

to set our system on a sound footing for long-term growth and development. Congress could continue the ingrained habit of treating taxpayers' funds as the key to the candy store. We could wait until the year 2015 to address our problems like the national debt. In 2015, at the rate of current spending, the Government would only be able to spend on four entitlement programs and interest on the national debt—that would take the entirety of the budget.

Then there would be no money for defense for the country, no law enforcement, no food safety, no highways. It would all be just for the entitlements and interest. We cannot do that. We must act now. We must protect the children. We must protect their opportunities.

We live in a global economy where productivity and competitiveness are the hallmarks. We will succeed, we will sink or swim based on whether or not we are productive and competitive. We cannot swim with a debt load on the back of each citizen in the next century so great that they cannot compete in the world marketplace.

Some people say, "Well, instead of controlling spending, we could always raise taxes." The largest tax increase in history was pushed through in 1993. Now the President says he raised taxes too much. I think we all felt that he raised taxes too much.

I know we could find a lot of things that we want to do instead of balance the budget—people did not send us here for that. They sent us here to balance the budget, and it is time that we do it, because the Government sets a standard.

Over the last 30 years, tragically, we have been setting a standard of irresponsibility, a standard of undisciplined spending. We are like the parents who never set a standard for their children. The children are witnessing this Government spend, spend, and spend without accountability. It is time that we meet the challenge of bringing responsibility and accountability back to Government. It is time we stopped saying an incessant "yes." It is time we have the tough character to say "no" to protect the children—to take a responsible path.

During the 104th Congress we passed a budget resolution to balance the budget in 7 years. We voted to phase out or consolidate numerous outdated programs, commissions, agencies, initiatives. We voted to reform the failed welfare system by giving the people the power to eliminate poverty and hopelessness in their own backyards.

Mr. President, rather than trying to gain short-term political advantage by shamelessly frightening elderly Americans with empty rhetoric and misinformation, we instead are moving to protect, preserve, and strengthen Medicare for the long haul. We are working to bring efficiencies, normally only found in the marketplace of late, into the Medicare system to give people a

sense of choice and, in doing so, yes, to restrain some of the growth—but still make it possible for people to have good health care.

We all know that in the next 7 years of reform, the amount spent per capita in the Medicare system under these reform plans goes from \$4,800 per year to \$6,700 per year, and that kind of an increase per capita is a substantial one. It will allow us to attend to the current health needs, without continuing to jeopardize the future of the fund.

Mr. President, we want to let the American people keep more of what they earn. American families deserve it. American families have seen their tax burden grow from as little as 2 percent in 1950 to nearly 50 percent today. We want to give families the opportunity and responsibility of spending their own money so they can help themselves rather than have the Government always taking their resources and deploying it in a governmental scheme which seldom meets the need and frequently undermines and erodes the values for which families stand.

It is important for families to decide what is in their best interest, rather than having a governmental bureaucracy always deciding what is in their best interest.

When the families of American people express their belief that Government is out of control, as they did in last November's election, they are correct. For too long this body has assembled to satisfy the appetites of narrow interests at the public's expense. The American people are fed up with a Congress that spends the yet unearned wages of the next generation.

The resounding mandate from the electorate is to dramatically reduce Government spending, to shrink the size of the Federal Government, to stop the Government from interfering with the ability of individuals to make decisions for themselves, for their families, their property, and their lives.

That means that the attitude of "Washington knows best" must come to an end. It means that the Congress must exercise the same kind of fiscal responsibility and restraint in making its difficult decisions that every family in this country has exercised when budgeting around their kitchen tables. We say that we will not buy the things that we cannot afford. We do not spend the money we do not have, and that is a virtue that ought to be imposed upon the Government.

In conclusion, over the next couple of weeks, all Senators, both Democrats and Republicans, will have the opportunity during the debate on the budget reconciliation bill, and other measures, to send a message to the American people. Let us make it a message of responsibility and integrity and accountability. Let us say that we have heard them; that they have sent us here to do a job, not necessarily an easy job, it is not a job that requires no courage, or a job that requires no judgment. They have sent us here to do a tough job, but

it is a job, the toughness of which they face on a daily basis in their own lives and businesses.

