

That is the strong message my freshman colleagues and I bring with us back to Washington. And for our colleagues who may not have ventured beyond the confines of the Beltway recently, that is the message the American people are demanding we do not forget.

Mr. HELMS addressed the Chair.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from North Carolina is recognized.

Mr. HELMS. I thank the Chair.

(The remarks of Mr. HELMS and Mr. FAIRCLOTH pertaining to the introduction of S. 1520 are located in today's RECORD under "Statements on Introduced Bills and Joint Resolutions.")

FRESHMAN TOUR

Mr. THOMAS. Mr. President, I rise to follow my friend, the Senator from Minnesota, in noting what I thought was useful, and that was the tour of freshman Senators throughout the country, actually, starting here in Washington, on through the Midwest, and ending up in Cheyenne, WY.

It seemed to me to be a very useful kind of an activity. Our theme was "Promises Made, Promises Kept." I think it was appropriate that 9 of the 11 new freshmen in this body participated. We made 10 stops in 9 States to talk about this kind of commitment to the things that had brought us to the Senate in 1994. I think we all agreed in general that there was a message in 1994, and that message basically was the Federal Government is too big and costs too much and we need to change the regulatory restrictions on the opportunities in this country.

That has been the effort of this freshman class, and to a large extent this body during that year. We have felt some kinship in that we have come here together, we did share this commitment, and we were committed to change. We had just come from an election where, I think, that message perhaps permeates a bit more than those who have been here before, perhaps.

There has been a great deal of success, I think, in that message. We have not accomplished specifically all the things that we would like to but the major change has been the turn of the debate. I think most anyone who has watched the Congress over the last 25 years would have to say that the conversation has basically been centered around those programs that have been in place for 25 years. They largely came in the Lyndon Johnson Great Society time, and each year most of the time has been spent saying, "How much more money do we put into the program? If it has not worked as well as it should, we will put more money in."

Now that debate has changed somewhat. The debate has change markedly. We are talking for the first time in 25 years about a balanced budget. We are talking for the first time in 25 years about how you spend less rather than more. That is a significant change in the framing of the debate in this coun-

try, a significant change in the direction that this Congress would take, and hopefully that this country would take.

We have talked about things like reducing spending as opposed to continuing to add more to the deficit, to add more to a \$5 trillion debt. We talked about a balanced budget. We have not had a balanced budget in almost 30 years. This is the first time that a balanced budget has been presented to the President of the United States. Unfortunately, he saw fit to veto it.

We have talked about entitlement changes. Most anybody who looks at our financial situation fairly has to see that we have to do something about entitlements. You cannot change the direction of spending by simply talking about those things that are discretionary. Two-thirds of the spending is in entitlements. You have to change that. Of course it is difficult. But we have set about to do that. We have talked about welfare reform, to make welfare the kind of program that most everyone believes it ought to be, where you help people who need help, but help them get back into the system, back into the workplace.

Middle-income tax reform—instead of the largest tax increase in the history, which is what we had 2 years ago, we are talking about middle-income tax relief. Also line-item veto, term limits, regulatory reform.

That is what has happened. We are very pleased about that and we took that message to the country. In addition to that message, I think we took some facts. We sort of evolved into politics by posturing and to a situation of policy by perception rather than facts. It is ironic. We have the ability to present facts to the whole world in a second. Fifty years ago it was months after something was done here before people even knew about it. Now we have this great opportunity, but unfortunately we are doing governing by advertising, doing governing by spinning.

We talk about gutting Medicare. Nobody in this place is interested in gutting Medicare. In fact, when you look of course at the numbers, why, obviously, it is not. That is what we talked about.

We talked about fundamental change. We heard a great deal of positive response to that. People who are aware of the benefits that come from balancing the budget, the fact that we can lower interest rates, reduce the cost of mortgages, and reduce the cost of loans to send your kids to school, and we can talk about being responsible for going into a new century without continuing to add costs to the debt for our kids to pay.

