

This country in its wisdom created national nutrition standards and created the School Hot Lunch Program. It also created another requirement that I am proud of. It is the requirement that says poor children in this country will get free school lunches.

There ought not be anyone in this Chamber and there ought not be anyone who disagrees with the basic assumption that it is our responsibility to give free school lunches to poor children. If we cannot, by looking into the eyes of children, understand the dimensions of a public policy that would withhold food from children who are hungry, what on Earth can we do that is constructive in this body?

I am hoping, when the product—that says in effect that we do not care about poor children and that there is no national requirement here—is sent to us by the House of Representatives under the Contract With America, that all of us have the willingness to stand here in the Senate and say, we disagree; poor children matter, America's kids matter.

Let me use a couple of quotes just to show you how those who push this Contract With America have changed. In 1982, the current Speaker of the House cosponsored a resolution written by then-Representative Carl D. Perkins that expressed the sense of the Congress "that the Federal Government should retain primary responsibility for the child nutrition programs and such programs should not be included in any block grant."

Well, here we are, turning 180 degrees, running the other direction, saying, Let us just eliminate the requirement. Let us roll it into a block grant. Roll it all together and ship it back to the States so you can have 50 different standards. Maybe one State would say it is not a standard that they care about. Maybe a dozen States would say they do not have the money to feed poor children. Does this country not care about that? I think that is not the case.

I think it would be a tragic mistake for us to decide in this body that what is really important in the Contract With America is to build star wars or to give tax cuts to the wealthiest among us, but it is not important to feed hungry children.

I know that when I go back to my office, I will get calls from someone watching C-SPAN saying that this is not what the contract says. But you had better believe this is what it says, and it is what the House of Representatives is trying to do. If you decide that we should eliminate the national requirement that poor children get free school lunches, then that is exactly what some mean to do.

At least from my standpoint, I hope my colleagues on both sides of the aisle will say that this makes no sense for this country. It ignores America's children and it retreats on a national standard that makes eminently good sense. Children matter. Hungry chil-

dren must have access to free school lunches. It matters to all of us in this country to see that is done.

This is a fight and a discussion that I am anxious to have in the coming weeks when this bill comes to the Senate, because this proposal is something that we should change.

Mr. President, I yield the floor.

Mr. DASCHLE addressed the Chair.

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Mr. STEVENS). The minority leader is recognized.

CHILD NUTRITION

Mr. DASCHLE. Mr. President, let me commend the distinguished Senator from North Dakota for his eloquent remarks just now and identify with them. The Senator from North Dakota commented about the Contract With America and its ramifications on school children.

What I think some of our colleagues forget is that we have had a contract in this country for a long time with our school children. At the heart of that contract is an understanding about the important role that nutrition plays in educating children today.

Our contract with school children grew out of our experience in World War II, when large numbers of young men were unable to serve in the military because of nutrition-related childhood illnesses.

At the same time, many children were coming to school malnourished, and because of that, they were unable to learn; and because they were unable to learn, they were unable to become productive citizens.

So even back in the 1940's, Americans recognized the direct relationship between nutrition and healthy development and learning. We also recognized that what happens in the lunchroom affects what happens in the classroom.

In 1946 President Truman signed the National School Lunch Act—not as a matter of charity but as a matter of national security.

What an cruel irony it would be, Mr. President, if in order to prevent our children from inheriting a huge debt tomorrow, we would take away their meals today.

Yet that is exactly what some of our colleagues would now have us do.

We cannot allow that to happen. Either way, whether we saddle our children with debt tomorrow or rob them of their lunch today, we are jeopardizing their future, and that is wrong.

Let us learn from history. The strength of our Nation is not measured only by armaments. It is also measured by the health and education of our children.

Talk to the teachers who teach our children. Talk to the men and women who run the school cafeterias and make their lunches. Talk to the parents who depend on those lunches to make sure their children are adequately nourished. They will tell you.

The reality is that a lot of kids, even today, come to school hungry. The re-

ality is that many of them don't get enough to eat at home and, if it weren't for the School Lunch Program, they would be too malnourished to learn.

So, Mr. President, this goes beyond simply a matter of nutrition. If we deprive children of a balanced meal, we risk depriving them of their ability to learn and become productive citizens.

What a terrible mistake it would be if, in our attempts to reduce the national debt, we increased our nutritional debt to our children. What a terrible mistake it would be if, in attempting to brighten our future, we forgot our past.

