

for a tax limitation amendment is upon us and an amendment that would make it hard to raise taxes by requiring a two-thirds vote in both the House and the Senate.

Mr. President, again, I commend the Senator from Georgia for making this time available. I hope that we can get on with this prospect of making Americans' lives a little bit easier by taking less of their hard-earned income.

Mr. COVERDELL. I thank the Senator from Arizona. Mr. President, how much time remains?

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Mr. DEWINE). The Senator from Georgia has 5 minutes.

Mr. COVERDELL. Thank you, Mr. President.

I want to commend the Senator from Arizona for his legislative efforts to make it only possible to pass new burdens on the American people with a two-thirds vote. I think there should be an extra burden on any legislative chamber before it has the right to pass on even greater burdens.

We have spent the entire morning here talking about the size of the burden which is just—I am convinced, if any of our Founders were here today, Jefferson in particular, they would be absolutely stunned at the scope of the amount of wages that a laborer must forfeit to the Government. He said we needed a frugal Government which did those things that absolutely had to be done, but other than that, the fruits of labor should be left to those who earn it, and allow them to choose their own pursuit of happiness.

We have talked a lot this morning about the scope of the tax increase this administration put on the American people. The effect and burden it added, in our case, is almost \$3,000 for the average family annually that they are having to forfeit from their wages, preventing them from doing the things they ought to do.

But I want to close with one piece that is particularly egregious about that tax increase. That tax increase which was passed in August 1993 changed the Tax Code backward even beyond the administration taking office. For the first time in history, it changed the Tax Code all the way back into a former administration, the Bush administration, January 1993.

Mr. President, the Russian Constitution does not allow you to tax retroactively. It is wrong. It is morally incorrect. Families and businesses and communities have to know what the rules of the road are. They have to be able to plan their lives, plan their families, plan their tax burdens in advance. They cannot get to the end of the year and have a Congress of the United States and President come forward and say, "Whoops. We're changing all that to take effect back a year earlier. So all your planning was for naught. We don't care."

Mr. President, that is wrong. When I leave this Chamber, I will be going to a hearing on a constitutional amend-

ment which I and others are sponsoring that, like the Russians', would prohibit Americans from being subjected to retroactive taxation.

Whenever I speak to any American group—it does not matter where they are, my State or any other—and you talk about retroactive taxation, there is a unanimity that that is wrong. Our Government has all too frequently in current years gotten into the business of changing the rules midstream. It has had a very deleterious effect on the planning of our families, planning for our businesses, particularly small businesses.

This retroactive tax that was dumped on the American people by the President's last tax increase, I believe, is horribly wrong, and has had a terribly negative impact. We ought to do everything we know to do to assure that it never happens again—not in the United States of America.

I yield back any remaining time.

#### DEBT LIMIT EXTENSION AND SOCIAL SECURITY

Mr. SIMPSON. Mr. President, because we recently shouldered the important matter of extending the debt limit, I feel obliged to address the provision in that bill that increases the earnings limit for Social Security beneficiaries aged 65–69. As my colleagues know, this is a change that I have expressed serious concern about in the past. Now that enactment of this provision has come to pass, I want to state my views about the general issue of the earnings limit.

First, let me pay tribute to a fine chap, my esteemed colleague from the great State of Arizona, Senator JOHN MCCAIN for his dogged determination and tireless efforts to effect this change in the law. I know that my past intervention on this issue has not always been truly welcome to my colleague—but I trust that my intentions, which were always constructive, were apparent.

It has never been my intention to permanently forestall all changes to the earnings limit. I trust that the provision attached to the debt limit extension provides the best available means of achieving the objectives of my friend from Arizona and all others who are interested in raising the earnings limit for seniors.

Clearly, I appreciate the fundamental principle behind the earnings limit legislation. Americans are living longer, are productive for more years, and our retirement systems need to recognize these facts. As chairman of the Senate Finance Subcommittee on Social Security and Family Policy, I have a demonstrated interest and responsibility to see that we adapt wisely and properly to these changes. One of my charges is to monitor any changes in Social Security policy and to ensure that those changes are not detrimental to the long-range solvency of the Social Security system. I have expressed my mis-

givings about previous funding mechanisms to "pay for" this legislation, and I am pleased to note that the offsets now come in a more straightforward manner from Social Security spending.

Ultimately, Congress must come to grips with the fact that American society is aging. For the benefit of today's workers, we must act to address these issues very soon, or the cost to our children and grandchildren will be catastrophically high. We must make changes to ensure the solvency of future retirement programs—we should increase the retirement age while at the same time offering inducements for Americans to work longer without suffering penalties that discourage continued participation in our work force.

