

the Berlin wall and liberate Eastern Europe and free more people than any victory in any war in the history of mankind, now all of a sudden, because a few Members who because of their numbers have dominated this process, say, "Don't let people compete for my jobs," will not be able to compete to keep some of their work. I cannot step aside and let that happen willingly. I may not be able to prevent it, as we will find out as this process goes along, but I have an obligation to fight it because it is fundamentally wrong for America to be preventing competition.

Almost as if on cue, our distinguished majority leader is here. I yield the floor.

Mr. INHOFE addressed the Chair.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Oklahoma is recognized.

Mr. INHOFE. Mr. President, first of all, let me say that it seems customary on this floor to say how much you appreciate and love somebody and respect them. Of course, there is no better evidence of my affection for the senior Senator from Texas than the fact that back when—some may have forgotten that he ran for President. In the primary, he ran against the then majority leader Bob Dole. I openly supported the senior Senator from Texas over Senator Bob Dole, which was politically pretty dumb for me to do. But I did it because I felt he is a very capable individual.

Having said that, I would like to respond to the items that he has stated in his statement. Let me cover a couple of things that the distinguished Senator from Texas talked about.

For openers, the Senator from Texas stated that the BRAC Commission, during their process in 1995, offered as an alternative to privatize in place. Let me suggest to you, Mr. President, that is not the case. It was the case in Newark, it was the case in Louisville, it was the case in the Naval Air Warfare Center in Indianapolis; but it was not the case in either McClellan Air Force Base or Kelly Air Force Base. The reason I say that is that, specifically in those first three instances where they did privatize in place, the BRAC report said specifically "privatize in place." Contrary to that, in the 1995 round, it specifically said that whatever happens, whether it is privatization or anything else, you have to move the required equipment and any required personnel to the receiving locations.

I think we all know why that is the case. If you have five air logistic centers, each one operating at 50 percent capacity and you close the two least efficient ones, according to the BRAC Commission, you then would transfer that workload, and if you didn't transfer that workload, you would have to somehow account for paying for 50 percent of overhead that isn't being used.

Now, when we talk about what this bill does, it is true that we are including in any competition a value for the vacancy that occurs, or the 50 percent capacity that is not being used in the

remaining ALC's. There would be three remaining. That is only reasonable because there is a tremendous value to that.

Second, we are also providing a value of the actual real estate value of the facilities that would be used. For example, if the Senator from Texas wanted competition to come in and use Kelly Air Force Base, it would not be fair competition to say, fine, you could have it for \$1 a year. Instead, the bill provides that it would have to be for the value of that institution. Those are dollars that otherwise would be spent on our defense system.

Third, I mention the question as to whether or not President Clinton made a political statement when he suggested out in Sacramento, CA, that they were going to leave that alone, I would like to read his statement to you. It says:

On July 1, you were dealt a serious blow when the independent Base Closing Commission said that we ought to shut Kelly down. At my insistence and my refusal to go along with that specific recommendation, the Air Force developed the privatization in place plan that will keep thousands of jobs here at this depot.

That is right before the Presidential election. If you look at this one sentence which says, "At my insistence and my refusal to go along with that specific recommendation \* \* \*" that in and of itself is a very clear violation of both the intent and the letter of the BRAC process.

I yield to the majority leader.

Mr. LOTT. Mr. President, I know there is a lot more debate that we will hear on this subject. We would like to start a process that would get us on the DOD authorization conference report.

#### EDUCATION SAVINGS ACT FOR PUBLIC AND PRIVATE SCHOOLS

Mr. LOTT. Mr. President, regarding the Coverdell A-plus education bill, I ask unanimous consent that the Senate now turn to H.R. 2646, the Coverdell education bill.

Mr. DASCHLE. Mr. President, reserving the right to object. We have no opposition to moving to the bill, but, obviously, how the bill is considered will be of some interest to us. I know that the leader has indicated he would like to go to the bill and, as I understand it, there may be a cloture vote as early as Friday on the bill itself.

Obviously, we still have not been able to resolve our problems relating to campaign finance reform and, in part because of that and also because this is a tax bill and not subject to reconciliation constraints under which we have worked with other tax bills, Democratic Senators, I know, and perhaps some Republicans would appreciate the opportunity to offer amendments. We have an array of amendments on this particular bill that we would like to offer and, of course, perhaps most prominently of all, the non-tax-related matters for which there would be an in-

terest in having a good debate is the campaign finance reform bill.