We understood in Harry Truman's time the critical role nutrition plays in children's physical and intellectual development. For nearly 50 years, we have acknowledged the direct link between nutrition and education, and between education and the ability to be productive citizens.

When Americans think about cutting government and redtape, taking food out of the mouths of children is not what they have in mind.

This is a provision of the Contract With America, Mr. President, that I hope will be short-lived. It denigrates the commitment we have made to children, to their education and to their future.

As the distinguished Senator from North Dakota has indicated, I hope that we will recognize the fallacies of this shortsighted proposal and retain in this Congress and in Congresses to come a genuine commitment to America's children and their well-being.

With that, I yield the floor.

Mr. COATS addressed the Chair.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Indiana.

THE BALANCED BUDGET AMENDMENT

Mr. COATS. Mr. President, we are approaching perhaps one of the most historic moments in the history of the Congress, when tomorrow this Senate will vote on the balanced budget amendment. We have not had an opportunity to pass a balanced budget amendment of this magnitude since my tenure in the Congress, and I doubt this century. We are very, very close—perhaps only one vote away. I think it is important for the Senate to understand, and for Senators to consider, just how critical it is that we bring to a final resolution this now 4-week-long debate on the necessity of a balanced budget.

I went back and grabbed a copy of the General Accounting Office report to the Congress, written in 1992, to review what their conclusions in a study entitled "Prompt Action Necessary to Avert Long-Term Damage to the Economy."

I will just cite a couple of items from their conclusion. They said, "Failure

to reverse the trends and fiscal policy," current fiscal policy, "and the composition of Federal spending will doom future generations to a stagnating standard of living, will damage the United States competitiveness and influence in the world and hamper our ability to address pressing national needs."

In 1992, the General Accounting Office warned the Congress, as it has repeatedly—and as many others have warned—that failure to reverse the current trends in how we spend money and the composition of that spending will doom future generations. They go on to say, "If not nothing is done to reverse current trends, deficits will explode over the longer term."

Finally, they conclude, "The economic and political reality is that the Nation cannot continue on the current path."

The discussion over the past 4 weeks in this Senate Chamber has been on whether or not we continue on the current path, or whether we put in place a device which will cause us to change direction, which will fundamentally alter the way in which this Congress addresses the spending of taxpayers' dollars, through a constitutional mandate, constitutional direction to balance the Federal budget. That is the question that is before us.

We have heard speeches and we have had many, many amendments saying we need to exempt certain programs from the balanced budget amendment. Primarily, the emphasis, as we have just heard, is: let us not follow the mandates of the contract because it will doom our children. It will adversely impact those children. We have had a number of amendments saying let us exempt programs for children from the effect of the balanced budget amendment. But it seems to me that if we are really, truly interested in our children, we will face up to the responsibility that is ours to address this deficit and this national debt—a debt which has run beyond our control and, as the General Accounting Office reports, "will doom future generations of these children."

The contract was put before the American people, and it outlined a new direction for this Congress and a new direction for this Nation that was overwhelmingly endorsed in the last election. We are going forward in an attempt to take a look at the Federal programs as they currently exist, including those that address children, and ask ourselves the fundamental questions: Is this the best expenditure of taxpayers dollars? Can we maximize that expenditure with fewer dollars? Is this the most efficient way of getting support to the very children that our colleagues were talking about here this morning? When we delve into the record, we find that it is not efficient. There is duplication and overlap, waste and mismanagement, and administrative costs that deny benefits to the

very people that we are trying to help. Many of these programs were well-intended when they were started.

But because the Congress failed to adequately oversee the implementation of these programs, and because we have been in literally a feeding frenzy over the past couple of decades of adding more and more programs, we end up with an inefficiency in Government that is staggering. This Government spending is driving our deficit and driving our national debt to the point where we will have very little, if anything, to offer to those children in the future.

The Labor and Human Resources Committee on which I serve looked at job training and found that there were 163 separate Federal job training programs. Is job training a worthy goal? Of course, it is. Can it be done more efficiently? I think we instinctively understand that if there are 163 programs administered by 14 agencies of the Federal Government that perhaps we can consolidate those and run those programs more efficiently.

In child care, a component of the children's programs, there are 93 separate programs of child care administered by 11 different Federal agencies, disbursing \$11.5 billion a year in targeted programs. Many of those programs overlap. In fact, a child in poverty could theoretically qualify for 13 separate child care programs, all providing the same benefit.

So the charge to this Congress is: Can you do it better? Can you do it more efficiently? Can you do it more effectively? And time after time, year after year, Congress has failed in that responsibility.

