

I put into the RECORD yesterday evidence that those tax cuts, those marginal tax rate reductions actually resulted in a 40-percent, approximately 40-percent, increase in revenues because they stimulated the economy for 8 years, they contributed more jobs, more opportunity; 21 million jobs were created. They stimulated opportunity. They did a lot of things to get this country going again. But let me point out that during that whole time Reagan was in the Presidency, the Democrats controlled the House of Representatives. Tip O'Neil was in charge during the first part of that. And they kept spending.

Now, I am not just blaming Democrats. There were liberal Republicans who helped them to do that as well. And there is no question that the increase in military spending did put pressures on the budget and that President Reagan was the one who did that. There is no question about that.

But, on the other hand, if you think of the trillions of dollars that were saved because the Iron Curtain now has fallen and freedom has been restored to the East bloc countries, it probably was worth it.

The blame should be on everybody. I don't think people should demagog this issue and stand up and say, "It is Reagan and Bush who did this thing to us and created this \$5.3 trillion debt." No, it is a continual, 58-out-of-66-year unbalanced spending process, during which time the Congress was controlled by liberals—let me put it that way, rather than Democrats and Republicans—liberals who spent us into bankruptcy. And during all of the Reagan years, the liberals did the same thing.

Had we not continued to spend, those marginal tax cuts would have brought us out of the difficulties, except with the possible exception, at least as I view it, of the increases in the defense budget.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Arkansas.

Mr. BUMPERS. Mr. President, I will be very brief. A lot of people want to catch airplanes, and I do not want to discommode anybody. But let me close by saying the Senator from Utah has suggested that the constitutional amendment would be so much more effective than my amendment.

But I ask the Senator from Utah, what provision in the constitutional amendment, Senate Joint Resolution 1, is more effective than mine? We cannot ignore the Budget Act; 60 votes is 60 votes, whether you are trying to get 60 votes to comply with the constitutional amendment or whether you are trying to get 60 votes to comply with the Budget Act, as my amendment will provide.

Let me tell you what one of the differences is. Under my amendment, if you cannot get 60 votes, you shut the Government down and you wait for the people here to come to their senses and get the Government open, as we did the

year before last. Under the constitutional amendment, if you cannot get the 60 votes, you shut the Government down and go down to the Supreme Court and wait for them to act. Not only is that time-consuming and outrageous, but you are also cutting the three branches of the Government of the United States to two.

One of the reasons we have this big deficit, which everybody laments—let me say it once more—is because we talk one way and act another. We talk about how we are going to get the budget balanced, and how terrible it is that we cannot get our spending under control, and then we turn around and cut taxes by massive amounts. It is the worst form of snake oil I have ever seen in my life, yet we keep buying into it. We bought into it in 1981, and now we are getting ready to buy into it again.

All I am saying is, under my amendment, you have everything you have under the constitutional amendment. It is just as tough to comply with—really, tougher—and we exclude Social Security.

I guess everything is said that needs to be said, so I will close and let the Senator from Utah move to table my amendment.

Mr. HATCH. Mr. President, how much time remains?

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Mr. BENNETT). The Senator from Utah has 47 minutes, and the Senator from Arkansas has 29 minutes.

Mr. HATCH. I am prepared to yield back my time.

Mr. BUMPERS. I yield back the remainder of my time.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. All time has been yielded back.

Mr. HATCH. Mr. President, I move to table and ask for the yeas and nays.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Is there a sufficient second?

There is a sufficient second.

The yeas and nays were ordered.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The question is on agreeing to the motion to lay on the table the motion to refer. The yeas and nays have been ordered. The clerk will call the roll.

The legislative clerk called the roll.

Mr. NICKLES. I announce that the Senator from Oklahoma [Mr. INHOFE] is necessarily absent.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Are there any other Senators in the Chamber desiring to vote?

The result was announced—yeas 65, nays 34, as follows:

[Rollcall Vote No. 23 Leg.]

YEAS—65

Abraham	Chafee	Gorton
Allard	Coats	Graham
Ashcroft	Cochran	Gramm
Baucus	Collins	Grassley
Bennett	Coverdell	Gregg
Biden	Craig	Hagel
Bingaman	D'Amato	Harkin
Bond	DeWine	Hatch
Brownback	Domenici	Helms
Bryan	Enzi	Hutchinson
Burns	Faircloth	Hutchison
Campbell	Frisk	

Jeffords	Murkowski	Smith, Gordon
Kempthorne	Nickles	H.
Kohl	Reid	Snowe
Kyl	Robb	Specter
Lott	Roberts	Stevens
Lugar	Roth	Thomas
Mack	Santorum	Thompson
McCain	Sessions	Thurmond
McConnell	Shelby	Warner
Moseley-Braun	Smith, Bob	Wyden

NAYS—34

Akaka	Feinstein	Levin
Boxer	Ford	Lieberman
Breaux	Glenn	Mikulski
Bumpers	Hollings	Moynihan
Byrd	Inouye	Murray
Cleland	Johnson	Reed
Conrad	Kennedy	Rockefeller
Daschle	Kerrey	Sarbanes
Dodd	Kerry	Torricelli
Dorgan	Landrieu	Wellstone
Durbin	Lautenberg	
Feingold	Leahy	

NOT VOTING—1

Inhofe

The motion to lay on the table the motion to refer was agreed to.

