

On page 41, between lines 12 and 13, insert the following:

SEC. 510. MAGNETIC FUSION ENERGY ENGINEERING.

Section 7 of the Magnetic Fusion Energy Engineering Act (42 U.S.C. 9396) is repealed.

SEC. 511. REPEAL OF REPORT ON VERIFICATION TECHNIQUES FOR PRODUCTION OF PLUTONIUM AND HIGHLY ENRICHED URANIUM.

Section 3131 of the National Defense Authorization Act for Fiscal Year 1991 (Public Law 101-510; 104 Stat. 1839) is amended by striking out subsection (c).

Mr. ABRAHAM. Mr. President, I will speak briefly to the amendment.

Earlier this summer, the Congress adopted a historic budget resolution.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. If the Senator will suspend for a moment, the Chair notes the Senate is still not in order. Please extend courtesy to the Senator from Michigan. The Senate is still not in order.

The Senator from Michigan is recognized.

Mr. ABRAHAM. Mr. President, in putting together the budget I think Members on all sides worked hard to try to identify various departments, agencies, commissions, boards, and councils whose functions were either unnecessary or duplicative of other activities going on in Government.

Working in conjunction with a number of my fellow freshman Members of this body, we have tried using the assumptions made in that budget, using suggestions that have been previously made by the GAO, by the CBO, in some cases by the President in the budget submission he made, to try to identify numerous agencies of Government which no longer fill their purpose and which consequently ought to be terminated. The purpose of this amendment, and it is the first of several we will be bringing during the course of the appropriations debates, is to bring to an end to these various no longer necessary Government agencies.

The amendment I am offering today will repeal the authorization of two technical panels who have outlived their usefulness, the Technical Committee on Verification of Fissile Material and Nuclear Warhead Controls and the Technical Panel on Magnetic Fusion. Neither of these panels currently receives funding. Nor do they have the support of either Congress or the executive branch. In other words, they are deadwood that should be cleared away as part of the process of balancing the budget.

Mr. President, Congress has the opportunity to produce something a vast majority of Americans want very deeply, a balanced budget. But to do so means trimming the fat from Government and cutting spending. This amendment represents a step in that direction. It terminates the activities of two Federal panels whose job is either finished or never began.

More important, it sets the tone I believe we should adopt with all of our spending bills. And so, as I said, from time to time during the appropriations process, a number of us are going to be

working together bringing other similar amendments to the floor in the hope we can produce the tangible reduction of numerous activities, agencies, and programs in Government that have outlived their usefulness.

Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent to add Senator ASHCROFT as a cosponsor.

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

Mr. ABRAHAM. I yield the floor.

Mr. MACK addressed the Chair.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Florida.

Mr. DOMENICI. Mr. President, did we adopt the amendment?

THE PRESIDING OFFICER. If there be no further debate, the question is on agreeing to the amendment.

The amendment (No. 2056) was agreed to.

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

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

The motion to lay on the table was agreed to.

Mr. DOMENICI. Mr. President, before Senator MACK speaks I wonder if I could ask Senator GRAMS if he would let us follow a routine, now. Senator DORGAN has also been waiting on a line-item veto sense-of-the-Senate. He would agree to 15 minutes per side. Could we have him go next and then the Senator would follow immediately after that?

Mr. GRAMS. That will be fine.

Mr. DOMENICI. I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Mr. ABRAHAM). The Senator from North Dakota.

AMENDMENT NO. 2057

(Purpose: To express the sense of the Senate on the conference on S. 4, the Line Item Veto Act)

Mr. DORGAN. Mr. President, I have an amendment No. 2057 at the desk which I would like to call up. Is there an amendment pending before the Senate?

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The pending amendment is set aside.

Mr. DORGAN. I call up my amendment.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will report.

The assistant legislative clerk read as follows:

The Senator from North Dakota [Mr. DORGAN], for himself, Mr. KOHL, Mr. FORD, Mr. ROBB, Mr. BREAU, Mr. HARKIN, Mr. BRADLEY, and Mr. WELLSTONE proposes an amendment numbered 2057.

Mr. DORGAN. 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:

At the appropriate place in the bill, insert the following:

SEC. . SENSE OF THE SENATE ON THE CONFERENCE ON S. 4, THE LINE ITEM VETO ACT.