Let us do that job. We have a duty to America and the next generation to tackle the tough decisions and not to hide our heads in the political sands. So let us come together to a point of reconciliation. Let us come to a point of decision on a bill that will set us on a steady path, a responsible path of accountability, of integrity and responsibility, a path of a balanced budget. It is within our grasp in the next 2 days. Let us make sure we take advantage of this opportunity.

Mr. President, I yield the floor.

Mr. ROCKEFELLER addressed the Chair.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from West Virginia.

Mr. ROCKEFELLER. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent to speak—I had not realized that there was a 10-minute limit. When I created the speech, which is talking about something which has not been talked about before on the floor, I did it for the purpose of trying to enlighten the membership. So if I go over just a couple of minutes, will that put me in severe jeopardy with the Presiding Officer?

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Another Presiding Officer will be here by that point.

Mr. ROCKEFELLER. That is true.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. So the Senator from West Virginia might want to seek a unanimous consent agreement first.

Mr. ROCKEFELLER. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that I, with discipline and with good intent, have the time which I might require for my remarks.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Is there objection? Without objection, it is so ordered.

PROMISES MADE SHOULD BE PROMISES KEPT

Mr. ROCKEFELLER. Mr. President, I rise to report to the entire U.S. Senate and, in fact, I am talking to my colleagues—hopefully, everybody is listening, probably not—about just how low, frankly, some are willing to stoop.

As we all know, we will soon see a gigantic budget bill with the impossible name of "reconciliation" on the floor. Under the special rules, the Senate will have very little time to discuss, let alone try to alter, this mammoth Government bill. That is why I stand here today. I want to take the time to shine a piercing light on one of the darkest, most hidden and most underhanded parts of the mammoth budget bill about to land on everybody's desk.

Using that familiar label of tax relief, the provision is an attempt to line the pockets of a select group of companies, some of which I shall name in a few moments, at the expense of something as critical as health benefits for the most vulnerable, the oldest, the weakest, and the most deserving group

of Americans you could find: Our coal miners, retired, old.

It is a provision based, in my judgment, upon greed. It is a provision stuck quietly into the package—it is, in fact, the second to last part of the finance package—in a back room before it surfaced in the open just last week. It was stuck in by the majority leader.

It is a provision that has brought a shudder into the hearts and minds of 92,000 very old, sometimes very sick, retired miners, their widows, and their orphans. Mr. President, almost 30,000 of them live in West Virginia. Obviously, I would tend to care about that a lot. On the other hand, 8,000 live in Virginia; 6,500 in Ohio; 20,000 in Pennsylvania; 12,000 in Kentucky; close to 2,000 in Indiana; and, in fact, they are in every State in this country, with the exception of Hawaii, and also in the District of Columbia.

Mr. President, these are 92,000 people who were promised by employers for decades—it was not an open question, it was a done deal—promised by their employers that they could count on health care when they made their last exit from the mines, when their lungs had sacrificed enough and they could not go on, they simply could not; when they had been underground digging out the fuel that made this country the world's most powerful economic engine, when they got too old, too sick or even lost a spouse or a parent to the dangerous work of, particularly underground, coal mining, when they could hope for some rest finally in their retirement years, 92,000 of these people are still living across this country and still have a right to believe in the principle that promises made should be promises kept.

Instead, with no hearings, with no visible authorship, no announcement, a special favor for the companies—a small group of which will get the majority of the benefits of this provision, and I will name them in a few moments—this special deal for these companies which want to break their promises—was slipped into the reconciliation bill.

It is the most extraordinary and duplicitous act I can remember in the 10 years I have been in the Senate.

A favor that gets these companies off the hook, a favor that risks the collapse of the fund that ensures the promised health care benefits to the retirees in my State and in virtually every other State—literally every other State but Hawaii—in America.

