

reduction of the tax base for Las Animas County. By reducing the tax base this could have a major economic impact on the schools and the community. The County like other Counties in the state is struggling with revenues and this expansion could do more harm.

The Board of Alamosa County Commissioners is respectfully asking that you support Las Animas County in prohibiting the expansion of Pinon Canyon Maneuver site.

Sincerely,

DARIUS ALLEN,
Chairman.

Mr. SALAZAR. I yield the floor.

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. The Senator from Florida.

Mr. NELSON of Florida. I thank the Chair.

(The remarks of Mr. NELSON of Florida pertaining to the introduction of S. 2024 are printed in today's RECORD under "Statements on Introduced Bills and Joint Resolutions.")

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. The Senator from Vermont.

AMENDMENT TO H.R. 2642

Mr. SANDERS. Mr. President, later on this morning, I will be offering an amendment which, frankly, in terms of dollars, is not one of the big amendments as part of the Military Construction and Veterans Affairs bill, which is over \$100 billion. This amendment is only \$20 million. But while it is small in the amount of money it deals with, it is enormously significant to the millions of men and women who have served our country in war, and it is especially relevant to disabled veterans, those people who have given as much as anyone can expect defending their country—the people without arms, the people without legs, the people in wheelchairs. It is for them I am offering this amendment, and I am very pleased that this amendment has the support of the American Legion, the Veterans of Foreign Wars, the Disabled American Veterans, the Paralyzed Veterans of America, and AMVETS.

The amendment I am offering addresses an ongoing and an emotional concern within the veterans community. It is the concern that we in the U.S. Government are nickel and diming veterans in an absolutely shameful way through the so-called rounding-down process in terms of the checks that go to disabled veterans. Some years ago, as a temporary budget Band-Aid, the Congress initiated the so-called rounding down of veterans disability benefits and a few other categories of benefits that affect veterans, their spouses, and their children. Under this rounding-down process, every year when we calculate the new disability benefits veterans will receive as a result of their COLAs, the resulting amount is rounded down to the whole dollar.

Let me give an example of what I mean. A veteran receives a check, or should receive a check, every month for hypothetically \$200.99. What we have done is say to that veteran: We are taking away, every month, that 99

cents, and you are going to get a check for \$200.

Now, somebody here may say: Hey, 99 cents is not a lot of money. Multiplied by 12 months a year, you are talking about less than \$12 a year. What is the problem? Well, the problem is, if you are a low-income veteran, it does matter. But I think even more significantly than the dollars, what we are saying to that veteran who opens that check, sitting in a wheelchair, we are saving 99 cents a month on you. But by the way, we are giving no-bid contracts out in Iraq which cost the taxpayers hundreds of millions of dollars, or perhaps billions of dollars, and we are going to balance the budget on your 99 cents per month.

So the amount of money we are talking about here is not a whole lot, but symbolically, to thousands of disabled veterans, it says something about how we in the Congress feel about them. We are saving 99 cents a month. Well, I think we can afford to give that 99 cents to those guys in the wheelchairs, the people without one arm, the people who are blind, the people who can't hear, the people coming home from Iraq with traumatic brain injury. I think we can afford to give them that 99 cents, and that is what this amendment is about. This amendment is going to cost all of \$20 million—\$20 million in a bill which is over \$100 billion.

Let me quote from the Independent Budget. I think many Members of the Senate know that the Independent Budget is the budget brought together by all of the major veterans groups, and this is what they say when they describe this process:

Disability compensation and dependency and indemnity compensation rates have historically been increased each year to keep these benefits even with the cost of living. However, as a temporary measure to reduce the budget deficit,—

A temporary measure.

Congress enacted legislation to require monthly payments, after adjustment for increases in the cost of living, to be rounded down to the nearest whole dollar amount.

And let's remind ourselves what kind of benefits we are talking about. Disability compensation benefits are benefits that veterans receive if they have a service-related disability and were discharged under other than dishonorable conditions.

Furthermore, this rounding down applies to what is known as the clothing allowance. When veterans have prosthetics or orthopedic appliances such as a wheelchair, they understandably have a high chance of wearing down or tearing clothing at a faster rate than the average person. In other words, you are in a wheelchair, it rubs, your clothing gets worn out. You get help with that. We are rounding down those checks.

This is not a complicated piece of legislation. This is legislation that says to people who have done as much as a human being can do for this country that we are no longer going to con-

tinue to nickel-and-dime you. I hope very much the Members of the Senate will join me and the American Legion, the Veterans of Foreign Wars, the Paralyzed Veterans of America, the Disabled American Veterans, and AMVETS in supporting this legislation.

I yield my time.

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

Mr. ENSIGN. Mr. President, are we in morning business now?

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. The Senate is in morning business.

REAGAN'S ECONOMIC POLICY

Mr. ENSIGN. Mr. President, an interesting economic trend is sweeping through countries around the globe. It is one that started right here in the United States, and it would be wise for us to consider some of the amazing results that are being documented internationally.

More than 25 years ago, Ronald Reagan took the helm of an economy that was tanking quickly and bringing American families down with it. The economy was shrinking; inflation was in double digits; more than 7 million Americans were unemployed; and the prime interest rate was through the roof.

Ronald Reagan fought for an aggressive plan to rein in non-defense government spending, provide tax relief, and eliminate unnecessary government regulation. There were many critics who argued that Reagan's plan would create greater inflation. They cried that tax relief would be paid for out of entitlements and leave the elderly and needy worse off. However, John F. Kennedy's assertion that a rising tide lifts all boats was true.

As Reagan prepared to leave the presidency, spending was down, as were tax rates and inflation. Employment had climbed to record heights—there more jobs and better, higher paying jobs. Family income had been on the rise for 4 straight years. America's poor were able to climb out of poverty at the fastest rate in 10 years. It marked the longest economic peacetime expansion in history.

In his farewell address to the nation in 1989, Reagan stated: Common sense told us that when you put a big tax on something, the people will produce less of it. So, we cut the people's tax rates, and the people produced more than ever before. The economy bloomed like a plant that had been cut back and could now grow quicker and stronger.

Among the loudest critics of Reagan's philosophy of lower taxes and less government regulation were European countries that taxed high to offer more social services to their citizens.

The tide has changed all right. Countries around the world, including those in Europe, are racing to cut their taxes. France, Spain, Italy, Sweden,