ___. CAP ON SPENDING BEYOND INFLATION.

(a) REPORT.—If in any year the Congressional Budget Office, in its report pursuant to section 202(e)(1) of the Congressional Budget Act of 1974, projects that Federal spending will exceed the rate of inflation for the budget year or any subsequent fiscal year covered by those projections, then the concurrent resolution on the budget for the budget year shall reduce spending relative to the projections of Congressional Budget Office to a level not exceeding the level for the preceding fiscal year adjusted for inflation plus population growth.

(b) POINTS OF ORDER.—

(1) BUDGET RESOLUTION.—If in any year the Congressional Budget Office, in its report pursuant to section 202(e)(1) of the Congressional Budget Act of 1974 projects that Federal spending will exceed the rate of inflation for the budget year or any subsequent fiscal year covered by those projections, it shall not be in order in the Senate to consider a concurrent resolution on the budget for the budget year, any amendment thereto, or any conference report thereon that fails to comply with subsection (a).

(2) LEGISLATION.—It shall not be in order in the House of Representatives or the Senate to consider any bill or joint resolution, as reported, or any amendment thereto or conference report thereon, if such measure would exceed the limits set in the budget resolution pursuant to paragraph (1).

(c) SUPERMAJORITY WAIVER AND APPEAL.—

(1) WAIVER.—This section may be waived or suspended only by the affirmative vote of three-fifths of the Members, duly chosen and sworn.

(2) APPEAL.—An affirmative vote of three-fifths of the Members, duly chosen and sworn, shall be required to sustain an appeal of the ruling of the Chair on a point of order raised under this section.

(d) BUDGET YEAR.—In this section, the term ''budget year'' shall have the same meaning as in section 250(c)(12) of the Balanced Budget and Emergency Deficit Control Act of 1985.

SA 532. Mr. DEMINT submitted an amendment intended to be proposed by him to the concurrent resolution S. Con. Res. 21, setting forth the congressional budget for the United States Government for fiscal year 2008 and including the appropriate budgetary levels for fiscal years 2007 and 2009 through 2012; which was ordered to lie on the table; as follows:

At the end of title III, insert the following:

SEC. ___. RESERVE FUND FOR TAX REFORM.

The Chairman of the Senate Committee on the Budget may revise the allocations, aggregates, and other appropriate levels in this resolution for a bill, joint resolution, amendment, motion, or conference report that provides for the implementation of a new tax code in the year 2012 based on fairness, simplicity, and international competitiveness, by the amounts provided in that legislation for that purpose, provided that such legislation would not increase spending over the total of the period of fiscal years 2007 through 2012 and such legislation would not increase revenues in any year in the period of fiscal years 2007 through 2012.

SA 533. Mr. DEMINT submitted an amendment intended to be proposed by him to the concurrent resolution S. Con. Res. 21, setting forth the congressional budget for the United States Government for fiscal year 2008 and including the appropriate budgetary levels for fiscal years 2007 and 2009 through 2012; which was ordered to lie on the table; as follows:

At the end of title III, insert the following:

SEC. ___. RESERVE FUND TO BALANCE THE BUDGET WITHOUT RAISING TAXES.

The Chairman of the Senate Committee on the Budget may revise the allocations, aggregates, and other appropriate levels in this resolution for a bill, joint resolution, amendment, motion, or conference report that would balance the budget without raising taxes by the amounts provided in that legislation for that purpose, provided that such legislation would not increase spending over the total of the period of fiscal years 2007 through 2012 and such legislation would not increase revenues in any year in the period of fiscal years 2007 through 2012.

SA 534. Mr. DEMINT submitted an amendment intended to be proposed by him to the concurrent resolution S. Con. Res. 21, setting forth the congressional budget for the United States Government for fiscal year 2008 and including the appropriate budgetary levels for fiscal years 2007 and 2009 through 2012; which was ordered to lie on the table; as follows:

On page 34, line 9, before the period at the end, insert the following: '', except that the authority to designate shall not apply to funding for spinach producers on a supplemental appropriations bill pursuant to subsection (f)(1) that is designated to supplement funding for ongoing combat operations''.

SA 535. Mr. WARNER (for himself, Mr. WEBB, and Mr. LIEBERMAN) submitted an amendment intended to be proposed by him to the concurrent resolution S. Con. Res. 21, setting forth the congressional budget for the United States Government for fiscal year 2008 and including the appropriate budgetary levels for fiscal years 2007 and 2009 through 2012; which was ordered to lie on the table; as follows:

On page 10, line 9, increase the amount by $163,000,000.

On page 10, line 10, increase the amount by $163,000,000.

On page 26, line 12, decrease the amount by $163,000,000.

On page 26, line 13, decrease the amount by $163,000,000.

SA 536. Mr. CHAMBLISS (for himself, Mr. ISAKSON) submitted an amendment intended to be proposed by him to the concurrent resolution S. Con. Res. 21, setting forth the congressional budget for the United States Government for fiscal year 2008 and including the appropriate budgetary levels for fiscal years 2007 and 2009 through 2012; which was ordered to lie on the table; as follows:

At the appropriate place, insert the following:

SEC. ___. DEFICIT-NEUTRAL RESERVE FUND FOR REAUTHORIZATION OF THE STATE CHILDREN'S HEALTH INSURANCE PROGRAM (SCHIP).

If the Committee on Finance reports a bill or joint resolution, if an amendment is offered thereto, or if a conference report is submitted thereon, that provides for reauthorization of the State Children's Health Insurance Program (SCHIP), eliminates enhanced Federal matching payments for health benefits coverage under SCHIP of nonpregnant adults, and permits States to offer supplemental dental and mental health benefits for children enrolled in SCHIP, then, provided that the Committee is within its allocation as provided under section 302(a) of the Congressional Budget Act of 1974, the Chairman of the Committee on the Budget may revise allocations of new budget authority and outlays, the revenue aggregates, and other appropriate measures to reflect such legislation, provided that such legislation would not increase the deficit for fiscal year 2008 and the period of fiscal years 2008 through 2012.

SA 537. Mr. WEBB (for himself, Mr. DURBIN, Mr. KERRY, Mrs. BOXER, Mr. WYDEN, Ms. MIKULSKI, Mr. REID) submitted an amendment intended to be proposed by him to the concurrent resolution S. Con. Res. 21, setting forth the congressional budget for the United States Government for fiscal year 2008 and including the appropriate budgetary levels for fiscal years 2007 and 2009 through 2012; which was ordered to lie on the table; as follows:

On page 59, line 7, after ''erans'' insert '', including GI educational benefits''.

SA 538. Mr. CARPER (for himself and Mr. COBURN) submitted an amendment intended to be proposed by him to the concurrent resolution S. Con. Res. 21, setting forth the congressional budget for the United States Government for fiscal year 2008 and including the appropriate budgetary levels for fiscal years 2007 and 2009 through 2012; as follows:

At the appropriate place, insert the following:

SEC. ___. DEFICIT-REDUCTION RESERVE FUND FOR REDUCTION OF IMPROPER PAYMENTS.

The Chairman of the Senate Committee on the Budget may revise the aggregates, allocations, functional totals, and other appropriate levels and limits in this resolution upon enactment of legislation that achieves savings by eliminating or reducing improper payments made by agencies reporting improper payments estimates under the Improper Payments Information Act of 2002 and uses such savings to reduce the deficit, provided that the legislation would not increase the deficit over the total of fiscal years 2007 through 2012.

SA 539. Mr. CARPER (for himself and Mr. COBURN) submitted an amendment intended to be proposed by him to the

concurrent resolution S. Con. Res. 21, setting forth the congressional budget for the United States Government for fiscal year 2008 and including the appropriate budgetary levels for fiscal years 2007 and 2009 through 2012; which was ordered to lie on the table; as follows:

At the appropriate place, insert the following:

SEC. ___. DEFICIT-REDUCTION RESERVE FUND FOR DISPOSAL OF EXCESS PROPERTY.

The Chairman of the Senate Committee on the Budget may revise the aggregates, allocations, functional totals, and other appropriate levels and limits in this resolution upon enactment of legislation that results in the disposal of vacant or unneeded Federal real property and uses any profits or savings realized to reduce the deficit, provided that the legislation would not increase the deficit over the total of fiscal years 2007 through 2012.

SA 540. Mr. CARPER (for himself and Mr. COBURN) submitted an amendment intended to be proposed by him to the concurrent resolution S. Con. Res. 21, setting forth the congressional budget for the United States Government for fiscal year 2008 and including the appropriate budgetary levels for fiscal years 2007 and 2009 through 2012; which was ordered to lie on the table; as follows:

At the appropriate place, insert the following:

SEC. ___. DEFICIT-REDUCTION RESERVE FUND FOR INCREASED USE OF RECOVERY AUDITS.

The Chairman of the Senate Committee on the Budget may revise the aggregates, allocations, functional totals, and other appropriate levels and limits in this resolution upon enactment of legislation that achieves savings by requiring that agencies increase their use of the recovery audits authorized by the Erroneous Payments Recovery Act of 2001 (section 831 of the National Defense Authorization Act of FY2002) and uses such savings to reduce the deficit, provided that the legislation would not increase the deficit over the total of fiscal years 2007 through 2012.

SA 541. Mr. SMITH submitted an amendment intended to be proposed by him to the concurrent resolution S. Con. Res. 21, setting forth the congressional budget for the United States Government for fiscal year 2008 and including the appropriate budgetary levels for fiscal years 2007 and 2009 through 2012; which was ordered to lie on the table; as follows:

On page 3, line 11, decrease the amount by $505,000,000.

On page 3, line 12, decrease the amount by $2,690,000,000.

On page 3, line 13, decrease the amount by $2,758,000,000.

On page 3, line 14, decrease the amount by $3,585,000,000.

On page 3, line 15, decrease the amount by $4,331,000,000.

On page 3, line 20, decrease the amount by $505,000,000.

On page 3, line 21, decrease the amount by $2,690,000,000.

On page 3, line 22, decrease the amount by $2,758,000,000.

On page 3, line 23, decrease the amount by $3,585,000,000.

On page 4, line 1, decrease the amount by $4,331,000,000.

On page 4, line 6, increase the amount by $12,000,000.

On page 4, line 7, increase the amount by $87,000,000.

On page 4, line 8, increase the amount by $219,000,000.

On page 4, line 9, increase the amount by $378,000,000.

On page 4, line 10, increase the amount by $582,000,000.

On page 4, line 15, increase the amount by $12,000,000.

On page 4, line 16, increase the amount by $87,000,000.

On page 4, line 17, increase the amount by $219,000,000.

On page 4, line 18, increase the amount by $378,000,000.

On page 4, line 19, increase the amount by $582,000,000.

On page 4, line 24, increase the amount by $517,000,000.

On page 4, line 25, increase the amount by $2,777,000,000.

On page 5, line 1, increase the amount by $2,977,000,000.

On page 5, line 2, increase the amount by $3,963,000,000.

On page 5, line 3, increase the amount by $4,913,000,000.

On page 5, line 7, increase the amount by $517,000,000.

On page 5, line 8, increase the amount by $3,294,000,000.

On page 5, line 9, increase the amount by $6,271,000,000.

On page 5, line 10, increase the amount by $10,234,000,000.

On page 5, line 11, increase the amount by $15,147,000,000.

On page 5, line 15, increase the amount by $517,000,000.

On page 5, line 16, increase the amount by $3,294,000,000.

On page 5, line 17, increase the amount by $6,271,000,000.

On page 5, line 18, increase the amount by $10,234,000,000.

On page 5, line 19, increase the amount by $15,147,000,000.

On page 25, line 12, increase the amount by $12,000,000.

On page 25, line 13, increase the amount by $12,000,000.

On page 25, line 16, increase the amount by $87,000,000.

On page 25, line 17, increase the amount by $87,000,000.

On page 25, line 20, increase the amount by $219,000,000.

On page 25, line 21, increase the amount by $219,000,000.

On page 25, line 24, increase the amount by $378,000,000.

On page 25, line 25, increase the amount by $378,000,000.

On page 26, line 3, increase the amount by $582,000,000.

On page 26, line 4, increase the amount by $582,000,000.

SA 542. Mrs. LINCOLN (for herself, Ms. SNOWE, and Mrs. MCCASKILL) submitted an amendment intended to be proposed by her to the concurrent resolution S. Con. Res. 21, setting forth the congressional budget for the United States Government for fiscal year 2008 and including the appropriate budgetary levels for fiscal years 2007 and 2009 through 2012; as follows:

On page 22, line 12, increase the amount by $70,000,000.

On page 22, line 13, increase the amount by $62,000,000.

On page 22, line 17, increase the amount by $8,000,000.

On page 26, line 12, decrease the amount by $70,000,000.

On page 26, line 13, decrease the amount by $62,000,000.

On page 26, line 17, decrease the amount by $8,000,000.

SA 543. Mr. DORGAN submitted an amendment intended to be proposed by him to the concurrent resolution S. Con. Res. 21, setting forth the congressional budget for the United States Government for fiscal year 2008 and including the appropriate budgetary levels for fiscal years 2007 and 2009 through 2012; which was ordered to lie on the table; as follows:

At the appropriate place insert the following:

SEC. ___. PROVISION OF ADDITIONAL REVENUES.

The budgetary totals in this resolution assume that the Internal Revenue Code of 1986 shall be amended in the same manner as provided in sections 211, 212, and 214 of S. 554 of the 110th Congress.

SA 544. Mr. DORGAN submitted an amendment intended to be proposed by him to the concurrent resolution S. Con. Res. 21, setting forth the congressional budget for the United States Government for fiscal year 2008 and including the appropriate budgetary levels for fiscal years 2007 and 2009 through 2012; which was ordered to lie on the table; as follows:

On page 50, line 8, insert ‘‘, such as enhanced charitable giving from individual retirement accounts,’’ before ‘‘and’’.

SA 545. Mr. SANDERS (for himself and Ms. MIKULSKI) proposed an amendment to the concurrent resolution S. Con. Res. 21, setting forth the congressional budget for the United States Government for fiscal year 2008 and including the appropriate budgetary levels for fiscal years 2007 and 2009 through 2012; as follows:

On page 3, line 11, increase the amount by $10,300,000,000.

On page 3, line 12, increase the amount by $14,600,000,000.

On page 3, line 13, increase the amount by $14,800,000,000.

On page 3, line 14, increase the amount by $4,500,000,000.

On page 3, line 20, increase the amount by $10,300,000,000.

On page 3, line 21, increase the amount by $14,600,000,000.

On page 3, line 22, increase the amount by $14,800,000,000.

On page 3, line 23, increase the amount by $4,500,000,000.

On page 4, line 6, increase the amount by $10,300,000,000.

On page 4, line 7, increase the amount by $14,600,000,000.

On page 4, line 8, increase the amount by $14,800,000,000.

On page 4, line 9, increase the amount by $4,500,000,000.

On page 4, line 15, increase the amount by $10,300,000,000.

On page 4, line 16, increase the amount by $14,600,000,000.

On page 4, line 17, increase the amount by $14,800,000,000.

On page 4, line 18, increase the amount by $4,500,000,000.

On page 10, line 9, increase the amount by $10,300,000,000.

On page 10, line 10, increase the amount by $10,300,000,000.

On page 10, line 13, increase the amount by $14,600,000,000.

On page 10, line 14, increase the amount by $14,600,000,000.

On page 10, line 17, increase the amount by $14,800,000,000.

On page 10, line 18, increase the amount by $14,800,000,000.

On page 10, line 21, increase the amount by $4,500,000,000.

On page 10, line 22, increase the amount by $4,500,000,000.

SA 546. Mr. THUNE (for himself, Mrs. LINCOLN, and Mr. PRYOR) submitted an amendment intended to be proposed by him to the concurrent resolution S. Con. Res. 21, setting forth the congressional budget for the United States Government for fiscal year 2008 and including the appropriate budgetary levels for fiscal years 2007 and 2009 through 2012; which was ordered to lie on the table; as follows:

On page 23, line 12, increase the amount by $29,000,000.

On page 23, line 13, increase the amount by $26,100,000.

On page 23, line 17, increase the amount by $2,900,000.

On page 26, line 12, decrease the amount by $29,000,000.

On page 26, line 13, decrease the amount by $26,100,000.

On page 26, line 17, decrease the amount by $2,900,000.

SA 547. Mr. GRASSLEY submitted an amendment intended to be proposed by him to the concurrent resolution S. Con. Res. 21, setting forth the congressional budget for the United States Government for fiscal year 2008 and including the appropriate budgetary levels for fiscal years 2007 and 2009 through 2012; which was ordered to lie on the table; as follows:

At the end of title III, add the following:

SEC. ___. PROVISION OF DATA ON MEDICARE PART D TO AGENCIES WITHIN THE DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH AND HUMAN SERVICES AND USE OF SUCH DATA FOR CONDUCTING RESEARCH.

If the Senate Committee on Finance—

(1) reports a bill, or if an amendment is offered thereto, or if a conference report is submitted thereon, that—

(A) calls for the transfer of data on Medicare part D to agencies within the Department of Health and Human Services, such as the Food and Drug Administration, for the purpose of conducting research and other activities to improve the public's safety, such as through enhancing post-marketing surveillance to improve drug safety;

(B) creates a framework and parameters for the use of Medicare part D data by university-based and other researchers for the purpose of conducting research on health care safety, effectiveness, efficiency, and quality and drug utilization, safety, efficacy, and effectiveness, among other topics; and

(C) includes provisions to protect beneficiary privacy and to prevent disclosure of proprietary or trade secret information with respect to the transfer and use of such data; and

(2) is within its allocation as provided under section 302(a) of the Congressional Budget Act of 1974, the Chairman of the Senate Committee on the Budget may revise allocations of new budget authority and outlays, the revenue aggregates, and other appropriate measures to reflect such legislation provided that such legislation would not increase the deficit for fiscal year 2008, and for the period of fiscal years 2008 through 2012.

SA 548. Mr. GRASSLEY submitted an amendment intended to be proposed by him to the concurrent resolution S. Con. Res. 21, setting forth the congressional budget for the United States Government for fiscal year 2008 and including the appropriate budgetary levels for fiscal years 2007 and 2009 through 2012; which was ordered to lie on the table; as follows:

On page 53, line 22, insert ''and that includes financial incentives for physicians to improve the quality and efficiency of items and services furnished to Medicare beneficiaries through the use of consensus-based quality measures'' after ''Act''.

SA 549. Mrs. DOLE submitted an amendment intended to be proposed by her to the concurrent resolution S. Con. Res. 21, setting forth the congressional budget for the United States Government for fiscal year 2008 and including the appropriate budgetary levels for fiscal years 2007 and 2009 through 2012; which was ordered to lie on the table; as follows:

On page 13, line 9, increase the amount by $10,000,000.

On page 13, line 10, increase the amount by $10,000,000.

On page 13, line 13, increase the amount by $10,000,000.

On page 13, line 14, increase the amount by $10,000,000.

On page 13, line 17, increase the amount by $3,000,000.

On page 13, line 18, increase the amount by $3,000,000.

On page 13, line 21, increase the amount by $0.

On page 13, line 22, increase the amount by $0.

On page 13, line 25, increase the amount by $0.

On page 14, line 1, increase the amount by $0.

On page 26, line 12, decrease the amount by $10,000,000.

On page 26, line 13, decrease the amount by $10,000,000.

On page 26, line 16, decrease the amount by $10,000,000.

On page 26, line 17, decrease the amount by $10,000,000.

On page 26, line 20, decrease the amount by $3,000,000.

On page 26, line 21, decrease the amount by $3,000,000.

On page 26, line 24, decrease the amount by $0.

On page 26, line 25, decrease the amount by $0.

On page 27, line 3, decrease the amount by $0.

On page 27, line 4, decrease the amount by $0.

SA 550. Mr. ALLARD submitted an amendment intended to be proposed by him to the concurrent resolution S. Con. Res. 21, setting forth the congressional budget for the United States Government for fiscal year 2008 and including the appropriate budgetary levels for fiscal years 2007 and 2009 through 2012; which was ordered to lie on the table; as follows:

On page 31, line 13, strike ''2017'' and insert ''2012''.

On page 33, line 24, strike ''2017'' and insert ''2012''.

On page 37, line 24, strike ''2017'' and insert ''2012''.

SA 551. Ms. MURKOWSKI submitted an amendment intended to be proposed by her to the concurrent resolution S. Con. Res. 21, setting forth the congressional budget for the United States Government for fiscal year 2008 and including the appropriate budgetary levels for fiscal years 2007 and 2009 through 2012; which was ordered to lie on the table; as follows:

On page 11, line 9, increase the amount by $125,000,000.

On page 11, line 10, increase the amount by $56,000,000.

On page 11, line 14, increase the amount by $50,000,000.

On page 11, line 18, increase the amount by $13,000,000.

On page 11, line 22, increase the amount by $6,000,000.

On page 26, line 12, decrease the amount by $125,000,000.

On page 26, line 13, decrease the amount by $56,000,000.

On page 26, line 17, decrease the amount by $50,000,000.

On page 26, line 121, decrease the amount by $13,000,000.

On page 326, line 25, decrease the amount by $6,000,000.

SA 552. Mrs. DOLE submitted an amendment intended to be proposed by her to the concurrent resolution S. Con. Res. 21, setting forth the congressional budget for the United States Government for fiscal year 2008 and including the appropriate budgetary levels for fiscal years 2007 and 2009 through 2012; which was ordered to lie on the table; as follows:

On page 3, line 14, decrease the amount by $1,000,000.

On page 3, line 15, decrease the amount by $1,000,000.

On page 3, line 23, decrease the amount by $1,000,000.

On page 4, line 1, decrease the amount by $1,000,000.

On page 5, line 2, increase the amount by $1,000,000.

On page 5, line 3, increase the amount by $1,000,000.

On page 5, line 10, increase the amount by $1,000,000.

On page 5, line 11, increase the amount by $2,000,000.

On page 5, line 18, increase the amount by $1,000,000.

On page 5, line 19, increase the amount by $2,000,000.

SA 553. Mrs. DOLE submitted an amendment intended to be proposed by her to the concurrent resolution S. Con. Res. 21, setting forth the congressional budget for the United States Government for fiscal year 2008 and including the appropriate budgetary levels for fiscal years 2007 and 2009 through 2012; which was ordered to lie on the table; as follows:

On page 3, line 14, decrease the amount by $1,000,000.

On page 3, line 15, decrease the amount by $1,000,000.
On page 3, line 23, decrease the amount by $1,000,000.
On page 4, line 1, decrease the amount by $1,000,000.
On page 5, line 2, increase the amount by $1,000,000.
On page 5, line 3, increase the amount by $1,000,000.
On page 5, line 10, increase the amount by $1,000,000.
On page 5, line 11, increase the amount by $2,000,000.
On page 5, line 18, increase the amount by $1,000,000.
On page 5, line 19, increase the amount by $2,000,000.

SA 554. Mr. DEMINT submitted an amendment intended to be proposed by him to the concurrent resolution S. Con. Res. 21, setting forth the congressional budget for the United States Government for fiscal year 2008 and including the appropriate budgetary levels for fiscal years 2007 and 2009 through 2012; which was ordered to lie on the table; as follows:

On page 34, line 9, before the period at the end, insert the following: '', except that the authority to designate shall not apply to funding for salaries and expenses of the Farm Service Agency on a supplemental appropriations bill pursuant to subsection (f)(1) that is designated to supplement funding for ongoing combat operations''.

SA 555. Mr. DEMINT submitted an amendment intended to be proposed by him to the concurrent resolution S. Con. Res. 21, setting forth the congressional budget for the United States Government for fiscal year 2008 and including the appropriate budgetary levels for fiscal years 2007 and 2009 through 2012; which was ordered to lie on the table; as follows:

On page 34, line 9, before the period at the end, insert the following: '', except that the authority to designate shall not apply to funding for the International Boundary and Water Commission on a supplemental appropriations bill pursuant to subsection (f)(1) that is designated to supplement funding for ongoing combat operations''.

SA 556. Mr. DEMINT submitted an amendment intended to be proposed by him to the concurrent resolution S. Con. Res. 21, setting forth the congressional budget for the United States Government for fiscal year 2008 and including the appropriate budgetary levels for fiscal years 2007 and 2009 through 2012; which was ordered to lie on the table; as follows:

On page 34, line 9, before the period at the end, insert the following: '', except that the authority to designate shall not apply to funding for the Food and Drug Administration on a supplemental appropriations bill pursuant to subsection (f)(1) that is designated to supplement funding for ongoing combat operations''.

SA 557. Mr. DEMINT submitted an amendment intended to be proposed by him to the concurrent resolution S. Con. Res. 21, setting forth the congressional budget for the United States Government for fiscal year 2008 and including the appropriate budgetary levels for fiscal years 2007 and 2009 through 2012; which was ordered to lie on the table; as follows:

On page 34, line 9, before the period at the end, insert the following: '', except that the authority to designate shall not apply to funding for the National Aeronautics and Space Administration on a supplemental appropriations bill pursuant to subsection (f)(1) that is designated to supplement funding for ongoing combat operations''.

