

But my overriding concern has been the fate of thousands of railroad employees across the Nation who could have been harmed under its provisions, and that is why we wanted to try to address this problem before it passed the Senate. I am delighted that this has now been done, and I am hopeful that the House will act on it immediately to ensure abroad, comprehensive labor protections for railroad workers. I want to go again thank Senator EXON for his help with this problem.

Mr. CHAFEE. I ask unanimous consent that the concurrent resolution be agreed to, the motion to reconsider be laid upon the table, that any statements relating to the conference report or the concurrent resolution appear at the appropriate place in the RECORD.

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

So the concurrent resolution (S. Con. Res. 37) was agreed to, as follows:

S. CON. RES. 37

Resolved by the Senate (the House of Representatives concurring), That the Clerk of the House of Representatives, in the enrollment of the bill (H.R. 2539) to amend subtitle IV of title 49, United States Code, to reform economic regulation of transportation, and for other purposes, shall make the following corrections:

In section 11326(b) proposed to be inserted in title 49, United States Code, by section 102, strike "unless the applicant elects to provide the alternative arrangement specified in this subsection. Such alternative" and insert "except that such";

In section 13902(b)(5) proposed to be inserted in title 49, United States Code, by section 103, strike "Any" and insert "Subject to section 14501(a), any".

A BIPARTISAN GROUP UNVEILS A PLAN TO BALANCE THE BUDGET

Mr. CHAFEE. First of all, I thank the Senator from Nevada for permitting us to go ahead of him. That was very gracious.

This morning, a bipartisan group of Senators—19 in all—unveiled a plan to balance the budget by the year 2002, using CBO, Congressional Budget Office, numbers. The group, which Senator BREAUX and I had convened several weeks ago—actually, we had our first meeting in October—includes, as I say, so far, 19 Senators. That is without going out and seeking new Members. It is just those who have come to us and want to join in this effort.

We are all united in this belief, Mr. President: It is absolutely essential that this Nation have a balanced budget by the year 2002, and that it will be impossible to achieve that budget unless those on both sides of the aisle are prepared to compromise. This is the essence of the effort of this group of Republicans and Democrats who are getting together for a common objective.

The Senate bipartisan balanced budget plan is a huge step forward on the path to this budget agreement. It represents, I might say, Mr. President, the first truly bipartisan proposal to balance the budget. There are other

groups in the House that are working, but they do not include Members of both sides. It was made possible, this agreement, only because both sides were willing to compromise on some very strongly held beliefs. We did this for the good of this country of ours. This is especially true with the compromising aspects with respect to the issues of Medicare and tax cuts. I am grateful to the Democrats in our group for their willingness to go with the CBO numbers. They agreed to that before it became accepted by the White House. This was a big step for the Democratic Members of our group.

Now, undoubtedly, this plan will cause consternation on the Democratic side with number, and on the Republican side with some. But we are committed to reaching this balanced budget, free of gimmickry, and we are doing it for the welfare of future generations, for our children and our grandchildren.

To those who disagree with our numbers, let me say this, Mr. President, and to those who think they can do a better job: Go to it. We welcome their efforts. All I ask is they do it with a bipartisan group, not just one group from one side and one group from the other. Sure, we can come out on the Republican side with a massive tax cut and tremendous slashes in Medicare, for example. But try that on the Democratic side and see how it goes. So the essence of this was that we had Members from both sides.

Mr. President, this plan is intended to demonstrate to the negotiators on both sides that, one, it is essential to compromise and, two, that it can be done. It is a doable task. No one should throw up their hands in despair and say the sides are too far apart.

What did we do? There were significant steps taken to control the growth of Medicare and other entitlements. Our plan calls for Medicare savings of \$154 billion, with a strong commitment from everybody in the group that the part B premiums stay at 31.5 percent, with affluence testing for those above the regular brackets, and also means testing for those who are in the lower-income areas—and they might well qualify for paying less than 31.5 percent.

We have agreed to conform the retirement age for Medicare with that of Social Security—namely, age 67. This is something that is going to take place in the future and will not contribute any dollars to the 7-year plan. But we feel it is critical to include this needed long-term entitlement reform.

On Medicaid, we have savings of \$67 billion. Underlying this number is a view that we should preserve the Federal entitlement for our most vulnerable citizens, while, at the same time, we provided the States with broad flexibility to administer the program. This is, again, not going to make everybody happy, but it was something that we all agreed to.

