

1,800-page bill that we sent to the President was the product of about 8 months of work by the Senate and the House. It was the product of 13 different committees. Every committee had to change the programs that are under its jurisdiction to fit into the effort. That effort was the policy to balance the budget. Our bill did that.

So, once in awhile, I like to reconsider our now vetoed Balanced Budget Act of 1995, because I have been working with other people in the Congress for a long time and we said that we could balance the budget. But, quite frankly, until last year we never delivered on that promise.

We tend to overpromise in Congress which can be wrong. We should be careful not to overpromise. We should perform in office commensurate with the rhetoric of our campaign.

We had promised to balance the budget over so many years in the 1970's and 1980's and early 1990's—the last time we had a balanced budget was in 1969—but we did not succeed, and yet we had promised it. That is why some people are so cynical about some of us in public office.

I suppose if you would have asked me 12 months ago, would we ever have gotten to a balanced budget, I would have been cynical myself about our ability to succeed. I would have said, "Well, no. It's a good goal, but we'll never get it done." I never said that at the time, but that is what I thought. Yet, I am on the committees that have to deliver on it. We were able to produce a budget that the nonpartisan Congressional Budget Office declared balanced. And the President vetoed it.

We are going to be able to start, maybe tomorrow morning, to put together another balanced budget act. This will be the balanced budget act of 1996. We will still have a lot of tough decisions to make, but at least now we have the President on record as saying that he was for a balanced budget. He said he was for a balanced budget, only he would do it in 10 years even though our's did it in 7 years. The new one to be taken up soon will do it in 6 years. It will ultimately balance because we said 12 months ago we were going to balance it. At least now we have the President saying he is for a balanced budget. I hope he really is. After June of last year, he said he was for a balanced budget. We passed it, and he still vetoed it.

So the process starts over again. I am not cynical about whether or not we can balance the budget now because we proved to the public we could do it. Most importantly, we had to prove it to ourselves that we could do it, and we did.

So I think that the President has an opportunity now to hopefully reject this business that you can tax people with a gas tax for money that ought to go into the road fund to build safer highways. Currently, President Clinton's gas tax is going to fund a bunch of programs with gasoline user fees

that have nothing to do with the people that are using the highways. Here is a way that he could help repeal that. He said he would do it. I hope he sends a message to the minority party up here on the Hill that he will do it.

I yield the floor.

Mr. BUMPERS addressed the Chair.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Arkansas.

THE DEFICIT

Mr. BUMPERS. Mr. President, I have listened very carefully to the Senator from Iowa's speech, as I have listened virtually to every member of the Republican Party of the Senate who has consistently lamented the deficit-reduction package of 1993. I did not enjoy voting to raise taxes in 1993 any more than I enjoyed cutting spending in 1993. But to set the record straight, that deficit-reduction package was intended to reduce the deficit compared to what it would otherwise be, by \$500 billion over a period of 5 years.

It was a very dramatic time in the Senate. Fifty Democrats voted aye. Every single Republican voted no. And Vice President GORE, who was seated in the chair that day, voted aye and broke the tie. And so the \$500 billion deficit-reduction package became law. At least two Senators on this side of the aisle lost their reelection campaigns because they voted aye, a very courageous and responsible vote.

The Office of Management and Budget estimates that rather than produce \$500 billion in savings, but because interest rates came down as a result of that package and because economic activity went up, the 1993 Clinton budget bill will actually reduce the deficit by \$800 billion over the same 5-year period, 1993 to 1998.

So I ask my Republican colleagues who find that deficit-reduction bill passed by 50 very courageous Democrats in 1993, I ask them to tell all Americans as we start to work on the budget tomorrow, where you would get that \$800 billion if we had not acted so responsibly?

The budget we will debate tomorrow, which I have absolutely no intention of voting for, again, has substantial cuts in Medicare and Medicaid, and—listen to this—a \$60 billion cut in education over the next 6 years.

Who gets the money? Why, the Republican budget provides for an \$11.3 billion increase next year alone in defense spending. Now, Mr. President, for the edification of anybody who cares, out of a roughly \$1.7 trillion budget, less than one-third of that is for what we call domestic discretionary spending—education; the environment; medical research; medical care and a whole host of other things.

Mr. President, \$515 billion is provided for discretionary spending, but defense gets the bulk of that, including a nice, handsome \$11-plus billion increase, and everything else that makes us a great country worth defending goes down.

