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House of Representatives

The House was not in session today. Its next meeting will be held on Monday, May 20, 1996, at 2 p.m.

Senate

FRIDAY, MAY 17, 1996

The Senate met at 9:30 a.m., and was called to order by the President pro tempore [Mr. THURMOND].

PRAYER

The Chaplain, Dr. Lloyd John Ogilvie, offered the following prayer:

Gracious Father, our refuge and our strength, a very present help in trouble, we come to You just as we are, with the confidence that You will lift our hearts and prepare us for the day ahead. We can be honest with You about our real feelings, questions, and our deepest concerns.

Here in the Capitol, a place of great human power and powerful people, often we assume that we must suffer, weep, and struggle alone. Beneath the highly polished surface of our images of power, often there is an aching heart. Loneliness is no stranger, and sometimes discouragement and even despair become unwelcome guests in our heart. Our culture does not honor the expression of need or vulnerability.

Dear God, help us to be more sensitive with those who are hurting and those facing what seem to them to be insurmountable problems. Most of all, set us free to express our concerns and give reassurance in the midst of the battle with the forces of depression and despair.

This morning, there is a family on our hearts, the family of a distinguished naval officer. With one voice, we pray for the family of Adm. Jeremy "Mike" Boorda. Oh, Holy Comforter, bless his wife, Bettie, his children and grandchildren, now in their monumental grief over the admiral's untimely and inexplicable death. Comfort

and strengthen them in their time of immense loss, and encourage them with the lovely memories of his great life and leadership.

Now, Lord, be with the men and women of the Navy, their officers, and especially those who worked closely with the admiral.

We all press on with the challenges of this day and trust You more deeply, open ourselves to You more completely, and encourage and uplift one another more unreservedly. In Your holy name. Amen.

RECOGNITION OF THE ACTING MAJORITY LEADER

The PRESIDENT pro tempore. The able acting majority leader, Senator LOTT of Mississippi, is recognized.

Mr. LOTT. I thank the Chair.

SCHEDULE

Mr. LOTT. Mr. President, the Senate will immediately begin consideration of Senate Concurrent Resolution 57, the concurrent budget resolution. Under the agreement of last night, there is a limited number of first-degree amendments in order to the resolution. Senators are urged to offer and debate those amendments either today or on Monday.

Further, Senators are reminded that there will be no rollcall votes either today or Monday so that we can complete the debate on these amendments and then enter into a series of votes on Tuesday. Any votes ordered on the amendments will occur on Tuesday,

and Senators can expect numerous votes Tuesday in order to complete action on the budget resolution.

Mr. President, I want to take just a moment to express our appreciation for the tremendous work that is being done by the chairman of the Budget Committee, the distinguished Senator from New Mexico, Mr. DOMENICI, working with his ranking member on the other side, Senator EXON. I know they are trying to move this very important piece of legislation forward. However, there now remains, at 9:30 this morning, 29 hours and 51 minutes to be consumed. We have a lot of work to do, and it is important that we continue to do that work and to use this time.

I want to emphasize that in the past I believe the record will show an average of probably at least 15 hours has been yielded back, and I think at least that much or more should be yielded back this time. I am troubled, and I think a lot of Senators are, that there seems to be some delay in moving this legislation through to completion. Let us make our case; let us offer our amendments; let us have our debate, but let us get this job done. I want to emphasize that the majority leader, Senator DOLE, has indicated very strongly that we are going to finish this bill on Tuesday. Senators should be prepared to work in the effort to get that accomplished. I believe we have amendments in order now.

• This "bullet" symbol identifies statements or insertions which are not spoken by a Member of the Senate on the floor.



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RESERVATION OF LEADER TIME

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Mr. THOMAS). Leadership time will be reserved.

CONCURRENT RESOLUTION ON
THE BUDGET

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senate will now resume consideration of Senate Concurrent Resolution 57. The clerk will report.

The assistant legislative clerk read as follows:

A concurrent resolution (S. Con. Res. 57) setting forth the congressional budget for the U.S. Government for fiscal years 1997, 1998, 1999, 2000, 2001, and 2002.

The Senate resumed consideration of the concurrent resolution.

Pending:

Boxer amendment No. 3982, to preserve, protect, and strengthen the Medicaid Program by controlling costs, providing State flexibility, and restoring critical standards and protections, including coverage for all populations covered under current law, to restore \$18 billion in excessive cuts, offset by corporate and business tax reforms, and to express the sense of the Senate regarding certain Medicaid reforms.

Wyden/Kerry Amendment No. 3984, to express the sense of the Senate regarding revenue assumptions.

Mr. LOTT. Mr. President, I now ask unanimous consent that the Wyden amendment of last night be set aside so that we can proceed to the next amendment, the Wellstone amendment.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Is there objection? The Chair hears none, and it is so ordered.

Who yields time?

Mr. WELLSTONE addressed the Chair.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Minnesota.

AMENDMENT NO. 3985

(Purpose: To express the sense of the Senate on tax deductibility of higher education tuition and student loan interest costs)

Mr. WELLSTONE. Mr. President, I send an amendment to the desk on behalf of myself, Senator KERRY of Massachusetts, and Senator BIDEN of Delaware.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will report.

The assistant legislative clerk read as follows.

