

with great humor and tenacity and a deep respect for our best American tradition. Senator FORD is as dependable and dedicated a public servant as anyone who has ever served in this great institution, and all Americans owe a debt of gratitude to the citizens of Kentucky, who have asked him to serve in the U.S. Senate.

I also express my thanks to the other members of the committee for their hard work. A special thanks goes to the leader, as well as to others in the House who made this whole event the success that it was yesterday. Many officers and employees of the House and Senate, along with representatives from the executive branch, assisted these congressional leaders in this enormous but ultimately successful task.

All who contributed to this historic event should be proud of their efforts and know that their country on this day after the inaugural is very grateful.

#### SENATE DEMOCRATS' AGENDA

Mr. DASCHLE. Mr. President, as we begin the first session of the 105th Congress, American families are asking some difficult questions, most of which seek answers affecting their lives directly. How am I going to put my kids through college? How do we pay the doctor bills if the kids get sick? Will I have enough money when I choose to retire?

Our challenges this year ought to be to provide the answers to those questions. As we do, we all recognize the limits of Government, and we should all recognize the unlimited potential of achievement through bipartisanship. Everything important which we accomplished in the last Congress—health care reform, the minimum wage increase, mental health equity—was accomplished only when we realized that only by reaching across the aisle in an effective way, passing legislation with overwhelming bipartisan support, could we ultimately send the right message to the American people—that we hear them and we want to respond to the problems affecting their daily lives. If we remember that lesson and pick up in this Congress where we left off in the last one, then we can make this not only a productive Congress, but a historic one.

We can, in this Congress, pass a budget for the remainder of this century, a plan that eliminates the deficit and invests in our people and their potential, so that the 21st century will be another American century. If we work together, we can answer those questions that worry Americans most, but we must find a way to do what the President said yesterday and what I heard the leader talk about just now—work together.

Cooperation is in the best interest of the American people, and, frankly, it is in our own self-interest. Good Government is still good politics. Since the

election, there has been a good deal of rhetoric from both sides of the aisle, from both Houses of Congress, from the White House, expressing an interest in dealing with the 105th Congress in ways that are dissimilar to those dealt with in the 104th. We have heard the rhetoric. Now we have to demonstrate with our deeds whether or not that rhetoric will be true, whether or not the sincerity of our rhetoric will actually match the sincerity of our work.

We can use the issues that we will lay out and describe today as wedge issues, issues that divide us; or we can use those same issues as issues that unite us. That will be our choice. Again, today, there will be rhetoric. Again, today, we will hear from both sides about the importance of trying to find common ground. The question is, will we find it? And if we do, how will we?

Today, I offer the Senate Democrats' priority legislation for the 105th Congress. This is our agenda. The Families First agenda is neither radical nor revolutionary. Instead, it is moderate. In our view, it is achievable. Our agenda starts with the fundamental premise that our political system can't work if people believe the system is rigged against them. Yet, more and more Americans believe that. More and more Americans have chosen not to go to the polls. At the very time we need more involvement, their response to what they see is to stay away—and not without reason. So we are proposing as our first bill comprehensive campaign finance reform.

The problem with the current system isn't limited to soft money or hard money, corporate money or PAC money, your money or my money; the problem is that there is too much money, period. And it is getting worse with every election. The truth is, there are no limits anymore, given the Supreme Court decisions.

I have enormous respect for Senators FEINGOLD and MCCAIN. There is much in their proposal that I admire and I think we should adopt. In my opinion, their bill should provide a way with which we come together to find common ground. But it does not go as far as I would like it to. We need to limit spending, special interest influence, and level the playing field for all candidates.

S. 11 establishes voluntary spending limits, and it gives candidates incentives to live within those limits. It reduces television and postal rates. It also restrains soft money and PAC contributions. It toughens restrictions on foreign contributions and extends election laws to cover so-called independent expenditures.

I know that any talk of spending limits raises constitutional questions. So, in addition, Senator HOLLINGS and I will offer a constitutional amendment that will allow Congress to set reasonable limits on how much people can give and spend in Federal elections. I hope, Mr. President, that we will even

consider proposing the issue to the Supreme Court again.

