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Senate

The Senate met at 1 p.m. and was called to order by the President pro tempore [Mr. THURMOND].

PRAYER

The Chaplain, the Reverend Richard C. Halverson, D.D., offered the following prayer:

Let us pray:

Tomorrow morning, Officer David Agner will have surgery near his brain—very serious. In a moment of silence, let us remember the officer and his family.

Thou art worthy, O Lord, to receive glory and honour and power: for thou hast created all things, and for thy pleasure they are and were created.—Revelation 4:11.

Gracious God and Father, the Founders of our Republic understood this fundamental truth and, upon it, based their conviction of human equality, human rights, and a government whose purpose was to secure these rights and whose authority was derived from the people. Grant us to see, O God, that if we undermine this foundation of our Government, we, sooner or later, jeopardize the superstructure which was built upon it. As we forsake the root of our national uniqueness, we forfeit the fruit.

Help us to comprehend, dear God, that this is one explanation for the futility of our best human efforts today. We are struggling to preserve the benefits of a belief which we no longer hold to be true. We have smashed the foundation and are striving to prevent the superstructure from collapsing.

Forgive the secularism, the antisupernaturalism which we have exchanged for faith in a Creator God which motivated our Founding Fathers. Restore unto us their beliefs that we may recover the riches of the legacy they transmitted to us before it is too late.

We pray this in the name of Him who is the Light of the world. Amen.

RESERVATION OF LEADER TIME

The PRESIDENT pro tempore. Under the previous order, the leadership time is reserved.

RECOGNITION OF THE ACTING MAJORITY LEADER

The PRESIDENT pro tempore. The distinguished Senator from Montana is recognized.

SCHEDULE

Mr. BURNS. Mr. President, on behalf of the majority leader, under his previous order, morning business shall be until the hour of 2 p.m. and with leaders' time being reserved. Senator CONRAD is to be recognized for 15 minutes, Senator SIMON for 15 minutes, Senator THOMAS for 5, Senator MURKOWSKI for 10, and Senator COHEN for 15.

At 2 o'clock begins the consideration of House Joint Resolution 1, the balanced budget constitutional amendment. There will be debate only today. And by order of the majority leader, there will be no rollcall votes for today.

MORNING BUSINESS

The PRESIDENT pro tempore. Under the previous order, there will now be a period for the transaction of morning business not to extend beyond the hour of 2 p.m. with Senators permitted to speak therein for not to exceed 10 minutes each. Under the previous order, the Senator from North Dakota [Mr. CONRAD] is to be recognized to speak for up to 15 minutes.

Mr. GORTON addressed the Chair.

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Mr. BURNS). The Senator from Washington is recognized.

CONGRESSMAN STEVE LARGENT

Mr. GORTON. Mr. President, late last week, the Member of Congress from the First District in the State of Oklahoma [STEVE LARGENT] was voted into the National Football League's Hall of Fame in the first year during which he was eligible for that honor.

While Mr. LARGENT represents a State a long way from my own State of Washington, his entire National Football League career was, of course, as a member of the Seattle Seahawks. And so for many years, for more than half of the year he was a resident of the Puget Sound region.

Very rarely have so many distinctions come to a person of the age of STEVE LARGENT, as an outstanding football player, both in college and in the National Football League, as an elected Member of the Congress of the United States, and as a person with a great deal of fame. Rarely, I may say, has anyone so deserved those honors.

I think STEVE LARGENT would be the first to say that he was far from the fastest or the most gifted person playing in the National Football League, but due to a tremendous amount of self-discipline and dedication, he became one of the most outstanding persons in our generation to play that fascinating game.

But I believe that Mr. LARGENT and all of us would say that more important than his fame as a football player, more important than his membership in the Congress of the United States, has been the example he has presented to those who have come to know him through those activities as a human being: As a husband, as a father, as an activist Christian. With those as his No. 1 goals, he has nonetheless been

• This "bullet" symbol identifies statements or insertions which are not spoken by a Member of the Senate on the floor.



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professionally successful, now, in two dramatically different professions.

We speak often of the role model nature of professional athletes. In STEVE LARGENT, we have an athlete who is truly a role model for our society; an individual who has shown that fame and high income is not inconsistent with the finest possible family and citizen leadership that it is possible for us to imagine. Last week, Congressman LARGENT was a part of the debate in the House of Representatives over a balanced budget amendment on which debate will begin in this body in less than an hour. So he is now serving in as distinguished a fashion as a Member of this Congress as he did as a member of the Seattle Seahawks and the National Football League. But most of all, our friend and exemplar, STEVE LARGENT, is a person who shows what citizenship and membership in a family ought to be in the United States of America.

So it is that we, from the State of Washington, are grateful for his long association with us. We wish, along with the people of Oklahoma, and especially of his First Congressional District, to congratulate him on an honor well earned and to wish him long years of success in his new career and a lifetime of success as a leader of the people he represents.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from North Dakota is recognized. I might suggest the Senator from North Dakota is recognized for 15 minutes.

Mr. CONRAD. I thank the Chair.

(The remarks of Mr. CONRAD pertaining to the introduction of S. 293 are located in today's RECORD under "Statements on Introduced Bills and Joint Resolutions.")

