

MORNING BUSINESS

Mr. THOMAS. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that we have morning business for not to exceed 5 minutes.

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

(The remarks of Mr. THOMAS pertaining to the introduction of S. 943 are located in today's RECORD under "Statements on Introduced Bills and Joint Resolutions.")

WAS CONGRESS IRRESPONSIBLE? THE VOTERS HAVE SAID YES

Mr. HELMS. Mr. President, more than 3 years ago, I began these daily reports to the Senate to make a matter of record the exact Federal debt as of close of business the previous day. On Mondays, of course, my reports are always "as of" the previous Friday.

As of the close of business Friday, June 16, the Federal debt stood at exactly \$4,892,368,600,316.89. On a per capita basis, every man, woman, and child in America owes \$18,571.52 as his or her share of the Federal debt.

It is important to recall, Mr. President, that the Senate this year missed an opportunity to implement a balanced budget amendment to the U.S. Constitution. Regrettably, the Senate failed by one vote in that first attempt to bring the Federal debt under control.

There will be another opportunity in the months ahead to approve such a constitutional amendment.

Mr. THOMAS. Mr. President, I suggest the absence of a quorum.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will call the roll.

The assistant legislative clerk proceeded to call the roll.

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 President, I ask unanimous consent that the order for the quorum call be rescinded.

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

EXTENSION OF MORNING BUSINESS

Mr. THOMAS. I ask unanimous consent that we extend morning business for 10 minutes.

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

Mr. THOMAS. I thank the Chair.

BALANCING THE BUDGET

Mr. THOMAS. Mr. President, I would like to take an opportunity as we wait to go on the highway bill to talk a bit more about the budget. It seems to me there will be nothing this year that we will deal with more important than the budget. One aspect of it, of course, is the "why" of balancing the budget. Certainly I do not think anyone would suggest that continuing to spend more than we take in is a responsible fiscal or moral position. This Congress has not balanced the budget for 25 years.

When there is discussion of a balanced budget amendment, we always hear people say: I am for a balanced budget; I sure want a balanced budget, but we do not need an amendment; all we have to do is do it.

Well, we have a chance to come to the snubbing post this time and figure out if we can do it. And we have before us from the Senate as well as the House potential outlines that do balance the budget.

Not only is balancing the budget important, Mr. President, but I think also, of course, the budget and spending and taxes help to shape the form of Government. I think they respond to what I believe was a very clear statement of the voters in 1994 that Government is too big and spends too much. And certainly the test of good Government is whether or not the Government responds when voters have sent that sort of a message. So nothing will be more important than the budget discussions this year and the result of those deliberations.

I am pleased to welcome the President of the United States to the budget debate. I am disappointed that it took this long for him to participate in it. He sort of falls into the follow-the-leader type of concept.

I am disappointed that the budget recommended by the administration does not, in fact, balance the budget, even though it is extended to a period of 10 years. I am also disappointed that it appears to yield to the political notion of endloading, where almost all of the pain is somewhere in the future, somewhere 10 years from now, which puts balancing the budget at great risk. It's likely that in the next 10 years there will be another budget and all the benefits will come early and the price we have to pay for it as taxpayers will not show up until later and the budget ends up never being balanced.

So, Mr. President, I am glad we are launched. I am glad the President of the United States has come into the discussion. However, the Congress has already done most of the heavy lifting by passing a balanced budget weeks ago. I am very proud of what the Senate did. I am not on the Budget Committee, but I think Senator DOMENICI and others came face up to the task, and their cuts start soon; they start to do what has to be done without putting it off the way the President does—the political way of tough talk, the political way of giving the benefits and doing the tax adjustments early on and letting the hard work, the heavy lifting go until later, make it until even after the turn of the century, which is only 5 years from now, maybe until after the next Presidential election, not this one in 1996 but the next one in the year 2000. Most of the heavy lifting in the President's budget comes after that—coincidence, I am sure.

We are told that the President's budget cuts discretionary programs except defense and education by \$200 billion in 7 years.

