

When I campaigned in 1992 for election, I said that the deficit will come down regardless of what happens, and every politician in Washington will take credit for it coming down. One of the major reasons it will come down, having nothing whatever to do with any politician in Washington, is that we will finish paying for the savings and loan bailout. That is moving through the system like a pig in a python, and once it finally is digested and taken care of, you will go back down to the same level of deficit you had before we had the bailout of the savings and loan. A lot of us will look at each other and say, "Aren't we heroes? Look. It has come down." When in fact all that really happened is that we are paying off a one-time obligation, and that was completed.

The other reason it comes down is because the cold war is over and we have had substantial downsizing in the Defense Department. The President talks about 270,000-and-some civilian employees no longer on the payroll. Yes, and over 200,000 of those are in the Defense Department having to do with base closures and other downsizing activities in the Defense Department.

The structural deficit is as persistent and pernicious as it ever was, and the size of the civilian work force unrelated to the cold war is as big and as obtrusive as it ever was, and we are kidding ourselves with these short-term numbers to think that something serious and long term is taking place.

THE MINIMUM WAGE

Mr. BENNETT. Mr. President, I want to talk about the two issues that are on the floor; first the minimum wage, and then the TEAM Act. I am willing to vote on the minimum wage at any time. I intend to vote against an increase in the minimum wage, and I do so for the following reasons.

If we increase the minimum wage, we eliminate jobs, and we eliminate jobs primarily among middle-class white suburban teenagers. You may say, "Well, that is fine. We do not owe these middle-class white suburban teenagers anything. So let us eliminate their jobs." I was a white suburban teenager in a middle-class family, and I started work at 14 when the minimum wage was 40 cents an hour. That dates me, I recognize, around here. I got a nice raise when the minimum wage went to 75 cents an hour. I did not need the money. The money was not the issue. The issue was that I learned that I had to be at work on time. I learned that I had to put in a good time at work. Looking back on it, the work I did, frankly, was not significant to the corporation. They could have done without it. But as long as they were paying me that low wage, it did not hurt them that much to have me around, and I liked to think I at least made things a little more comfortable if not more profitable.

It was the most significant learning experience of my young life. It was

more significant than many, if not most, of the classes I took in high school. It was more significant in setting the pattern of my life and work habits in my life than the extra-curricular clubs that I went to and the other things I was involved in. It was a tremendously worthwhile experience, as I am sure it is for the other middle-class teenagers who are experiencing their first work opportunity, a work opportunity that will be outlawed if we raise the minimum wage to the point where the employer says, "Well, I cannot afford it anymore, and I will cut it off."

Virtually every employer who has contacted me on this issue has said, "If the minimum wage goes up, I will eliminate jobs." I say to those who get so excited about how low the money is, why is it more moral for a person to be unemployed at \$5.25 an hour than it is for that person to be working at \$4.25 an hour? Somehow, I do not see the social benefit in having somebody unemployed at a high rate whereas they could be working at a lower rate in an entry-level job.

THE TEAM ACT

Mr. BENNETT. Finally, on the TEAM Act, as it is called, I want to make these observations.

Going back to a headline that appeared in a local U.S. paper—I ask unanimous consent that I be allowed to continue for another 3 minutes.

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

Mr. BENNETT. The headline coming from another circumstance but driving to the heart of this issue said this: "Why are the liberals afraid of democracy?"

This had to do with another circumstance where liberals were complaining about people voting on an issue and saying that the Government should dictate it. Why, said the speaker at this particular symposium, himself a liberal, "are the liberals afraid of democracy? Are they afraid they would lose? Why are the unions afraid of the TEAM Act? Are they afraid that workers, speaking for themselves, exercising democratic rights, will in fact end up in a circumstance that might be good for those workers? Do they not trust the workers?"