Mr. SIMON addressed the Chair.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Illinois.

MONTHLY REPORT TO THE SENATE

Mr. SIMON. Mr. President, and my colleagues in the Senate. On November 14, I announced that I will not be a candidate for reelection to the Senate nor for any other office. I will be leaving with great respect for this body and with great appreciation to the people of Illinois who made it possible for me to serve here.

The evening of my announcement, President Clinton called me from Jakarta, Indonesia, to wish me the best. He made a suggestion: Once a month I should report to the public on what is happening and what should happen in Congress. He indicated that since I will not be a candidate for reelection, my words might take on added significance and not be viewed as another partisan speech.

I am making the first of my monthly comments today, the 113th anniversary of the birth of Franklin D. Roosevelt, a President who has been praised recently by both President Clinton and

Speaker NEWT GINGRICH. FDR and Congress worked together on the huge problems the Nation then faced.

A glance at the policy landscape provides these recent positive developments, from my perspective:

First, a peaceful change in the majority party in both Houses of Congress. While I personally would have preferred retaining Democratic majorities in the House and Senate, I also recognize that for a free system to thrive, peaceful change must occur from time to time.

Second, Congress has voted to place the laws and regulations that govern our private sector counterparts on itself, and the President has signed that measure. That will protect our employees better and make us more sensitive to the difficulties others face.

Third, the Senate Judiciary Committee—and now the full House of Representatives—have approved a balanced budget amendment to the Constitution. The passage of the amendment first urged by Thomas Jefferson come none too soon as we careen down the fiscal hill toward the fate of far too many nations: monetizing the debt, meeting our obligations by printing more and more money that is worth less and less.

There are negative developments also. I would include:

First, excessive partisanship in Congress by both political parties as we adjust to the new status each has. That we will differ on issues is both natural and healthy; that we are sometime petty in our differences may be natural for all of us who have above-average egos, but it is not healthy.

Second, a mean-spiritedness toward the poor surfaces in too much discussion of welfare reform, sometimes bordering on racism. We need genuine welfare reform. The danger is that we will move organizational boxes around on a chart and try to convince the public and ourselves that we have done something constructive. Even worse, there is talk of taking punitive action against poor people.

Third, the two parties have entered into a bidding war on tax cuts. Many of the Republicans promised one in their Contract With America, and President Clinton pledged the same in altered form. Both sides are wrong. If I may personalize this, I face a choice of giving myself a small tax cut and imposing a further burden on my three grandchildren, or sacrificing a little and providing a better future for my grandchildren. I do not have a difficult time making that choice, and I do not believe most Americans do. We should pledge a reduction in the deficit instead of a tax cut.

Others can provide additional pluses and minuses.

But one issue that dominated the political landscape only a few months ago is almost absent: health care. Yes, the President—to his credit—mentioned it in his State of the Union Message, but little is said on the floors of the House

and Senate about this massive problem. Television and radio news programs rarely mention it. What once was a dominant issue at town meetings in my State has almost staged a disappearing act.

But it will not disappear, not as long as almost 40 million Americans remain unprotected, the only citizens of any modern industrial nation with that status. It will not disappear as long as Americans are added to the lists of uninsured at the rate of more than 91,000 every month, 3,055 every day.

Since the day President Clinton waved his pen at us in a joint session of Congress on January 25, 1994, 1.1 million more Americans have lost their health insurance coverage, bringing the total to 39.7 million. And costs continue to escalate. Medicare spending, for example, will double in the next 7 years and will then consume 16 percent of our total Federal spending. But we cannot tackle Medicare costs without tackling the health care costs in the rest of our economy. As we cut from Medicare, we shift the burden to the private sector—and every private-paying patient makes up the difference when Medicare underpays hospitals by about \$13 billion every year, as it does now.

Seven days ago marked 56 years since Franklin Roosevelt sent a message to Congress for a national health program. But early in 1931, as Governor of New York, he reported to the legislature of that State: "The success or failure of any government in the final analysis must be measured by the well-being of its citizens. Nothing can be more important [than] * * * the health of its people." Since then, Harry Truman and Richard Nixon and Bill Clinton have called upon us to protect our citizens better, and Congress has failed to respond.

This issue will not go away. It is more than grim statistics. It is my former staff member, now a consultant with the Federal Government but without health insurance coverage because she is technically not an employee. At a dinner with two friends, she suddenly experienced chest pains, paleness, perspiration, and nausea—often symptoms of a heart attack. She refused to go to a hospital for fear of the cost. It turned out she has a problem with food poisoning that was not serious. But how many people have died who actually have had heart attacks in that situation? A woman in McHenry, IL, wrote to me about the health coverage horrors her daughter and son-in-law have gone through, facing the loss of their home and car. And then this woman who wrote to me added:

I have had cancer, so I can never quit my job as no one else will give me insurance. My husband has had ileitis and two types of diabetes so no one will give him insurance. We are trapped in our jobs and could not afford to pay for our own insurance if we ever got permanently laid off or had to switch jobs. We are 48 and 53 years old and this is a scary thought.