This provision is outrageous. It is shameful. It is another example of what we read about in the Wall Street Journal today. I assume and hope there will be more of this. It is an article on Members of the Senate who are getting special breaks, and it lists a bunch of Senators and the deals they cut for special friends or special interests—however you want to phrase it. It is not very elegant, however one phrases it.

Mr. President, even though average Americans did not get their say in

what would happen to their Medicaid benefits or their student loans or to the tax credit that rewards working over welfare, a select group of companies with lobbyists wall to wall sure got their say in this package.

A bill allegedly meant to balance the budget is tipping the scales of fairness and justice when it comes to health care for 92,000 very old retirees.

I strongly appeal to my Republican colleagues. I ask them to stop this corporate payoff before more damage is done to people who have done nothing in their life to deserve it.

It is obvious that the hope is to keep this cruel little provision under wraps, stick it on page 166 of a Finance Committee document. Hide it in the bill about to come to the floor. Do not talk about it, do not acknowledge who is responsible for this giveaway to companies.

I am here to talk about it. I will not stop talking about it for as long as it hangs around. I am not going to let the U.S. Senate become a bazaar again for greedy interests, and in particular in the case of retired old coal miners.

If one has not seen them, if one does not know them, one does not understand the emotion involved in this. They cannot hire lobbyists. They cannot prevail in a fight like this, unless they have a majority of us on their side.

What exactly does the provision do? It hands over the money that is keeping the miners' health trust fund solvent to a select group of companies that cannot bear keeping their promise to their own retirees to whom they promised health benefits, with whom there was an agreement. It is one more reminder that special interests count a whole lot more in this particular Congress—not the working people who toiled in the mine, miles underground in crawl spaces, crouched in the icy water until their backs ached and their lungs spoiled, as they dug to provide the power for our Nation's growth and prosperity.

Those workers—fathers, friends, brothers, and uncles—do not count when they are stacked up against the interests of big corporations who want to wriggle out of any responsibility for their own retirees to whom they have made this commitment of health benefits so long as they shall live.

I want to share just a little bit of history with the Senate. Almost 50 years ago, Madam President, the President of the United States, Harry S. Truman—this is important, because it gives it context—ended a national coal strike by seizing the coal mines. That action established an unprecedented relationship between the Federal Government, miners, and operators in the coal industry. In that 1946 strike right after the Second World War, health care was a central issue. It is not hard to understand why. Pensions are important, health care is everything—both for miners and for their families. Back then, people died of mining illnesses

and injuries in staggering numbers. There were no safety precautions. That did not take place until we passed the 1969 Coal Safety Act. All to dig out coal for the rest of the country to grow on and become what it is today which is, of course, a great, incredible, America.

Since that 1946 strike, coal miners have traded—sacrificed—other benefits like pensions to preserve the decent health care benefits which they depend on because illness and injury are so intertwined with the nature of coal mining.

This leads up to the health program under attack in the reconciliation bill about to come to the floor. In the 1950's, a grand compact involving the President and others was reached between labor and management in the coal industry—an extraordinary sort of event.

In return for health and pension security, it was decided, labor agreed to mechanize the coal mines, thereby throwing out of work within a few years 400,000 people in the Appalachians. But in return for the mechanization was the promise of lifetime pensions and health benefits. It was a good deal all around.

Much later on the health care promised to retirees faced jeopardy, and because of the impending crisis—this is much later on—I, as a Member of the Senate, worked night and day for months and months on end to find a way to shore up the health fund and extend its solvency.

I cared passionately about working this out. That led to the passage of the 1992 Coal Industry Retiree Health Benefit Act, simply known as the Coal Act.

Coal miners helped to create the might of modern industrial America. Nobody would dispute that. They fueled our progress. In 1992, when we passed the Coal Act, unanimously, without a vote, and through bipartisan negotiations, in a solution which was suggested by President Bush and his White House, and the law, of course, was signed by President Bush, we told those miners that their tremendous contributions and sacrifices mattered, and the promises made to them would be kept.