There was an article recently in the op-ed pages of the Washington Post, stating that a case could be made that what we need to do is revisit this in this Supreme Court, to test the constitutional limits they have proposed in *Buckley versus Valeo*. Whether we accept the decisions made in *Buckley versus Valeo*, and other subsequent decisions, however we decide to do this, the question is this: Can we get campaign spending under control? I believe the answer is yes. I believe we must do that in this, the 105th Congress.

In the last 10 years of debate on campaign finance reform, Congress has produced 6,742 pages of hearings; 3,361 floor speeches, not including this one; 2,748 pages of CRS reports; 1,063 pages of committee reports; 113 Senate votes dealing with campaign finance reform, and 1 bipartisan Federal commission. We have had 522 witnesses; 49 days of testimony; 29 sets of hearings by 8 different congressional committees; 17 filibusters; 8 cloture votes on 1 bill; 1 Senator carried to the floor by the Sergeant at Arms and forced to vote on campaign finance reform, and 15 reports by 6 different congressional committees. That is just in the last decade.

There is only one thing left to do: Enact campaign finance reform now. Now. We should do it in the first 100 days of this Congress so that the new rules are in place by the next election.

Mr. President, that is S. 11, our very first bill, and it is first because I speak with virtual unanimity within our caucus about the need to address this issue. I know there are concerns expressed and felt deeply by Members of the other side. This ought not be the wedge issue I described a moment ago. This ought to be a bridge issue.

Let us build that bridge to allow us success in dealing with it soon.

Our second bill is aimed at increasing the income of American families and the competitiveness of American business by investing in education. According to the Bureau of Labor Statistics, 60 percent of all jobs created between now and the year 2005 will require education beyond high school. Yet, every year fewer families can afford the tuition. In the last 10 years, the cost of public college education has increased 23 percent. It is even worse in private colleges: 36 percent.

For the average family, the cost of sending one child to college is now 14 percent of total family income. The average debt load for a South Dakota college student is up by one-third just since 1991. Eighty-five percent of South Dakota's college students today are on financial aid. That is right; 85 percent rely on college aid in order to go to school in my home State of South Dakota.

Our bill, the Education for the 21st Century Act, includes the President's proposal to create a \$1,500 Hope scholarship for the first 2 years of college. The Hope scholarship is a refundable

tax credit. It will pay for more than the full college cost of tuition at most community colleges, or it can be used as a substantial downpayment at a more expensive 4-year school.

Our bill also includes the President's proposed \$10,000 per year higher education tax deduction for families with incomes up to \$100,000. In addition, we propose a new partnership to help communities repair and replace schools that are overcrowded, obsolete, and even dangerous. According to the General Accounting Office, one-third of all schools today in this country need extensive repair or replacement. Over 30 percent of the schools in this country are unsafe today for children to inhabit and obtain the education they deserve. Sixty percent of schools have at least one major problem, like a leaky roof or crumbling walls.

Schools have always been and should remain a local and State responsibility—and I emphasize that. But the enormity of the problem, an estimated \$112 billion nationwide, demands a partnership that includes a role by the people of the United States at the Federal level. Our bill reduces the interest rates for new school construction and repair by up to 50 percent. The interest rate reduction is equal to subsidizing \$1 out of every \$4 in construction and renovation spending.

We support the President's proposal to make sure that every child can read—and read well—once those schools are built and repaired, by the time he or she finishes third grade. One of the best predictors of whether a child will eventually graduate from high school is whether he or she can read by the end of the third grade. Yet 40 percent of fourth graders—40 percent—fail to attain even the basic level of reading on the National Assessment of Educational Progress test. Isn't that amazing? Four out of every 10 children today when they reach fourth grade cannot read at the level that will largely determine their ability to learn for the rest of the years they are in elementary school.

Let us resolve in this Congress to increase those numbers dramatically. Let us accept the President's America Reads challenge. Let us also make sure that our young people master the new literacy by connecting every school in America to the information superhighway by the year 2002.

This is our education bill. We applaud our Republican colleagues for joining us in the last weeks of the last Congress to support education, and we look forward to working with them to pass these proposals as well.