Here are the kinds of things that are illegal now, without the passage of the TEAM Act, in terms of discussions between workers and businesses. They cannot discuss an extension of employees' lunch breaks by 15 minutes. That is illegal. They have to have the union discuss that in their behalf. They cannot discuss the issue of decreasing rest breaks from 15 minutes to 10 minutes. You would think they could get together, exercise their democratic rights, rights of free speech, to talk about that? Oh, no. Under the present law that is illegal. The union has to be the one to do that.

How about sitting down with management and the workers to discuss

tornado warning procedures? Oh, no, we cannot trust the workers to have that kind of discussion. They may give away the store. We have to have the union there to protect their rights. The union must decide, not the workers who are directly involved.

How about rules about fighting? Oh, no, we cannot have that discussion with the workers. We have to have that discussion with the union.

Sharpness of the edges of safety knives? No, we cannot have the people who actually handle the safety knives discuss that with management. We have to have the union there. The list goes on and on.

I am willing to vote on minimum wage. I am willing to vote on TEAM Act. I am willing to vote on the gas increase. I am not willing to have some people in this body say to us, "You can vote on the ones that we think are important, but we will not let you vote on the ones that you think are important."

I say, in closing, to those who are so concerned about the minimum wage, why, if it is such a vital social benefit for so many people, was it never mentioned by the then-majority party for the 2 years that they held both the Presidency and the Congress? Never once did it come up when they had the opportunity to control the agenda, control the veto, and control the passage through here. They did not even mention it, let alone raise it. Now, all of a sudden, it is an amendment that must be offered to every single bill.

I think the coincidence is that \$35 million has been pledged in support of the President's campaign by the labor unions, and the decision has been, suddenly, well, it is important. So now we will bring it up, even though we never did when we were in charge.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Georgia.

THE THREE PROPOSALS BEFORE THE SENATE

Mr. COVERDELL. Mr. President, to lay a framework here, we have three proposals that are before the Senate offered by the majority leader, Senator DOLE of Kansas. We have an opportunity to repeal a 4½-cent gas tax that was imposed by President Clinton in August 1993. This is the gas tax that the President, while campaigning, said should not be imposed because it is especially harsh on the poor families in our country. But when he became President, he changed his mind and imposed a 4.3-cent gas tax that, as I said, is very, very difficult for the poorer sectors of our society to deal with, the rural sectors, rural communities that have to utilize gas extensively in their travels and in their work. This has added a deficit in a family checking account between \$100 and \$200 per family.

It is interesting we are discussing that on this day, because May 8 is the first day that wage earners get to keep

their checks for their own housing, their own food, their own transportation. From January 1 to yesterday, every check that was earned by every worker in America went to the Government. It is hard to believe we are at a point in time in our country where you work from January 1 to May 7 and you have to wait until May 8 to keep the first check that you earned. So repealing this gas tax is just the beginning of a series of steps that ought to occur to lighten that load and push those days back.

If you ask Americans what date they think is the appropriate one, they say March 1. Now it is May 7, and you have to wait until May 8 until you can begin to keep what you worked for, for your own family.

So we are talking about repealing this gas tax. We are talking about the minimum wage, which the Senator from Massachusetts has argued now for several weeks ought to be passed. I disagree with him, but there would be a vote on the minimum wage in this proposal the majority leader has put before the Senate.

I agree with the Senator from Utah that the minimum wage will hurt those that they argue it will help. Entry-level, beginning employees, minority employees will find it harder to get a job. That debate has been aired now for several weeks, and there will be a vote on that proposal.

Then there will be a vote on legislation that makes it possible—it is called the TEAM Act. But basically it is a proposal that allows employers and employees to meet together and discuss the modern workplace. Today, representative employees from a company in Lawrenceville, GA, visited our office and said their working groups had saved \$6 million. A team that consisted of nine employees, people from the assembly line to plant managers, chosen by coworkers, met for 6 months, and they saved that company \$6 million. They are up here saying we want that flexibility in labor law.