Action had to be taken. That became clear in the late 1980's. That is because the dwindling base of contributors resulting from bankruptcies and the failure of some companies to keep paying into the fund, just walking away from their responsibilities, put the miners' health trust fund in jeopardy.

When a strike broke out in 1989, then-Secretary of Labor Elizabeth Dole appointed a mediator to assist in a settlement. When the settlement was reached, she announced the appointment of a commission to recommend a long-term solution to the health crisis in this fund. That commission became known as the Dole Commission.

Secretary Dole explained that during negotiations of the settlement of this strike which involved at that time one

single company, "It became clear," she said in the unanimous report, "to all parties involved that the issue of health care benefits for retirees affects the entire industry."

She went on to say, "A comprehensive industrywide solution is desperately needed."

Secretary Dole's Coal Commission submitted its final report in November of 1990. The Commission observed that health benefits are an emotional subject in the coal industry, not only because coal miners have been promised and guaranteed health care benefits for life, but also because coal miners in their labor contracts have traded lower pensions over the years for better health care benefits.

In fact, in the solution that we reached in 1992, the miners contributed something like \$210 million from their pension funds to the solution to protect their health benefits.

Something else that the Coal Commission said:

Retired coal miners have legitimate expectations of health care benefits for life. That was the promise they received during their working lives. That is how they planned their retirement years. That commitment should be honored.

Close quote, the Dole Commission.

The Dole commission also considered the fairest way to ensure that the health fund did not collapse. The base upon which it was funded was getting more narrow. Therefore, there had to be a broader solution. They recommended that companies that employed miners—current signatories, so to speak, and former signatories alike—share the costs of providing benefits to miners whose employers went out of business. And, in the words of the Dole commission, the best way to finance the health benefits promised miners was the "imposition of a statutory obligation to contribute on current and past signatories, mechanisms to prevent future dumping of retiree health obligations."

(Ms. SNOWE assumed the chair.)

Mr. ROCKEFELLER. It was hard. And at that time we ran up against, to be quite honest, Madam President, President Bush's so-called "read my lips" problem. What the Dole commission was talking about was a tax on coal companies. The President said, "This is not acceptable." So he came in with the solution that became the Coal Act, upon which everything is based today and which is being undermined in the reconciliation bill about to come before us.

Collective bargaining cannot work when companies are not around to bargain with because they are bankrupt, perhaps, or have walked away from their responsibilities, sometimes through legal loopholes which created dozens of conflicting court decisions. Moreover, the orphaned retirees whose last employers were gone faced the prospect that when the collective bargaining agreement expired in 1993, no one would have been responsible for

their health care. And that was the fact. The Bituminous Coal Operators Association was going to just cease to exist, and there would be nobody to pay for any of the health benefits. Whereas this small group, 25 percent of the coal industry, was paying for 100 percent of the retirees of all coal companies, and that patently was not fair.

So, the Miners Health Program, with the shrinking funding base and spiraling costs, made continuation of the old program unworkable, hence the task Congress and the administration faced in 1992, when we did pass, unanimously, the Coal Act. That was the best that we could do to assign responsibility for funding the health program, recognizing that there was not then nor is there now any perfect solution.

So, in 1992, Congress met its national responsibility to protect miners' health benefits. I was proud to offer that legislation—again, the Coal Industry Retiree Health Benefit Act, or the Coal Act. It was attached to the Energy Policy Act of 1992. I worked on that legislation with an outstanding group of Members whose invaluable contributions were essential to securing passage of the act, my esteemed colleagues Senator BYRD, Senator FORD, and Senator SPECTER. Senator Wallop was absolutely crucial. The Senator from Wyoming at that time was absolutely crucial in the passage of that act, and others from the Finance Committee and the Energy Committee. The Coal Act would not have become law without their work and without strong bipartisan cooperation, which is what has me so perplexed now.