The environment, including funding for EPA's enforcement, takes a whopping hit. In 1970, 65 percent of the lakes and streams in this country were neither swimmable nor fishable. In 1995, 65 percent of the lakes and streams in this Nation are swimmable and are fishable because EPA, through their enforcement acts, made people quit dumping their sewage into the rivers and streams and made the soap manufacturers come up with cleaner soaps without chemicals in them.

How does the Republican budget respond to that kind of progress? Why, they cut EPA's enforcement because they argue the business community just cannot take it. I am the first to admit that some regulations are crazy and do not make sense. But nobody, Republican or Democrat alike, in their heart of hearts wants to turn the clock back on cleaning up the lakes and streams of this Nation, or polluting the air we breathe, which is much, much cleaner now, principally because we made the automobile industry put catalytic converters in their cars.

So when the Republicans talk about that big tax hike in 1993, what is their answer? Maybe in their heart of hearts they are feeling a little badly about having voted against cutting the deficit by an honest-to-God \$800 billion—not over 7 years; over a 5-year period. What is their answer to it? Cut the gasoline tax 4.3 cents. I thought my good colleague from Louisiana, Senator BREAU, had a great line. That is like spitting in the ocean and trying to make it rise.

The gas tax did not cause the gasoline price increase and it is not going to contribute to reducing it. It will go into the pockets of the oil companies. Everybody says that by October, gas prices will be back where they started from and we will be sitting here with \$3 billion added to the deficit.

What is it with the Republicans? They will not vote for deficit reduction, they keep on increasing defense spending, they keep wanting to repeal the gas tax. And their budget has an enormous billion tax cut. I am not voting for any tax cuts until we get the deficit under control.

You know what is really paradoxical about the proposed tax cut that gives families a credit for each child? Listen to this: Six to nine million people in this country work for anywhere from \$4.25 an hour to \$6 and \$7 an hour, 6 to 9 million of them. We give them a little check at the end of the year called the earned income tax credit because we believe that is preferable to their quitting work and going on welfare. So we say we will give you up to \$2,800 at the end of the year if you will just stay on the job. That is a lot cheaper than \$9,000 a year on welfare. It is a good investment for us.

What does the Republican budget do? It cuts investment tax credit by approximately \$20 billion. What does this mean to the 6 to 9 million people who are working for essentially minimum

wages, up to \$7 an hour? Effectively, they get a tax increase because the earned income tax credit has been cut.

Do you know what else is really ironic about it? Those people do not pay taxes. They do not make enough to pay taxes. So you know what? They do not get a child tax credit. They are getting a tax increase by cutting the earned-income tax credit, and they get nothing to offset it because it is only if you pay taxes that you can offset the tax cut for each child.

What kind of lunacy is this? What do the American people expect from us? They expect a little decency and they expect fairness.

Mrs. BOXER. Will the Senator yield?

Mr. BUMPERS. I am happy to yield to the Senator.

Mrs. BOXER. Mr. President, first, I want to say to the Senator from Arkansas, thank you for coming to the floor today and talking to us and to whoever is watching here. As the Senator has a way of doing, he finds the truth. He finds the truth in all of this. The truth that he pointed out—and then I will ask a question—when you get through with this Republican budget, what you realize is that it hurts the people of this country. It hurts the hardest working people of this country. We will bring that out in the next few days.

The question I want to ask the Senator is this: We know when the Government shut down and we had that crisis, it was because the President of the United States stood up and said to this Republican Congress, "I'm not going to back down. I'm going to stand up for Medicare and the elderly who rely on it. I'm going to stand up for Medicaid and the poorest children who rely on it, and the poorest seniors in nursing homes who rely on it." He was going to stand up, and he did, for the environment and for education.

I say to my friend, has he looked at this Republican budget that they have just unveiled with great fanfare, and that budget which the President vetoed, and does he see similarities between the two?

Mr. BUMPERS. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that I be allowed to proceed for 4 additional minutes.

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

Mr. BUMPERS. Let me say to the Senator from California, this question reminds me of something Franklin Roosevelt said. My father taught us when we died we were going to Franklin Roosevelt's. He was the only one who ever did anything for us.

This budget is a manifestation of almost total disdain for people trying to reach for the first rung on the ladder. It is protectionism at its worst of those who have much. Franklin Roosevelt once said, and I know the Senator is familiar with the quote, "The groans of the full pocketbooks of the wealthy are louder than the churning of the empty stomachs of hungry people." That is not so true now as it was during the

Depression, but the principle in this budget is the same.

