

theme running through these provisions is the obligation of Federal agencies to conduct their dissemination activities in such a way as to ensure that the public has timely and equitable access to public information. A major element of this obligation is the mandate to make information available on a nondiscriminatory and nonexclusive basis so as to avoid disadvantaging any class of information users. Public information is public. It should not become a source of revenue for agencies or a means by which to exercise proprietary-like controls on information.

Finally, the legislation requires the development of a Government Information Locator Service [GILS] to ensure improved public access to government information, especially that maintained in electronic format, and makes other improvements in the areas of government statistics, records management, computer security, and the management of information technology.

These are important reforms. Of course, reaching broad bipartisan agreement on this legislation has involved considerable compromise. There has been give and take on both sides. The result, like most compromises, has displeased some. I believe, however, that the legislation represents a practical compromise that addresses many real issues and moves the Government forward toward the reduction of paperwork burdens on the public and improvements in the management of Federal information resources. It should be supported for its very significant provisions.

Even with this accomplishment, it should be clearly understood that the legislative compromise does not resolve conflicting views on the OMB paperwork and regulatory review controversies that have dogged congressional oversight of the Paperwork Reduction Act. As I said in my additional views in our committee report:

Support for the original act and for the current legislation should not . . . lead anyone to overlook the problems that have frustrated full implementation of the law. Fifteen years of Committee oversight have produced a record replete with criticisms, largely directed at OMB, for unbalanced implementation of the Act. Slighting statistics, records management, information technology management, privacy and security, and other aspects of information resources management, OMB devoted itself to a paperwork clearance and regulatory review process that occasioned repeated charges of interference with substantive agency decision-making. I believe that this record should not be obscured . . ." (S. Report No. 104-8, p. 59):

This record should remind us of our continuing obligation to oversee the act, at the same time that we move forward with the current legislation to better fulfill its very important purposes.

In conclusion, the legislation before us strengthens the Paperwork Reduction Act. It also remains true to the intent of the original 1980 act. Both the administration and the General Accounting Office concur in this judg-

ment and support the legislation. I am very proud of our accomplishment in bringing this legislation to final passage of the conference report. This has been a cooperative bipartisan effort. We could not be here without the hard work of Senator NUNN and Senator ROTH, who is now chairman of the Governmental Affairs Committee. I would also single out Senator BINGAMAN, my good friend from New Mexico, who, when he was on our committee, initiated the reauthorization effort in 1989. And, of course, as always, Senator CARL LEVIN of Michigan has played an important role, working to ensure that our committee's consideration of the legislation helped the fight both against paperwork and for Government efficiency.

This really has been a long-haul effort. And through those years, a small group of staff have labored long and hard, again and again working over drafts and coming up with legislative language to help us reach the point we are at today. I want to thank Frank Polk of Senator ROTH's staff, Bill Montalto with Senator NUNN, and Len Weiss and David Plocher of my staff. We could not be here today without their work. Finally, I want to thank Jeff Hill and Bruce McConnell of OMB's Office of Information and Regulatory Affairs, and Dan Latta and Chris Hoenig of GAO's Accounting and Information Management Division. Their technical assistance throughout the legislative process was essential, and they deserve our thanks for their help.

We are now one short step from final enactment of the Paperwork Reduction Act of 1995. I strongly urge my colleagues to join in supporting this very important legislation.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection, the conference report is agreed to.

So the conference report was agreed to.

Mr. THOMAS. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent to proceed as in morning business.

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

FRESHMAN FOCUS

Mr. THOMAS. Mr. President, as you know, over the last several weeks, the Senate freshmen have taken time on various occasions to come to the floor to talk about the agenda that we believe was prescribed during the last election, the agenda that the 11 of us, as new Republican Senators, would like to see pursued in the Senate.

Our plan was to talk in morning business about that this morning. As you know, the order has been changed, and we respect that. But until such time as the majority leader and the minority leader are able to pull up the bill, we would like to proceed to talk about some of the things that we think are most important.

