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Senate

The Senate met at 9:30 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:

Gracious Father, as nature abhors a vacuum, You deplore deadlocks that debilitate progress. We confess that we are hammerlocked and pinned to the mat by seemingly unresolvable differences in the negotiations between the Congress and the White House over the budget. The clock is running and ticks toward tomorrow's deadline. Meanwhile, the Nation watches, worries, and wonders.

Lord, help us to reorder our priorities. Deliberately we set aside self-serving manipulation. We trade in our party spirit for the spirit of patriotism. Grant both sides in this negotiation that triumphant transition that happens when we give up the pride of thinking that we have all of the answers and dare to pray, "Lord, show us the way to break this deadlock." Displace our distrust of each other; replace it with a deep commitment to creative compromise. There is so much on which both factions agree. Give us the will to press on until workable solutions are found. We begin this day asking You to work in the minds and hearts of those who bear the responsibility of finding Your solution. Give them clear heads and willing hearts. We ask this for the good of the Nation and for the continuing respect of the people for the ability of the executive and legislative branches of Government to work together to govern this land. In the name of our Lord. Amen.

RECOGNITION OF THE ACTING MAJORITY LEADER

The PRESIDENT pro tempore. The able Senator from Oklahoma is recognized.

PROGRAM

Mr. INHOFE. Mr. President, today there will be a period for morning business until the hour of 10:30 with Senators permitted to speak up to 5 minutes each, with the following exceptions: Senator WELLSTONE, 30 minutes; Senator MURKOWSKI, 15 minutes; Senator JEFFORDS, 15 minutes.

At 10:30 this morning, the Senate will begin consideration of the Interior appropriations conference report, H.R. 1977. That conference report is limited to 6 hours of debate. However, some of that debate time may be yielded back.

Following a vote on the Interior appropriations conference report, the Senate may turn to the consideration of the State Department reorganization bill under a previously agreed to 4-hour time limit. Rollcalls can therefore be expected throughout the day today.

Mr. WELLSTONE addressed the Chair.

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

Mr. WELLSTONE. I thank the Chair. (Mr. INHOFE assumed the chair.)

LOW-INCOME ENERGY ASSISTANCE

Mr. WELLSTONE. Mr. President, I rose last week to talk about an issue that is critical to people in my State, and across the Northeast and upper Midwest. There have been scores of editorials in major newspapers all across the country dealing with a fundamental moral issue that we, in this Nation, are confronted with this week in the Senate and House of Representatives.

The title of this editorial is "Pray for Warm Winter. GOP Plans Mean Pork and a Loss of Heating Aid."

I am going to be joined by a number of colleagues throughout the day who want to speak on this issue. My colleague from Wisconsin is here, Senator KOHL. I wish to make sure that other

colleagues know that only late last night did we realize we would have some time today. But there have been a number of Senators who have taken a lead on this issue—Senator LEAHY, Senator JEFFORDS, Senator COHEN, Senator SNOWE, Senator KENNEDY, Senator HARKIN, Senator ABRAHAM, Senator MOYNIHAN, and others—Democrats and Republicans alike.

Mr. President, fuel assistance programs across the country have run out of money, and people are being forced out in the cold. We are confronted with the fierce urgency of now, and time rushes on. Quite frankly, whether or not this continuing resolution is for 2 or 3 days, or whether there is another continuing resolution for 1 week or whatever has absolutely nothing to do with the essential fact that there are men, women, and children in the Northeast, Midwest, and cold weather States who are going cold right now. More short-term fixes won't cut it anymore. There are long waiting lists throughout the country, and when people in this program don't get served, they don't heat their homes. In the State of New York, for example, I have heard that people are being told to come back in March to apply for energy assistance. Come back in March, when it's freezing there now. In my State of Minnesota—and I am sure it is the case in my colleague's State of Wisconsin—this weekend temperatures are right around zero.

We have to allocate this money now, and the problem is that for all of our States we are faced with the situation of needing the money desperately, right now. Let there be no mistake. This is not really a 1-year program, it is basically a 6-month heating program. We need to get funding to people for energy assistance now. By this time in Minnesota last year, as opposed to \$9 million, we had about \$25 million out in our State. Right now, Mr. President,

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



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there are 31,000 applications now pending; 16,000 cannot be served; close to 4,000 people in crisis, many in a no-heat situation. In Minnesota, many have been turned away.

