

seniors from the very first day I took office as a U.S. Congressman. And I will continue to fight for them as a member of the Senate Finance Committee. My resolve is stronger than ever. Our first priority for seniors is simple: to preserve and protect Medicare. I have just come from a meeting working on a comprehensive plan to save Medicare. I would hope that instead of running Medi-"scare" ads, these liberal special interest groups would offer real solutions to what President Clinton and every Member of Congress believes is a very severe problem. I would like to see their ideas, their plans specifically.

All of us will have to stand on the Senate floor soon and vote up or down on these issues within the next few weeks. At that time, our views and our votes will be known. Before that occurs, I hope all those behind the current ad campaigns will step forward and join in a constructive effort to save Medicare. This issue is too important for our seniors, and they deserve a constructive dialogue and debate.

Mr. President, I yield back the balance of my time.

I suggest the absence of a quorum.

Mr. FORD. Mr. President, would the Senator from South Dakota withhold that motion?

Mr. PRESSLER. Yes, I will.

Mr. FORD addressed the Chair.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Kentucky is recognized.

Mr. FORD. I ask unanimous consent that I might proceed as in morning business for 2 minutes.

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

HEALTH CARE

Mr. FORD. Mr. President, I understand where my friend from South Dakota comes from. But there is part A and part B under Medicare. Part A, we talk about the trustees and their reports. They gave us two reports. One is a \$136 billion surplus today in part A; but in 7 years it will be down to minus \$6 billion. Under part B, there is \$17 billion in surplus today; and 7 years from now it will be \$25 billion in surplus.

The President has put out that he would want \$89 billion in part A to make Medicare solvent for 10 years, and he has asked for a little bit more to make Medicare solvent. We agree with the problems of solvency. The President has three members on the board of trustees, or the commission, that reports to all of us annually. And so we have given a proposal. We do not want to take \$270 billion out over 7 years. We do not want to cut another \$240 billion out of Medicaid.

So when you look at that, the reduction in the budget comes out of health care—comes out of health care. And something, in my opinion, has to be wrong when we are looking at children to be hurt, we are looking at the elderly to be hurt. And yet the headline in the Nashville Tennessean is, "The GOP

Plan Has Coddled the Rich and Socked It to the Poor." That is big 2-inch headlines across the banner of that newspaper.

So when you say we have not given a program, it is out there. It is out there. And we are not scaring our old folks. We are trying to protect them. So, a little bit—a little bit is a whole lot better than trying to reach a tax cut. \$240 billion is a figure we all want to remember—\$245 billion. That is a tax cut. When you cut the expenditure of Government to balance the budget, that is one thing. And we are all for that. I am for it. But then you say you want to give a tax cut, that means you have got to cut more.

So the problem now is not balancing the budget; the problem now is \$245 billion that will be a tax cut. If we can get around to not using that or not giving it to the ultrarich, I think the balanced budget and the programs would go through very smoothly.

There is no big argument about making Medicare solvent, no argument at all, but it is giving a \$245 billion tax cut to the most wealthy in this country while you take a big hunk out of Medicaid.

And I see the Alzheimer's patients under Medicaid, I see the Alzheimer's patients under Medicare. There are a lot of people in this Chamber that probably can use Medicare. I am of that age, others of that age. But the problem results in a \$245 billion tax cut. If we did not have that, we would not have the problem. The ads would not be running. We would already have the appropriations bills out. We would be waiting for the conference to come back. We probably could meet our deadline of October 1 for the budget.

I understand my time is probably up, and I thank the Chair for his friendly greetings.

I yield the floor. I suggest the absence of a quorum, Mr. President.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will call the roll.

The assistant legislative clerk proceeded to call the roll.

Mr. CHAFEE. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the order for the quorum call be rescinded.

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

AGRICULTURE, RURAL DEVELOPMENT, FOOD AND DRUG ADMINISTRATION, AND RELATED AGENCIES APPROPRIATIONS ACT, 1996

The Senate continued with the consideration of the bill.