What we are not told is in the last 3 years the discretionary budget is cut by \$178 billion, so basically almost all of the cuts come in the last 3 years, not in the early years.

We are told there are no cuts in defense, but after the year 2005, there are an additional \$65 billion in defense cuts. Most of the discussion this year has been that this is not a peaceful world, and it is not a time to continue to reduce defense expenditures.

In addition, what was not said in the President's budget was in the last 3 years Medicare is cut by \$167 billion, more than all of the proposed cuts in the first 7 years.

So I think it is fair to say that this budget proposal is endloaded. Even the Washington Post, which is not exactly a pillar of conservatism, indicates that given more time, it is always easier to do the budget reduction.

A full 85 percent of the President's promised reductions would occur in the next century. I would argue that chances are pretty good before we come to actually paying for the changes we ask for, there will be other changes. In the next 7 years, as a matter of fact, the promises made in the President's budget for cuts are slightly smaller than the budget he submitted in February.

So Martha Phillips, who is the executive director of the Concord Coalition, said, "It is a funny thing about those elusive outyears; they never seem to arrive."

I think one of the difficulties, Mr. President, in recent years—perhaps always, but it seems particularly ironic now—is that in an era in which we have the greatest, quickest communications system the world has ever known, it is very, very difficult to get facts to you and me as voters in Casper, WY; that the information is usually put forth by advocates on either side and spun whichever way they choose to spin it to where it is extremely difficult for people to really get a handle on what is happening.

I noticed in just the last couple of months that the folks who come to our office who belong to nationwide organizations usually get a briefing. Frankly, when they come to the office and explain their point of view from the basis of the briefing, you hardly recognize it from what you have seen in the budget.

What we need more than anything, of course, is really straight talk, some real facts. The idea that we are going to balance the budget with no pain is an illusion. Of course, there is going to be some pain. Of course, there are going to be some changes.

The idea that we accomplished great things in 1993, for example, when most of the deficit reduction came from bookkeeping changes. We changed what was anticipated in losses in the RTC. We changed what was anticipated in losses in Medicaid. About 18 percent of the change was a policy change, and that was a tax increase.

Spending in 1993, when we talk about the deficit reduction, went up and continues to go up at 5 percent. When you are talking about \$1.5 trillion, 5 percent of that is a very large amount of money.

But I am encouraged now that the President has endorsed the idea of balancing the budget that we should get there as quickly as possible. It is a little hard to imagine that in a \$7 trillion economy that a \$60 billion change in Government spending is going to hurt our prosperity. I think George Will said that it was very hard to figure out how that can discombobulate a \$7 trillion economy.

So we should move boldly. We have the chance to move boldly. We have the chance to do the things that we talked about for a very long time, that almost everyone talks about on the campaign trail—balance the budget, reduce Government, reduce spending. But when we get here, there are arguments about who does it, where it ought to be, and we end up not doing the things that you and I know need to be done.

We can balance the budget. Very likely we will find 6.1 million more jobs, we will lower interest rates on student loans, and on mortgages.

Mr. President, I think that we are going to hold the administration's feet to the fire. His track record does not indicate a great deal of confidence. His actions do not match the rhetoric that we have been hearing. The President promised a 5-year balanced budget plan as a candidate, then rejected a 7-year budget plan, and now proposes a 10-year budget plan. The budget deficit reduction in 1993 he talks so much about was a matter of increasing taxes.

So we have a history of more taxes, more spending—spending has never been reduced—and more Government. As a matter of fact, in the 1993 deficit reduction bill, domestic discretionary spending actually accelerated rather than decreased.

In addition, this administration last year made an effort to have the Government take over health care. We have to do something about Medicare. Americans rejected the idea of a Federal Health Care Program. We have now an opportunity to save Medicare. If we do not do something, according to the trustees—some of whom are Cabinet members—in 2 years we will be into the reserves and in 5 more years it will be broke. So it is not a question of whether we do something, it is a question of what we do and how we do it. If we want to have Medicare, if we want to have health care for the elderly, we have to change the program. Yet the administration only keeps Medicare solvent for 3 more years, until 2005.

