

are closer to the people. They can better reflect the views of the people. And, again, if three-fourths of the States ratify the action by Congress and ratify the amendment, it becomes part of the Constitution.

So why not go through the constitutional process that our Founding Fathers so wisely set up? There is a word for that process, and that word is democracy. That is what it is all about: Democracy. Let us let democracy work. No more excuses, no more obstacles. Eighty percent of the American people want a balanced budget amendment to the Constitution. By passing the amendment, we can balance the budget by the year 2002. We can protect the Social Security trust funds, and we will have done the single most important thing we can do to ensure the Nation's economic security and to protect the American dream for our children and grandchildren.

Now, having said this, it is my hope that we can start this process sometime this next week. As I said, there is no issue more important. Eighty percent of the American people wonder why we have not done it by now. We failed by one vote. Six of my colleagues who had voted for it the year before, voted against it last year. Maybe they will come back home. We will do our best to accommodate some of the concerns that some of my colleagues have raised on the other side of the aisle, if we can work out some accommodations.

Let us take this out of politics. Let us tell the American people it is bipartisan, as it is, with Senator SIMON the leader on the Democratic side, Senator CRAIG and Senator HATCH, Senator DOMENICI, and others on this side of the aisle. So we hope that we can find a solution next week, start on this next week and maybe complete action the following week.

There is nothing more important. And I hope that we can come together, as we should, to do the right thing for the American people, the American taxpayers and our future generations.

REPEAL OF THE 4.3-CENT GAS TAX

Mr. DOLE. Mr. President, finally, let me say a word with reference to the Finance Committee hearing that was held this morning on repeal of the gas tax, the 4.3-cent gas tax, which was made permanent in 1993 in the Clinton tax bill, which raised taxes by \$265 billion, the gas tax increase contributes about \$4.8 billion a year.

Not a single Republican voted for the big, big, big tax increase, the largest tax increase in the history of America. In fact, I think one of my colleagues said, "No, in the history of the world." Whatever, it was big. It has had an impact on the economy. Only once before—in 1990—did Congress ever vote to have a gas tax to pay for deficit reduction. Gas taxes were always set aside in a trust fund to build highways, bridges, and whatever.

That is a very worthy purpose, and that is why motorists and others who use fuel are prepared to pay that tax to have better roads, better highways, and better bridges. But in 1993, in the \$265 billion Clinton tax increase, which included a 4.3-cent increase in gas taxes, which was an increase of about 25 to 30 percent in the Federal gas tax, instead of dedicating the funds to bridges, highways, and whatever, it is being used for deficit reduction.

Gas prices are spiraling. They have gone up 30 cents in the State of California, for example—15 cents, 20 cents in most other States.

Will repeal of this gas tax mean the price of gas will fall? Not necessarily. If we repeal the gas tax, we are certain they are going to be 4 cents less than they were before. We should not be raising taxes. We ought to be cutting spending. The American people want us to cut spending, not raise taxes, whether it is a gas tax or some other tax on the American people, American consumers, particularly low-income Americans.

So it is my hope—in fact, on Tuesday of next week, I will introduce legislation, along with Senator GRAMM, who will be the principal sponsor, along with Members of the House, to repeal the gas tax—repeal the gas tax and remind the American people that this is the beginning, this is the beginning.

Remember, without a Republican vote, the Democrats in the House and Senate passed a \$265-billion tax increase in 1993 that President Clinton wanted. We believe this is one small step we can take. It amounts to about \$4.8 billion a year. We will find offsets, and they will not be tax increases. We will try to relieve the consumers and the motorists of at least that part of the burden on the Federal gas tax. It is going to go to the consumers. We cannot predict that prices may not rise because if there is no supply, prices will rise. But, as I have said, they will at least be 4.3 cents cheaper than they were before.

I believe there will be strong bipartisan support for repeal, and we hope to have that legislation ready and on the Senate floor in the very near future.

Mr. President, I yield the floor.

Mr. WARNER addressed the Chair.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Virginia.

Mr. WARNER. Mr. President, I wish to commend the distinguished majority leader, and I shall join with him and ask if I may be a cosponsor of that legislation.

Mr. President, this is a tax put on gasoline that does not go to the improvement of the Nation's highway transportation system. When a driver moves up to the pump and pays the tax, which could be as high as 18 Federal, those taxes historically have gone to improve America's transportation—roads and bridges—but not in this case. President Clinton designed this tax to go elsewhere.

