

reaching the Salmon River after a run of 25 to 30 miles.

Dave Alexander was right. The fires were stopped at the Salmon River and extinguished only when the snows arrived in October. By then, Idaho's fires had cost \$150 million to fight and an estimated 2 billion board feet of timber had burned. And, of course, the habitat for the wildlife of the area was devastated.

By Forest Service estimates, as much as 665 million board feet of the burned timber was salvageable, with a potential revenue of \$325 million. Remember, 25 percent of this revenue would be returned to local counties for schools and roads. In Idaho, Shoshone County officials have watched their budget drop sharply because of the lack of national forest timber sales. They are desperate for some solutions to their situation. They are among many who have pointed out the absurdity of no timber sales being offered while dead forests abound. Equally concerned are the 100 former employees of the Ida-Pine sawmill which closed for lack of timber supply, while watching the nearby forests burn up.

Unfortunately the value of burned trees drops rapidly over time. Time is the primary factor in accomplishing timber salvage and replanting the burn. The consequences of leaving burned forests untreated are both environmental and financial. Not only is it a waste of potential revenue to the U.S. Treasury and the counties, it encourages future wildfire. If left standing, dead trees become conduits for lightning and may cause a re-burn, fueled by the ready supply of fallen trees never removed from the first fire. This scenario is no boon to fish and wildlife habitat, either.

So, it made sense to mount an aggressive timber salvage program on the Boise and Payette National Forests. On the Boise alone, an estimated 2,600 jobs would be created by the salvage operations. These two forests have been moving as quickly as possible under current law. But the laws and regulations, prior to enactment of the fiscal year 1995 rescissions bill with its salvage provisions, simply did not permit the Forest Service to act quickly enough. Rather, they constituted a formula for inaction and delay.

Let me tell you why. First, both forests have been slogging their way through eight separate NEPA [National Environmental Policy Act] documents, five of them environmental impact statements.

Consider the fact that the Forest Service even finds it necessary to prepare five environmental impact statements. When NEPA was enacted in 1969, EIS's were to be done only in the case of a major Federal action. Now, driven by the courts, the Forest Service is compelled to conduct an EIS just to sell dead, burned trees. You tell me how this makes sense.

Consider also, that preservation groups have found a new method to

delay and obstruct completion of these NEPA documents. They deliberately use the Freedom of Information Act as a harassment tool. The Boise National Forest has responded to 45 separate FOIA requests at a cost of more than \$50,000. On the Payette, the number of FOIA requests has quadrupled, and a new, full-time position was created at a cost of \$20,000 to handle the responses. One FOIA request was expected to take 670 hours of staff time to respond, thereby diverting staff away from salvage preparations.

It is this type of delay and added expense which causes me and other Senators to argue the need for streamlining the current rules as we have done in the rescissions bill, which is now law. Without the help of the Congress to clear some of the procedural path, timber salvage would be nearly impossible to accomplish.

The continuing story of the 1994 Idaho wildfires is a case in point. As of July 1, not one stick of burnt timber had yet been salvaged from the Boise or Payette National Forests. Not 1 acre of the burned forest has been replanted with trees, because the reforestation would be paid for by salvage receipts. The State forests had been salvaged. The adjoining private ownerships had been salvaged, but not the Federal lands.

Now those decisions are finally being made on the EIS's, those decisions have been appealed and held up by proponents of gridlock. I intend to come to the floor again soon to continue this story. I will follow the story as it unfolds. It will demonstrate why it is imperative that Congress provide relief in some form to free salvage sales from the burden of the unnecessary and costly procedures in place now. Salvage provisions in the rescission law are only temporary. They will expire in December 1996. With that in mind, I will press forward with S. 391, the long-term forest health bill I introduced in February. More on that with the next chapter of this story.

For now, please take note—665 million board feet awaits salvage; as of July 1, no timber salvage had done; no reforestation had been done; and 11 months had passed in preparing NEPA documents. Now those decisions are being appealed.

Soon I will be back to talk about the fires of 1994, the devastation and the destruction, and ways this Congress and this country can move to a better procedure to manage our national forests.

I yield the remainder of my time.

Mr. REID addressed the Chair.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Nevada.

EXTENSION OF MORNING BUSINESS

Mr. REID. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the time for morning business be extended to the hour of 2:15, and that I have the opportunity to speak until then.

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

The Senator from Nevada is recognized.

Mr. REID. I thank the Chair.