Our third bill builds on an important, bipartisan victory from the last Congress, the Kennedy-Kassebaum health bill. Kennedy-Kassebaum was a huge step in the right direction. Yet, a record number of Americans, over 40 million, are still without health insurance, and that includes 10 million American children. In my State of South Dakota alone, more than 17,000

children have no public or private health insurance. In fact, children are one of the fastest growing groups of uninsured. Each year more and more children lose private health coverage. And this trend is almost certain to continue as employers continue to reduce their health insurance costs by dropping dependent coverage for their workers.

These are not children of America's poorest families. Fortunately, they have Medicaid. A majority of uninsured children are from two-parent families where one or both parents work full time. It is unconscionable that a parent could work 40 hours a week 52 weeks a year and still not be able to buy basic health coverage for his or her children.

So today we are introducing a bill to make private coverage for children available to working families. The Children's Health Coverage Act of 1997 will provide tax credits to help working families purchase private coverage for their uninsured children. Our bill includes coverage for pregnant women because we know that the quality of prenatal care can have lifelong effects. The tax credit would cover most of a private health insurance premium for the lowest-income families and decrease on a sliding scale for families with higher incomes.

To stimulate competition for children's health insurance, we require that insurance companies that do business with the Federal Government—through Medicare or Medicaid or the Federal Employees Health Benefits Plan—to develop children's-only policies. We seek to build upon, not replace, the current employer-based health insurance system. Our bill, therefore, includes provisions to deter employers from dropping coverage for children of workers who qualify for this new credit.

Insuring children is good social policy, but it is also good economic policy. It costs about \$20 for a doctor's visit to treat a child with strep throat but thousands of dollars to hospitalize a child whose untreated strep throat eventually develops into rheumatic fever. Studies show that having a regular source of care cuts child health care costs significantly. So the modest cost of this program will pay for itself many times over and reduce health care costs down the line.

Some of my colleagues favor a slightly different approach. Senators KENNEDY and KERRY favor providing families with vouchers rather than tax credits to pay for their children's health care. These are differences in strategy only, Mr. President. I could support that approach, as I could the approach I just described. Democrats are united in their determination to take this next modest step in health care reform.

The United States is the only major industrialized country in the world that does not guarantee health coverage for children. Let us work together in this Congress to erase that ignoble distinction.

Our fourth bill seeks to increase Americans' retirement security. More than 51 million Americans today—half the private work force—do not have a pension. Only one-fifth of South Dakota's small business employees currently have pension plans. Last year, in the bill that contained the minimum wage increase, we passed laws that help expand pension coverage to an additional 10 million workers.

But so much more remains to be done. Because of a loophole, more than 32,000 large pension plans covering 23 million Americans—and containing more than \$1 trillion in assets—are still not effectively audited. The Retirement Security Act we are introducing today strengthens the accounting requirements for those funds.

Our bill also requires employers to diversify the savings of employee investments in 401(k) plans just as they must for more traditional kinds of plans so the bankruptcy of one company cannot devastate a pension plan. For multiemployer plans, which typically cover union members, our bill increases the Federal guarantee available should a plan become insolvent. The benefit level has remained flat since the creation of the program in 1980. Five million workers with pensions change jobs every year. Our bill provides those workers with new protections so they don't lose the money they have invested in a pension when they change jobs or leave behind an investment whose value will erode over time. It will do that by reducing by 2 years the time it takes for a worker to become vested.

In addition, we will build on some of the pension reforms we passed last year. Last year, by eliminating a lot of the red tape, we made it easier for small businesses to offer pension plans. This year, let's make it easier still by providing them with start-up costs.

Last year, Congress removed the restriction that kept spouses who don't work outside the home from taking full advantage of IRA savings opportunities if the other spouse was covered by an employer's pension plan. This year, we want to remove that restriction for spouses who do work outside the home.

Last year, we made it easier for women to collect pension benefits they are legally owed through a spouse or former spouse. Yet, 60 percent of women working in the private sector still lack pension plans. And, women's pensions benefits, on average, are only about half of men's benefits. Let's get rid of those inequities.

We are committed to keeping Social Security and Medicare solvent—and we will. But Social Security and Medicare were never intended to serve as retirement plans, only supplements to such plans. Let's agree in this Congress to give Americans the tools they need to retire with dignity. We can do it, if we work together.

Our fifth bill is aimed at two of the deadliest epidemics affecting young people. Those are the twin epidemics of drug abuse and violence.

