

undiagnosed illnesses. Mr. President, Secretary Jesse Brown will not be silenced.

Streamline and make the VA more responsive, a plan to decentralize the VA national health care system, which is now being implemented. Mr. President, Secretary Jesse Brown will not be silenced.

Women veterans: He implemented a series of health care initiatives for women, established eight women veterans Comprehensive Health Care Centers. Mr. President, Secretary Jesse Brown will not be silenced.

There are many more accomplishments that I could list, but I want to just end with one personal story, which I think tells a very large story about Secretary Jesse Brown.

Tim Gilmore fought for our country in the Vietnam war. He suffered from agent orange exposure, and he died of cancer. Toward the end of his life, Tim Gilmore was tormented by one fact. He knew he would not have long to live, but he had not received any compensation. By the rules that we operate under, if he did not receive any compensation before he passed away, there was a very real question whether his family would ever receive any compensation. He was tormented by this.

When Secretary Jesse Brown came to my State, this family made a personal appeal to him, the veterans community made a personal appeal to him to somehow, please, cut through the bureaucracy and please have some compassion and please be an advocate for Tim Gilmore and his family.

Mr. President, I made the same appeal. Time went by, Tim Gilmore became weaker, and it was very clear he was going to pass away soon. A very short period of time before Tim Gilmore passed away, Secretary Jesse Brown made sure that he received compensation, made sure that his family would receive that compensation.

That family has never forgotten that. To Tim Gilmore, a Vietnam vet who died from agent orange exposure, that was one of the most important things before he passed away. I will be indebted, as a Senator from Minnesota, to Secretary Jesse Brown forever, for his compassion and his strength and commitment to people.

I will say to my colleagues, you can do whatever you want to his travel budget or personal budget, but you are not going to silence him. He is going to continue to talk about this budget and how it affects veterans.

I will mention one point I have been focused on, as a U.S. Senator, and I will be pleased to debate this with anyone. I think what we are doing here in the health care field puts way too many veterans in very serious jeopardy for the following reason: Our veterans population is also becoming an aging population. We all know that.

If you have reductions in Medicare—and we continue to go through this debate about whether it is lessening the rate of increase or a cut. I do not even

want to get into the semantics. I want to tell you, there is only one way you look at it. Look at the year 2002; ask how many people are going to be 65 years of age or over, how many of them are going to be 85 years of age or over; you ask what kind of services they are going to require, and you ask whether or not you are investing the resources to make sure they get them. We are not.

If you have those reductions in Medicare and reductions in medical assistance, you are going to have more of the elderly people coming to the veterans health care system for health care. Then, if you have the reduction in the VA health care system as well, it becomes a triple whammy.

Secretary Jesse Brown is going to continue to be a strong advocate for veterans. I will say to my colleagues, he is going to continue to challenge your budget and he is going to continue to say, "Why don't you ask the oil companies to sacrifice a little bit, or the coal companies, or the tobacco companies, or the pharmaceutical companies? And how come you give all this money to military contractors, above and beyond what the Pentagon asked for? And how come you have all these rapid depreciation allowances and cuts in capital gains?"

I listened to my colleague from Mississippi speak with considerable intelligence the other day about this. He is a very able Senator. But this Secretary of Veterans Affairs is going to continue to challenge these priorities. He should.

We do not need any hate, I think all of us agree. But we will have the debate. It will be an important debate for this country. I believe Secretary Jesse Brown will be a very powerful voice in that debate. I come to the floor of the Senate to speak in his behalf today.

I yield the floor.

Mr. LOTT. 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. DOLE. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that further proceedings under the quorum call be dispensed with.

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

THE BALANCED BUDGET ACT OF 1995

Mr. DOLE. First, I want to thank all my colleagues for what has been happening over the past several months as far as putting together the Balanced Budget Act of 1995 is concerned. It was a massive undertaking. People said we could never do it, never make the hard decisions, but we did. We kept our word with the American people. And we have, I think, a product we can be proud of.