A small business from Macon, GA—they employ 30 people in Macon—they have created a committee called TRAQ, total responsibility in quality, made up of employee-selected representatives. Top management does not participate but makes recommendations. These employees from this company in Georgia have written endorsing this new concept. The concept has been endorsed by the Savannah Morning News, the TEAM Act concept, the ability of people to come together.

Mr. President, do I need to ask unanimous consent for another 2 minutes?

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator's time is about to expire.

Mr. FORD. If I do not object, will the Senator yield for a question?

Mr. COVERDELL. I sure will.

Mr. FORD. You will?

Mr. COVERDELL. Yes.

Mr. FORD. So I will not object.

Why do we need to change the law when these people you are talking about now are on a team?

Mr. COVERDELL. Because we are a right-to-work State, and they can function under the law here. There are many shops where that is not the case.

Mr. FORD. But 96 percent of all businesses now, I understand, have the team concept, but what they do is try to improve the assembly line, to try to improve, so that the nuts and bolts ought to be here on the right instead of on the left. The Ranger truck in Louisville that was not doing so well, management and the employees got together and they were able to learn to put the truck upside-down and be able to lean on the machine that tightens the bolts and turn the truck back up and were able to do these things. That is fine. But now are you saying that these teams will be able to negotiate wages? Negotiate hours? Is that the team concept that you want?

Mr. COVERDELL. Frankly, if it were up to me—

Mr. FORD. Oh, I understand that.

Mr. COVERDELL. It would.

Mr. FORD. But what this law—

Mr. COVERDELL. No; and to respond to your question—I know neither one of us want to put a full page in here.

Mr. FORD. I am trying not to, but some people just say some things.

Mr. COVERDELL. The National Labor Relations Board has called into question all of these concepts.

And is it very simple to read what this act does. It simply would make this possible. I simply quote Secretary Reich:

Many companies have already discovered that management practices fully involving workers have great value beyond their twin virtues.

Or as President Clinton said in his 1996 State of the Union Message:

When companies and workers work as a team, they do better, and so does America.

We could not agree more. So why not make it possible and make it certain that no one is under a threat from the National Labor Relations Board?

Mr. FORD. I say to my colleague, you take one line out of a statement and then you do not read the paragraph before or the paragraph under of the President's State of the Union Message. My interpretation of that was that employees ought to be recognized as assets, to be nurtured and improved and trained—that was No. 1—so that management and the employees could work together.

Second, I think his intent was the employees should not be used to be fired so the CEO could get \$5 million as a bonus for that year while they are out walking on the street. So what he was saying, as long as the—

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Chair informs the Senators the additional 2 minutes has expired.

Mr. FORD. I request 5 additional minutes.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. I believe the Senator from Georgia—

Mr. FORD. You have the floor.

Mr. COVERDELL. I have the floor.

Mr. FORD. I like what we are doing. We are having a good time.

Mr. COVERDELL. Let me finish this statement and I will not object to an additional 5 minutes.

Mr. FORD. I do not want the meat loaf to get too hard, and I do not want to stay around here. I would like to talk with you now.

Mr. COVERDELL. All right.

Mr. FORD. Because I think the team concept is fine. I understand that well. That is to improve the flow of the—

Mr. COVERDELL. I ask unanimous consent that we have an additional 5 minutes.

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

Mr. FORD. But I like the team concept of working together, making the assembly line work better, put out a better product, make more profit for the employer. But if you take this out, if you pass this bill, as I understand it, as my lawyers tell me, then the employer selects the team and that is the end of it. He appoints his son-in-law and a couple of others and that is the end of it, because you do not allow what is going on now. You eliminate the law, and the law then gives the employer the opportunity to select the teams.

Now you say, "Well, that will never happen." That is what this law says.

Mr. COVERDELL. No; that is not what this law says. Now I am going to take my prerogative and finish my statement.

Mr. FORD. You disagree. Well, I had fun while it lasted.

