

Mr. BOND. I thank my colleague from Georgia. I particularly commend my good friend from Texas for pointing out what we in the Midwest, as well as the Southwest, feel so strongly about, which is that when you raise fees on people who use highways, it is not pleasant. But when they go to highways, we can understand what they are being used for. If you raise fees on people who generate hazardous waste, if it goes to clean up hazardous waste, that is a reasonable argument. But when it goes to the general revenue fund, permits spending and overspending in many areas, it is a real problem.

FEDERAL RESERVE NOMINEES

Mr. BOND. Mr. President, the reason I rise today, I want to address a couple of related subjects, things that we are working on, and they have to do with some of the debates that have been going on about the nominees for the Federal Reserve.

I have the pleasure of having as one of my constituents a fellow Missourian, Dr. Laurence Meyer, who has been nominated to the Federal Reserve Board. When we get to the discussions of the Federal Reserve nominations next week, I want to make the case very strongly that Dr. Meyer has justly earned a reputation as a leading economist. He has played a key role in the development and expansion of the economics department of Washington University. He has been recognized repeatedly by faculty, students, by the public at large, and by his own colleagues as a leader in these fields. His is an excellent nomination. I also say that we are very fortunate that the President has proposed renomination and he has agreed to accept the current Chairman of the Federal Reserve Board, Chairman Alan Greenspan. During his 8-year tenure, economic performance through administrations, Republican and Democrat, has been outstanding because inflation has been kept under control.

Again, I want to address more of Chairman Greenspan's accomplishments later on. But I want to straighten out a couple of misconceptions that have been raised by others on this floor yesterday in their debates about the Federal Reserve. They seem to think that growth in this country is slow because of the Federal Reserve. Mr. President, the Federal Reserve job, as the chief monetary regulator, is to deal with monetary policy. Monetary policy can be a brake or an accelerator, but it is not the essential engine that drives the economy of this country. That is fiscal policy and the opportunity for this economy to grow. We have had a major hit to the engine of our economy. It is a hit that has happened over the years in terms of running up the deficit. This deficit has been out of control. We have raised \$5 trillion worth of debt that sits on the backs of our children, our grandchildren, and future generations, and it serves as a great drag on the economy right now.

In addition, in 1990 and 1993, we put heavy burdens of taxes on the productive sector—taxes on savings and investment, taxes particularly that hit the small businesses that I have the pleasure of serving on the Small Business Committee.

Yesterday, you would have thought that taxes and deficits did not matter, that slow growth was the only burden that was the legacy of the Federal Reserve Board. Well, that is not true. The Federal Reserve has kept inflation under control. We need to deal with the deficit. Then we need to deal with taxes that discourage investment and savings.

That is why the third nominee for the Federal Reserve is important. Dr. Rivlin is currently the Director of the Office of Management and Budget. She has presented, on behalf of the President, a measure, the budget of the President of the United States, so that when the Congressional Budget Office scores it and applies a trigger the Congressional Budget Office said is necessary to get to a balance in 2002, they can claim that under the Congressional Budget Office scoring and applying the trigger that the budget will get to balance in 2002.

The problem is, as I have outlined on this floor before, I, in the role as chairman of the appropriations subcommittee, have asked the agencies that would be forced to make those cuts in future years how they plan to make them, and they have been advised by the Office of Management and Budget that they are not serious about it.

Mr. President, as I have pointed out, we have addressed letters to Dr. Rivlin, questions as to whether the administration is serious about balancing the budget. Do they have a second set of books that has cuts in a lot of other agencies? The Veterans' Administration has told us they are exempt; EPA, NASA, the agencies that I have spoken to have said the cuts are not going to fall on them. Where are they going to fall? Are we serious about the deficit?

We are waiting to hear whether the Office of Management and Budget honestly believes it can implement and will begin planning for the reductions in spending necessary to balance the budget.

That, in my view, will depend upon how I vote, at least for one, on the confirmation of the Budget Director to be a Member of the Federal Reserve Board.

I thank the Chair. I yield the floor.