SA 558. Mr. DEMINT submitted an amendment intended to be proposed by him to the concurrent resolution S. Con. Res. 21, setting forth the congressional budget for the United States Government for fiscal year 2008 and including the appropriate budgetary levels for fiscal years 2007 and 2009 through 2012; which was ordered to lie on the table; as follows:

On page 34, line 9, before the period at the end, insert the following: '', except that the authority to designate shall not apply to funding for salaries and expenses for the U.S. House of Representatives on a supplemental appropriations bill pursuant to subsection (f)(1) that is designated to supplement funding for ongoing combat operations''.

SA 559. Mr. DEMINT submitted an amendment intended to be proposed by him to the concurrent resolution S. Con. Res. 21, setting forth the congressional budget for the United States Government for fiscal year 2008 and including the appropriate budgetary levels for fiscal years 2007 and 2009 through 2012; which was ordered to lie on the table; as follows:

On page 34, line 9, before the period at the end, insert the following: '', except that the authority to designate shall not apply to funding for radio upgrades for the U.S. Capitol Police on a supplemental appropriations bill pursuant to subsection (f)(1) that is designated to supplement funding for ongoing combat operations''.

SA 560. Mr. DEMINT submitted an amendment intended to be proposed by him to the concurrent resolution S. Con. Res. 21, setting forth the congressional budget for the United States Government for fiscal year 2008 and including the appropriate budgetary levels for fiscal years 2007 and 2009 through 2012; which was ordered to lie on the table; as follows:

On page 34, line 9, before the period at the end, insert the following: '', except that the authority to designate shall not apply to funding for asbestos mitigation on a supplemental appropriations bill pursuant to subsection (f)(1) that is designated to supplement funding for ongoing combat operations''.

SA 561. Mr. DEMINT submitted an amendment intended to be proposed by him to the concurrent resolution S. Con. Res. 21, setting forth the congressional budget for the United States Government for fiscal year 2008 and including the appropriate budgetary levels for fiscal years 2007 and 2009 through 2012; which was ordered to lie on the table; as follows:

On page 34, line 9, before the period at the end, insert the following: '', except that the authority to designate shall not apply to funding for government contracting reform on a supplemental appropriations bill pursuant to subsection (f)(1) that is designated to supplement funding for ongoing combat operations''.

SA 562. Mr. DEMINT submitted an amendment intended to be proposed by him to the concurrent resolution S. Con. Res. 21, setting forth the congressional budget for the United States Government for fiscal year 2008 and including the appropriate budgetary levels for fiscal years 2007 and 2009 through 2012; which was ordered to lie on the table; as follows:

On page 34, line 9, before the period at the end, insert the following: '', except that the authority to designate shall not apply to funding for rural schools on a supplemental appropriations bill pursuant to subsection (f)(1) that is designated to supplement funding for ongoing combat operations''.

SA 563. Mr. DEMINT submitted an amendment intended to be proposed by him to the concurrent resolution S. Con. Res. 21, setting forth the congressional budget for the United States Government for fiscal year 2008, and including the appropriate budgetary levels for fiscal years 2007 and 2009 through 2012; which was ordered to lie on the table; as follows:

On page 34, line 9, before the period at the end, insert the following: '', except that the authority to designate shall not apply to funding for wildlife suppression on a supplemental appropriations bill pursuant to subsection (f)(1) that is designated to supplement funding for ongoing combat operations''.

SA 564. Mr. DEMINT submitted an amendment intended to be proposed by him to the concurrent resolution S. Con. Res. 21, setting forth the congressional budget for the United States Government for fiscal year 2008, and including the appropriate budgetary levels for fiscal years 2007 and 2009 through 2012; which was ordered to lie on the table; as follows:

On page 34, line 9, before the period at the end, insert the following: '', except that the authority to designate shall not apply to funding for salmon fishery on a supplemental appropriations bill pursuant to subsection (f)(1) that is designated to supplement funding for ongoing combat operations''.

SA 565. Mr. DEMINT submitted an amendment intended to be proposed by him to the concurrent resolution S. Con. Res. 21, setting forth the congressional budget for the United States Government for fiscal year 2008, and including the appropriate budgetary levels for fiscal years 2007 and 2009 through 2012; which was ordered to lie on the table; as follows:

On page 34, line 9, before the period at the end, insert the following: '', except that the authority to designate shall not apply to funding for shrimp and menhaden fishing industries on a supplemental appropriations bill pursuant to subsection (f)(1) that is designated to supplement funding for ongoing combat operations''.

SA 566. Mr. DEMINT submitted an amendment intended to be proposed by

him to the concurrent resolution S. Con. Res. 21, setting forth the congressional budget for the United States Government for fiscal year 2008, and including the appropriate budgetary levels for fiscal years 2007 and 2009 through 2012; which was ordered to lie on the table; as follows:

On page 34, line 9, before the period at the end, insert the following: '', except that the authority to designate shall not apply to funding for the milk income loss contract program on a supplemental appropriations bill pursuant to subsection (f)(1) that is designated to supplement funding for ongoing combat operations''.

SA 567. Mr. DEMINT submitted an amendment intended to be proposed by him to the concurrent resolution S. Con. Res. 21, setting forth the congressional budget for the United States Government for fiscal year 2008, and including the appropriate budgetary levels for fiscal years 2007 and 2009 through 2012; which was ordered to lie on the table; as follows:

On page 34, line 9, before the period at the end, insert the following: '', except that the authority to designate shall not apply to funding for livestock on a supplemental appropriations bill pursuant to subsection (f)(1) that is designated to supplement funding for ongoing combat operations''.

SA 568. Mr. DEMINT submitted an amendment intended to be proposed by him to the concurrent resolution S. Con. Res. 21, setting forth the congressional budget for the United States Government for fiscal year 2008, and including the appropriate budgetary levels for fiscal years 2007 and 2009 through 2012; which was ordered to lie on the table; as follows:

On page 34, line 9, before the period at the end, insert the following: '', except that the authority to designate shall not apply to funding for peanut storage costs on a supplemental appropriations bill pursuant to subsection (f)(1) that is designated to supplement funding for ongoing combat operations''.

SA 569. Mr. DEMINT submitted an amendment intended to be proposed by him to the concurrent resolution S. Con. Res. 21, setting forth the congressional budget for the United States Government for fiscal year 2008, and including the appropriate budgetary levels for fiscal years 2007 and 2009 through 2012; which was ordered to lie on the table; as follows:

On page 34, line 9, before the period at the end, insert the following: '', except that the authority to designate shall not apply to funding for aquaculture businesses on a supplemental appropriations bill pursuant to subsection (f)(1) that is designated to supplement funding for ongoing combat operations''.

SA 570. Mr. DEMINT submitted an amendment intended to be proposed by him to the concurrent resolution S. Con. Res. 21, setting forth the congressional budget for the United States Government for fiscal year 2008, and including the appropriate budgetary levels for fiscal years 2007 and 2009 through 2012; which was ordered to lie on the table; as follows:

On page 34, line 9, before the period at the end, insert the following: '', except that the authority to designate shall not apply to funding for citrus assistance on a supplemental appropriations bill pursuant to subsection (f)(1) that is designated to supplement funding for ongoing combat operations''.

SA 571. Mr. DEMINT submitted an amendment intended to be proposed by him to the concurrent resolution S. Con. Res. 21, setting forth the congressional budget for the United States Government for fiscal year 2008, and including the appropriate budgetary levels for fiscal years 2007 and 2009 through 2012; which was ordered to lie on the table; as follows:

On page 34, line 9, before the period at the end, insert the following: '', except that the authority to designate shall not apply to funding for spinach producers on a supplemental appropriations bill pursuant to subsection (f)(1) that is designated to supplement funding for ongoing combat operations''.

SA 572. Mr. COLEMAN (for himself and Ms. KLOBUCHAR) submitted an amendment intended to be proposed by him to the concurrent resolution S. Con. Res. 21, setting forth the congressional budget for the United States Government for fiscal year 2008 and including the appropriate budgetary levels for fiscal years 2007 and 2009 through 2012; which was ordered to lie on the table; as follows:

On page 12, line 9, increase the amount by $50,000,000.

On page 12, line 10, increase the amount by $40,000,000.

On page 12, line 14, increase the amount by $10,000,000.

On page 26, line 12, decrease the amount by $50,000,000.

On page 26, line 13, decrease the amount by $40,000,000.

On page 26, line 17, decrease the amount by $10,000,000.

SA 573. Mr. BAUCUS (for himself and Mr. GRASSLEY) submitted an amendment intended to be proposed by him to the concurrent resolution S. Con. Res. 21, setting forth the congressional budget for the United States Government for fiscal year 2008 and including the appropriate budgetary levels for fiscal years 2007 and 2009 through 2012; which was ordered to lie on the table; as follows:

Strike subsection (a) of section 308 and insert the following:

(a) PROVISION OF MEDICARE PART D INFORMATION TO CONGRESSIONAL SUPPORT AGENCIES.—If the Senate Committee on Finance—

(1) reports a bill, or if an amendment is offered thereto, or if a conference report is submitted thereon, that—

(A) provides for the transfer of data on part D from the Department of Health and Human Service to Congressional Support Agencies, such as the Congressional Budget Office, for the purposes of conducting oversight with respect to part D and comparing prescription drug prices under part D to prices under other programs; and

(B) includes provisions to protect beneficiary privacy and to prevent disclosure of proprietary or trade secret information with respect to the transfer of such data; and

(2) is within its allocation as provided under section 302(a) of the Congressional Budget Act of 1974,

the Chairman of the Senate Committee on the Budget may revise allocations of new budget authority and outlays, the revenue aggregates, and other appropriate measures to reflect such legislation provided that such legislation would not increase the deficit for fiscal year 2008, and for the period of fiscal years 2008 through 2012.

SA 574. Mrs. FEINSTEIN (for herself and Mr. KYL) submitted an amendment intended to be proposed by her to the concurrent resolution S. Con. Res. 21, setting forth the congressional budget for the United States Government for fiscal year 2008 and including the appropriate budgetary levels for fiscal years 2007 and 2009 through 2012; which was ordered to lie on the table; as follows:

On page 23, line 12, increase the amount by $543,000,000.

On page 23, line 13, increase the amount by $119,000,000.

On page 23, line 17, increase the amount by $163,000,000.

On page 23, line 21, increase the amount by $109,000,000.

On page 23, line 25, increase the amount by $81,000,000.

On page 24, line 4, increase the amount by $71,000,000.

On page 26, line 12, decrease the amount by $543,000,000.

On page 26, line 13, decrease the amount by $119,000,000.

On page 26, line 17, decrease the amount by $163,000,000.

On page 26, line 21, decrease the amount by $109,000,000.

On page 26, line 25, decrease the amount by $81,000,000.

On page 27, line 4, decrease the amount by $71,000,000.

At the end, insert the following:

SEC. ____. SENSE OF CONGRESS ON THE STATE CRIMINAL ALIEN ASSISTANCE PROGRAM.

(a) FINDINGS.—Congress makes the following findings:

(1) Control of illegal immigration is a Federal responsibility.

(2) The State Criminal Alien Assistance Program (referred to in this section as ''SCAAP'') carried out pursuant to section 241(i) of the Immigration and Nationality Act (8 U.S.C. 1231(i)) provides critical funding to States and localities for reimbursement of costs incurred as a result of housing undocumented criminal aliens.

(3) Congress appropriated $300,000,000 for SCAAP to reimburse State and local governments for those costs in fiscal year 2004.

(4) Congress appropriated $305,000,000 for SCAAP to reimburse State and local governments for those costs in fiscal year 2005.

(5) Congress appropriated $405,000,000 for SCAAP to reimburse State and local governments for those costs in fiscal year 2006.

(6) Congress appropriated $399,000,000 for SCAAP to reimburse State and local governments for those costs in fiscal year 2007.

(7) Congress has authorized to be appropriated $950,000,000 to carry out SCAAP for each of the fiscal years 2008 through 2011.

(b) SENSE OF CONGRESS.—It is the sense of Congress that the budgetary totals in this resolution assume that $950,000,000 should be made available for SCAAP for fiscal year 2008.

SA 575. Mr. LEVIN submitted an amendment intended to be proposed by

him to the concurrent resolution S. Con. Res. 21, setting forth the congressional budget for the United States Government for fiscal year 2008, and including the appropriate budgetary levels for fiscal years 2007 and 2009 through 2012; which was ordered to lie on the table; as follows:

At the end of title III, add the following:

SEC. _____. DEFICIT-NEUTRAL RESERVE FUND FOR MANUFACTURING INITIATIVES.

The Chairman of the Senate Committee on the Budget may revise the allocations, aggregates, and other appropriate levels in this resolution for one or more bills, joint resolutions, amendments, motions, or conference reports, including tax legislation, that would revitalize the United States domestic manufacturing sector by increasing Federal research and development, by expanding the scope and effectiveness of manufacturing programs across the Federal government, by leveling the international playing field for United States domestic manufacturers in the areas of health care and trade, by increasing support for development of alternative fuels and leap-ahead automotive and energy technologies, and by establishing tax incentives to encourage the continued production in the United States of advanced technologies and the infrastructure to support such technologies, by the amounts provided in that legislation for those purposes, provided that such legislation would not increase the deficit over the total of the period of fiscal years 2007 through 2012.

SA 576. Mr. DEMINT submitted an amendment intended to be proposed by him to the concurrent resolution S. Con. Res. 21, setting forth the congressional budget for the United States Government for fiscal year 2008, and including the appropriate budgetary levels for fiscal years 2007 and 2009 through 2012; which was ordered to lie on the table; as follows:

On page 34, line 9, before the period at the end, insert the following: '', except that the authority to designate shall not apply to funding for farmland damaged by freezing temperatures on a supplemental appropriations bill pursuant to subsection (f)(1) that is designated to supplement funding for ongoing combat operations''.

SA 577. Mr. COLEMAN (for himself, Ms. SNOWE, Ms. COLLINS, Mr. ROBERTS, and Mr. GRAHAM) proposed an amendment to the concurrent resolution S. Con. Res. 21, setting forth the congressional budget for the United States Government for fiscal year 2008 and including the appropriate budgetary levels for fiscal years 2007 and 2009 through 2012; as follows:

On page 3, line 12, decrease the amount by $277,000,000.

On page 3, line 13, decrease the amount by $634,000,000.

On page 3, line 14, decrease the amount by $939,000,000.

On page 3, line 15, decrease the amount by $1,307,000,000.

On page 3, line 21, decrease the amount by $277,000,000.

On page 3, line 22, decrease the amount by $634,000,000.

On page 3, line 23, decrease the amount by $939,000,000.

On page 4, line 1, decrease the amount by $1,307,000,000.

On page 4, line 7, decrease the amount by $277,000,000.

On page 4, line 8, decrease the amount by $634,000,000.

On page 4, line 9, decrease the amount by $939,000,000.

On page 4, line 10, decrease the amount by $1,307,000,000.

On page 4, line 16, decrease the amount by $277,000,000.

On page 4, line 17, decrease the amount by $634,000,000.

On page 4, line 18, decrease the amount by $939,000,000.

On page 4, line 19, decrease the amount by $1,307,000,000.

On page 26, line 16, decrease the amount by $277,000,000.

On page 26, line 17, decrease the amount by $277,000,000.

On page 26, line 20, decrease the amount by $634,000,000.

On page 26, line 21, decrease the amount by $634,000,000.

On page 26, line 24, decrease the amount by $939,000,000.

On page 26, line 25, decrease the amount by $939,000,000.

On page 27, line 3, decrease the amount by $1,307,000,000.

On page 27, line 4, decrease the amount by $1,307,000,000.

SA 578. Mr. DEMINT (for himself and Mr. KYL) submitted an amendment intended to be proposed by him to the concurrent resolution S. Con. Res. 21, setting forth the congressional budget for the United States Government for fiscal year 2008 and including the appropriate budgetary levels for fiscal years 2007 and 2009 through 2012; which was ordered to lie on the table; as follows:

On page 3, line 11, decrease the amount by $2,100,000,000.

On page 3, line 12, decrease the amount by $1,400,000,000.

On page 3, line 13, decrease the amount by $2,900,000,000.

On page 3, line 14, decrease the amount by $35,000,000,000.

On page 3, line 15, decrease the amount by $31,000,000,000.

On page 3, line 20, decrease the amount by $2,100,000,000.

On page 3, line 21, decrease the amount by $1,400,000,000.

On page 3, line 22, decrease the amount by $2,900,000,000.

On page 3, line 23, decrease the amount by $35,000,000,000.

On page 4, line 1, decrease the amount by $31,000,000,000.

On page 4, line 6, increase the amount by $50,000,000.

On page 4, line 7, increase the amount by $133,000,000.

On page 4, line 8, increase the amount by $240,000,000.

On page 4, line 9, increase the amount by $1,142,000,000.

On page 4, line 10, increase the amount by $2,747,000,000.

On page 4, line 15, increase the amount by $50,000,000.

On page 4, line 16, increase the amount by $113,000,000.

On page 4, line 17, increase the amount by $240,000,000.

On page 4, line 18, increase the amount by $1,142,000,000.

On page 4, line 19, increase the amount by $2,747,000,000.

On page 4, line 24, increase the amount by $2,150,000,000.

On page 4, line 25, increase the amount by $1,533,000,000.

On page 5, line 1, increase the amount by $3,140,000,000.

On page 5, line 2, increase the amount by $36,142,000,000.

On page 5, line 3, increase the amount by $33,747,000,000.

On page 5, line 7, increase the amount by $2,150,000,000.

On page 5, line 8, increase the amount by $3,683,000,000.

On page 5, line 9, increase the amount by $6,823,000,000.

On page 5, line 10, increase the amount by $42,966,000,000.

On page 5, line 11, increase the amount by $76,713,000,000.

On page 5, line 15, increase the amount by $2,150,000,000.

On page 5, line 16, increase the amount by $3,683,000,000.

On page 5, line 17, increase the amount by $6,823,000,000.

On page 5, line 18, increase the amount by $42,966,000,000.

On page 5, line 19, increase the amount by $76,713,000,000.

On page 25, line 12, increase the amount by $50,000,000.

On page 25, line 13, increase the amount by $50,000,000.

On page 25, line 16, increase the amount by $133,000,000.

On page 25, line 17, increase the amount by $133,000,000.

On page 25, line 20, increase the amount by $240,000,000.

On page 25, line 21, increase the amount by $240,000,000.

On page 25, line 24, increase the amount by $1,142,000,000.

On page 25, line 25, increase the amount by $1,142,000,000.

On page 26, line 3, increase the amount by $2,747,000,000.

On page 26, line 4, increase the amount by $2,747,000,000.

SA 579. Ms. SNOWE submitted an amendment intended to be proposed by her to the concurrent resolution S. Con. Res. 21, setting forth the congressional budget for the United States Government for fiscal year 2008, and including the appropriate budgetary levels for fiscal years 2007 and 2009 through 2012; which was ordered to lie on the table; as follows:

On page 14, line 9, increase the amount by $74,000,000.

On page 14, line 10, increase the amount by $57,000,000.

On page 14, line 14, increase the amount by $12,000,000.

On page 14, line 18, increase the amount by $3,000,000.

On page 14, line 22, increase the amount by $1,000,000.

On page 15, line 9, decrease the amount by $74,000,000.

On page 15, line 10, decrease the amount by $57,000,000.

On page 15, line 14, decrease the amount by $12,000,000.

On page 15, line 18, decrease the amount by $3,000,000.

On page 15, line 22, decrease the amount by $1,000,000.

SA 580. Mr. NELSON submitted an amendment intended to be proposed by him to the concurrent resolution S. Con. Res. 21, setting forth the congressional budget for the United States Government for fiscal year 2008, and including the appropriate budgetary levels for fiscal years 2007 and 2009

through 2012; which was ordered to lie on the table; as follows:

On page 49, line 17, insert after ''disabled military personnel'' the following: ''or veterans (including the elimination of the offset between Survivor Benefit Plan annuities and veterans' dependency and indemnity compensation)''.

SA 581. Mr. BROWNBACK submitted an amendment intended to be proposed by him to the concurrent resolution S. Con. Res. 21, setting forth the congressional budget for the United States Government for fiscal year 2008 and including the appropriate budgetary levels for fiscal years 2007 and 2009 through 2012; which was ordered to lie on the table; as follows:

On page 24, line 12, increase the amount by $3,000,000.
On page 24, line 13, increase the amount by $3,000,000.
On page 24, line 16, increase the amount by $6,000,000.
On page 24, line 17, increase the amount by $6,000,000.
On page 24, line 20, increase the amount by $8,000,000.
On page 24, line 21, increase the amount by $8,000,000.
On page 24, line 24, increase the amount by $8,000,000.
On page 24, line 25, increase the amount by $8,000,000.
On page 25, line 3, increase the amount by $4,000,000.
On page 25, line 4, increase the amount by $4,000,000.
On page 26, line 12, decrease the amount by $3,000,000.
On page 26, line 13, decrease the amount by $2,000,000.
On page 26, line 16, decrease the amount by $6,000,000.
On page 26, line 17, decrease the amount by $6,000,000.
On page 26, line 20, decrease the amount by $8,000,000.
On page 26, line 21, decrease the amount by $8,000,000.
On page 26, line 24, decrease the amount by $8,000,000.
On page 26, line 25, decrease the amount by $8,000,000.
On page 27, line 3, decrease the amount by $4,000,000.
On page 27, line 4, decrease the amount by $4,000,000.

SA 582. Mr. HAGEL (for himself, Mr. COLEMAN, and Mr. ROBERTS) submitted an amendment intended to be proposed by him to the concurrent resolution S. Con. Res. 21, setting forth the congressional budget for the United States Government for fiscal year 2008, and including the appropriate budgetary levels for fiscal years 2007 and 2009 through 2012; which was ordered to lie on the table; as follows:

At the end of title III, insert the following:

SEC. 326. SENSE OF THE SENATE.

It is the sense of the Senate that of the increase in funding provided by this concurrent resolution for the Department of Education, $2,000,000,000 should be provided directly to the Secretary of Education to be used exclusively to fund part B of the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (20 U.S.C. 1411 et seq.).

SA 583. Mr. KYL (for himself and Mr. THUNE) proposed an amendment to the concurrent resolution S. Con. Res. 21, setting forth the congressional budget for the United States Government for fiscal year 2008 and including the appropriate budgetary levels for fiscal years 2007 and 2009 through 2012; as follows:

On page 3, line 11, decrease the amount by $20,000,000.
On page 3, line 12, decrease the amount by $388,000,000.
On page 3, line 13, decrease the amount by $886,000,000.
On page 3, line 14, decrease the amount by $17,390,000,000.
On page 3, line 15, decrease the amount by $14,602,000,000.
On page 3, line 20, decrease the amount by $20,000,000.
On page 3, line 21, decrease the amount by $388,000,000.
On page 3, line 22, decrease the amount by $886,000,000.
On page 3, line 23, decrease the amount by $17,390,000,000.
On page 4, line 1, decrease the amount by $14,602,000,000.
On page 4, line 7, increase the amount by $10,000,000.
On page 4, line 8, increase the amount by $40,000,000.
On page 4, line 9, increase the amount by $472,000,000.
On page 4, line 10, increase the amount by $1,246,000,000.
On page 4, line 16, increase the amount by $10,000,000.
On page 4, line 17, increase the amount by $40,000,000.
On page 4, line 18, increase the amount by $472,000,000. s
On page 4, line 19, increase the amount by $1,246,000,000.
On page 4, line 24, increase the amount by $20,000,000.
On page 4, line 25, increase the amount by $398,000,000.
On page 5, line 1, increase the amount by $926,000,000.
On page 5, line 2, increase the amount by $17,862,000,000.
On page 5, line 3, increase the amount by $15,848,000,000.
On page 5, line 7, increase the amount by $20,000,000.
On page 5, line 8, increase the amount by $418,000,000.
On page 5, line 9, increase the amount by $1,345,000,000.
On page 5, line 10, increase the amount by $19,207,000,000.
On page 5, line 11, increase the amount by $35,054,000,000.
On page 5, line 15, increase the amount by $20,000,000.
On page 5, line 16, increase the amount by $418,000,000.
On page 5, line 17, increase the amount by $1,345,000,000.
On page 5, line 18, increase the amount by $19,207,000,000.
On page 5, line 19, increase the amount by $35,054,000,000.
On page 25, line 16, increase the amount by $10,000,000.
On page 25, line 17, increase the amount by $10,000,000.
On page 25, line 20, increase the amount by $40,000,000.
On page 25, line 21, increase the amount by $40,000,000.
On page 25, line 24, increase the amount by $472,000,000.
On page 25, line 25, increase the amount by $472,000,000.
On page 26, line 3, increase the amount by $1,246,000,000.
On page 26, line 4, increase the amount by $1,246,000,000.

SA 584. Mr. COLEMAN (for himself and Mr. COBURN) submitted an amendment intended to be proposed by him to the concurrent resolution S. Con. Res. 21, setting forth the congressional budget for the United States Government for fiscal year 2008 and including the appropriate budgetary levels for fiscal years 2007 and 2009 through 2012; which was ordered to lie on the table; as follows:

On page 18, line 12, increase the amount by $75,000,000.
On page 18, line 13, increase the amount by $45,000,000.
On page 18, line 17, increase the amount by $22,500,000.
On page 18, line 21, increase the amount by $7,500,000.
On page 26, line 12, decrease the amount by $75,000,000.
On page 26, line 13, decrease the amount by $45,000,000.
On page 26, line 17, decrease the amount by $22,500,000.
On page 26, line 21, decrease the amount by $7,500,000.