We did our work, and miners' benefits were saved and that makes me proud. Now those miners, today, on average are 73 years old. Most worked in the mines for 20, 30, or 40 years or more. People have no idea what that means unless they have been around coal mining. Every day they rode a rail car a mile underground, stooped in crawl spaces 4-feet high with ice water up to their knees, and made their mines productive and made their employers rich, for the most part. For them, the legacy of that work is black lung.

People say they can get by on black lung. Black lung is a totally different subject, and only about 4 percent of miners are granted black lung, even though I firmly believe that anybody who has been in the mines for 8, 9, or 10 years, by definition has black lung. They have black lung, asthma, cancer, back pain, chronic respiratory disease. Their health benefits remain a matter of life and death to them, Madam President. The most serious of subjects in the most dangerous profession. And now, in this new amazing Congress, a sneak attack has been made on the health care security that was finally restored in 1992 for miners and their widows and orphans. And, Madam President, it is not a secret attack any longer.

The companies that would profit, which would get 60 percent of the benefit of all of this, have been hiding behind little coal companies so as to make it look like little coal companies were going to take all the hurt. The ones who are going to get 60 percent or more of the benefits of the finance provision are Allied Signal, North American Coal, LTV, Pittston, A.T. Massey, and Berwind Coal Co. Those six have manipulated, through dozens, scores of lawyers, to the point where they could put into the reconciliation bill something that will yield them a \$33 million windfall.

The provision in this bill is a gift for these big companies looking for a way to walk away from their promise made to these miners nearly 50 years ago. These companies have spent millions to unravel the Coal Act, to renege on their promises. So far they have not succeeded in robbing miners of a single day of health coverage, but they have not stopped trying. I thought this was all put to bed, it was all history. As I said, people did not want to do it in the Finance Committee. I do not think any Republican members in the Finance Committee really wanted to do it. It was just put in there. I think it was put in there by the majority leader, and their patrons slipped just what they were asking for in the reconciliation bill approved by the Finance Committee and now part of the package about to come to the floor.

The day after the Finance Committee reported out their handiwork that demolishes the health security of over 92,000 miners and their widows for the sake of a few of the biggest and most profitable companies in this country—I will not give you their profit levels, but they are extraordinary—I went back to West Virginia. I would say to my esteemed colleague from Minnesota, I am almost finished. I went back to tell miners and their wives what happened.

The miners I met with were tight-lipped. This was this past weekend. They were tight-lipped, as miners tend to be under all circumstances, especially older miners who have seen it all—strikes, cave-ins, shutdowns, layoffs. They have learned to accept a lot in life.

I remember, once I had a friend who fought in the Second World War in the Battle of the Bulge. He and I served in the Peace Corps together and I tried to get him to talk about it. He would not talk about it. He would not talk about it. Miners tend to be like that.

They have seen their coworkers killed, mangled, dismembered. They have lost limbs, they have lost their breath, but they have kept their faith and they have kept their health care benefits, but they do not have a lot to pass on to their families.

Until the Senate Finance Committee action, you know, then they had their health cards and knew their health

benefits were going to be safe and secure. I had to tell them about a document that appeared on Monday, that was debated by the Finance Committee on a Wednesday, that was approved by its Republican members on Thursday, full of tax breaks for every conceivable special interest. But on page 165 and 166—those are the pages I care about—the very end of the package containing the Cracker Jack prize for all of the companies that want to renege on their promise to their retirees.

One miner, who worked for decades in the mines, told me starkly, he said, "I am worried to death." He said, "Now it seems like the company is the one running the whole show."

He is right.

"They want to do away with us when we were the ones who worked and built everything else."

He is right.

Bude Jarvis, one of the miners, asked me, "What's going to happen to me if I lose my benefits?" And he answered his own question, "They'll probably just put me in the grave before my time."

Another miner, worried about his diabetic wife—diabetes is common—he said, "If I had to buy her medicine, I don't know what would happen. I could not afford to."