Crime and drug use among adults are down. But juvenile crime and drug abuse is accelerating. Over the last decade, drug-related juvenile crime in this country more than doubled. And youth violence—particularly homicide committed with guns—skyrocketed.

We must reverse these deadly trends. Income security and retirement security don't really matter if we don't have personal security—if we're constantly afraid for ourselves and our families.

Our Youth Violence, Crime and Drug Abuse Prevention bill includes three main parts. First, we will build on the successes of the 1994 Crime Act by continuing the COPS program for two additional years and putting 25,000 more cops on the beat.

Second, our bill invests in crime and drug abuse prevention. It extends the Safe and Drug Free Schools Program. It expands existing drug courts, and creates new juvenile drug courts for first-time, non-violent drug offenders. Anyone convicted in drug court has a choice: mandatory treatment, or mandatory jail.

Our bill also offers incentives for private industry to invest in research and development in medicines to treat heroin and cocaine addiction. And, it reauthorizes the Office of National Drug Control Policy; if we're going to fight a war, we need a "war room."

Prevention and treatment are essential. But for youthful offenders who are repeat, hardened criminals—for those who commit the most heinous acts—it's time to make the punishment fit the crime. That's the third part of our bill.

Our bill changes federal law so that violent juvenile offenders no longer are automatically released when they turn 21.

We require all juvenile offenders to pay restitution to the victims of their crimes, and ensure victims' rights to speak at sentencing.

We give States the resources to hire more prosecutors for juvenile courts. And create special juvenile gun courts where juvenile gun offenders can be tried and sentenced on an expedited basis.

Our bill toughens penalties for possession of a firearm in connection with a violent or drug-trafficking crime. It extends to 10 years the statute of limitations for all crimes of violence and drug trafficking. And it eliminates the statute of limitations for all murders.

Finally, we propose tougher penalties for gang-related crimes.

The sixth bill we are introducing today is the Cattle Industry Improvement Act.

Cattle prices are lower than they've been in years. If prices don't rebound in the immediate future, farm foreclosures, job layoffs by agriculture-related businesses and bank failures could occur across rural America.

A special committee appointed last year by the Department of Agriculture to look into the causes of the low cat-

tle prices confirmed what many ranchers had long suspected: Low cattle prices appear to be tied in some cases to unfair competition posed by the largest beef processors.

Our bill enables USDA to make changes in the cattle market to give all producers—large and small—a chance to make an honest living and compete fairly in the marketplace.

It requires the Secretary to define and prohibit noncompetitive practices. It mandates price reporting for all sales transactions to ensure a fair and honest price discovery system.

Our bill also calls for a review of Federal lending practices to determine if the Government is contributing to meatpacker concentration.

In addition, it directs the President and the Secretaries of Agriculture and Health and Human Services to formulate a plan for consolidating and streamlining the entire food inspection system.

And it requires the USDA to develop a system for labeling United States meat and meat products. Companies will be encouraged to voluntarily label their products as originating from United States livestock producers.

The ultimate result of stifled competition in any market is always higher prices for consumers. Let's act together to make sure competition in the cattle industry remains fair and open.

These are the top six priorities for Senate Democrats as we begin this new session of Congress: Campaign finance reform, education, children's health care, pension security, juvenile crime and drug abuse, and a strong rural America. We are also introducing a number of other bills today.

Our Working Americans Opportunity Act streamlines and improves Federal worker training programs to keep pace with our changing economy. We consolidate more than 150 Federal job training programs over 14 agencies. And we put training dollars directly into workers' hands through a voucher system to give people more choices, and more control over their own futures.

We're also proposing a Targeted Investment Incentive and Economic Growth Act. This country does not need and cannot afford another across-the-board tax cut that provides a windfall for the wealthy. Instead, we propose targeted tax changes to both raise the rate of economic growth and spread its benefits to increasing numbers of Americans.

We will encourage investment in small businesses and innovation by allowing gains on the sale of small business stock to be deferred if they are fully reinvested in other qualifying small business equities. And by expanding the 50 percent exclusion on gains from the sale of small business stock held for at least five years that we enacted in 1993.

