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Senate

(Legislative day of Monday, June 19, 1995)

The Senate met at 9 a.m., on the expiration of the recess, and was called to order by the President pro tempore [Mr. THURMOND].

PRAYER

The Chaplain, Dr. Lloyd John Ogilvie, offered the following prayer:

Almighty God, You know what we need before we ask You, and yet, You encourage us to seek, knock, and ask. When we truly seek You and really desire Your will, You do guide us in what to ask. When we ask what You guide, You provide.

Our day is filled with challenges and decisions that will test our own knowledge and experience. We dare not trust in our own understanding. In the quiet of this moment fill our inner wells with Your Spirit. Our deepest desire is to live today for Your glory and by Your grace.

We praise You that it is Your desire to give good gifts to those who ask You. You give strength and courage when we seek You above anything else. You guide the humble and teach them Your way. We open our minds to receive Your inspiration. Astound us with new insight and fresh ideas we would not conceive without Your blessing.

Make us maximum by Your Spirit for the demanding responsibilities and relationships of this day. Then we will say with the Psalmist, "Lord is my strength and my shield; my heart trusted in Him, and I am helped; therefore, my heart greatly rejoices."—Psalm 28:7. Amen.

RESERVATION OF LEADER TIME

The PRESIDENT pro tempore. Under the previous order, the leadership time is reserved.

MORNING BUSINESS

The PRESIDENT pro tempore. Under the previous order, there will now be a period for the transaction of morning business not to extend beyond the hour of 10:30 a.m., with Senators permitted to speak therein for not to exceed 5 minutes each.

FRESHMAN THOUGHTS ON THE BUDGET

Mr. THOMAS. Mr. President, as has been our custom recently, the freshman class would like to take some time this morning to talk about topics that are of primary interest. This morning we want to talk about the budget.

This is an exciting day. We will pass the budget balanced for the first time in 30 years.

Mr. President, let me yield to the Senator from Oklahoma.

Mr. INHOFE. Mr. President, I thank the Senator from Wyoming for yielding.

I think he said it right. This is really a historic day, a day we have been waiting for—many Members—for years, since the 1960's, when this country decided that the Great Society days were coming in and Government would play an expanded role, and that we would be able to take care of everyone from birth to death.

A lot of people realize that this cannot be done. The resources are not there. The money was not there, so we borrowed it.

Over the years, we have established huge deficits and huge debts. Finally, today, we will be passing a budget resolution that is going to put the United States in a position to balance the budget by the year 2002.

In other words, we will be in a position where we will have eliminated our deficit at that time, and then can start paying off this huge, huge, debt that is out there.

A lot of things happened in the last few weeks. President Clinton submitted a budget to this body. It was a pretty big spending budget resolution. It went down by a margin of 99 to 0.

Then a short while after that, the Republicans came forth with essentially what we will be voting on today and passed it. This was a resolution that would eliminate our deficit by the year 2002.

A week after that, the President came with another resolution that would have had the effect, he said, of eliminating the deficit by the year 2005. Until we started looking at it. The Congressional Budget Office looked at it and said, well, wait, in the next 10 years, you will be increasing the debt by about \$200 billion a year. When I multiply that out, that would be a \$2 trillion increase in our Nation's debt by the year 2005. That is certainly not bringing the deficit under control.

I would like to quote the President. During the speech that was made to a joint session, the President came out and talked about what he was going to do with the deficit. He praised the Congressional Budget Office by saying,

Well, you can laugh, my fellow Republicans, but I'll point out that the Congressional Budget Office was normally more conservative in what was going to happen and closer to right than the previous Presidents have been.

Yet it was the CBO that came out and said that it was a phony budget resolution, that it did not reduce the deficit. It certainly did not reduce the deficit.

This is an exciting time. We have heard over the last few months of debate that this is not a fiscal issue that we will be dealing with today. This is a moral issue, in that someone who is born today—like young Daniel that was born, and his new father, standing proudly behind me, the Senator from

• This "bullet" symbol identifies statements or insertions which are not spoken by a Member of the Senate on the floor.



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Pennsylvania—young Daniel, in his lifetime, would have to pay 82 percent of his lifetime earnings if we stayed on the track that we are on today to the Federal Government. This is something we are not going to allow to happen.