This is outrageous. It is unconscionable. So what we have to do is make sure that in this continuing resolution—Friday, Monday, starting with the one Friday by midnight—we have a formula that accelerates the delivery of funding to our States, to the cold weather States so people do not freeze to death. We cannot go forward on this ad hoc basis—a little bit here and a little bit there but not enough to serve long waiting lists of people. Our country can do better.

In the State of Minnesota last year, 110,000 households, about 330,000 people, were served by this program. Grants were about \$380 or thereabouts. The heating bills for people were far more than that during the winter but in many cases this at least enabled people to get by.

Many of the people who benefit are elderly people who live on Social Security benefits. Many of them are families with children. Many of them are families struggling with disabilities. Many of them are minimum wage workers.

It is unbelievable; in the House of Representatives this program was eliminated outright, cut by over \$1.3 billion. The total cost of the energy assistance program for the whole country is less than one B-2 bomber. This reflects seriously distorted priorities. These are not the priorities of the vast majority of people in this country.

There are editorials in newspapers all across the country which essentially are saying what the vast majority of people are saying. What we are doing right now in Washington, DC, is too harsh and it is too extreme; it is too punitive. It must not be allowed to continue.

Let me give a couple of examples of folks in my state who have been affected by these immediate, huge cuts. Clara Mager is a 73-year-old resident of an Iron Range town. I mentioned her problem briefly the other day. She receives about \$675 a month in Social Security. She lives alone, and she raised 6 children on her own. She just received a grant of approximately \$220. She owed her fuel provider, Intercity Oil, \$177, and on Monday she had only 60 gallons left in her fuel tank. She does not know how she is going to make it through the winter, and she does not know whether she can stay in her house.

Nancy Watson is 55 years old, from Clear Lake, MN, and disabled. Her income on SSI and MSA is \$529 a month. She received a grant of only about \$80 this year, and she does not know what she is going to do. It is far less than in the past because we are not getting the allocations of funds out there in the communities.

In Blue Earth County—we are getting calls from all over the State—a

self-sufficient 90-year-old woman lives alone; her monthly income is \$204. Right now she has closed off almost all of her home, I say to my colleague from Wisconsin; she is living in one room. She is heating one room. She has not been able to get the energy assistance she needs this year. She does not know where she is going to go, and she thinks she is going to basically have to leave her home and go into a nursing home.

Mr. President, there are people in my State, and in Wisconsin, and in many other States across this land right now, who either have no heat—can you imagine that in the United States of America? There are those who are living or heating one room, or who have turned the thermostat down to 50 degrees, or who are using their oven to try and heat their home, whose furnaces have not been repaired but should be, but there was no funding for that, who are running with dangerous, badly maintained kerosene stoves, running a fire hazard, with the risk of carbon monoxide poisoning. This is the United States of America?

And so, Mr. President, let me just be clear about this to my colleagues, Democrats and Republicans alike: The Low-Income Energy Assistance Program requires a minimum amount of resources, but it goes to the core of what we are about. This is a cold-weather lifeline program. This is not an income supplement. This is a survival supplement.

Family values, Mr. President, are about extending a helping hand. Family values are about giving people hope. Family values are about compassion. Family values are about all of us here understanding the implications and consequences of what we do.

My God, we have statistics and alphabet soup, OMB, CBO, baseline budgets and all the rest. Too often, it is a bloodless debate. I am talking about people who are desperate, right now, today, in the State of Minnesota, who are having to go without heat, or being forced to scrounge funds from friends, relatives, charities to buy fuel.

What is it going to take—someone freezing to death—for us to take action? Then it will be too late. Time rushes on. Time is not neutral. People are going cold in America. We can do better.

And I say to the administration, if there is no agreement come midnight Friday, since this was last year's funding, they should put out this money now. The money is there, waiting to be released, but it's constrained by law until midnight tomorrow. After that, the administration should release the \$1 billion—it is already there—and get the funding out to the States and out to the communities so people do not go cold and so people do not freeze to death.