SA 585. Mr. GREGG (for himself and Mrs. CLINTON) submitted an amendment intended to be proposed by him to the concurrent resolution S. Con. Res. 21, setting forth the congressional budget for the United States Government for fiscal year 2008 and including the appropriate budgetary levels for fiscal years 2007 and 2009 through 2012; which was ordered to lie on the table; as follows:

At the appropriate place, insert the following:

SEC. ____. RESERVE FUND TO IMPROVE HEALTH CARE QUALITY AND INFORMATION.

In the Senate, if the Senate Committee on Finance reports a bill or joint resolution, if an amendment is offered thereto, or if a conference report is submitted thereon, that—

(1) requires the Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services to share Medicare enrollment, claims, survey, and assessment data with select private sector entities to develop reports to measure health care quality for the public in a manner that ensures beneficiary privacy;

(2) allows such select private sector entities to develop reports to measure health care quality and cost at the provider and supplier level; and

(3) includes incentives to improve quality and reduce cost throughout the health care delivery system,

then, provided that the committee is within its allocation as provided under section 302(a) of the Congressional Budget Act of 1974, the Chairman of the Senate Committee on the Budget may revise allocations of new budget authority and outlays, the revenue aggregates, and other appropriate aggregates to reflect such legislation, to the extent that such legislation would not increase the deficit for fiscal year 2008 and for the period of fiscal years 2008 through 2012.

SA 586. Mr. OBAMA (for himself, Mr. MENENDEZ, Mr. DURBIN, Mr. FEINGOLD, Mr. BINGAMAN, Mr. SALAZAR, and Mr. KENNEDY) submitted an amendment intended to be proposed by him to the concurrent resolution S. Con. Res. 21, setting forth the congressional budget

for the United States Government for fiscal year 2008 and including the appropriate budgetary levels for fiscal years 2007 and 2009 through 2012; which was ordered to lie on the table; as follows:

On page 61, after line 16, insert the following:

(4) provides for more timely processing of applications or fee reductions for legal immigrants seeking to become citizens;

SA 587. Mr. BINGAMAN (for himself, Ms. CANTWELL, Mr. SALAZAR, Mr. FEINGOLD, Mr. MENENDEZ, Mr. SANDERS, Mr. TESTER, Mr. BAUCUS, Mr. KERRY, Mrs. BOXER, Mr. DURBIN, and Ms. KLOBUCHAR) submitted an amendment intended to be proposed by him to the concurrent resolution S. Con. Res. 21, setting forth the congressional budget for the United States Government for fiscal year 2008 and including the appropriate budgetary levels for fiscal years 2007 and 2009 through 2012; which was ordered to lie on the table; as follows:

On page 48, between lines 14 and 15, insert the following:

SEC. 210. PROHIBITION ON SCORING OF AMOUNTS FROM SALES OR LEASES OF CERTAIN FEDERAL LAND.

Any amount realized from the sale or lease of land or interests in land (other than a sale or lease authorized by statute, as of the date of adoption of this concurrent resolution by both Houses) that are part of the National Park System, the National Forest System, or the National Wildlife Refuge System shall not be scored with respect to the level of budget authority, outlays, or revenues.

SA 588. Mr. CASEY submitted an amendment intended to be proposed by him to the concurrent resolution S. Con. Res. 21, setting forth congressional budget for the United States Government for fiscal year 2008 and including the appropriate budgetary levels for fiscal years 2007 and 2009 through 2012; which was ordered to lie on the table; as follows:

After section 322, insert the following:

SEC. 322A. DEFICIT-NEUTRAL RESERVE FUND FOR PRESCHOOL OPPORTUNITIES.

If the Committee on Health, Education, Labor, and Pensions of the Senate, after providing sufficient funding for Head Start and the Child Care and Development Block Grant, reports a bill or a joint resolution, or an amendment is offered in the Senate to such a bill or joint resolution, or a conference report is submitted to the Senate on a such a bill or joint resolution, that augments or establishes a Federal program that provides assistance to States that offer or expand preschool to children of low-income families, the Chairman of the Committee on the Budget of the Senate may revisit the aggregates, allocations, and other appropriate levels in this resolution by amounts provided in such measure for that purpose, provided that such legislation would not increase the deficit for the total of the period of fiscal years 2007 through 2012.

SA 589. Mr. DORGAN (for himself and Ms. SNOWE) submitted an amendment intended to be proposed by him to the concurrent resolution S. Con. Res. 21, setting forth the congressional budget for the United States Government for fiscal year 2008 and including the appropriate budgetary levels for fiscal years 2007 and 2009 through 2012; which was ordered to lie on the table; as follows:

On page 62, between lines 7 and 8, insert the following:

SEC. 322A. DEFICIT-NEUTRAL RESERVE FUND FOR THE SAFE IMPORTATION OF FDA-APPROVED PRESCRIPTION DRUGS.

The Chairman of the Senate Committee on the Budget may revise the aggregates, allocations, and other levels in this resolution for a bill, joint resolution, motion, amendment, or conference report that permits the safe importation of prescription drugs approved by the Food and Drug Administration from a specified list of countries, by the amounts provided in such legislation for that purpose, provided that such legislation would not increase the deficit over the total of the period of fiscal years 2007 through 2012.

SA 590. Mr. DORGAN (for himself, Ms. COLLINS, Mr. FEINGOLD, and Mr. BIDEN) submitted an amendment intended to be proposed by him to the concurrent resolution S. Con. Res. 21, setting forth the congressional budget for the United States Government for fiscal year 2008 and including the appropriate budgetary levels for fiscal years 2007 and 2009 through 2012; as follows:

On page 18, line 12, increase the amount by $9,000,000.

On page 18, line 13, increase the amount by $3,000,000.

On page 18, line 17, increase the amount by $4,000,000.

On page 18, line 21, increase the amount by $2,000,000.

On page 26, line 12, decrease the amount by $9,000,000.

On page 26, line 13, decrease the amount by $3,000,000.

On page 26, line 17, decrease the amount by $4,000,000.

On page 26, line 21, decrease the amount by $2,000,000.

SA 591. Mr. ROCKEFELLER submitted an amendment intended to be proposed by him to the concurrent resolution S. Con. Res. 21, setting forth the congressional budget for the United States Government for fiscal year 2008 and including the appropriate budgetary levels for fiscal years 2007 and 2009 through 2012; which was ordered to lie on the table; as follows:

At the appropriate place, insert the following:

SEC. ___. DEFICIT-NEUTRAL RESERVE FUND TO IMPROVE CHILD SUPPORT COLLECTIONS.

The Chairman of the Senate Committee on the Budget may revise the allocations, aggregates, and other appropriate levels in this resolution for a bill, joint resolution, amendment, motion, or conference report that allows and encourages States to reinvest incentive payments received under part D of title IV of the Social Security Act to improve child support collections, by the amounts provided in that legislation for that purpose, provided that such legislation would not increase the deficit over the total of the period of fiscal years 2007 through 2012.

SA 592. Mrs. DOLE submitted an amendment intended to be proposed by her to the concurrent resolution S. Con. Res. 21, setting forth the congressional budget for the United States Government for fiscal year 2008 and including the appropriate budgetary levels for fiscal years 2007 and 2009 through 2012; which was ordered to lie on the table; as follows:

On page 13, line 9, increase the amount by $50,000,000.

On page 13, line 10, increase the amount by $50,000,000.

On page 13, line 13, increase the amount by $50,000,000.

On page 13, line 14, increase the amount by $50,000,000.

On page 13, line 17, increase the amount by $50,000,000.

On page 13, line 18, increase the amount by $50,000,000.

On page 13, line 21, increase the amount by $50,000,000.

On page 13, line 22, increase the amount by $50,000,000.

On page 13, line 25, increase the amount by $50,000,000.

On page 14, line 1, increase the amount by $50,000,000.

On page 26, line 12, decrease the amount by $50,000,000.

On page 26, line 13, decrease the amount by $50,000,000.

On page 26, line 16, decrease the amount by $50,000,000.

On page 26, line 17, decrease the amount by $50,000,000.

On page 26, line 20, decrease the amount by $50,000,000.

On page 26, line 21, decrease the amount by $50,000,000.

On page 26, line 24, decrease the amount by $50,000,000.

On page 26, line 25, decrease the amount by $50,000,000.

On page 27, line 3, decrease the amount by $50,000,000.

On page 27, line 4, decrease the amount by $50,000,000.

SA 593. Mr. BURR submitted an amendment intended to be proposed by him to the concurrent resolution S. Con. Res. 21, setting forth congressional budget for the United States Government for fiscal year 2008 and including the appropriate budgetary levels for fiscal years 2007 and 2009 through 2012; which was ordered to lie on the table; as follows:

On page 53, line 9, insert ", except that, in order to promote competition and lower drug prices under part D of title XVIII of such Act, the Secretary of Health and Human Services may not interfere with the negotiations between drug manufacturers and pharmacies and PDP sponsors with respect to drugs for the treatment of diabetes," after "1395w–111(i)(1))".

SA 594. Mr. BUNNING (for himself Mr. MCCONNELL, and Mr. GRASSLEY) submitted an amendment intended to be proposed by him to the concurrent resolution S. Con. Res. 21, setting forth the congressional budget for the United States Government for fiscal year 2008 and including the appropriate budgetary levels for fiscal years 2007 and 2009 through 2012; which was ordered to lie on the table; as follows:

At the appropriate place, insert the following:

SEC. ___. DEFICIT-NEUTRAL RESERVE FUND FOR PROTECTING STATE FLEXIBILITY IN MEDICAID.

If the Committee on Finance reports a bill or joint resolution, if an amendment is offered thereto, or if a conference report is

submitted thereon, that implements improvements to Medicare, Medicaid, or the State Children's Health Insurance Program, but that does not reduce the ability of States to provide coverage to Medicaid recipients through flexible benefit options that provide greater opportunities to provide health benefits coverage for Medicaid recipients, or alter the guarantee in section 1937 of the Social Security Act of coverage of early and periodic screening, diagnostic, and treatment services for children, then, provided that the Committee is within its allocation as provided under section 302(a) of the Congressional Budget Act of 1974, the Chairman of the Committee on the Budget may revise allocations of new budget authority and outlays, the revenue aggregates, and other appropriate measures to reflect such legislation, provided that such legislation would not increase the deficit for fiscal year 2008 and the period of fiscal years 2008 through 2012.

SA 595. Mr. BUNNING submitted an amendment intended to be propose by him to the concurrent resolution S. Con. Res. 21, setting forth the congressional budget for the United States Government for fiscal year 2008 and including the appropriate budgetary levels for fiscal years 2007 and 2009 through 2012; which was ordered to lie on the table; as follows:

On page 3, line 10, decrease the amount by $0.
On page 3, line 11, decrease the amount by $5,600,000,000.
On page 3, line 12, decrease the amount by $14,300,000,000.
On page 3, line 13, decrease the amount by $15,600,000,000.
On page 3, line 14, decrease the amount by $17,500,000,000.
On page 3, line 15, decrease the amount by $19,800,000,000.
On page 3, line 19, decrease the amount by $0.
On page 3, line 20, decrease the amount by $5,600,000,000.
On page 3, line 21, decrease the amount by $14,300,000,000.
On page 3, line 22, decrease the amount by $15,600,000,000.
On page 3, line 23, decrease the amount by $17,500,000,000.
On page 4, line 1, decrease the amount by $19,800,000,000.
On page 4, line 5, decrease the amount by $0.
On page 4, line 6, decrease the amount by $5,600,000,000.
On page 4, line 7, decrease the amount by $14,300,000,000.
On page 4, line 8, decrease the amount by $15,600,000,000.
On page 4, line 9, decrease the amount by $17,500,000,000.
On page 4, line 10, decrease the amount by $19,800,000,000.
On page 4, line 14, decrease the amount by $0.
On page 4, line 15, decrease the amount by $5,600,000,000.
On page 4, line 16, decrease the amount by $14,300,000,000.
On page 4, line 17, decrease the amount by $15,600,000,000.
On page 4, line 18, decrease the amount by $17,500,000,000.
On page 4, line 19, decrease the amount by $19,800,000,000.
On page 26, line 8, decrease the amount by $0.
On page 26, line 9, decrease the amount by $0.
On page 26, line 12, decrease the amount by $5,600,000,000.
On page 26, line 13, decrease the amount by $5,600,000,000.
On page 26, line 16, decrease the amount by $14,300,000,000.
On page 26, line 17, decrease the amount by $14,300,000,000.
On page 26, line 20, decrease the amount by $15,600,000,000.
On page 26, line 21, decrease the amount by $15,600,000,000.
On page 26, line 24, decrease the amount by $17,500,000,000.
On page 26, line 25, decrease the amount by $17,500,000,000.
On page 27, line 3, decrease the amount by $19,800,000,000.
On page 27, line 4, decrease the amount by $19,800,000,000.

SA 596. Mr. REED (for himself, Ms. COLLINS, Mr. KENNEDY, Ms. SNOWE, Mr. KERRY, Mr. WHITEHOUSE, Mr. BIDEN, Mr. SANDERS, Mr. SCHUMER, Mr. LIEBERMAN, Mr. PRYOR, Mrs. CLINTON, and Mr. DODD) submitted an amendment intended to be proposed by him to the concurrent resolution S. Con. Res. 21, setting forth the congressional budget for the United States Government for fiscal year 2008 and including the appropriate budgetary levels for fiscal years 2007 and 2009 through 2012; which was ordered to lie on the table; as follows:

On page 20, line 12, increase the amount by $703,000,000.
On page 20, line 13, increase the amount by $527,000,000.
On page 20, line 17, increase the amount by $162,000,000.
On page 20, line 21, increase the amount by $14,000,000.
On page 26, line 12, decrease the amount by $703,000,000.
On page 26, line 13, decrease the amount by $527,000,000.
On page 26, line 17, decrease the amount by $162,000,000.
On page 26, line 21, decrease the amount by $14,000,000.

SA 597. Ms. SNOWE submitted an amendment intended to be proposed by her to the concurrent resolution S. Con. Res. 21, setting forth the congressional budget for the United States Government for fiscal year 2008 and including the appropriate budgetary levels for fiscal years 2007 and 2009 through 2012; which was ordered to lie on the table; as follows:

On page 50, line 7, insert ''the permanent extension of expensing under section 179 of the Internal Revenue Code of 1986 with an increase in the expensing limit to $200,000 and the phaseout threshold to $800,000 and other'' after ''including''.

SA 598. Mr. CONRAD proposed an amendment to the concurrent resolution S. Con. Res. 21, setting forth the congressional budget for the United States Government for fiscal year 2008 and including the appropriate budgetary levels for fiscal years 2007 and 2009 through 2012; as follows:

At the end of title III, insert the following:

SEC. ___. DEFICIT-NEUTRAL RESERVE FUND FOR EXTENSION OF CERTAIN ENERGY TAX INCENTIVES.

The Chairman of the Senate Committee on the Budget may revise the aggregates, allocations, and other levels in this resolution for a bill, joint resolution, motion, amendment, or conference report that would extend through 2015 energy tax incentives, including the production tax credit for electricity produced from renewable resources, the Clean Renewable Energy Bond program, and the provisions to encourage energy efficient buildings, products and power plants, provided that such legislation would not increase the deficit over the total of fiscal years 2007 through 2012.

SA 599. Mr. OBAMA (for himself, Mr. BUNNING, Mr. BINGAMAN, Mr. LUGAR, and Mrs. BOXER) submitted an amendment intended to be proposed by him to the concurrent resolution S. Con. Res. 21, setting forth the congressional budget for the United States Government for fiscal year 2008 and including the appropriate budgetary levels for fiscal years 2007 and 2009 through 2012; which was ordered to lie on the table; as follows:

On page 11, line 9, increase the amount by $200,000,000.
On page 11, line 10, increase the amount by $50,000,000.
On page 11, line 14, increase the amount by $70,000,000.
On page 11, line 18, increase the amount by $50,000,000.
On page 11, line 22, increase the amount by $10,000,000.
On page 12, line 1, increase the amount by $10,000,000.
On page 26, line 12, decrease the amount by $200,000,000.
On page 26, line 13, decrease the amount by $50,000,000.
On page 26, line 17, decrease the amount by $70,000,000.
On page 26, line 21, decrease the amount by $50,000,000.
On page 26, line 25, decrease the amount by $10,000,000.
On page 27, line 4, decrease the amount by $10,000,000.

SA 600. Mr. BINGAMAN (for himself, Mr. DOMENICI, Mr. ROCKEFELLER, Mr. DURBIN, and Mr. KERRY) submitted an amendment intended to be proposed by him to the concurrent resolution S. Con. Res. 21, setting forth the congressional budget for the United States Government for fiscal year 2008 and including the appropriate budgetary levels for fiscal years 2007 and 2009 through 2012; which was ordered to lie on the table; as follows:

At the appropriate place, insert the following:

SEC. ___. DEFICIT-NEUTRAL RESERVE FUND FOR A DELAY IN THE IMPLEMENTATION OF A PROPOSED RULE RELATING TO THE FEDERAL-STATE FINANCIAL PARTNERSHIPS UNDER MEDICAID AND SCHIP.

The Chairman of the Senate Committee on the Budget may revise the allocations, aggregates, and other appropriate levels in this resolution for a bill, joint resolution, amendment, motion, or conference report that provides for a delay in the implementation of the proposed rule published on January 18, 2007, on pages 2236 through 2248 of volume 72, Federal Register (relating to parts 433, 447, and 457 of title 42, Code of Federal Regulations) or any other rule that would affect the Medicaid program and SCHIP in a similar manner, by the amounts provided in that legislation for that purpose, provided that such legislation would not increase the deficit over the total of the period of fiscal years 2007 through 2012.

SA 601. Mr. PRYOR (for himself and Mr. NELSON of Florida) submitted an amendment intended to be proposed by him to the concurrent resolution S. Con. Res. 21, setting forth the congressional budget for the United States Government for fiscal year 2008 and including the appropriate budgetary levels for fiscal years 2007 and 2009 through 2012; which was ordered to lie on the table; as follows:

At the end of title III, insert the following:

SEC. ____. RESERVE FUND TO PROVIDE ADDITIONAL TRAINING FOR PHYSICIANS AND ATTRACT MORE PHYSICIANS IN STATES THAT FACE A SHORTAGE OF PHYSICIANS IN TRAINING.

The Chairman of the Senate Budget Committee may revise the aggregates, allocations, and other appropriate levels in this resolution for a bill, joint resolution, amendment, motion, or conference report that provides additional training for physicians and attracts more physicians in States that face a shortage of physicians in training, provided that the legislation would not increase the deficit over the total of fiscal years 2007 through 2012.

SA 602. Mr. KENNEDY submitted an amendment intended to be proposed by him to the concurrent resolution S. Con. Res. 21, setting forth the congressional budget for the United States Government for fiscal year 2008 and including the appropriate budgetary levels for fiscal years 2007 and 2009 through 2012; which was ordered to lie on the table; as follows:

On page 18, line 12, increase the amount by $40,000,000.

On page 18, line 13, increase the amount by $36,000,000.

On page 18, line 17, increase the amount by $4,000,000.

On page 26, line 12, decrease the amount by $40,000,000.

On page 26, line 13, decrease the amount $36,000,000.

On page 26, line 17, decrease the amount by $4,000,000.

SA 603. Mr. DORGAN submitted an amendment intended to be proposed by him to the concurrent resolution S. Con. Res. 21, setting forth the congressional budget for the United States Government for fiscal year 2008 and including the appropriate budgetary levels for fiscal years 2007 and 2009 through 2012; which was ordered to lie on the table; as follows:

On page 9, line 8, decrease the amount by $22,000,000.

On page 9, line 9, decrease the amount by $18,000,000.

On page 9, line 13, decrease the amount by $3,000,000.

On page 9, line 17, decrease the amount by $1,000,000.

On page 26, line 12, increase the amount by $22,000,000.

On page 26, line 13, increase the amount by $18,000,000.

On page 26, line 17, increase the amount by $3,000,000.

On page 26, line 21, increase the amount by $1,000,000.

SA 604. Mrs. BOXER submitted an amendment intended to be proposed by her to the concurrent resolution S. Con. Res. 21, setting forth the congressional budget for the United States Government for fiscal year 2008 and including the appropriate budgetary levels for fiscal years 2007 and 2009 through 2012; which was ordered to lie on the table; as follows:

At the appropriate place, insert the following:

SEC. ____. SENSE OF SENATE ON REDEPLOYMENT OF UNITED STATES MILITARY FORCES FROM IRAQ.

(a) FINDINGS.—The Senate makes the following findings:

(1) The bipartisan Iraq Study Group recommended that all United States combat brigades not necessary for force protection could be out of Iraq by the first quarter of 2008 and that ''the U.S. should not make an open-ended commitment to keep large numbers of American troops deployed in Iraq''.

(2) On November 15, 2005, the Senate voted 79-19 in support of an amendment stating that ''calendar year 2006 should be a period of significant transition to full Iraqi sovereignty, with Iraqi security forces taking the lead for the security of a free and sovereign Iraq, thereby creating the conditions for the phased redeployment of United States forces from Iraq''.

(b) SENSE OF SENATE.—It is the sense of the Senate that the budget of the Department of Defense for fiscal year 2008 includes funding for the redeployment of United States military forces from Iraq.

SA 605. Mr. KENNEDY submitted an amendment intended to be proposed by him to the concurrent resolution S. Con. Res. 21, setting forth the congressional budget for the United States Government for fiscal year 2008 and including the appropriate budgetary levels for fiscal years 2007 and 2009 through 2012; which was ordered to lie on the table; as follows:

At the end of title III, insert the following:

SEC. _____. DEFICIT-NEUTRAL RESERVE FUND FOR UNEMPLOYMENT INSURANCE MODERNIZATION LEGISLATION.

The Chairman of the Senate Committee on the Budget may revise the aggregates, allocations, and other appropriate levels in this resolution for a bill, joint resolution, amendment, motion, or conference report that modernizes unemployment insurance by making incentive payments to States, by the amounts provided in that legislation for that purpose, provided that such legislation would not increase the deficit over the total of the period of fiscal years 2007 through 2012.

SA 606. Mr. LOTT submitted an amendment intended to be proposed by him to the concurrent resolution S. Con. Res. 21, setting forth the congressional budget for the United States Government for fiscal year 2008 and including the appropriate budgetary levels for fiscal years 2007 and 2009 through 2012; which was ordered to lie on the table; as follows:

On page 3, line 10, decrease the amount by $13,800,000,000.

On page 3, line 11, decrease the amount by $36,600,000,000.

On page 3, line 12, decrease the amount by $41,700,000,000.

On page 3, line 13, decrease the amount by $46,900,000,000.

On page 3, line 14, decrease the amount by $39,300,000,000.

On page 3, line 15, decrease the amount by $23,900,000,000.

On page 3, line 19, decrease the amount by $13,800,000,000.

On page 3, line 20, decrease the amount by $36,600,000,000.

On page 3, line 21, decrease the amount by $41,700,000,000.

On page 3, line 22, decrease the amount by $46,900,000,000.

On page 3, line 23, decrease the amount by $39,300,000,000.

On page 3, line 24, decrease the amount by $23,900,000,000.

On page 4, line 5, increase the amount by $225,000,000.

On page 4, line 6, increase the amount by $1,539,000,000.

On page 4, line 7, increase the amount by $3,413,000,000.

On page 4, line 8, increase the amount by $5,653,000,000.

On page 4, line 9, increase the amount by $7,944,000,000.

On page 4, line 10, increase the amount by $9,809,000,000.

On page 4, line 14, increase the amount by $225,000,000.

On page 4, line 15, increase the amount by $1,539,000,000.

On page 4, line 16, increase the amount by $3,413,000,000.

On page 4, line 17, increase the amount by $5,653,000,000.

On page 4, line 18, increase the amount by $7,944,000,000.

On page 4, line 19, increase the amount by $9,809,000,000.

On page 4, line 23, increase the amount by $14,025,000,000.

On page 4, line 24, increase the amount by $38,139,000,000.

On page 4, line 25, increase the amount by $45,113,000,000.

On page 5, line 1, increase the amount by $52,553,000,000.

On page 5, line 2, increase the amount by $47,244,000,000.

On page 5, line 3, increase the amount by $33,709,000,000.

On page 5, line 6, increase the amount by $14,025,000,000.

On page 5, line 7, increase the amount by $52,164,000,000.

On page 5, line 8, increase the amount by $97,278,000,000.

On page 5, line 9, increase the amount by $149,831,000,000.

On page 5, line 10, increase the amount by $197,075,000,000.

On page 5, line 11, increase the amount by $230,784,000,000.

On page 5, line 14, increase the amount by $14,025,000,000.

On page 5, line 15, increase the amount by $52,164,000,000.

On page 5, line 16, increase the amount by $97,278,000,000.

On page 5, line 17, increase the amount by $149,831,000,000.

On page 5, line 18, increase the amount by $197,075,000,000.

On page 5, line 19, increase the amount by $230,784,000,000.

On page 25, line 8, increase the amount by $225,000,000.

On page 25, line 9, increase the amount by $225,000,000.

On page 25, line 12, increase the amount by $1,539,000,000.

On page 25, line 13, increase the amount by $1,539,000,000.

