

Mr. DOLE. Mr. President, regular order.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator cannot proceed. The only item in order is to ask that the quorum be rescinded.

Ms. MOSELEY-BRAUN. Mr. President, I would do that. I was asking the question, whether now is the time that the motion to rescind the quorum call might possibly not be objected to.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Is the Senator seeking consent to rescind the call for the quorum?

Ms. MOSELEY-BRAUN. Mr. President, yes.

Mr. ASHCROFT. Mr. President, I object.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will call the roll.

The assistant legislative clerk continued with the call of the roll.

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 President, I ask unanimous consent that the order for the quorum call be rescinded.

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

UNANIMOUS-CONSENT AGREEMENT

Mr. ASHCROFT. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the following Senators be recognized to speak in the following order for the allotted times: Senator WELLSTONE, 10 minutes; Senator MOSELEY-BRAUN for 10 minutes; Senator ASHCROFT for 10 minutes; Senator BYRD for 10 minutes.

I further ask that following the conclusion of Senator BYRD's statement, the majority leader be recognized to speak and then proceed to various wrap-up items that have been cleared by the two leaders.

Following those items, the Senate would stand in adjournment under the provisions of Senate Concurrent Resolution 20.

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

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 President, I ask unanimous consent that the order for the quorum call be rescinded.

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

THE RESCISSIONS BILL

Mr. WELLSTONE. Mr. President, I shall be very brief and will be followed by the Senator from Illinois.

Mr. President, let me try to give the morning and part of this afternoon some context. We had a bill, which was about 120 pages long, come over from the House at about 9 o'clock today. This was the rescissions package voted on about 10 o'clock last night in the House of Representatives. It is my really strong view as a Senator that it is important to be able to review legislation, especially when we are talking

about the cuts that directly affect people's lives. Sometimes, Mr. President, we get into the statistics and numbers and we forget the faces.

I had voted for the rescissions package passed out of the Senate earlier. I voted against the conference report because of changes that had been made. It is no secret to any Senator in here that I feel especially strongly, as do many other Senators feel very strongly, about several programs—but it is not programs. It is really about people.

I spoke about the Low-Income Home Energy Assistance Program, and I had an amendment and wanted to introduce an amendment that would have restored about a 20-percent cut in the LIHEAP. In my State of Minnesota there are 110,000 households and 300,000 people who are depending on this. I come from a cold weather State. It is a small grant, but for many people it is the difference between heating and eating.

I say to the Presiding Officer, the Senator from Idaho, because I know what kind of Senator he is and I think we respect each other whether we agree or disagree, I met with people in their living rooms. I saw the fear in their eyes. I know how strongly these people depend on this assistance, especially in such a cold weather State. And I said I would fight for these people, and that is what I have done. Because what happened last night in this final package is that we did not have the original Senate version, but we cut it 20 percent, some \$315 million.

In addition, I fought for a counseling program for elderly people, to make sure they could not be ripped off. It was consumer protection. This was coverage that people asked for in addition to Medicare, to fill in the gap.

Then I discovered there were some additional cuts in dislocated worker programs. The Senator from Illinois spoke eloquently, of course, about a program she had worked on, just a small amount of money for school infrastructure, for kids.

So what I said today was I wanted the opportunity to go through this bill. I wanted an opportunity to talk about it. I wanted an opportunity to introduce amendments. The first amendment would have been offset, and I gave examples of some of the waste in the travel administrative budget in defense. That money would have been transferred so we would not have the same cut in the Low-Income Home Energy Assistance Program.

I must say, Mr. President, looking at this in a slightly larger context, I find it unconscionable. Really, what we might be talking about, as we extend this rescissions bill into the future—this is a grim precedent of where we are going, since this is where the rubber meets the road. We could be seeing the cuts in the outyears for low-income energy assistance, for children, for education, for counseling for seniors to make sure they do not get ripped off with health insurance—all used to fi-

nance tax cuts that go in the main to wealthy, high-income people. Cuts in programs for dislocated workers, job training, you name it. All in the name of tax cuts? We do not go after any of the subsidies for the oil companies but we cut low-income energy assistance? We do not go after any of the military contractors, any of the waste there, but we make cuts in low-income energy assistance, job training programs for kids, counseling programs for elderly people, for consumer protection.

