

PRIVATE MEETINGS—4 MEETINGS

5/4/95—Meeting with Secretary Shalala.

8/2/95—Meeting on the Budget.

8/4/95—Meeting on the Budget.

8/10/95—Meeting on the Budget.

Mr. SIMPSON. Mr. President, I am now a member of that committee and I sat in on those hearings. They were often held at 9:30, 10 o'clock in the morning. Had I been chairman I might also have sought to have them in the afternoon. I was there for almost all of them, usually arriving after some haste ill-attained in getting through the D.C.'s fabled rush hour traffic from my home in Virginia.

We held 10 full Finance Committee hearings last year on Medicare alone—10. They were not about abstract, philosophical topics, but subjects directly related to the solutions presented in our budget proposal. On May 11, 16 and 17 we had hearings specifically on the question of how to restore solvency to the Medicare Program. We tackled the issue of payment policies in hearings on July 19 and 20. We explored more comprehensive reforms on July 25 and July 26. On August 30 we dealt with the subject which I personally think requires much more, much more attention—the 30-year future of Medicare. That is when the real problems all coalesce. This is only part of the list, as the record will show.

We also had multiple hearings on Medicaid. The proposals which we made in the course of budget reconciliation were all explored in depth at those hearings. The opinions of the Governors regarding our plan was heard on June 28. The importance of flexibility for the State Governments in administering Medicaid was explored July 12. The proper way to calculate the distribution of funds under the Medicaid formula was explored on July 27. Again this is only a partial list.

Even the issue of the Consumer Price Index reform, which so many have said we should "not rush to do," especially not rush to do in budget reconciliation, the CPI reform was the subject of several full committee hearings on March 16, April 6, and June 6. When somebody tells you we have not done anything—and looked into CPI; we do not want to rush into it—cite those, please. Having been right there personally I can tell you few experts believe we are acting with any sense at all on either side of the aisle in allowing the expensive errors in the CPI calculation to persist. That is absurd. It is out of whack either .5 or up to 2.2. Everybody that testified said that. If you dealt with it, knocked off a half percent or full percent in the outyears, in 10 years, at 1 percent, it is \$680 billion bucks—billion bucks—and we do not even play with it.

The senior groups all seem to flunk the saliva test when we begin to talk about the CPI. "Oh, break the contract, break the contract." I am telling you, they will break America. We are not talking about them or to them.

None of them will be hurt in anything we are doing. No one over 60 is even affected by the things we have in mind, but people between 18 and 40 will indeed be on a destructive path.

Mr. President, I do not know what to make of these assertions that we have not had hearings on Medicare or Medicaid. We have had many. The record speaks clearly. On Medicare alone, 10 full committee hearings. It seems to me be a trend in Washington saying that what has happened has not happened and vice versa. The media plays that well in their recountings of these things. Perhaps the assertions will be revised to state that we only had a minimal look at Medicare. That would probably be the result of the response to my remarks.

I do not know how many dozens of hours were needed to spend on that to escape the application of that term. I also note that this work continues on in the current year. We had another remarkable hearing on Medicaid last week with six of our Nation's Governors testifying—three Republicans, three Democrats—in describing the desires of the State governments with regard to Medicaid.

So I ask these items be printed, and I ask my colleagues to perhaps refrain from repeating the charge that we have not thoroughly explored Medicare in committee hearings. The facts are exactly otherwise, and I wish my good colleagues to know that.

INTERNATIONAL FAMILY PLANNING FUNDING

Mr. SIMPSON. Finally, a comment on family planning funding. I want to express my serious concerns about the severe restrictions this Congress has imposed on U.S. funding for international family planning assistance.

My colleagues will recall that the Senate successfully avoided a partial Government shutdown on January 26 by passing H.R. 2880 on a bipartisan vote of 82-8. At the time we faced a midnight deadline for passing legislation to avoid yet another Government shutdown. Because no one in this Chamber wanted another shutdown to occur, we passed this measure in the exact form it came to us from the House without amending or striking any provisions which we considered to be objectionable. We had no choice in the matter. It was a frustrating and vexing experience for many of us.