We call this the freshman focus, and we think we do bring to this body

something of a unique point of view in that each of us, of course, just came off an election, each of us campaigned for a very long time in our States, each of us talked to many people, and each of us believes that there was a message in the election and that the responsibility of responsive Government is to respond to that election and to the voice of the voters as we see it.

So, Mr. President, we, I think, have going on here a great debate. It may not take the form of great debate in terms of its physical approach, but the great debate is between the way we see things happening, the way we see ourselves as a society and as a country entering into the new millennium, entering into the year 2000 in a relatively short 5 or 6 years and what shape we see ourselves in as a nation going into that new millennium.

The great debate is whether or not we want to go into that new century continuing as we are financially, continuing as we are with the huge debt that we have, continuing as we are with deficits of \$250 billion in that foreseeable future or, in fact, whether we want to seek to make some changes so that we go into that millennium, so that we go into that new century, with a nation that is financially and fiscally responsible, and now is the time we have to do that.

That is the great debate, the great debate that has been going on in the House, the great debate that is going on here, the great debate that will take place over the next year in terms of the budget. Basically, the debate is overspending.

We all have charts. Unfortunately, I am not armed with a chart this morning. The chart would show, however, that spending has gone up in this kind of fashion, spending has gone up in the neighborhood of 5 percent a year for many years and is designed to continue to go up at 5 percent a year for the foreseeable future. The President's budget this year has a 5.5-percent increase in spending.

So we talk a lot about the deficit, the deficit which is a result, of course, of the difference between revenues and outlays, but really is the result of spending. If there was a message that I think was universally discernible in November, it was that Government is too big and that Government spends too much. Most people agree with that.

If we are to have a reasonable debate, there needs to be a couple of things agreed to, a couple of things have to be stipulated. One struck me some time back in our church in Cheyenne that we attend, and the message that the pastor had was that every day each of us has a responsibility to make this a better place to live.

Whether a person is a Senator, whether a person is a carpenter, whether a person is a rancher, we each, where we are, have a responsibility to make this a better place to live.

We do it in our own ways. We each have something different to contribute.

But, Mr. President, we have, in addition to the citizenship responsibility, we have the responsibility of being trustees for this country, being trustees for the spending responsibilities of the United States—an awesome responsibility it seems to me, one that goes far beyond simply spending, goes far beyond arithmetic, goes far beyond accounting. It goes into the character of a nation.

Whether or not we are able to pay for the things we want, whether we are willing to have a cost-benefit ratio and decide for ourselves if it is worth paying for, we pay for it. It is irresponsible to continue to put it on the credit card for our kids. Our credit card is maxed out.

Within the next month or 2 months, we will be asked to raise the debt limit—\$5 trillion. Talk about charts that impressed me a little some time ago, in 1970, the budget of this country was about \$204 billion, in that category. Twenty-five years later, the interest payment on the debt is more than the entire cost of the Federal Government in 1970—not very long ago.

So the question in the great debate is how do we go into the 21st century? How do we go into the new millennium? That is what the freshmen are focusing on.

There is a great deal more to the debate on this question today of rescissions, this question today of whether we can find \$15 billion to take out of spending, \$15 billion that will not go on the debt. There is more to it than just this spending issue. It has a good deal to do with national character.

So that is what it is about. That is what the freshmen are seeking to do. Unfortunately, the opposition, rather than taking a look at where are we, where do we need to go, what changes do we have to make, what changes did voters ask for, are saying, "Oh, no, we cannot change. We want to continue with the programs we have had. We want to continue with the war on poverty"—which has failed. The war on poverty was started 30 years ago, and there are more people in poverty now than there were then.

We have the greatest opportunity now than we have had for a very long time, a great opportunity to take a look at where we are going. I suggested there needs to be a stipulation in this great debate, and that stipulation also has to be not only do we have a responsibility to make it a better place to live, but also that people who want to make changes have as much compassion and as much caring as do those who do not. The idea that people wanting to make a change and wanting to take a look at where we are going signifies that we want to throw everyone out on the street and there is no caring and that it is simply a mathematical thing is absolutely wrong. I am beginning to hear it. I hear it almost hourly from the opposition—the reason for not making a change is because it is not compassionate.