(a) FINDINGS.—The Senate finds that—

(1) the line item veto was a major plank in the House majority's "Contract with Amer-

ica" and has received strong bipartisan support in the 104th Congress;

(2) the House of Representatives on February 6, 1995, passed H.R. 2, the Line Item Veto Act, on a vote of 294-134;

(3) the Senate on March 23, 1995, passed S. 4, the Separate Enrollment and Line Item Veto Act of 1995, on a vote of 69-29;

(4) the House passed S. 4, with the text of H.R. 2 inserted, by voice vote on May 17, 1995, 50 days after passage by the Senate;

(5) notwithstanding the failure of the House to request a conference, the Senate disagreed with the House amendment, requested a conference and appointed conferees on S. 4 on June 20, 1995;

(6) the papers for S. 4 have been held at the desk of the Speaker of the House for 42 days and the Speaker of the House has not yet moved to appoint conferees;

(7) with the passage of time it increasingly appears that the Congress may pass and send to the President not only the appropriations bills for fiscal year 1996 but also the reconciliation bill required by H. Con. Res. 67 (the concurrent resolution setting forth the congressional budget for fiscal years 1996, 1997, 1998, 1999, 2000, 2001, and 2002) without first passing and sending to the President a line item veto bill; and

(8) the House majority leadership has publicly cast doubt on the prospects for a conference on S. 4 this year.

(b) SENSE OF THE SENATE.—It is the sense of the Senate that—

(1) the Speaker of the House should move to appoint conferees on S. 4 immediately, so that the House and Senate may resolve their differences on this important legislation;

Mr. DORGAN. Mr. President, are we operating under a time agreement by unanimous consent?

The PRESIDING OFFICER. It has not been formally entered into.

Mr. DOMENICI. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that on this amendment there be 15 minutes on a side.

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

Mr. DOMENICI. I wonder if Senator DORGAN will do me a favor. I forgot, I left Senator MACK standing. He had been recognized and I asked him if he would wait for us and I did not go back to him. He wants to speak for 2 minutes and then it will be Mr. DORGAN's turn on the amendment.

Mr. DORGAN. Of course, I will be happy to do that. It is my understanding there will not be a second-degree on my amendment, and I will have an up-or-down vote on my amendment.

Mr. DOMENICI. That is my understanding.

Mr. DORGAN. I yield to the Senator from Florida.

PRESIDENT CLINTON'S STATEMENT ON LEGISLATIVE APPROPRIATIONS

Mr. MACK. Mr. President, earlier today, in a statement made by President Clinton, he said he was planning to veto the legislative appropriations bill, and I find that, frankly, very disappointing. There have been many press reports suggesting the Clinton White House is in a constant campaign mode. His decision to veto the bill is clearly the decision of candidate Clinton, not President Clinton. Candidate

Clinton is playing games. He is misleading the American people.

This year the Congress, in a bipartisan fashion, cut its own spending by nearly 9 percent. A cut of this magnitude has not occurred in 40 years, I might say, the last time the Republicans controlled the Congress.

The legislative branch bill has not been vetoed since 1920. Let me outline a couple of the specifics about what we have done: An overall reduction of \$206 million; reduction of Senate committee budgets by 15 percent; elimination of the Office of Technology Assessment; a 2-year, 25-percent reduction in the budget of the General Accounting Office.

This is part of what the President had to say today:

[The Congress] is way behind schedule on virtually every budget bill . . . but one bill, wouldn't you know, is right on schedule—the bill that funds the Congress, its staff, and its operations. I don't think Congress should take care of its own business before it takes care of the people's business.

If you listen to that statement, there is an implication there that they have increased spending in the legislative branch. This is one of the most misleading statements that I have heard.

The President likes to talk about common ground and solving the fiscal crisis responsibly, but when it comes to spending cuts he is totally absent. We are leading by example. Candidate Clinton is leading by rhetoric. It is disappointing and bodes poorly for finding the common ground he claims to embrace.

We hear a lot of talk about a train wreck coming in October. President Clinton likes to talk about avoiding it. But when it comes time for demonstrating good faith, President Clinton takes a walk and candidate Clinton comes into play. It may make good politics, but President Clinton is not being served well by candidate Clinton, and neither are the American people.

The American people elected us to cut spending. We are doing it, and Bill Clinton is standing in the way.

I yield the floor.

ENERGY AND WATER DEVELOPMENT APPROPRIATIONS

The Senate continued with the consideration of the bill.

AMENDMENT NO. 2057

Mr. DORGAN. Mr. President, am I correct that amendment 2057 is now pending?

The PRESIDING OFFICER. That is correct.

Mr. DORGAN. Mr. President, I offer this amendment for myself, and Senators KOHL, BREAUX, FORD, ROBB, BRADLEY, WELLSTONE, and HARKIN.

