

Every day in America, 788 babies are born at low birthweight, less than 5 pounds 8 ounces.

Every day in America, 1,340 teenagers give birth.

Every day in America, 2,217 teenagers drop out of school—each day.

Every day in America, 2,350 children are in adult jails.

Every day in America, 2,699 infants are born into poverty.

Every day in America, 3,356 babies are born to unmarried women.

Every day in America, 8,189 children are reported abused or neglected.

Every day in America, 100,000 children are homeless.

Every day in America 135,000 children bring guns to school.

Every day in America, 1.2 million latchkey children come home to a house in which there is a gun.

Mr. President, I would like to, from this Children's Defense Fund report that came out today on the state of America's children, talk about what this means with Minnesota children at risk.

A Nation that would rather send someone else's child to prison for \$15,496 a year, or to an orphanage for over \$36,000 a year, then invest in \$300,000 worth of immunization and \$100,000 worth of prenatal care to give a child a healthy start, \$1,800 to give that child a summer job to learn a work ethic, lacks both family values and common and economic sense.

Mr. President, let me just add that as long as we are going to be talking about a budget deficit and addressing that budget deficit, I think it is time that we also address a spiritual deficit in our Nation. I have brought an amendment to the floor of the U.S. Senate four times which has been defeated. I will bring it back on the floor this week, especially with the rescissions bill over here.

I commend Senator HATFIELD, and others, for their fine work in at least restoring some of the cuts for some programs that are so important. I know that I met with citizens back in Minnesota about cuts to the Low Energy Assistance Program. In my State of Minnesota, over 100,000 households, 300,000 individuals, I say to my colleagues, 30 percent elderly, members of household, 40 percent child, over 50 percent someone working; this was a grant of about \$350 that enabled somebody to get over a tough time, with 40 percent using it only 1 year. People were terrified. I will thank Senator HATFIELD and others for not zeroing out that program.

As I look at these cuts that are before us, Mr. President, I would like to raise some questions not about the budget deficit but about the spiritual deficit. Minnesota children at risk. I will have this amendment on the floor and I will ask one more time for my colleagues to go on record that we will not pass any legislation, take any action that would increase the number of hungry or homeless children in America. That amendment has failed in four separate votes, though the support for

the amendment is going up; the last time it received 47 votes.

Mr. President, I want to ask the following question: Who decides that we are going to cut child nutrition programs but not subsidies for oil companies? Who decides that we are going to cut the Headstart Program but not subsidies for insurance companies? Who decides that we are going to cut child care programs but not tobacco company subsidies? Who decides, Mr. President, that we are going to cut educational programs for children, but not military contractors?

Mr. President, some people are very generous with the suffering of others. And it is time that we understand that we should not be making budget cuts based on the path of least political resistance, making cuts that affect citizens with the least amount of clout that are not the heavy hitters and do not have the lobbyists.

There needs to be a standard of fairness. I will insist on that during this debate. Mr. President, if you will allow me 15 seconds for a conclusion, over and over again on the floor of the U.S. Senate, I will, if you will, shout it from the mountain top. There will not be any real national security for our Nation until we invest in the health and the skills and the intellect and the character of our children. That is what this debate is about.

I thank the Chair and I thank my colleagues for their generosity and graciousness.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Georgia is recognized to speak for up to 15 minutes.

OUR NATION'S STRIKING DILEMMA

Mr. COVERDELL. Mr. President, I want to begin by thanking the members of the bipartisan commission that concluded its work last year—the entitlement commission and the Congressional Budget Office and the Senate Budget Committee, and others, who have contributed to my purpose and reason for speaking to the Senate this morning.

In perusing their work—and we do get inundated with information in this Capital City—but as I was going through the material they had provided, I suddenly fell upon a page for which this chart is a near replica. It has been improved and modified with new information. But this single page riveted my attention, and I think if known, it would command the attention of every American, every American family, and every American business. It poses for our Nation a striking dilemma.

Mr. President, what it points to is this fact and this condition: Within 10 years—maybe 8, maybe 12—the entirety of all U.S. revenues—all U.S. revenues—are consumed but by five outlays, five expenditures. You just have to think for a moment of the thousands and thousands of Federal expenditures that we accrue each year.