Let me suggest if we want to take a look at the long range, we want to take a look at your kids, my kids and our grandkids, we need to have a little compassion about that. We need to have a little compassion about what kind of a financial position and responsibility for our Government will we have in the year 2000 unless we make some changes.

Of course they are difficult. Of course they are difficult changes. We must make them. Americans voted for change in 1994.

We have the greatest opportunity we have had for a very long time to take a look at programs and say are they fulfilling the objective? Is that the best way to deliver services to people who need them? To take a look at welfare and say, the purpose of welfare is to help people who need help and to help them back into the workplace. A hand up, not a handout.

That is what we ought to be looking for, and to measure those programs and see if, indeed, they are successful, or is there a better way to do it. Do we need 165 programs designed to go from school to work? Of course not. We need to put them together and look at duplicity and look at repetition and see if there is a more efficient way to do it. That is what this debate is about.

Frankly, we are having a hard time keeping that debate in the arena of finding better ways to help people help themselves. That is what it is for.

Mr. President, I hope as we go through it, there will be a stipulation that we are setting out to find a better way, a better way to help people who need help; a better way to provide incentives for everyone to work and take care of themselves; a better way for the business sector to invest, to create jobs, so that we can help ourselves; a better way to eliminate bureaucracy and duplicity so that we can deliver services.

That is what it is about. That is the responsibility that we have.

Mr. President, I thank you, and I want to yield to my good friend from Pennsylvania, who certainly is one of the leaders in this effort to find better ways so that we have a society of self-improvement rather than dependence.

Mr. SANTORUM addressed the Chair. The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Pennsylvania.

Mr. SANTORUM. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent I may proceed as in morning business.

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

CONGRATULATIONS TO THE HOUSE

Mr. SANTORUM. I want to commend the Senator from Wyoming for his continued effort to bring the freshmen here to the floor on a regular basis to talk about where this Senate is going and how we are living up here in the Senate to what the country said on November 8, and what the House is obvi-

ously very successfully doing in living up to their promises to the folks that they made when they ran for office back last year.

The first thing I want to do is congratulate the House, having voted, pretty strong showing last night, for a tax reform bill and a tax cut bill—both a tax cut bill and a tax reform bill. It is a progrowth bill, a bill that is going to create more jobs, it will help families, eliminate the marriage tax penalty that has existed—which is a tremendous break—an encouragement for people to marry, an encouragement to supporting families.

It is a bill that says to seniors that we believe seniors have value and worth, that seniors can, in fact, work past the age of 65 and earn a modest amount of money—\$20,000, \$15,000—and not lose your Social Security benefits, if you are age 65 to 70.

We think that that is important. It is an important sign to seniors that we understand that they have value to give to the communities and to give it their businesses, and that we do not want to discourage seniors out of the work force and penalize them at a rate of over 50 percent in taxation if they make over \$9,600 a year as a senior. We think that that is a very positive thing that occurred in that tax bill last night.

The adoption tax credit provision which encourages adoption, we believe, is also a very, very positive profamily kind of tax change. And the list goes on.

I want to commend them for the great work that they did in paying for the program. It is not a tax cut that will increase the deficit. They offset it, more than offset it, with spending reductions in order to pay for the tax reductions.

That is the kind of decision that we will have to be making, whether it is, in fact, better to have a person keep their money or is it better to have a person send their money here and for Washington to figure how best to spend it, and of course take the cut for bureaucracy and write rules and regulations that make no sense, then send it back. That is the difference.

I think it is a pretty easy call for most Americans. I am not surprised that it passed over in the House, and I will not be surprised when it passes over here in the Senate.

On a larger scale, I want to congratulate the House for the great work that they have done. In 91 or 92 days they passed nine major pieces of legislation, nine major bills. The amount of work that they did in working—and I know a lot of folks around do not believe that Members of Congress and the Senate work very hard. I will say if we look at what the House of Representatives has done in this first 90 days, and the amount of hours they put in legislation in committees and in working groups and putting this stuff together to pass this kind of massive change that they promised, I think a person might think