Mr. COVERDELL. This is a good debate, because talking about the TEAM Act or the ability for employers and employees to work together is something that actually came out of Asia. We have all sat back and noticed the efficiencies that some of the Japanese companies have. This is where this concept comes from.

This is talking about a new workplace. Labor law in this country is essentially drawn for industry and the workplace that is 50 years old. We are about to go into a new century, and we ought to be talking about a more flexible workplace, like this suggests. We ought to be talking and acknowledging the fact that the American family is under severe pressures and anxiety today. Both of them have to work today just to keep up with the point I made a minute ago that half their income is taken by the Government now.

Mr. FORD. Plural; plural.

Mr. COVERDELL. And we ought to be guiding them to a more flexible workplace, a more friendlier work environment. I think the President's statement sort of speaks for itself. It is not a question of interpreting it. He simply says, this is a quote:

When companies and workers work as a team, they do better and so does America.

He is right, and we ought to be shaping law that gets us ready for the new century, that allows a friendlier work environment, that allows workers and management to work together. That is what the TEAM Act will do.

I might point out that it is not management that was up here from these Georgia companies, it was employees who were up here trying to help endorse these newer concepts for the new century and the new workplace.

Again, we have three proposals here. One is to repeal the gas tax that President Clinton and the administration imposed in August 1993. It is an initial step to lighten this burden on the American family. The second is the minimum wage that the Senator from Massachusetts just tried to propose for America. And the third is a modification that frees companies not to be threatened by the National Labor Relations Board if employers and employees set up work groups to cover the very points that the Senator from Utah espoused.

This is a good law. It actually ought to be just the beginning. We ought to be thinking of other forms of flexibility and other forms of a new environment in the workplace that adjusts itself to the modern workplace and modern family of employees are having to contend with.

With that, Mr. President, I am going to do the leader's notice for the end of the day.

Mr. FORD. Mr. President, I asked for recognition.

Mr. COVERDELL. I yield—

Mr. FORD. You yield the floor.

Mr. COVERDELL. I yield.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Kentucky.

Mr. FORD. Mr. President, I apologize for taking so much time here, but I think what we are getting into is important. There is no way under the 4.3-cent gasoline tax any assurance that the consumer will get it. So all we ask is let that proposal stand alone and we will have relevant amendments and a time agreement. But we are blocked out of amendments; we have to take it as is.

Why, you could give an income tax credit of 4.3 cents, and that would assure that the consumer, the taxpayer would get the money. We do not even have a chance to put up that kind of amendment. You know, a blind hog every once in a while finds an acorn. We might come up with a good suggestion, but we are precluded from amending. That is No. 1.

Mr. COVERDELL. Will the Senator yield?

Mr. FORD. I am glad to yield—you yielded to me—as long as I do not go beyond.

Mr. COVERDELL. I think we heard the majority leader say to the minority leader that he was prepared to discuss an amendment, that he was prepared to meet this evening—

Mr. FORD. But he wants to keep it in the same package.

Mr. COVERDELL. He did not say that.

Mr. FORD. Absolutely, absolutely, that is the whole theme here, and you have to approve of the amendment.

Mr. COVERDELL. I will say this, I am encouraged the Senator from Ken-

tucky is talking as though he is prepared to grant some time.

Mr. FORD. We have been prepared all along, but what you do is put a poison pill in, and we are not going to accept the poison pill. Wait a minute. We are not going to accept the poison pill. You say this is it, and we say we cannot be for it if you put that in. Well, you put that in and so, therefore, we have told you in advance we cannot be for it.

So we are put in a position of having to be against it, and I do not particularly like that. But I wanted to tell you, if I am precluded from offering any amendment, I think I have the right, and this side has the right, and some on that side will have the right to offer amendments and be quite disturbed about not being able to offer amendments.

So what we did is we offered three stand-alone bills with relevant amendments and a time, and you say, "No, we want to put it all in a package, and we have to vote on it as a package. We get three votes and then a vote on the package."