AMENDMENTS NOS. 9 AND 18 WITHDRAWN

Mr. BROWNBACK. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent amendments No. 9 and No. 18 be withdrawn.

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

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The majority leader.

ORDER OF PROCEDURE

Mr. LOTT. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent the Senator from Delaware be allowed to proceed as in morning business for as long as he may need. We are waiting for the Democratic leader. We may perhaps interrupt for some agreements when he arrives.

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

The Senator from Delaware.

MEDICARE

Mr. ROTH. Mr. President, I rise today to draw my colleagues' attention to an opinion piece by Senator Bob Dole entitled "Medicare: Let's Fix It" that was in last Sunday's Washington Post.

It is my hope that all my Senate colleagues will read this compelling op-ed. Senator Dole has worked on and observed the Medicare Program for many years, and there is much wisdom to be gleaned from his commentary. He is right—we must address Medicare's problems with real solutions while giving seniors more choices.

On a personal note, I want to thank my friend for his praise of legislation, S. 341, recently introduced by Senator MOYNIHAN and myself, to establish a bipartisan commission on the long-term solvency problems in the Medicare Program.

As Senator Dole notes, "a bipartisan commission can recommend sound long-term solutions," as evidenced by the 1983 Social Security Commission.

Mr. President, the proposed national bipartisan commission on the Future of Medicare would be this type of commission.

Currently, the Medicare Program is not in the best of health—its short- and long-term fiscal problems make it increasingly vulnerable. In January, the Congressional Budget Office projected the Medicare trust fund is headed for the emergency room; it will go bankrupt in 2001 with a \$4.5 billion shortfall. The trust fund is spending more than it is taking in from revenues; this trend will continue, creating a trust fund deficit of over one-half trillion dollars just 10 years from now. And that's still before the baby-boomers begin to retire in 2010.

The prognosis is not good. The Medicare trust fund is limping—and soon will be staggering—into the 21st century.

This national bipartisan commission is the medicine needed to restore Medicare's good health. Its recommendations will help the President and Congress build the consensus needed to enact effective policies to preserve and strengthen Medicare.

Senator Dole is correct in stating, "Creating a commission won't let—the President and Congress—off the hook to enact needed Medicare changes now to avoid bankruptcy in 2001." I believe the President and Congress must act immediately to extend the short-term solvency of the program.

I am encouraged by President Clinton's willingness in his budget package to address the growth of Medicare spending over the next 5 years. However, I'm troubled by the administration's use of gimmicks like the home health transfer and an over reliance on cutting provider payments—such policies are just plastic surgery, masking deeper problems with a pretty face. Senator Dole says he has "never seen a budget gimmick that solved a real public policy problem"—and neither have I.

In the long-term, Medicare must fight another potentially crippling problem. Retiring baby boomers will challenge our ability to maintain our promises to beneficiaries. Today, there are less than 40 million Americans who qualify to receive Medicare. By the year 2010, the number will be approaching 50 million, and by 2020, it will be over 60 million. Today, there are almost four workers supporting each retiree, but in 2030, there will be only about two per retiree.

The demographic progression of the Medicare population will not come as a surprise. We know today what is to be expected.

To be healthy, the Medicare Program is in need of structural reform. Since Medicare's enactment in 1965, there has been a great deal of change in the private health care system in the United States—but Medicare remains fundamentally unchanged. Medicare is too rigid and unable to offer the improvements in delivery of care and technological advances that have been made in the private sector. Medicare is the Model T Ford of health care programs competing in a race car world.

These are some of the problems the National Bipartisan Commission will address. I believe it will prove to be the intensive treatment needed to cure Medicare's growing symptoms. There is agreement over the diagnosis, but no consensus over the course of treatment. Meanwhile, Medicare's time runs short.

It is my hope that by working together in a bipartisan effort, we can seriously and responsibly address the Medicare issue. Again, I hope my colleagues will read Senator Dole's essay, and consider the issues he raises.

