

Mr. FRIST. Mr. President, I suggest the absence of a quorum.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will call the roll.

The legislative clerk proceeded to call the roll.

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 President, I ask unanimous consent that the order for the quorum call be rescinded.

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

SCHEDULE

Mr. DEWINE. Mr. President, on behalf of the leader, I wish to announce that today the Senate will be in a period of morning business until the hour of 1:30 p.m., with the time equally divided between the two leaders.

At 1:30 today, the Senate will resume consideration of House Joint Resolution 36 regarding U.N. population funding. Following 2 hours of debate on that resolution, the resolution will be temporarily set aside and the Senate will then resume consideration of Senate Joint Resolution 1, the constitutional balanced budget amendment.

From 3:30 today to 5:30 today, the Senate will debate Senator BYRD's amendment relating to section 6 of the balanced budget amendment. All Senators should be reminded that at 5:30 this afternoon there will be a rollcall vote in relation to the pending Byrd amendment.

Following that vote this afternoon, Senator REID will be recognized to offer his amendment regarding Social Security. The Senate will continue debating that amendment tomorrow morning and afternoon, with a vote occurring on or in relation to that amendment at 6 p.m. on Tuesday.

Also, I remind our colleagues that we will be voting on the U.N. population funding resolution at 2:15 on Tuesday afternoon immediately following the weekly policy conferences. Following the vote on Senator REID's amendment to Senate Joint Resolution 1, Senator FEINSTEIN will offer an amendment. We will debate that amendment from 9 a.m. to 11 a.m. on Wednesday, with the vote occurring at 11 a.m. on that amendment.

The majority leader thanks his colleagues for their cooperation in allowing the Senate to move forward on both of these matters.

I further remind all Senators that the leadership hopes to complete action on the balanced budget amendment as soon as possible, and the leader will continue to update all of us as we make progress on this issue.

Mr. President, I note the absence of a quorum.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will call the roll.

The legislative clerk proceeded to call the roll.

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 President, I ask unanimous consent that the order for the quorum call be rescinded.

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

SENATOR JOHN GLENN'S ANNOUNCED RETIREMENT

Mr. DEWINE. Mr. President, I rise today to commemorate a very important milestone in the history of the State of Ohio and in the history of this body on this, the first day the Senate has met since my colleague Senator JOHN GLENN announced that he was retiring from this body. On behalf of the people of Ohio and on behalf of the U.S. Senate, I have the privilege of paying respects to Senator GLENN, to pay respects to my senior Senator, our friend and our colleague, on the occasion of the announcement of his retirement from the U.S. Senate. Senator GLENN has served Ohio and the Senate for a longer consecutive period than any other individual in the history of our State. When he leaves office 2 years from now, he will have served in this body for 24 consecutive years. Over this almost quarter of a century of service, Senator GLENN has established a reputation as a man who knows the importance of details. Senator GLENN realizes that the most important work done in this Chamber is not the sound bites, not the press conferences, but the nitty-gritty of making this complicated legislative process work for the people who sent us here.

Despite the fact that I have only been in the Senate for a little over 2 years, in many ways I feel I know Senator GLENN better than many who have served with him for a lot longer period of time. This is true, in part at least, I suspect, because he and I fought a very tough campaign against each other in 1992. It was a tough, hard-fought campaign. Let no one doubt—I can say this from personal experience—let no one doubt that behind JOHN GLENN's kind, grandfatherly exterior beats the heart of a true marine, a man who is willing to fight very hard for what he believes is right. That has been something that has really been the hallmark of JOHN GLENN's life of service to this country, from his service in World War II and Korea to his service in the military to his work in the space program to this very day, as he continues his service to this country in the U.S. Senate.

Two years after that campaign, I was elected to the Senate, and it became important, then, for Senator GLENN and me to build a relationship, to build a relationship to benefit all Ohioans. I think we have done that. In the 2 years since then, I have found that Senator GLENN's attitude to the work of the Senate really should serve as a model for all the rest of us. In a campaign, you fight hard, but when you are in the Senate, when you are one of the 100 Members of the U.S. Senate drawn from all over this country, there is a different kind of work to be done. I have worked with Senator GLENN on the floor, worked with him on different issues, and he has unfailingly put the interests of Ohio and the interests of this country first.

