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Senate

The Senate met at 10:30 a.m., and was called to order by the President pro tempore (Mr. THURMOND).

PRAYER

The Chaplain, Dr. Lloyd John Ogilvie, offered the following prayer:

Almighty God, our gracious heavenly Father and Lord of all life, we praise You for hearing and answering our prayers. Today, we are very aware of how You work through men and women to get Your work done. Without You, we cannot; without us You will not. You are the source of all that we have and are. We are thankful that there is no limit to what can be accomplished when we humbly give You the glory and no limit to the problems that can be solved when we diligently seek what is best for our Nation.

You have been at work through us to plan for the future of our Nation. We thank You for using leaders in both parties to break the deadlock and get the Government moving again. Help us to affirm the truths we have claimed together for our fiscal future and inspire us to resolve differences that remain. We press on with awe and wonder over this vivid reminder of Your direct involvement in all the details of our lives and of Your willingness to accomplish Your plan through us. In the name of our Lord. Amen.

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Mr. COVERDELL). The able majority leader is recognized.

SCHEDULE

Mr. DOLE. Mr. President, for the information of my colleagues, there will be a period for morning business with Senators entitled to speak up to 10 minutes each. Today, we expect to adopt an adjournment resolution in time for the Senate to adjourn for Thanksgiving. It is possible the Senate may consider any legislative or execu-

tive items that have been cleared for action, but there will be no votes today.

The House will not start voting until 5 o'clock this afternoon. Hopefully, they can have a near-unanimous vote on the resolution we passed yesterday to keep the Government going until December 15. If something should happen there, if there should be an amendment or something, we would be coming back an hour after that final disposition. I do not think that will happen, but we will have to leave that possibility open, just in the event there should be some other action on the House floor.

A BUDGET TO BE THANKFUL FOR

Mr. DOLE. Mr. President, the past few days have been historic ones in Washington, DC. As we approach Thanksgiving, I believe our children and our grandchildren will have a lot to be thankful for. They may not understand it. Maybe their parents will not understand it, maybe their grandparents will not understand it, but I do believe we have provided the leadership the American people have been waiting for, the leadership to do the most important thing we could ever do: pass a balanced budget for the first time in a generation.

While President Clinton says he opposes our budget, last night the Republican majority reached an agreement with the White House, with the President and congressional Democrats to enact legislation before the end of this year to balance the budget by the year 2002 using honest economic estimates of the Congressional Budget Office, a balanced budget in 7 years. That is what this discussion has been all about. We have never lost sight, on our side of the aisle, of our principles. We are fighting for America's future. Some may not appreciate it, some may not

understand it, but that is what the battle is all about.

We would like to make budget deficits a thing of the past. And make no mistake about it, this is all about America's future, all about generations yet to come. This may be our—maybe not last, but one of our best opportunities to make fundamental change in the way we do business, the way the Government does business, so that our children will inherit something. Maybe they can inherit a dream rather than crushing debt.

I think we owe all Americans an economy with lower interest rates so more people can buy a car, farm machinery, take out a college loan, or realize a lifetime dream of maybe buying a home. Believe me, if you look at the numbers—not my numbers but numbers from experts in the field—if, in fact, we have a balanced budget over 7 years, the markets will respond, interest rates will fall. It is like a tax cut. For every American it is like a big tax cut. If you pay less interest when you buy a car, buy a home, student loan, it is just as much money in your pocket as a tax cut would be.

So, for the hard-working Americans, we owe it to them to do what we should do. We owe it to America's seniors to save Medicare from bankruptcy, just as we saved Social Security from bankruptcy in 1983 in a bipartisan way. President Reagan, a Republican, Tip O'Neill, Democratic Speaker of the House, and Howard Baker, Republican leader of the Senate, put together a commission—and I was honored to be on the commission with the likes of Claude Pepper of Florida, the champion of senior citizens, and many others—and, in a bipartisan way, we rescued Social Security from bankruptcy in 1983.

I think we owe it to American families to give them back more of their

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



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own money—their money. I have repeated this story many times. We have a \$500-per-child tax credit in the Republican plan. The President has \$300 under a little different conditions. I met a man in Jacksonville, FL, who told me he had 10 children—10. He said, "Ten times 500 is \$5,000." And he said, "Senator, I can spend that money better for my children than you or anybody else in Washington, DC." That is what the tax credit is all about.

About 70 percent, nearly 80 percent of our total tax cuts go to families with children, or reduce the marriage penalty, or go to other areas we believe are family related. We also owe it to families who are trapped in the welfare system to create a new system based on work and hope and opportunity.

We believe we have a good plan—I think the Senate bill which passed, as I recall 87 to 12, it would have been 88 to 12 but Senator HATFIELD was unavoidably absent that day—and we are going to change welfare as we know it. It is going to be helpful to those who must rely on welfare.

We are going to send it back to the States. I just finished talking to the Republican Governors, by satellite, in New Hampshire. They are excited about the prospect. Let them make the decisions. They are excited about welfare reform. They are excited about returning Medicaid to the States.