In addition, our bill will stimulate investment in other activities that propel job creation and family incomes,

such as worker training by companies, employee ownership, and infrastructure. It will also free up capital for investment and promote retirement security by giving people more flexibility in the way they manage the gains on their homes and family farms and businesses.

Our Brownfields and Environmental Clean-Up Act will help clean up and develop thousands of abandoned and contaminated industrial sites, or "brownfields," across America.

Our bill helps States and communities evaluate these sites. It limits potential liability for buyers who buy these brownfields in good faith, so they don't end up paying for someone else's mistakes. And it provides grants to State and local governments to create low-interest loans for current owners and prospective developers. It is not a substitute for Superfund reform, but a companion to it.

There are an estimated 100,000 brownfields in the U.S. Most already have well-developed infrastructure of utilities and transportation. By restoring these lands, we can conserve precious farmland and open space, and create new jobs and opportunities where they're needed most.

Our Working Families Child Care Act increases the availability of good, affordable child care. For too many families today, child care is simply not available in their community. Or, the child care that is available is not what they need—be that infant care or before and after school care. For other families, child care may be available but completely unaffordable. The cost of child care is often the most expensive—or second most expensive—monthly bill a family incurs, following rent or mortgage payments. And for those families who are lucky enough to find affordable child care, the type of care that is available may be of extremely poor quality.

I hope we can work together in a bipartisan manner to address the child care needs of today's working families.

Also in our package is a bill to make America's agricultural safety net whole again by correcting some of the problems with the Farm Act we passed last year. Our bill expands crop revenue insurance. It removes caps on commodity marketing loans, and establishes loan rates as a percentage of the average market price. And it encourages farmer-owned, value-added processing facilities.

Finally, we are offering the Paycheck Fairness Act to address the continuing wage disparities between men and women. With more and more families relying partly or entirely on women's earnings, America simply can no longer afford this often glaring inequity.

If there was a mandate in the last elections, it was a mandate for bipartisan cooperation. The American people want us to work together, as we did in the closing days of the last Congress, to find answers to their questions.

We can break the grip of special-interest money on the political process.

Family incomes have been stagnant too long. We can get them moving in the right direction again.

We make 2 years of college the new standard for education in this country.

We can guarantee that every child in America is able to see a doctor—and save on health care costs in the long run.

We can significantly increase the number of Americans who are able to retire with dignity and security.

We can make our communities safer and preserve rural America. We can help small businesses to create the jobs of the 21st century and help workers acquire the skills that will be demanded by those jobs.

We can do all of this, and more, if we work together. Democrats are ready to start today. Mr. President, I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Mr. KEMPTHORNE). Under the previous order, the next 60 minutes will be under the control of the majority leader or his designee.

Who yields time?

Mr. HELMS addressed the Chair.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from North Carolina.

#### UNANIMOUS-CONSENT AGREEMENT—BILLS PLACED ON CALENDAR PURSUANT TO RULE XIV

Mr. HELMS. Mr. President, pursuant to rule XIV, I shall shortly send to the desk eight bills to be considered en bloc and considered to have been read for the first time and be objected to following their second reading en bloc. I ask unanimous consent that be in order.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Is there objection? Without objection, it is so ordered.

Mr. HELMS. Mr. President, I send the bills to the desk. I ask unanimous consent that the statements with each be printed in the RECORD.

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

Mr. HELMS. Mr. President, today I will introduce a series of eight bills to: First, restore the right of our children to pray; second, restore the rights of the unborn; third, strengthen the penalties for drug dealers and violent acts of crime; fourth, restore the supremacy of the individual over Government-imposed quotas; and fifth, protect the constitutional right to hold and express moral beliefs.

Mr. President, our traditions, our children, and our institutions which made this country great, are all under assault. They are not threatened in the military sense—instead they are threatened by moral decay. This Nation simply must regain its moral footing.

We are less than 4 years away from a new century full of promise for this great country. New technologies abound and unprecedented discoveries

in medicine are within our grasp. Yet, if America is to continue to prosper in the next century, Americans must retain the values and traditions established by our Founding Fathers.

Since the beginning, America has been protected by the moral foundations on which she was established. Values like personal responsibility, liberty, respect for human life, and an abiding faith.

These values have made America a shining beacon on a hill and the envy of the world.