I did not come here to the U.S. Senate from the State of Minnesota to be silent, especially not in the face of this kind of cruelty and unthinking slash-

ing of the budget. I believe there is goodness in people. I believe there is goodness in people and it extends way beyond party. And I believe this is a moral issue. I honest to God believe this is a moral issue.

I think the problem is that we have gotten so caught up in the statistics that we just do not understand what the implications are, what this translates into in personal terms and human terms.

Mr. President, let me just simply say that as I understand this chart, just looking at the LIHEAP allocation by December of 1994, at least \$800 million had been allocated out to communities. By the end of the second quarter, that number had shot to well over a billion dollars. That is last year. It is now December 15, 1995, and \$231 million all together been allocated under the continuing resolution. That says it all.

Last year by this time about \$800 million had gone out to our communities to make sure that men, women and children do not go cold in America, do not freeze to death in America. By the way, don't anybody believe that this is scare tactics. Talk to any of the people who are out there trying to serve—Salvation Army, churches, foundations—that are trying to serve people right now, and they will tell you the same thing. By December 15, 1995, only \$231 million. That will make for a cold Hanukkah and a cold Christmas for many Americans who depend on LIHEAP funds.

One would think we could do better in this next continuing resolution. We have to accelerate the funding right now, and if we do not do that in a continuing resolution and there is no agreement, the administration needs to release the money right now. I yield to my colleague from Wisconsin.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Wisconsin.

Mr. KOHL. I thank my colleague from Minnesota.

We are from the same geographical part of the United States so we have the same problem, and my outlook on this problem that we are facing is very similar to Senator WELLSTONE's.

We have 130,000 low-income families in Wisconsin who desperately depend on this energy assistance. They are, all of them, families who live at or beneath the poverty level, and they are understandably and without question in need of this assistance.

For whatever reason, the face of Government this week is on display to our country. We are going to demonstrate whether or not we understand here in Washington what it is to be poor and to be living in bitter cold and whether or not we are prepared to respond to that desperate need that these low-income families have for energy assistance to heat themselves and their families on their meager resources.

For reasons that are not understandable, we here in Washington have decided to fund this energy assistance, not when it is needed as we have been

doing heretofore in the program, which is to say, get the money out during the winter months, but we have decided not only to cut LIHEAP but also to fund it in 12 equal annual installments.

Anybody listening to this debate this morning knows that that does not make any sense. The money needs to be gotten out during the winter months, this month and next month, and sending out that money to these low-income families in June and July and August does not make any sense when they need the money in December and January and February.

If we are not able to respond to that need, as Senator WELLSTONE has said, now, this week, by tomorrow, we will have demonstrated that we do not have the compassion to understand what is going on in our country and what the purpose of Government is, if it is not to help those who are in genuine desperate need.

So we have a crisis, and we have an ability to respond to that crisis. We are talking about, as Senator WELLSTONE has said, a total amount of money of less than \$1 billion, which is a cut from what it had been last year.

LIHEAP last year was funded at \$1.3 billion. We decided to cut it to \$1 billion. As Senator WELLSTONE pointed out, the House wants to zero out the program entirely. That debate between the House and the Senate has not yet been resolved. But, in the meantime, we have a continuing resolution which does fund LIHEAP at a billion dollars, and we have to see to it that that money gets out to those people in desperate need of now. The next day or two will demonstrate what the face of our Government is and what it is we are interested in depicting to the people of the United States, whom we represent.

So I urge my colleagues, along with Senator WELLSTONE and many others—53 Senators have signed a letter urging the negotiators to act quickly, with dispatch and without delay, on this urgent need. I urge my colleagues to see to it that our negotiators here in Congress, and in the administration, act in a way which is sensible and compassionate for those in our country who need our help so urgently at this specific time.

Mr. WELLSTONE. Mr. President, I thank my colleague from Wisconsin. Again, really, I think this is the beginning of the discussion today. There will be time—and I believe a number of us will be back on the floor throughout the day. We are going to keep pushing on this.