On page 25, line 16, increase the amount by $3,413,000,000.

On page 25, line 17, increase the amount by $3,413,000,000.

On page 25, line 20 increase the amount by $5,653,000,000.

On page 25, line 21, increase the amount by $5,653,000,000.

On page 25, line 24, increase the amount by $7,944,000,000.

On page 25, line 25, increase the amount by $7,944,000,000.

On page 26, line 3, increase the amount by $9,809,000,000.

On page 26, line 4, increase the amount by $9,809,000,000.

SA 607. Mr. CHAMBLISS (for himself and Mr. GRAHAM of Florida) submitted an amendment intended to be proposed by him to the concurrent resolution S. Con. Res. 21, setting forth the congressional budget for the United States Government for fiscal year 2008 and including the appropriate budgetary levels for fiscal years 2007 and 2009 through 2012; which was ordered to lie on the table; as follows:

At the appropriate place, insert the following:

SEC. ___. DEFICIT-NEUTRAL RESERVE FUND FOR IMPROVED RETIREMENT BENEFITS FOR MEMBERS OF THE READY RESERVE OF THE ARMED FORCES.

The Chairman of the Committee on the Budget of the Senate may revise the aggregates, allocations, and other appropriate levels in this resolution for a bill, joint resolution, amendment, motion, or conference report that provides for an improved retirement benefit for members of the Ready Reserve, by the amounts provided in such legislation for that purpose, provided that such legislation would not increase the deficit over the total of the period of fiscal years 2007 through 2012.

SA 608. Mr. ENSIGN submitted an amendment intended to be proposed by him to the concurrent resolution S. Con. Res. 21, setting forth the congressional budget for the United States Government for fiscal year 2008 and including the appropriate budgetary levels for fiscal years 2007 and 2009 through 2012; which was ordered to lie on the table; as follows:

On Page 23, line 12, increase the amount by $50,000,000.

On Page 23, line 13, increase the amount by $45,000,000.

On Page 23, line 17, increase the amount by $5,000,000.

On page 24, line 12, increase the amount by $250,000,000.

On page 24, line 13, increase the amount by $250,000,000.

On page 26, line 12, decrease the amount by $300,000,000.

On page 26, line 13, decrease the amount by $295,000,000.

On page 26, line 17, decrease the amount by $5,000,000.

SA 609. Mr. GRAHAM (for himself and Mr. LIEBERMAN) submitted an amendment intended to be proposed by him to the concurrent resolution S. Con. Res. 21, setting forth the congressional budget for the United States Government for fiscal year 2008 and including the appropriate budgetary levels for fiscal years 2007 and 2009 through 2012; which was ordered to lie on the table; as follows:

At the appropriate place insert the following:

SEC. _____. SOCIAL SECURITY RESTRUCTURING.

(a) FINDINGS.—The Senate finds that—

(1) Social Security is the foundation of retirement income for most Americans;

(2) preserving and strengthening the long term viability of Social Security is a vital national priority and is essential for the retirement security of today's working Americans, current and future retirees, and their families;

(3) Social Security faces significant fiscal and demographic pressures;

(4) the nonpartisan Office of the Chief Actuary at the Social Security Administration reports that—

(A) the number of workers paying taxes to support each Social Security beneficiary has dropped from 16.5 in 1950 to 3.3 in 2006;

(B) within a generation there will be only 2 workers to support each retiree, which will substantially increase the financial burden on American workers;

(C) without structural reform, the Social Security system, beginning in 2017, will pay out more in benefits than the system will collect in taxes;

(D) without structural reform, the Social Security trust fund will be exhausted in 2040, and Social Security tax revenue in 2040 will only cover 74 percent of promised benefits, and will decrease to 70 percent by 2080;

(E) without structural reform, future Congresses may have to raise payroll taxes 50 percent over the next 75 years to pay full benefits on time, resulting in payroll tax rates of as much as 17.6 percent by 2050 and 18.7 percent by 2080;

(F) without structural reform, Social Security's total cash shortfall over the next 75 years is estimated to be $4,600,000,000,000 measured in present value terms; and

(G) absent structural reforms, spending on Social Security will increase from 4.3 percent of gross domestic product in 2006 to 6.3 percent in 2080; and

(5) the Congressional Budget Office, the General Accounting Office, the Congressional Research Service, the Chairman of the Federal Reserve Board, and the President's Commission to Strengthen Social Security have all warned that failure to enact fiscally responsible Social Security reform quickly will result in 1 or more of the following:

(A) Higher tax rates.

(B) Lower Social Security benefit levels.

(C) Increased Federal debt or less spending on other Federal programs.

(b) SENSE OF THE SENATE.—It is the sense of the Senate that—

(1) the President, Congress, and the American people including seniors, workers, women, minorities, and disabled persons should work together at the earliest opportunity to enact legislation to achieve a solvent and sustainable Social Security system; and

(2) Social Security reform—

(A) must protect current and near retirees from any changes to Social Security benefits;

(B) must reduce the pressure on future taxpayers and on other budgetary priorities;

(C) must provide benefit levels that adequately reflect individual contributions to the Social Security system; and

(D) must preserve and strengthen the safety net for vulnerable populations including the disabled and survivors.

(3) The Senate should honor section 13301 of the Budget Enforcement Act of 1990.

SA 610. Mr. PRYOR (for himself and Ms. KLOBUCHAR) submitted an amendment intended to be proposed by him to the concurrent resolution S. Con. Res. 21, setting forth the congressional budget for the United States Government for fiscal year 2008 and including the appropriate budgetary levels for fiscal years 2007 and 2009 through 2012; which was ordered to lie on the table; as follows:

On page 14, line 5, increase the amount by $10,000,000.

On page 14, line 6, increase the amount by $10,000,000.

On page 14, line 9, increase the amount by $10,000,000.

On page 14, line 10, increase the amount by $10,000,000.

On page 14, line 13, increase the amount by $10,000,000.

On page 14, line 14, increase the amount by $10,000,000.

On page 14, line 17, increase the amount by $10,000,000.

On page 14, line 18, increase the amount by $10,000,000.

On page 14, line 21, increase the amount by $10,000,000.

On page 14, line 22, increase the amount by $10,000,000.

On page 14, line 25, increase the amount by $10,000,000.

On page 15, line 1, increase the amount by $10,000,000.

On page 26, line 8, decrease the amount by $10,000,000.

On page 26, line 9, decrease the amount by $10,000,000.

On page 26, line 12, decrease the amount by $10,000,000.

On page 26, line 13, decrease the amount by $10,000,000.

On page 26, line 16, decrease the amount by $10,000,000.

On page 26, line 17, decrease the amount by $10,000,000.

On page 26, line 20, decrease the amount by $10,000,000.

On page 26, line 21, decrease the amount by $10,000,000.

On page 26, line 24, decrease the amount by $10,000,000.

On page 26, line 25, decrease the amount by $10,000,000.

On page 27, line 3, decrease the amount by $10,000,000.

On page 27, line 4, decrease the amount by $10,000,000.

SA 611. Mr. PRYOR submitted an amendment intended to be proposed by him to the concurrent resolution S. Con. Res. 21, setting forth the congressional budget for the United States Government for fiscal year 2008 and including the appropriate budgetary levels for fiscal years 2007 and 2009 through 2012; which was ordered to lie on the table; as follows:

On page 10, line 9, increase the amount by $40,000,000.

On page 10, line 14, increase the amount by $40,000,000.

On page 10, line 18, increase the amount by $40,000,000.

On page 10, line 22, increase the amount by $40,000,000.

On page 11, line 1, increase the amount by $40,000,000.

On page 26, line 12, decrease the amount by $40,000,000.

On page 26, line 17, decrease the amount by $40,000,000.

On page 26, line 21, decrease the amount by $40,000,000.

On page 26, line 25, decrease the amount by $40,000,000.

On page 27, line 4, decrease the amount by $40,000,000.

SA 612. Mr. LIEBERMAN submitted an amendment intended to be proposed by him to the concurrent resolution S. Con. Res. 21, setting forth the congressional budget for the United States

Government for fiscal year 2008 and including the appropriate budgetary levels for fiscal years 2007 and 2009 through 2012; which was ordered to lie on the table; as follows:

On page 3, line 12, increase the amount by $50,000,000,000.
On page 3, line 13, increase the amount by $50,000,000,000.
On page 3, line 14, increase the amount by $50,000,000,000.
On page 3, line 15, increase the amount by $50,000,000,000.
On page 3, line 21, increase the amount by $50,000,000,000.
On page 3, line 22, increase the amount by $50,000,000,000.
On page 3, line 23, increase the amount by $50,000,000,000.
On page 4, line 1, increase the amount by $50,000,000,000.
On page 4, line 7, increase the amount by $50,000,000,000.
On page 4, line 8, increase the amount by $50,000,000,000.
On page 4, line 9, increase the amount by $50,000,000,000.
On page 4, line 10, increase the amount by $50,000,000,000.
On page 4, line 16, increase the amount by $30,383,000,000.
On page 4, line 17, increase the amount by $40,410,000,000.
On page 4, line 18, increase the amount by $45,220,000,000.
On page 4, line 19, increase the amount by $47,603,000,000.
On page 4, line 25, decrease the amount by $19,617,000,000.
On page 5, line 1, decrease the amount by $9,590,000,000.
On page 5, line 2, decrease the amount by $4,780,000,000.
On page 5, line 3, decrease the amount by $2,397,000,000.
On page 5, line 8, decrease the amount by $19,617,000,000.
On page 5, line 9, decrease the amount by $29,207,000,000.
On page 5, line 10, decrease the amount by $33,987,000,000.
On page 5, line 11, decrease the amount by $36,384,000,000.
On page 5, line 16, decrease the amount by $19,617,000,000.
On page 5, line 17, decrease the amount by $29,207,000,000.
On page 5, line 18, decrease the amount by $33,987,000,000.
On page 5, line 19, decrease the amount by $36,384,000,000.
On page 8, line 12, increase the amount by $47,500,000,000.
On page 8, line 13, increase the amount by $28,500,000,000.
On page 8, line 16, increase the amount by $47,500,000,000.
On page 8, line 17, increase the amount by $38,000,000,000.
On page 8, line 20, increase the amount by $47,500,000,000.
On page 8, line 21, increase the amount by $42,750,000,000.
On page 8, line 24, increase the amount by $47,500,000,000.
On page 8, line 25, increase the amount by $45,125,000,000.
On page 22, line 16, increase the amount by $2,500,000,000.
On page 22, line 17, increase the amount by $1,883,000,000.
On page 22, line 20, increase the amount by $2,500,000,000.
On page 22, line 21, increase the amount by $2,410,000,000.
On page 22, line 24, increase the amount by $2,500,000,000.
On page 22, line 25, increase the amount by $2,470,000,000.
On page 23, line 3, increase the amount by $2,500,000,000.
On page 23, line 4, increase the amount by $2,478,000,000.
On page 41, line 9, increase the amount by $50,000,000,000.
On page 41, line 10, increase the amount by $30,383,000,000.

SA 613. Mr. SPECTER submitted an amendment intended to be proposed by him to the concurrent resolution S. Con. Res. 21, setting forth the congressional budget for the United States Government for fiscal year 2008 and including the appropriate budgetary levels for fiscal years 2007 and 2009 through 2012; which was ordered to lie on the table; as follows:

On page 63, after line 24, insert the following:

SEC. 326. DEFICIT-NEUTRAL RESERVE FOR ASBESTOS REFORM LEGISLATION.

The Chairman of the Senate Committee on the Budget shall revise the aggregates, allocations, and other appropriate levels in this resolution for a bill, joint resolution, amendment, motion, or conference report regarding asbestos reform, that (i) provides monetary compensation to impaired victims of an asbestos-related disease, (ii) does not provide monetary compensation to unimpaired claimants or those suffering from a disease who cannot establish that asbestos exposure was a contributing factor in causing their condition, and (iii) is estimated to remain funded from nontaxpayer sources for the life of the fund, by the amounts provided in such legislation for that purpose, provided that such legislation would not increase the deficit over the total of the period of fiscal years 2007 through 2012.

SA 614. Mr. GRAHAM submitted an amendment intended to be proposed by him to the concurrent resolution S. Con. Res. 21, setting forth the congressional budget for the United States Government for fiscal year 2008 and including the appropriate budgetary levels for fiscal years 2007 and 2009 through 2012; which was ordered to lie on the table; as follows:

On page 9, line 8, increase the amount by $10,000,000.
On page 9, line 9, increase the amount by $8,000,000.
On page 9, line 12, increase the amount by $_____.
On page 9, line 13, increase the amount by $1,000,000.
On page 9, line 16, increase the amount by $_____.
On page 9, line 17, increase the amount by $1,000,000.
On page 14, line 9, increase the amount by $10,000,000.
On page 14, line 10, increase the amount by $8,000,000.
On page 14, line 13, increase the amount by $_____.
On page 14, line 14, increase the amount by $1,000,000.
On page 14, line 17, increase the amount by $_____.
On page 14, line 18, increase the amount by $1,000,000.
On page 23, line 12, increase the amount by $10,000,000.
On page 23, line 13, increase the amount by $8,000,000.
On page 23, line 16, increase the amount by $_____.
On page 23, line 17, increase the amount by $1,000,000.
On page 24, line 20, increase the amount by $_____.
On page 23, line 21, increase the amount by $1,000,000.
On page 24, line 12, increase the amount by $10,000,000.
On page 24, line 13, increase the amount by $8,000,000.
On page 24, line 16, increase the amount by $_____.
On page 24, line 17, increase the amount by $1,000,000.
On page 24, line 20, increase the amount by $_____.
On page 24, line 21, increase the amount by $1,000,000.
On page 26, line 12, decrease the amount by $40,000,000.
On page 26, line 13, decrease the amount by $32,000,000.
On page 26, line 16, decrease the amount by $_____.
On page 26, line 17, decrease the amount by $4,000,000.
On page 26, line 20, decrease the amount by $_____.
On page 26, line 21, decrease the amount by $4,000,000.

SA 615. Mr. KERRY (for himself and Mr. ROCKEFELLER) submitted an amendment intended to be proposed by him to the concurrent resolution S. Con. Res. 21, setting forth the congressional budget for the United States Government for fiscal year 2008 and including the appropriate budgetary levels for fiscal years 2007 and 2009 through 2012; which was ordered to lie on the table; as follows:

On page 59, line 7, after ''erans,'' insert ''including services for low-vision and blinded veterans,''.

SA 616. Mr. KERRY (for himself and Ms. SNOWE) submitted an amendment intended to be proposed by him to the concurrent resolution S. Con. Res. 21, setting forth the congressional budget for the United States Government for fiscal year 2008 and including the appropriate budgetary levels for fiscal years 2007 and 2009 through 2012; which was ordered to lie on the table; as follows:

On page 14, line 9, increase the amount by $97,000,000.
On page 14, line 10, increase the amount by $75,000,000.
On page 14, line 14, increase the amount by $16,000,000.
On page 14, line 18, increase the amount by $4,000,000.
On page 14, line 22, increase the amount by $1,000,000.
On page 26, line 12, decrease the amount by $97,000,000.
On page 26, line 13, decrease the amount by $75,000,000.
On page 26, line 17, decrease the amount by $16,000,000.
On page 26, line 21, decrease the amount by $4,000,000.
On page 26, line 25, decrease the amount by $1,000,000.

SA 617. Mr. CASEY submitted an amendment intended to be proposed by him to the concurrent resolution S. Con. Res. 21, setting forth the congressional budget for the United States Government for fiscal year 2008 and including the appropriate budgetary levels for fiscal years 2007 and 2009

through 2012; which was ordered to lie on the table; as follows:

After section 322, insert the following:

SEC. 322A. DEFICIT-NEUTRAL RESERVE FUND FOR PRESCHOOL OPPORTUNITIES.

If the Committee on Health, Education, Labor, and Pensions of the Senate, reports a bill or a joint resolution, or an amendment is offered in the Senate to such a bill or joint resolution, or a conference report is submitted to the Senate on a such a bill or joint resolution, that augments or establishes a Federal program that provides assistance to States that offer or expand preschool to children of low-income families, the Chairman of the Committee on the Budget of the Senate may revisit the aggregates, allocations, and other appropriate levels in this resolution by amounts provided in such measure for that purpose, provided that such legislation would not increase the deficit for the total of the period of fiscal years 2007 through 2012.

SA 618. Mr. GRASSLEY (for himself, Mr. GREGG, Mr. DEMINT, and Mr. KYL) submitted an amendment intended to be proposed by him to the concurrent resolution S. Con. Res. 21, setting forth the congressional budget for the United States Government for fiscal year 2008 and including the appropriate budgetary levels for fiscal years 2007 and 2009 through 2012; which was ordered to lie on the table; as follows:

On page 58, strike lines 14 through 26 and insert the following:

SEC. 316. RESERVE FUND FOR ACCESS TO AFFORDABLE HEALTH CARE.

In the Senate, if the Senate Committee on Finance or the Senate Committee on Health, Education, Labor, and Pensions reports a bill or joint resolution, if an amendment is offered thereto, or if a conference report is submitted thereon, that improves health care by —

(1) reducing the number of uninsured;

(2) addressing rising health care costs;

(3) improving health care quality; and

(4) protecting individuals with health coverage,

then, provided that the committee is within its allocation as provided under section 302(a) of the Congressional Budget Act of 1974, the Chairman of the Senate Committee on the Budget may revise allocations of new budget authority and outlays, the revenue aggregates, and other appropriate aggregates to reflect such legislation, to the extent that such legislation would not increase the deficit for fiscal year 2008 and for the period of fiscal years 2008 through 2012.

SA 619. Mr. CHAMBLISS (for himself, Mrs. FEINSTEIN, Mr. ISAKSON, and Mr. GRAHAM) submitted an amendment intended to be proposed by him to the concurrent resolution S. Con. Res. 21, setting forth the congressional budget for the United States Government for fiscal year 2008 and including the appropriate budgetary levels for fiscal years 2007 and 2009 through 2012; which was ordered to lie on the table; as follows:

On page 23, line 12, increase the amount by $376,000,000.

On page 23, line 13, increase the amount by $338,400,000.

On page 23, line 17, increase the amount by $37,000,000.

On page 26, line 12, decrease the amount by $376,000,000.

On page 26, line 13, decrease the amount by $338,400,000.

On page 26, line 17, decrease the amount by $37,000,000.

SA 620. Mr. WARNER (for himself, Mr. WEBB, and Mr. LIEBERMAN) submitted an amendment intended to be proposed by him to the concurrent resolution S. Con. Res. 21, setting forth the congressional budget for the United States Government for fiscal year 2008 and including the appropriate budgetary levels for fiscal years 2007 and 2009 through 2012; which was ordered to lie on the table; as follows:

On page 15, line 9, increase the amount by $163,000,000.

On page 15, line 10, increase the amount by $163,000,000.

On page 26, line 12, decrease the amount by $163,000,000.

On page 26, line 13, decrease the amount by $163,000,000.

AUTHORITY FOR COMMITTEES TO MEET

COMMITTEE ON ARMED SERVICES

Mr. CONRAD. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the Committee on Armed Services be authorized to meet during the session of the Senate on Thursday, March 22, 2007, at 9:30 a.m., in open session to receive testimony on U.S. Southern Command, U.S. Northern Command, and U.S. Joint Forces Command in review of the defense authorization request for fiscal year 2008 and the Future Years Defense Program.

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

COMMITTEE ON ARMED SERVICES

Mr. CONRAD. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the Committee on Armed Services be authorized to meet during the session of the Senate on Thursday, March 22, 2007, at 2 p.m., in closed session to receive a briefing on detention and judicial capacity in Iraq.

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

COMMITTEE ON BANKING, HOUSING, AND URBAN AFFAIRS

Mr. CONRAD. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the Committee on Banking, Housing, and Urban Affairs be authorized to meet during the session of the Senate on March 22, 2007, at 10 a.m., to conduct a hearing on ''Mortgage Market Turmoil: Causes and Consequences.''

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

COMMITTEE ON COMMERCE, SCIENCE, AND TRANSPORTATION

Mr. CONRAD. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the Committee on Commerce, Science, and Transportation be authorized to hold a hearing during the session of the Senate on Thursday, March 22, 2007, at 10 a.m., in room 253 of the Russell Senate Office Building. The purpose of the hearing is to discuss Federal Aviation Administration modernization proposals.

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

COMMITTEE ON ENERGY AND NATURAL RESOURCES

Mr. CONRAD. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the Committee on Energy and Natural Resources be authorized to hold a hearing during the session of the Senate on Thursday, March 22, 2007, at 2:30 p.m., in room SD–366 of the Dirksen Senate Office Building.

The purpose of the hearing is to receive testimony on the ''Future of Coal'' report recently published by the Massachusetts Institute of Technology.

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

COMMITTEE ON FINANCE

Mr. CONRAD. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the Committee on Finance be authorized to meet during the session on Thursday, March 22, 2007, at 10 a.m., in 215 Dirksen Senate Office Building, to hear testimony on ''Keeping America's Promise: Health Care and Child Welfare Services for Native Americans.''

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

COMMITTEE ON FOREIGN RELATIONS

Mr. CONRAD. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the Committee on Foreign Relations be authorized to meet during the session of the Senate on Thursday, March 22, 2007, at 10:30 a.m., to hold a nomination hearing.

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

COMMITTEE ON HOMELAND SECURITY AND GOVERNMENTAL AFFAIRS

Mr. CONRAD. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the Committee on Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs be authorized to meet on Thursday, March 22, 2007, at 10 a.m., for a hearing titled ''Deconstructing Reconstruction: Problems, Challenges, and the Way Forward in Iraq and Afghanistan.''

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

COMMITTEE ON INDIAN AFFAIRS

Mr. CONRAD. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the Committee on Indian Affairs be authorized to meet on Thursday, March 22, 2007, at 9:45 a.m. in Room 485 of the Russell Senate Office Building to conduct an oversight hearing on Indian Housing.

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

COMMITTEE ON THE JUDICIARY

Mr. CONRAD. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the Committee on the Judiciary be authorized to meet to conduct a markup on Thursday, March 22, 2007, at 10:00 a.m. in Dirksen Room 226.

Agenda

I. Committee Authorization: Authorization of Subpoenas in Connection with Investigation into Replacement of U.S. Attorneys.

II. Bills: S. 236, Federal Agency Data Mining Reporting Act of 2007, Feingold, Sununu, Leahy, Kennedy, Cardin; S. 376, Law Enforcement Officers Safety

Act of 2007, Leahy, Specter, Kyl, Cornyn, Grassley, Sessions; S. 849, OPEN Government Act, Leahy, Cornyn, Feingold, Specter.

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

SELECT COMMITTEE ON INTELLIGENCE

Mr. CONRAD. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the Select Committee on Intelligence be authorized to meet during the session of the Senate on March 22, 2007 at 2:30 p.m. to hold a closed hearing.

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

SUBCOMMITTEE ON OVERSIGHT OF GOVERNMENT MANAGEMENT, THE FEDERAL WORKFORCE, AND THE DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA

Mr. CONRAD. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the Subcommittee on Oversight of Government Management, the Federal Workforce and the District of Columbia be authorized to meet on Thursday, March 22, 2007 at 2:30 p.m. for a hearing entitled, Safeguarding the Merit System Principals: A Review of the Merit Systems Protection Board and the Office of the Special Counsel.

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

EXECUTIVE SESSION

EXECUTIVE CALENDAR

Mr. CASEY. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent the Senate now proceed to executive session to consider the following nomination: Calendar No. 47, that the nomination be confirmed, the motion to reconsider be laid on the table, the President be immediately notified of the Senate's action, and the Senate then resume legislative session.

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

The nomination considered and confirmed is as follows:

IN THE ARMY

The following named officer for appointment to the grade of lieutenant general in the United States Army while assigned to a position of importance and responsibility under title 10, U.S.C., section 601:

To be lieutenant general

Lt. Gen. Peter W. Chiarelli, 0000

LEGISLATIVE SESSION

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Under the previous order, the Senate will resume legislative session.

MEASURES INDEFINITELY POSTPONED—S. 194, S. 219, S. 412

Mr. CASEY. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the following calendar items be indefinitely postponed: Calendar No. 54, S. 194; Calendar No. 55, S. 219; and Calendar No. 56, S. 412.

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

AUTHORIZATION OF TESTIMONY

Mr. CASEY. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the Senate proceed to the immediate consideration of S. Res. 119, submitted earlier today.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will report the resolution by title.

The bill clerk read as follows:

A resolution (S. Res. 119) to authorize testimony by a former Committee on the Judiciary detailee.

There being no objection, the Senate proceeded to consider the resolution.

Mr. REID. Mr. President, the Committee on the Judiciary has received a request from an attorney with the Federal Bureau of Investigation for a declaration from a former Judiciary Committee detailee for use in a Department of Justice administrative proceeding brought by an FBI employee claiming whistleblower protection. The FBI requests the declaration to address the employee's allegations regarding a conversation between the committee detailee and the FBI employee.

This resolution would provide authority for the former committee detailee to provide a declaration for use in the FBI's administrative proceeding.

Mr. CASEY. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the resolution be agreed to, the preamble be agreed to, the motion to reconsider be laid on the table, and any statements relating thereto be printed in the RECORD.

