

I hope I do not come to the floor again in the months ahead to be critical of the Federal Reserve Board. My preference would be to praise the Federal Reserve Board for doing the right thing. But they are doing the wrong thing. It is time for us to say when the Federal Reserve Board is on the wrong course doing something that is going to injure this country. When the Fed feels its role is to be a human brake pedal to slow the country down and risk throwing it into a recession, it is time for some of us to stand up and say this makes no sense for our country.

I come from a State that is a heavy user of credit—agriculture. The family farmer plants in the spring and does not get a crop until fall. They need to use credit to tide them over during the year.

Do you know what sort of behavior this does to a family farmer? It is an enormous hit for a family farmer or rancher. This substantially increases their costs. Farmers in North Dakota will pay, on average, thousands of dollars more in interest payment because of the Fed's actions this past year. Did they have any opportunity to participate in these decisions? Any voice at all? No. The interest of the family farmer or rancher out there is subordinated to the interest of the money center banks. I guarantee you, the interest of the money center banks is present, front and center in that room when these decisions are made.

But I also guarantee you that there is not anybody in that room talking about my Uncle Joe, about people who produce things, about the farmers out there who are planting and hoping, about the ranchers who are working in subzero weather trying to make sure their cows are all right and then come to the bank at the end of the year and decide they have substantially increased costs. It has nothing to do with their cows, but it has to do with some folks down there behind a closed door at the Federal Reserve Board.

This ought to change. I would not be here if I thought the Federal Reserve Board was on the right track and doing the right things for our country. I feel so strongly they are not. I think the Fed is moving in a direction counterproductive to this country's interest.

That is what persuades me to talk and to, once again, want to introduce this legislation. Let me in 1 final minute read something from the Washington Post today. After yesterday's action by the Federal Reserve Board, it is not, I suppose, surprising for anyone to see a quote:

Many Wall Street analysts, however, praise the course of Fed policy.

I tell you what, that probably is not very surprising to most Americans. Many Wall Street analysts praise the Fed policy. Of course they praise the Fed policy. Who do you think the Feds are doing this for? It is not Main Street, it is not the family farmer, not the rancher, not the working person out there.

So I guess when previous Fed Reserve folks said to Members of Congress at a hearing, "We are serving our constituency"—that is what they said arrogantly—we know who their constituency is. But it is different than our constituency, and that is the dilemma.

I hope one of these days there is a reconciliation in this country about who monetary policy is created and fashioned for and in whose interest it now serves.

Mr. President, I yield the floor, and I suggest the absence of a quorum.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will call the roll.

The legislative clerk proceeded to call the roll.

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

THE CLINTON PLAN TO ASSIST MEXICO

Mr. DODD. Mr. President, on Tuesday, January 31, President Clinton announced that he could no longer wait for the Congress to act on the Mexican loan guarantee legislation that he had proposed to assist Mexico with the serious economic crisis it confronts. Instead, he has decided to act now to stem the tide of negative expectations that threatens to overwhelm Mexican exchange and financial markets. Utilizing existing executive authority, the President has indicated that the United States will make available a \$20 billion swap arrangement through the Exchange Stabilization Fund.

The President, to his credit, has also enlisted the substantial involvement of the international community in this latest initiative. The International Monetary Fund will provide an unprecedented level of assistance—\$17.5 billion, and the European Community through the Bank for International Settlements will make \$10 billion available to this effort. Taken together, this package should be more than sufficient to deal with the adverse market psychology that had developed over the inability of Congress to act on the guarantee proposal.

I believe that the President's decision is the right one in light of the potential threat that the current instability poses, not only for Mexico, but for our economy as well. It is important to remember that Mexico has been an important player in the United States economic picture. Mexico has been our third largest trading partner. The United States has represented two-thirds of Mexico's worldwide trading activities. Up until now, Mexico has been an important and growing market for United States exports—we sold nearly \$50 billion of our products there in 1994. Some 770,000 American jobs depend on our trade with Mexico. U.S. investors also have a stake in the current situation. Not just large New York bankers and Wall Street investment brokers—but thousands of other Americans through their involvement in pension and mutual funds.