I am sure we will continue to disagree on some issues, but our disagree-

ments are buried whenever we have a chance to accomplish something for Ohioans by working together. Some may say that Senator GLENN's style of leadership is too bipartisan for modern politics, too bipartisan for this day and age, too bipartisan for this town. If that is true, it is a shame, because the dedication to bipartisanship exemplified by JOHN GLENN, through his service in the Senate, I think should serve as an example for all of us.

It was significant that Senator GLENN chose the 35th anniversary of his three orbits around the Earth to make his announcement that he was leaving the Senate.

I think as an Ohioan, it was also significant to see where he made that announcement. He went back home to Muskingum College, New Concord, OH, a town where he had been raised, where he grew up, a town where there is now a high school named after him, the John Glenn High School. He went home to make this announcement to the people of the State of Ohio.

I think it was also significant that he made the announcement in front of an audience of primarily young people. JOHN GLENN has always been someone who has thought about the future. How many times have we heard him come to the floor and talk about young people, talk about investment in young people, talk about what we have to do to prepare them and us for the next century? So it was significant that he went home to make this speech and significant that he was talking to young people when he did it.

I was reminded, as I think many Americans were, when I heard the official news that JOHN GLENN was going to retire, where I was 35 years ago—at least those of us who are old enough to remember—when he made that historic flight. My future wife and I were freshmen at Yellow Springs High School, Yellow Springs, OH. On the particular moment that he took off, I happened to be in Ed Wingard's science class and remember listening on the radio, and watching on TV later in the day, as we followed his progress for the next few hours. JOHN GLENN, on that date, captured the hearts of Americans, and he guaranteed his place in the history of this country and the history of this world.

We took a great deal of pride, those of us from Ohio, in what our native son was doing on that date. It was clear that NASA had selected the right person to make the trip, not just because of his nerves of steel, not just because of his technical ability, but it was also clear why they picked JOHN GLENN when he came back. It was clear that this was a person who young people across the country could look up to, that this was someone who should be considered a national hero and a national treasure.

We should not talk today as if JOHN GLENN will not be with us. JOHN GLENN is going to be with us for 2 more years in this body. We are going to argue

about some things, agree on some things, but JOHN GLENN will continue for the next 2 years to do what he has done throughout his lifetime, and that is serve the people of the State of Ohio and serve this great country that he loves so very much.

So let me, on behalf of the people of the State of Ohio, again say thank you to JOHN GLENN for his service to his country, for his service to the State of Ohio, and thank him for being a role model for all of us 35 years ago and for continuing to be a role model today.

Mr. President, I yield the floor and suggest the absence of a quorum.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will call the roll.

The bill clerk proceeded to call the roll.

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

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

SAFETY OF OUR CHILDREN

Mr. DEWINE. Mr. President, I rise today to thank President Clinton for lending his voice to one of the most important efforts underway in this Congress. On February 14, the President unveiled a proposal that would help provide children with safe homes and loving families, something that every child deserves. This is a victory for America's children, and I believe a victory for good common sense. It recognizes that the safety of our children must always be our most important consideration.

Mr. President, let no one doubt how important this issue is and why action by this Congress is so necessary. On a number of occasions over the last year, I have come to the floor of the Senate to discuss a provision in Federal law, that has tragedy in it, which has proven dangerous to the safety of America's children. I have on those occasions discussed the fact that too many children are spending their most important, most formative years in a legal limbo, a legal limbo that denies them their chance to be adopted, that denies them what all children should have: the chance to be loved and cared for by parents.

Mr. President, we are sending too many children back to dangerous and abusive homes. We are sending them back to the custody of people who have already abused them, already tortured them, and we do it, tragically, knowing that that has already taken place.

The statistics are frightening. Every day in this country, three children actually die of abuse and neglect at the hands of their own parents or caretakers. That is over 1,200 children per year. Almost half of these children—almost half of them—are killed after their tragic circumstances have already come to the attention of local authorities. That means 600 children die every year in cases where we, as a society, already know that they have

been abused, already know that they may have been tortured, already know that they really should never go back into that home again.