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

The resolution (S. Res. 119) was agreed to.

The preamble was agreed to.

The resolution, with its preamble, reads as follows:

S. RES. 119

Whereas, the Committee on the Judiciary has received a request from an attorney in the Office of the General Counsel of the Federal Bureau of Investigation for a declaration from a former detailee of the Committee, Steven M. Dettelbach, for use in the Department of Justice's administrative proceeding styled *In re George A. Runkle. Jr.*, OARM–WB No. 06–2;

Whereas, by the privileges of the Senate of the United States and Rule XI of the Standing Rules of the Senate, no evidence under the control or in the possession of the Senate can, by administrative or judicial process, be taken from such control or possession but by permission of the Senate;

Whereas, when it appears that evidence under the control or in the possession of the Senate is needed for the promotion of justice, the Senate will take such action as will promote the ends of justice consistent with the privileges of the Senate: Now, therefore, be it

Resolved, That the former detailee of the Committee on the Judiciary, Steven M. Dettelbach, is authorized to provide a declaration for use in the administrative proceeding *In re George A. Runkle, Jr.*, OARM–WB No. 06–2.

ORDERS FOR FRIDAY, MARCH 23, 2007

Mr. CASEY. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that when the Senate completes its business today, it stand adjourned until 9 a.m; Friday, March 23; that on Friday, following the prayer and pledge, the Journal of proceedings be approved to date, the morning hour be deemed expired, and the time for the two leaders reserved for their use later in the day; that the Senate then resume consideration of S. Con. Res. 21, with 30 minutes remaining for debate equally divided or controlled between the chairman and ranking member of the Budget Committee; that when the voting sequence begins there be 2 minutes of debate equally divided prior to each vote in the sequence.

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

ORDER FOR ADJOURNMENT

Mr. CASEY. Mr. President, if there is no further business today, and if the Republican leader has nothing further, I now ask unanimous consent that following the last speaker on the Republican side, the Senate stand adjourned under the previous order.

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

NATIONAL REHABILITATION COUNSELORS APPRECIATION DAY

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Georgia.

Mr. CHAMBLISS. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the Senate now proceed to the consideration of S. Res. 120, which was submitted earlier today.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will report the resolution by title.

The bill clerk read as follows:

A resolution (S. Res. 120) designating March 22, 2007, as National Rehabilitation Counselors Appreciation Day.

There being no objection, the Senate proceeded to consider the resolution.

Mr. CHAMBLISS. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent the resolution be agreed to, the preamble be agreed to, and the motion to reconsider be laid on the table.

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

The resolution (S. Res. 120) was agreed to.

The preamble was agreed to.

The resolution, with its preamble, reads as follows:

S. RES. 120

Whereas rehabilitation counselors conduct assessments, provide counseling, support to families, and plan and implement rehabilitation programs for those in need;

Whereas the purpose of the professional organizations in rehabilitation is to promote the improvement of rehabilitation services available to persons with disabilities through quality education and rehabilitation research for counselors;

Whereas the various professional organizations, including the National Rehabilitation Association (NRA), Rehabilitation Counselors and Educators Association (RCEA), the National Council on Rehabilitation Education (NCRE), the National Rehabilitation

Counseling Association (NRCA), the American Rehabilitation Counseling Association (ARCA), the Commission on Rehabilitation Counselor Certification (CRCC), the Council of State Administrators of Vocational Rehabilitation (CSAVR), and the Council on Rehabilitation Education (CORE) have stood firm to advocate up-to-date education and training and the maintenance of professional standards in the field of rehabilitation counseling and education;

Whereas on March 22, 1983, Martha Walker of Kent State University, who was President of the NCRE, testified before the Subcommittee on Select Education of the House of Representatives, and was instrumental in bringing to the attention of Congress the need for rehabilitation counselors to be qualified; and

Whereas the efforts of Martha Walker led to the enactment of laws that now require rehabilitation counselors to have proper credentials in order to provide a higher level of quality service to those in need: Now, therefore, be it

Resolved, That the Senate—

(1) designates March 22, 2007, as National Rehabilitation Counselors Appreciation Day; and

(2) commends all of the hard work and dedication that rehabilitation counselors provide to individuals in need and the numerous efforts that the multiple professional organizations have made to assisting those who require rehabilitation.

CONCLUSION OF MORNING BUSINESS

Mr. CASEY. Mr. President, I ask morning business be closed.

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

CONGRESSIONAL BUDGET FOR THE UNITED STATES GOVERNMENT FOR FISCAL YEAR 2008—Continued

AMENDMENT NO. 536

Mr. CHAMBLISS. Mr. President, I rise tonight to discuss for a few minutes amendment No. 536, which has been filed by my colleague from Georgia, Senator ISAKSON, and myself. In offering this amendment to the budget resolution, we truly believe it is a fair amendment and puts children first, in the way the State Children's Health Insurance Program was intended.

When SCHIP was created in 1997, it was instituted to do exactly what the name states: provide health care coverage to uninsured children. I do not believe you will find anyone here who disagrees with that purpose because it provides health insurance to hard-working families who earn too much to qualify for Medicaid but not enough to buy private insurance.

There has been a lot of discussion about the long-term aspects of that program lately, and rightfully so. However, some States are using their SCHIP funding to cover adults, and that is not the intention of this program. In fact, three States have more adults as enrollees than children. There are 12 States that will spend almost $807 million of their SCHIP money on more than 671,000 adults this year.

When we talk about children's health care, two of the components that are critical include dental care and mental health care. That is the specific focus of our amendment. Our proposal would eliminate States in receiving an enhanced SCHIP matching rate for adults who are covered under the SCHIP program. If States continue to choose to insure adults with SCHIP funds, they will receive a lower Federal match instead of the normal SCHIP match. We think this approach makes the most sense because SCHIP was created to cover children.

The increased Federal match was created as an incentive for States to cover these kids, not adults. This new lower match rate for adults will free up funding to create a budget-neutral reserve fund to provide for dental and mental health benefits for children. So, again, our amendment simply says this: If States want to use their SCHIP funds to cover adults, which is a decision States may choose to make, they will receive the Medicaid matching rate.

We are not saying the States should not provide health insurance coverage for adults who need it. At the same time it is important to emphasize that SCHIP funding is for kids. Our amendment uses this funding intended for children for two very important components of children's health care, that being dental care and mental health.

I believe we must craft policies to ensure the greatest number of children are provided quality health care and quality dental care. I was extremely saddened to hear recently of a 12-year-old boy in Prince George's County, MD, who died from a toothache and an inability to find proper care. I do not know whether this child was on an SCHIP program or was on Medicaid. But this is only one example of the need for increased access to dental care for children. It is heartbreaking and inexcusable that something as tragic as this could happen, when a routine tooth extraction may have saved this young boy's life.

Parents know and understand that things as routine as dental care are critically important to a child's overall health. Tooth decay remains a prevalent, chronic disease, and is the single most common childhood disease nationwide. It is five times as common as asthma, and, unfortunately, minority, low-income, and geographically isolated children suffer disproportionately from this disease. Eighty percent of all tooth decay is found in only 25 percent of children. These are the children the SCHIP program was created to help. We can and we must do better for these kids. This amendment does exactly what we ought to be doing with SCHIP, namely providing health insurance coverage for children, not adults.

I urge my colleagues to do what is right and support this amendment.

AMENDMENT NO. 619

Mr. President, let me very quickly talk about one other amendment I have filed. It is amendment No. 619. This particular amendment deals with the Edward Byrne Memorial Justice Grant Program, which is commonly referred to as the Byrne/JG Program. It is an amendment which Senator FEINSTEIN, Senator ISAKSON, Senator GRAHAM, and I have filed. The Byrne/JG Program is the primary provider of Federal criminal justice funding to State and local jurisdictions. The funding supports all components of the criminal justice system from multijurisdictional drug and gang task forces to community crime prevention programs, to substance abuse programs, prosecution initiatives, domestic violence programs, and information-sharing initiatives.

I will tell you that our law enforcement officials, our sheriffs, our prosecutors, our drug court professionals, and many of our public servants in the law enforcement arena rely on this funding to make our communities safer. The results they get with this funding are tangible and real.

In February of last year, the Iowa Governor's Office of Drug Control Policy conducted a survey to obtain a clearer, quantifiable, and more complete national picture of the Byrne/JG program's impact on drug and criminal efforts in America. This survey focused on the 2004 grant year and found that drug enforcement task forces funded by the Byrne/JG program in 45 States made more than 221,000 drug arrests. The achievements of those multijurisdictional drug enforcement task forces are impressive.

For example, 45 States reported seizing almost 18,000 kilograms of cocaine, with an estimated consumer street value of over $1.6 billion. Forty States reported seizing just shy of 5,500 kilograms of methamphetamine, with an estimated street value of $518 million.

The States participating in this survey reported the total value of drugs seized at over $12 billion. This figure represents more than $63 dollars in seized drugs for every dollar spent on drug task forces. This is indeed an amendment which will reinstate the level of funding for the Byrne/JG Program to last year's level. We are not asking it to be any higher than that. By doing that, we will allow our law enforcement community to continue to provide the type of safety and protection citizens all across America want.

Before I yield the floor, I wish to note several well-respected organizations, including the National Narcotics Officers Association Coalition, the National Sheriffs' Association, the National District Attorneys' Association, the National Association of Drug Court Professionals, the National Criminal Justice Association, and the International Association of Chiefs of Police support this robust funding for the program.

I encourage my colleagues to support amendment No. 619.

Mr. President, I ask that my entire statement be inserted into the RECORD.

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

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Georgia.

Mr. ISAKSON. Mr. President, I am delighted to come to the floor and join in support of the amendment offered by Senator CHAMBLISS and myself with regard to the State Children's Health Insurance Program.

The State Children's Health Insurance Program was begun in 1997. At that particular time I was chairman of the board of education in the State of Georgia. I applauded the Federal Government for providing this asset and this benefit to our States.

For the benefit of those who aren't familiar, the SCHIP program is a Medicaid Program, but unlike Medicaid today, it is a block grant, it is not an entitlement. Specific funds are block-granted to the States for the purpose of providing affordable health insurance to children in poverty.

That is the way the program began. As years have gone by, States have chosen to elect to ask for waivers from Washington to expand the coverage beyond children. Meritoriously, some States have asked to cover pregnant mothers in poverty under the SCHIP program. I would be the first person to tell you that is an appropriate appropriation of funds and the intent of the bill.

However, other States have chosen to add adults who do not have children to coverage under SCHIP, the result of which has compromised the program and taken money that was intended to go to children and sent it to adults.

By way of example, my State of Georgia runs out of SCHIP money this month. We do not provide any SCHIP benefits to anybody who is not a child. Our eligibility threshold is 235 percent of poverty. So it is exactly as prescribed originally. But because we are a growth State and in addition took on the children from Katrina, we have run out of money early, because we had an increase in the number of people in our State using and taking advantage of SCHIP.

There are other States that have used their money up by adults consuming it under this program. What Senator CHAMBLISS and I have done is simply said this: If you are going to include adults in the Children's Health Insurance Program, which is a Medicaid program, then the reimbursement to those States by the Federal Government for the cost for children ought to be the enhanced amount which Congress passed in 1997, which is about 70 percent of the cost. But if you are going to include adults, that match ought to be the 63-percent Medicaid match, not the enhanced match that was put in to attract people in the first place to provide children's health insurance. Then you take that differential and you put it into a reserve fund, and offer States the opportunity to enhance their children's health insurance by including dental and/or mental health benefits.

We know from our experience with young children in poverty that early prevention of dental disease and good dental health provides a lifetime for those children of healthy teeth, a lifetime of absence of dental disease, and a saving of untold millions of dollars in this country.

So what Senator CHAMBLISS and I have brought to the floor is very simply this premise: If you pass a State Children's Health Insurance Program, shouldn't it go to the benefit of children's health? If you decide to include adults, why should the Medicaid match be any greater than it is for adults anyway? And if you create additional funds by making this differentiation, should not those funds go to the two areas which are most important in terms of children's health, dental and mental health?

I submit this is a thoughtful amendment. It is affordable because it is budget neutral. It takes the SCHIP program back to where it was intended, for children. It does not punish a State that includes adults under the Medicaid program, but it requires them to go back to the regular Medicaid match, not the enhanced match that was created for children's health insurance.

If we adopt this amendment, more children will have healthier lives and children in poverty will continue to get the benefit of a wise and beneficial program this Congress passed in 1997.

Mr. President, I yield the floor and suggest the absence of a quorum.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will call the roll.

The assistant legislative clerk proceeded to call the roll.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Kansas.

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

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

Mr. BROWNBACK. Mr. President, I thank the Presiding Officer for staying here late this evening. I hope anyone who is not watching this is watching the KU-Southern Illinois game on right now, which is quite a barn burner going on.

I have an amendment I want to talk about, because we are going to go into the long voting session tomorrow and will not have a great deal of time to talk about it then. But it is an important amendment. It is an important amendment for the budget. It is an important amendment for the long-term process.

A lot of my colleagues will be very familiar with the BRAC process, the Base Realignment and Closure Commission process. It was enacted at least a dozen years ago, probably a little more than that. It is a process by which we have a commission look at military bases. They consider the military bases, consider whether they are useful where they are currently located, if it would be better for them to be realigned, if it is better for a base to be closed and that money put somewhere else.

It has been a very effective process for us to be able to take spending and put it in higher priority areas, whereas historically if you tried to eliminate a military base, it was virtually impossible to do, because you would go at the military base in a particular State, and it would not matter how old the base had been or whether it was out of position, the Members of that State would defend it.

We were rarely able to close a military base. So we enacted the BRAC process. That process created a commission, and they looked at all the military establishments. It then said that these 65, 125, 233 bases should be closed. We have higher priorities for this money. The process is chopped off on by the President, and then it comes to Congress, one vote up or down, agree, disagree, deal or no deal. By that means, we have realigned over $40 billion in annual appropriations, total appropriations on military bases. It has been a very good process to eliminate wasteful Federal spending in places where it is not needed. We need that process for the rest of Government. We spend about $2.9 trillion on an annual basis. We have not found effective ways to eliminate wasteful Federal spending.

I have yet to find somebody running for public office at the Federal level—or any level, for that matter—who says they are for wasteful government spending or they are for duplicative government spending. If everybody is saying they are against it and they are against waste, fraud, and abuse and they keep looking for that line in the budget to wipe it out, here is a realistic way we can deal with that, take that BRAC process and apply to it the rest of Government.

What could it yield? Let me give some examples using this quick report card. Regularly, the Government puts out a report card on the effectiveness of our own Government spending programs, whether they are hitting their targets or not. They score them. You can look here at a few of agencies. For the State Department, they reviewed 40 programs for this OMB report card. They score them for effectiveness in what the program was targeted for. They were at a median score of 77.93 percent. I gave them the letter grade of a C-plus, based on the regular report card system. Here you can see the Department of Education, HUD, EPA. For the Department of Education, 74 programs were scored. They had a median score of 44.5, which I gave a letter score of an F. That is what my kids would get. That is what I would give if I were teaching, saying: This is not an effective Government program. Why is it we can't go in and find some of these education programs that are not being effective and eliminate them? It is because the system is built to spend.

There is an old maxim that Ronald Reagan used that there is nothing so

permanent as a temporary Government program. Once in place, they seem to sustain themselves. They get a support group around them, and then the specific controls over the general. If it is a program that somebody in Vermont wants to maintain or Kansas wants to maintain, even though maybe its effectiveness is very low, we defend it because it is for our States. That is the specific. If the general interest would say this should be eliminated, let's change the system so they can save money. We can do so using the military base-closing process and use that money for higher priority needs.

I want to eliminate deaths by cancer in 10 years. This is going to take a real research effort and focus. To do so, we spend $2.9 trillion in the budget now. We have enough money, but it is not in the right places. Let's use this system to reduce and eliminate wasteful spending and then be able to target higher priority areas.

This is a program which both Republicans and Democrats, in whatever philosophical position you may put yourself, would say is a good idea. This is something which is bipartisan, nonpartisan, and it is for good governance and good government. It changes the system because the system is built to spend. It is built to spend almost perennially. It needs to be adjusted.

I want to quote from former President Clinton's adviser Paul Weinstein, of the Progressive Policy Institute, who testified before the Senate about this approach:

> Our organization has believed that the best way to achieve comprehensive reform in the executive branch is to combine the commission function with a mechanism to require Congress to vote on its recommendations. Senator Brownback's CARFA [Commission on Accountability and Review of Federal Agencies] legislation would provide this type of commission.

Here again, we have to realize the difficulties of this system. The strength of the system is spending money. The strength of the system is not saving money. Change it to combine both a commission and a requirement for legislative action.

Under the CARFA proposal, once every 4 years an agency would be reviewed for recommendations being made on whether eliminations should be made in that agency. It would then be put together in a package and sent to the President to either agree or disagree. It would then go to the Congress for the Congress to look at, as we do the BRAC process now. It would then be required to be voted upon with a limited time period for debate without amendment. You look at it, and then you get a chance to look at the overall practices and the package, and then you can say I agree, vote yes, I disagree, vote no, deal or no deal. This is a process which has worked.

I submit to my colleagues, both sides of the aisle, all persuasions, we have a lot of high-priority needs. We don't have the money focused in the high-priority areas. Too often, it is focused on things that we are maintaining from the past that maybe have less saliency today but still have a protection group around them, and we haven't found a way to eliminate them or get in and do it. Here is a way to do it, and it doesn't favor one side's program or the other's. It says: We are going to have this in a bipartisan commission, and we are going to change the process so we can save the money. Then that money will be used for higher needs.

This is an effective way for us to move forward. I urge my colleagues, when we get a chance to vote on my amendment, to look at this and say: That is something which I want to endorse, something I want to support, because it is going to allow us to more effectively spend the Federal money. One of the things people tell me that drives them the most crazy about Federal spending is wasteful Federal spending. Here is a way. We redesign the system to get at it. I urge my colleagues to support it.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Mr. BROWN). The senior Senator from Ohio is recognized.

Mr. VOINOVICH. Mr. President, I rise to share with the Senate my concerns and frustrations with S. Con. Res. 21, the fiscal year 2008 budget resolution, and to discuss two amendments I will offer tomorrow to try to improve the resolution.

Frankly, the resolution before this body ignores the dire state of our financial future and uses smoke and mirrors to mask our long-term fiscal challenges. I have come to the Senate floor numerous times over the past 8 years to express my concern that the Federal Government continues to spend more money than it brings in and that this Congress is running a credit card for today's needs and shamelessly leaving the bill for future generations. We all know this recklessness threatens our economic stability, our competitiveness in the global marketplace, and our future way of life.

Since I arrived in the Senate, the national debt has increased from $5.6 trillion to $8.6 trillion. That is an increase of more than 50 percent in 8 years. This amounts to $29,000 of debt for every American. Can my colleagues believe that? What is of even more concern, however, is that 55 percent of the privately owned national debt is held by foreign creditors, including the Chinese Government. That is up from 35 percent only 6 years ago. Yet these numbers, which represent our past behavior, pale in comparison with the budget problems looming in our future as the baby boom generation begins to retire over 9 months from now.

Forty years ago, Social Security, Medicare, and Medicaid accounted for 3 percent of our GDP. Today, they are up to 9 percent. In another 40 years, they will be up to 18 percent, equal to total Federal revenues and crowding out all other spending. In other words, all of the money the Federal Government spends currently will be used up for Medicare, Medicaid and Social Security. There won't be any money for anything else.

Looking forward, we face a long-term fiscal imbalance of $55 trillion. That is hard to even grasp, but it translates into $440,000 of future Government debt for every American household, up from a mere $175,000 only 6 years ago. This is all documented. If we listen to David Walker, who is the Comptroller General, he is going all over the country—he was in my State in Cincinnati for a fiscal wake-up—working with the Concord Coalition to let Americans know. He is like the Paul Revere out there telling Americans we better be concerned about this. I remember Ross Perot, who ran for the President of the United States, and all of his charts. His charts looked like nothing compared to the charts we would use to show how bad things are.

Imposing a crushing debt burden such as this on future generations at the same time they are going to have to compete with rising powers such as China and India is unacceptable. All of us have a responsibility to try to guarantee that they enjoy the same standard of living and quality of life we have enjoyed, if not better. This young page here in front of me—I am worried about him. What kind of a life is he going to have? What kind of an opportunity is he going to have in terms of his standard of living and quality of life? We are concerned about him. What kind of a legacy are we going to leave him? What about my seven grandchildren? What kind of a world are they going to live in? That is why the chairman of the Budget Committee and I have spoken over the past few years about the growing debt and the impact it will have on future generations.

Yet we are here today with the majority's budget resolution that increases the national debt by $2.4 trillion over the next 5 years. That is assuming Congress doesn't take advantage of all of the loopholes that are in the budget. We are back at square one. Neither Republicans nor Democrats have offered a budget that even comes close to reestablishing our fiscal sanity. The administration's budget is unrealistic, and the Democratic budget is even worse.

I am going to vote against the Democratic budget. If this were the Republican budget, I would vote against that budget, too. Both of them. Once again, we have pulled the wool over our own eyes. That is what is going on.

Some of my colleagues, especially my new colleagues, may wonder why I take such offense at the budget. Unfortunately I am a product of my experiences. The Bible says the Lord never gives you a challenge you cannot overcome. Well, he has tested me before, and he is testing all of us right now.

As mayor of Cleveland, I inherited the first city in the country to go bankrupt since the Great Depression. We made cuts, we raised taxes, and we

righted the ship. When I took the helm as Governor of Ohio, I inherited a $1.5 billion budget shortfall that can only be described as a financial crisis. During the first biennial budget, we had to make four rounds of cuts. These were dire economic times which required honesty, leadership, and management. I was forced to make a lot of hard choices. We had to reform our tax policy, scale back spending, and target our resources to the people who needed them the most. We worked harder and smarter, and we succeeded at doing more with less. In fact, my years as Governor represent the lowest rate of growth in State spending in 30 years.

Here in Washington, it seems as if no one is willing to make the tough choices. I cannot understand it. Too many Members won't do anything if it doesn't bolster their side politically or fit into a 10-second sound bite. Instead, both parties are using gimmicks to cover up the state of our Nation's long-term fiscal health.

Let me offer some examples. The administration released its fiscal 2008 budget request in early February and projected a deficit of $239 billion. This number is the deficit left over after spending every dollar of Social Security surplus. But the Social Security surplus must be reserved for future retirees. As far as I know, you can't spend the money twice, but Congress keeps pretending that it can. If you remove the Social Security surplus from the equation, that $239 billion deficit they are talking about almost doubles to $451 billion. If you use the accrual way of figuring it, it is about $640 billion.

The administration goes further to achieve its surplus by assuming non-security discretionary spending will peak in 2007 and go down every year after that. So we are reducing our deficit by eating our seed corn. That is a real problem today.

What we have to understand is that only one-sixth of the budget is non-defense discretionary. All of the hits are being made against that one-sixth to try to balance the budget. We are ignoring so many things this country ought to be doing.

Furthermore, the administration calculates the security-related discretionary spending will peak in 2008, and that supplemental spending for military operations will end after 2009. Give me a break. We are going to end that in 2009? We are going to be over in Iraq and Afghanistan for a long period of time. But the President just increased the number of troops going to Iraq by more than 21,000. These estimates are not based on reality. Why don't we tell the American people the truth? Let's tell them the truth.

Meanwhile, my colleagues on the other side of the aisle are using tricks that even are more egregious. The majority's budget allows for a dramatic increase in entitlement spending through the use of more than 20 reserve funds. They are not included in the overall budget totals. They simply conceal what they intend to spend and it gives the appearance of a more responsible budget.

The majority's budget hides increases in discretionary spending through the use of seven cap adjustments. Appropriations for seven favored programs and agencies will not count toward the budget limit. Just like that, poof, and they are gone.

Furthermore, the majority's budget allows for unlimited emergency spending. I think we all understand that on occasion we have natural disasters or unanticipated crises, such as Hurricane Katrina, that require emergency resources. For this reason, we cannot estimate all of our emergency spending in the budget. But a great deal of the spending that is currently designated as ''emergency'' is actually quite regular and predictable.

For example, every year we spend emergency funds on drought relief. This is difficult for me to understand: If we spend it every year, why can't we account for it in our budget? This is why we ought to have a rainy day fund such as I had when I was Governor that set aside designated funds for legitimate natural disasters so the ''emergency'' label is not abused for otherwise anticipated events.

My friend from New Hampshire, Senator GREGG, created a rainy day fund with a fixed dollar limit in last year's budget resolution, and I thought: That is a great idea. But the new majority has already eliminated that fund from the budget and has created an open-ended source of emergency spending that is not subject to any financial limitations.

There is one trick after another in this budget resolution. We are already raiding the Social Security trust fund and a bunch of smaller trust funds to make our bottom line look rosier than it is. This budget exacerbates a problem the Budget Committee chairman himself and I have spoken out against for a great many years.

I have a great deal of respect for the Democratic chairman of the Budget Committee. I think he is one of the most responsible guys, but he has also got to do his thing in terms of the politics of this Senate. In fact, in the last Congress, the Budget Committee chairman and I introduced legislation that would invest the Social Security surplus in non-Federal bonds to prevent the surplus from being used to fund other Government spending. We plan to reintroduce this bill again.