I commend the distinguished majority leader. This Clinton tax must be re-

pealed and repealed promptly. And henceforth, when you go to the gas pump, whatever tax it is, that tax must be directed toward the improvement of the transportation system. Those are the users in those automobiles and those trucks, and they are entitled to those funds to be expended for the very roads on which they must drive and work to support their families.

I thank the Chair. I yield the floor.

Mr. DOLE. Mr. President, I thank the Senator from Virginia.

I hope to be meeting with him tomorrow on this very important issue.

WHITE HOUSE TRAVEL OFFICE REIMBURSEMENT

Mr. DOLE. Mr. President, I now ask unanimous consent that the Senate turn to the consideration of H.R. 2937 regarding the White House Travel Office.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will report.

The bill clerk read as follows:

A bill (H.R. 2937) for the reimbursement of attorney fees and costs incurred by former employees of the White House Travel Office with respect to the termination of their employment in that Office on May 19, 1993.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Is there objection to the immediate consideration of the bill?

There being no objection, the Senate proceeded to consider the bill.

AMENDMENT NO. 3952

Mr. DOLE. I send a substitute amendment to the desk and ask for its immediate consideration.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will report.

The bill clerk read as follows:

The Senator from Kansas [Mr. DOLE] proposes an amendment numbered 3952.

Mr. DOLE. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that reading of the amendment be dispensed with.

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

The amendment is as follows:

Strike all after the enacting clause and insert in lieu thereof the following:

SECTION 1. REIMBURSEMENT OF CERTAIN ATTORNEY FEES AND COSTS.

(a) IN GENERAL.—The Secretary of the Treasury shall pay, from amounts in the Treasury not otherwise appropriated, such sums as are necessary to reimburse former employees of the White House Travel Office whose employment in that Office was terminated on May 19, 1993, for any attorney fees and costs they incurred with respect to that termination.

(b) VERIFICATION REQUIRED.—The Secretary shall pay an individual in full under subsection (a) upon submission by the individual of documentation verifying the attorney fees and costs.

(c) LIMITATION.—Payments under subsection (a) shall not include attorney fees or costs incurred with respect to any Congressional hearing or investigation into the termination of employment of the former employees of the White House Travel Office.

(d) NO INFERENCE OF LIABILITY.—Liability of the United States shall not be inferred from enactment of or payment under this section.

SEC. 2. LIMITATION ON FILING OF CLAIMS.

The Secretary of the Treasury shall not pay any claim filed under this Act that is filed later than 120 days after the date of the enactment of this Act.

SEC. 3. REDUCTION.

The amount paid pursuant to this Act to an individual for attorney fees and costs described in section 1 shall be reduced by any amount received before the date of the enactment of this Act, without obligation for repayment by the individual, for payment of such attorney fees and cost (including any amount received from the funds appropriated for the individual in the matter relating to the "Office of the General Counsel" under the heading "Office of the Secretary" in title I of the Department of Transportation and Related Agencies Appropriations Act, 1994).

SEC. 4. PAYMENT IN FULL SETTLEMENT OF CLAIMS AGAINST THE UNITED STATES.

Payment under this Act, when accepted by an individual described in section 1, shall be in full satisfaction of all claims of, or on behalf of, the individual against the United States that arose out of the termination of the White House Travel Office employment of that individual on May 19, 1993.

Mr. DOLE. Mr. President, I ask for the yeas and nays.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Is there a sufficient second?

There appears to be a sufficient second.

The yeas and nays were ordered.

AMENDMENT NO. 3953 TO AMENDMENT NO. 3952

Mr. DOLE. Mr. President, I send an amendment to the desk to the substitute.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will report.

The bill clerk read as follows:

The Senator from Kansas [Mr. DOLE] proposes an amendment numbered 3953 to amendment No. 3952.

Mr. DOLE. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that reading of the amendment be dispensed with, and I ask for the yeas and nays.

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

The amendment is as follows:

In lieu of the language proposed to be inserted, insert the following:

SECTION 1. REIMBURSEMENT OF CERTAIN ATTORNEY FEES AND COSTS.

(a) IN GENERAL.—The Secretary of the Treasury shall pay, from amounts in the Treasury not otherwise appropriated, such sums as are necessary to reimburse former employees of the White House Travel Office whose employment in that Office was terminated on May 19, 1993, for any attorney fees and costs they incurred with respect to that termination.