(The remarks of Mr. REID pertaining to the introduction of S. 1093 are located in today's RECORD under "Statements on Introduced Bills and Joint Resolutions.")

THE 30TH ANNIVERSARY OF THE PASSAGE OF MEDICARE

Mr. REID. Mr. President, I feel it is important to talk on the 30th anniversary of the passing of Medicare and especially after listening to some of the statements made by my friend, the senior Senator from the State of New Mexico while I was in the Chamber.

It is important that we recognize Medicare is a program that is really working. It is a program that has separated us from other countries, made our senior citizens able to receive the care, medical care in general, that they need. Certainly there needs to be improvements made in the Medicare system, and we should make those. But I think the across-the-board cuts we have in the budget resolution that is now before this body are really out of line.

Mr. President, just so we can understand, these cuts really do affect people. These cuts are not just farfetched, in the imagination of the Senator from Nevada. Republicans are proposing to cut more than \$450 billion from health care between 1996 and 2002, \$270 billion of these dollars from Medicare and \$182 billion from Medicaid. In combination, these cuts are more than four times anything ever enacted. Most of the \$270 billion in Medicare cuts would not be necessary without the Republicans' \$245 billion tax cut.

Over a 7-year period, the combined Medicare and Medicaid cuts of the Republicans would reduce Federal health care dollars to Nevada by \$2 billion—the small State of Nevada by over \$2 billion. Each of Nevada's 182,000 Medicare beneficiaries would pay as much as \$3,000 more in premiums and copayments. Couples would pay at least \$6,000 more. Overall, the State of Nevada would lose \$533 million in Medicare funding in 2002 and \$2 billion over 7 years.

In Medicaid, overall, the State of Nevada would lose \$157 million in Federal Medicaid funding in 2002 and \$516 million over the 7 years, a reduction of 29 percent in the year 2002 alone, and this is according to the Urban Institute. This will have a devastating impact on the State's current almost 100,000 recipients. According to this study, these cuts would mean that Nevada would have to cut off coverage to over 25,000 recipients, likely adding them to the ranks of the uninsured.

Mr. President, we all heard the speeches early on. The distinguished majority leader before the election said:

President Clinton and Vice President Gore are resorting to scare tactics falsely accusing Republicans of secret plans to cut Medicare benefits. This was reported widely. I just selected the Washington Post in November of last year.

The Republican National Committee chairperson, Haley Barbour, said:

The outrage, as far as I am concerned is the Democrats' big lie campaign that the Contract With America would require huge Medicare cuts. It would not.

This was reported a number of places after Barbour made the speech, but I have chosen here CNN Late Edition, November 6, 1994.

But what has happened after the election?

The GOP plan: \$270 billion in Medicare cuts—

This does not count almost \$200 billion more in Medicaid cuts—

the largest Medicare cuts in history; seniors pay \$900 more a year in out-of-pocket health care costs.

Those are the facts. We cannot escape it. To my friend from New Mexico, I say clearly, of course we have got to make some changes in Medicare. But we should do it with congressional hearings, like we do other things responsibly around here.

I yield the floor.

WAS CONGRESS IRRESPONSIBLE? CONSIDER THE ARITHMETIC

Mr. HELMS. Mr. President, the skyrocketing Federal debt, which long ago soared into the stratosphere, is sort of like the weather—everybody talks about it but almost nobody had done much about it until immediately after the elections last November.

But when the new 104th Congress convened in January, the U.S. House of Representatives quickly approved a balanced budget amendment to the U.S. Constitution. In the Senate all but one of the 54 Republicans supported the balanced budget amendment; only 13 Democrats supported it. Since a two-third-vote—67 Senators—is necessary to approve a constitutional amendment, the proposed Senate amendment failed by one vote. There will be another vote later this year or next year.

Mr. President, as of the close of business Thursday, July 27, the Federal debt—down to the penny—stood at exactly \$4,948,216,665,542.90 or \$18,783.51 for every man, woman, and child on a per capita basis.

MEDICARE'S 30TH ANNIVERSARY

Mr. GLENN. Mr. President, this Sunday marks the 30th anniversary of the Medicare Program's enactment into law. On July 30, 1965 President Lyndon Johnson traveled to Independence, MO, to sign the bill creating Medicare with President Harry Truman looking on. President Truman, of course, had proposed the creation of a national health insurance program in 1948. But it took 17 years of discussion and debate, several failed attempts in Congress, and

the work of the Truman, Kennedy, and Johnson administrations, before the stage was set for Democrats to build on Social Security's successes and further guarantee security for our Nation's elderly and disabled citizens.