In other words, what we are saying is we are going to take the money that is now being used to fund the budget and instead of borrowing it from trust funds—Social Security—we are going to take the Social Security funds and put them in a non-U.S. account—municipal bonds—so they will accrue interest; and when the time comes that we will need to use that money, there will be something there besides an IOU from the Federal Government that says: We are going to take care of it.

The bill would require the Government issue more Treasuries to the public in order to pay for other spending instead of borrowing from Social Security. What we basically are going to say to the American public is: We are borrowing all these funds from Social Security, all the other trust funds, and we are going to put that aside, and we are going to borrow that money from the public so you know how much borrowing is going on. We are not going to mask this thing, as we have done for so many years.

We thought, finally our children and grandchildren will have a clear picture of how fiscally irresponsible we are. But today the Budget Committee chairman is relying on the very same gimmick—borrowing from the Social Security trust fund—to claim a balance in 2012.

What about taxes? The majority's budget claims that $400 billion in revenue will be collected from ''closing the 'tax gap' ''—in other words, collecting more of the taxes that are currently owed but not paid. Yet the President's proposal to collect just 2 percent of this $400 billion caused small businesses to howl in protest that the new administrative and compliance burdens would overwhelm them.

In other words, it is easy to talk about closing the tax gap, but from a political point of view, it is not going to be very easy. We should do that. There is no question about it. I talked to Charles Rossotti, who was the former head of the Internal Revenue Service. He said with more filings and more people in the Internal Revenue Service, we should be able to pick up another $50 billion. That is a realistic way of looking at it. But just to say: $400 billion; we are going to come up with it somehow; close the tax gap, and it is all going to be there—voila.

In fact, the Greater Cleveland Partnership and the Council of Smaller Enterprises, which represent small business in northeast Ohio, describe the administration's tax gap proposals—by the way, this is not a Democratic proposal; this is the administration's tax gap proposals—as ''an unreasonable tracking and reporting burden for small business.'' And that is just for 2 percent of the revenue the majority claims it can raise by going after small businesses. We should try to collect money that is owed, but if it were that easy—as my friend from Iowa Senator GRASSLEY suggests—we would have found the money to fix the AMT years ago.

But, sadly, these gimmicks are not the worst part of the budget. What is more disturbing about this resolution is what is not included. The majority did not designate one dime in Social Security, Medicare, or Medicaid savings to help slow the impending entitlement tidal wave heading our way—not one dime. Entitlement spending threatens to flood our budget and soak up every Federal dollar, as I mentioned

earlier, leaving no revenue for education, the environment, infrastructure, or scientific research. The majority's budget ignores this problem.

In fact, this budget does worse than ignore the problem. It will pile billions of dollars in new entitlement spending on top of the existing problem. It is so obvious that this budget resolution simply satisfies a political agenda. It is a public relations campaign that the majority is using to avoid telling the American people the truth. I am accusing them of that, and I have to say the same thing for my side of the aisle. We are both guilty. All of our hands are dirty.

To add to insult, since Republicans switched to 5-year budgets a few years ago, Democrats have repeatedly called for 10-year budgets because 5-year budgets hide our long-term problems. In other words, the other side of the aisle kept complaining: You are using 5-year budgets because if you use 10, the American people are going to find out how much money you are spending. So we went to the 5-year budget. We want to hide that figure about the next 5 years. If the Democrats wanted to do it this time, I would have said: Do the 10-year budget. Let the American people know what the truth is about how much money this budget is going to cost.

For example, the CBO currently projects that total outlays for Medicare and Medicaid will more than double—more than double—by 2017, increasing by 124 percent. This is roughly two times as much as the economy is expected to grow during the same period. A 5-year forecast hides this explosion in entitlement liabilities. Tell the truth—transparency. Let the American people know what the score is.

Yet, here we are, with Democrats in control of both Chambers, and they are trying to pass a 5-year budget that continues to cover up the gathering fiscal storm looming on our horizon. Shame on us. Shame on them. They are playing the game we played starting in 2004, after promising to do better.

I take our Nation's fiscal health very seriously. I am concerned there is a lack of transparency in this budget. There are gaping loopholes the majority can exploit to cause spending and deficits to rise much higher than the budget resolution claims. In an attempt to close some of these loopholes, tomorrow I am going to offer two amendments.

First, we need to reform our Nation's entitlement programs. I have been begging on my knees trying to get the White House to take on the responsibility of reforming our Tax Code—we need it; it is overdue—to take on entitlements, to reach out to Republicans and Democrats and say: The time has come. Let's put everything on the table. Let's reform our Tax Code. Let's do something about entitlements. The fact is, silence—silence. I have to tell you, if we do not do this, then our children and grandchildren are going to drown—they are going to drown—in a sea of debt.

I am concerned, however, that if we reform entitlements and save billions of dollars, Congress might grab those savings and spend some of them on other programs instead of paying down the debt. So what I am saying is, I am hoping—and I know the chairman of the Budget Committee, the Senator from North Dakota, has said he wants entitlement spending reform—I am hoping we get it. All this amendment says is: If we do get entitlement spending reform, it is going to be used to pay down the debt and not fund other entitlements.

I previously introduced legislation called the SAFE Commission Act that would guarantee a fast-track, comprehensive approach to reforming our Nation's tax, entitlement, and budget systems. If the 110th Congress enacts entitlement reform, either by way of legislation or as a result of another bipartisan effort, we must use those savings to reduce the deficit and, as I say, pay down the debt and not on entitlement spending.

Specifically, my first amendment would require any savings from legislation that slows the growth of entitlement spending by $5 billion or more be dedicated to deficit reduction. Some of my colleagues are asking: George, why are you worrying about this? Well, I hope we have this problem where we have to decide what to do with these entitlement savings we have enacted. Because, as I said earlier, the majority has not included even one dime's worth of savings in this budget resolution. We do nothing—not one thing—in this budget about entitlement spending.

Second, every time we enact new entitlement spending or tax cuts, which are financed through additional borrowing, we increase the level of interest payments the Government has to make on its debt. I have talked about this debt and the interest costs. These new interest costs represent additional Government spending. Yet, CBO cost estimates ignore the effect of these interest payments on spending and the national debt.

In other words, we are spending money on reducing taxes—and we are paying for it by borrowing—or we are spending money on new programs—and we are borrowing the money—because we keep ratcheting up the debt and we do not calculate the interest costs that are involved in either tax reductions or the spending for these new programs.

These ballooning interest costs add up to $370 billion in 2008. Think about this: That interest cost will be 13 percent of the budget. The public needs to know that in addition to spending additional money on new programs, we are paying interest on that money. I am concerned about these growing interest costs because they are part of our mounting national debt.

Frankly, our interest rates are low right now, but they could skyrocket. The first couple years I was mayor of Cleveland, interest rates at the time were 13 percent. Some Americans remember savings passbooks that were paying 14 and 16 percent. I will never forget it because I had the money for my children's college education in mutual funds. I sold the mutual funds and put them in the passbook savings because we were getting—can you imagine—we were getting 16 percent—16 percent—on a passbook investment.

I think we need to wake up to the fact that if we get a change in the international marketplace—as I mentioned earlier, 55 percent of our budget is with foreign investors—if those central banks get a little bit nervous about the United States of America—and I have talked to Alan Greenspan about this; we could see interest rates skyrocket to 12 percent, 13 percent—that would suck up an enormous amount of money.

So the fact is, we ought to pay attention to letting people know when we either reduce taxes, and borrow the money, or we spend money above the budget, somebody has to pay some interest on that cost. We must stop this charade once and for all. Both sides of the aisle have a clear, moral obligation to improve the fiscal health of our Nation. It starts with formulating a fair and honest budget. Yet we are being dishonest and masking the long-term challenges that confront our Nation.

We must deal with these problems head on and work on a bipartisan basis to reform our tax system, control the growth of entitlement spending, and slow this freight train that is threatening to crush our children and grandchildren's futures.

Experts say the most important step you can take is to first admit you have a problem. I will never forget when I was mayor of Cleveland and came in, the easiest thing sometimes in life was just to keep the problems in a drawer and not look at them and hope they would go away. I found a long time ago that if you take those problems and pull them out and deal with them, you are so much better off than if you just let them lay around and get worse.

The question today is, Do we have the moral courage to fix it? Do we have the moral courage? Can we do that? It is a moral issue.

I will never forget Frank Wolf. I gave a speech last year and Frank called me and he said: I am going to put a bill in, and we are going to set up a commission that is going to do something about tax reform and entitlement.

He said: I have—I think he said 11 or 12 grandchildren. He said: I thought about it. I am a fiscal conservative. He said: But you know something. We have a moral obligation to our children. We just can't let this thing keep going. The fact is, do we have that moral conviction to fix it or are we too darn interested in protecting our political hides—our political hides—to do anything? Do we have the courage to do it? Do we have the courage?

I am 70 years old. I have seven grandchildren. I care and worry about them.

My concern is what legacy am I going to leave my children and my grandchildren. I was fortunate. We were fortunate. We had others before us who were responsible—others, for example, who were willing to pay for the wars that we were in. Today, in this country, let's see, it is up to $510 billion for Iraq and Afghanistan, and if we pass the supplemental, it is going to be $610 billion. The only sacrifice that is being made today in this country is by the families that have the body bags returned to them. Twenty-six thousand of our men and women who have been injured, half of them disabled for the rest of their life, and we are not doing anything. We are not doing anything.

Last year, I said if we can't get tax reform to raise the money that we need to take care of things, then we ought to have a temporary tax increase to pay for our war. We should. It is the right thing to do. But, no, we will let it go and let somebody else worry about it the next time around—the new President.

Mr. President, I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Alabama is recognized.

Mr. SESSIONS. Mr. President, I would note as I begin how much I appreciate Senator VOINOVICH and his passion for America in trying to introduce responsibility in spending and taxes. We don't always agree on everything, but he is a man of principle and dedication to his country.

Mr. President, the amendment I will be asking my colleagues to consider tomorrow deals with a growing problem that we have in America. It has to be confronted completely before long. It is the alternative minimum tax. This is a tax that after you figure what you owe on your income tax return and you have taken all your deductions, you have to calculate your taxes again and you may have to file under the alternative minimum tax and pay more taxes. That was an idea conjured up before I came to the Senate to capture rich people who weren't paying enough taxes. Maybe it had some resonance to it, but it has fallen very hard now on the middle class, and it is very dramatic.

We in this Congress have become addicted to the money the alternative minimum tax brings in. We have decided, though, that we can't allow millions of middle-class people to be burdened with a new and higher tax, so we have tried to fix it. We did what was called the AMT patch—a patch. It wasn't a complete fix, it was a Band-Aid, and it would do a lot. Actually, it has done considerable. Without a patch next year, about 23 million people will be subjected to the tax, but with the patch, 17 million of those will not. They will be dropped out of AMT. Seventeen million people will be saved from that.

I just want to say, first of all, the real solution, as everyone knows, is tax simplification. We need to do that, but we have no real momentum at this moment in the Congress in either House or in either party or by the President. Those of us not on the Finance Committee sometimes wonder why we don't have more proposals for tax simplification, but we don't. It is going to happen sometime, sooner rather than later.

So the patch helps. It raises the AMT exemption level, the amount of money, the floor to which you get caught with, and that has helped some. But the real truth that I must share with my colleagues is that the result has not been fair. It is not a principled way to deal with the people being caught by the alternative minimum tax.

In 2006, for example, 7.4 percent of married people with children paid higher taxes under the AMT, while 1 percent of singles paid the AMT. Think of that. This tax, the way it is calculated and the way it is put together, it has fallen incredibly hard, over seven times as hard, on married people with children as it does on single taxpayers. Why is that so? Well, when you calculate your alternative minimum tax, you can't use your personal exemptions. You can't use that personal exemption of $3,400, and you can't claim your children as exemptions.

So I would first say one of the most valuable things this country has are the parents out there, some single moms, working their hearts out every day to raise and educate the next generation of young people who are going to lead this country.

So the alternative minimum tax I have believed for some time has penalized people with children. We have had a marriage penalty and now we see with the AMT, we are actually taxing children, making it even more expensive for young families to have children.

So I think my amendment does the right thing. It achieves a very similar result as the patch but is more principled, more cued to what is in the national interests, and more fair.

First, it treats children and personal exemptions correctly. You still get your personal exemption under the AMT and exemptions for your dependents in your household. Under this plan as I have offered it, 87 percent as many people will not have to file an AMT return as would under the patch—almost the same, 13 percent less, but very close to the same number. But astoundingly and importantly, it costs a lot less. It would save in terms of tax revenue lost $82 billion over 5 years. It would be a lot less expensive in terms of tax cost.

This $82 billion could help us contain the deficit. It could help us fund the expiring tax cuts that have allowed us to have a low-tax economy that has led to such terrific growth in our economy, would provide some of the money we could use for that, and it would be good for the economy in a way that I am afraid this unprincipled approach to patching the AMT does not. There would be less focus on high income, high tax States. I come from a lower tax State, a poorer State, a poorer State with a lower average income than the average in the United States. We are doing a lot better, and I am proud of that, but we still are below the national average in a number of different ways. Our State would not benefit much at all under the patch.

Let me show my colleagues this chart. This is a rather astounding chart. These are the percentage of taxpayers who paid the AMT by State in 2005. In my home State of Alabama, it was 0.8, eight-tenths of 1 percent. Less than 1 percent paid any AMT. But in New York, with a good bit higher average income, 6 percent paid—6 percent of the people paid it. The numbers are high in other States. Mississippi is low at .9, and the Dakotas are .8 and .6. Indiana is 1.0; West Virginia, .9. The lower income States are not going to benefit as much under the kind of patch we are talking about. Most of the benefits of the patch will be transferred to only a few States for a lot of different reasons. One is because they have higher taxes which cannot be deducted under the AMT.

So I would say what we need to do is to do better. By having the exemptions allowable under the AMT calculation, we would benefit people more fairly around the country, although not a complete fairness. It is still going to be a tax that dramatically shifts benefits to higher income, higher tax States. There is no doubt about that. But this is at least a step in the right direction, and it helps real people. My excellent staff person, Dr. Andrew Barrett, talks about a professor he knows, Christopher Wolfe, who has 10 children. He is getting whacked by the AMT.

I think a person who is pouring his heart and soul into raising a large family and trying to do the right thing by them should not lose their tax exemptions and have to pay a higher tax than somebody who didn't have that.

I hope we can have a good vote on this tomorrow. I think it is the right thing. As we go forward, we are going to have to talk about this more. The more I study it, the more convinced I am that this is not a good way to handle tax policy in America, this AMT.

I ask unanimous consent that Senator ORRIN HATCH be listed as a cosponsor on that legislation.

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

Mr. SESSIONS. Mr. President, I will sum up. I am a member of the Budget Committee. One of the things you see as you watch these budgets go through here and we discuss them and debate them and it sounds like a lot of politics and hot air and partisanship. But the real truth is that a budget is a defining instrument for a party. A budget tells what your priorities are, what direction you want to take the country in. I am not sure we have ever had a budget since I have been here—well, maybe a few in the beginning but certainly not in the last several years of my tenure—that was passed on anything other

than a party-line vote, at least in the Budget Committee.

Once again, the budget that came out of this Budget Committee, now that we have a Democratic majority, passed with all Democratic votes and no Republican votes. Last year, the budget that passed out was passed by all Republican votes and opposed by all Democrats. But they were in the minority at that time. I used to think, well, why can't we just get together and work these things out. Perhaps we can at some point. Perhaps we will have a break in this cycle. But right now, it seems that the budget defines us and our differences. What is it we agree on? What is it we disagree on? Where do we want to take the country? And where does somebody else not want to go?

Let me mention a few things about this budget. It is a spending budget. The President proposed a rather substantial increase in discretionary spending; but our Democratic colleagues passed a budget that adds $18 billion more in nondefense discretionary spending than the President asked for. It brought it up to a total increase in nondefense discretionary spending of over 6 percent—I think it is 6.1-percent growth in spending.

Well, what is the cost of living? What is the CPI, the inflation rate? It is about 2.3 percent. So this budget increase, in a time of war, in a time when entitlements are raging out of control, is not a frugal budget; it is a spending budget. You should not be spending almost three times the inflation rate if you want to have any kind of responsibility in spending. We don't have to spend three times the rate of inflation to keep the country from collapsing. The country is not going to collapse if we had a flat budget or if we cut 3, 4, 5 percent, if you want to know the truth. The Republic will still be standing.

But, no, we have to fund these programs, these ideas, and these visions that utilize money and runs up the total. So they have shoved through a budget that increases it substantially. Last year, we passed, on a party-line vote, a proposal that would have contained, by about 1 or 2 percent over 5 years, the growth in entitlement spending. Senator JUDD GREGG worked this in. He believed in it passionately. He believed we could now, early on, before we reach a fiscal disaster in the future, control some of these spending programs. He had a modest cut in the growth—growth only—of Medicare. I think it was like 45 percent growth to 46 percent growth. How about that? Do you think we can sustain that? It got to the floor and all of the Democrats opposed it and several Republicans opposed it, and it failed. We could not even contain the growth by 1 percent.

So all last year, in this last election, my Democratic friends, were out railing at President Bush for spending wildly. They claimed that Republicans were irresponsible on spending, and here they go coming back with this budget. Did it have any effort or did it display any movement whatsoever to contain the growth of entitlement spending? Zero. It didn't attempt to confront that issue. I think that is a mistake. We have had a lot of complaints that we have to do something, but when it came down to the time to produce a budget, over the objection of Senator GREGG and others, they had no interest in that.

Well, what about taxes? We didn't have any savings on the spending side. We had an increase on spending. What about taxes? They say this is not a raising-taxes budget, that it doesn't raise taxes, don't worry about that. We have not voted to raise taxes. Let me tell you what they did do. They created a system and a mechanism—or at least the majority did when they passed this budget—that is going to put us in a position where we are going to raise taxes, and I am going to explain it to you as simply as I possibly can. The budget adds four points of order. A point of order calls for a supermajority vote to carry out some act. They said you cannot have tax cuts unless several things occur, and the only way you can have those tax cuts, if those things don't occur, is override a budget point of order, and that takes 60 votes, not 50. So what about the existing tax cuts—the capital gains reductions, the marriage penalty elimination, the dividends reduction? What about reducing the tax rate for the lowest income workers who pay Federal taxes by 33 percent, from 15 to 10 percent?

Well, they came up with a proposal that says you cannot even extend those tax cuts that have been in place for a number of years and begin to expire in the next couple of years. Those cannot be extended without being able to overcome the budget points of order. To do so, the most logical thing is to cut spending. So if you cut spending enough to pay for a tax reduction, a tax reduction that is already in place—and some have been in place for over 5 years—if you don't cut spending sufficient to ''pay for the lost revenue,'' according to these estimates, then you cannot undo it without 60 votes.

When we passed those tax reductions, it was virtually party line, although several Democrats, including Ben Nelson, voted with us, but one time it was a tie vote. Another time it was one or two votes. These were razor thin, the low fifties. By putting in a 60-vote point of order, it is not going to be possible to extend the existing tax cuts, the reduction of the rates, capital gains. They estimated, for example, that capital gains reductions would cost the Treasury $5 billion. As it turned out, capital gains, after being reduced, have resulted in increases to the Treasury of $133 billion. If you sell a piece of property and you have to pay 20 percent on the profit, you might not do it. If you are thinking about selling stock and you say, wait a minute, it has grown in value and you are going to have to pay a 20 percent tax on that, you may say I will just hold it. At 15 percent, people say, OK, I will pay that.

We have had an interesting time of more sales of property and assets subject to capital gains, and we increased revenue after the tax rate was reduced. I wish to say to you that this budget has put us in a position that I don't see how it is possible that we can extend even the existing tax reduction. Those tax reductions have spurred this economy. They were enacted during a time when we had difficulties. It is important to note that when President Bush took office, the Nasdaq, the high-tech stock market, had fallen 50 percent. The first quarter he took office was negative growth. In fact, the last month of President Clinton's term was negative growth. President Bush inherited an economy in serious trouble. Then 9/11 hit and we were in a recession. It could have been a long one, but it turned out not to be. It bounced back quickly, and a big reason is he reduced taxes; the economy grew and picked up the slack and began to grow.

Two years ago, the revenue coming into the U.S. Treasury increased 15 percent over the previous year. Last year, the revenue coming in—this is money actually in the Federal till—went up 12 percent over the 15 percent. This year, they are predicting that revenue to the Federal Treasury will be up almost 10 percent over last year's 12 percent. That is fabulous growth. What should we do? We ought to contain Federal spending. We ought to keep those tax cuts in place, not to make somebody rich, not just to let them keep more money—money that they earned—but because it is good for our economy, because we are a free market economy, and we are a group of people who believe in individual responsibility—not like the Europeans, who are semi-Socialist, if not Socialist, who deeply believe in higher taxes, more regulation, bigger government, and more social welfare.

That is not our heritage. We have a heritage of free, responsible, individual Americans, whose goal and ideal is to take care of ourselves, but we will help those who need it when they need it.

I wish to say this budget defines a lot of who we are. I think it defines a different vision for what is best for America. It has been that way for most of the time I have been in the Senate, and it looks like we are at it again this year.

I feel strongly we ought not to go and slide and move toward the big government, high taxes, and social welfare system of the Europeans. They say: Well, it has not made the taxes go up; we have a budget and the Finance Committee can fix this and they can do whatever they want to do. They have a lot of freedom.

But with the points of order in the budget, I submit to you that we have a problem. I submit to you this Democratic budget that came out of the

committee is similar to this torpedo on this chart.

Democrats can say they have not raised taxes yet, but they have launched that torpedo right at this thriving, vibrant American economy. The torpedo is named ''tax increases'' and they are on the way. That is a fact. I don't see anything that is going to intercept that torpedo because the vote tomorrow will put us on a road we cannot get out of. It is going to put us in a situation where the votes will not exist to cut taxes, and we are going to allow even existing tax reductions to phase out, and taxes will jump, and it will amount to the largest tax increase in American history, from what the experts tell us.

It is late. This is an important point and an important time for our country. When we pass a budget, it doesn't do a whole lot. A budget basically has a couple of things it does. It sets the total level of spending. That level has been raised over what the President has asked for. It creates a mechanism that could allow us to extend tax cuts for less than 60 votes, or do other revenue changes for less than 60 votes. But the budget we are passing is going to put us into a situation where we will increase spending and we will be put on a road to increase taxes.

I think that is a wrong direction for our Nation, and I doth protest.

Mr. President, I yield the floor.

ADJOURNMENT UNTIL 9 A.M. TOMORROW

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Under the previous order, the Senate stands adjourned until 9 a.m. tomorrow.

Thereupon, the Senate, at 9:42 p.m., adjourned until Friday, March 23, 2007, at 9 a.m.

NOMINATIONS

Executive nominations received by the Senate March 22, 2007:

DEPARTMENT OF STATE

JOHN C. ROOD, OF ARIZONA, TO BE UNDER SECRETARY OF STATE FOR ARMS CONTROL AND INTERNATIONAL SECURITY, VICE ROBERT JOSEPH, RESIGNED.