I do not understand why you will not take the offer. There must be some reason, because the minimum wage was the only threat you had. That was the only threat. Now you are agreeing to the minimum wage to take it as an amendment or vote on it. And there is a majority in this body that will vote for it, and the majority leader stated that this afternoon. So the majority wants to increase the minimum wage in the Senate. The majority leader agreed to that.

So, that is one vote. That is stand alone. That is the only threat you have had. That is the only thing that the majority leader has been building the tree for, so we cannot have an amendment, so we cannot put on the minimum wage.

Now something happened out there beyond the beltway, and all of a sudden we are agreeing to the minimum wage, because you have Senators on your side who want to vote for the minimum wage increase.

So we just say there are three bills. Let them stand alone, let us have relevant amendments, let us do a time agreement, if that is what is necessary, instead of putting it in a package and then having three votes and then the fourth vote to approve the package. There is some reason beyond the minimum wage.

Mr. COVERDELL. What we are worried about is the poison pen.

Mr. FORD. Pill.

Mr. COVERDELL. Pen, the one that vetoed the tax relief earlier this year, the one that vetoed welfare reform.

Mr. FORD. The one that signed the tax in 1990, that was a poison pen too, my friend?

Mr. COVERDELL. I am talking about—

Mr. FORD. You want to talk about the President. There was a history of a \$300 billion deficit when President Clinton took over. It is now \$140 billion,

down 4 consecutive years—4 consecutive years—after you built it up over almost \$5 trillion.

You say, we have not done very well? Let us look at the record. You are saying, we had to swallow the poison pill to vote for that.

Mr. COVERDELL. You are about to run past your \$389.

Mr. FORD. You got me worked up, and I am sweating a little bit. But the thing that really bothers this Senator is to say that it is all President Clinton's fault. Why, I even saw one story that he was responsible—an op-ed piece—that he was responsible for the Unabomber. Keep on keeping on, because he is going up in the ratings. He is even 16 points ahead in Kentucky. Will you believe that? I yield the floor. And I will go to dinner.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator's time has expired.

Mr. COVERDELL. Mr. President, just in response—I do not speak for the leader, but I do not believe the package will be separated, because of the fear of the poison pen of a veto. So they will not be taken up in separate votes. I am sure there can be an accommodation to other amendments. But the separation that would allow the President the authority to accept what that side wants and reject what our side wants is not likely the case.

Mr. GORTON. Would the Senator from Georgia yield for a question?

Mr. COVERDELL. I yield for a question.

Mr. GORTON. Would the Senator from Georgia agree that at the present time we on this side of the aisle have sought to pass a very simple bill, which has already passed the House of Representatives, to reimburse attorney's fees and costs to those people who were wrongfully fired in the White House Travel Office just a couple years ago, and that we have been denied the right to pass that bill without any changes and without any conditions?

Mr. COVERDELL. The Senator is absolutely correct. It is the underlying bill to which the majority leader's package would be attached.

Mr. GORTON. Would the Senator from Georgia not agree that we asked for the ability to debate a repeal of the gas tax, an unprecedented gas tax, not for use for transportation infrastructure, but for the first time in the history of our country the gas tax increase passed 3 years ago simply went into the general fund for various social programs, and we are denied the ability to deal with that issue standing alone?

Mr. COVERDELL. The Senator is absolutely correct. It was under threat of amendment.

Mr. GORTON. Would the Senator from Georgia agree that we now have before us not only those two together, but also an increase in the minimum wage, the very increase in the minimum wage that the other party has asked for, but at the same time that we deal with that aspect, the questions relating to labor, that we have wanted to

ensure that the Senate majority could work its will with respect to the TEAM Act, an act which will authorize the kind of cooperation which is in fact taking place right now in more than 30,000 places of employment throughout the country, in which members of a corporation management and labor can work together for safer conditions, for better productivity, for the creation of production teams and the like, things that are not specifically collective bargaining, and that we have thought it was quite appropriate that we deal with both the minimum wage on one side of the equation and this one as a package and ensure that, if we are going to have one passed along, we would pass the other as well?

