

cents of every dollar of that tax increase has gone to more big Government spending. That is why Republicans continue to believe that the way to reduce the deficit is not to raise taxes, but instead to cut wasteful Government spending.

This chart also shows that the Clinton tax rate increase was retroactive—reaching back to the Bush administration. The tax record of the 103d Congress included a top tax rate increase to 39.6 percent which devastated small business, and is probably part of the reason why so many Americans feel that their wages have stagnated. When these small businesses, which are the biggest creators of jobs in this country, have to give more money to the Federal Government, they have less money for expansion, pay raises, and job creation.

The Democratic 103d Congress' tax record also included an increase in taxes on Social Security benefits up to 85 percent—an outrageous increase.

The 103d Congress also, of course, raised gas taxes by 30 percent.

So, the tax accomplishments of the 103d Democratic Congress included a hard hit at many Americans and they were not all rich.

But what a difference a Congress makes. This Republican Congress has a much different record on taxes. Instead of raising taxes, we have cut taxes. The 104th Congress has passed legislation that has been signed into law including: allowing working seniors to keep more of their Social Security benefits by increasing the earnings limit; tax relief for the thousands of service people in Bosnia; a reinstatement and subsequent increase of the self-employed health insurance deduction; and a measure to prohibit States from taxing the benefits of former residents who have retired and moved to other States. These tax changes benefit millions of Americans.

And, if President Clinton had signed the Balanced Budget Act of 1995, the tax burden on millions more working Americans would be lighter. Families, in particular, would have benefited from the Republican budget, which gave parents a \$500 tax credit for each child. Our budget also reduced the capital gains rate, phased out the unfair marriage penalty, provided a deduction for student loan interest, and expanded tax-deductible individual retirement accounts.

The difference between the two records couldn't be more stark. The last Congress increased taxes by a record amount, while this Congress cut taxes.

Mr. President, it is my hope that this Congress can undo the economic damage that the last Congress has done. Repeal of the Clinton gas tax is a good place to begin.

Mr. BUMPERS addressed the Chair.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Arkansas.

(The remarks of Mr. BUMPERS pertaining to the introduction of S. 1737

are located in today's RECORD under "Statements on Introduced Bills and Joint Resolutions.")

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

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

Mr. DASCHLE. Mr. President, we have not made a lot of progress in the last several hours, and I am hopeful that at some point today we can reach an agreement.

The current situation would require a vote on three separate provisions of the same amendment to a bill that is now pending, the Travel Office reimbursement legislation. We have indicated that that is unacceptable to us.

Earlier today, at a press conference, the distinguished majority leader, when asked if he would agree to consideration of three separate bills, answered, "If we can get an agreement to vote on three separate bills, that's one thing. I've already given that agreement to have three separate bills."

As I understand it now, that may not be Senator DOLE's exact intent. But I must tell you that if it is, indeed, his position to accept consideration of three separate bills, then, indeed, we would be ready this afternoon to agree; we would allow a vote on the gas tax reduction and relevant amendments; a vote on the minimum wage and amendments that are relevant; and a vote on the TEAM Act with relevant amendments. That seems to me to be exactly what we have been proposing now for several days.

If we can do that, we could reach an agreement by 4:45 this afternoon. So I am very hopeful that we are getting closer together, that we can find a way to resolve this impasse. Three separate bills, as the majority leader suggested earlier today, would do that, would give us that opportunity, and I am hopeful that we can talk in good faith and find a way to determine the sequencing and ultimately come to some conclusion on this legislation.

Three separate bills with relevant amendments, perhaps with a reasonable time limit, is acceptable to us, and we will take it.

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

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

MEGAN'S LAW

Mr. DOLE. Mr. President, late last evening H.R. 2137 passed the House, I

think, unanimously. It is Megan's law, plus some other additions to help protect our Nation's children from sexual predators. The vote was 418 to 0. Known as Megan's law, it strengthens the existing law to require all 50 States to notify communities of the presence of convicted sex offenders who might pose a danger to children.