I am very proud, Mr. President, to be here today and be able to say, finally, a historic moment has arrived. We are participating in it. I am very proud of the participation of the 11 freshmen, the new Members of the U.S. Senate, who participated in putting this together.

Today is an exciting day. I thank the Senator from Wyoming for yielding to me.

Mr. THOMAS addressed the Chair.

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Mr. ASHCROFT). The Senator from Wyoming.

Mr. THOMAS. Mr. President, let me comment just briefly before I yield to my friend from Pennsylvania.

This is, I think, a day to which we have been looking forward. All 11 freshmen who came to the Senate this year supported the balanced budget amendment. All 11 freshmen will support this balanced budget resolution.

I think it is indicative of the fact that we were on the campaign trail, probably more than anyone else, because we were seeking our first election to the Senate. I think we found among all the issues that the idea of a responsibility in budgeting, the idea of responsibility in spending, was the issue that most people cared about.

Through all these years, we have put it on the charge card. The old charge card is maxed out, and most people know that. So we have a chance, and we will pass a balanced budget today for the first time in many, many years.

Now, I think it is honest and fair to say that passing this budget resolution is the easiest part. After this, of course, given these parameters, we have to go in and determine where the cuts are specifically. Where the additions will be, specifically. How the money is apportioned, and what the priorities are. That, of course, will be the difficult part.

The nature of it, obviously, is that each Member in our own program says we want to balance the budget but not on my program. We want to balance the budget, but we ought to take it away somewhere else. Members would be amazed at the number of folks who say, "We need a little more money because it will save money in the long run."

Probably true. Nevertheless, next year's budget is what we are talking about when we have to do something with it. It does demonstrate on the part of this Congress and on the part of the House, and I am proud of, some discipline, some concern for the future.

We had 50 4-H youngsters from Wyoming in yesterday, talking about what is going on, about their future. Talked about the fact that if we do not do something by the time the 4-H'ers are at their high-earning capacity in mid-

dle-age they will be paying 80 percent of their income in taxes.

It is not a question of whether we change but how we do it. It is difficult. Everyone said in the balanced budget amendment, I am for a balanced budget amendment—but. But. We have a dozen reasons we cannot do it this way or why we cannot do it in another way. We will hear that, of course, all through this debate, "I want to balance the budget, but we cannot do it on the backs of the farmers, but we cannot do it on the backs of these people."

We have to find a way, and we will find a way. I am delighted the President has finally come around to a balanced budget. Even though he does it in a different way, the principle is there and, finally, some commitment to balancing the budget.

He said in his letter, which I was a little disappointed in where he threatens to veto, "We share the goal of balancing the Federal budget," he says, "but we must do it in the right way."

The right way is his right way, of course. Each of us has a right way. So it will be difficult, and I understand that. I understand it is a great debate. There are bona fide differences in views, how people think the Government should function. There are those who have a notion that spending more is better; that the Government's job is to collect more taxes and spend it out in the right way. That is a legitimate point of view. I do not happen to share it. I think the real thrust in this country is that the Federal Government is too big and costs too much; that is the general notion. But the other view—it is shared by a number of people in this Congress—is a legitimate one.

So it is a great debate. And, of course, people sometimes say, "Why can't you guys get together and pass something?" There are differences of view about it. So it will not be easy, and there will be endless posturing going on defending this little group and defending that group. But through it all, in honesty, there are different sets of priorities. People push those priorities in good faith.

Let me make just a couple of points that I think are important. One is, defense will be one of the areas of great concern. Let me just say I do not know the number, I do not know where it ought to be. But certainly defense, among all the other functions of the Federal Government, is one that is a legitimate one. The Federal Government is the only unit that can carry out defense. This is not a peaceful world. How much you spend, sure, we can debate that. Should we have a strong defense establishment? Of course.

The other one, which I think is interesting in terms of principle, is Medicare. Medicare part A is financed by withholding in Social Security. So there is a fund that comes in, spending comes out. That fund is going to go broke, according to the trustees, in 7 years. There is no question about that.

The real issue is, do you take general tax revenues and prop up the fund or do you cause the fund to be self-sustaining, as it should be? Even in part B, where a portion of it is paid for by the recipient, the question is do you fund those things out of general tax revenues with no control over the spending? Or do you seek to fix the program as it is by reducing the spending from 10 percent a year to 7 percent a year?