I want to say that I think this trip was very useful and I am pleased that my colleagues were willing to take their time to go. I am particularly pleased they went to Cheyenne, WY. We had the largest town meeting we have ever had there. Not everyone is in agreement how to do it, but the pre-

ponderance of people say we need to be responsible. We need to look to the future. One little guy in the audience had a computer. We talked about \$5 trillion debt, he divided it by the number of people and announced we each owe \$17,000, and we were dazzled a little by the technology, but the answer is right, we do.

Mr. President, what we need here is leadership. We need to provide for the direction of this country. We do not need obstructionism. We do not need insistence on the status quo. This is a great country with a great future. We have the best opportunity that we have ever had to strengthen that future and make it a land of responsibility and the land of opportunity.

EXTENSION OF TIME FOR MORNING BUSINESS

Mr. SPECTER. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the time for morning business be extended until 3:40.

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

CONCERN OVER CONGRESSIONAL RECESS

Mr. SPECTER. Mr. President, I have sought recognition to express my concern about our being out of session for the next considerable period of time in the context of the gridlock and breakdown over the negotiations of the budget. It is my hope that the negotiators will continue the budget negotiations because of the importance of reaching a resolution on those subjects, and that we will not have a recurrence of the shutdown of Government, as we have had twice in the course of the past several weeks, or that there will not be a resort to the debt ceiling issue as an instrument of, candidly speaking, political blackmail—which I think will be unsuccessful. If we are not able to resolve the budget disagreements, that we will at least crystallize the issue and make that the election issue in 1996.

I made this point back on November 14, on the second day of the first governmental shutdown. It seemed to me from the start that this was bad policy. From the reaction of the American people, that view was confirmed. That is simply not the way to run the Government of the United States.

I think the budget negotiators, however, have worked hard and there has been considerable progress made. I have taken a look, in reviewing the issues, and believe that the negotiators with more work can come to a conclusion. The central point is to have a balanced budget—a matter of enormous importance.

There has been an agreement in principle by the Republican-controlled Congress and Republican-controlled White—almost a Freudian slip, to make the Republicans control the White House as well. We have a divided

Government, but at least there has been agreement on that principle. There is a substantial question as to whether the balanced budget proposal offered by the administration meets the "fair" criterion, since so much of it is deferred until the years 2001 and 2002. But I think there is ample room for negotiation, in order to have a realistic agreement made in those terms.

I spoke on this matter to some extent yesterday and wish to amplify it today. One set of figures which bear repeating are the statistics on the narrowing of the gap between the parties on major issues such as Medicare, where the rate of increase is reduced in the conference report passed by the Republican-controlled Congress. Note it is not a cut but rather a reduction of the rate of increase by \$270 billion, which has since been reduced to \$168 billion. The administration first agreed to \$102 billion and now recommends reducing the rate of increase by \$124 billion. So there is a gap now remaining of \$44 billion, considerably closer than what had been initially in the range of \$168 billion.

Similarly, on Medicare, the original position of the Republican-controlled Congress was \$133 billion, since reduced to \$85 billion with the administration at \$59 billion on a reduction on the rate of increase. So that gap is narrowing.

Similarly, on the tax cut, the House figures are in the range of \$350 billion and were reduced to \$245 billion in the conference report. That has since been reduced further to \$203 billion, while the administration proposes \$130 billion.

I have taken a close look at a number of the structural points in disagreement, while working with others in the House and Senate, to try to report out a bill on the Appropriations Subcommittee for Labor, Health, Human Services and Education, a subcommittee which I chair. I have had extensive negotiations with Donna Shalala, Secretary of Health and Human Services, Richard Riley, Secretary of Education, and Robert Reich, Secretary of Labor and find that the principal issues arise in the Departments of Education and Health and Human Services.

As I have taken a look at the various issues, it seems to me that middle ground can be reached. If you take a look at the medical savings account, which is a controversial item, or the Medicare opt-out position as to HMO's back and forth, or the Medicare beneficiary part B payments, or the issue of balance billing by doctors, or the concern which has been expressed over the regulation of doctors' fees—all of those matters—if you take the congressional position as opposed to the administration position, you find there is middle ground available.

If you look at the Medicaid issue, in addition to the figures narrowing, the structural matters also are subject to compromise.