(b) VERIFICATION REQUIRED.—The Secretary shall pay an individual in full under subsection (a) upon submission by the individual of documentation verifying the attorney fees and costs.

(c) LIMITATION.—Payments under subsection (a) shall not include attorney fees or costs incurred with respect to any Congressional hearing or investigation into the termination of employment of the former employees of the White House Travel Office.

(d) NO INFERENCE OF LIABILITY.—Liability of the United States shall not be inferred from enactment of or payment under this section.

SEC. 2. LIMITATION ON FILING OF CLAIMS.

The Secretary of the Treasury shall not pay any claim filed under this Act that is

filed later than 120 days after the date of the enactment of this Act.

SEC. 3. REDUCTION.

The amount paid pursuant to this Act to an individual for attorney fees and costs described in section 1 shall be reduced by any amount received before the date of the enactment of this Act, without obligation for repayment by the individual, for payment of such attorney fees and costs (including any amount received from the funds appropriated for the individual in the matter relating to the "Office of the General Counsel" under the heading "Office of the Secretary" in title I of the Department of Transportation and Related Agencies Appropriations Act, 1994).

SEC. 4. PAYMENT IN FULL SETTLEMENT OF CLAIMS AGAINST THE UNITED STATES.

Payment under this Act, when accepted by an individual described in section 1, shall be in full satisfaction of all claims of, or on behalf of, the individual against the United States that arose out of the termination of the White House Travel Office employment of that individual on May 19, 1993.

This section shall become effective 1 day after the date of enactment.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Is there a sufficient second?

There appears to be a sufficient second.

The yeas and nays were ordered.

AMENDMENT NO. 3954 TO AMENDMENT NO. 3953

Mr. DOLE. I now send a second-degree amendment to the desk.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will report.

The bill clerk read as follows:

The Senator from Kansas [Mr. DOLE] proposes an amendment numbered 3954 to amendment No. 3953.

Mr. DOLE. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that reading of the amendment be dispensed with.

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

The amendment is as follows:

In lieu of the language proposed to be inserted, insert the following:

SECTION 1. REIMBURSEMENT OF CERTAIN ATTORNEY FEES AND COSTS.

(a) IN GENERAL.—The Secretary of the Treasury shall pay, from amounts in the Treasury not otherwise appropriated, such sums as are necessary to reimburse former employees of the White House Travel Office whose employment in that Office was terminated on May 19, 1993, for any attorney fees and costs they incurred with respect to that termination.

(b) VERIFICATION REQUIRED.—The Secretary shall pay an individual in full under subsection (a) upon submission by the individual of documentation verifying the attorney fees and costs.

(c) LIMITATION.—Payments under subsection (a) shall not include attorney fees or costs incurred with respect to any Congressional hearing or investigation into the termination of employment of the former employees of the White House Travel Office.

(d) NO INFERENCE OF LIABILITY.—Liability of the United States shall not be inferred from enactment of or payment under this section.

SEC. 2. LIMITATION ON FILING OF CLAIMS.

The Secretary of the Treasury shall not pay any claim filed under this Act that is filed later than 120 days after the date of the enactment of this Act.

SEC. 3. REDUCTION

The amount paid pursuant to this Act to an individual for attorney fees and costs de-

scribed in section 1 shall be reduced by any amount received before the date of the enactment of this Act, without obligation for repayment by the individual, for payment of such attorney fees and costs (including any amount received from the funds appropriated for the individual in the matter relating to the "Office of the General Counsel" under the heading "Office of the Secretary" in title I of the Department of Transportation and Related Agencies Appropriations Act, 1994).

SEC. 4. PAYMENT IN FULL SETTLEMENT OF CLAIMS AGAINST THE UNITED STATES.

Payment under this Act, when accepted by an individual described in section 1, shall be in full satisfaction of all claims of, or on behalf of, the individual against the United States that arose out of the termination of the White House Travel Office employment of that individual on May 19, 1993.

This section shall become effective 2 days after the date of enactment.

MOTION TO REFER

Mr. DOLE. Mr. President, I send a motion to refer to the desk and ask for its immediate consideration.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will report.

The assistant legislative clerk read as follows:

The Senator from Kansas [Mr. DOLE] moves to refer the pending bill to the Committee on Judiciary with instructions to report back forthwith.