Mr. President, we have a great opportunity to do some things that need to be done, some things of principle that must be done. We have that exciting opportunity today, and then to move within that budget resolution to the appropriations for the remainder of the year.

I yield at this time to the Senator from Pennsylvania.

Mr. SANTORUM. I thank my friend, the Senator from Wyoming, for yielding, and I thank him for his steadfast effort to come to the floor on a regular basis and organize the 11 freshman Republican Members of the Senate to come and talk about the important issues facing this country today. Obviously, the one on all of our minds is the issue of the budget.

I think the comments of the Senator from Wyoming were right on point. We have a great opportunity today to make history, and I believe we will do so. It is just the beginning of the process. We have a long way to go from passing this budget resolution, which is simply a blueprint. This budget resolution does not get signed by the President. It is a working document, in a sense, for the Congress to follow, laying forth the blueprint as to how we should get to a balanced budget over the next 7 years.

Then it is our job, over the next several months, before the end of the fiscal year, by the end of September, to craft a reconciliation package that brings in line the spending with the projections made in the budget resolution. So we have the actual reductions in the programs over the next several months—not just the blueprint as to how you get to a balanced budget. That is the tough one. That is where we have the disagreement, as the Senator from Wyoming stated, between those of us in the Congress and the President, on the "right way" to go about balancing the budget.

I will say, I am at least heartened by the fact that the President now accepts the premise of a balanced budget. When he submitted this budget—this is the President's fiscal year 1996 budget—when he submitted this budget back in February, he did not accept the premise that the Congress and the President should work together to balance the Federal budget, because this budget, according to the Congressional Budget Office and his own budgeteers, had perpetual deficits of over \$200 billion a year for as far as the eye could see, in fact, increasing 5 or 6 years out. So his first submission did not accept that premise.

He, also, when he submitted this—and this was during the balanced budget debate—suggested that a balanced budget was harmful; a time certain set for a balanced budget was a harmful thing for the economy, was bad for this country, was bad for people. Now he, surprisingly, has flip-flopped and suggested that a balanced budget is a good idea for a time certain; that we can do it in 7 years—or he suggests 10 years—but a date certain to arrive at a balanced budget is not a catastrophic event as his advisers and many of the President's close advisers suggested during the last several months.

So we have now seen that he first said a balanced budget was not necessary, and now he says it is. He first said we did not need a date certain, now he says we can set one. Then we find out the President says we should not be attacking Medicare. And now, in the most recent budget submission—and by the way, this is it. This is the President's new budget. Just to give a comparison, this is the original President's budget. This is the new President's budget.

You might wonder how you condense all of this into this. It is very simple. There is not much here, relative to what is here. There just is not the specificity, if you look at these pages. It is 20-some pages. You have an executive summary in the first four pages or so. Then you have six pages, double sided—I will admit that, it is double sided, which we save paper on; double sided—of the specifics of the President's budget. This is it. This is the entire new President's budget.

All you have heard about is, "The President submitted and comes to the table with this great new budget he talked about." It is six double-sided pages. Understand this, this is six double-sided pages to describe how we are going to spend, over the next 10 years, somewhere in the area of \$16 trillion; six double-sided pages, \$16 trillion. Just to put it in perspective a little bit. But this is it.

The other part here are charts. We always have to have charts. So we have charts here at the back that show how he is going to get his numbers down.

He was very critical of the Republicans in their budget that came out of the House and Senate, of cuts in Medicare. He was to draw a line in the sand. Now with this new budget, in fact, the first thing he talks about is reducing the growth in Medicare and contrasts his cuts—which he says are modest, necessary and modest—to ours.

His reductions are around the area of \$120 billion over 10—7 years. Ours are a little more than double that, \$270 billion over 7 years. The interesting thing is, Budget Director Alice Rivlin testified before the Joint Economic Committee last week, and she went on and just excoriated the Republicans for their horrible reductions in Medicare.