If you take a look at welfare, there again, compromise is possible. Where

the welfare reform bill passed by the Senate with overwhelming numbers, some 87 Senators voting in favor of the measure, there was a great deal of reliance on the block grants. There is an area for compromise on providing the bulk of welfare related programs through block grants but certain specific programs should remain with standards established by the Federal Government. I think the statement made by the very distinguished Senator from Maine, Margaret Chase Smith, is worth repeating, when she distinguished between the issues of the principle of compromise as opposed to the compromise of principle. We are not talking about freedom of speech or freedom of religion or first amendment issues. We are talking about dollars and cents. And we are, really, very, very close together.

So it is my hope that the negotiators will continue, because I think agreement is within reach, and when we are talking about the central principle of a balanced budget, that is something that we ought not give up on. We ought to continue to work to try to narrow the gap, and I hope that we will continue to do that.

CAMPAIGN SPENDING LIMITS

Mr. SPECTER. Mr. President, January 29, which is next Monday, will be the 20th anniversary of the decision of *Buckley v. Valeo*. I had intended to comment on January 29, the anniversary date of that decision which established as a principle of constitutional law that any individual could spend as much of his or her money in a campaign as he or she chose. That issue was a matter of substantial consternation to me when the decision was handed down and, I think, remains a major impediment on public policy in the United States on the way we run our election campaigns, where, realistically viewed, any seat is up for sale.

There have been many, many examples of multimillion-dollar expenditures in this body, the U.S. Senate, the U.S. House of Representatives, and in State Government, and now we are witnessing one for the Presidency of the United States.

The fact of life is, if you advertise enough on television, if you sell candidacies like you sell soap, the sky is the limit. Even the White House of the United States of America, the Office of the President, may be, in fact, up for sale if someone is willing to start off by announcing a willingness to spend \$25 million. If you have \$400 million, that is not an enormous sum; you have \$375 million left. Somebody might be able to get along on that. You might spend \$50 million or even \$75 million to promote a candidacy, both to articulate a positive view and then, perhaps even more effectively, to articulate a negative view.

This is a subject I have been concerned about for a long time because I filed for the U.S. Senate back in 1975

announcing my candidacy for the U.S. Senate on November 17, 1975, in the first election cycle where the 1974 election law was in effect. At that time the spending limitation applied to what an individual could spend, and, for a State the size of Pennsylvania, it was \$35,000. I decided to run for the office of U.S. Senate against a very distinguished American who later became a U.S. Senator, John Heinz. After my election in 1980, he and I formed a very close working partnership and very close friendship. I have only the best things to say about Senator Heinz.

But, in the middle of that campaign, on January 29, 1976, the Supreme Court of the United States decided *Buckley v. Valeo* and said a candidate can spend any amount of money. My later colleague was in a position to do so and did just that. That made an indelible impression upon me, so much so that when the decision came down on January 29, I petitioned for leave to intervene as amicus and filed a set of legal appeals, all of which were denied.

But it seemed to me since that time, as I have watched enormous expenditures in campaign financing by individuals, that simply was unsound constitutional law and certainly unsound public policy. There is nothing in the Constitution, in my legal judgement, which guarantees freedom of speech on any reasonable, realistic, logical constitutional interpretation which says you ought to be able to spend as much money that you have to win an elective office. I think it is high time for the Congress of the United States and the 50 States to reexamine that in a constitutional amendment, which is currently pending.

Senator HOLLINGS has proposed the amendment for many Congresses, and I have joined with him and sometimes I have proposed individual constitutional amendments. But as we approach the 20th anniversary of *Buckley v. Valeo*, we ought to take a very serious look at it. And we may have a striking impetus for change in that law by the Presidential campaign which is currently underway. So, in advance of the 29th, I urge my colleagues to take a very close look at this issue which I think has very serious implications for the electoral process in America.

I thank the Chair. It is now 3:40. I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Does the Senator suggest the absence of a quorum?

Mr. SPECTER. And I do suggest the absence of a quorum.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will call the roll.

The bill clerk proceeded to call the roll.

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

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Mr. THOMPSON). Without objection, it is so ordered.