

livestock feed assistance for the 1996 crop year, but have incurred feed losses in 1996 due to drought, flooding, or other natural disasters, should receive special consideration for assistance from commodities for the sale of commodities currently available in the disaster reserve established under section 813 of the Agricultural Act of 1970 (7 U.S.C. 1427a). A livestock producer should be eligible to receive the assistance during the period beginning May 1, 1996, and ending not sooner than August 31, 1996.

Mrs. HUTCHISON. Mr. President, what has just cleared the Senate is a very important sense of the Senate that has unanimously passed that will help the areas of our country that have been devastated by this drought. In fact, this is the Gramm-Hutchison-Domenici-Bingaman resolution.

It says we encourage the Secretary of Agriculture to allow some of the counties—because of a regulatory snafu, a technicality—that are not now able to apply for livestock feed assistance under its old program to do so. The bulk of the counties in New Mexico, Texas, Oklahoma, and Kansas that are affected by this will have that opportunity. But because of the technicality, they have not been able to clear all of the counties. So we are asking the Secretary of Agriculture to do this for us. It is very important to the farmers and ranchers of these States.

Mr. President, this drought is hurting not only the farmers and ranchers of these States, but the consumers are going to see higher prices as well. We are in a situation now where farmers are not able to make loans because the drought has caused them either to be unable to plant or to be unable to have anything if they have planted. It also causes a great hardship on people who are raising cattle. There is no feed for the cattle because we have not been able to raise the hay.

It is a terrible situation, and I just appreciate very much all of my colleagues helping us with this sense of the Senate. I hope this will encourage the Secretary of Agriculture to help us through this technicality and help these farmers and ranchers make it this year so they can continue to provide the food and be the breadbasket of America next year.

RESOLUTION RELATIVE TO EMERGENCY LIVESTOCK FEED ASSISTANCE

Mr. LOTT. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the Senate proceed to the immediate consideration of Senate Resolution 261; I further ask that the resolution be considered and agreed to and the motion to reconsider be laid upon the table, and that any statements relating to this resolution be printed in the RECORD.

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

The resolution (S. Res. 261) was agreed to; as follows:

S. RES. 261

SECTION 1. ELIGIBILITY FOR EMERGENCY LIVESTOCK FEED ASSISTANCE.

It is the sense of the Senate that, as part of the orderly termination of the emergency

livestock feed assistance program established under title VI of the Agricultural Act of 1949 (7 U.S.C. 1471 et seq.), livestock producers who were eligible for emergency livestock feed assistance for the 1995 crop year, but were unable to apply for the assistance for the 1996 crop year, and who have suffered a qualifying loss as determined by the Secretary, should be eligible to receive assistance under the program through at least August 31, 1996.

UNANIMOUS-CONSENT AGREEMENT—HOUSE JOINT RESOLUTION 178

Mr. LOTT. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the Senate on Thursday, June 13, begin consideration of the budget conference report 104-612 at 10 a.m., that there be 2 hours of debate equally divided between Senators DOMENICI and EXON; and, further, that at 12 noon tomorrow the Senate proceed to vote on the adoption of the budget resolution conference report with no intervening action or debate, all provided that the official papers have arrived in the Senate; and, further, that if the papers have not arrived, then the vote occur at a time and date to be determined by the majority leader after consultation with the Democratic leader.

I note for the Members that this has been discussed with the Democratic leader, and we have agreed on this.

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

ORDERS FOR THURSDAY, JUNE 13, 1996

Mr. LOTT. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that when the Senate completes its business today it stand in adjournment until the hour of 10 a.m. on Thursday, June 13; 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 the time for the two leaders be reserved for their use later in the day, and the Senate then begin consideration of the conference report to accompany the concurrent budget resolution as under the previous order.

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

PROGRAM

Mr. LOTT. For the information of all Senators, tomorrow there will be 2 hours remaining for debate on the budget conference report with a vote occurring at 12 o'clock on the adoption of that report.

Following that vote, the Senate will be in a period of morning business to accommodate a number of requests to speak. Additional rollcall votes on possible issues that are pending could come on Thursday, and the Senate may also be asked to turn to consideration of any other items cleared for action.

We are, frankly, hoping that we can begin debate tomorrow on the Federal Reserve Board nominations. We are consulting now with the Democratic leader. We hope to come to an agreement on how that matter will be handled in the balance of the day tomorrow and perhaps even over into next week.

ORDER FOR ADJOURNMENT

Mr. LOTT. If there be no further business to come before the Senate, I now ask that the Senate stand in adjournment under the previous order following the remarks of Senator KENNEDY of Massachusetts.

I yield the floor, Mr. President.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Massachusetts.