I asked her a very simple question. I said, I look at your budget and the budget numbers. I look at the Repub-

lican budget numbers on Medicare. The Republican's budget asks for more money to be spent on Medicare than you do every year. We actually spend more money on Medicare every year. She said we spend less. Their cuts are draconian and terrible, and ours are not. How does that figure? You say most people say how can you spend more money every year on a program and cut less? This is how. Here is the rub. The rub is that the President in all of his projections projects a slower rate of growth in all of these programs. So he assumes that Medicare is not going to grow that much and then only cuts from a lower rate of growth. So he cuts less but he assumes less growth in the first place, which nobody else by the way assumes; just him.

As a result, we have less cuts but lower numbers which is sort of a strange thing. You can argue both sides as to who is being cruel to Medicare. Are you being cruel because you have cut more money, or are you being cruel because you are spending actually less money per year? I would think the people in Medicare would be more concerned about how much money you spend as opposed to what you are required to cut.

We are suggesting more spending on Medicare. But at least the President has suggested that Medicare needs to be fixed and that we have to do something to reduce the rate of growth of spending in Medicare. So he has at least come to the table on that issue. Again, that is not where he was a few months ago in railing against the Republicans.

Finally, I will be willing to say that the President still has a tax cut in his proposal. So he is in agreement with us that we do need some tax relief for middle-income families in America. So there are bases for us to be encouraged about some sort of commonalty, even though the President has come up woefully inadequate and short in his budget, his new budget does not balance even though he says it does. The Congressional Budget Office, which is the numbers that we use, the minority leader, the Senator from South Dakota, just last week said, you know, the President cannot be fooling around with these funny numbers. He has to use Congressional Budget Office numbers. This is the minority leader, the Democratic leader of the Senate, who says the President has to come with a serious proposal that uses the Congressional Budget Office numbers, what his trumped-up, optimistic assessment that the world, the United States is going to continue to grow and inflation is going to be down, all these rosy scenarios so we get to balance by not having to cut as much. We have to use the Congressional Budget Office. The CBO says this budget, this detailed summary here, does not bring us to balance in 10 years like the President said. It does not bring us to balance. In fact, by the year 10 of this budget the deficit is over \$200 billion. In fact, the deficit

stays about \$200 billion over the next 10 years.

So it does not work. This is not a real budget. You hear so much about the argument saying your way or my way, and my way is the right way. His way is no way. No way does this thing get us to a balanced budget. This does not work.

So while I sincerely give the President credit for coming to the table and saying we have to address this issue, we agree on a date certain, we agree that we have to balance the budget, we agree we have to do something with Medicare, we agree we need to do something with tax cuts, you know I appreciate that. It does form a working basis for relationship to try to move forward and not end up at a horrible confrontation come the end of this fiscal year. I think the President has to go back and get real and get real with the numbers, get real with what every business person would use, which is, you know, the most likely or conservative estimates of growth and things like that. The President has not done that.

Mr. DORGAN. Will the Senator yield to me for a question?

Mr. SANTORUM. I will be happy to yield in a minute.

So I have to continue to count the days before the President has come up with a balanced budget proposal. He has still not come to the table scoring to the Congressional Budget Office numbers we have to use here in this place, and that the President agreed in his first State of the Union Address he would use. He has not come to the table with a balanced budget that is credible. And, as a result, we have to continue to do the counting. I think that is unfortunate but I am hopeful that the President will come forward.

I am happy to yield.

Mr. DORGAN. I appreciate the Senator yielding.

I, too, find fault with the President's budget. I have no difficulty with the assertion of the Senator from Pennsylvania that there are some difficulties with the budget, with the numbers in the budget. I am willing to do that.

I wonder if the Senator from Pennsylvania is willing to take a look at page 3 of the budget resolution that he brings to the floor and says is a balanced budget. On page 3 the majority party brings to the floor a budget document that page 3, paragraph (4), deficits—in the year 2002, it says the deficit is \$108 billion. The speaker before the Senator from Pennsylvania, the Senator from Pennsylvania, and I expect the speakers after the Senator from Pennsylvania, will continue to insist that this budget is a balanced budget in the year 2002. If that is the case, why on page 3 does it say in the year 2002 there is a budget deficit of \$108 billion?

Will the Senator from Pennsylvania not agree that is what it says in this document, and that is what we will have in the year 2002, not a balanced budget but in fact a deficit of over \$100 billion?