We are here seeking a balanced budget amendment to the Constitution because Congress has failed in its responsibility to provide efficient, effective management of the programs that it enacts. It has failed to correctly oversee the spending of taxpayers' dollars to the point where, in just the last 14 years, we have driven the national debt from less than \$1 to \$4.8 trillion.

We are saddling future generations with enormous debt. Each new child born in America bears a cost of nearly \$20,000 which will have to be repaid. We are approaching an interest payment alone that exceeds virtually every other category of discretionary domestic spending for the Government. Interest does not go to children's lunches. It does not go to child care. It does not go to road investment. It does not go to community policing. It does not go to fight crime. It does not go to fight drugs and all the other numbers of programs the Federal Government has been involved in. It simply goes to pay interest, simply interest on the debt. And that interest is going to explode in the future.

If we really care about our children, we will look at where we are today and say: "We must change course. We must do something differently than what we have done before."

We have had all kinds of so-called congressional solutions, legislative solutions, to deal with this deficit. And while we are touting the promise of the latest proposal by the Congress to deal with the deficit, the deficit keeps mounting at a staggering rate.

The National Taxpayers Union has estimated that for a child born today, by the time that child is 18 years old, he or she will have accumulated \$103,000 in extra taxes over his or her lifetime because of the debt. Today's debt burden is over 10 times more than the debt today's adults inherited from their parents. Let me repeat that. The debt that I inherited from my parents is one-tenth of what my children will inherit from me.

The National Taxpayers Union goes on to say:

Our children and grandchildren will pay. In many ways—not just in extra taxes. But in higher interest rates. Less affordable homes. Fewer jobs. Lower wages. Decaying infrastructure. Meager retirement incomes. A debt-burdened Government unable to afford programs and benefits Americans now take for granted.

The very programs that our colleagues were talking about—the School Lunch Programs, the Child Care Programs that go to benefit children and which we now take for granted—will become completely unaffordable by an increasing debt-burdened Government.

Thomas Jefferson left us with words of wisdom that we have not followed, and that we need to ponder as we come to a decision about how we are going to vote on this balanced budget amendment. He said:

The question of whether one generation has the right to bind another by the deficit it imposes is a question of such consequence as to place it among the fundamental principles of Government. We should consider ourselves unauthorized to saddle posterity with our debts, and be morally bound to pay for them ourselves.

We are entrusted with a unique privilege and responsibility as Members of the U.S. Senate. We should heed the words of Jefferson that say we should be morally bound to pay our own debts.

What right do we have to enjoy a standard of living now and simply dump the payment for that standard of living on to our children and our grandchildren? What right do we have to do that? It is immoral to do that. We should, as Jefferson said, be morally bound to pay for what we spend. And we have not done that. We have not done that in small margins, we have not done that in massive margins.

We have expanded our national debt from less than \$1 trillion in 1980 to nearly \$5 trillion in 1994. We have quintupled it in 15 years. We have quintupled the debt that took 200 years to accumulate prior to that.

And so, as Members contemplate their vote, I hope they would see the extraordinary implications of this vote. If the balanced budget amendment fails, I fear we will not have another opportunity to address the primary and fundamental issue facing this

Nation. If it passes, we will begin a process of doing what we were elected to do in the first place—of determining priorities, of establishing ways in which the taxpayers' dollar can be spent in effective, efficient ways. We will have to go into every program, every program of Government, to ask ourselves the fundamental question: Is this the best way we can spend this money? Is this the highest priority for this money? Is there a more efficient way to do it? It is a question, as Jefferson said, of such consequence to place it among the fundamental principles of Government.

It is wrong. It is wrong for us to continue this course.

We have a choice before us tomorrow evening that will fundamentally alter the way we do business. We have proven our incapacity to be careful stewards of the Nation's debt, careful stewards of the Nation's earnings, careful stewards of the future of this country for our children's sakes, for our grandchildren's sakes, for future generations' sakes.

Let us do what we all know we need to do—save us from ourselves. Give us a tool which will allow us to balance that budget and once and for all end this practice of saddling posterity with our debts.

Mr. President, I yield the floor

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

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

Mr. LEAHY. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that I be allowed to continue as though in morning business.

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

Mr. BYRD. Mr. President, will the Senator yield briefly for an inquiry?

Mr. LEAHY. Mr. President, I yield.

Mr. BYRD. Am I still to be recognized for 1 hour as under the previous order?

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from West Virginia is correct, that would be the order. The Chair has just recognized the Senator from Vermont for an extension of morning business.