We can't have it both ways—handing out plums that allow workers to stay in the work force in a productive way, while at the same time avoiding the hard choices that must follow—meaning raising of the retirement age. I hope that this first step will lead Congress to confront the next necessary decision. Increases in the Social Security eligibility age must be enacted soon, and the change will have to be phased in over a long period—perhaps 20 years—in order to be fair and effective. Such a plan will allow today's workers to plan for these changes.

This legislation to increase the earnings limit is offset in large part by terminating the disability benefits for drug addicts and alcoholics. Many have considered the payment of benefits to these groups to be an abuse of the Social Security system. This measure passed by the Senate makes a clear choice that we will subsidize the continued working activity of senior citizens instead of subsidizing these addictions of alcohol and drug use. Clearly, the Senate is appropriately going on record as to what activity we wish to encourage and what we want to discourage.

Another change that will offset the cost of this legislation is the increase in reviews of those people who are currently receiving disability benefits. Such payments were never intended to be a lifetime allowance to substitute for employment or self-employment. For years, the Social Security Administration has been unable to complete these required reviews—the result of which is that people are receiving disability payments long after their disability has either ceased or improved to the point where a return to work is possible. Not only will these reviews result in savings for the trust funds, but they will place able Americans who can return to work back in the workplace.

I congratulate Senator MCCAIN for finding the offsets that enable us to pay for the increased earnings limits for seniors. I am very pleased—you can hardly know how much—to be able to speak to this issue without having thrown a monkey wrench into the works and frustrating my colleague from Arizona. I am most hopeful that

this measure will be merely a prelude to Congress coming to grips with the much larger issue of the aging of America and the future of our retirement programs. The steps that we must take in the future will never—in any way—be as popular as this measure, but we must have the political fortitude to make those decisions as well. That is our job, that is our duty.

#### WORKER TRAINING AND THE BOSTON HARBOR CLEANUP

Mr. KENNEDY. Mr. President, Ben Franklin once said that “an investment in knowledge always pays the best interest.” The same can be said about an impressive initiative on worker training undertaken in recent years by the Massachusetts Water Resources Authority as part of the current environmental cleanup of Boston Harbor.

In replacing outdated and obsolete water treatment plants with new state-of-the-art facilities, MWRA invested in retraining its existing work force in the skills needed to operate the new facility, rather than lay off hundreds of employees and recruit new workers with the needed skills. The strategy worked, and has led to lower costs for the new plant, lower costs for rate-payers, and a newly skilled work force with high employee morale.

I commend MWRA for this practical demonstration of the effectiveness of job retraining and the wisdom of tapping the untapped potential of its experienced work force.

Too often, such retraining initiatives are the exception, not the norm. We live in an era when workers are too easily under-valued and under-appreciated by employers. The MWRA example can be a lesson to the Nation that a wise course is available. I ask for unanimous consent that an article by Douglas B. MacDonald, executive director of MWRA, be printed in the RECORD.

There being no objection, the article was ordered to be printed in the RECORD, as follows:

[From the Boston Globe, Mar. 19, 1996]

EVERYDAY HEROES OF DEER ISLAND

(By Douglas B. MacDonald)

The first phase of the new Deer Island sewage treatment plant has been up and running for a year. The “filthiest harbor in America” is quickly succumbing to visible signs of environmental recovery; seals and porpoises in the water, swimmers at the beaches, fishermen on the shore. Those are striking testimony that the new infrastructure of pumps, valves and tanks really can retrieve our environment from the careless ravages of a neglected sewer system. Within the new plant there is another less publicized but equally inspirational, success story; the workers themselves.

When the MWRA began design and initial construction of the new Deer Island treatment facilities in the late 1980s, it wrestled with the question of how more than 200 workers at the old Deer Island and Nut Island plants would fit into the new plant. Those workers, experienced only in operating treatment facilities with antiquated technology, might have been considered as obsolete as the old plants themselves.

Happily, neither MWRA management nor its workers ever accepted that fatalistic view. The workers were challenged, and they challenged themselves, to staff the 21st century facility arising in their midst.

The old plants were decades past their prime, underfunded and neglected. Workers had to almost hand-process raw sewage. They kept the old plants functioning with little more than their own dedication.