In 1994 the crime bill was lobbied not to require States to take such steps. Since that time, 49 States have enacted sex offender registration laws, and 30 have adopted community notification provisions, but not all States have taken the necessary steps to require such notification. And this is a tragedy in the making.

It seems to me that we can prevent this from happening and we can take action now. I do not know any reason to hesitate. So I am going to ask consent when I finish that we bring it up and pass the bill.

But every parent in America knows the fear and the doubts he or she suffers worrying about the safety of their children. Parents understand that their children cannot know how truly evil some people are. They know that no matter how hard they try, they cannot be with their children every second of the day. A second is all it takes for tragedy to strike. We have an obligation to ensure that those who committed such crimes will not be able to do so again. This is a limited measure, but an absolutely necessary one.

Again, sort of following along the President's remarks at his press conference, it seems to me this would be an area where there would not be any objection. I know when this bill comes up it will be unanimous. We would like to let the American people know that we can respond immediately. The bill is here.

UNANIMOUS-CONSENT REQUEST— H.R. 2137

Mr. DOLE. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that H.R. 2137 be immediately considered.

Mr. DASCHLE addressed the Chair.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The minority leader.

Mr. DASCHLE. Mr. President, I associate myself with the distinguished majority leader's remarks in this regard. The bill is a good one. It probably will enjoy broad bipartisan support. We do have amendments that our colleagues on this side of the aisle would like to be able to offer. So given the fact that they need to have that right, I object at this time.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Objection is heard.

Mr. DOLE. I hope we are not holding up the bill over the minimum wage dispute.

Mr. FORD. Oh, come on.

Mr. DOLE. That is not an amendment that will be offered to Megan's law. We have had about enough of that.

Mr. DASCHLE. If the majority leader would yield, I will clarify, it is not our

intention to offer the minimum wage on this particular bill.

Mr. DOLE. The Senator from Massachusetts made it clear he is going to offer it at every opportunity. So I thought I better make the Record clear.

MEASURE PLACED ON
CALENDAR—H.R. 2137

Mr. DOLE. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that H.R. 2137 be placed on the calendar.

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

Mr. DOLE. Hopefully we can take up that bill tomorrow. I do not know of any reason—if there are amendments that are relevant, germane, or maybe there can be a separate bill. But I know that the family is very concerned about that. I had an opportunity to visit with Megan's parents. They feel very strongly about this. I do not believe there will be any objection. But there has been objection to its immediate consideration.

WHITE HOUSE TRAVEL OFFICE
LEGISLATION

The Senate continued with the consideration of the bill.

Mr. DOLE. Mr. President, as I understand, the Democrats have had a caucus, and they might now be willing to agree to the unanimous-consent request that I made earlier this morning that there be three votes; division I being the gas tax issue; division II being the TEAM Act issue; and division III being the Democratic proposal for the minimum wage; that each division be limited to 2 hours each, to be equally divided in the usual form, and following the conclusion or yielding back of time, the Senate proceed to division I, division II, and division III. Then I assume there would be a vote on final passage.

If I am correct in that, I would be happy to try to obtain that consent agreement now.

Mr. DASCHLE. Mr. President, reserving the right to object, I will offer a unanimous-consent agreement to do what I understand the majority leader proposed earlier—later than that particular offer; later on in the morning—that we have three separate bills, and have votes and amendments to those three separate bills. I offer that as a unanimous-consent agreement at this time with amendments.

Mr. DOLE. With amendments?

Mr. DASCHLE. We would offer three separate bills with amendments. We could agree to a time limit, but three separate bills with amendments. That is correct.

Mr. DOLE. I never agreed to anything like that. I object.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Objection is heard.

Mr. DOLE. Let me say that I did indicate—I do not negotiate with the press. As far as I know, they are not

Members of the Senate. Some have more power than we have, but they are not voting.

I was asked that question, and I repeated the question. I might subscribe to that. But I went on to say, I made almost the identical offer today, but I never made any offer that would indicate we would have amendments to these separate bills. That is an entirely different process.

Plus, I am no rocket scientist, but it did occur to me that obviously the President could veto the TEAM Act and sign the other two. He said he would do that today. I would not buy into such an agreement.