Mr. COVERDELL. Mr. President, it is my understanding that the Presiding Officer has some business before the Senate. I am going to suggest the absence of a quorum so I might relieve the Chair.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will call the roll.

The bill clerk proceeded to call the roll.

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

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

Mr. INHOFE. Mr. President, I have a couple of comments to make about the comments that were made previously by the Senator from Texas. Before that I have a little bit of business to take care of of a different nature.

THE NATIONAL ENVIRONMENT EDUCATION ACT

Mr. INHOFE. Mr. President, yesterday I introduced legislation to reauthorize the National Environment Education Act. I am joined by most of the members of the Environment and Public Works Committee and will probably have all of those Members as cosponsors of this legislation in a very short time.

The reason I am doing this is that there has been a lot of criticism that we are getting that there is too much emanating from Washington on our environmental laws and environmental education. People have said we are brainwashing our children. I feel that the better way to do this is to have this money going to the local level so that the curriculum can be determined by the local level.

I can remember several scary stories about students coming home from school in the Northwest who happened to be sons or daughters of people working in the lumber industry saying that it is sinful to cut down any tree, and this type of thing. This is the type of thing that has to be stopped. I believe the only way we are going to be able to successfully do this is to reauthorize this legislation so that the safeguards are built in that anything that is used in the education of our young people has to be based on scientific facts and not just the normal scare type of things that we have been getting. So I believe we will be able to control this program.

This, incidentally, was introduced at the same time by Congressman KLUG in the House of Representatives.

Mr. President, yesterday I introduced legislation to reauthorize the National Environmental Education Act. I am joined by my colleagues Senators CHAFEE, LIEBERMAN, FAIRCLOTH, KEMPTHORNE, MOYNIHAN, and REID. And I am joined on the House side by my colleague, Congressman SCOTT KLUG of Wisconsin, who introduced an identical bill in the House yesterday.

This bill will reauthorize the educational efforts at the National Environmental Education and Training Foundation and the EPA's Office of Environmental Education. These programs support environmental education at the local level. They provide grant money and seed money to encourage local primary and secondary schools and universities to educate children on environmental issues.

With the importance of the environment and the continuing debate on how best to protect it, it is vital to educate

our children so that they truly understand how the environment functions.

Over the last few years environmental education has been criticized for being one-sided and heavy-handed. People have accused environmental advocates of trying to brainwash children and of pushing an environmental agenda that is not supported by the facts or by science. They also accuse the Federal Government of setting one curriculum standard and forcing all schools to subscribe to their views. This is not how these two environmental education programs have worked, and I have taken specific steps to ensure that they never work this way. In fact, this legislation will prevent this from happening.

The programs that this act reauthorizes have targeted the majority of their grants at the local level, allowing the teachers in our community schools to design their environmental programs to teach our children, and this is where the decisions should be made. In addition, the grants have not been used for advocacy or to lobby the Government, as other grant programs have been accused of doing.

This legislation accomplishes two important functions. First, it cleans up the current law to make the programs run more efficiently. And second, it places two very important safeguards in the program to ensure its integrity in the future.

I have placed in this bill language to ensure that the EPA programs are balanced and scientifically sound. It is important that environmental education is presented in an unbiased and balanced manner. The personal values and prejudices of the educators should not be instilled in our children. Instead we must teach them to think for themselves after they have been presented with all of the facts and information. Environmental ideas must be grounded in sound science and not emotional bias. While these programs have not been guilty of this in the past, this is an important safeguard to protect the future of environmental education.

Second, I have included language which prohibits any of the funds to be used for lobbying efforts. While these programs have not used the grant process to lobby the Government, there are other programs which have been accused of this and this language will ensure that this program never becomes a vehicle for the executive branch to lobby Congress.

This bill also makes a number of housekeeping changes to the programs which are supported by both the EPA and the Education Foundation which will both streamline and programs and make them more efficient.

The grants that have been awarded under this program have gone to a number of local groups. In Oklahoma alone such organizations as the Stillwater 4-H Foundation; Roosevelt Elementary School in Norman, OK; Oklahoma State University; the Kaw Nation of Oklahoma; and the Osage Coun-

ty Oklahoma Conservation District have received grants for environmental education under these programs.