Mr. COVERDELL. The Senator from Washington is correct. He is articulating very well the balance here. If we are going to deal with, in my judgment, the old systems of managing the workplace, I think coming to the new century is a wonderful time to begin talking about some of the newer ideas.

Mr. GORTON. Would the Senator from Georgia agree that the only offer—perhaps not offer; demand—demand we have from the minority party is that we deal with these issues in a way in which those that the minority party favors are assured to become law while those that the majority party favors are assured to be vetoed?

Mr. COVERDELL. As I said a moment ago, I could not envision us separating this thing in a form where the President's poison pen versus this poison pill they are talking about could be applied to the issues we want to become law and he could accept the provisions that they want to become law.

Mr. GORTON. Does the Senator from Georgia agree that the rationale for this is that the various labor union bosses find absolutely anathema any proposal which would allow informal arrangements between management and labor that does not go through formal labor unions, and for that reason they are perfectly prepared to filibuster and are filibustering, and the President is perfectly prepared to veto, and will veto a proposal that gives gas tax relief, and the minimum wage increase, if it is accompanied by this modern management technique which so many people, both the management and labor, whatever their devotion to lower taxes, whatever their devotion to a minimum wage increase, they are far less important than preventing the passage of the TEAM Act?

Mr. COVERDELL. Well, I agree. It is a matter of public discourse at this point that the labor bosses in this city have publicly stated that they are going to expend \$35 million to destabilize the majority—

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Chair informs the Senator the time limit has expired.

Mr. GORTON. I ask unanimous consent for another 5 minutes.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Is there objection? Without objection, it is so ordered.

Mr. COVERDELL. That they will put 100 paid volunteers in some 70 congressional districts. So you do not have to be a rocket scientist to figure out why the other side is scared to death of a procedure or management tool that those labor bosses do not want.

I might add to that, but the employees—as I noted just a moment ago, it was the employees, not management, who came from my State today and yesterday asking for this new vehicle. I think the American worker, unlike the boss system in this city, the American worker wants these flexibilities.

Mr. GORTON. Obviously, because they can only take place with their involvement.

Mr. COVERDELL. That is right.

Mr. GORTON. So those of us who feel that cooperation, rather than confrontation, is the future for America and labor-management relationships, that this is the way we will build more jobs and greater competitiveness, that the only way we can authorize what in fact has been going on until it was determined to be a violation of an act from the 1930's, that the only way that we could bring ourselves into the 1990's or into the 21st century under this set of circumstances is to marry this proposal, which otherwise would be filibustered and vetoed.

Mr. COVERDELL. Being filibustered now.

Mr. GORTON. Is being filibustered and would be vetoed.

The only way we can possibly get it into law is to marry it with something that the other side would like to see passed and let them determine whether or not their expressed devotion to a minimum wage increase is sufficient to overcome their loyalty to these union leaders.

Is it not the opinion of the Senator from Georgia that they have now shown us that their devotion to a minimum wage increase is far less than their devotion to following the dictates of union leaders who say that no relationship between management and labor can take place except through formal labor unions?

Mr. COVERDELL. If this afternoon and whatever we uncovered from the Senator from Kentucky, the sensitivities that were raised here a few minutes ago would suggest that you are right.

Mr. GORTON. I believe that I am. I thank the Senator from Georgia. If I may, I express my own opinion that while I think that a minimum wage increase, at least marginally, would decrease jobs and job opportunities, I nevertheless feel that creating a better overall economy through the TEAM Act is worth a compromise which puts the two of these together and sends it to the President of the United States with the hope that the President would sign them.

I share the regret and opinion of the Senator from Georgia that devotion to the minimum wage increase is no more than lip deep, that it will disappear

once anything else of a more balanced nature should appear with it.