Mr. SANTORUM. All I know is the Congressional Budget Office scores this document as a balanced budget. I would defer to the Senator from New Mexico as to the specifics of that particular page. This is the first time I have seen it. But from all the scoring that we have had, this was scored by the Congressional Budget Office as a balanced budget according to the Senator from New Mexico. So the Senator's question is with him as to what this document says versus what he has represented to the Congressional Budget Office has told him. That is all I can respond to.

But I will say that, if, in fact, this budget is not balanced, we should go about the process of getting one that does come into balance.

So I guess I do not know the answer to the question.

Mr. DORGAN. If the Senator will yield further, and I appreciate his indulgence, he apparently has found what I found on page 3. This is a condition in the original budget as well. I do not think there is a conflict with what the Congressional Budget Office says and what this document says. I think if the Senator, following his presentation, will check he will discover, as the Senator from New Mexico or Congressional Budget Office and with everyone else has, that, in fact, this budget is not balanced by 2002; this budget on page 3 says the deficit at 2002 is \$108 billion. That is a problem.

Mr. SANTORUM. All I would say is that is a very good question. I would like to get the answer. I do not have the answer.

Mr. DORGAN. My point is I think the Senator from Pennsylvania is wrong about the question of whether this budget will balance. That is my only point.

Mr. SANTORUM. I know where the Senator is coming from.

Mr. DORGAN. My only point is, if this is a balanced budget, zero in the year 2002, it does not say zero. It says by the year 2002 there will be a \$108 billion deficit. I would say that I do not think there is disagreement among us about whether or not we ought to be in balance. There may be a disagreement about the priorities in spending. But there is no disagreement about the need to balance the budget. The only reason I come and raise the point is that this does not balance the budget. It still remains at a \$108 billion deficit in the year 2002, and much more remains to be done.

Mr. SANTORUM. I appreciate that. I assure the Senator that I will bring this matter before the chairman of the Budget Committee for his response to that. I am sure he has a response to that.

What I will say is that we have put forth an honest effort, according to all the numbers that I have seen, that this does bring us to a balanced budget in 7 years, and it does so in the way that I think is really the only way possible to do it: By containing the growth of Gov-

ernment. Under this budget resolution, the Federal Government's budget continues to grow 3 percent a year. Growth is continuing in Government spending. It does not freeze. The spending goes up 3 percent a year. It does not go up as fast as it would had we not changed some of the things here in the budget.

So I am excited about today. I think it is a great opportunity for us to do something for—I see some young people up in the audience—to do something for the next generation of Americans, and provide some rays of hope for them, that we are going to get our economic ship right and give them the opportunity for a successful economy so that they can seek their dreams and fulfill those dreams in a free and prosperous America.

I thank the Senator from Wyoming. I see the Senator from Tennessee is here to speak on this issue. I would be happy to yield at this point to the Senator from Tennessee.

Mr. MURKOWSKI. Mr. President, I make an inquiry, if I may?

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Alaska.

Mr. MURKOWSKI. I thank the Chair. Is there a prescribed time this morning for Senators?

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The following are the conditions under which morning business was to be conducted: The Senator from Wyoming [Mr. THOMAS] was recognized for up to 30 minutes. He had yielded time to the Senator from Pennsylvania and was to yield time to the Senator from Tennessee. The Senator from Alaska was to be recognized to speak for up to 15 minutes, the Senator from North Dakota recognized to speak for up to 30 minutes, and the Senator from California [Mrs. FEINSTEIN] recognized to speak for up to 15 minutes. Morning business was to close at the hour of 10:30.

Mr. MURKOWSKI. I thank the Chair and wish the President good day. I yield to my colleague from Tennessee.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Tennessee.

A HISTORIC OCCASION

Mr. FRIST. Mr. President, my fellow freshman colleagues and I are here to continue the discussion and would like to close the discussion with the importance of balancing the Federal budget and to mark this historic occasion for final passage of the 1996 budget resolution conference report.

It was just 18 months ago that I was performing heart and lung transplant surgery in the operating rooms at Vanderbilt University, and at that point in time I worked taking out enlarged, worn-out hearts and replacing them with strong, powerful new hearts that were healthy. These operations gave people with heart disease, heart disease which had crippled their lives, new hope, a new opportunity, a new chance, a new beginning.