Mr. BYRD. That would not interfere with my hour?

The PRESIDING OFFICER. There will be no interference.

Mr. BYRD. I thank the Chair. I thank the Senator from Vermont.

Mr. LEAHY. Mr. President, I assure the Senator from West Virginia that I will not be long. I had not realized that he had that order.

CHILD NUTRITION CONCERNS

Mr. LEAHY. Mr. President, I was concerned over the weekend as I read

some of the items on both the balanced budget amendment and the pending resolution, House Joint Resolution 1.

I was in a debate over the weekend on this balanced budget amendment on television and other areas. I have been asked questions about some of the issues involving child nutrition.

Now, the area of child nutrition, Mr. President—I may or may not have expertise in some areas in this body—I do believe I have an expertise in that area. As both chairman and as ranking member of the Senate Agriculture Committee, and before that as a member, I have had a primary responsibility handling our child nutrition programs. I have done this in Republican administrations and Democratic administrations. I have done it with both Republican and Democratic cosponsors.

In fact, I might say that since the Truman administration, both Republicans and Democrats have strongly backed the School Lunch Program. The distinguished occupant of the chair may recall when this program began. It began right after World War II. President Truman realized that thousands of military recruits were turned down, even at a time of war, because of malnutrition and nutrition-related medical problems.

Now, I am afraid, Mr. President, the House Republicans want to end this 50-year tradition. They want to repeal the School Lunch Act. Actually, I believe they want to do that as part of this overall Contract With America, which includes the balanced budget amendment and others.

In fact, in committees last week, the Republican majority in the House repealed free lunches for school children who cannot afford a meal ticket. They turned their back on the program supported by Republican and Democratic Presidents since the time of Harry Truman. They eliminated national nutrition standards for healthy school lunches. Now, that will not make parents of grade school children very happy, but it will make a fortune for soft drink bottlers and their PAC's and their lobbyists.

Now, Republicans also have taken steps to cut thousands of children off child care food programs. They are dismantling the WIC Program. Millions of pregnant women, infants and children could be thrown off the WIC Program. In fact, it is the height of hypocrisy when they speak of having the Contract With America and the American family when they move to cut the Women, Infants and Children Program, something that feeds pregnant women and feeds their children when they are first born.

Not only that, I would say to my colleagues; they removed the so-called Leahy amendment which required competition among infant formula makers. This competition saved the American taxpayers \$975 million a year and allowed more children, more infants, and more pregnant women to go on this program. They eliminated that.

What does it do? It tells the American taxpayers that that \$975 million, instead of feeding poor hungry children, will go to four major drug companies. It is welfare for the wealthiest. It is denying food to the neediest. It is hypocrisy at its worst, and it is a giveaway to major political contributors in the most obvious sense.

These people have reduced dramatically the chance of low-income families to get off welfare. Their cuts in day care funding may mean that thousands of day care homes go out of business. They know the children are not old enough to vote, so what they have done is target the School Lunch Program, the School Breakfast Program, the child care programs, and WIC. They put back in Meals on Wheels because they suddenly realized that went to older Americans who do vote and may contribute. So they put that back in, but they cut out the children who do not vote.

The fine print in the Contract With America is really a contract against children. It is a contract against mothers and fathers. I believe it must be stopped. The contract is antichild, antifamily, and false advertising.

I believe, Mr. President, that we ought to look at what they have done. They say they will pass this out in block grants. Of course, they do not put out money for the block grants, and if they do, we know what will be the first thing to be cut. In fact, I must say that one of the best arguments against block granting child nutrition programs have come from Speaker GINGRICH and Congressman WILLIAM GOODLING, but, in the past, not when they are here with this unholy contract.

Speaker GINGRICH has done a complete about-face on these issues. He cosponsored a resolution in 1982 stating that the "Federal Government should retain primary responsibility for the child nutrition programs and such programs should not be included in any block grant."

The reasons child nutrition programs should not be included in block grants is best stated by Congressman WILLIAM GOODLING, who is now chairman of the House committee. He said that "a child's basic nutrition needs should not vary from State to State," and yet we now find that what was true then apparently is not true today when you have a Contract With America to fulfill, no matter how hypocritical it is, no matter how many giveaways to huge campaign contributors and wealthy interests there are.

Mr. President, I feel, as does the distinguished senior Senator from West Virginia, that I have one contract with America, and like him, I carry that with me. It is the Constitution of the United States—the Constitution of the United States. This is so good, we have only had to amend it 17 times since the