Today retired miners' health benefits pay for prescription drugs. That is one of the beauties. They are on Medicare but Medicare does not pay for any of that stuff.

These are people who will have taken a dozen different kinds of pills by lunch because of their ailments. So when it comes right down to it, this provision is about one thing. Old coal miners and their widows being ground up in the legislative process like hamburger while the lobbyists cut them up.

All the jockeying, the lobbying, the lawyering, and the loophole making behind this provision, who pays, who does not, who profits, by how much—it is so much legal mumbo jumbo to a retired miner. He does not get into those things, nor does his widow.

When a retired coal miner who has worked for half a century underground in the most dangerous profession in the world by far—by far, Madam President—cannot count on the health care that he was promised decades ago by this Federal Government, and by the companies that richly profited from his labors, then we have made the word of this body worthless—worthless—and will have made contracts worthless. If the Senate and society do not say that the contract that guaranteed miners—guaranteed miners and their widows—benefits is worth keeping, then how can we trust any contract? A contract is not anything to an average American if he needs a bevy of lawyers to make it count. That is supposed to be a problem in countries which are struggling to work their way out of dictatorships and Communist economies. A contract is not worth anything if it is only good until some special interest with political connections can take

away what you were promised while elected representatives, including perhaps your own, turn their backs.

Promises made should be promises kept, whether you are a coal miner, or a teacher, or a computer technician, or a nurse, or a politician, or a plumber. Promises made should be promises kept.

The Senate still has a chance to reject this giveaway to select companies trying to profit at the expense of 92,000 retirees, widows, and their orphans. They are dying at the rate of 6,000 a year. Ninety-two thousand are dying. When we passed the bill, there were 120,000. Now it is 92,000. They are dying.

We know the budget reconciliation bill will pass with virtually every Republican vote. I hope I am wrong on that. We know that the process is stacked so that the bill cannot be filibustered. But my colleagues on the other side of the aisle can stand up for the people in their own States and the principle of keeping promises.

And I close with this. My colleagues on the other side of the aisle who heard the call of Secretary DOLE's Coal Commission for a fair solution and helped me pass the bill to rescue the health fund can heed that call once more. To anyone who says America's crisis is about values, this is the chance to turn those words into deeds. This provision that mocks the basic value of keeping promises and attacks the health care of 92,000 retirees should go, Madam President. It should go. And, if it does not, those of us on the other side, in West Virginia and across the country, will not give up. We will not, and we cannot, as I am sure the Presiding Officer understands, be still.

I thank the Presiding Officer. I thank my distinguished colleague from Minnesota who must think that I took considerable advantage.

Mr. GRAMS addressed the Chair.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Minnesota.

Mr. GRAMS. Thank you very much, Madam President.

Madam President, we are beginning a truly historic week. With a vote approaching on budget reconciliation, Congress is ready to set this Nation on course toward a balanced budget. We are also ready to offer working-class Americans relief from a Federal tax burden that is crushing them and their families.

The legislation we will approve this week is nothing short of revolutionary. The desperate attempts of my colleagues across the aisle to discredit the revolution are nothing short of pitiful.

For several weeks now, we have had to listen to baseless statements made on the floor of this Senate about the budget reconciliation package, the kind of statements that in Minnesota we call fish stories.

Now, I hate to waste a lot of time in answering such ridiculous charges, but in Washington, things that get repeated three times somehow become fact, especially in the minds of the lib-

eral press, who will carry these charges as fact.

My colleague, the junior Senator from California, was on the floor last Friday, getting in the last words before the weekend, and claimed Speaker GINGRICH had made a deal with people making over \$350,000 a year to give them a huge tax break but they had to settle for \$5,500 back instead.

The good Senator should first of all be held accountable for making such a ridiculous, baseless charge.

"Where's the beef?" Where is the proof to back up such outlandish accusations?

What she failed to say is that the Republican tax relief plan has been scored with nearly 75 percent of our \$245 billion in tax cuts going to working-class families with incomes under \$75,000.