I was and continue to be deeply troubled by a provision of H.R. 2880 that prohibits funding for international family planning assistance programs until July 1 unless a foreign aid reauthorization bill is enacted prior to that date. After July 1, funds will be provided at only 65 percent of the fiscal year 1995 level, with a requirement they be spent in equal amounts over the following 15 months.

I believe that policy to be very shortsighted. It is preventing the U.S. Agency for International Development

[AID] from increasing access to family planning services for millions of citizens in the developing countries around the world. The ultimate result will be more unwanted pregnancy and even higher population growth in the poorest, most heavily populated nations of the globe.

Ironically, this policy, if it is not corrected, will also inevitably lead to more abortions, many of which will be performed under unsafe conditions that will surely result in infection, infertility, and death. This outcome deeply concerns me.

The people who so often resist these programs are talking continually about abortion, unwanted pregnancy, population and so on. I strongly urge all of my colleagues, whether they be pro-choice, pro-life, Democrat, Republican, conservative, liberal, moderate, to consider the tragic consequences of what we have done. Restricting access to family planning services—I did not say "abortion," and it is not there, either—restricting access to family planning services will assuredly result in more abortion. If anyone can refute this I welcome them to do so and come forward.

The harsh reality is that this misguided policy is contributing to a scenario where abortions are or will be the only form of birth control in some of the most impoverished places on Earth. This outcome sharply collides with the stated views of the very people who support it. Of all the issues the religious groups may consider when they compile their scorecards—I know where my scorecard is because I happen to be pro-choice, and I have always been pro-choice; always. In fact, I do not even think men should vote on the issue. So mine is rather clear and has been. So when they are compiling their scorecards on the performance of Members of Congress, I think this is surely one of the most important because it might be that they would show that these people somehow were in favor of abortion because of the misguided way they try to distort the issue.

The abortion issue alone offers a compelling reason for the Congress to reconsider the current restrictions on international family planning funding.

But we should also contemplate the consequences of unrestrained worldwide population growth. One study by the United Nations Population Division has estimated that if the world population trends of 1990 continue indefinitely into the future, worldwide population will increase to 694 billion by the year 2150. This is the equivalent of 12,100 people for every square mile of land on the Earth's surface. The possibility of this occurring is self-evident. The real issue is whether we will take thoughtful, rational steps to prevent this scenario or will we do nothing and simply allow nature to prevent this outcome in its own less civilized way?

Since the beginning of mankind to the year 1940 was a segment of population growth, and since 1940 to this

day it has doubled. The population of Earth has doubled since 1940. It is now 5.5 billion, and this study shows in the year 2150 it will increase to 694 billion. And where is the most rapid population growth occurring? Desperately poor countries that have to cope with poverty and malnutrition and ill health and lack of education and environmental damage and famine.

These countries simply do not have the resources to effectively solve all of these problems on their own, or maybe any of them, any more than they are able to stabilize their population growth. It continues to compound and exacerbate so many of the other difficulties. Fertility rates, lack of education for women, these things lead to grievous problems.

I am not suggesting the United States bear the sole responsibility for addressing this problem. Nor is the rest of the world suggesting this. In September 1994, I and Senator JOHN KERRY attended the International Conference on Population and Development in Cairo. Mr. President, 179 nations participated in that conference, and the final "programme of action," which was adopted by acclamation, estimated that the nations of the world would have to spend \$17 billion annually by the year 2000 in order to meet the needs of developing countries for basic reproductive health services, including family planning and the prevention of sexually transmitted diseases.

This "programme of action" estimated that up to two-thirds of these costs would be met by developing countries themselves—two-thirds; self-termination—with the other one-third coming from "external sources." To put that in perspective, consider the United States Government's expenditures on international family planning in fiscal year 1995 represented less than 10 percent of what is needed from these external sources by the year 2000. To retreat from this modest commitment would be a grave mistake.

So, as this legislative session continues, I believe we should restore a more appropriate level of funding for international family planning programs. Senator HATFIELD has previously advised the Senate of his desire to rectify this situation, and here is a man who holds a view different than mine on abortion, but a very sensitive, sensible human being. I richly commend my friend MARK HATFIELD for his commitment to this cause, and I stand ready to assist him in any way possible. He does his tasks so very well, and we should not impede him.