It may not be perfect—probably there are some things we can change, cor-

rect, modify—but it is a fundamental change in the direction this country has been headed for the past, at least, two or three decades. I know the President has indicated he is going to veto it. And if he does—as I assume he will—I hope he also will say he is seriously concerned about the problems we raise and try to correct them, that he will sit down with us in serious negotiations and have some budget that we can all hold up and all take credit for that will balance the budget in the 7 years, reform welfare as we know it, preserve and strengthen Medicare, provide tax cuts for families with children, and also tax cuts to stimulate the economy, a capital gains rate reduction, estate tax relief. There are hundreds of provisions in this bill.

I particularly, again, want to thank my colleague, Senator DOMENICI, from New Mexico, and members of the Budget Committee for their outstanding work. And I failed to mention Senator ROTH, the new chairman of the Finance Committee. About 80 percent of this heavy lifting was done by the Finance Committee under the chairmanship of Senator BILL ROTH from Delaware. He did an outstanding job. All the tax cuts, the Medicare and Medicaid provisions, all these very controversial areas were under the jurisdiction of the Finance Committee. Certainly Senator ROTH deserves our commendation too.

ORDER OF PROCEDURE

Mr. DOLE. Mr. President, we hope to continue to negotiate today and perhaps have some agreement on a continuing resolution by day's end, maybe not, but we will try. We have just sent the President the Defense appropriations bill. If he signs that, about 182,000 people will go back to work. That is almost one-quarter of the total.

We hope he will look at that carefully, particularly in light of the fact that he may be sending American troops to Bosnia. It would seem to me he would want to sign the Defense appropriations bill. I hope he does not send American troops to Bosnia without first coming to Congress, but in the event he does, either event, I think the appropriations bill is important.

I would like to announce, but I am not quite able to, that there will be no votes today. We will check on both sides of the aisle to see if we can reach an agreement on a continuing resolution and if anyone would require a roll-call vote. If not, then we could say no votes today. So, we will begin that process on both sides of the aisle. As soon as we have word, we will get back and make that announcement. I know some Members probably have other plans for the day.

What that would mean, if we had no votes, if we did reach an agreement, we could simply pass a continuing resolution by a voice vote, vitiate the final action taken on the CR we had a day or two ago, amend it, send it to the House and ask them to concur with the Senate amendment. So we could do that by voice vote.

I yield the floor.

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

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Mr. INHOFE). Without objection, it is so ordered.

Mr. GORTON. Mr. President, what is the status of business?

The PRESIDING OFFICER. We are in morning business. Each Senator is allowed to talk for 10 minutes.

THE MOST SIGNIFICANT BILL PASSED BY THE CONGRESS

Mr. GORTON. Mr. President, last evening the Senate passed what the majority leader described as the most significant bill passed by the Congress during his long and distinguished tenure in this body. I should like to express my agreement with the majority leader's characterization.

That Balanced Budget Act of 1995, which will undoubtedly be passed by the House of Representatives today because of the minor changes made in the Senate, represents a degree of responsibility, of fiscal responsibility unmatched by that of any Congress, at least since the end of World War II.

That degree of fiscal responsibility, of course, has been required by the habit of huge multi-hundreds of billions of dollars in deficits over the course of the last several years, and, most particularly, it has been required because of the nature of the budget submissions of this President of the United States who, while he was a candidate for the Presidency, claimed that he could and would balance the budget in 5 years, but who, in January of this year, proposed a budget which would never, ever lead the United States to a budget deficit significantly lower than \$200 billion.

The course of action since 1969, the last year in which there was a balanced budget in this country, has created a debt on our shoulders and on the shoulders of our children and grandchildren of almost \$5 trillion. That means, Mr. President, that a child born today inherits a debt, or a bill, of some \$187,000 during his or her life, simply to pay interest on the national debt. That statistic alone starkly illustrates not just the fiscal and financial necessity, but the moral necessity of a sharp change in direction.

This country can no longer go on providing goods and services for which it is unwilling to pay and sending the bill to our children and grandchildren. Such a change is significant. Such a change does demand dramatic changes in many of our financial priorities. But such a change carries with it great rewards.