Senator KOHL mentioned this letter, dated December 8 and signed by 54 Senators, to Chairman HATFIELD, who I really want to say right now has been very committed to trying to do something about this. He has been great in the U.S. Senate, and we are going to dearly miss him. I know he feels as if his hands are tied at the moment. He is very committed to do something about the acceleration of getting the funding

out to communities. But 54 Senators have signed this letter, simply saying, look, we have to get the funds out. Temperatures have dropped below freezing, there is snow on the ground, and we simply are not able to get the money out.

There is a real sense of urgency here. So there is a tremendous amount of support for this on the Senate side. I have been in contact with many offices. I know Senator LEAHY, Senator KERRY and others are very, very committed to this and are very anxious for us to get this resolved. Senator SPECTER from Pennsylvania, as well. I mean, Democrats and Republicans alike want to get this done. This has become a moral issue. I do not believe that is an exaggeration.

Are we going to dilly-dally around here and play games and talk about all these statistics, and yet not come together to make some change in a formula to make sure that we get some urgently needed funds out into communities so people do not freeze to death in the United States?

Mr. President, when we went through the rescissions package, I held that package up for a short period. Part of the reason I did that was, there was a deal late at night, and all of a sudden over \$300 million, or thereabouts, was cut from the energy assistance program. I remember saying in the debate then that if this is a glimpse of what is to come, I do not want to have anything to do with it. This is too harsh, too extreme, it is too radical. This is beyond the goodness of people in America. And when we were faced with our first continuing resolution, at one point in time there was some suggested language that said that until the Labor, Health and Human Services appropriations bill is passed, there can be no allocation of energy assistance money. What is going on here? What is going on? This is so harsh and so extreme. While we beat that effort back, the problem is even more urgent now.

Mr. President, this article says, "Buffalo Prays for a Warm Winter." We can do better than that, can we not? Are we not policymakers? Is that what people are supposed to be reduced to, praying for warm weather? Do we need to just pray for a warm winter? It is not a warm winter in Minnesota. We need to take action.

Another article focusing on LIHEAP funding problems says, "A Heap of Trouble in New York." A Lexington, KY, paper has a headline here that says "Staying Warm." The list goes on. Beaver, PA, "Bankruptcy, Heating Program for the Poor Hit." In the Maine Sentinel, "Heating Program Cut; Out in the Cold." "Timing Wrong for Eliminating Weather Aid," Albany. The list goes on and on, Mr. President. "Cold Comfort," Boston Globe. Des Moines Register, "A Shameful Place to Cut. A rich nation can help its poor stay warm in the winter." The Des Moines Register editorial says LIHEAP is a shameful place to cut. A rich na-

tion can help its poor stay warm in the winter. Is that not true any longer?

Mr. President, this is a shameful place to cut. Our Nation can do better, and, in my State of Minnesota, there are citizens who are going without heat, and one is one too many. There are people who are cold, and one family is one too many. There are families who depend on this energy assistance, so they do not get cold and so they will have enough resources to be able to purchase prescription drugs if that is what they need, or food. The total cost of this program was less than the cost of one B-2 bomber. The Des Moines Register is right, a rich nation can help its poor stay warm in the winter.

Mr. President, in this situation, time rushes on; time is not neutral. We are confronted with the fierce urgency of now. I assume there is goodwill on the part of all of my colleagues, and I assume I will receive a tremendous amount of support. Fifty-four Senators already have gone on record as saying we have to act now.

Mr. President, I believe that for the next 2 days this must be a priority for the U.S. Congress, and for the next week it must be a priority to make sure that people in the United States of America—men, women and children—do not go cold. We must make sure that we do not have people freezing to death in the United States of America. The issue could not be clearer.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Mr. THOMAS). Who seeks recognition?

MEASURE PLACED ON THE CALENDAR—S. 1472

Mr. WELLSTONE. I understand there is a bill on the calendar due for a second reading.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator is correct.

The clerk will report.

The assistant legislative clerk read as follows:

A bill (S. 1472) to provide for one additional Federal judge for the Middle District of Louisiana and one less district judge for the Eastern District of Louisiana.

Mr. WELLSTONE. Mr. President, I object to further consideration of this matter at this time.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The bill will be placed on the calendar.

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

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

BOSNIA

Mr. INHOFE. Mr. President, several of us last night were opposed to the President's program to mass deploy