I do think this is a very reasonable agreement that I have suggested. Since I have been asked to object to the Democratic leader's proposal, perhaps he would be kind enough to object—

Mr. DASCHLE. I object.

Mr. DOLE. I find it strange that our colleagues on the other side are filibustering minimum wage. We are prepared to have that vote right now. We will not even need 30 minutes of debate. We are prepared to have the vote on TEAM Act, prepared to have the vote on gas tax.

Again, the TEAM Act is just a very little piece of the pie or the puzzle. I hope we could find some way to reach an agreement. If there are amendments, I know the Senator from North Dakota—I have written him a letter, Senator DORGAN, if he has any way to tighten up the effort to make certain that the 4.3 cents will go to the consumer. I had a letter from Texaco, and we will have a response from ARCO. Somebody raised a question about ARCO in the press conference. I did not have the answer, but we are getting the answer from ARCO. I think we will have the assurances that some would need before they act on the gas tax repeal.

As I said at the press conference earlier, we do pay for it. This is really an effort—the President's spending is why we have to have it. He wanted to spend more money, so we had to raise the gas tax. We will not let the deficit grow any larger. We will make certain we offset any loss.

I hope that this is a reasonable agreement, and I would like to proceed with it. If not, I do not see any reason to stay in later this evening.

Mr. KENNEDY. Will the Senator yield?

Mr. DOLE. I am happy to yield.

Mr. DASCHLE. Go ahead.

Mr. KENNEDY. Mr. President, I wonder if the majority leader would yield for a brief question regarding matters that we discussed just a few moments ago.

Mr. DOLE. Certainly.

Mr. KENNEDY. As I understand from the press conference, a question was asked, just to follow up on what Senator DASCHLE has pointed out: "Why not have three up-or-down votes on three different bills, whether they are amendable or unamendable? Why not do it that way?"

Senator DOLE said, "Three separate bills, I might even subscribe to that. But they won't let it happen. They will filibuster the TEAM Act. If we can get an agreement to vote on three separate bills, that is one thing. I have already given that agreement, to have the three separate bills."

As I understood the—

Mr. DOLE. Three separate votes.

Mr. KENNEDY. The question included the words: "amendable or unamendable? Why not do it that way?"

"Three separate bills, I might even subscribe to that. But they won't let it happen."

As I understood it, that is what Senator DASCHLE had offered. I was wondering, since it appeared, at least from the transcript, that that was the position of the majority leader, why that would not be acceptable to do that here as the minority leader has suggested.

Mr. DOLE. As I have indicated, I said in that response, I might and I might not. And I will not. That will take care of that.

Again, nobody is trying to negotiate. Democrats like to negotiate, but I do not negotiate with press people unless there is one up there who works for the Democrats, but I do not think so, not directly.

We would be very happy to proceed on the basis we have outlined this morning. We think it is very reasonable. I think the President ought to accept it in the spirit he invoked in his 1:30 press conference. He did indicate he would sign—he mentioned something about workers' rights. That is what we are talking about, workers' rights.

I do not understand how we expect the majority to permit the minority to have their way and we not be entitled to have any say at all. We are prepared to repeal the gas tax, have that vote, have the TEAM Act vote, and have the minimum wage vote and then have a final vote. I think my colleagues on the other side might appreciate the fact we would probably have a fairly healthy vote on final passage, which I think would bode well for what might eventually happen to this legislation.

There is a lot of merit to keeping the three together. There may not be any merit on that side of the aisle, but there is merit on this side of the aisle.

Again, I tried to work with—certainly, always tried to work with—the Democratic leader. I am happy to meet with him at any time and see if there is some agreement we can reach.

Mr. DASCHLE. Mr. President, I will not belabor this. Let me just say that I think both sides have made their position very clear. The majority leader wants to combine the TEAM Act, the minimum wage, and the Travel Office bill all in one package, in addition, of course, to the gas tax reduction. In one package we would combine all of these things.

I must say I do not know that we will ever be able to resolve this until we