It seems to me we should continue to insist that if we are going to do the one, we ought to do the other at the same time and in a way which that poison pen of the White House can accept simply what he wishes and not have to do something which will really improve the economy and labor-management relations in the United States of America.

I thank the Senator from Georgia.

Mr. COVERDELL. Mr. President, I underscore that regarding this proposal, 90 percent of the economists have alluded to the fact that it will cost hundreds of thousands of jobs. The proposal we are talking about is part of a new workplace. It comes from nations that are using it that have become tough competitors of ours. We better start getting modern labor law in place if we are going to compete in the new century.

Mr. MACK. Would the Senator from Georgia be willing to yield for a question?

Mr. COVERDELL. I yield.

Mr. MACK. Would the Senator agree it is possible that our colleagues on the other side of the aisle are filibustering this legislation because, frankly, it is an embarrassment if this 4.3-cent gasoline tax cut were to make its way to the President of the United States?

Again, what I am trying to draw in your mind is a picture of the President of the United States who campaigned in 1992 that he was going to reduce the burden on America's middle-income families. In fact, I think he proposed a tax cut for middle-income families. Then within the first year after he was elected he introduced and enabled the passage of a tax plan that would, in fact, increase taxes on all Americans, part of which was the 4.3-cent gasoline tax.

Now, we are in a situation where we would be saying that we want to give the President an opportunity to keep his campaign promise of 1992, but it puts him in an embarrassing position, because after he got through saying the things he said in 1992, he went ahead and supported the tax increase.

Is it possible our colleagues on the other side of the aisle are engaging in this filibuster to try to protect the President from an embarrassing situation where he will either have to sign into law something that would reverse something he has done, or he will have to veto?

Mr. COVERDELL. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent we be allowed to finish our colloquy.

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

Mr. COVERDELL. Yes, there are two promises here. First, the President said he would lower taxes on the middle-class as part of the campaign of 1992. That was substantially reversed. Instead of lowering the economic pressure on America and America's working families, he reversed it and increased the economic pressure with a

historic tax increase of which the gas tax is a significant piece.

Second, he said during the same campaign that a gas tax was regressive and would be particularly harmful on the poor and the elderly and should not be imposed, and then reversed that and imposed a new gas tax.

So the debate is about reversing something the President imposed on the country through his leadership in the Congress, and more importantly, reminds us of a promise that was made that was not kept, which is what the Senator from Florida has alluded to.

Mr. MACK. I thank the Senator.

Mr. COVERDELL. I thank the Senator from Florida.

ORDERS FOR THURSDAY, MAY 9,
1996

Mr. COVERDELL. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that when the

Senate completes its business today it stand in adjournment until the hour of 9:15 a.m. on Thursday, May 9; further, that immediately following the prayer, the Journal of proceedings be deemed approved to date, no resolutions come over under the rule, the call of the calendar be dispensed with, the morning hour be deemed to have expired, and there then be a period for morning business until the hour of 10 a.m. with Senators to speak for up to 5 minutes each, with the following Senators to speak: Senator BURNS, 5 minutes; Senator DORGAN, 25 minutes; Senator LIEBERMAN, 15 minutes; Senator BRYAN, 10 minutes.

Further, that immediately following morning business, the Senate resume H.R. 2937, the White House Travel Office legislation.

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

PROGRAM

Mr. COVERDELL. The Senate will resume consideration of the White House Travel Office bill on Thursday. It is also hoped that we may be able to consider H.R. 2137, the Megan's law bill, during tomorrow's session. Again, it is still possible for the Senate to reach an agreement for consideration of gas tax repeal, TEAM Act, minimum wage legislation.

ADJOURNMENT UNTIL 9:15 A.M.
TOMORROW

Mr. COVERDELL. If there is no further business to come before the Senate, I now ask that Senate stand in adjournment under the previous order.

There being no objection, the Senate, at 6:07 p.m., adjourned until Thursday, May 9, 1996, at 9:15 a.m.