Mr. DOLE. I ask for the yeas and nays on the motion to refer.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Is there a sufficient second?

There appears to be a sufficient second.

The yeas and nays were ordered.

AMENDMENT NO. 3955

Mr. DOLE. I now send an amendment to the desk to the motion.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will report.

The bill clerk read as follows:

The Senator from Kansas [Mr. DOLE] proposes an amendment numbered 3955 to the instructions to the motion to refer.

Mr. DOLE. I ask that reading of the amendment be dispensed with, and I ask for the yeas and nays.

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

The amendment is as follows:

In lieu of the instructions, insert the following: with instructions to report back forthwith with the following amendment:

SECTION 1. REIMBURSEMENT OF CERTAIN ATTORNEY FEES AND COSTS.

(a) IN GENERAL.—The Secretary of the Treasury shall pay, from amounts in the Treasury not otherwise appropriated, such sums as are necessary to reimburse former employees of the White House Travel Office whose employment in that Office was terminated on May 19, 1993, for any attorney fees and costs they incurred with respect to that termination.

(b) VERIFICATION REQUIRED.—The Secretary shall pay an individual in full under subsection (a) upon submission by the individual of documentation verifying the attorney fees and costs.

(c) LIMITATION.—Payments, under subsection (a) shall not include attorney fees or costs incurred with respect to any Congressional hearing or investigation into the termination of employment of the former employees of the White House Travel Office.

(d) NO INFERENCE OF LIABILITY.—Liability of the United States shall not be inferred from enactment of or payment under this section.

SEC. 2. LIMITATION ON FILING OF CLAIMS.

The Secretary of the Treasury shall not pay any claim filed under this Act that is filed later than 120 days after the date of the enactment of this Act.

SEC. 3. REDUCTION.

The amount paid pursuant to this Act to an individual for attorney fees and costs described in section 1 shall be reduced by any amount received before the date of the enactment of this Act, without obligation for repayment by the individual, for payment of such attorney fees and costs (including any amount received from the funds appropriated for the individual in the matter relating to the "Office of the General Counsel" under the heading "Office of the Secretary" in title I of the Department of Transportation and Related Agencies Appropriations Act, 1994).

SEC. 4. PAYMENT IN FULL SETTLEMENT OF CLAIMS AGAINST THE UNITED STATES.

Payment under this Act, when accepted by an individual described in section 1, shall be in full satisfaction of all claims of, or on behalf of, the individual against the United States that arose out of the termination of the White House Travel Office employment of that individual on May 19, 1993.

This section shall become effective 4 days after the date of enactment.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Is there a sufficient second?

There appears to be a sufficient second.

The yeas and nays were ordered.

AMENDMENT NO. 3956 TO AMENDMENT NO. 3955

Mr. DOLE. Mr. President, I send a second-degree amendment to the desk.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will report.

The assistant legislative clerk read as follows:

The Senator from Kansas [Mr. DOLE] proposes an amendment numbered 3956 to amendment No. 3955.

Mr. DOLE. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that reading of the amendment be dispensed with.

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

The amendment is as follows:

Strike all after the word "SECTION" and insert the following:

1. REIMBURSEMENT OF CERTAIN ATTORNEY FEES AND COSTS.

(a) IN GENERAL.—The Secretary of the Treasury shall pay, from amounts in the Treasury not otherwise appropriated, such sums as are necessary to reimburse former employees of the White House Travel Office whose employment in that Office was terminated on May 19, 1993, for any attorney fees and costs they incurred with respect to that termination.

(b) VERIFICATION REQUIRED.—The Secretary shall pay an individual in full under subsection (a) upon submission by the individual of documentation verifying the attorney fees and costs.

(c) LIMITATION.—Payments under subsection (a) shall not include attorney fees or costs incurred with respect to any Congressional hearing or investigation into the termination of employment of the former employees of the White House Travel Office.

(d) NO INFERENCE OF LIABILITY.—Liability of the United States shall not be inferred from enactment of or payment under this section.

SEC. 2. LIMITATION ON FILING OF CLAIMS.

The Secretary of the Treasury shall not pay any claim filed under this Act that is filed later than 120 days after the date of the enactment of this Act.

SEC. 3. REDUCTION.

