

grant, there then is no national priority that says we are going to feed hungry kids. It becomes a decision by 50 different States about how much money they have to feed hungry kids versus the needs of all of other interests that are at their doorsteps asking for funds. Block grants themselves are not, in my judgment, the answer.

Yes, we use block grants from time to time, and, yes, they can be effective in some cases. But, frankly, I am pretty unimpressed with some of these new Governors who are busy cutting taxes at the State level and puffing out their chests, walking around holding their suspenders, and boasting about what a great job they are doing cutting taxes back at home. Then they come here and walk through these doors with a tin cup asking if they can have money, no strings attached, in the form of block grants which eliminate the kind of things we have targeted as national needs, things that effectively respond to hunger in children. If they can get their hands on that money with no strings attached, then they have the resources to respond to the problems they have caused by their own tax cuts. I say, if they want resources, let them raise them.

If you want to cause maximum waste in government, just decide to create a government in which you disconnect where you raise money from where you spend it. Decide to raise it here and spend it there, I guarantee you it will be free money in the eyes of those who spend it. You can look at program after program for examples. Go back to the Law Enforcement Assistance Act (LEAA) and ask yourselves if some of the most egregious wastes of Federal money did not occur under its block grants. I have some specific examples I could use, but I will do that at a later time.

The point I want to make today is that it might be out of fashion to be poor. It might be out of fashion to be hungry. There may not be a lot of high-paid lobbyists around supporting the interests of the hungry, but that does not mean that they are not people with compelling needs, and that does not mean that we do not have a responsibility as a nation to respond to their needs.

The young boy named David Bright came to Congress one day. He was 10 years old, living with his mother and a brother and a sister in a homeless shelter in New York, lost, troubled, living in squalid poverty. He talked about the rats in the shelters. Then he said something I have never forgotten. He said, "No 10-year-old boy like me should have to put his head down on his desk at school in the afternoon because it hurts to be hungry." No 10-year-old boy should have to put his head down on his desk at school in the afternoon because it hurts to be hungry.

If anyone in this Chamber or in the House Chamber or elsewhere can look in the eyes of 10-year-old kids who are hungry because their family does not

have enough money to buy groceries, their family does not have a home, their family does not have enough to eat and say that there is not a national need, not an urgent priority, you do not rank up here, you go down and compete someplace for some block grant that we gave to a Governor who talks about cutting taxes back home, then this is a debate I am anxious to have on this floor.

We need to debate what our national priorities are. Yes, we need incentives to tell people who are down and out, "Here is a stepladder to get up and going again." We need incentives to say, "You go from welfare to work." We need all of those things. I will be one supporting others on this floor who say, "Let us change the welfare system." But I will not be part and parcel of that discussion and decide, as some have, that this is a kind of a survival-of-the-fittest society where, if you are poor, you do not matter, and if you are a kid who is hungry, you are not a national need.

When I see what happens over in the House, where they say, "We are conservatives. We think that the Government wastes too much money, and so here is 600 million bucks we want to stick into the Pentagon," and the Pentagon says, "We do not want it and we do not need it and please do not give it to us," and the House says, "Sorry, but we are going to give it to you anyway, and we will take the money from a program that helps poor kids," then I think something is wrong with the thinking around here. That's why I hope we can have legislation and substantial debate about what this Nation's urgent needs and priorities are.

As we do that, I at least hope all of us will understand this country's kids deserve to have a prominent place in the array of national needs that this Congress decides to establish. We have spent a long time looking at this country's problems and trying to address them. No one here, I think, has decided to do that in any other manner but with good will and with their best judgment. We have made some mistakes along the way. There is no question about that. But we have also done some good things, and I would hate very much to see this wave of emotion about the Contract With America sweep out the door with some of the inefficient things that we certainly should change a set of good programs and a set of urgent national priorities that respond to the interests of the most vulnerable in this country, our children.

Mr. President, I yield the floor.

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. The Chair recognizes the Senator from Arizona.

Mr. McCAIN. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that I be recognized to speak for 10 minutes as if in morning business.