So why would she pick out the figure of 350,000? The answer is class warfare. It is an old trick our opponents have perfected in 1995: if you are not right, try divide and conquer. Scare people into believing things that are not true, or at best half-truths.

The good Senator from California also spoke about Medicare and trustees' report warning the Medicare Program would be bankrupt by 2002.

She was right when she said nearly every year, the Medicare trustees issue a report naming a date when the system faces default.

But again, she failed to mention that this year, the trustees urged Congress to act quickly to save the system and stave off bankruptcy—to lessen the impact it will have on the hard-working families who pay the taxes to support it. And besides, that is no excuse to do nothing.

My colleague said the Medicare system has been faced with the same problem many times, that Democrats have made some tough decisions, but have extended the life of Medicare each time.

But again, she did not tell the American people that the seven times the Democrats faced those "tough" questions, their answer was to raise taxes on working Americans.

Seven times they raised taxes in the last 30 years to keep the program going. Doubling, tripling, quadrupling your withholding taxes * * * and then doubling it again and again. Rather than finding a way to save Medicare, improve it, and hold down the costs, they would advocate a tax increase.

That new tax, of course, would have to amount to \$388 billion over the next 7 years, \$388 billion in new payroll taxes—to feed this huge Government machine * * * a machine we cannot control now * * * a bureaucracy that is so out of control there is no efficiency, only billions in waste, fraud, and abuse.

But hey, it is only the taxpayers' money, not mine. Put it on the taxpayers' credit card, they say.

Funny, the Democrats never seem to have a problem in raising taxes, taking money from you and me * * * but ask

them to support a tax cut, and they will rush to the floor in a flood of protest. They just cannot stand the pain of not being able to give away more of your dollars. They want to raise your taxes so they can be compassionate and give it away.

But Mr. President, that is not compassion. That behavior is greedy and power grabbing.

For over 40 years, the Democrats have been inviting people to dinner, and using the American taxpayer as the credit card to pay for it.

I also heard the Democrats say they have the resolve to balance the budget, but would do it in a "more reasonable" way, with "more compassion."

The last 40 years, however, tell us how they would do it: Raise taxes, give away more money, raise taxes, give away more money.

Again, watch out for that word "compassion"—it means they want more of your hard-earned dollars so they can spend it.

The President says he has the resolve to balance the budget, but he does not have a balanced budget to offer.

The outlines he has put on the table have never come close to balancing the budget. They leave \$200 billion-a-year-plus deficits as far as the eye can see.

And what about the so-called balanced budget plan the senior Senator from North Dakota has proposed, the one my Democrat colleagues say is the answer.

Again, their answer is always more taxes, and my colleague's budget is no different.

I have a chart here just to compare 1993, 1994, and 1995—the Democrat budget and answer, and the Republican budget and answer. You can see in each year—1993, a \$251 billion tax increase by President Clinton, the largest in history; Democrats in 1994 continue more taxes; in 1995, under the plan of the Senator from North Dakota, he would want to raise taxes another \$228 billion rather than giving back \$245 billion in tax cuts.

His budget would supposedly balance without inflicting pain on millions of Americans, unless, of course, you include those who get up and go to work every day, the taxpayers of this country. There apparently is no pain in working longer hours to pay more in taxes.

The budget offered by the Senator from North Dakota would pick your pockets to the tune of over \$500 billion-plus, in additional taxes over the next 7 years. Imagine, rather than supporting a tax cut of \$245 billion, their plan would be to raise another \$228 billion from American taxpayers.

If the growth of the Federal budget is not reduced and spending continues to increase, you need more dollars to feed the spending fire, and that is where you, the taxpayers, come in again.

The Republicans have a plan that will balance the budget—eliminate the deficit—by the year 2002.

Now, they say our plan will cost students more to go to school, cost fami-

lies more for everything from food to clothing to shelter, the elderly will pay more for Medicare, nursing homes, et cetera.