CONGRATULATING MAJORITY LEADER LOTT

Mr. KENNEDY. Mr. President, I want to take a very brief moment to congratulate my friend and colleague from Mississippi, Senator LOTT, on being selected as the majority leader of the Senate. I have had the opportunity to work with TRENT LOTT in the Armed Services Committee. I have great respect for him, and friendship, and I look forward to working with him, trying to carry forward the country's business in whatever way we possibly can. So I congratulate him and congratulate his family. It is a great honor for him to be selected and I wish him the very best in his new responsibilities.

THE MISGUIDED REPUBLICAN BUDGET

Mr. KENNEDY. Mr. President, tomorrow we are going to be asked to consider a repackaged version of last year's misguided Republican budget. It has not improved with age. This budget plan, like last year's, undermines basic protections for children and the elderly, raises taxes on the working poor, and denies educational opportunity to millions of Americans, all to pay for the lavish tax breaks for the wealthy. If this budget plan becomes law, Medicare would be cut by \$167 billion over 6 years, Medicaid would be cut by \$72 billion at the Federal level and some \$250 billion in the States by the year 2002, with the change in the formulas which have been developed in this proposal.

Education will be cut \$25 billion. Yesterday, I addressed the Senate on this issue, pointing out what a mistake this really is, when we find out that the number of children who are going to be going to the high schools in this country is going to increase by 8 percent. We are going to go up to about 53 or 54 million children in the next 2 years. The number of traditional college-age students will increase by 12 percent. As a result, even a current services budget is failing to adjust to those particular

new realities and the funding that is included in this budget falls by about \$20 billion to even come close to it. This is in contrast to the President's program that continues our ongoing commitment in the field of education.

Under this Republican budget, the earned-income tax credit will be cut \$18 billion. That is the tax credit which is available to working families, phased out at approximately \$28,000 to \$30,000, and principally available to working families with children. All of these cuts would be made in order to bestow a lavish windfall of \$122 billion to \$180 billion, as Mr. KASICH has pointed out in the House of Representatives, for tax breaks for the wealthiest individuals in the Nation.

Mr. President, 42 percent of the mandatory cuts in this misguided budget come from programs that help the neediest families and individuals in the Nation; 47 percent of the tax breaks will go to those making over \$100,000 a year. Meanwhile, corporate special interests are not asked to ante up a single nickel. The corporate welfare part of our budget, which is expenditures which otherwise could be used for deficit reduction, will be over \$4 trillion over the period of the next 7 years—\$4 trillion. Yet there is not \$1 of savings from tax expenditures in the Republican budget. There is not one expenditure that is out there in the Federal Tax Code that is being eliminated by the Republican budget program.

We hear so often about how we have too many programs, programs that do not work, and many of us have been trying to address that issue. We had a good program to try to deal with the proliferation of job training programs under an excellent bipartisan bill that Senator KASSEBAUM and I worked on. It passed the Senate overwhelmingly in this Congress. We still have hopes about that program. We have been consolidating health programs and consolidating education programs in the period of recent years. But we cannot find, in the Republican budget, 1 nickel to save from some inefficient tax expenditures that may be enticing American corporations to go overseas and take American jobs with them—not one.

The President's program has \$40 billion in savings. It seems to me we ought to be able to go up even significantly above that proposal. But there is not one—not one—in the Republican program.

Medicare cuts are a prime example of the Republican priorities. They are no less devastating simply because they sound familiar. The Medicare cuts have not improved with age. Last year the Republican plan was a thinly veiled attack on the entire concept of Medicare. It was designed to cause Medicare to "wither on the vine," in the words of Speaker GINGRICH, by forcing senior citizens to give up their family doctor and join the private insurance programs.

When Republicans took up the issues of Medicare cuts last year, they pro-

posed to cut the program by \$270 billion—three times more than the amount the Medicare trustees said was needed to protect the solvency of the trust fund.

You cannot listen to a speech on the floor of the U.S. Senate without our good Republican friends saying we have to pass this in order to deal with the potential bankruptcy of the trust fund. The fact is, they are cutting the Medicare Program three times the amount that the trustees say is necessary in order to protect the solvency of the trust funds.

This year, the Republicans are proposing to cut \$167 billion from Medicare. By contrast, the President's plan cuts it \$116 billion, 44 percent less. Yet it guarantees the Medicare solvency for a decade and funds Medicare at the level necessary to assure that quality care will be available for senior citizens when they need it.

Even worse, Republicans support an inflexible ceiling on Medicare spending. Consequently, if inflation is higher or medical needs are greater than anticipated, Medicare spending will not go up as it should, and many senior citizens will be out of luck and out of care.

The President's plan has the right savings and right priorities. It provides ample time for Congress and the administration to work together to find the longer run solutions we need to deal honestly with Medicare's problems and preserve the quality of health care for the elderly.

In fact, we can take many steps to reduce Medicare costs without cutting the quality of benefits, without raising premiums, but these steps are not what the Republicans are proposing.