Mr. CHAFEE. Mr. President, I want to take this opportunity to thank the managers of the bill for the increase that they have given to the WIC Program. I think the WIC Program is an outstanding program, and I think it is worthwhile. Its value has been evidenced by the fact that the distinguished managers of the bill have given it a very nice increase for the upcoming year.

So I want to thank the senior Senator from Mississippi and the senior Senator from Arkansas for the additions to the WIC Program which they provided in this legislation.

Mr. President, I suggest the absence of a quorum.

Mr. COCHRAN. Mr. President, will the distinguished Senator please withhold?

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Mississippi.

Mr. COCHRAN. Mr. President, let me just thank the Senator from Rhode Island for his generous comments and his support for the provisions of the bill which he described. It is very difficult in this time of diminishing access to funds under our allocation and budget resolution to keep this caseload up to the existing level. It has been done with the full cooperation of the other members of the subcommittee.

We recognize that it is an important program. It is a program that saves money, I think, in terms of health care costs and learning deficiencies that would occur were it not for the proper nutrition at these ages.

So I appreciate very much the Senator noticing the hard work that was put in on this subject.

Mr. CHAFEE. Mr. President, what the WIC Program is, for those who do not know, it is a nutrition program, as the distinguished senior Senator from Mississippi said, a nutrition program for women, infants, and children.

Furthermore, invariably, at least in my State, it takes place in a setting where you might say it is one-stop shopping, where a mother can come and her infant child will be cared for and, in addition, can get some nutrition advice from experts.

As the distinguished Senator from Mississippi said, this is really proven out to be a money saver in the long run. If we can keep these infants healthy and get them off to a good start, savings to the Nation in the form of medical care are very, very significant in the long run.

So I am happy this was able to be worked out the way it was.

Mr. President, I suggest the absence of a quorum.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will call the roll.

The assistant legislative clerk proceeded to call the roll.

Mr. COCHRAN. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the order for the quorum call be rescinded.

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

UNANIMOUS-CONSENT AGREEMENT

Mr. COCHRAN. Mr. President, we were successful in getting Senators to cooperate in identifying the amendments that remain to be offered to this bill. We are prepared now to seek unanimous consent to limit the amendments on the bill to those which we will read. These have been cleared on both sides of the aisle.

I now ask unanimous consent that the following amendments be the only

remaining amendments in order to H.R. 1976, other than the pending amendments; that they be offered in the first or second-degree; if a committee amendment still remains to be amended, any first-degree amendment be subject to relevant second degrees:

A Stevens budget for Assistant Secretary of Natural Resources amendment; a managers' package; two Cochran relevant amendments; a McCain funding for travel colleges; Domenici on scoring; Abraham on advisory committees; Senator BINGAMAN requiring USDA energy savings initiatives; Senators BOXER and FEINSTEIN on chickens, fresh and frozen regulations; Senator BRADLEY, two relevant amendments; Senator BRYAN, one to eliminate the Market Promotion Program and three relevant amendments; Senator BUMPERS, two relevant amendments; Senator BYRD, relevant amendment; Senator CONRAD, an amendment to establish a United States-Canadian review on water in North Dakota, ARS potato research laboratory and a relevant amendment; Senator DASCHLE, two relevant amendments; Senator DODD, two relevant amendments; Senator DORGAN, a United States-Canadian study on Devil's Lake; Senator FEINGOLD, a rural development amendment and one on research grants; Senator HARKIN, food stamps amendment; Senator KERREY, cotton disaster assistance funds amendment; Senator KERRY of Massachusetts, prohibit Market Promotion Program, mink export amendment, and a relevant amendment; Senator KOHL, two relevant amendments plus an amendment on rural development grants; Senator LAUTENBERG, two relevant amendments; Senator LEAHY, an amendment to restore livestock feed assistance and an alternative development amendment; Senator LEVIN, Michigan special research grant amendment and a relevant amendment; Senator REID, sugar program amendment and two relevant amendments.

