

world, where they can produce cheap and sell here. What has that meant? It has meant a choking trade deficit for America, and lower wages for American workers. We ought not put up with it.

We fought for 50 years on the question of what is a livable wage. We have minimum wages in this country. We have worker safety standards. We have laws against child labor. You cannot hire 12-year-olds and pay 12 cents an hour and work them 12 hours a day. Those are successes in this country, that we have prohibited those kinds of things. Yet, all too often, we are choking on a trade deficit caused by producers who produce in circumstances where they could not produce in this country, and then ship their product here.

What it is doing is drying up economic opportunities for American citizens, and it ought to stop. We ought to say to every one of those countries, China especially—we have a \$30 billion trade deficit with China—it is unthinkable we allow that to continue. We have a \$65 billion trade deficit with Japan. We cannot get American products into Japan in any significant quantity, but we are a sponge for Japanese products. We buy all this material from China and when they want to buy wheat, they are off price shopping in Canada someplace.

The fact is, this country ought to start standing up for its own economic interests and start doing it soon. This trade policy is completely out of whack. It is hurting American families.

I am not suggesting isolationism or building walls around our country. But I am saying that America ought to stop getting kicked around with unfair trade practices. If our market is open to other countries' products, then their markets ought to be open to ours. If we will not allow the employment of 12-year-old kids at 12 cents an hour, we ought not to allow products from countries that do, to come to the American marketplace to undercut American jobs.

It is that simple. I have been on the floor almost weekly since the first of this year, and yearly in my time in Congress, to talk about this. One day, one way, we will change these policies and start standing up for the economic interests of this country—not just corporate profits, but also wages for American families.

THE LINE-ITEM VETO

Mr. DORGAN. Mr. President, let me turn to another subject. I talked about the fiscal policy, the budget deficit, when I began. It is a serious problem. I have voted for many ways to try to address the budget deficit.

I headed a task force in the House on Government waste. I have worked on a waste task force here in the Senate. I have cast dozens of votes to cut spending. I just voted for a rescissions bill to try to cut Federal spending.

I did not cast a vote for the proposal that eventually went down by one vote here in the U.S. Senate on a constitutional amendment to balance the budget. I did vote for a constitutional amendment to balance the budget. We had two of them. One was the right one and one of them was the wrong one. The one that was the main proposal would have taken \$1.3 trillion in Social Security trust funds over many, many years and used it to balance the budget. I happen to think that is thievery. I happen to think that is taking things under dishonest pretenses, because it is taking money that comes from a paycheck and is promised to go into a Social Security trust fund to be saved for the future. Then they say, "I know we say that, but we want to use that money instead to balance the budget." That is dishonest budgeting, and I would not vote for that.

But one element of dealing with the Federal budget deficit is an issue called the line-item veto. It, by itself, will not solve the deficit problem, but it will help with respect to those spending proposals that have never been the subject of hearings are stuck in bills that come through here. So I support a line-item veto and I have, for a dozen or 15 votes over the years, voted for a line-item veto.

One of the things I think is interesting about the line-item veto issue is this. The House of Representatives passed a line-item veto in February. We in the Senate passed a line-item veto in March. It is now the end of July and we have no line-item veto. Why? Because there has been no conference committee appointed to resolve the differences between the House and the Senate versions.

Why has there not been a conference appointed? The Contract With America included the line-item veto as one of their major elements. I supported it. I have always supported it. I think it makes sense.

But it is interesting to me that the Speaker of the House of Representatives has recently said that he does not think they are going to get around to the line-item veto this year. He wanted to talk about a line-item veto, he wanted to push a line-item veto, so he had a vote on a line-item veto in February. But he did not want a line-item veto to pass because he did not want a Democratic President to have a line-item veto.

I supported line-item vetoes when a Republican was in the White House because I do not think it matters who is President. A Republican President should have had a line-item veto when the Congress was Democratic and a Democratic President ought to have a line-item veto when the Congress is controlled by Republicans.

The other day I held up a little report from a newspaper that said, "Gingrich Gets \$200 Million in New Pork," just as an example. The question is, are the people who talked about a line-item veto more interested

in producing pork or are they more interested in producing a line-item veto? I think the evidence is starting to suggest the former.