It is not too late for us to reverse our course and embrace a more sane, rational and sensible policy.

I thank the Chair.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Nebraska.

Mr. EXON. Mr. President, may I inquire of the chair if we are in morning business?

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senate is technically still on a motion to

proceed with the Whitewater investigation, but we have been proceeding, in essence, as if in morning business.

Mr. EXON. I thank the Chair. I ask unanimous consent I be allowed to proceed as in morning business for a brief period of time on another matter.

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

THE COMMUNICATIONS DECENCY ACT

Mr. EXON. Mr. President, I have just had one of the most remarkable and rewarding meetings of my career with a 10-year-old girl and her mother from the Washington, DC, area. I will only use her first name. She and her mother called and asked to see me today.

Lea is a sweet girl, 10 years of age, who was preparing for a computer project to earn a Girl Scout merit badge this week. In preparation for that project, Lea and her mother signed on to the Prodigy computer service and logged on to a so-called chat room for children, where kids from around the country can play checkers and do other such things that kids do with each other. It was Lea's very first time on the Internet.

Within minutes—I emphasize, Mr. President—within minutes, someone was attempting to engage young Lea, a 10-year-old, in conversations of a sexual nature. Needless to say, she was shocked and screamed. Lea and her mother were upset and very angry.

If I can be allowed a personal comment, this really brought this problem that I and others have been trying to do something about home, because my wife and I have been blessed with two 10-year-old granddaughters of our own. When Lea came in to see me, it was life as it exists and life as I know it.

At the time of this most unfortunate event, Prodigy did not provide the supposedly child-safe space with an alert button, which notifies the system operator that children's checkers room was being misused. A similar service was available for adults, in the adult chat room, but not for children, as strange as that might seem.

Together, the mother and the daughter contacted Prodigy and the news media. Within hours, Prodigy agreed to make the alert button available and the alarm available to those on these children's areas.

I heard this story on the news this morning, on the radio, and met with the mother and the daughter at their request this afternoon. I bring this story to the attention of the U.S. Senate because, since the passage of the Communications Decency Act as part of the Telecommunications Act of 1996, there has been a great deal of attention placed on this new law. With that attention, some have also continued their campaign of misinformation about the new law in the press and now in the courts.

Mr. President, Lea's story demonstrates and illustrates better than

anything else that I know of that there are, indeed, real dangers on the Internet, especially for children and especially with the interactive computer services that are available. But more important, the very quick response from Prodigy to this problem illustrates that the new law is starting to work.

Opponents of the new law use harsh language like "censorship" to describe the Communications Decency Act that was jointly sponsored by myself and Senator COATS from Indiana and overwhelmingly passed in the U.S. Senate and in the House of Representatives and made part of the telecommunications bill. Those who cry censorship hide behind the first amendment to make defense of those who would give pornography to children and engage children in sexual conversations. What a travesty.

I hope more adults, whether they have children or grandchildren or not, will come to realize and recognize and see that the law is operational.

In respect to the first amendment, Mr. President, it is almost a sacred text with this Senator.

That is why I worked so closely—even with the new law's opponents—to assure that our legislation was constitutional. The final legislation was the produce of nearly 3 years of investigation, research, negotiation, and compromise.

The Communications Decency Act makes it a crime to send indecent communications to children by means of a computer service or telecommunications device, to make indecent communications available to children on an open electronic bulletin board, to use a computer to make the equivalent of an obscene phone call to another computer user, and to use a computer or facility of interstate commerce to lure a child into illegal sexual activities.

The law makes computer services responsible for what is on their system. To comply with the new law, a computer service must take reasonable, effective and appropriate measures to restrict child access to indecent communications.

While it is fair to wonder why the alert button service has not been made available earlier, Prodigy is to be recognized for their quick response when this problem was brought to their attention. This is the type of response, that the Communications Decency Act sought to encourage and help prevent in the first place.

What the ACLU and their fellow travelers and the computer service companies have difficulty dealing with is that it is wrong—desperately wrong—for an adult to electronically molest or corrupt a child.

And thinking people en masse want to do something about it.

The Communications Decency Act is not a cure-all. But, at a minimum, children and families deserve to have a law on their side notwithstanding the