To me it was unacceptable.

I just want to respond to one or two points that the majority leader made, and then I will conclude my remarks.

This was not something just done on Friday. I just got this bill. I am not going to be bulldozed over as a Senator. I want to look and see what is in this piece of legislation. That is the responsible thing to do. And it certainly is true that those people, be they elderly people with disabilities, be they children, working poor people who are affected by low-income energy assistance may not have all the clout and make all the money and make all the contributions, deserve representation here in the U.S. Senate.

The cuts, I believe, are unconscionable. So this was not something I just come to on Friday. This has been a priority issue for me as a Senator from a cold weather State where many people are affected by these cuts for a long, long time. And will continue to be so.

Second, I care fiercely about the assistance for people in Oklahoma and California. We will be back to this bill. We all know it. Of course, we will be back to this bill. And, of course, there will be relief, and I have voted for that relief and will continue to do so. We all know we are going to be back on this piece of legislation—and we must. I hope there will be some discussion in the meantime and we can work out some reasonable compromise.

Finally, I have the utmost respect for the manager of the bill, the Senator from Oregon, and certainly for the Senator from West Virginia. But as to what happens in the future, we cannot be bound by the priorities and the parameters of what the House of Representatives is doing in these kinds of budget resolutions. We can make changes next year. I just simply tried to say today, and I will say it over and over again—I will shout it from the mountain top, from the floor of the Senate, if that is what is necessary—that these are distorted priorities. To ask some of the most vulnerable citizens in this country to tighten their belts when they cannot, to cut low-income energy assistance for people in my State, a cold weather State, and not even look for offsets? Not to restore that kind of funding? That is unacceptable to me.

So, I have no doubt that we will be back on this.

My final point would have been that by amendment, I would have on the first amendment talked about other

States, the number of people affected in Missouri, in Kansas, or in Minnesota by low-income housing energy assistance, or Illinois. I would have laid out some important data. I would have talked about real people who are behind these statistics, and I would have talked about offsets.

But in all due respect to the majority leader to come out at the end and say: I will roll them all into one amendment and have 10 minutes and then move to table—I do not legislate that way. I do not know too many Senators who really find that acceptable when it is the issue you have been working on for the people you are trying to represent.

So I hope that we will be back on this bill right away, and we will go forward with the discussion. I hope that we can work out a satisfactory agreement. In any case, I intend to keep on speaking and keep on fighting, not with malice, not with bitterness, but with dignity, and face the policy that I honestly believe in.

I yield the floor.

Ms. MOSELEY-BRAUN addressed the Chair.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Illinois.

Ms. MOSELEY-BRAUN. Thank you very much.

Mr. President, this morning has been difficult for all of us. But I have to say that particularly when some of the pages came over and spoke to me a while ago, I could not help but be reminded of how it is, particularly in this U.S. Senate, in this legislative body, that one person really can make a difference.

And if a person, a Senator, cares deeply about something, then that Senator has the right and the opportunity to make the case, to make a point, and to raise the issue. Sometimes in raising the issue, it results in change. Sometimes it does not. But certainly, raising the issue is of primary and critical importance.

I have not been here long enough. But, at the same time, I am a Senator, and I was elected by my State. I am called on to be the voice for the people who sent me here, and to stand up for interests and concerns of the voters and citizens of my State.

I believe that it is of real importance to raise the fact that the decisions in this bill represent misplaced priorities, that it ought to have been changed, and that the priorities represented ought to have been changed. I mean no disrespect to my colleagues on the committee who came up with this compromise—I know they worked hard and I know they felt strongly and feel strongly about the particulars in this bill. But if anything, that is what legislation represents—ideas. That is what it is. It is an idea. If the idea has a flaw in it, then I think it is our obligation to get up and say there is something wrong with it.