DEPARTMENT OF JUSTICE

MICHAEL J. SULLIVAN, OF MASSACHUSETTS, TO BE DIRECTOR, BUREAU OF ALCOHOL, TOBACCO, FIREARMS, AND EXPLOSIVES. (NEW POSITION)

IN THE ARMY

THE FOLLOWING NAMED OFFICER FOR APPOINTMENT IN THE UNITED STATES ARMY TO THE GRADE INDICATED WHILE ASSIGNED TO A POSITION OF IMPORTANCE AND RESPONSIBILITY UNDER TITLE 10, U.S.C., SECTION 601:

To be lieutenant general

LT. GEN. MARTIN E. DEMPSEY, 0000

THE FOLLOWING NAMED OFFICERS FOR APPOINTMENT IN THE RESERVE OF THE ARMY TO THE GRADE INDICATED UNDER TITLE 10, U.S.C., SECTION 12203:

To be major general

BRIGADIER GENERAL MARI K. EDER, 0000
BRIGADIER GENERAL WILLIAM H. GERETY, 0000
BRIGADIER GENERAL PAUL F. HAMM, 0000
BRIGADIER GENERAL GEORGE R. HARRIS, 0000
BRIGADIER GENERAL STEVEN J. HASHEM, 0000
BRIGADIER GENERAL ADOLPH MCQUEEN, JR., 0000
BRIGADIER GENERAL DAVID A. MORRIS, 0000
BRIGADIER GENERAL MAYNARD J. SANDERS, 0000
BRIGADIER GENERAL GREGORY A. SCHUMACHER, 0000
BRIGADIER GENERAL MICHAEL J. SCHWEIGER, 0000
BRIGADIER GENERAL RICHARD J. SHERLOCK, JR., 0000
BRIGADIER GENERAL DEAN G. SIENKO, 0000

To be brigadier general

COLONEL MARCIA M. ANDERSON, 0000
COLONEL DOUGLAS P. ANSON, 0000
COLONEL WILLIAM G. BEARD, 0000
COLONEL WILLIAM M. BUCKLER, 0000
COLONEL ALFRED B. CARLTON, 0000
COLONEL ROBERT G. CATALANOTTI, 0000
COLONEL MICHELE G. COMPTON, 0000
COLONEL JOHN C. HANLEY, 0000
COLONEL KATHERINE P. KASUN, 0000
COLONEL ROBERT W. KENYON, 0000
COLONEL KAREN E. LEDOUX, 0000
COLONEL PETER S. LENNON, 0000
COLONEL CHARLES D. MARTIN, 0000
COLONEL GARY A. MEDVIGY, 0000
COLONEL SAMUEL T. NICHOLS, JR., 0000
COLONEL JAMES D. OWENS, JR., 0000
COLONEL JEFFREY E. PHILLIPS, 0000
COLONEL LESLIE A. PURSER, 0000
COLONEL DAVID W. PUSTER, 0000
COLONEL DANIEL I. SCHULTZ, 0000
COLONEL MICHAEL R. SMITH, 0000
COLONEL JEFFREY W. TALLEY, 0000
COLONEL MEGAN P. TATU, 0000
COLONEL NICKOLAS P. TOOLIATOS, 0000
COLONEL JAMES T. WALTON, 0000

IN THE MARINE CORPS

THE FOLLOWING NAMED OFFICER FOR APPOINTMENT IN THE UNITED STATES MARINE CORPS TO THE GRADE INDICATED WHILE ASSIGNED TO A POSITION OF IMPORTANCE AND RESPONSIBILITY UNDER TITLE 10, U.S.C., SECTION 601:

To be lieutenant general

MAJ. GEN. GEORGE J. TRAUTMAN III, 0000

IN THE NAVY

THE FOLLOWING NAMED OFFICER FOR APPOINTMENT IN THE UNITED STATES NAVY TO THE GRADE INDICATED WHILE ASSIGNED TO A POSITION OF IMPORTANCE AND RESPONSIBILITY UNDER TITLE 10, U.S.C., SECTION 601:

To be vice admiral

REAR ADM. HAROLD D. STARLING II, 0000

IN THE COAST GUARD

THE FOLLOWING NAMED OFFICERS FOR APPOINTMENT TO THE GRADE INDICATED IN THE UNITED STATES COAST GUARD UNDER TITLE 14, U.S.C., SECTION 211:

To be lieutenant commander

KIRSTEN R. MARTIN, 0000
PATRICK A. ROPP, 0000
RICHARD V. TIMME, 0000

FOREIGN SERVICE

THE FOLLOWING-NAMED CAREER MEMBERS OF THE SENIOR FOREIGN SERVICE OF THE AGENCY FOR INTERNATIONAL DEVELOPMENT FOR PROMOTION WITHIN AND INTO THE SENIOR FOREIGN SERVICE TO THE CLASSES INDICATED:

CAREER MEMBER OF THE SENIOR FOREIGN SERVICE, CLASS OF MINISTER-COUNSELOR:

EDWARD W. BIRGELLS, OF TEXAS
CARLEENE HOPE DEI, OF FLORIDA
MICHAEL TILESTON FRITZ, OF WYOMING
WILLIAM A. JEFFERS, OF FLORIDA

CAREER MEMBER OF THE SENIOR FOREIGN SERVICE, CLASS OF COUNSELOR:

STEPHEN F. CALLAHAN, OF VIRGINIA
ROBERT FRANCIS CUNNANE, OF FLORIDA
ALEXANDER DICKIE IV, OF TEXAS
KARL FICKENSCHER, OF NORTH CAROLINA
STEPHEN M. HAYKIN, OF WASHINGTON
JANINA JARUZELSKI, OF NEW JERSEY
ELISABETH A. KVITASHVILI, OF VIRGINIA
DAVID E. MCCLOUD, OF FLORIDA
KEVIN J. MULLALLY, OF TEXAS
GARY WILLIAM NEWTON, OF FLORIDA
HERMANIA B. PANGAN, OF VIRGINIA
SUSAN G. REICHLE, OF VIRGINIA
DENISE A. ROLLINS, OF MICHIGAN
MARILYNN ANN SCHMIDT, OF VIRGINIA
ELZADIA WASHINGTON-DANAUX, OF TENNESSEE
JACK WINN, OF FLORIDA
ANDREA J. YATES, OF FLORIDA

PUBLIC HEALTH SERVICE

THE FOLLOWING CANDIDATES FOR PERSONNEL ACTION IN THE REGULAR CORPS OF THE U.S. PUBLIC HEALTH SERVICE SUBJECT TO QUALIFICATIONS THEREFORE AS PROVIDED BY LAW AND REGULATIONS:

To be assistant surgeon

SUNEE R. DANIELSON
MARY E. EVANS

IN THE ARMY

THE FOLLOWING NAMED OFFICER FOR REGULAR APPOINTMENT IN THE GRADE INDICATED IN THE UNITED STATES ARMY MEDICAL SPECIALIST CORPS UNDER TITLE 10, U.S.C., SECTIONS 531 AND 3064:

To be lieutenant colonel

MELISSA W. JONES, 0000

THE FOLLOWING NAMED OFFICER FOR REGULAR APPOINTMENT IN THE GRADE INDICATED IN THE UNITED STATES ARMY NURSE CORPS UNDER TITLE 10, U.S.C., SECTIONS 531 AND 3064:

To be lieutenant colonel

BARBARA J. KING, 0000

THE FOLLOWING NAMED ARMY NATIONAL GUARD OF THE UNITED STATES OFFICERS FOR APPOINTMENT TO THE GRADE INDICATED IN THE RESERVE OF THE ARMY UNDER TITLE 10, U.S.C., SECTIONS 12203 AND 12211:

To be colonel

JAMES F. BECK, 0000
KEVIN S. MCKIERNAN, 0000

THE FOLLOWING NAMED OFFICERS FOR REGULAR APPOINTMENT IN THE GRADES INDICATED IN THE UNITED STATES ARMY MEDICAL CORPS UNDER TITLE 10, U.S.C., SECTIONS 531 AND 3064:

To be colonel

DANIEL L. HURST, 0000

To be lieutenant colonel

EMMANUEL R. BONNECARRERE, 0000
LARRY D. CHRISTOPHER, 0000
SAMUEL H. FISTEL, 0000
JUAN M. LOPEZ, 0000

To be major

JOHN G. MARKLEY, 0000
JACQUELYN OHERRIN, 0000
ADAM H. SIMS, 0000
GEORGE T. TALBOT, 0000

IN THE MARINE CORPS

THE FOLLOWING NAMED OFFICERS FOR APPOINTMENT TO THE GRADE INDICATED IN THE UNITED STATES MARINE CORPS UNDER TITLE 10, U.S.C., SECTION 624:

To be lieutenant colonel

EDUARDO A. ABISELLAN, 0000
CHRISTOPHER C. ABRAMS, 0000
JOHN K. ADAMS, 0000
TED A. ADAMS, 0000
JOHN C. ALLEE, 0000
CHRISTOPHER W. ALLEN, 0000
JOSEPH T. ALLENA, JR., 0000
GEOFFREY M. ANTHONY, 0000
VINCENT D. APPLEWHITE, 0000
JOHN ARMELLINO, JR., 0000
STEPHEN P. ARMES, 0000
MITCHELL K. ARNZEN, 0000
JOHN B. ATKINSON, 0000
STEPHEN C. AUGUSTIN, 0000
TERRY L. BAGGETT, 0000
PAUL D. BAKER, 0000
RAYMOND G. BAKER, 0000
SCOTT A. BALDWIN, 0000
CRAIG P. BARNETT, 0000
JOHN M. BARNETT, 0000
TIMOTHY E. BARRICK, 0000
MICHAEL B. BARRY, 0000
STEPHEN R. BECK, JR., 0000
PATRICK A. BECKETT, 0000
MARC A. BEGIN, 0000
DOUGLAS C. BEHEL, 0000
THOMAS J. BEIKIRCH, 0000
MARLIN C. BENTON, JR., 0000
DAVID BERNATOVICH, 0000
WILLIAM C. BERRIS, 0000
CHARLES N. BLACK, 0000
CHAD A. BLAIR, 0000
RUSSELL A. BLAUW, 0000
BRET A. BOLDING, 0000
RICHARD J. BORDONARO, 0000
TODD V. BOTTOMS, 0000
MATTHEW C. BOYKIN, 0000
ROBERT J. BRAATZ, 0000
ROBERT G. BRACKNELL, 0000
DAVID P. BRADNEY, 0000
RONALD C. BRANEY, 0000
TERRY L. BRANSTETTER, JR., 0000
IAN D. BRASURE, 0000
ROLLIN D. BREWSTER III, 0000
PETER J. BROWN, 0000
ROBERT J. BRUDER, 0000
JOHN H. BRUGGEMAN, JR., 0000
TIMOTHY R. BRYANT, 0000
VICTOR J. BUNCH, 0000
KENNETH A. BURGER, 0000
HEATHER M. BURGESS, 0000
RUSSELL C. BURTON, 0000
SHAWN P. CALLAHAN, 0000
MICHAEL J. CALLANAN, 0000
MICHAEL T. CARSON, 0000
RONNIE A. CARSON, JR., 0000
JENNIFER E. CARTER, 0000
MELVIN G. CARTER, 0000
TODD M. CARUSO, 0000
MICHAEL S. CASEY, 0000
WALTER D. CERKAN, 0000
ERIK L. CHRISTENSEN, 0000
IAN R. CLARK, 0000
WILLIAM P. CLARK, 0000
TIMOTHY L. CLARKE, 0000
ERIN D. COADY, 0000
JAIME O. COLLAZO, 0000
STEPHEN G. CONROY, 0000
SAMUEL C. COOK, 0000
MATTHEW D. COOPER, 0000
ROBERT D. COOPER, 0000
EDITH W. CORDERY, 0000
GUY R. COURSEY, 0000
IAN D. COURTNEY, 0000
KENNETH L. CRABTREE, 0000
BRIAN E. CRANE, 0000

DARYL G. CRANE, 0000
MATTHEW A. CROCE, 0000
PAUL D. CUCINOTTA, 0000
DREW E. CUKOR, 0000
MATTHEW C. CULBERTSON, 0000
JENS A. CURTIS, 0000
EARL W. DANIELS, 0000
KEITH C. DARBY II, 0000
ROMIN DASMALCHI, 0000
RONALD K. DENNARD, 0000
PAUL T. DEUTSCH, 0000
ANDREW L. DIETZ, 0000
MARK D. DIETZ, 0000
JOHN E. DOBES, 0000
SCOTT P. DUNCAN, 0000
ANDREW L. EAST, 0000
KURT G. EBAUGH, 0000
BEN T. EDWARDS, JR., 0000
FRED H. EGERER II, 0000
ERIC J. ELDRED, 0000
THOMAS C. EULER III, 0000
ANTHONY C. FABIANO, 0000
THOMAS M. FAHY, JR., 0000
JAMES P. FALLON, 0000
CHRISTOPHER M. FEARS, 0000
WESLEY L. FEIGHT, 0000
TODD W. FERRY, 0000
TIMOTHY J. FETSCH, 0000
CHRISTOPHER A. FEYEDELEM, 0000
PHILIP A. FICKES, 0000
MICHAEL D. FOLGATE, 0000
VINCENT H. FONTENOT, JR., 0000
TIMOTHY J. FRANK, 0000
WESLEY A. FRASARD, JR., 0000
JAMES W. FREY, 0000
THOMAS C. FRIES, 0000
PHILLIP N. FRIETZE, 0000
BRYON J. FUGATE, 0000
ROBERT C. FULFORD, 0000
JAMES R. FULLWOOD, JR., 0000
PETER S. GADD, 0000
THOMAS J. GALVIN, 0000
JASON S. GERIN, 0000
ERIC A. GILLIS, 0000
DOUGLAS V. GLASGOW, 0000
MICHAEL F. GOGOLIN, 0000
JOHN C. GOLDEN IV, 0000
TIMOTHY C. GOLDEN, 0000
KEVIN M. GONZALEZ, 0000
DANIEL F. GOODWIN, 0000
DONALD A. GORDON, 0000
ROBERT GOVONI, 0000
BRUCE G. GRALER, 0000
DAVID P. GRANT, 0000
DANIEL Q. GREENWOOD, 0000
DAVID M. GRIESMER, 0000
STEPHEN M. GRIFFITHS, 0000
REGINALD L. HAIRSTON, 0000
MORRIS D. HALE, 0000
NICHOLAS S. HALE, 0000
EARL L. HALQUIST, 0000
JAMES F. HARP, 0000
CLARENCE T. HARPER III, 0000
SCOTT W. HARRIS, 0000
BARON A. HARRISON, 0000
PETER W. HART, 0000
JEFFREY H. HAUSER, 0000
BRIAN W. HAVILAND, 0000
DOUGLAS A. HAWKINS, 0000
CHAD T. HEDLESTON, 0000
HENRY G. HESS, 0000
JAMES A. HESSEN, 0000
MICHAEL O. HIXSON, 0000
TIMOTHY H. HOGAN, 0000
MICHAEL T. HOLMES, 0000
RENEE A. HOLMES, 0000
JEFFREY C. HOLT, 0000
MARK D. HOROWITZ, 0000
JAMES E. HOWARD, 0000
MICHAEL P. HUBBARD, 0000
LAWRENCE E. HUGGINS, JR., 0000
BRIAN G. HUGHES, 0000
PETER D. HUNTLEY, 0000
JAMES J. HURD, 0000
THOMAS J. IMPELLITTERI, 0000
JAN M. JANUARY, 0000
JEFFREY L. JAROSZ, 0000
MICHAEL J. JERNIGAN, 0000
DAVID E. JONES, 0000
SEKOU S. KAREGA, 0000
DANIEL R. KAZMIER, 0000
PATRICK J. KEANE III, 0000
ANTHONY P. KENNICK, 0000
CRAIG M. KILHENNY, 0000
JEFFREY A. KNUDSON, 0000
ROBERT A. KUROWSKI, 0000
SCOTT S. LACY, 0000
WILLIAM F. LAPRATT, 0000
TERRENCE H. LATORRE, 0000
FRANK N. LATT, 0000
RHETT B. LAWING, 0000
RAYMOND H. LEGALL, 0000
RODNEY LEGOWSKI, 0000
WENDELL B. LEIMBACH, JR., 0000
SCOTT D. LEONARD, 0000
MICHAEL D. LEPSON, 0000
JOSEPH P. LEVREAULT, 0000
PATRICK A. LINDAUER, 0000
DANIEL R. LINGMAN, 0000
DANIEL C. LOGAN, 0000
JOSEPH A. LORE, 0000
DAVID W. LUCAS, 0000
JOSEPH A. LUCIA III, 0000
ROBERT E. LUCIUS, JR., 0000
STEVEN G. LUHRSEN, 0000
ERIC M. LYON, 0000
JOHN E. MADES, 0000
LORNA M. MAHLOCK, 0000
GEORGE G. MALKASIAN, 0000
DENNIS A. MANACO, 0000
KENDALL A. MARTINEZ, 0000
WILLIAM J. MATTES, JR., 0000
SEAN P. MATTINGLY, 0000
THOMAS G. MCCANN II, 0000
WILLIAM P. MCCLANE, 0000
MATTHEW J. MCCORMACK, 0000
DONALD B. MCDANIEL, 0000
MATTHEW J. MCDIVITT, 0000
JOHN E. MCDONOUGH, 0000
PATRICK M. MCGEE, 0000
SHAWN W. MCKEE, 0000
SEAN C. MCPHERSON, 0000
WILLIAM J. MCWATERS, 0000
ROGER C. MEADE, 0000
HALSTEAD MEADOWS III, 0000
MICHAEL W. MELSO, 0000
ANDREW O. METCALF, 0000
ELDON E. METZGER, 0000
KURT E. MOGENSEN, 0000
PAUL R. MOGG, 0000
JOSEPH F. MONROE, 0000
MICHAEL J. MOONEY, 0000
JUAN J. MORENO, 0000
DAVID B. MORGAN, 0000
DARIN S. MORRIS, 0000
JASON L. MORRIS, 0000
ALBERT G. MOSELEY IV, 0000
MICHAEL L. MULLER, 0000
LANCE D. MUNIZ, 0000
JOHN J. MURPHY III, 0000
MAUREEN B. MURPHY, 0000
JOSEPH C. MURRAY, 0000
ROBERT J. NASH, 0000
JAMES D. NEAL, JR., 0000
NATHAN G. NEBLETT, 0000
SHANE D. NICKLAUS, 0000
BERNARD J. NOWNES II, 0000
PAUL J. NUGENT, 0000
DAVID M. OCONNELL, 0000
JAMES E. OHARRA, 0000
KENNETH A. OLDHAM, 0000
MICHAEL S. OSHAUGHNESSY, 0000
DAVID S. OWEN, 0000
PATRICK R. OWENS, 0000
LOUIS J. PALAZZO, 0000
DANIEL L. PARIS, 0000
DAVID J. PARK, 0000
PAUL T. PATRICK, 0000
CHRISTOPHER D. PATTON, 0000
JOHN S. PAYNE II, 0000
THOMAS A. PECINA, 0000
TODD E. PERRY, 0000
CHRISTOPHER L. PHELPS, 0000
MICHAEL A. PHILLIPS, 0000
SCOTT W. PIERCE, 0000
STEPHEN S. PIERSON, 0000
ROBERT J. PLEVELL, 0000
DAVE S. PORTILLO, 0000
DOUGLAS M. POWELL, 0000
THOMAS E. PRENTICE, 0000
DONALD J. PRESTO, 0000
CHARLES P. PRESTON IV, 0000
JOHN A. PRYCE, 0000
MATTHEW PUGLISI, 0000
ERIC A. PUTMAN, 0000
DEAN L. PUTNAM, 0000
JAMES E. QUINN, 0000
JOSEPH N. RAFTERY, 0000
MATTHEW R. RAJKOVICH, 0000
MATTHEW G. RAU, 0000
MICHAEL T. RECCE, 0000
MARVIN REED, 0000
BRENDAN REILLY, 0000
DAVID S. RENTZ, 0000
DAVID E. RICHARDSON, 0000
MICHAEL R. RIES, 0000
SEAN M. RIORDAN, 0000
KEITH T. RIVINIUS, 0000
CRAIG D. ROGERSON, 0000
MICHAEL P. ROHLFS, JR., 0000
CHARLES D. ROSE, JR., 0000
PAUL A. ROSENBLOOM, 0000
DEE S. ROSSER, 0000
GEORGE B. ROWELL IV, 0000
JOSEPH J. RUSSO, 0000
MICHAEL V. SAMAROV, 0000
ANDREW J. SAUER, 0000
BRETON L. SAUNDERS, 0000
THOMAS B. SAVAGE, 0000
MICHAEL E. SAYEGH, 0000
JOHN M. SCHAAR, 0000
FREDERICK G. SCHENK, 0000
JASON C. SCHUETTE, 0000
ROBERT K. SCHWARZ, 0000
JONATHAN B. SCRABECK, 0000
JOSEPH W. SEARS, 0000
DAVID J. SEBUCK, 0000
MICHAEL B. SEGER, 0000
DANIEL D. SEIBEL, 0000
BRIAN F. SEIFFERT, 0000
GLENN R. SEIFFERT, 0000
MARK W. SHELLABARGER, 0000
DANIEL L. SHIPLEY, 0000
TY A. SIMMONS, 0000
DAVID W. SMITH, 0000
MARK D. SMITH, 0000
JEFFREY C. SMITHERMAN, 0000
WALTER C. SOPP, JR., 0000
JOHN H. SORENSON, 0000
DAVID B. SOSA, 0000
SHAUN C. SPANG, 0000
DIANA L. STANESZEWSKI, 0000
MICHAEL J. STEELE, 0000
RICHARD G. STEELE, 0000
NOEL C. STEVENS, 0000
KEVIN J. STEWART, 0000
STEPHEN R. STEWART, 0000
BENJAMIN P. STINSON, 0000
JAMES B. STONE IV, 0000
SHAWN R. STRANDBERG, 0000
DANIEL R. SULLIVAN, 0000
WILLIAM H. SWAN, 0000
SHAWN M. SWIER, 0000
MICHAEL J. TARGOS III, 0000
ANDREW J. TATE, 0000
CHRISTOPHER A. TAVUCHIS, 0000
EDWARD R. TAYLOR, 0000
BRADFORD J. TENNEY, 0000
DONALD J. THIEME II, 0000
IVAN G. THOMAS, 0000
MARK C. THOMPSON, 0000
TODD S. TOMKO, 0000
SCOTT M. TOUNEY, 0000
CASEY C. TRAVERS, 0000
LEONARD E. TROXEL, 0000
LARRY E. TURNER, JR., 0000
HENRY E. VANDERBORGHT, 0000
DAVID N. VANDIVORT, 0000
JOHN A. VANMESSEL, 0000
WILLIAM H. VIVIAN, 0000
GLENN C. VOGEL, 0000
JOSEPH F. WADE, 0000
DAVID C. WALSH, 0000
CHRISTOPHER B. WALTERS, 0000
ROBERT Q. WARD, 0000
STEVEN C. WARE, 0000
MICHAEL R. WATERMAN, 0000
MCCLENDON N. WATERS III, 0000
PAUL R. WEAVER, 0000
JAMES B. WELLONS, 0000
EDWARD J. WHITE, 0000
KARL E. WILLIAMS, 0000
MARCUS W. WILLIAMS, 0000
WILLIAM D. WISCHMEYER, JR., 0000
THOMAS J. WITCZAK, 0000
EUGENE P. WITTKOFF, 0000
STEVEN M. WOLF, 0000
BRIAN N. WOLFORD, 0000
CRAIG R. WONSON, 0000
KEVIN S. WOODARD, 0000
CALVERT L. WORTH, JR., 0000
DANIEL L. YAROSLASKI, 0000
TYLER J. ZAGURSKI, 0000
JOSEPH J. ZARBA, JR., 0000

THE FOLLOWING NAMED OFFICERS FOR APPOINTMENT TO THE GRADE INDICATED IN THE UNITED STATES MARINE CORPS UNDER TITLE 10, U.S.C., SECTION 624:

To be major

AARON D. ABDULLAH, 0000
ERIK R. ABRAHAMSON, 0000
MARTIN L. ABREU, 0000
JESSICA L. ACOSTA, 0000
DAVID M. ADAMIEC, 0000
JOHN J. AHN, 0000
LOUIS M. ALBIERO, JR., 0000
BRIAN S. ALBON, 0000
GREGORY J. ALLAN, 0000
BRIAN J. AMEND, 0000
BRADLEY W. ANDERSON, 0000
JOSHUA P. ANDERSON, 0000
TIMOTHY E. ANDERSON, 0000
AARON A. ANGELL, 0000
JOSEPH D. ARICO, 0000
ADRIAN D. ARMOLD, 0000
MICHAEL F. ARNONE, 0000
JUAN I. ARRATIA, 0000
ERIC M. ASCHENBRENNER, 0000
RICHARD B. ASHFORD, 0000
SCOTT K. ATWOOD, 0000
BRAD E. AUGHINBAUGH, 0000
TYSON M. AVERY, 0000
BLAS AVILA, JR., 0000
SHERIF A. AZIZ, 0000
JOHN T. BADAMI, 0000
EDWARD BAHRET, 0000
CHARLES T. BAISLEY, 0000
GREGORY T. BAKER, 0000
SAMUEL BAKION, 0000
MATTHEW A. BALDWIN, 0000
GREGORY R. BAMFORD, 0000
JOHN J. BANCROFT, JR., 0000
ROZANNE BANICKI, 0000
CARLOS M. BARELA, 0000
JEFFREY V. BARNETT, 0000
ERIK J. BARTELT, 0000
DAX C. BATTAGLIA, 0000
BARTHOLOME BATTISTA, 0000
PAUL J. BATTY, 0000
THEODORE W. BATZEL, JR., 0000
GINGER E. BEALS, 0000
JOSEPH T. BEALS, 0000
BRADLEY P. BEAN, 0000
JAMES M. BECHTEL, 0000
HASSEN C. BECKFORD, 0000
ERIC M. BECKMANN, 0000
THOMAS M. BEDELL, 0000
NATALIE L. BEEDE, 0000
ERIN S. BENJAMIN, 0000
DAVID M. BERNARD, 0000
FREDRICK L. BERNIER, 0000
PIERRE R. BERTRAND, 0000
EDWARD Y. BLAKISTON, 0000
JERRY W. BLOOMQUIST, 0000
DAVID A. BOGLE, 0000
JOHN A. BONDS, 0000
JONATHAN A. BOSSIE, 0000
STEPHEN C. BOUCHER, 0000
CHRISTOPHER J. BOWER, 0000
ELIKA S. BOWMER, 0000