But from their years of working with outmoded and failing equipment, the workers had become pros at troubleshooting the nuances and complexities of the MWRA's sewer system, which takes in over 400 million gallons of wastewater each day from 43 communities. They managed to operate the old plant with countless jury-rigs, even bringing in their own tools to keep the plants functioning. Collectively, the old plant workers has over 4,000 years of experience. Their knowledge was an enormous potential asset.

Still, decisions about staffing the new plant were difficult. Managers and collective bargaining units wrestled with how to mesh the workers' pride and old-plant experience with yet-to-be-attained technological skills and computer literacy. Discussions were candid and sometimes heated.

Slowly, however, trust took root. MWRA management agreed that existing workers would be the core of the new work force. Workers who upgraded their abilities were promised jobs in the new plant. The notion that a new generation of technology must make redundant a generation of workers was rejected outright.

Armed with this guarantee, each worker developed a training plan, and MWRA invested several million dollars in courses, workshops and support for outside schooling. Programs covered everything from basic reading and math skills to advanced computer training.

Giving workers a sense of ownership in the new plant was another important step, and began with plant familiarization tours of each new building at the earliest points of construction. As the new plant was being designed, plant staff provided engineering firms with “will it work?” critiques, relying on their own knowledge of the idiosyncrasies of the old system.

Today the human side of the new Deer Island treatment plant is a remarkable story, and underscores the resilience of the American worker. For example, a 20-year veteran worker staffs a three-screen computer console, clicking the mouse like a kid playing a video game. Three years ago this man feared that computer illiteracy would land him outside the plant gate. But he and his computer-trained coworkers know from experience exactly what the computer tells them is going on with a valve 500 yards away.

This new productivity benefits MWRA and its rate-payers. Three years ago, cost projections foresaw 500 workers as the necessary staffing level for the Deer Island plant. Today, MWRA plans to run that plant with about 400 workers.

For all the money spent on the new tanks, valves and pumps, the best time and money expended to date on the Boston Harbor Project has been invested in the workers who are running our facilities. For the public we serve and for the people we employ, it was the smart thing to do and it was the right thing to do.

#### THE BAD DEBT BOXSCORE

Mr. HELMS. Mr. President, at the close of business Friday, April 12, 1996, the Federal debt stood at \$5,145,722,307,691.76.

On a per capita basis, every man, woman, and child in America owes

\$19,444.53 as his or her share of that debt.

#### RON BROWN: A TRIBUTE TO PUBLIC SERVICE

Mr. HOLLINGS. Mr. President, now that the initial shock of the horrific jet crash in Croatia has passed, we are forced to accept the fact that my friend Commerce Secretary Ron Brown and 34 other talented professionals have perished. Today, almost 2 weeks later, it's still hard to describe the echoing sense of loss and deep sinking sorrow that still remains in all of us—man, woman, black, white, Republican, Democrat.

There has been much written and said about Ron Brown over the last few days, and that is fitting, because there is so much to say. He was many things: key strategist, mesmerizing speaker, wily politician, savvy businessman, superb lawyer. Most of all, he was an exemplary public servant for this country. On his last day, he was on the road in a faraway place aggressively promoting U.S. business interests abroad. And, in this case, he was trying to bring peace and economic recovery to the war-weary Bosnian people. He took very seriously his responsibility to preserve the American dream for the next generation of Americans, so that they will have economic opportunity rather than a declining standard of living. To him, championing the economic interests of the United States was tantamount to championing the people of the United States, and so, in a very literal way, he died serving his country.

Ron Brown was the most effective Secretary of Commerce I have known in my years in the Senate. It is fair to say that he was the most energetic and outstanding individual to ever serve in that post. Throughout his distinguished career in private industry, politics and the executive branch, Ron Brown served as a role model for all Americans. With the fall of the Berlin Wall, international business has become the new realm for competition. Ron Brown understood that and worked tirelessly to promote U.S. exports and business overseas. It was quite typical for Secretary Brown and me to meet after he had returned from a long trip abroad. Lack of sleep and shifting time zones never set him back. Jet lag wasn't in his vocabulary. It just was not in Ron's nature to take time to rest up.

Ron Brown was an especially strong role model for African-Americans. He never forgot his roots, and he took special pride in his efforts to make Commerce Department programs more inclusive and to provide equal opportunity in the work force. He took pride in his efforts to revitalize the Minority Business Development Agency and the Economic Development Administration. Most of all, he set an example for those who would follow in his footsteps with his determination, his intelligence and his optimism.

Secretary Brown came into the Commerce Department with a tremendous