Even my State of Connecticut, thousands of miles from Mexico's border, stands to reap the benefits of a vibrant Mexican economy, or alternatively suffer the pain of a collapsed one. In 1993 nearly 7,000 Connecticut workers were employed in producing products destined for sale in Mexico at a value of \$365 million. My State is by no means unique on this score. California, Texas, Arizona, New Mexico all have an enormous stake in Mexico's economic health.

That Mexico has a serious problem is not in question. Its financial and currency markets have been in a frenzy over the last several weeks. The peso has lost more than 50 percent in value. Yesterday, the peso reached a historic low at 6.3 pesos to the dollar. The Mexican stock market has been rocked as well. The Zedillo government has been unable to refinance most of its debts coming due thus far this year—obligations that will reach \$80 billion by year's end. Unless this crisis of confidence is reversed and markets stabilized, the Mexican economy will slide into serious recession and its financial system will all but collapse.

Clearly, the Mexican Government must take steps to help itself. And it has done so. On January 3, President Zedillo announced an emergency economic program designed to stabilize the economy—allow the peso to float, reduce Government expenditures, accelerate Mexico's privatization program for state enterprises, conclude a wage-price accord with business and labor in order to contain inflation, and open the Mexican financial sector to foreign investment. Despite these efforts, the crisis of confidence continued.

I for one am firmly convinced that President Clinton has made the right decision in proposing that the United States intervene in order to restore confidence in Mexico's economy. It makes good economic sense. It makes good foreign policy sense. The American people stand everything to gain from a stable and prosperous Mexico. And, much to lose from one that is in disorder and poor.

If we sit back and do nothing, millions of Mexicans will lose their jobs. This will produce social and political tensions. It will also put additional pressure on our borders as Mexicans seek alternative sources of employment in the United States, further heightening tensions over immigration between the United States and Mexico.

To those who point to NAFTA as an explanation for the current economic crisis facing Mexico, I would say that they could not be more wrong. If anything, it is because of NAFTA that there is a clear framework for resolving the current economic problems confronting Mexico. Many Americans currently doing business in Mexico have indicated that they intend to stay the course, to remain engaged, to ride

out the current fiscal storm. Why? Because they believe that the Mexican economy is fundamentally strong. A principle reason they hold that view is because NAFTA has ensured the continuity of fundamental market reforms that has made it possible for Americans to sell products and do business there. Were it not for NAFTA, the crisis in Mexico would be far deeper and far more protracted.

I commend Majority Leader BOB DOLE and Speaker NEWT GINGRICH for their willingness to act in a bipartisan fashion to assist the President in moving the original guarantee proposal through the Congress. Regrettably they were unable to garner the necessary bipartisan support required to pass the legislation in a timely fashion. I think that the President was right in the judgment that the Mexican economy could not withstand the battering of another several weeks of uncertainty over whether the United States assistance would be forthcoming.

Mr. President, we engage in vigorous debate in this body day in and day out. Debate is clearly an integral part of the legislative process. However, from time to time, an issue comes before the Congress that is so important and so sensitive that it mandates that partisan politics be set aside and that we come together in support of the President. I believe that the situation in Mexico is just such an issue.

Mexico and the United States have had a long and enduring friendship. We share a 2,000-mile common border. We share a common commitment to democracy, liberty, and human freedom. We are partners in a global economy that has inextricably linked our fates. For all of these reasons, United States' interests are served by helping Mexico at its moment of need. I call upon all my colleagues to get behind the President in support of this effort—it is in the interest of all Americans that this initiative succeed.

NATIONAL SERVICE

Mr. SARBANES. Mr. President, I was proud to cast my vote for the National and Community Service Trust Act of 1993 when the conference report came before the Senate for final approval last September. This was important legislation intended to marshal the Nation's best resources—its citizens—to confront the many pressing problems facing communities across the country. The National Service Act, signed into law on September 21, 1993, has helped renew the ethic of civic responsibility and the spirit of community service throughout the United States while also providing critical assistance in meeting vital human, educational, environmental, and public safety needs.