When you start saying that, within a decade, I suppose most everybody within the sound of my voice, with God's permission, expects to be here in 10 years. In 10 years, all of our Government's revenues are consumed by just five expenditures.

Mr. President, those expenditures are Social Security, Medicare, Medicaid, Federal retirement, and the interest on the United States of America's debt. Those five things will consume every dime the country has.

This chart shows those five expenditures and U.S. revenues meeting in the year 2006, but 10 years away. I believe it will occur sooner than that.

But, in any event, on or about this date, we are confronted with this calamity. We were just listening to the Senator from Minnesota talk about a program for children in which he has great interest. The point is that if we allow this to happen to ourselves, within 10 years, anything the U.S. Government wanted to do either could not be done because there would be no revenue to do it, or we would have to borrow it. In short, we would be saying that to run the U.S. Government, the Defense Department, to build a road, a canal, to widen a port, to take care of the program for children mentioned by the Senator from Minnesota, and the School Lunch Program which has been debated in the House, it would either have to be discontinued, or we would have to borrow to do it. Think of it—borrow to run the entirety of the U.S. Government, or not do it, because all the money will have been consumed but by five outlays.

Mr. President, from time to time, in America's history, Americans have been called upon to do extraordinary things—those that founded the Nation, those that fought to keep it a union, the Americans that went to Europe in the name of freedom in 1918, and again in 1940. Mr. President, my view is that no generation of Americans—none—will have ever been called upon to do more than the current generation of Americans as they face this staggering crisis.

I repeat that: I do not believe there is any generation of Americans other than those living today that will have been asked to do more in the name of saving this Union.

Mr. President, this is not a message of gloom. Mr. President, this is a message of challenge. Challenge. I have never known a generation of Americans that would flinch or cower from facing a crisis that had to do with the saving of the Union.

First, Americans have to know about this problem, which I do not believe they do. I think Americans understand that we have difficulties and problems. But they do not know that the problem is at their back door. They have heard policymakers for years talk about the growing crisis of our fiscal affairs.

What they do not realize is that there is not another generation to pass

this problem to. We cannot pass the baton to someone else. It is our problem. We are going to have to confront it now. We are going to have to try to prevail. That means move to a balanced budget. That means it has to be done fairly and evenhandedly.

Mr. President, we are going to have to take steps in these Chambers to remove the burdens of business so that we can expand our economy.

I contend that when we look at this conversion of but five outlays that consume all of our revenues, we are going to have to confront what I would characterize as generational contracts. We are going to have to take these entitlements and honor our agreements to those who are at the end of their work careers. But for those coming into the work career, we are going to have to entertain and shape new agreements.

Mr. President, this generation of Americans has a choice. It can do those things I just talked about—tighten the belt, move to a balanced budget, expand the economy, move to generational contracts on entitlements. If we do that, the American dream, which has been a part of this country since its inception—that life would always be better for the new generation, that the new generation would have more opportunity, be better educated, it would be a stronger nation—is still possible. If we do the tightening of the belt, if we enter into generational contracts, if we do the things to expand the economy, we will create millions of new jobs for America's future. If we do these things, we will create thousands of new businesses. And in forming the new businesses, we will generate new ideas and better ways to live, and we will elevate our standard of living in this country.

But what if we choose to flinch? What if we ignore what we have been told—that five expenditures will consume all of our revenues in but a decade. What if we ignore this, while history is full of nations in ruins because they failed to confront this kind of crisis?

If we let this happen, the future generations will have to bear an 82-percent tax rate to pay for our failure to confront this issue. Mr. President, 82 percent of earned wages would be consumed just in order to take care of our fiscal abuse.

We would be saying to the future that the present is all we are worried about. We do not care about those jobs in the future. We do not care about the burden of the working family in the future.

Mr. President, I began these remarks by saying that I believe that this generation of Americans will be called upon as no other. We are at a unique crossroads in the history of this Nation.