Mr. BUMPERS addressed the Chair.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Arkansas.

Mr. BUMPERS. Mr. President, I have just been advised that Senator FORD would like to be added as having one relevant amendment. Otherwise, we have no objection to the list as read by the chairman.

Mr. COCHRAN. Mr. President, I ask that my UC be amended, as pointed out by the Senator from Arkansas, and to add a Gorton relevant amendment, plus a Gregg relevant amendment and, as modified, I so ask unanimous consent.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Is there objection to the unanimous consent agreement, as modified? Without objection, it is so ordered.

Mr. COCHRAN. Mr. President, I thank the distinguished manager on the part of the minority for his cooperation and all Senators for cooperating to identify these amendments.

Let me say now that if we called for the regular order, which I am prepared to do, as I understand it, the amendment of the Senator from Nebraska, Senator KERREY, which was offered

earlier in the day by Senator DASCHLE on his behalf, would be the pending business. Parliamentary inquiry. Is that correct?

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator is correct.

Mr. BUMPERS. Mr. President, what is the pending business?

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The pending amendment is No. 2688 offered by the Senator from Colorado to the committee amendment.

Mr. BUMPERS. That is the amendment on the peanut subsidy?

The PRESIDING OFFICER. That is correct.

Mr. BUMPERS. Just to refresh my own understanding of this, what was the question and answer of the distinguished Senator from Mississippi as to what the regular order was?

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Amendment No. 2686, the amendment offered by the Democratic leader on behalf of the Senator from Nebraska.

Mr. COCHRAN. I call for the regular order.

AMENDMENT NO. 2686

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Amendment No. 2686 is the pending question.

Mr. BUMPERS. Mr. President, I suggest the absence of a quorum.

Mr. COCHRAN. I have not yielded the floor. Do I have the floor?

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Yes.

Mr. COCHRAN. Mr. President, the purpose of coming to this amendment in the regular order is that this amendment was the first offered today by the distinguished Democratic leader on behalf of the Senator from Nebraska and the Senator from Wisconsin, with the understanding that it would be taken up later in the day. It is later in the day. We have told Senators that we would not have a vote on this bill until 5:30. We now have reached that point and beyond. I have spoken against the Kerrey amendment, and for the committee amendment, which is the subject of the Kerrey amendment.

The Kerrey amendment seeks to strike the committee amendment which contains funds—\$41 million—for disaster assistance for cotton producers, which have been hard hit this year by a massive infestation of beet army worms, tobacco budworms, and unusually dry weather, which has exacerbated a very difficult situation throughout the South and Southwest.

I notice that the Senator from Nebraska has come to the floor now to speak to the amendment. I am prepared to yield the floor and permit whatever time he may need to discuss his amendment. I hope that we can then vote on his amendment, or a motion to table his amendment. I am prepared to move to table his amendment and ask for the yeas and nays, but I am not going to do that if he wants to speak to that amendment now.

Before I yield for that purpose, I wonder if we can agree on a time certain, for the benefit of all Senators, on a motion to table the Kerrey amendment.

I am hopeful that the Senator could agree to take no more than 10 or 15 minutes. I think I spoke for about 10 minutes. Most Senators know what

this is all about. If additional time is needed, I am happy to consider that, along with the interests of other Senators. I know Senators have made plans for other activities tonight. They thought they were going to vote at 5:30. I wonder if the Senator can tell us what his needs would be in terms of time to debate this amendment. I will be happy to yield to the Senator to respond, without losing my right to the floor.

Mr. KERREY. Mr. President, I say to the distinguished Senator from Mississippi, there are others who have told me they want to speak. I just arrived here. I am not sure how many others have actually come to speak in favor of this amendment. I personally can get by easily with 10 or 15 minutes. I wonder if the Senator would mind making it 30 minutes, and I will be prepared to yield it back if nobody else shows up. It may be necessary at this point, since some Members have been waiting and know what time the vote was going to be scheduled, to give them time to get here. As far as the amount of time I require personally to speak on this amendment, 10 or 15 minutes would be all I would need.