Today, I believe we are doing the same thing for our Government. We are reversing the out-of-control spending

habits of the past. We are instituting discipline over the spending process. We, indeed, are reenergizing a tired, worn-out Congress with a strong, healthy one; and after 40 years, a new heart is beginning to beat. A new spirit of federalism is flowing out of Washington, and this budget sets forth the blueprint for returning power to the States and to the American people.

The budget resolution conference report eliminates waste. It consolidates duplicative programs and calls for reform of obsolete programs in anticipation of governing in the 21st century. It recognizes the need to phase out programs gradually and responsibly, still mindful of the ever-mounting interest and Federal debt. Franklin Roosevelt once said, "We can afford all that we need, but we cannot afford all we want."

Today, the Republicans will complete a dramatic first step towards reforming Government so that it provides all that we need and yet does not provide more than the American taxpayer is willing to pay for.

Mr. President, despite ever-changing tax rates, the amount of revenues paid to the Federal Government have hovered consistently near 19 percent of GDP, gross domestic product, for the last 30 years, and yet Federal spending has risen from 19 percent of GDP in the early 1960's to a high of 24.4 percent in 1983, settling at about 22 percent of GDP today. It is that 3 percent gap between the amount of Government services the American public would like to have and the amount which taxpayers are willing to pay for that is really at the heart of the matter.

Republicans never said it would be easy to close this gap between Federal spending and Federal revenues, and there really should be no misconceptions. This budget makes tough choices. But the American people did not send us here last November to shrink from what they knew would be a mammoth task, that of balancing the budget and reexamining nearly every aspect of modern American Government.

As President Harry Truman has pointed out, no government is perfect. And yet as he said, "One of the chief virtues of democracy * * * is that its defects are always visible and under democratic processes can be pointed out and corrected." And today, America is correcting one of its greatest problems, that is, that of fiscal irresponsibility. And tomorrow we will move on to tackle the other problems that plague our Nation—crime, decay of the inner cities, and breakdown of the American family. The primary step toward solving all of these problems is to rely less on the Federal Government, as we have done in this budget, and to empower America's citizens once again.

All of the Members of the 104th Congress can be proud that democracy has worked, that we have made great

strides in addressing the Nation's budget deficit. When our founders sacrificed so much that America might be independent and free, we accepted a trust to preserve this Nation for future generations.

This conference report is a historic first step, and we must continue to stand tall through the entire reform process.

I will close with a list of 10 points, often attributed to Abraham Lincoln that I believe we should be mindful of as we consider reform of nearly every government program in the coming months:

First, you cannot bring about prosperity by discouraging thrift.

Second, you cannot strengthen the weak by weakening the strong.

Third, you cannot help small men up by tearing big men down.

Fourth, you cannot help the poor by destroying the rich.

Fifth, you cannot lift the wage-earner up by pulling the wage-payer down.

Sixth, you cannot keep out of trouble by spending more than your income.

Seventh, you cannot further the brotherhood of man by inciting class hatred.

Eighth, you cannot establish sound social security on borrowed money.

Ninth, you cannot build character and courage by taking away a man's initiative and independence, and

Tenth, you cannot help men permanently by doing for them what they could and should do for themselves.

Mr. President, I thank the Chair and yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The time controlled by the Senator from Wyoming has expired.

Mr. DORGAN addressed the Chair.

Mr. MURKOWSKI addressed the Chair.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from North Dakota.

ORDER OF PROCEDURE

Mr. DORGAN. Mr. President, my understanding was that morning business allocated one-half hour to the Republican side, controlled by Senator THOMAS this morning, and then one-half hour to our side controlled by myself. Is that correct?

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The order provided to the Chair was that the Senator from Wyoming [Mr. THOMAS] was to be recognized to speak for up to 30 minutes, the Senator from Alaska [Mr. MURKOWSKI] recognized to speak for up to 15 minutes, the Senator from North Dakota [Mr. DORGAN] recognized to speak for up to 30 minutes, and the Senator from California [Mrs. FEINSTEIN] recognized to speak for up to 15 minutes.

Mr. DORGAN. Was it to have been in that order? My understanding was that—

The PRESIDING OFFICER. There is no specific sequence. That is the way in which it was provided.

Mr. MURKOWSKI addressed the Chair.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Alaska.