So I certainly hope that the President of the United States joining the debate will cause us to move toward a balanced budget. I am decidedly pleased he has moved away from the February budget proposal which was rejected 99 to zip in this body.

We need to use the Congressional Budget Office's [CBO] numbers. The

President suggested 2 years ago that those were the better numbers. Now we find he chooses to use other numbers which actually reduce the need by about \$200 billion per year, and according to most people's accounting, would come up at the end of the 10 years still hundreds of billions in arrears. We have the best chance in memory to take a real bona fide look at doing something about overspending, about doing something with the size of Government, and we can do it this year, Mr. President.

So I welcome the President's entry, his recognition that we do need to balance the budget, and some of the ideas that he has, but I suggest to you we have to be honest and fair about it. We cannot wait until the next century to have the pain come. We have to start now and do the things that most people agree need to be done.

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

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will call the roll.

The assistant legislative clerk proceeded to call the roll.

Mr. WARNER. 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. WARNER. Mr. President, we have just had an opportunity for the chairman of the committee, the Senator from Rhode Island [Mr. CHAFEE] myself, and the distinguished Senator from New York [Mr. MOYNIHAN] to meet with Mr. Rodney Slater, the Administrator of the Federal Highway Administration, and he will soon be forthcoming with some clarifications of the positions of the administration on a series of amendments.

The Secretary of Transportation did forward to all Senators today a letter respecting a special interest in the safety provisions in the pending bill, and at an appropriate time, I will introduce that letter into the RECORD.

But I encourage all Senators who have a particular interest in this legislation to come forward today when we have the opportunity to work out a number of amendments and to, hopefully, have arguments on others and hold over until tomorrow, pursuant to the decision of the majority leader and Democratic leader on the time for the votes.

So, at any time, this Senator and, I am sure, my distinguished colleague would be pleased to interrupt our remarks to allow a Senator or Senators to pursue their individual interests with respect to amendments.

MEASURE READ THE SECOND TIME—S. 939

Mr. WARNER. Mr. President, I understand there is a bill at the desk that is due for its second reading.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will read the bill for the second time.

The assistant legislative clerk read as follows:

A bill (S. 939) to amend Title 18 United States Code to ban partial-birth abortions.

Mr. WARNER. Mr. President, at this time, under the instructions of the majority leader, I interpose an objection to further proceedings on this matter.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The bill will be placed on the calendar.

CONCLUSION OF MORNING BUSINESS

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Morning business is now closed.

NATIONAL HIGHWAY SYSTEM DESIGNATION ACT

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Under the previous order, the Senate will now resume consideration of S. 440, which the clerk will report.

The assistant legislative clerk read as follows:

A bill (S. 440) to amend title 23, United States Code, to provide for the designation of the National Highway System, and for other purposes.

The Senate resumed consideration of the bill.

Mr. WARNER. Mr. President, there are some 20 amendments of which the managers have notice. There may be more. I know it is the intention of the majority leader and the Democratic leader that we proceed as expeditiously as possible to bring this pending matter to a conclusion in the Senate. Again, I urge all Senators having an interest to come to the floor and take up those matters.

This legislation is critically important to maintaining the transportation planning and construction programs in our several States, to providing for the efficient and timely movement of American products carried by commercial activities, and to the safety of the motoring public.

As provided in the 1991 Intermodal Surface Transportation and Efficiency Act, known as ISTEA, the Congress must approve the National Highway System map by September 30, 1995. With the cooperation of all members of the Committee on the Environment and Public Works, we were able to expedite this bill such as the Senate has it at this particular time, well in advance of the deadline created by ISTEA.

Now, if Congress does not meet the deadline, \$6.5 billion in interstate maintenance and National Highway System annual apportionments will be withheld from the several States. Therefore, we must not permit this penalty to be further imposed on our States.

In February of this year, I introduced this legislation, along with 14 of my colleagues, to ensure prompt action on the National Highway System. Today, this legislation enjoys the bipartisan support of 26 Senators.

The Environment and Public Works Subcommittee on Transportation and Infrastructure, which I am privileged