You think about cutting education \$60 billion. You think of how many children will not be educated as a result of that. I have said time and time again if it had not been for the GI bill waiting for me when I got out of the service, I would not be standing here right now.

And that applies to millions and millions of people. There was a very poignant story in the Post this morning about a woman who said, "I wouldn't be in this position if it hadn't been for student loans and student grants." So what are we doing? We are cutting education \$60 billion. Everybody wants clear air and clean water. So what are we doing? Cutting the environment. Nobody wants to see a child go without health care. So we are cutting Medicaid. I could go on and on. But I find this budget almost identical to the budget we debated last year—

Mrs. BOXER. That is right.

Mr. BUMPERS. The one followed by a reconciliation which the President had the good sense and the courage to veto. Had he not vetoed it, we would be on our way to third-world status right now. That is how bad I felt it was.

Mr. President, I know my time has about expired. Every time I think of the fact that two of my very best friends and best Senators in the U.S. Senate lost their seats because they cast a very courageous vote here in 1993, it makes me sad.

So, Mr. President, there are going to be a limited number of amendments. I have a number that I wish I could offer on the budget, but I know time constraints will not permit that. However, I will offer a few. One amendment would keep the U.S. Government from selling assets to balance the budget. Think about selling the power marketing systems. Think about selling the Elk Hills Petroleum Reserve. Sell everything. What do you do for an encore when everything is gone?

A woman once said her husband came home from the law office and said, "I had a great day today." She said, "What happened?" He said, "I sold my desk." That is what we are doing in this budget. I am not going to vote for it. I am going to vigorously speak against it, and there will be 53 Republicans that will vote for it. We are starting down the same road we just left.

I yield the floor.

Mr. COVERDELL addressed the Chair.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Georgia is recognized.

GAS TAX REPEAL

Mr. COVERDELL. Mr. President, a few moments ago, the other side of the aisle effectively blocked the efforts to repeal President Clinton's August 1993 increase on gasoline, diesel fuel, and jet fuel. Now, just to put this in perspective, when the President was run-

ning for the office he now holds, he said, in unequivocal terms, that a gas tax was the wrong thing to do, he said it was egregious for low income, and he said it was harmful to the elderly, all of which is true. It is as regressive a tax as one can find because the lowest income families in America pay the highest share of their disposable incomes. It ranges as high as 8 percent of their disposable income that has to be invested in the purchase of gasoline.

So those that have the least resources are those for which this tax causes the most difficulty, which, as I am sure, is why the President said it was the wrong thing to do. Nevertheless, on arrival at the White House, an increase in gasoline taxes was put in his tax increase on America, which, as we all know, was the largest tax increase in American history. These policies have had the effect of costing America's average families, all of them put together, about \$2,000 to \$3,000 in lost income.

Some people around here do not seem to think that is a lot of money. But for the average family in Georgia, let me try to put it in perspective. An average family in Georgia makes \$45,000 a year. Both parents have to work to get that. In fact, in many cases today, the kids have to work, too, to make ends meet. By the time this average family in Georgia pays their Federal taxes, FICA, Social Security, Medicare, State and local taxes—their share of the regulatory apparatus in our country, which is at an all-time high—they have 48 percent of their gross income left to do everything that we have asked them to do. That is unbelievable.

If Thomas Jefferson were here today, or any of the other Founders, they would absolutely be stunned that we have grown up the Government so large that it takes over half the resources from labor, leaves them with less than half of what they earned to do what they have to do, to promote their own dreams, to educate, to house, to feed, to clothe, to transport, to provide for the health of their families and their communities. No wonder there is so much anxiety in the workplace today, so much anxiousness among our people. We have literally pushed the American family to the wall.

So, suddenly, there is a phenomenon that makes everybody focus on the price of gasoline. The prices have been skyrocketing because there is a refinery shortage, because there was a bad winter, because the price of the crude product costs much more today. And so some Members came to the floor and said let us at least, in the face of this, get rid of that burden. Let us repeal that gas tax. Let us remember what the President said when he ran for President. And then even the President said, "Yes, I agree. I would sign a repeal of the gas tax."

But when we tried to do it in these last 5 or 6 days, with us saying it should be done, with the President finally agreeing, remembering his remarks during the campaign that it was