Mr. COCHRAN. I thank the Senator. Let me see if this is suitable to Senators.

I ask unanimous consent that we vote on or in relation to the Kerrey amendment at 6:30.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Is there objection to that unanimous-consent request?

Is the time to be divided in the usual fashion? Does the Senator wish to specify a division of time?

Mr. COCHRAN. Under the usual form, and that no other amendment would be in order to the amendment.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Is there objection?

Without objection, it is so ordered.

Mr. KERREY. Mr. President, this is a fairly straightforward amendment. I must say I offer it with some reluctance. The distinguished Senator from Mississippi and the distinguished ranking member from Arkansas have done an excellent job with the agriculture appropriations bill and in staying open to suggestions and staying open to preferences of individual Members.

However, this \$41 million appropriation for cotton really does put us on a slippery slope, Mr. President. Last year, when we set in motion the enhanced crop insurance program, the promise was that crop insurance was to be to replace ad hoc disaster programs. That was the promise. If we begin today, less than a year later from putting that program into place, saying, well, here is a case we can make, there is no question—and I do not argue with the distinguished Senator from Mississippi that the disaster and tragedy affecting cotton producers is meritorious. However, we said that instead of

ad hoc disaster, we were going to do crop insurance.

It seems to me, Mr. President, that if we begin with cotton, there will be amendments offered to do soybeans or corn or rice, or all sorts of things. We will get appeals, one after another. And those of us who have heard those appeals thus far have been able to say, no, I would like to go to the floor and offer an amendment on your behalf, I understand the disaster is serious; however, we are using crop insurance.

We need to improve that program. It is not perfect. We nonetheless need to work with that program, rather than, at least for people like me, breaking a promise to taxpayers that we would not have both an ad hoc disaster payment and crop insurance.

The details of the reallocation, Mr. President, are as follows: \$35 million of the \$41 million would go into a rural community advancement program, which includes grants and loans for water and sewer improvements, rental housing, and other important rural development programs. The Senator from Arkansas and the Senator from Mississippi have both spoken eloquently on the rather severe cuts we have in rural development in this bill. It is unavoidable. We can avoid a piece of that by enacting this amendment.

Second, \$4.5 million goes into the rural development loan fund intermediary lending program—an extremely successful program, one that has bipartisan support, Mr. President—that promotes rural economic development by making investment capital available, via a locally based nonprofit intermediary, to rural businesses that typically cannot obtain financing from conventional sources.

Lastly, \$1.5 million goes into rural technology and cooperative development grant programs, which provide funding to public bodies and nonprofit organizations to establish rural technology and cooperative developing networks nationwide to help improve economic conditions in rural America.

Again, the amendment rests upon a belief that we should either do crop insurance or ad hoc disaster. Again, I do not challenge the meritorious nature of the cotton disaster. But I do believe, Mr. President, that it would be a terrible mistake for us to move away from crop insurance, back into this sort of dual thing where we say, well, if crop insurance does not work, we will do ad hoc disaster on top of that, and the next thing you know, taxpayers are paying for both. Next will be blueberries and potatoes and everything else that comes in. They will say, "I see that in 1995 you took care of cotton; can you take care of us as well?"

I hope colleagues understand that I do not offer this amendment as a consequence of radical disagreement or objection to what the chairman and ranking member are doing. They have done an exceptional job of putting this bill together. I offer it as a consequence of believing very strongly that our policy

ought to continue with crop insurance. If it is demonstrable that crop insurance does not work—and there are many problems still with that—and it is demonstrable that it does not work, we should abandon the crop insurance program and go back to year in and year out politically deciding in Congress how it is that we are going to allocate resources for the disaster program.