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. Without objection, it is so ordered.

Mr. McCAIN. Mr. President, before I begin the substance of my remarks, I would like to comment briefly on the comments of the Senator from North Dakota. In case he missed an election last November 8, the American people want to do things differently from what was just espoused by the Senator from North Dakota. It is not old fashioned to want to have a change in the way that we address the problems affecting America. It is not old fashioned to recognize that the programs so greatly espoused and seeking to be continued by the Senator from North Dakota have failed.

I would urge him to consider the words of our new Congressman from Oklahoma, Congressman J.C. WATTS, Jr., who said, "We don't measure compassion by the number of people who are on welfare. We measure compassion by the number of people we can get over the welfare."

The spirited defense of the status quo and business as usual just articulated by the Senator from North Dakota is ample evidence to me that he has not gotten the message of November 8 as the American people want things done differently, not business as usual. I believe that, if the Senator in North Dakota would check around, he would find that the overwhelming majority of Americans want the Contract With America passed.

They want the Contract With America because they lost confidence in the way that the Senator from North Dakota and the leadership on the other side of the aisle was running America. They are totally dissatisfied. They want change. They are going to get change. I am proud of the job that is being done by my colleagues in the House and the courage that they are showing in taking on some sacred cows.

If the Senator from North Dakota thinks this old line about being cruel to poor people and depriving food from people's mouths is going to work, my message to him is, it "ain't" going to work.

I also look forward to a spirited debate and discussion with him because we have to find new ways to attack old problems, rather than going back to the old ways of spending more money on programs that have failed to fulfill our obligation to those in our society.

Mr. DORGAN. Mr. President, will the Senator yield?

Mr. McCAIN. I only have 10 minutes. I will be glad to yield to the Senator from North Dakota at the expiration of my time, if I have any remaining.

THE BASE CLOSING COMMISSION

Mr. McCAIN. Mr. President, I am deeply concerned about the fact that there will not be, I am told by the leadership, a vote on the nominees for the Base Closing Commission today.

The fact is, on February 28, the Secretary of Defense will file for the Federal Register a list of bases that the

Secretary of Defense is recommending that will be closed for the consideration of the Base Closing Commission.

Mr. President, this will make it very difficult, if not impossible, for the remaining nominees to the Base Closing Commission to be confirmed by the Senate.

Mr. President, I view failure to move forward with the base closing process as an unconscionable act that will deprive the young men and women in the military today of their ability to defend this Nation's vital national security interests. We cannot spend money on bases and infrastructure which are no longer needed in light of the reduction of some 40 percent in the defense budget.

We have, in the words of former Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, Colin Powell, reduced our defense spending somewhere around 40 to 45 percent since 1985. At the same time, we have reduced our base infrastructure by some 10 to 15 percent.

We have gone through two painful rounds of base closings and now the third one, hopefully the last, will be facing us. If we do not move forward with this base closing process, we will not close bases in this country. We have proven that to anyone's satisfaction, which is why we went to the base closing process to start with.

Mr. President, there are people on both sides of the aisle and both ends of Pennsylvania Avenue who do not want to see this process move forward.

I believe that there is one egregious incident, for example, of a nominee, Gen. J.B. Davis, where incorrect information was spread around Hill offices which tied him to an organization that had considerable financial interests at many installations. I do not know who originated the memorandum setting out this flawed data, but it was further disseminated by consultants and others who somehow failed to check the facts of this matter.

But the primary fact is, Mr. President, if we do not move forward with the base closing process, we have forgotten several things. The cold war is over. The defense budget is small. We have excess infrastructure that needs to be closed. The BRAC will go on regardless of Senate action, but will suffer in quality if the names are not brought to a vote immediately. I believe my constituents and our national security interests deserve the best possible Commission we can provide. I hope that all my colleagues will agree with that.

Mr. President, if we do not approve the nominees, then former Senator Alan Dixon, who is the Chairman of the Commission, by law must proceed with the process. That will leave the review of the entire base closing proposals in the hands of one individual. He will have only one choice and that will be to rubberstamp whatever the Defense Department has recommended.