But let me ask you a simple question: if we cannot afford it as individuals, as families, as a society, how can we afford for the Government to do it for us?

The money has to come from somewhere.

The Government creates no wealth—it only reallocates it, redistributes it. If we do not have the money to pay the bills that need to be paid, how can we afford the taxes Washington wants in order to do it for us—to be compassionate?

The Senate Democrats do not hold a monopoly on compassion. Liberal or conservative, Republican or Democrat, I think most of us came to this Chamber out of deep compassion for our fellow Americans.

We want nothing more than for every American to have the opportunity to be successful, no matter what that means to each individual. As Edward Deming, the Father of the Japanese industrial revolution would say. We need a "Win-win" solution. We do not want losers in society, or those left out. We want winners. We are all better off with more winners.

But somehow, according to the senior Senator from California, if you make \$350,000 a year, you do not deserve it, because you have somehow gotten it illegally or unfairly.

Or if nothing else, it is just not right that you have it.

And if you do, the Government should step in and take it away—whatever amount it deems "fair"—and give it to those the Government thinks deserve it.

There are individuals in this country that need our help and we are spending nearly \$1.6 trillion this year to try and meet those needs the best we can, without destroying the very fabric of our society—our families and our job creators—to do it.

But the rhetoric that spending is being reduced so the money can be funneled into huge tax cuts for the wealthy is a sham.

The whole argument is being presented in this manner to drive your attention from the facts to the fiction, the shell game, the con man, the snake oil salesman, the Democratic opposition.

President Clinton himself is guilty of this budgetary double-speak.

The President raised taxes in 1993 by \$251 billion.

Of course, we all know that last week, he told a crowd of fat cat contributors at a \$1,000 a plate fundraiser he knew they were mad and he admitted he raised taxes too much, but said it was the Republicans' fault because they would not help him stop the Democrats from spending more money.

He had to raise taxes, he said. But the next day, back in Washington, he blamed that statement on being tired,

reiterating his point that "no Democrat in his right mind would ever propose cutting taxes, or saying they had raised them enough."

They do not want the taxpayers to keep more of their own money. They do not trust you to spend it wisely.

Who knows, you might "waste it" on food, clothing, shelter, a vacation, or by saving it for your child's education.

"Send it to Washington and we'll be compassionate with your hard-earned money," they say. "Let us take care of you."

The kind of care offered by the Democrats is suffocating the American people.

To stop the suffocation, we are ready to cut their taxes, and I need to remind my colleagues across the aisle that tax relief is not dessert.

Congress has been eating the taxpayers' dessert for the past 40 years. And the American people have been left only gruel to eat.

Finally, when the opponents of change resort to class warfare, when they resort to statements like, "champagne bottles are being chilled in penthouses all across the country—except in those where someone has a conscience," well, that is nothing but the desperate cry of a dying liberal agenda.

I cannot afford champagne, but that is OK because I do not like it anyway. When I get back to Minnesota this weekend, I am going to put some beer in the cooler.

And like millions of Americans across this country, we are going to celebrate a small victory over this powerful Government machine, because the people know they will be able to keep \$245 billion of their own money, to spend the way they want, rather than giving it to those who claim to be compassionate.

And we are going to say this is only the first in a long line of victories to come.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator's 10 minutes' time has expired.

Mr. GRAMS. I thank the Chair.

Mr. KERRY. Madam President, what is the legislative status at this point?

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senate is in morning business.

Mr. KERRY. I thank the Chair.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Statements are limited to 10 minutes.

Mr. KERRY. I ask unanimous consent that I be permitted to proceed for such time as I might consume.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Is there any objection? The Chair hears none, and it is so ordered.

FOLLOWING THE BUDGET DEBATE

Mr. KERRY. Madam President, I listened with interest to the comments of my friend from Minnesota, and I guess in a way as I listened to him I sort of felt sorry for Americans who try to follow this debate. It is going to be difficult because the rhetoric flies fast