The amount paid pursuant to this Act to an individual for attorney fees and costs described in section 1 shall be reduced by any amount received before the date of the enactment of this Act, without obligation for repayment by the individual, for payment of such attorney fees and costs (including any amount received from the funds appropriated for the individual in the matter relating to the "Office of the General Counsel" under the heading "Office of the Secretary" in title I of the Department of Transportation and Related Agencies Appropriations Act, 1994).

SEC. 4. PAYMENT IN FULL SETTLEMENT OF CLAIMS AGAINST THE UNITED STATES.

Payment under this Act, when accepted by an individual described in section 1, shall be in full satisfaction of all claims of, or on behalf of, the individual against the United States that arose out of the termination of the White House Travel Office employment of that individual on May 19, 1993.

This section shall become effective 3 days after the date of enactment.

CLOTURE MOTION

Mr. DOLE. Mr. President, I send a cloture motion to the desk.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The cloture motion having been presented under rule XXII, the Chair directs the clerk to read the motion.

The legislative clerk read as follows:

CLOTURE MOTION

We, the undersigned Senators, in accordance with the provisions of rule XXII of the Standing Rules of the Senate, do hereby move to bring to a close debate on Calendar No. 380, H.R. 2937, an act for the reimbursement of attorney fees and costs incurred by former employees of the White House Travel Office with respect to the termination of their employment in that office on May 19, 1993.

Bob Dole, Orrin Hatch, Spencer Abraham, Chuck Grassley, Larry Pressler, Ted Stevens, Rod Grams, Strom Thurmond, Thad Cochran, Judd Gregg, Paul D. Coverdell, Connie Mack, Conrad Burns, Larry E. Craig, Richard G. Lugar, Frank H. Murkowski.

Mr. DOLE. I will just say for the information of all Senators, the cloture vote on the White House Travel Office bill will occur on Tuesday, May 7.

I ask unanimous consent the cloture vote occur at 2:15 p.m. on Tuesday, May 7, and the mandatory quorum under rule XXII be waived.

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

ORDER OF PROCEDURE

Mr. DOLE. Let me indicate, as I will do in the closing statement, there will be no votes today. There will be no votes on Monday. The first vote will occur at 2:15 p.m. on Tuesday, May 7.

Let me also indicate, it is necessary to go through this procedure of filling up the tree so we can take action on this bill without having nongermane amendments offered to it. I would indi-

cate we have made a proposal to the Democratic leadership with reference to minimum wage. I have asked Senator LOTT to try to resolve that with Senator DASCHLE and others. We hope they can reach some agreement so we can start bringing up legislation and passing it. This bill should not take 5 minutes. It may take 2 or 3 days. But I hope that is not the case.

I know there was some misinformation about the Senator from Arkansas, Senator PRYOR, holding up the bill. That is not accurate. He did raise some questions last night about how we might treat other people who had the same problem, where they have incurred big legal expenses through no fault of their own because they have been called to testify or because of something being investigated. I suggested, rather than try to cure that on this bill, that we ask the chairman of the Judiciary Committee if he would consider general legislation, if he would take a look at it—it might be Whitewater, it might be Iran-Contra—because I can tell you, a lot of people in this country have incurred huge legal bills when they were called before committees and their reputation was at stake and when they were really not even under investigation or targets of investigation. That has been true through the years.

So, if we want to change general policy, I suggest we do it through the process of hearings in the appropriate committee. I hope that will be satisfactory and that we can pass this bill quickly on Tuesday and move on to a couple of other bills—Amtrak authorization, which we believe is very important, and the firefighters discrimination bill, S. 849—and, hopefully, then, on Wednesday, go to the constitutional amendment for a balanced budget.

MORNING BUSINESS

Mr. DOLE. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent there now be a period for the transaction of routine morning business with Senators permitted to speak for up to 5 minutes each.

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

THE VERY BAD DEBT BOXSCORE

Mr. HELMS. Mr. President, at the close of business yesterday, Thursday, May 2, 1996, the Federal debt stood at \$5,100,092,620,432.01.

On a per capita basis, every man, woman, and child in America owes \$19,262.84 as his or her share of that debt.

THE CHINA IPR AGREEMENT

Mr. THOMAS. Mr. President, yesterday the U.S. Trade Representative released its annual Special 301 report on the protection of U.S. intellectual property rights [IPR] by foreign countries. It will come as no surprise to my