It is very simple for us to move on the line-item veto. If the Speaker of the House is unable, at this point, to understand how one gets to a conference, I have some step-by-step instructions.

First, think of the names of some U.S. House Members. Probably some of your friends.

Second, pick a few. That is not rocket science. Think of some names of your friends; pick a few.

Third, send the list to the House floor for action.

Let us have a conference and bring a line-item veto back to the floor of the House and the Senate and get it voted on, get it to the President, so before these appropriations bills come down to the President this year and before the reconciliation bill is sent to the President this year, this President has a line-item veto. If we are serious about the Federal deficit, let us deal with the issue called the line-item veto.

It is one thing to talk about it. It is another thing to do something about it. I see that the Speaker has indicated that maybe he will not be able to get to the line-item veto this year. The chairman of the House Appropriations Committee said yesterday it looks like they are not real anxious to move on that. It seems to me it is now time for us to ask the question: If you are serious about a line-item veto, this is the time to bring a line-item veto to conference, to the Senate and the House, and make it law, give it to this President, and let us use that to seriously reduce the Federal deficit.

Both Republicans and Democrats have a stake in fiscal policy that advances the economic interests of this country. That means reducing the Federal deficit and no longer including projects that have not previously been authorized in appropriations bills.

I support a line-item veto because it is the tool that is best equipped to stop that sort of practice, to save money, and reduce the Federal budget deficit.

I do hope in the coming days that we will discover that those who were so interested in the line-item veto early in this year continue to retain an interest in giving this President the line-item veto this year, the sooner the better.

Mr. President, how much time remains?

The PRESIDING OFFICER. About 4 minutes remains.

MEDICARE

Mr. DORGAN. Mr. President, we are nearing, now, the 30th anniversary of Medicare, in another week or so. Recently we have been discussing on the floor of the Senate, at great length, a range of Government policies that have been failures, and there are plenty. We have done a lot wrong and we need to

change that and address that. It is funny that we do not discuss success much. Success is not very sexy, not very interesting. Nobody writes about it.

There is an old saying that bad news travels halfway around the world before good news gets its shoes on. That is the way life is. You are not going to turn on a television program today and hear somebody say: Do you know what that Government did? That Government did this: In the last 20 years, this country, the United States of America, uses twice as much energy as it used 20 years ago and it has cleaner air. Do you know what that Government did? That Government put in place regulations that said polluters cannot keep polluting. We are going to require the air in America to be cleaned up. And 20 years later we have cleaner air and less smog. Things are not perfect yet, but 25 years ago people were talking about where we were headed and it was doom and gloom, an awful scenario, with degraded air and degraded water, a desperate situation. We have cleaner rivers, cleaner streams, less acid rain, and cleaner air, 20 years later.

That is a success. Nobody is going to celebrate much success, but we have done a lot of the right things. One of the things that we have done that is an enormous success in this country, in my judgment, is create a Medicare system for America's elderly. We have decided that if you get old, if you reach that age of retirement, we will give you some assurance that you are not going to suffer for lack of health care when you are sick.

This health care system has worked for the elderly in this country in a remarkable way, in a wonderful way. The fact is, a lot of people did not like it. A substantial part of one party voted against it when it was initiated. Some would say they are against everything for the first time. Then later on they support it when they find it works.

But now we are in a situation where some say, "Let us threaten the underpinnings of Medicare because we do not like it, we never did like it, and we would like to privatize it." The fact is, the Medicare system works. We have folks here who bring priorities to the floor of the Senate, who say, we do not have enough money for Medicare. We want to take Medicare apart and dismantle it. We are going to threaten the very existence of Medicare. And we also, by the way, want to give a tax cut, the bulk of which goes to the richest Americans.

I brought charts to the floor to talk about the tax cut that has been proposed over in the House. We do not have numbers over in the Senate yet, but in the House it says if you are earning \$30,000 or less, your tax cut is \$112 a year. But if you have \$200,000 or more in income, you get \$11,000 a year in tax cuts. That is quite a deal, I suppose. If you are somebody who makes over a couple of hundred thousand dollars a year, especially if you are some-

body who does not get your money from wages—if you get your money from interest and dividends—you are really doing well out of that plan.