Another false Republican argument in defense of their Medicare cuts is that the reductions are not really cuts, because the total amount of Medicare spending will continue to grow. That argument was addressed, I thought, very effectively by the ranking minority member of the Budget Committee, Senator EXON, last evening.

But every household in America knows that if the cost of your rent and the cost of your utilities and the cost of food go up and your income stays the same or goes up less rapidly, you have taken a real cut in your living standard, and that is what is at issue.

In my own State of Massachusetts, the number of frail elderly, those who are 85 years old, is going to double in the period of the next 5 years, let alone the total number of elderly that is going to grow. This is a real national phenomenon, a demographic phenomenon. We are blessed to have our parents with longer and extended lives, and to try and play shell games, in terms of the quality of care for our seniors, I think, is particularly unacceptable when we are balancing that with tax breaks for wealthy individuals.

Republicans speak of a cut in defense, when defense spending does not increase by enough to offset rising costs. Apparently, the same Republican

logic does not apply to spending on Medicare that applies to spending on guns, tanks and other weapons. A cut is a cut is a cut, whether it is in Medicare, Social Security, or national defense.

Even more damaging than the loss of billions of dollars that Republicans would slash from Medicare is their attempt to turn it over to the private insurance industry. The Republican budget contains a number of changes to force senior citizens to give up their own doctors and join private insurance plans.

Once they are forced into these plans, senior citizens will be stripped of many of the protections they enjoy today—protections against overcharges by doctors and other health providers, what we call double billing. The doctors, rather than taking what is allocated to them under the Medicare Program, say, "Pay in full."

Under current law, the seniors are protected from paying additional kinds of costs, but there is no such requirement if they go into private health insurance. They could be billed once and then be charged again. That is a problem that is readily understood. We thought we addressed that in amendments that I and others had offered earlier on the budget resolution, but those protections were discarded in the conference.

There were protections against premium gouging and profiteering by insurance companies, protection of their right to keep their own family doctor and go to the specialist of their choice.

Republicans claim they want to offer senior citizens a choice, but this is a choice no senior citizen should be forced to make.

I offered a sense-of-the-Congress resolution that was adopted by the full Senate stating that reconciliation should not include proposals to eliminate these protections. It specifically reaffirmed that private insurance plans should be prohibited from leveling premium surcharges for basic Medicare services, and the doctors should not be allowed to strap on extra charges to seniors participating in such plans. That proposal was dropped by the Republicans in the House-Senate conference. The Republican assault on Medicare is painfully clear, and the American people will never support this anti-elderly special interest agenda.

Republicans deny that their Medicare cuts will fund tax breaks for the wealthy. This time the leopard claims that it really has changed its spots, but the Republican budget clearly anticipates \$60 billion in revenue increases from tax extenders and closing of selected corporate loopholes in order to fund \$60 billion in new taxes for the undeserving rich. Without those lavish tax breaks, they would not need to cut Medicare by \$167 billion. The Medicare trust fund should not be a slush fund for tax breaks for the rich.

There are appropriate ways to reduce Medicare spending and improve the

quality at the same time. Mr. President, we have had extensive hearings in this body, chaired by our friend and colleague Senator HARKIN, that has reviewed in very careful detail the billions of dollars that can be saved under Medicare by dealing more effectively with fraud and abuse. We can save tens of billions of dollars from unnecessary hospitalization—20 to 30 percent of hospitalizations are unnecessary—by trying to provide preventive services to keep the seniors at home or in a setting so they can be treated with good quality care in less costly settings.

We are talking about tens of billions of dollars that can be saved from avoiding adverse drug reaction. When our seniors are taking prescription drugs which are in conflict with each other and cause new illness and sickness, there are ways of dealing with this issue that can save the seniors enormous distress and pain and sickness

and illness and plus save our system billions of dollars. But we have not even attempted to consider any of these items in this program.

The harsh cuts in Medicare contained in the Republican budget are a repudiation of our historic commitment to Social Security, because the distinction between Medicare and Social Security is a false one.

Medicare is part of the same compact between the Government and the people as Social Security. The compact says, "Contribute during your working years, and we will guarantee basic income and health security in your retirement years."

No budget plan that purports to be part of a Contract With America should break America's contract with the elderly. It is bad enough to propose these deep cuts in Medicare at all. It is even worse to make these cuts in order

to pay for an undeserved, unneeded tax break for the wealthiest Americans.

We do not have to destroy Medicare in order to save it. Congress will never allow the Medicare trust fund to become bankrupt. I know that. The American people know it. It is time for Republicans to stop raiding Medicare, and join in sensible steps to improve and strengthen it for the future.

Mr. President, I appreciate the opportunity to address the Senate. I yield the floor.

ADJOURNMENT UNTIL 10 A.M.
TOMORROW

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Under the previous order, the Senate will now stand adjourned until tomorrow at 10 o'clock.

Thereupon, the Senate, at 5:30 p.m., adjourned until Thursday, June 13, 1996, at 10 a.m.