The Senator from Minnesota [Mr. WELLSTONE], for himself, Mr. KERRY, and Mr. BIDEN, proposes an amendment numbered 3985.

Mr. WELLSTONE. 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:

At the appropriate place, insert the following new section:

SEC. . SENSE OF THE SENATE ON TAX RELIEF
PRIORITIES.

(a) FINDINGS.—The Senate finds that:—

(1) the concurrent resolution on the budget for fiscal year 1997 (S. Con. Res. 57) calls for \$122 billion in net tax reductions through 2002;

(2) the Committee Report accompanying the 1997 concurrent resolution (Senate Report 104-271) states, "The Committee's recommendation would accommodate further tax reform or tax reductions to be offset by the extension of expired tax provisions or corporate and business tax reforms. Should the tax writing committees choose to raise additional revenues through these or other sources, such receipts could be used to offset other tax reform proposals such as estate tax reform, economic growth, fuel excise taxes or other policies on a deficit neutral basis";

(3) the tax reductions passed in conjunction with the fiscal 1996 budget (H.R. 2491) included tax breaks which would disproportionately benefit the wealthy and large corporations, such as, reductions in the capital gains tax, exemptions from the alternative minimum tax, reduced tax penalties for corporate raiding of employee pensions, and increased tax incentives for corporations to move jobs overseas; and

(4) over the last decade, the cost of attending college has almost doubled, rising at twice the rate of inflation.

(b) SENSE OF THE SENATE.—The assumptions underlying the reconciliation instructions in this budget resolution assume that it is the sense of the Senate that any tax revenue raised by the Finance Committee to provide gross tax * * * the amount needed to pay for a per-child tax credit will be used either:

(1) to finance a tax deduction of \$10,000 per year for higher education tuition and student loan interest costs; or

(2) to reduce the federal budget deficit; and not for tax cuts which disproportionately benefit the wealthy and large corporations.

Mr. WELLSTONE. I thank the Chair.

Mr. President, what this amendment essentially says is that if there are to be any further tax cuts beyond tax credits for children and families, these cuts must take the form of a tax deduction of up to \$10,000 per year for higher education tuition payments or student loan interest payments.

The report of the Senate Budget Committee allows for additional tax cuts beyond tax credits for children and families. These additional tax cuts are bound to flow disproportionately to high-income wealthy people. I believe that we should, instead, focus our efforts where they ought to be—on tax relief to enable families to afford higher education. That is what this amendment that my colleagues and I are introducing on this side of the aisle would do. It is expected that this education tax cut would finance a \$10,000-per-year tax deduction for higher education tuition and for student loan interest costs.

Mr. President, on April 29, 1996, the front cover of Newsweek states in bold terms:

\$1,000 a Week—The Scary Cost of College

This cover story addresses the fact that some colleges in this country cost their students \$1,000 per week of school. That is what a family today in America is faced with.

Mr. President, according to the College Board, tuition costs have gone up more than 40 percent since 1985. Expressed in constant 1994 dollars, in 1985, tuition at the average private college was \$10,058. By 1994, it was \$14,486—a 44-

percent increase. The average public college tuition was \$2,095 in 1985. By 1994, it was \$2,948—a 41-percent increase.

If you look at this next chart, what you can see is that over the years, since 1980, family income has risen only half as fast as skyrocketing medical costs; but even more than medical costs, what we see is a dramatic increase in private college tuition and public college tuition.

There is an economic squeeze for working families in America. Affordable higher education is at the very top of the list of priorities for families in our country. The first thing we should do as public servants is respond to these families.

Mr. President, as this next chart shows, in my State of Minnesota, from 1981 to 1992, the CPI has gone up 60 percent; the medical care subindex has gone up 133 percent; community college tuition has gone up 151 percent; the University of Minnesota tuition has gone up 153 percent; State university tuition has gone up 204 percent; and technical college tuition has gone up 316 percent.

I spend a lot of time in schools in my State. I can tell you, Mr. President, it is not at all uncommon to meet students who are taking 6 or 7 years to graduate because they are working two and three minimum wage jobs to get through. It is not at all uncommon to meet many students who are in their thirties and forties, going back to school at community colleges, who are trying to get back on their own two feet and are having a very difficult time making ends meet.

It is not uncommon to meet students who sell plasma at the beginning of the semester to buy textbooks. Mr. President, when we talk about higher education, we are talking about a major economic issue for families in Minnesota and all across the country.

As we see in this next chart, if we look at the last 15 years, we see that median family income has gone up 5 percent. However, tuition at a public 4-year institution has gone up 98 percent, and tuition at a private 4-year institution has gone up 89 percent. If we want to respond to working families in our country, then we need to make sure that no additional tax cuts flow to wealthy or high-income people before we make higher education affordable for everyone. That is why this amendment says that it is the sense of the Senate that whatever is left over by way of tax cuts goes to education.

Now I want to talk about student loans. Look at this chart. This is really rather amazing. What we see here is that, in the 1974-75 school year, grants made up 80 percent of an average student aid package. Twenty years later, in the 1994-5 school year, grants make up only 20 percent of student aid. In 1974-5, only 20 percent of a student's financial package was loans—and now loans are up to 80 percent.

So tuition and costs have skyrocketed beyond the means of most