Mr. President, if you will notify me when I have used 3 minutes, I would appreciate that.

This is a very simple amendment. Many of us feel that the President—any President—ought to have a line-item veto. I voted for the line-item

veto when President Bush was in office and when President Reagan was in office, and I have voted for the line-item veto now that President Clinton is in the office of the Presidency.

On February 6, the U.S. House passed a line-item veto bill. The next month, on March 23, the U.S. Senate passed a line-item veto bill. A great amount of time has intervened, and there has not even been a conference. The House has not even appointed conferees.

Many of us feel that a line-item veto is a good policy, that it will help in reducing the deficit, that it will certainly help in trying to take out, from some of the legislation that moves through the Congress, special projects that have not previously been authorized or heard or substantially discussed. Many of us believe that we ought to see a line-item veto conference report passed by the House and the Senate and given to this President before the appropriations bills hit his desk and before the reconciliation bill comes to this President.

If a line-item veto is good policy—and, indeed, in my judgment it is—then it seems to me that the Speaker of the other body ought to appoint conferees. Let us have a conference, let us pass the conference report, and let us give this President the line-item veto to be able to use it to reduce the Federal deficit.

I do not understand why this is not a matter of high priority for a House that on February 6 passed a line-item veto bill but now in August has not even been able to find time to appoint conferees. This amendment is very simple. It explains what I have just said, and it says it is the sense of the Senate that the Speaker of the House should move to appoint conferees on S. 4 immediately—that is, the line-item veto bill—so that the House and the Senate may resolve their differences on this important legislation. I at least believe that the line-item veto in the hands of this President—any President—makes sense in terms of public policy, and I hope he has the line-item veto before the appropriations bills and the reconciliation bill come to his desk.

That is the purpose of this amendment.

Mr. President, let me yield 3 minutes to the Senator from Wisconsin, Senator KOHL, who is a cosponsor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Wisconsin is recognized.

Mr. KOHL. Thank you very much.

Mr. President, I am an original cosponsor of this bill, and I believe very strongly that it can be a very useful, in fact, perhaps decisive tool in order to avoid the budget impasse and a breakdown of the whole process, in order for us to avoid having the kind of a "train wreck" that will not allow us to pass a budget come this fall.

It was in the Contract With America. Not only Democrats but also Republicans are very supportive of the line-item veto. And there is a suspicion

that the only reason we are not going to pass it right now is because we have a Democrat in the White House instead of a Republican. That is not the way to conduct budget policy in this country. That is the way to conduct politics. I think it is the kind of Government that the American people are sick and tired of. They do not want to see a continuation of it. They are supportive in overwhelming numbers of the line-item veto. It is something that we can do. It is something that will contribute to an effective budget come this fall.

I think we are all winners. There are no losers if we pass the line-item veto.

So I support this amendment by the Senator from North Dakota. I think that we, as a body, should encourage the House to appoint their conferees so that we can resolve the minor differences between the House and the Senate on the line-item veto and get on with the important work in behalf of the American people.

Mr. President, as I said, I am an original sponsor of the pending sense-of-the-Senate amendment, and it states simply that the House of Representatives should move to appoint conferees on S. 4, the line-item veto bill, and that we should not send appropriations bills to the President until we pass line-item veto legislation.

It may seem odd to see two Democratic Senators calling for action on the line-item veto, one of the most popular plans in the Contract With America. But as long time supporters of the line-item veto, we are unhappy that such an important tool for budget discipline has apparently been lost in the bog of balanced budget politics.

We ought to move the line-item veto legislation because it is a tool that can trim the fat of Government and highlight the spending choices that must be made if we are going to balance the budget. We ought to move the line-item veto legislation now because it is a tool that could save us from the budget impasse that we may be facing.

Many now speculate about the coming budget train wreck. The President has already threatened to veto six of the appropriations bills passed by the House. Veto override vote counts are taking place on a tax bill that hasn't even been drafted. And White House Chief of Staff Panetta is drawing up plans for the anticipated shut down of the Government at the beginning of the fiscal year.

It does not have to happen this way, and it should not happen this way.

The 104th Congress could be remembered as the Congress where balanced budget changed from a slogan to the status quo. The House passed a balanced budget constitutional amendment; the Senate is one vote away from doing so.

The Republican majority passed a Budget Resolution that balances the budget. The Democrats proposed an alternative that does the same, and a vast majority of our party voted for it. The President has his own balanced