The other enemies were outside our borders. They were easier to identify—Hitler marching. Across America, the great divide in our Nation, this is a battle amongst ourselves. This is an in-

sidious, creeping development that is much harder to recognize.

Just as sure as the Sun comes up in the morning and sets in the West, this generation of Americans will have to confront this crisis or we will undo our own Nation.

I want to add one other thing, Mr. President. There is only one world power today. We all acknowledge that we are still living in a very dangerous world. If we destabilize our currency, if we wound ourselves because we lack the discipline to manage our fiscal affairs, we will make the world a very dangerous place for the future families of America. It will not be difficult for our world adversaries to know that if we do not care for our financial health, we will be unable to defend our freedom here or anywhere else in the world.

I have but one request, Mr. President. I hope that every American family will take a look at this very simple chart that says within 10 years, we will consume all U.S. revenues with but five expenditures—Social Security, Medicare, Medicaid, Federal retirement, and the interest on debt—and put that chart on their kitchen table and contemplate what that means to the planned retirement of the parents, to the aspirations for education and jobs of the children, and the future of their country. I believe, from around that kitchen table, will come the will and the resolve to confront this great moral challenge for the United States.

I ask them to do this for themselves, Mr. President, and for their families, and for this Union.

Mr. President, I yield the floor.

Mr. THOMAS addressed the Chair.

THE PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Wyoming [Mr. THOMAS] is recognized to speak for up to 35 minutes.

HOW TO PROCEED ON WELFARE REFORM

Mr. THOMAS. Mr. President, I am pleased today to join my freshman colleagues to discuss some of the solutions and some of the facts, the interest, that go into the Nation's welfare system.

Before the debate on welfare reform can proceed, however, it seems to me that we have to make some stipulations. We have to begin with the basic premise, the premise that everyone in this Chamber is compassionate about helping over 26 million people climb out of poverty. That is not the question.

I think if we are really seeking some solutions to our welfare problems, some solutions to help Americans advance themselves, we have to get away from this idea of saying that this group—because they have a different view—wants to throw everybody out in the cold.

I think we do all start with that notion that every day, each person has a responsibility to make this a better place to live. With that premise, we

wanted to talk some about the fundamental question of how we proceed, and what is the role of the Federal Government; how can we make changes that will cause some changes in the results of the welfare program?

Mr. President, let me first recognize the Senator from Arizona.

Mr. KYL. Mr. President, I thank my colleague for yielding. The 11 freshman Republican Senators have made it a point to come to the Chamber and speak each week on an important topic because we have just gone through an election, have just spoken very directly with our constituents, with a large segment of the block of voters who called for change in this last election. The Presiding Officer experienced that as well, and knows the fervor with which our constituents approach the issues of reform and change.

No issue that they talked about in the last campaign had more emotional feeling to it, I think, than the issue of welfare reform. Because they not only recognized that welfare reform could result in huge savings of money to the Federal Government, but that we were destroying generations of people, creating a cycle of dependency from which too many people were finding it impossible to extricate themselves.

So it is a very personal challenge as well as a sound, prudent fiscal policy that causes us to look to the issue of welfare reform. We do that this week because we want to compliment our House colleagues for passing a meaningful fundamental welfare reform package, the first real effort to reform our failed welfare system in decades, and to say to our House colleagues: You got the ball rolling and now it is our opportunity in the Senate to take advantage of the momentum you have created, to take the legislation you have passed and to try to improve upon it if we can, and to get a bill to the President which he can sign, truly ending welfare as we know it.

The House bill, in most people's view, is not a perfect bill. But it is a very good start toward this issue of welfare reform. As I said, it is now our opportunity.

Let me just make four quick points about what I think our approach to this problem ought to be.

Our current system, I think almost everyone has now recognized, does not foster independence, and family, and responsibility—all values that we know are essential, but, instead, perpetuates both material and behavioral poverty. The most compassionate, responsible course of action that I think we can take is to find a way to free our Nation's children and families from dependency in this terribly flawed welfare system.

Toward that premise I think we should first admit that continued dramatic increases in Federal social welfare spending have failed to reduce the number of people in poverty in this