In light of this, I am troubled by recent statements by the House Republican leadership expressing opposition to national service, describing it as gimmickry and coerced voluntarism. I would urge those who put forward

these views to look carefully at the new national service program's centerpiece, AmeriCorps, a national network of local youth service corps. Unlike previous volunteer-based programs, AmeriCorps is not one large Federal program, but a network of locally developed and locally managed service corps which will give thousands of young people the kind of opportunity earlier generations had to serve their country and improve their own lives as well as those of their neighbors.

I am proud that my own State of Maryland has been a leader in the area of national service. The tremendous number of volunteer organizations across the State deserve credit for the enormous difference that volunteers have made and continue to make in Maryland each and every day. Maryland has very deservedly been the recipient of a number of first round AmeriCorps grants. I was privileged to be with the President during the official kickoff of the AmeriCorps Program at Aberdeen Proving Ground last September, the first campus selected under the National Service Act as a site for the National Civilian Community Corps [NCCC]. Using a converted barracks, the NCCC campus at Aberdeen houses 250 young adults who work in 10-member teams on projects throughout Maryland, the Northeast, and the Mid-Atlantic. The program emphasizes conservation of natural resources, public safety, and the educational and human needs of children and older Americans.

I was also privileged to meet earlier with members of Community Year in Montgomery County, Civic Works in Baltimore, and the Maryland Conservation Corps to discuss their critical efforts to rehabilitate housing for low-income families. More recently, my wife was able to visit an AmeriCorps site at Frostburg State University in western Maryland. The local program, named Appalachian Service Through Action and Resources or A STAR, provides many types of assistance in areas involving social service and the environment. Participants perform duties as varied as coordinating environmental projects at Deep Creek Lake, developing Victory Gardens in Garrett County, working with local Head Start programs in recruiting volunteers, providing independent living assistance enlarging area food pantries, and establishing youth literacy programs.

Mr. President, it is my view that national service, and those who participate in it represent the best of our Nation. AmeriCorps and other programs under the National Service Act of 1993 carry forward an idea rooted in the best traditions and values of America—the tradition of serving others, the value of taking personal responsibility for ourselves and our communities, and the belief that to whom much is given, much is expected. Through programs like AmeriCorps we are providing our Nation's young people with both an opportunity and an obligation. It asks

them to put something back into the community while also providing them an opportunity to develop skills which will serve them well throughout their lives.

As I have indicated through examples in my own State, the national service program is working. Nationwide, there are other examples—the executive director of the National Association of Police Organizations has called AmeriCorps a huge boost in the arm for law enforcement; officials of the Federal Emergency Management Agency say that participants in AmeriCorps have helped thousands of disaster victims pick up the pieces of their lives; Habitat for Humanity says they could not do their job without such individuals.

In my view, Mr. President, those who have answered the call to service by participating in AmeriCorps and other national service opportunities are taking part in the oldest and best of America's traditions—a spirit of service. I would ask those who have criticized legislation which has furthered national service to look again at the important efforts underway which serve to produce stronger families and stronger communities, and to join me in commending those who are taking part in this important renewal of service to our Nation.

THE RETIREMENT OF RICHARD COLLINS

Mr. INOUE. Mr. President, on January 31, Richard Collins of the staff of the Senate Appropriations Committee retired. Mr. Collins has served the committee and the Senate for the past 20 years. It has been my pleasure to have worked closely with Richard throughout that period. Richard served as the clerk and staff director of the two subcommittees I had the fortune to chair in the 1980's and 1990's, Foreign Operations and Defense.

In each of these positions Richard has served me and the Senate professionally and faithfully. I will miss his knowledge and counsel in the days and years ahead. I can take some solace knowing that Richard plans to remain in the Washington, DC, area. And, I know we shall call upon him often to provide the type of guidance that we have counted upon for the past 20 years.

Last Thursday night, the friends of Richard Collins gathered to wish him a farewell and happy retirement. On that occasion, Richard spoke eloquently about his career in the Senate, his many and varied experiences, and what it meant to him to be a staff member for this body. He spoke of his affection and reverence for the institution, the relationship between Members and their staff and the importance of staff in the operation of the Senate. I know that many of my colleagues were in attendance that evening and had the good fortune to hear this gentleman's farewell remarks, but I believe the