

Office and the Government Printing Office. The use of this software serves 2 major purposes: First, it allows the Senate Enrolling Clerk and the Government Printing Office to print legislation directly from our electronic files, eliminating the need to retypeset and proofread each file; and secondly, it allows the Secretary of the Senate, the Library of Congress, and the Government Printing Office to post legislation on the Internet in an easily searchable format.

The current version of the software contains a table tool that allows us to include tables in legislation if the tables fit into one of the templates provided in the table tool. I met this past week with the staffs of the Secretary of the Senate and the Government Printing Office and they have concluded that the table tool does not have templates that can be used to prepare all of the funding tables contained in the committee report. In fact, the Government Printing Office currently scans the funding tables as camera copy in order to print the committee report and does not convert the tables into the electronic format that would be necessary to include the tables in legislation. As a result, this Office is unable to prepare or print legislation which includes those tables.

In addition, even if templates are developed for the table tool, we will not be able to prepare the tables for inclusion in legislation unless the data in the tables can be electronically imported directly into the legislation we prepare. The committee report for the next fiscal year contains at least 180 pages of tables. Since the Office is currently unable to directly import the data in the tables, it would require our staff to spend hundreds of hours to input the data from these tables, proofread the tables for accuracy, and then make any necessary edits. We do not have sufficient staff to do this while continuing to meet our other responsibilities.

In my opinion, this is really more of an information technology issue than a legislative drafting issue. If the Senate decides to require the text of the funding tables to be included in legislation, the Government Printing Office would need to develop the necessary templates for the table tool and the Committee staff or others preparing the tables would have to conform to uniform standards for electronic formatting of the tables to ensure that the data could be imported directly into legislation.

Please let me know if I can provide you with any additional information or if you have any further questions regarding this matter.

Sincerely,

JAMES W. FRANSEN,
Legislative Counsel.

Mr. LEVIN. Now, Mr. President, I ask the Senator from Vermont the following question: whether the Senator would be willing to proceed in morning business.

Mr. SANDERS. Yes.

Mr. LEVIN. I thank the Senator.

MORNING BUSINESS

Mr. LEVIN. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the Senate now proceed to a period of morning business, with Senators permitted to speak therein.

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

The Senator from Vermont is recognized.

ECONOMIC POLICY

Mr. SANDERS. Mr. President, a little while ago Senator GRASSLEY of

Iowa was down on the floor critiquing Senator OBAMA's tax plan in some detail. Right now, I am not prepared to refute what Senator GRASSLEY said, although I strongly disagree with his conclusions. But I did wish to talk a little bit about some of the differences I perceive between Senator MCCAIN and the proposals he is bringing forth in terms of what Senator OBAMA has been talking about.

I, also, most importantly, wish to make the point—and I think Senator MCCAIN would be upfront in admitting—that if he is elected President, what we are going to be seeing is 4 more years of the policies we have seen in this country for the last 8 years, which have been a disaster for the middle class and working families of this country. I wish to spend a few moments on that.

Since President Bush has been in office, nearly 6 million middle-class Americans have slipped out of the middle class and are now in poverty. I can tell you that all over this country—in my State of Vermont but all over this country—people who used to believe they were securely in the middle class, people who looked to the future with optimism, are now lining up in front of emergency food shelves because the wages they are earning are simply not enough to sustain their families. We are seeing a run on emergency food shelves all over America from working families.

I can tell you that in Vermont and throughout the northern tier of this country, people are frightened to death about the coming winter because in many instances they simply do not have the money to pay the fuel bills which will keep their homes warm this winter.

Since George W. Bush has been in office, median household income has declined by over \$2,100 for working-age Americans. That is a huge drop.

Since President Bush has been in office, over 4 million Americans have lost their pensions. People who have worked their entire lives at a company with the expectation that when they retired there would be a defined pension plan available to them—that has not happened in 4 million instances.

Since George W. Bush has been President, 7 million Americans have lost their health insurance and the cost of health care has soared and more and more people are underinsured.

Since President Bush has been in office, more than 3 million manufacturing jobs have been lost, as corporate America has thrown people out on the street, moved to China, moved to Vietnam, moved to any country where they can pay people a few pennies an hour.

Since George W. Bush has been in office, nearly half a million jobs have been lost over the last 6 months alone, and the unemployment rate today is over 6 percent.

I ask you: Do we need to continue these economic policies which have been such a disaster for the middle

class and working families in our country? Do we need 4 more years of these disastrous economic policies?

Since George W. Bush has been President, total consumer debt has more than doubled. Everybody knows that. Everybody we know almost is in debt. We have a personal savings rate in this country today which is zero.

Since President Bush has been in office, home foreclosures are the highest on record. There are huge numbers of foreclosures all over this country. In 2007, the typical American family paid over \$1,700 more on their mortgage payments.

Is that a record, is that a series of policies that this country wants to continue for another 4 years? I think not—not for ordinary people. If you are a millionaire or a billionaire, I could understand that but certainly not for the average American family.

Since George W. Bush has been President, Americans are now paying \$2,100 more for gasoline, \$200 more for food, \$1,500 more on childcare expenses, \$1,000 more for a college education, \$350 more for health insurance, \$600 more for afterschool costs, and so forth.

The bottom line is, the Bush economic policies have been a disaster for the middle class and for working families and the only people who have benefited from these policies are the people on the top. I do not believe we need a President in Mr. MCCAIN who is going to emulate these economic policies to the detriment of tens of millions of working families.

When Bill Clinton was in office—and I have to tell you, as an Independent, I had strong disagreements with President Clinton on a number of issues, including his trade policies, but when President Clinton was in office, 22.7 million new jobs were created over that 8-year period. That is a strong record of job creation. Since President Bush has been in office, we have created fewer than 6 million new jobs. Mr. President, 22.7 million, fewer than 6 million, that is a real difference.

Under President Clinton, 6 million Americans were lifted out of poverty. That is pretty good. Under President George W. Bush, over the same period of time, 6 million Americans have slipped out of the middle class and into poverty. Under President Clinton, 6 million people rise above poverty; under President Bush, 6 million more Americans slip into poverty.

Are those the economic policies we want to continue for another 4 years? We have a national debt right now which is an incredible disgrace. It is a debt we are leaving to our kids and our grandchildren. I always find it ironic that our Republican friends pose as the party of fiscal responsibility. Yes, they are staying up nights worrying about earmarks, worrying about everything.

Under President George W. Bush, the national debt has increased by \$3 trillion. We are closing in on \$10 trillion. Under President Clinton, we had record-breaking surpluses as far as the eye could see.