This is an important piece of legislation, and I hope both the Senate and the House can act quickly to reauthorize these programs.

MEDICAL SAVINGS ACCOUNTS

Mr. INHOFE. Mr. President, I think that the senior Senator from Texas articulated the MSA environment that we are in right now with the health bill in a very accurate way. But I believe that he overlooked one thing. I agree with him that we have a system that has a built-in disincentive to save or to get services, medical services and health care services, that would be less expensive. I am not any different than anyone else. I suggest that you are probably the same way, Mr. President. Once you pay your deductible and you are in the course of a year, you are going to go out and get any kind of health services that you need if it does not cost you anything. So you have something built into the system.

I cannot think of any other service or product in America where you would have a system built in that encourages you to pay more. I have heard some percentages of savings ranging between 40 and 60 percent if we could have MSA's.

But the one thing the Senator from Texas did not mention was that it also provides another benefit to those individuals because, if someone is between jobs or if someone gets fired from a job, this offers portability. It is a fund that can be drawn upon, or, if there is a catastrophic illness, this can be used for that. It is just beyond me. I have not been able to think of one logical argument that the Senator from Massachusetts, Senator KENNEDY, had against MSA's. I could see perhaps some doctors objecting to it because, obviously, people are going to be more cost conscious and are not going to be getting services they do not need. Ironically, though, I am proud of the medical community. I have yet to have one doctor tell me that he did not want to have MSA's. They are not opposing it even though they are the only group I could think of who possibly would lose some financial advantage by a system going in place.

So I am hoping that we will be able to get this. I cannot believe that our entire health program is being held hostage just because of the medical savings account, something that benefits everyone—all Americans, young, old, rich, poor—everyone equally.

TROOPS IN BOSNIA

Mr. INHOFE. Mr. President, I want to repeat something in perhaps a little bit of a different way that I mentioned yesterday because we talked about a lot of things on this floor that are very significant, such as our health delivery system and such as the deficit. But our

Nation's defense perhaps is the most significant subject that we could have to talk about.

I was so dismayed and shocked yesterday when I read what the President was saying through Secretary of Defense William Perry that we now are going to leave our troops over in Bosnia for a period longer than the 12 months that they agreed to.

I am on the Intelligence Committee and the Senate Armed Services Committee. I can tell you that at the time this happened, I could not believe that we were sending troops into a warring area with an exit strategy that was geared to time, 12 months, as opposed to events. I do not know of any time in history that this has been the case.

So during the October 17 Senate Armed Services Committee meeting and several other meetings, and on the floor, we talked about the fact that we did not believe it was going to be a 12-month operation. I asked specifically Secretary Perry, as well as other people asking him in the same meeting—one was Senator ROBB from Virginia and one was Senator BINGAMAN from New Mexico—"Are you absolutely committed to bringing the troops home in 12 months?" The answer was always, "Yes, we are committed." It was hard for me to believe that could be possible.

So I went over to the northeast sector of Bosnia where we were planning at that time to send our troops. When I got there and went up to the northeast sector, finding out no other American had been up there, I found out from General Haukland, from Norway, who was in charge of the U.N. troops of that sector, that, in fact, it was laughable.

I said, "Are you aware that our troops are coming back in 12 months?" He said, "You mean in 12 years?" That is when he drew this analogy, when he said putting the troops in there is like putting your hand in water, and you leave it there for 12 months and take it out and nothing has changed; it is still there.

So we are making a longer term commitment than the President of the United States promised the American people. I can tell you right now, I stood right here on December 13 of last year when we had the resolution of disapproval that was authored by the junior Senator from Texas and myself, Senator HUTCHISON and myself. We lacked four votes of passing a resolution of disapproval. Mr. President, we would have had those four votes and many more if the American people had known, and if the Senators in this Chamber had known, that it was going to be a long-term proposition.

Right now it does look like it is open-ended. We could talk about the cost of it, we could talk about the mission, but the point is, they told us something that they knew was not true on December 13, at the time they passed the program to send American troops over into an area we have no vital security interest in.