KEVIN J. BOYCE, 0000
JONATHAN L. BRADLEY, 0000
TIMOTHY S. BRADY, JR., 0000
ANDREW J. BRASOSKY, 0000
KEVIN H. BRIGHT, 0000
CHRISTIAN J. BROADSTON, 0000
KAREN B. BROCKMEIER, 0000
JEFFREY T. BROOKS, 0000
MICHAEL L. BROOKS, 0000
JOSEPH D. BROOME, 0000
JERRY BROWN, JR., 0000
JONATHAN F. BROWN, 0000
MAURICE A. BROWN, 0000
DESMOND F. BROWNE, JR., 0000
CHRISTOPHER A. BROWNING, 0000
AARON J. BRUNK, 0000
JOHN P. BRUZZA, 0000
ALVIN L. BRYANT, JR., 0000
SAMUEL G. BRYCE, 0000
CHRISTIAN J. BUCHANAN, 0000
ARMANDO C. BUDOMO, JR., 0000
ROBERT M. BUENO, 0000
BENEDICT G. BUERKE, 0000
ASHLEY K. BURCH, 0000
GREGORY S. BURGESS, 0000
DOUGLAS R. BURKE, JR., 0000
JOSEPH P. BURKE, 0000
RUSSELL A. BURKE, 0000
DOUGLAS W. BURKMAN, 0000
DAMON K. BURROWS, 0000
GREGORY K. BUTCHER, 0000
BRADLEY J. BUTLER, 0000
TAMARA L. CAMPBELL, 0000
TROY H. CAMPBELL, 0000
CHRISTOPHER K. CANNON, 0000
CHRISTOPHER P. CANNON, 0000
PETER J. CAPUZZI, 0000
CONLON D. CARABINE, 0000
FOSTER T. CARLILE, 0000
BRADFORD R. CARR, 0000
JOHN C. CATANZARITO, 0000
ROBERT E. CATO II, 0000
ANTONIO CERVANTES, JR., 0000
JOSHUA B. CHARTIER, 0000
SIU K. CHENG, 0000
JOHN R. CHERRY, 0000
DARREL L. CHOAT, 0000
ANDREW CHRISTIAN, 0000
DAVIS R. CHRISTY, 0000
WILLIAM H. CHRONISTER, 0000
LEE K. CLARE, 0000
EARL R. CLARK, 0000
JOSHUA D. CLAYTON, 0000
BRYAN S. CLIFTON, 0000
LLONIE A. COBB, 0000
BRIAN W. COLE, 0000
CHRISTOPHER J. COLLINS, 0000
JAMES B. COLLINS, 0000
LEAH L. CONLEY, 0000
RYAN M. CONNOLLY, 0000
JAMES A. COOPER, 0000
LEE K. COOPER, 0000
ROBERT L. CORL, 0000
EDUARDO CORREA, 0000
FRED G. COURTNEY III, 0000
MARK E. COVER, 0000
BARRY A. CRAFT, JR., 0000
MICHAEL L. CRAIGHEAD, 0000
RYAN E. CRAIS, 0000
BRENT A. CREWS, 0000
MICHAEL J. CRITCHLEY, 0000
ROBERTO CUEVAS, 0000
CLINTON A. CULP, 0000
GREGORY R. CURTIS, 0000
IAN C. DAGLEY, 0000
TERRY L. DALTON, JR., 0000
CHAD W. DARNELL, 0000
KEVIN O. DAVIS, 0000
MARK S. DAVIS, 0000
ROBERT B. DAVIS, 0000
TIMOTHY A. DAVIS, 0000
MANUEL J. DELAROSA, 0000
JOSE M. DELEON, JR., 0000
ANDREW M. DELGAUDIO, 0000
JOSEPH T. DELLOS, 0000
CHARLES W. DELPIZZO III, 0000
GREGORY P. DEMARCO, 0000
BRIAN P. DENNIS, 0000
SAMUEL N. DEPUTY, 0000
KEVIN B. DEWITT, 0000
PATRICIA M. DIENHART, 0000
JEFFREY S. DINSMORE, 0000
DEREK J. DIORIO, 0000
BRIAN A. DIXON, 0000
GILBERT F. DMEZA, 0000
JOHN F. DOBRYDNEY, 0000
WILLIAM DOCTOR, JR., 0000
KEVIN M. DOHERTY, 0000
HENRY DOLBERRY, JR., 0000
CHRISTOPHER P. DONNELLY, 0000
LINA M. DOWNING, 0000
TERESA J. DRAG, 0000
JONATHAN A. DREXLER, 0000
STEPHEN D. DRISKILL, 0000
JAMES L. DRUERY, 0000
CHARLES E. DUDIK, 0000
JOSEPH R. DUMONT, 0000
JASON K. DUNCAN, 0000
DOUGLAS R. DUNLAP, 0000
JOHN P. DUVALL, JR., 0000
JEFFREY L. DYAL, 0000
JULIE R. EASTLAND, 0000
JOHN L. ELCOCK, 0000
CHRISTOPHER P. ELHARDT, 0000
JOHN M. ENNIS, 0000
MICHAEL R. ERICKSON, 0000
RYAN J. ERISMAN, 0000
BRYCE D. ESSARY, 0000
MICHAEL N. ESTES, 0000
DAVID D. FAIRLEIGH, 0000
BRIAN L. FANCHER, 0000
JENNIFER M. FARINA, 0000
ROBERT B. FARRELL, 0000
KRISTOPHER L. FAUGHT, 0000
RORY M. FEELY, 0000
MATTHEW D. FEHMEL, 0000
DANIEL C. FELICIANO, 0000
WILLIAM B. FENWICK, 0000
JOSE R. FIERRO, 0000
FRANK E. FILLER, 0000
DALE E. FINCKE, JR., 0000
RYAN M. FINN, 0000
STEPHEN V. FISCUS, 0000
CHARLES N. FITZPATRICK III, 0000
MICHAEL C. FLEMMING, 0000
BRYAN J. FORNEY, 0000
TERRENCE E. FOX, 0000
CHRISTIAN V. FRANCO, 0000
MARK E. FRANKO, 0000
JOHN M. FRASER, 0000
AARON T. FRAZIER, 0000
SHAWN T. FREEMAN, 0000
ANTHONY D. FROST, 0000
EUGENE L. FUNDERBURK, 0000
DAVID A. FUNKHOUSER, 0000
REBECCA D. FURMAN, 0000
JASON A. GADDY, 0000
GERARDO D. GAJE, JR., 0000
JOSEPH E. GALVIN, 0000
JER J. GARCIA, 0000
RICHARD D. GARCIA, 0000
JOHN L. GARDNER, 0000
ROBERT B. GARRISON, 0000
JOHNNY G. GARZA, 0000
SCOTT A. GEHRIS, 0000
VINH V. GERALD, 0000
DONALD E. GERBER, 0000
LESTER R. GERBER, 0000
PATRICK T. GERMAN, 0000
MICHAEL J. GERVASONI, 0000
WILLIAM J. GIBBONS, 0000
CARL D. GIDEON, 0000
TARRELL D. GIERSCH, 0000
JOHN S. GILBERT, 0000
BRIAN J. GILBERTSON, 0000
STEVEN A. GILL, 0000
TODD M. GILLINGHAM, 0000
JIMMY R. GLOVER, JR., 0000
PATRICK M. GLYNN, 0000
MAXX GODSEY, 0000
MATTHEW J. GORBATY, 0000
JOHN T. GORDON, 0000
GREGORY F. GOULD, 0000
BRANDON W. GRAHAM, 0000
CHRISTOPHER M. GRASSO, 0000
KEVIN P. GRAVES, 0000
MICHAEL A. GRAZIANI, 0000
JOHN P. GREEN, JR., 0000
LEO S. GREGORY, 0000
BRIAN R. GRIFFING, 0000
JASON C. GROGAN, 0000
JASON D. GROSE, 0000
WILLIAM H. GRUBE, 0000
RUBEN D. GUTIERREZ, 0000
CHRISTOPHER D. HAFER, 0000
DENNIS L. HAGER II, 0000
MICHAEL A. HALEY, 0000
JASON M. HAMILTON, 0000
CHAE J. HAN, 0000
RICHARD D. HANSEN, 0000
RYAN E. HANSEN, 0000
AMEDE I. HANSON, 0000
DANE HANSON, 0000
GREGORY A. HANWECK, 0000
CHRISTIAN R. HARBOUR, 0000
ETHAN H. HARDING, 0000
TODD A. HARDING, 0000
RYAN E. HARRINGTON, 0000
CLINT C. HARRIS, 0000
CASEY A. HARSH, 0000
DAVID J. HART, 0000
CRAIG L. HARVEY, 0000
GEORGE D. HASSELTINE, 0000
BRYAN C. HATFIELD, 0000
BRIAN R. HEDIN, 0000
TREVOR A. HEIDENREICH, 0000
DAVID L. HENDERSON, 0000
CHRISTINA M. HENNESSEY, 0000
RUDOLFO G. HERNANDEZ, 0000
ARTURO HERNANDEZLOPEZ, 0000
JOHN P. HERRON, 0000
PHILIP R. HERSCHELMAN, 0000
JASON W. HEUER, 0000
BRENT E. HEYL, 0000
TWAYNE R. HICKMAN, 0000
JIMMY S. HICKS, 0000
AARON P. HILL, 0000
LISA D. HILLJOHNSON, 0000
BRADLEY D. HITCHCOCK, 0000
CHAD E. HOARE, 0000
SEAN P. HOEWING, 0000
MAX H. HOPKINS, 0000
WILSON M. HOPKINS III, 0000
BRYAN T. HORVATH, 0000
ALEJANDRO R. HOUSE, 0000
MARK D. HOWARD, 0000
DANE L. HOWELL, 0000
WILLIAM HUBBARD, 0000
MICHAEL R. HUDSON, 0000
CHRISTOPH W. HUFF, 0000
SHAWN C. HUGHES, 0000
DAVID K. HUNT, 0000
JAMES B. HUNT, 0000
MICHAEL L. HUNTING, JR., 0000
HENRY E. HURT III, 0000
ANDREW J. HUSMAN, 0000
BRET M. HYLA, 0000
DAVID C. HYMAN, 0000
SEAN E. HYNES, 0000
JAIME A. IBARRA, 0000
TIMOTHY W. IRWIN, 0000
LOUIS E. ISABELLE, 0000
GEORGE B. JACOBS, 0000
JOHN J. JAESKI, 0000
ROBERT E. JAMES, 0000
JASON M. JANCZAK, 0000
CHARLES D. JENNINGS, 0000
MIKE K. JERON, 0000
FERNANDO V. JIMENEZ, 0000
ANTHONY E. JOHNSON, 0000
GRANT M. JOHNSON, 0000
JASON JOHNSON, 0000
KIMBERLY A. JOHNSON, 0000
PAUL K. JOHNSON III, 0000
GREGORY L. JONES, 0000
KEMPER A. JONES, 0000
DAVID C. JOSEFORSKY, 0000
GREGORY K. JOSEPH, 0000
COLLEEN M. JUDD, 0000
MICHAEL C. KAHN, 0000
JAY J. KAJS, 0000
DENNIS J. KASKOVICH, JR., 0000
RONALD W. KEARSE, 0000
ANDREW M. KELLEY, 0000
JASON L. KENDALL, 0000
HILARY A. KHAN, 0000
WAHEED U. KHAN, 0000
MARK A. KIEHLE, 0000
JOHN P. KIRBY, 0000
THOMAS F. KISCH, 0000
AARON R. KNEPEL, 0000
BRANDON S. KNOTTS, 0000
JONATHAN D. KNOTTS, 0000
JOHN D. KNUTSON, 0000
NOAH J. KOMNICK, 0000
VINCE W. KOOPMANN, 0000
PAUL B. KOPACZ, 0000
SPEROS C. KOUMPARAKIS, 0000
BENJAMIN S. KRIPPENDORF, 0000
CHARLES B. KROLL, 0000
PHILIP C. LAING, 0000
PETER J. LANG II, 0000
LANCE J. LANGFELDT, 0000
ANDREW K. LARSEN, 0000
JEFFREY J. LARSON, 0000
GOTTFRIED H. LAUBE, JR., 0000
SCOTT A. LAUZON, 0000
TAI D. LE, 0000
ISAAC G. LEE, 0000
LAWRENCE C. LEE, 0000
SAMUEL K. LEE, 0000
ADAM V. LEFRINGHOUSE, 0000
LEONARD J. LEVINE, 0000
CARL A. LEWANDOWSKI, 0000
DOUGLAS A. LINDAMOOD, 0000
MARK R. LISTON, 0000
ROBERT J. LIVINGSTON, JR., 0000
BRENT A. LOOBY, 0000
IRMA LOPEZ, 0000
DAVID S. LOWERY, 0000
JAMES T. LOWERY, 0000
SARAH L. LUKES, 0000
JONATHAN R. LUNDY, 0000
CUONG Q. LUONG, 0000
ANDREW D. LYNCH, 0000
JOHN P. MAHER, 0000
ANTHONY M. MALDONADO, 0000
MICHAEL J. MANIFOR, 0000
KJELL D. MARCUSSEN, 0000
TRENT M. MARECZ, 0000
HOWARD G. MARIOTT II, 0000
WILLIAM J. MARKHAM III, 0000
JOHN E. MARSHALL, 0000
CORY J. MARTIN, 0000
DAVID E. MARTIN, 0000
JAMES M. MARTIN, 0000
RHONDA C. MARTIN, 0000
DAVID M. MARTINEZ, 0000
IRVIN MARTINEZ, 0000
JUSTIN E. MARVEL, 0000
STEPHEN W. MATTHEWS, 0000
RICARDO MATUS, 0000
RANDALL M. MAULDIN, 0000
ADAM W. MCARTHUR, 0000
JAMES K. MCBRIDE, 0000
ALEXIS L. MCCABE, 0000
JOHN S. MCCALMONT, 0000
MICHAEL M. MCCLOUD II, 0000
JEFFREY S. MCCORMACK, 0000
GARY A. MCCULLAR, 0000
FREDERICK J. MCELMAN, 0000
AMY M. MCGRATH, 0000
JAMES R. MCGRATH, 0000
GREGORY A. MCGUIRE, 0000
RODRICK H. MCHATY, 0000
BRYAN T. MCKERNAN, 0000
MICHAEL T. MCMAHAN, 0000
JEFFREY L. MEEKER, 0000
ALVARO J. MELENDEZ, 0000
ELVINO M. MENDONCA, JR., 0000
CHRISTOPHER M. MERRILL, 0000
SAMUEL L. MEYER, 0000
DERYL D. MICHAEL, 0000
BRIAN S. MIDDLETON, 0000
BRETT M. MILLER, 0000
JASON Z. MILLER, 0000
SHAWN D. MILLER, 0000
CONRAD MILNE, 0000
JAMES W. MINGUS, 0000
JASON B. MITCHELL, 0000
BRIAN M. MOLL, 0000

JOHN M. MOORE, 0000
ROY W. MOORE, 0000
BALTAZAR MORA, JR., 0000
ELLIOT MORA, 0000
DAVID M. MOREAU, 0000
ROGER O. MOUSEL, JR., 0000
JOHN P. MULKERN, 0000
JAMES D. MULLIN, 0000
BRIAN T. MULVIHILL, 0000
PETER J. MUNSON, 0000
SETH MUNSON, 0000
GEORGE S. MURPHY, 0000
GERALD E. MURPHY, 0000
CHRISTOPHER M. MURRAY, 0000
SEAN M. MURRAY, 0000
MICHAEL R. NAKONIECZNY, 0000
KATHRYN M. NAVIN, 0000
ANDREW R. NEEDLES, 0000
NICHOLAS O. NEIMER, 0000
ANDREW J. NELSON, 0000
MICHAEL C. NESBITT, 0000
JAMES D. NEUSHUL, 0000
DAVID E. NEVERS, 0000
HILARY NICESWANGER, 0000
LAWRENCE D. NICHOLS, 0000
CARLO A. NINO, 0000
JAMES M. NIXON, 0000
MARVIN L. NORCROSS, JR., 0000
EDWIN NORRIS, 0000
JOHN K. NORRIS, JR., 0000
RUSSELL H. NORRIS, 0000
CARL H. NORTHCUTT, 0000
CHARLES M. NUNALLY III, 0000
NICHOLAS C. NUZZO, 0000
WILLIAM E. OBRIEN, 0000
BRENDAN P. ODONNELL, 0000
JEFFREY M. ODONNELL, 0000
KEITH S. OKI, 0000
JEFFREY W. OLESKO, 0000
BERNARD J. OLOUGHLIN, 0000
DEREK S. OST, 0000
ANDREW M. OTERO, 0000
JASON F. PACE, 0000
QUINTON S. PACKARD, 0000
MICHAEL C. PALMER, 0000
GEORGE N. PAPPAS, JR., 0000
VASILIOS E. PAPPAS, 0000
BURRELL D. PARMER, 0000
ADAM M. PASTOR, 0000
ANGELA D. PATERNA, 0000
MATTHEW W. PATMON, 0000
RICHARD B. PATTESON, 0000
EDWARD J. PAVELKA, 0000
MATTHEW R. PEARCE, 0000
JASON D. PEJSA, 0000
ERIC J. PENROD, 0000
JANAKA P. PERERA, 0000
NATHAN T. PERKKIO, 0000
JON C. PETERSEN, 0000
DAREN R. PETERSON, 0000
ROBERT C. PETERSON, 0000
MATHEW J. PFEFFER, 0000
TUANANH T. PHAM, 0000
KENNETH W. PHELPS III, 0000
TODD A. PILLO, 0000
ROBERT J. PLEAK, 0000
STEPHANIE M. POLESNAK, 0000
CASEY J. POLKINGHORNE, 0000
JAMES P. POPPY, 0000
BRENDAN W. POWELL, 0000
DONATO S. POWELL, 0000
MONTE S. POWELL, 0000
EDWARD W. POWERS, 0000
CARL C. PRIECHENFRIED, 0000
CHRISTOPHER D. PRITCHETT, 0000
ANDREW C. PRITZ, 0000
JAMES PRUDHOMME III, 0000
RYAN A. PYKE, 0000
CHRISTINE K. RABAJA, 0000
BERT RAKDHAM, 0000
GARRETT S. RAMPULLA, 0000
ROBERT P. RANDAZZO, 0000
JOHN G. RANDOLPH, 0000
CASMER J. RATKOWIAK III, 0000
GUY W. RAVEY, 0000
HUNTER R. RAWLINGS IV, 0000
WILLIAM G. RAYNE, 0000
JAMES D. REDDING, 0000
RONALD J. REGA, JR., 0000
MATTHEW L. REGNER, 0000
ERIC A. REID, 0000
CHRISTY L. REIDSMA, 0000
CHRISTOPHER T. REINHART, 0000
JAMISON M. RENAUX, 0000
ROSANNA B. REYES, 0000
JULIAN D. REYES-JONES, 0000
JACOB L. REYNOLDS, 0000
PATRICK J. REYNOLDS, JR., 0000
ROBERT M. RICH, 0000
JAMES E. RICHARDSON, JR., 0000
DUANE T. RIVERA, 0000
AMY C. RIVINIUS, 0000
CHRISTOPHER D. ROBERSON, 0000
TIMOTHY E. ROBERTSON, 0000
CLINTON L. ROBINS, 0000
EDWARD ROBINSON, 0000
NATHANIEL K. ROBINSON, 0000
REBECCA B. ROBISON-CHANDLER, 0000
SEAN M. ROCHE, 0000
MARCO A. RODRIGUEZ, 0000
CHARLES E. ROELL, JR., 0000
JACQUES A. ROGERS, 0000
GREGORY S. ROOKER, 0000
AARON M. ROSE, 0000
DAWN C. ROSENBLAD, 0000
THOMAS M. ROSS, 0000
MICHEAL D. RUSS, 0000
STEVEN A. SABLAN, 0000
MARK D. SADOWSKY, 0000
ANDRE P. SALVANERA, 0000
AARON C. SAMSEL, 0000
BRIAN K. SANCHEZ, 0000
ROLAND G. SARINO, 0000
JOHN S. SATTELY, 0000
TROY J. SCHILLINGER, 0000
JOEL F. SCHMIDT, 0000
KARL T. SCHMIDT, 0000
TIMOTHY W. SCHNELLE, 0000
WILLIAM J. SCHRANTZ, 0000
CHARLES F. SCHWARM, 0000
ANTONIO SCOFFIELD, 0000
DANIEL R. SCOTT, 0000
ROBERTO C. SCOTT, 0000
GEORGE J. SEEGEL, 0000
MARISA P. SERANO, 0000
AARON P. SHELLEY, 0000
TAMIKO A. SHIBATA, 0000
CHRISTOPHER J. SHIMP, 0000
JACK A. SILE, 0000
KEVIN D. SIMMONS, 0000
LOUIS P. SIMON, 0000
DANIEL J. SKUCE, 0000
DAVID B. SLAY, 0000
MARC R. SLEDGE, 0000
TIMOTHY M. SLINGER, 0000
GRAHAM F. SLOAN, 0000
STEPHEN K. SLOAN, 0000
CRAIG L. SMITH, 0000
JAMES W. SMITH, 0000
MICHAEL R. SMITH, 0000
SEAN P. SMITH, 0000
STEFAN R. SNEDEN, 0000
ADAM T. SNOW, 0000
WILLIAM R. SNOWMAN, 0000
LISA M. SOUDERS, 0000
KIRK M. SPANGENBERG, 0000
DAVID W. SPANGLER, 0000
RAYMOND V. SPAULDING, 0000
SAMAR K. SPINELLI, 0000
BRYAN C. SPRANKLE, 0000
RANDY J. STAAB, 0000
JAMES F. STAFFORD, 0000
MATTHEW I. STARSIAK, 0000
ROBERT A. STEELE, 0000
MATTHEW R. STENCEL, 0000
DAVID R. STENGRIM, 0000
MICHAEL C. STEVENS, 0000
KENRIC D. STEVENSON, 0000
JADE STEWARDCAMPBELL, 0000
JONATHAN M. STOFKA, 0000
KEVIN M. STOUT, 0000
LARS E. STRANDBERG, 0000
ERIC A. STRONG, 0000
BRYAN G. SWENSON, 0000
JUSTIN R. SWICK, 0000
JOSEPH C. TAMMINEN, 0000
AIMEE C. TANNER, 0000
BARRON S. TAYLOR, 0000
BRIAN R. TAYLOR, 0000
MICHAEL J. TAYLOR, 0000
THOMAS N. TAYLOR, 0000
JOSEPH D. TEASLEY, 0000
HAMARTRYA V. THARPE, 0000
DOUGLAS T. THOMAS, 0000
MARGARET E. THOMAS, 0000
ROGER N. THOMAS, 0000
ROBERT A. TOMLINSON, 0000
ADOLFO TORRES, 0000
RENE TORRES, 0000
JONATHAN E. TOWLE, 0000
MATTHEW W. TRACY, 0000
RENE TREVINO, 0000
JOY M. TRIPLETT, 0000
RANDALL G. TURNER, 0000
SHAWN S. TURNER, 0000
JOSHUA B. TUTTLE, 0000
HANORAH E. TYERWITEK, 0000
JOSEPH S. UCHYTIL, 0000
JOSHUA M. VANCE, 0000
CHAD I. VANSOMEREN, 0000
CHAD A. VAUGHN, 0000
QUENTIN R. VAUGHN, 0000
WILLIAM M. VESSEY, 0000
DUANE P. VILA, 0000
ROMAN P. VITKOVITSKY, 0000
JARED C. VONEIDA, 0000
PHILIP E. WAGGONER, 0000
JASON A. WALKER, 0000
LEN E. WALKER, 0000
MATTHEW L. WALKER, 0000
MICHAEL T. WALLACE, 0000
WINSOME A. WALLS, 0000
MELVILLE J. WALTERS IV, 0000
MICHAEL P. WARD, 0000
LARRY R. WARFIELD II, 0000
GEOFFREY F. WARLOCK, 0000
JAYSEN N. WARNER, 0000
THOMAS M. WARREN, 0000
ALTON A. WARTHEN, 0000
DAREN V. WASHINGTON, 0000
ANDY S. WATSON, 0000
DEREK E. WATSON, 0000
LARRY J. WAYE, 0000
LISA M. WEBB, 0000
MICHAEL E. WEBB, 0000
PATRICK WEINERT, 0000
JAMES W. WEIRICK, 0000
VINCENT J. WELCH, 0000
TRAVIS B. WELLS, 0000
JASON L. WHALEN, 0000
EDDIE R. WHEELER, 0000
JODY E. WHITE, 0000
VAN E. WHITE, 0000
DANIEL M. WHITLEY, 0000
JOHNNY J. WIDENER, 0000
ANDRE L. WILLIAMS, 0000
JOHN H. WILLIAMS III, 0000
JAMES R. WILLIAMSON, 0000
DEANGELO M. WILLIS, 0000
ANDREW B. WILSON, 0000
TIMOTHY E. WILSON, 0000
BRIAN E. WOBENSMITH, 0000
BRENDAN M. WOLF, 0000
CRAIG A. WOLFENBARGER, 0000
WADE L. WORKMAN, 0000
LUKE R. YLITALO, 0000
JOHN E. YORIO, 0000
JEFFERSON T. YOUNG III, 0000
MATTHEW S. YOUNGBLOOD, 0000
SCOTT A. ZELESNIKAR, 0000
CARL M. ZIEGLER, 0000
KEVIN J. ZIMMERMAN, 0000
SCOTT W. ZIMMERMAN, 0000

CONFIRMATION

Executive nomination confirmed by the Senate Thursday, March 22, 2007:

IN THE ARMY

THE FOLLOWING NAMED OFFICER FOR APPOINTMENT TO THE GRADE OF LIEUTENANT GENERAL IN THE UNITED STATES ARMY WHILE ASSIGNED TO A POSITION OF IMPORTANCE AND RESPONSIBILITY UNDER TITLE 10, U.S.C., SECTION 601:

To be lieutenant general

LT. GEN. PETER W. CHIARELLI, 0000