Mr. President, some of the tragedies in the child welfare system are the unintended consequence of a small part of a law passed by the U.S. Congress in 1980—basically, Mr. President, a good law. Under the Federal Child Welfare Act—the law I am referring to—for a State to be eligible for Federal matching funds for foster care expenditures, the State must have a plan for the provision of child welfare services approved by the Secretary of HHS. The State plan must provide—here I quote from statute—“that, in each case, reasonable efforts will be made (A) prior to the placement of a child in foster care, to prevent or eliminate the need for removal of the child from his home, and (B) to make it possible for the child to return to his home.”

In other words, Mr. President, no matter what the particular circumstances of a household may be, a State must make reasonable efforts to keep it together, and to put it back together if it has fallen apart.

There is strong evidence, Mr. President, strong evidence to suggest that, in practice, reasonable efforts have become extraordinary efforts, efforts to keep families together at all costs, efforts, I might add, to keep families together that are families in name only and to put children back in homes that are homes in name only.

As a result of this, Mr. President, children have died. That law simply has to be changed. One of my first legislative acts of the Congress was to introduce a bill that would accomplish this.

My bill would change the law to make it absolutely clear that the best interests of the child have to come first. Pretty basic, pretty simple—best interests of the child, safety of a child. You would not think we would have to clarify that.

I tell you, Mr. President, based on my experience in talking to judges, prosecutors, in talking to children service advocates, children service caseworkers across the State of Ohio, and from talking to some of my colleagues from other States, and from hearing testimony in our committee, it is abundantly clear to me that we have to spell this out, that it is being misinterpreted, that reasonable efforts to put families back together many times take precedence over the best interests of the child and the safety of the child.

As I said, Mr. President, my bill would change the law to make it clear that the best interests of the child must come first. We do this by enacting the following simple, straightforward amendment to the Child Welfare Act. And this is what language I would add, not taking anything away, just add this:

In determining reasonable efforts, the best interests of the child, including the child's health and safety, shall be of primary concern.

Pretty simple, Mr. President, pretty straightforward, pretty basic, but darn important.

In November, Mr. President, I chaired a hearing of the Senate Labor and Human Resources Committee on this issue. I assembled some of America's chief experts on child welfare. And I was encouraged by what they had to say.

Peter Digre, the director of Los Angeles County's Department of Children and Family Services—an unbelievably huge department, and a man who has to deal with gut-wrenching problems and decisions every single day of his life—this is what Peter Digre said. He said that “we should emphasize child safety as our first priority.”

Dr. Digre's department has about 73,000 children under its protection—73,000. He sees the real-life consequence of unreasonable attempts to reunite families that are families in name only.

But, Mr. President, I believe our most eloquent testimony that day came from Sharon Aulton, a grandmother in Annapolis, MD. Sharon Aulton had warned the local children services that her daughter was neglecting her children, her grandchildren, but the officials failed to intervene. Sharon Aulton's daughter ended up blockading her children in a room and setting the room on fire. Both these beautiful young children died.

Mr. President, this happens too often in this country. Last August a 4-year-old girl named Nadine was found starved to death in her mother's apartment in New York. The mother had kept Nadine in a crib covered by a blanket so she did not have to see her. She did not feed the child regularly for the year preceding her death. In the last few months before the child's death, she did not seek medical help despite the fact that the child could not walk, could not stand, could not even sit up.

Apparently, Mr. President, city social workers had visited the apartment in May 1995 after an anonymous complaint about the little girl's treatment. The commissioner of the Administration for Children Services was unable to provide any information as to the conditions found in the apartment or what action was taken at that time by the city. However, the commissioner did say the city investigators found enough credible evidence of neglect to open an investigation after they visited the apartment, but yet the case was closed 5 months later. Nadine only weighed 15 pounds at the time of her death—a week before her 5th birthday.

Mr. President, I have a daughter who is almost 5, my daughter Anna. Those of us who have children, those of us who care about kids, have to be heart-sick and shocked by the recounting of this poor little child's death. According to the ambulance workers, Mr. President, Nadine was found in the crib, dirty, with arms as thin as a half-dollar, her eyes sunken, her hair in patches, her ribs protruding. Her mother at