I am convinced that that is not what the Congress had in mind when we set

up the BRAC process. And I am convinced that the American people will thereby be shortchanged and bases may be closed that do not need to be closed and bases will be kept open that do not need to be kept open.

Mr. President, I think that it is clear that the fact that one of the names was removed almost without cause—or at least for some period of time there was no information—from the nominating list by the White House contributed to this problem significantly. But I think there are ways that we could have worked it out, maybe, by withholding one name nominated by the other party as well as one nominated by the Republicans, and the other names sent forward, we could have worked effectively in that fashion.

I am convinced that if we do not move forward today on these nominations, it places the entire concept of base closing in significant jeopardy.

Mr. President I hope that the leadership will reconsider their decision on this issue and move forward today with the nominees for the Base Closing Commission for the sake of national security and for the sake of young men and women that are in our military today.

Mr. President, I yield to the Senator from North Dakota what remaining time I have.

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

WELFARE REFORM

Mr. DORGAN. Mr. President, I do not intend to use all the time.

I just wanted to observe that the Senator was wondering whether we felt the election meant anything about welfare reform. Well, there will not be that kind of debate, because we will not have that kind of debate. Most of us feel we should reform the welfare system.

My point was not the welfare system. My point was that I do not believe the last election was a message from the American people that hunger among our children is not a national priority, nor would I expect the Senator from Arizona would interpret the election that way, either.

Mr. MCCAIN. Mr. President, I appreciate the remarks of my friend from North Dakota. I wish that he had taken some measures during the 1986-94 period when he was in the majority to bring forward meaningful welfare reform of the welfare system. And since he did not, this side of the aisle will, both from the other body as well as from this one.

I thank the Chair and I yield back the remainder of my time.

RAY NATTER

Mr. DOMENICI. Mr. President, since 1989, Ray Natter has been the Republican general counsel on the Senate Banking Committee. Ray came to the

Senate in 1987 after mastering the complicated area of banking law as special counsel to the House Banking Committee and senior counsel at the Federal Reserve. Prior to coming to the Hill, Ray also spent 10 years as a legislative attorney at the Congressional Research Service. Without a doubt, Ray knows banking law and the legislative process.

Ray worked on several important issues in the last Congress, including interstate banking, fair trade in financial services and community development banking. In previous years, he had a significant impact on various important pieces of legislation, including the drafting of the Resolution Trust Corporation Completion Act, which helped end the savings and loan crisis.

When Ray worked for Chairman Garn he not only wrote significant portions of FIRREA and FDICIA, he also worked on the important issue of lender liability, which was particularly critical to bankers in my State.

Regardless of how busy he was or how many major banking bills Ray was working on, he always had time for the problems that I needed help with. Sometimes New Mexicans had ideas for legislation that I would ask Ray to review. Sometimes I would have a constituent who felt the RTC needed a little congressional oversight. Ray always gave me good counsel and advised me of all the pertinent laws.

When I was new on the Banking Committee, Ray helped me and my staff navigate the complicated world of financial institution regulation. He was always knowledgeable, accurate and willing to give his time to ensure that we became as well-informed as he was on these difficult issues.

I am not going to serve on the Banking Committee this Congress. I would have preferred to stay on the Banking Committee but too many others wanted an opportunity to participate under Chairman D'AMATO's leadership.

I want to thank Ray for his 8 years of service to the Senate Banking Committee, three chairman, and through passage of numerous public laws. Ray will be joining the staff of the general counsel of the Comptroller of the Currency. The Senate will miss Ray's expertise and his willingness to help members of the Banking Committee and the Senate. I have no doubt that the Comptroller's Office will recognize immediately that they have landed one of the best banking lawyers in Washington.

THE 1995 BIRD HUNTING SEASON

Mr. WELLSTONE. Mr. President, on the Senate floor today, one of my colleagues challenged my concern shared by thousands of Minnesotans that S. 219, a bill that would create a moratorium on new regulations, would have the effect of limiting or eliminating the 1995 migratory bird hunting season. I take strong exception to my colleague's comments and will continue to