Hopefully, by Friday, we can resolve that matter. But even if we do, the issue would still stand that we would need to be able to offer some amendments. So I am hopeful that we can arrange a way in which that can be accommodated. Subject to how the bill is pending on Friday, we would be subject to another cloture vote for which there would be a significant degree of opposition—hopefully unanimous on our side—so long as the campaign finance reform issue and this tax matter has not been resolved. But we certainly will work with the leader to work through these matters, and we have no objection to bringing the bill up today.

Mr. LOTT. Mr. President, I have a unanimous-consent request pending.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Is there objection?

Without objection, it is so ordered.

The clerk will report.

A bill (H.R. 2646) to amend the Internal Revenue Code of 1986 to allow tax-free expenditures from education individual retirement accounts for elementary and secondary school expenses, to increase the maximum annual amount of contributions to such accounts, and for other purposes.

The Senate proceeded to consider the bill.

#### CLOTURE MOTION

Mr. LOTT. Mr. President, I send a cloture motion to the desk.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will report.

The bill clerk read as follows:

#### CLOTURE MOTION

We, the undersigned Senators, in accordance with the provisions of rule XXII of the Standing Rules of the Senate, do hereby move to bring to a close debate on H.R. 2646, the Education Savings Act for Public and Private Schools.

Trent Lott, Paul Coverdell, Robert F. Bennett, Pat Roberts, Strom Thurmond, Gordon H. Smith, Bill Frist, Mike DeWine, Larry E. Craig, Don Nickles, Connie Mack, Jeff Sessions, Conrad Burns, Lauch Faircloth, Thad Cochran, and Wayne Allard.

Mr. LOTT. Mr. President, for the information of all Senators, the cloture vote on the Coverdell education bill will occur on Friday of this week. We will have consultation with the Democratic leader and will notify Senators as to exactly what time that would occur. We will give them that information on Thursday so Members can make plans for what time we would have that vote and, hopefully, what time they could then leave on Friday.

In response to the Democratic leader's comments, first of all, this is a very, very important issue. I have found that any time that I explain what the Coverdell A-plus provision will do, people of all backgrounds and races and situations in education are very much attracted to it. We would allow people, whether it is parents or grandparents or even other groups, to be able to have savings accounts similar to individual retirement accounts.

And those moneys can be used with tax benefit to help children with education, K through 12—kindergarten through the 12th grade. That may be for computers, or it could be for a tutor. It could be for supplies, or it could be to make some decision on their own as parents as to where their children would go to school. It is the sort of thing we have for higher education in America.

I think one of the reasons we have very good higher education in America but much weaker elementary and secondary is because we don't have the same resource, the same opportunity, the same financial benefits available.

So I think this is a bill that has a lot of support. We saw that here in the vote earlier this year in the Senate.

I am glad that Senator DASCHLE indicates that they do not object to us getting to the substance of this bill.

With regard to amendments, I certainly think it would be a good idea and would want amendments to be offered. I would like for them certainly to be germane amendments. After we get cloture on this issue then we would go to the amendment process. I am sure that Senators on both sides of the aisle would probably have some amendments that they would like to offer.

I think, once again, it is very unfortunate that this matter would be tied up over the campaign finance reform issue. We continue to work to get some agreement that we can go along with.

As a matter of fact, once again, just like last week, I had thought we had an agreement. We had a unanimous-consent agreement typed up. Senator MCCAIN is now saying that is not what he meant, that is not what he wants, or he needs something different. But we will continue to work on it. Senator DASCHLE and I have talked. I have talked to interested Senators in trying to get resolution as to when it would be handled.

I say, again for the RECORD, it would be my intent to call this issue up before the end of the first week in March. I don't intend to fill the tree up. I would like amendments to be in order. The problem is Senator MCCAIN wants some specific extra provision as to what he might offer and how it would be voted on. That is what we are still working on. But we get very close, and then it slides back a bit. We will keep working on that because, again, I think it would be unfortunate if the Senate would continue to be tangled up on that issue while letting very, very important national issues like our national transportation infrastructure, highway improvement and educational opportunities in America—even fast-track trade agreements—because we can't get an agreement on this other issue.