I think, finally, we owe it to the American people just to keep our word and keep our promise. I know there is not a lot of precedent for it. They may not be used to it. But these things were promised the American people in 1994, and they are being delivered in 1995.

We cannot do everything in 1 year. When you have had 40 years going the other direction of a bigger central government, more spending, more taxes, it may take more than one session of Congress to turn it all around. But this is the beginning. This is only the beginning, but it is a start of the process.

We have been told that we can do it in 7 years. Those are the estimates of the nonpartisan Congressional Budget Office, which, I might add, have been, I think, right 14 out of 16 times when you compare the projections of the Congressional Budget Office and the Office of Management and Budget in the White House. That would be under Presidents of both parties. That is not intended to be criticism.

So, I thank all my colleagues, and I thank Senator DASCHLE, obviously, and others on the Democratic side, for coming together on an agreement. We can all say who won or who lost, but I think the bottom line is Federal employees are back at work. They are going to be paid. They are not going to suffer any loss of pay.

If we do what we should do between now and December 15, it will not make any difference who won and who lost. I think we won. We did not blink. We have a 7-year balanced budget using CBO estimates. But that may not be important. The important thing is, if

we do what we should do working together, the big winners will be the American people. The children will not understand it, and the grandchildren, but will understand it 5 or 10 or 15 years from now when they are looking for work, or want to get married, or want to buy a car, or want to go to college.

If we have turned the country in the right direction—right now I think 70 percent of the American people say we are going in the wrong direction—if we downsize the Government, and if we reconnect the values of this Government of ours with the average American out there, and if we regain our place as the leader of the international community, then I believe that we are off to a good start.

Everybody can take credit—Republicans, Democrats, the President, whoever. And it would be deserved. If we do the wrong thing, then I believe the American people will rebel. They will say, "Well, business as usual. They talk a good game but it never happens."

So I am excited today about the direction. I am excited about the agreement. I believe the House will pass the agreement we sent over last night, and I hope unanimously without much discussion. Then I would assume a week from today we will start the serious negotiations. We will be working with all of our colleagues on this side, and certainly I know Senator DASCHLE will work with his colleagues on the other side for input. We have also invited the Republican Governors to give us input which I think is very important.

So I want to thank my colleagues for their cooperation and wish them a well deserved and happy Thanksgiving.

I yield the floor.

Mr. THURMOND. Mr. President, will the able Senator yield?

Mr. DOLE. I am happy to yield.

EXPRESSION OF APPRECIATION FOR SENATOR DOLE

Mr. THURMOND. Mr. President, as the President pro tempore of the Senate and on behalf of the Senate, I want to express our appreciation to our able majority leader for the great work he has done in getting the Government back into operation and for accomplishing what we did over the weekend. Without his leadership, it could not have been done. We are very appreciative of all that he does for the Senate, and this is another incident of his outstanding leadership for this country.

Mr. DOLE. I thank my friend from South Carolina.

I yield the floor.

Mr. LEAHY addressed the Chair.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Chair recognizes the Senator from Vermont.

COMMENDATION OF SENATORS AND STAFF

Mr. LEAHY. Mr. President, I applaud leaders on both sides of the aisle for the work that was being done around here this weekend. I saw the hard work of Senator DASCHLE, and Senator DOLE, and of everybody else.

Let me just take a moment to applaud a lot of people whose names and faces do not get on the news, the men and women who keep the Congress running—many of whom were here not knowing whether they were going to be paid or not, who work extraordinary hours well past midnight night after night, whether they are the parliamentarians, the clerks, the security guards, the Capitol Police, the young pages, the men and women who come here to learn of the Government, whether they are from Vermont or any other State. The staff of Senators, Republicans and Democrats alike—those in the Cloakroom who, when many of us were able to go home at night, had to stay there for hours and hours after that time in case votes came up and we were called; and the same in the other body.

Those who keep doors open, those who make it possible for us to fulfill our constitutional responsibility to America to have this body—this body which should be the conscience of the Nation—open to the public; those who make sure that any member of the public who came here, even though Washington was shut down, could at least come and visit the Congress, and either be enlightened or enraged by the debate, depending upon how they might feel.

GOVERNMENT EMPLOYEES

Mr. LEAHY. Mr. President, I will speak of other Government employees now. I strongly support the agreement's commitment to provide back pay for the thousands of employees and their families who were forced off the job last week through no fault of their own. It was an insult to these households held hostage through our inability to agree on a workable Government budget for all Americans. I regret that the shutdown punished hard-working families, not some faceless bureaucrats as some would have you believe.

I know an awful lot of men and women in Vermont who work very hard at keeping the Government of this great country running, from the Immigration and Naturalization Service to the Justice Department and Agriculture, food service, on and on. These are hard-working people. They are the Cal Ripkens of the Government who show up for work every single day, do their job, do it the very best they can, and suddenly are told they are not essential, we do not believe in what they have been doing, and they are sent home through no fault of their own.

They just want to work. I had so many call my home, call my office, and