But my point is, we say, at this point in our life as a country, that we have an enormous Federal budget deficit and the way to address that is to give a big tax cut to the wealthiest Americans and then turn around, after we have given the tax cut to the wealthiest Americans, and say, by the way, we do not have enough money for Medicare. We do not have enough money for what I think is an enormous, successful program in this country?

It does not make any sense to me. We have to be smart enough, it seems to me, to distinguish between what works and what does not, and keep what works and strengthen and improve it, and get rid of what does not. And we ought to take a look. We have been delaying clean air and clean water regulations and safe food regulations. Let us keep those that work. And let us keep the Medicare system, and, yes, let us improve it.

But let us not cut out the foundation from a program as important as the Medicare Program has been to this country. Let us especially not do that so we can give a big tax cut to the wealthiest Americans.

I live in North Dakota, in the northern Great Plains, the Old West. And we know about the wagon trains, because they crossed North Dakota not so long ago. Wagon trains did not move unless all the wagons moved. They did not make progress by leaving some behind.

The point with respect to the economic issues I have mentioned, including Medicare, is that at a time when corporations have record profits, the highest in history, the stock market is reaching record highs, and we see lower wages for American families. And then we hear the suggestion that the rich need a tax cut and that we ought to undercut the pinnings of Medicare. It just does not make any sense.

We ought to try to get all of these wagons moving along. We ought to try to get the standard of living for the average American family increasing—not decreasing. We have to support the things that work. Yes. Let us celebrate a little bit of success. And that is what I hope this debate will be about in the coming days and months. There is no debate about whether we should have regulatory reform. We have silly, foolish regulations that in my judgment hinder the work of small businesses and others. Let us get rid of them. But let us not roll back important regulations with respect to safe food and clean air and clean water.

Let us celebrate the success of programs that work and decide that these programs are going to strengthen—not undercut. That is what I hope this debate will be about between Democrats and Republicans. There ought not be such a great divide between the two parties in this Chamber. We want the same things. We have different ap-

proaches for getting there perhaps. But let us have a healthy, aggressive, robust debate and decide to celebrate things that work and change those that do not. Let us decide that we want a country whose economic system provides opportunity for all, which lifts all Americans, so that when they roll up their sleeves and want to improve their lives, they are able to do so.

Mr. President, I yield the floor.

THE LOBBYING DISCLOSURE AND GIFT BAN BILL

Mr. WELLSTONE. Mr. President, I just want to provide a very brief analysis to people in our country about a very important reform bill that is going to be coming to the floor on Monday, the lobbying disclosure and gift ban legislation, S. 101.

Mr. President, we will start the debate, and actually each section of lobbying disclosure and gift ban will be taken up separately. There is no question in my mind, Mr. President, that people in our country yearn for a political process that they believe in, and there is no question in my mind that people in our country—in Minnesota, Idaho, Massachusetts, all across the Nation—really want to see an open, honest, accountable political process. There are several critical ingredients to this, and two are certainly lobbying disclosure—Senator LEVIN has been an extremely capable legislator in taking the lead in this area, with Senator COHEN—and also the gift ban. Senator FEINGOLD, Senator LEVIN, Senator LAUTENBERG, and myself have all been very active.

The reason I come to the floor is that there is a development people ought to know about—an attempted substitute bill. This will be a McConnell-Dole initiative. Mr. President, I think people need to know about this initiative because I think it represents not a step forward but a huge leap backward.

Mr. President, this substitute bill is full of enough loopholes for many huge trucks to drive through. To give but just a few examples, lobbyists would be able to take you or me out to dinner one night, as long as it is anything under \$100; the next time, maybe we could be taken to a Bullets game; the next time, we could go to an Orioles game; the next time, we would just be given a gift. It goes on and on and on, and there is no aggregation limit.

Actually, it is not per day but per occasion. Lobbyists, three times a day, breakfast, lunch, and dinner, but take us out as long as it is under \$100 or give us some other gift, as many times as this lobbyist wanted to. It never would be counted and never would be disclosed. This is not comprehensive, sweeping gift ban legislation.

Second, to give but another example, the whole issue of charitable travel. I think it is important that Senators and Representatives, when they care about a charity, travel to an event. We should be there to support it. But to