Sadly though, we have seen a steady erosion of these values and beliefs. This raises a significant question: Where are we headed? Quo vadis America?

Mr. President, I believe we are in a battle—in the sense that we are engaged in a struggle for the soul of America. The moral decay has also chewed away at the institution of the family and led to soaring rates of illegitimacy and drug abuse.

The liberal establishment has turned a blind eye to what has been going on in America. Their supporters from the Hollywood crowd to Planned Parenthood set forth an agenda that eroded the values of this country.

We live in an era when it is fashionable to pretend that our Founding Fathers did not build this country upon biblical principles.

Mr. President, on September 7, 1864, Abraham Lincoln thanked a group of citizens for a Bible he was given saying, "In regard to this Great Book, I have but to say, it is the best gift God has given to man. All the good the Savior gave to this world was communicated through this book. But for it we could not know right from wrong."

It is imperative, that as we look to the next century, we not forget what brought us to this point in history—the faith and ideals of our forefathers. Alexis de Tocqueville, after traveling throughout this country, found the source of America's strength. He stated that America's greatness lies in its churches and synagogues.

Mr. President, the legislation that I will introduce today will go a long way to ensuring that America's foundations remain secure.

I thank the Chair and yield the floor. The PRESIDING OFFICER. Under the previous order, the bills will now be placed on the calendar pursuant to rule XIV.

Mr. ROTH addressed the Chair.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Delaware is recognized.

Mr. ROTH. I thank the Chair.

(The remarks of Mr. ROTH pertaining to the introduction of S. 2 are located in today's RECORD under "Statements on Introduced Bills and Joint Resolutions.")

Mr. ROTH. I yield the floor.

Mr. CHAFEE addressed the Chair.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Rhode Island.

Mr. CHAFEE. I thank the Chair.

(The remarks of Mr. CHAFEE and Mr. SMITH pertaining to the introduction of

legislation are located in today's RECORD under "Statements on Introduced Bills and Joint Resolutions.")

Mr. COVERDELL addressed the Chair.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Georgia is recognized.

(The remarks of Mr. COVERDELL pertaining to the introduction of S. 1 are located in today's RECORD under "Statements on Introduced Bills and Joint Resolutions.")

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Utah is recognized.

(The remarks of Mr. HATCH and Mr. CRAIG pertaining to the introduction of Senate Joint Resolution 1 are located in today's RECORD under "Statements on Introduced Bills and Joint Resolutions.")

(The remarks of Mr. HATCH pertaining to the introduction of S. 3 are located in today's RECORD under "Statements and Introduced Bills and Joint Resolutions.")

(The remarks of Mr. HATCH pertaining to the introduction of S. 10 are located in today's RECORD under "Statements on Introduced Bills and Joint Resolutions.")

Mr. HATCH. Mr. President, I also want to note that I have filed three other bills today; in particular, the Curt Flood Act of 1997, which is the baseball antitrust bill that I believe now is coming to fruition, which is something that we have tried to do for a long time. We have named it after Curt Flood, who died a day or so ago, and who really deserves the recognition because of the fights that he led on this act in organized baseball. That is S. 53.

We have also filed S. 54, which is the Federal Gang Violence Act of 1997, a bill by Senator FEINSTEIN and myself. She has worked very hard with me and others on the Judiciary Committee, and we certainly want to mention her sterling work on that bill.

Finally, the Civil Justice Fairness Act of 1997, which is already introduced.

(The remarks of Mr. HATCH pertaining to the introduction of S. 53 and S. 54 are located in today's RECORD under "Statements on Introduced Bills and Joint Resolutions.")

Mr. HATCH. I thank the Chair. I yield the floor.

Mr. ASHCROFT addressed the Chair.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Missouri is recognized.

(The remarks of Mr. ASHCROFT pertaining to the introduction of S. 4 are located in today's RECORD under "Statements on Introduced Bills and Joint Resolutions.")

(The remarks of Mr. ASHCROFT pertaining to the introduction of S. 5 are located in today's RECORD under "Statements on Introduced Bills and Joint Resolutions.")

Mr. MACK addressed the Chair.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Florida.

(The remarks of Mr. MACK pertaining to the submission of Senate Resolution 15 are located in today's RECORD under