We have agreed to \$130 billion in tax cuts. We did not delineate how the tax

cuts would be. We left that to the negotiators. We did not say X amount for capital gains cuts or Y amount for a child tax credit. We have chosen to reduce the CPI, Consumer Price Index, by .5 percent, which gives us \$110 billion in additional savings.

Frankly, we did this because we have had all kinds of testimony before the Finance Committee, which stated that the present CPI is a flawed measurement and should be adjusted actually beyond the .5 percent. It should be as high as .7 percent, or indeed some economists say as high as 2 percent. We also included \$58 billion in savings under welfare, which assumes the Senate-passed welfare reform bill. On discretionary reductions, we came in slightly below the so-called hard freeze—namely, no increase for inflation over the 7-year period.

Finally, Mr. President, we support the immediate adoption of a clean continuing resolution, on a short-term basis, until sometime next week, to get people back to work and get these budget negotiations back on track.

Mr. President, this is not a perfect plan, and it is not offered in the sense that we are budget negotiators. It is an illustration that a responsible balanced budget agreement using CBO numbers is doable. I hope it will help our negotiators as they go about the difficult task of securing a final budget accord.

Mr. President, I am delighted to be joined here on the floor with the distinguished Senator from Louisiana, who was absolutely crucial in all these negotiations that we had.

I yield the floor to him.

Mr. BREAUX. Mr. President, at a time when most Americans believe that many Members of Congress ruined this Christmas season, and are probably on the verge of killing each other because we have not been able to agree on the principles and even how to keep the Government open, I want to say what a great privilege and pleasure it is to be able to work with the senior Senator from the State of Rhode Island. His wisdom, his experience, his knowledge, his compassion for people, and yet his dedication to making Government work really is a pleasure to me, as a Democratic Member on this side of the aisle, to be able to work with a person of great common sense and great compassion and just common sense that understands that in order to make Government work there is such a thing as the art of compromise. That makes sense.

I think we have gotten to a point in this Congress where the word compromise is almost a dirty word that you should never utter for fear of moving away from the party principles. All of us who have been here longer than 12 months have to understand the way to get things done is to put forth the best ideas from both sides of the aisle and recognize that on difficult issues that those principles that we stand for need not be compromised, but how to get to those goals in fact does necessitate

compromise if we are ever going to make Government work.

Unfortunately, there are some who do not want to make Government work who have been elected to the Congress who are more concerned with shutting it down in order to make a point than in being willing to negotiate and talk with the other side and compromise with the other side in an effort to reach a legitimate compromise.

I think there is enough blame to go around. This is not a partisan statement at all. In fact, it is the opposite. I think both sides have had various Members at various times stake out lines in the sand and say we will not go any further than this, but there is a consequence to those type of speeches. The consequence is that the American people are shouting. They are not whispering any longer. They are shouting, "Enough is enough. We have sent all of you here, Democrats and Republicans, to make Government work, not to shut it down, not to close the doors on the services that people need, not to make political points."

That is what elections are about. After you are here, it is about service, and after you are here it is about making Government work for the people that elected us. We are at a point now where we are, both sides, losing the faith of the American people to do exactly what we are supposed to be doing.

That is why the press conference that we had this morning, Senator CHAFEE and myself, accompanied by about 19 Members, 18, 19, 20—half and half; half Democrats and half Republicans—who stood up and said, we have heard the pleas of the American people to get the job done. We have heard the pleas of our constituents who have said "Stop the madness. Make Government work again. Trust us to accept your judgment when you reach a compromise," and we presented that plan. It is a blueprint. It is an outline. It has specific numbers on how to reach a balanced budget in 7 years, scored by the CBO in a way that is not everything that both sides would want, but I think reflects a fair middle ground.

We have called for a continuing resolution. This is a bipartisan group that says we should continue the Government so we can have the negotiators work without the pressure of having the Government shut down. This is Republicans and Democrats saying, at the same time, and in the same forum, we need a simple continuing resolution, uncluttered, give us until January 15th so the negotiators can work in peace and do the job that they are supposed to do. A very important point, the first time that a bipartisan group has said that.

Second, this group has called for tax cuts. These tax cuts are smaller than many Republicans would like but at the same time these tax cuts are larger than many Democrats would like. But it is a tax cut, a significant tax cut, which is designed to increase growth and productivity and savings in this country.