Thirty years ago, Medicare's detractors tried to rally opponents with cries of socialized medicine and forecasts of Medicare's impending failure. Since that time, we have witnessed the positive impact that Medicare has had on the lives of seniors and disabled beneficiaries, as well as their families. Few can deny Medicare's accomplishments. By ensuring access to necessary and appropriate medical services, Medicare continues to help millions of Americans lead dignified and independent lives—free from worry that even a minor illness or injury could devastate both their personal, and their family's, financial security.

Medicare is not a perfect health insurance program. Congress continues to work to control Federal health spending, and the elderly must still confront the ever-increasing costs of treatment for catastrophic illness, long-term care, and prescription drugs. However, today's seniors enjoy their retirement years in better health and with a greater sense of security than most thought possible 30 years ago.

Ten years ago, I made a brief statement to mark Medicare's 20 year anniversary. In that statement, I discussed the efforts that Congress had made to expand benefits, improve the quality of Medicare services, and address the explosion of health care spending. As we all know, the Congress has not solved all of the health care challenges I outlined that day, and today the Medicare program may be facing its greatest test. But Mr. President, Congress is confronting Medicare's current fiscal challenge with a radically different spirit and attitude than it had in the past.

Until recently, the Medicare debate was centered around the commitment to keeping our compact with America's seniors by ensuring Medicare's long-term solvency, while also expanding beneficiaries' access to services and improving the quality of care. The recent budget resolution's \$270 billion Medicare cut—which has been disguised as a Medicare rescue—is actually nothing more than an attempt to extract the maximum amount of budget savings from the Medicare Program.

Somehow the Medicare reform debate has become a discussion about how the Congress can balance the Federal budget and give tax breaks to the rich, instead of how our country can provide health care and security for the elderly and disabled. Let us put aside the political posturing surrounding the budget debate and sit down to figure out what is best for the 37 million Americans who are served by Medicare, and the millions more expected to join the rolls in the future.

Mr. President, these days Americans are very cynical about their govern-

ment. We should not confirm the public's fear that Members of Congress are trying to gain political advantage from Medicare's fiscal crises, rather we must take action to restore the public confidence while restoring the stability of Medicare. A generation that has given so much should not be burdened with higher premiums and deductibles or decreased benefits. Older American's financial security should not be sacrificed for partisan gain.

I recognize the limits of Medicare in this time of tight budgets and downsizing of government, but I also believe that by working together, we can fulfill a pledge made three decades ago and honor our commitment to today's seniors, and future generations of older Americans.

GIFT REFORM

Mr. SMITH. Mr. President, I rise to state briefly the reasons why I voted today in support of S. 1061, the bill to reform the rules of the Senate regarding the acceptance of gifts by Members and employees of the Senate. That measure, of course, was approved by a resounding, bipartisan vote of 98-0.

Mr. President, in the 103d Congress, I was pleased to support S. 1935, the Congressional Gifts Reform Act, which was approved by the Senate on May 11, 1994, by a vote of 95 to 4. Ultimately, however, S. 1935 did not become law because it was combined in conference with a controversial lobbying reform measure. As a result, the conference report was not approved by the Senate.

I am pleased, Mr. President, that the Senate has now revisited the issue and has succeeded in reforming its Rules regarding gifts. S. 1061, as adopted by the Senate today, represents a reasonable compromise among the competing proposals for gift reform. In general, Members and employees of the Senate will be permitted to accept only non-monetary gifts with a value of less than \$50, with a total cumulative value of no more than \$100, in any calendar year from any person, corporation, or organization. No gift with a value below \$10, however, will count towards the \$100 annual limit.

As a member of the Select Committee on Ethics, I am strongly committed to keeping the ethical standards of the Senate above reproach. The new gift standard under which the Senate will be operating will make an important contribution to enhancing public confidence in the Senate as an institution.

I want especially to commend the distinguished Senator from Kentucky, MITCH MCCONNELL, for his exemplary leadership in working to achieve the compromise that resulted in the unanimous passage of S. 1061. It is my privilege to serve under Senator MCCONNELL's leaderships as the chairman of the Select Committee on Ethics. He does an outstanding job of leading that important Select Committee under what are sometimes difficult circumstances.