Mr. MURKOWSKI. I do not want to complicate this by any means. I think that there is some legitimate confusion relative to the process here. I asked for morning business. I was told that my time, the 15 minutes, began at 9:30. It is just a little after 9:30. I do not want to belabor it. My only effort in coming over was that I have to chair a hearing at 10 o'clock. So I attempted to try to come over in order to make that. With the indulgence of my colleagues, with no objection, I prefer to make a brief statement and then go and open my hearing.

Mr. DORGAN. Mr. President, if I might just respond, I arrived at 9 o'clock and our caucus at the moment, our Democratic caucus, is meeting on regulatory reform. All of us have problems.

My understanding was that we were going to have one-half hour over there and one-half hour over here. If that was not locked in, I guess I would be willing to be flexible on that. But I say that I arrived here at 9 o'clock. I know the Senator from New Mexico is missing the same caucus that I am missing, and I very much did want to respond to some of the points in the budget.

The Senator from Alaska intends to take how long for his presentation?

Mr. MURKOWSKI. I will not take a full 15 minutes, in response in the Senator from North Dakota. I encourage the floor managers, or however the process works, if this could be alleviated perhaps. I am not being critical, but I appreciate the concern of my friend. We are both in the same situation. Maybe the best thing to do is for me to start and get out of here, and then I can yield to my friend from North Dakota the remaining time that I have.

Mr. DORGAN. Mr. President, I will not object to that. I hope that we will be able to sequence it in the future, if that side has 30 minutes, perhaps, if we have 30 minutes reserved, we would be recognized for the next 30 minutes. If the Senator from New Mexico has no objection, I would be happy to allow the Senator from Alaska to proceed at this point and assume the time following that.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Chair thanks the Senator from North Dakota. The Senator from Alaska.

Mr. MURKOWSKI. I thank my friend from North Dakota. I wish him a good day.

RISK ASSESSMENT

Mr. MURKOWSKI. Mr. President, I am going to use my time to speak on risk assessment. I had intended to do that at 10:30. However, the hearing which I have to chair, as chairman of the Energy and Natural Resources Committee, is a joint hearing with the Environment and Public Works Committee on a very important and timely topic, and that is the Komi oilspill

which has taken place in Russia at this time as I speak. The significance of this spill is unprecedented in relationship to any spills that we have ever experienced previously. Approximately 400,000 barrels of oil per day are leaking from various pipelines in Russia. That equals twice the *Exxon Valdez* spill, which, of course, was one incident. This volume of 400,000 barrels a day is occurring each and every day. The joint committee that will be meeting today will be attempting to focus on this and generate notoriety and, hopefully, a plan to assist in cleanup and to ensure that this terrible, terrible tragedy does not continue.

My statement this morning, Mr. President, is to call attention to the reality that listening to some people in Congress, listening to some people in the executive branch, you might not think it, but I think those of us who have been listening understand that this town was given a very simple message last November. And that message is that it is time for the Federal Government to wake up and reform the way it does business.

It just so happens we now have bipartisan legislation to help point us in that direction. That legislation is the Comprehensive Regulatory Reform Act of 1995. Its purpose is to protect public health and safety and to protect the environment while sparing people, you and I and those out there, from the nasty side effects of overregulation. It is a statement in favor of freedom, common sense, and responsible government, and one more, and that is accountability.

From the air we breathe to the food we eat and the ground we walk on, Federal regulations govern almost every phase of our lives. Their stated purpose, of course, is to help make people healthier and safer by reducing exposure to a variety of risky substances and products and by regulating various activities.

In many cases, Mr. President, these goals are accomplished. However, in others, regulations focus on unsubstantiated or minute risks to health, safety or the environment, and end up wasting a lot of taxpayers' money and time that could be spent on more pressing problems. Worst of all, unnecessary regulations, duplication, take away our freedoms. Our freedoms are lost bit by bit by empowering bureaucrats in Washington to tell us what we can and cannot do and almost on a worst-case basis.

Last year, Mr. President, Americans spent an estimated \$647 billion on regulations. That is more than every element of the average person's budget except housing. Yes, that is even more—\$104 billion more, as a matter of fact—than America spent in paying its tax bill in 1994. But, unlike taxes and the other bills we pay, much of the costs of regulations are hidden in the price of goods and services, so most people do not know about their true costs to each of us.