That is why I came to the floor this morning with Senator WELLSTONE. I

have and will continue to say that it is wrong to take money away from job training opportunities for our disadvantaged teenagers. I think it is wrong to take money away from senior citizens who may need heating assistance. I think it is wrong to say we are not going to start fixing up some of the schools that make it almost impossible for students to learn.

I also thought that while there are some things about this bill that were good, that we could find the money to take care of these priorities.

I came to the Senate floor with Senator WELLSTONE to try to offer some amendments. But, as you know, the procedures are sometimes convoluted; the procedures are sometimes complex.

The bottom line result was that we were not given an opportunity to actually have a vote on our amendments in the context of the amendment process, and the bill was pulled.

I thought we could go to the bill. I think Senator WELLSTONE is right, that the bill will come back, that we will have another shot at it at some point in time if, indeed, this is the will of the leadership. I certainly did not want—and I know Senator WELLSTONE did not want—to annoy anybody or to put anybody out or to impair anybody's plans for vacation. But we have a responsibility, it seems to me, to do everything that is within our power to speak to the ideas that get floated around here as legislation.

I think this is one of those critical moments, as we start the debate of what kind of march are we going to take down that road to deficit reduction, we must also engage in the debate of how are we going to march down that road? Are we going to march down that road together, as Americans with a shared sacrifice and everybody pitching in, or are we going to march down that road stepping on the backs of the feet of the teenagers, the senior citizens, the poor, the vulnerable, and the people who cannot necessarily speak for themselves?

I tell you, Mr. President, that I believe what happened here this morning, I hope that what happened here this morning, will help to shape the debate about how we go about achieving deficit reduction and how we get on that glidepath to a balanced budget; and that, in having come out here and exercised our rights as legislators, that Senator WELLSTONE and I reached our colleagues on the television sets in their offices, or wherever they are right now, that we reached some people to suggest that as we go down that path, we have to go down that path in a way that recognizes that our future as Americans is inextricably wound together and that we cannot, we must not, take more sacrifice from one group than another; that the contributions ought to be based on the ability to contribute; that we do not call on people who are already hanging on by their fingernails, call on the least able in our society to give the most; and

that we can achieve this glidepath recognizing that investment in our people is the single most important investment we can make as Americans.

That I think is what this debate this morning was really about, or what we hoped it would be about. I had hoped to offer two amendments. Senator WELLSTONE also had amendments. We did not get that chance. But I know we will have a chance to do so. I hope we will have a chance to do so on this legislation or some other legislation as we go down this process, as we move toward adjournment.

Mr. President, I say to my colleagues, as we approach these issues, let us recognize that really we do have an obligation to talk to one another and to try to work these issues out in a way that is fair to all Americans—not just some Americans, but every American—including those who do not have the wherewithal to weigh in with lobbyists and the like.

I thank the Chair very much, and I yield the floor.

Mr. ASHCROFT addressed the Chair.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Missouri is recognized for 10 minutes under the previous unanimous consent order.

Mr. ASHCROFT. I thank the Chair.

THE RESCISSIONS BILL

Mr. ASHCROFT. Mr. President, I am pleased to have this opportunity to make comments about the rescissions bill which has been before us but which has been withdrawn from consideration as a result of the unwillingness on the part of the Senator from Illinois and the Senator from Minnesota to allow amendments to be voted on.

Just moments ago, the Senator from Illinois said that there were amendments which she had prepared which she hoped she would have the opportunity to submit. I recall this morning having listened to the leader ask specifically that amendments be submitted. He asked not only that the Senator from Illinois submit amendments for consideration but asked that the Senator from Minnesota submit amendments for consideration. Over and over again, they would deny that they wanted to submit amendments; they would refuse to submit amendments.

Then I saw the leader, the majority leader, come to this podium and say I have heard the debate and I will craft an amendment which will reflect the concerns of the Senator from Illinois and the Senator from Minnesota, and I will submit that amendment so that we can have a vote so that the Senate can express itself in regard to the amendment, if I can have unanimous consent to do that.

The objections which were heard in this Chamber at that time were the objections from the very Senators who now say they were deprived of an opportunity to forward such concerns and have a vote on their concerns.