The Congressional Budget Office tell us that simply by passing this bill, the

Government of the United States will gain a fiscal dividend of \$170 billion in more taxes and lower interest payments, a \$170 billion dividend matched by a dividend of three or four times that size, more than half a trillion dollars to the people of the United States in the form of better jobs, higher wages, lower interest rates on their mortgages and on their car loans.

That is the tangible dividend for our having passed this bill if, and only if, the President of the United States signs it.

At this point, he has said he will not. At this point, he has said he will veto even the continuing resolution passed by this body two evenings ago which would allow all of the Government workers to go back to work, all of the activities of Government to continue until some time in December, merely in an exchange for a promise on the part of the President that he will agree to a budget that is balanced by the year 2002 by the honest figures and statistics of the Congressional Budget Office.

The President, in spite of his promise in 1993 to use just those figures, has refused, prefers to keep the Government out of operation to making that pledge.

Now, Mr. President, nothing in that pledge requires him to accept the precise numbers and priorities of our budget. He can insist on more in the way of taxes than we call for and more in the way of spending than we call for, or a different balance of spending. We may or may not agree, but that can be negotiated. What we will not negotiate, Mr. President, is the proposition that the budget will be balanced by the end of 7 years, with firm statutes in place that will assure that balance, and that the figures we will use to determine whether or not that balance is reached are honest figures, not figures cooked up in the White House.

At this point, we understand the President wants us simply to say we will have the goal of balancing the budget in 2002 and maybe the goal of using Congressional Budget Office figures. Well, Mr. President, that just does not work. We know, regrettably, that this White House has a different goal every day of the week.

In fact, this President has talked about a balanced budget in 5 years, 7 years, 8 years, 9 years, 10 years, and never, and he has used at least two different sources of statistics for each of those promises. So we have to nail down the proposition that the budget will be balanced in 7 years under honest statistics. That is all we ask for. But we can ask for no less because nothing less will result in the people of the United States having this wonderful fiscal dividend for them in the form of better job opportunities and higher wages and lower interest rates, and we will also say that we have been wrong in the past in spending what we would not pay for and sending the bill to someone else, and that we are not going to do it anymore.

Mr. ASHCROFT addressed the Chair.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Missouri is recognized.

Mr. ASHCROFT. Thank you, Mr. President.

A TURNING POINT IN THE HISTORY OF OUR COUNTRY

Mr. ASHCROFT. Mr. President, I commend the Senator from Washington for his clear statement about the kind of challenge that is before us. This is a turning point—a turning point in the history of our country. Will we decide to discontinue using the credit card of the next generation and then after racking up the charges, sending them the bill? That is the fundamental decision. It is a decision we have not had the courage to make for the last 26 years. Over a quarter of a century has passed since we last operated without sending this enormous credit card bill to our children and grandchildren.

This is an issue of freedom. Who will be free to make the decision on how the next generations resources will be spent? Will we be free to decide how their resources are spent? Or will they be free? It is not unlike the kind of decision that was made when this country came into existence. The British thought they could tax us and spend our resources without listening to us. We referred to it as taxation without representation. And spending our resources against our wishes was so offensive to us that we drew a proverbial line in the sand. The midnight ride of Paul Revere launched this Nation into a period of conflict to establish once and for all that one group does not spend the resources of another group against the other group's wishes and will.

I believe that this is a fundamental turning point in America. Who is going to control the destiny of the next generation? Will they, as free people, have the God-given right to shape the tomorrows in which they live by deploying their resources in ways in which they see fit? Or will they be slaves to the past? Will they be devoting their resources to pay for our excesses?

I think the Senator from Washington has stated the case rather clearly. He has pointed out that we have to live within our means, that we have to fashion a spending plan that is within the limits of the money that we will have. Now, that is always a little bit difficult to do in government. You have to project how much money you will have. You do not know exactly how much money you will have because you do not know how much will be paid in taxes and you do not know the level of business activity. So you have to make estimates. You have to have assumptions about the level of economic activity in society. You have to have forecasting.

Any time you have forecasting, you run into the same trouble that you run into if you are going on a picnic with