But as majority leader I am going to call these important bills up. And this one will get a cloture vote, and then hopefully we will proceed to the substance and relevant amendments that would be offered.

Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the mandatory quorum under rule XXII be waived.

Mr. DASCHLE. Mr. President, reserving the right to object, I wish quickly to respond.

Mr. President, the distinguished majority leader mentioned several other pieces of legislation that have urgency to them. Our position has been all along that on those occasions where there is urgent legislation, we want to work with the majority to expeditiously move those bills through the process. One in particular is the 6-month ISTEAA bill. We have indicated that we are more than ready to respond to the bipartisan Governors' request stated yesterday in a letter that we pass a 6-month ISTEAA bill. Members of the House leadership have said they will only accept a short-term bill. The House short-term bill is currently on the calendar.

I hope we can take that House-passed bill, amend it with any improvements the Senate deems appropriate, and quickly to deal with the urgent matter of reauthorizing expired safety programs and the urgent matter of providing contract authority that the 6-month legislation addresses. So we are more than willing to work with our colleagues on such matters of urgency.

This tax bill, however, would not be called urgent. It may be, as the Senator has indicated, a popular bill. But there are other popular tax bills that didn't get in the budget reconciliation package last summer that many Senators want to revisit. This happens to be one of them.

We have a whole host of other tax provisions that we think the Senate, if we are going to have a tax bill, ought to at least give some thought to reconsideration.

So again we are certainly ready to work with our colleagues, and I am willing to work with the majority leader to see if we can't resolve that matter. But I am very hopeful and determined to ensure that we do come to some final agreement on a procedure on campaign finance, and, like the majority leader, I stand willing to work with those who have been very much involved in the issue to see if we can do that this week.

I will not object.

The PRESIDING OFFICER [Ms. COLLINS]. Without objection, it is so ordered.

Mr. LOTT. Madam President, if I could just respond further, I think I have made it clear my commitments trying to get the ISTEAA extension highway infrastructure bill done. Basically, the Senate spent 2 weeks trying to get on the substance of that bill. Because of the unrelated campaign finance reform issue, the highway bill has had to be pulled. I indicated more than once repeatedly that if we didn't get cloture and get on the substance the Members that were blocking that bill would have to bear the responsibility for it. For those Governors and

those highway people that now would like some additional action, where were they a week ago? Why weren't they talking to the Senators that were opposing cloture that would allow us to get on to this highway bill?

So, if they have any ideas now as to how to proceed, I urge them to talk to the chairman and ranking member on the Environment and Public Works Committee and explain why they weren't involved a week or 2 weeks ago so we could get to the substance of this issue.

#### UNANIMOUS CONSENT REQUEST— NATIONAL DEFENSE AUTHORIZATION ACT FOR FISCAL YEAR 1998, CONFERENCE REPORT

Mr. LOTT. Madam President, I now ask unanimous consent that the Senate turn to the consideration of the DOD authorization conference report, and it be considered as having been read.

Mr. DASCHLE. Reserving the right to object.

Mr. GRAMM. Reserving the right to object.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Texas is recognized.

Mr. DASCHLE. Madam President, I sought recognition.

Mr. GRAMM. Madam President, if I might have the indulgence of the majority leader to try to explain where we are, and I will do it very briefly.

We have before us a bill that would take 17 hours to read. It has 30 pages in it that are aimed primarily to prevent competition from occurring in defense. In preventing competition from occurring, it will cost the taxpayers hundreds of millions of dollars, and it will prevent private contractors—some of whom might use facilities at Kelly Air Force Base in Texas or might use facilities at McClellan Air Force Base in California, or might use other facilities anywhere in the country—from competing.

Despite the fact that we have a bill that would take 17 hours to read, despite the fact that we have 30 pages of language which is primarily aimed at preventing this competition, in working with the Defense Department and with the White House, we have come up with 1 page of changes that if it could be made in technical corrections to the language of the bill, then we would happily get out of the way and let the bill pass.

The President, who is committed to veto the bill—and I put his letter in the RECORD—would then gladly sign the bill. So the point I would like to make is that while we are here to resist to the best of our ability—and we will resist—that we are only a few changes away from the ability to move ahead with a bill that not only could we pass this afternoon but that the President could sign.

It is my understanding that there may be other technical language changes related to an amendment that