Mr. President, that concludes my stirring remarks on this particular amendment. I told the Senator from Mississippi I was going to take 10 or 15 minutes. I have not done that.

MEDICARE

Mr. KERREY. Mr. President, I will test the patience of the Senator from Mississippi by talking on a subject that is very much related to this and that is the proposal that was made last Friday on Medicare by the Republican leadership in the House of Representatives.

I read over the weekend the details that were available—not all details were available. I make the comments because I know on our side in the Senate Finance Committee they are deliberating, as well, trying to discover how to come up with \$270 billion.

Allow me to say two things about this. One, there are many on this side, many Democrats on this side, that would rush immediately to embrace a proposal to eliminate the deficit by the year 2002 if we could eliminate the enthusiasm for a tax cut that still is on the table.

I understand that enthusiasm is there. I did not hear an awful lot of people in the Senate, at least when they were campaigning for reelection, campaign on a promise to put those portions of the Contract With America in our budget reconciliation.

The choice is not between bigger Government and smaller Government. We would still have a balanced budget by the year 2002, all with cuts in spending. We would still have a proposal that would not have any tax increases in it.

I think we could take an awful lot and we could get a bipartisan agreement and still have a very tough budget reconciliation if that were acceptable to my colleagues on the Republican side.

Much more difficult, and it gets difficult on this side, is that we have in place, Mr. President, with our entitlement programs, growth in those programs that continue to erode our entire budget.

Imagine a business out there that has \$1,000 or \$100,000 or \$1 million or \$10 million or \$100 million worth of sales with 67 percent of their sales being eaten up in costs related to mandated spending. That is, noncontrollable spending.

In this case, most of the retirement and health care. Imagine, 67 percent. Their capacity to invest in equipment, their capacity to invest in employees,

their capacity to invest in things that maintain their base of sales is substantially reduced as a result.

The same is true with the Federal Government. It would be bad enough, Mr. President, if we had 67 percent and it stayed there. Under both the President's proposal and the Republican budget resolution that percentage continues to grow so that in the year 2000 it is 75 percent, not 67 percent.

Mr. President, that is 8 percentage points, approximately, additional growth in entitlements. On this year's spending that is nearly \$140 billion of additional money of our budget that is going to entitlement spending.

I know the Senator from Mississippi understands this. If we had \$400 billion which is what 25 percent would be, if we had 25 percent of our budget allocated this year for defense and non-defense appropriations, we would have \$400 billion, Mr. President.

Our most dovish liberal member would probably spend \$250 billion on defense, leaving \$150 billion for non-defense spending.

Mr. President, as I look at the Republican Medicare Preservation Act—whatever they call it; something to that effect—of 1995, they say the proposal preserves Medicare in the future. It does not. All it does is it picks as the problem the year 2002 but it does not alert Americans to the enormous demographic problem of baby boomers that come online and begin to retire in the year 2008.

Mr. President, unless we take a longer view, we do not see the appropriated accounts begin to dip even lower than 25 percent, eventually becoming zero, unless we take action.

There are two things that put pressure on the appropriations accounts that requires us to cut back in agriculture this year, as well as all other of our 13 appropriations bills. One is a tax cut that is insisted upon by the Republican majority.

I do not believe—I am not sure even the majority is that enthusiastic on the Republican side. Bigger than that, Mr. President, by my calculation, is a factor of four—four times larger than that problem—is the problem of growth of entitlements.

We Democrats will have to say to Republicans—indeed the proposal put out last Friday instead of saying it does too much, the biggest deficiency that I find with the proposal, Mr. President, is it does not do enough. My criticism of it, it is not big enough. It does not really fix the problem.

I stand here as one Democrat who is concerned about what we are doing to these appropriated accounts. I see many areas where Republicans and Democrats, whether it is rural development or transportation or education, could agree that we are not spending enough, that we are decreasing our productive capacity in the future and denying ourselves higher standards of living and more economic growth.

As a result, where we have agreement we are simply unable to come up with