The second thing we do is we say there will have to be more cuts in entitlement programs—propose less cuts than Republicans would like and certainly more cuts than Democrats would like. But we are recommending that there be entitlement cuts to these programs to restore their solvency, to assure they will be around for the next generation, recognizing that to do that we have to have some significant reforms.

Mr. President, what we have offered is a blueprint. Part of that blueprint is something that some people think is so horribly controversial that we cannot even utter the word except in cloistered surroundings, and that is an adjustment in the Consumer Price Index. Every economic expert, the people that read numbers every day and wear the green eyeshades and look at how much it costs to buy a typical basket of groceries, have told the Congress that we overestimate the Consumer Price Index, and taxes are indexed to that. Entitlement increases are indexed to that. But the index needs to be adjusted.

You would think that that is not too difficult a thing to do. But our side does not want to go first because people will say it is a tax increase or a cut in entitlement programs. Republicans do not want to go first because of the same reason. So as a result, nothing gets done. Our side stood up today in a public forum and said yes, we think it ought to be fixed. It is broken. The suggestion is that there be a .5 percent adjustment in the Consumer Price Index, which will generate about \$110 billion over the next 7 years that we can use for programs that need greater funding, that will meet the needs of the people of this country.

I will conclude by saying this: Mr. CHAFEE has offered some real leadership here, and the other Republicans who have joined him have said, yes, it is time to recognize that compromise is all the way out. So we call for a truce today. We called for a "stop the shouting and stop the blame game" today. It was a significant statement. The product that we have put on the table, I think, is one that makes sense. It may not be the final answer, but it certainly offers a blueprint for us to get out of the mess that we are in.

We would hope that our colleagues will take a look at the product. I hope the negotiators will consider it as we present it to them this afternoon. I think the negotiations are going well. And hopefully, with a continuing resolution, they will have adequate time to get the job done. I yield the floor.

Mr. CHAFEE. Mr. President, I want to thank the distinguished Senator from Louisiana for the kind comments. It was a joint leadership. He was kind enough to say it was my leadership. No, no, it was the joint leadership in which we shared the responsibilities and the effort together, Senator BREAU and I, and we certainly had wonderful support from everybody involved.

Mr. President, the agreement that we submitted today in the press conference and have outlined here on the floor was remarkable for this fact: Everybody agreed on every point. Now, that does not mean we started that way, but when we finished people did not say, "Well, I am for points 1 through 4 but include me out on points 5, 6 and 7. But I am there for points 8, 9, and 10." Everybody signed on for all of the points. That was tough. It was tough for the Democrats to go to the \$140,000 tax cut; it was tough for the Republicans to agree on the Medicare cut. We think we could have done better on the Medicare cut. We do not use the word "cut"; "reduction in the rate of increase."

In order to reach an agreement we all compromised. I think it was a wonderful effort, and along with the Senator from Louisiana, I commend it to our colleagues and hope they take a good look at it.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Under the previous order the Senator from Nevada is now recognized.

Mr. CONRAD. Will the Senator from Nevada yield to me for just 2 minutes?

Mr. REID. As soon as I yield to the Senator from West Virginia for whatever time he may consume, as long as I do not lose my right to the floor.

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

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Senator from West Virginia.

RECOGNIZING SENATOR DOLE'S SERVICE AS REPUBLICAN FLOOR LEADER

Mr. BYRD. Mr. President, I thank the Senator for his characteristic courtesy. I will be brief.

Mr. President, today Senator ROBERT DOLE equals the record set by Charles McNary, of Oregon, as the longest serving Republican floor leader. Senator McNary served as floor leader for 10 years, 11 months, and 18 days, until his death on February 25, 1944.

Senator DOLE, who began his service as leader on January 3, 1985, will have served 10 years, 11 months, and 18 days, as of the close of business today. That is quite a record. Tomorrow, the Lord willing, Senator DOLE will break the all-time record for the longest serving Republican floor leader.

I have been majority leader, minority leader, and majority leader again. I know something about the burdens that a leader carries. It is a thankless task. All of his colleagues think that they can do a better job than he can do as leader, or at least I kind of had that feeling when I was leader. And it is a heavy responsibility.

Senator DOLE has served his country on the far-flung battlefields, he has sacrificed for his country on foreign battlefields, and he has served his country on the legislative battlefield. I salute him and commend him.

He broke Everett Dirksen's record as second longest serving Republican floor