The answers to the Medicare problem are not easy and they are not politically popular. The consequences of delaying treatment are much worse, though. As chairman of the Senate Finance Committee, I intend for future generations to inherit a robust Medicare Program with a clean bill of health. The Commission proposed by Senator MOYNIHAN and myself is just what the doctor ordered.

Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that a copy of Senator Dole's op-ed be printed in the RECORD.

There being no objection, the material was ordered to be printed in the RECORD, as follows:

[From the Washington Post, Feb. 22, 1997]

MEDICARE: LET'S FIX IT

(By Bob Dole)

Some politicians make Medicare decisions with one eye on the next election—something I learned in 1996. Enough already. It's time to focus on present beneficiaries and the next generation.

Rhetoric won't get the job done. Neither will budget gimmicks nor shell games such as the administration's proposal to move home health costs from Part A of Medicare over to Part B. Such accounting gimmicks have been around for at least as long as the budget deficit. I've seen plenty of them, even tried some, but I have never seen a budget gimmick yet that solved a real public policy problem.

The fact is, to survive, Medicare will have to look much different in 10 years from what it looks like today. The program obviously requires structural changes, not just tinkering around the edges. In his State of the Union address, President Clinton said: "The enemy of our time is inaction." Well, it's time to do what's right for our nation's elderly before the president's words become an epitaph for the Medicare program.

Doing what's right means doing things differently in several ways. Remember, we face two major problems with Medicare: a short-term problem with bankruptcy in 2001 and an even larger long-term financing problem when the baby boomers start retiring in 2010. Any Medicare "fix" has to be mindful of both. I do not have all the answers, but I would advance a few ideas for consideration.

Affluence-test the Part B premium. Yes, I'll say it: Senior citizens who can afford to pay more should pay more for Part B of Medicare. Unlike Part A of Medicare, Part B is not financed by payroll taxes. Right now, Medicare beneficiaries pay premiums that cover only 25 percent of the cost of Part B of Medicare. General revenues pick up the tab for the remaining 75 percent. If only the well-to-do beneficiaries, those with incomes greater than \$60,000 for a single individual and \$90,000 for a couple, paid a higher premium (say, 50 percent instead of 25 percent—as was originally intended in the program), we could save \$9 billion over five years.

It's just plain old-fashioned fairness for affluent beneficiaries to pay a little more (still way below the actual cost of the care), and our elected leaders should say so. No more of this strange, silent dance between president and Congress where each partner says to the other, "You go first!" The president should propose and a bipartisan majority in Congress should support appropriate increases in the Part B premium.

Keep the link between Medicare and Social Security. Throughout the history of the Medicare program, the age at which a senior citizen becomes eligible for Medicare has always been the same as the age at which he or she becomes eligible for Social Security. That's as it should be. It makes perfect sense for these two programs to go hand-in-hand.

In 1983 the bipartisan Social Security Commission, on which I served, recommended several fixes to save the Social Security program that were enacted into law. One fix was slowly to raise the age of eligibility for Social Security to 67. After all, people will live longer and retire later than they did earlier in the century when the program was created. So, the age of eligibility for Social Security will start to rise a couple of months each year beginning in 2003. We should keep the historical link between Medicare and Social Security, and let Medicare eligibility rise with Social Security.

Give senior citizens choice. Medicare beneficiaries should be able to choose the kind of coverage they want. Innovative ideas such as medical savings account should be available, as should managed-care plans and traditional fee-for-service plans. The critical word here is choice. No one should be forced into any particular health care model.

Let's let seniors make their own decisions. It's wrong when some people argue that seniors simply are not capable of deciding their own health care coverage and that the government always knows best. Given the right kind of information, seniors can decide what's best for themselves. The should be given the same kind of choices that federal employees have been offered for years. The federal employee health benefits program is one broad-scale model that shows choice works.

Giving seniors choice could also help hold down costs. Last year health care costs in the private sector grew only 2.9 percent while health care costs in the public sector rose 8.7 percent—three times as fast. Why is the private sector doing a much better job holding down costs? One reason is free-market competition. And choice will spur competition, efficiency and lower costs in the public sector just as it already has in the private sector. What's more, structural changes that help lower overall costs are the only way to address Medicare's long-term problem.

Cutting providers alone is not the answer. It seems every time the president and Congress address Medicare, payments to doctors and hospitals get cut. Politically, this is a "no brainer," since there are millions more beneficiaries than doctors and hospitals. The president's FY 1998 budget proposal is more of the same: cuts for doctors and hospitals—and now cuts for HMOs, too, reducing their reimbursement rate from 95 percent to 90 percent of average per capita costs.

Some reductions in some areas are no doubt justified, but you cannot fix the program by hitting providers alone. You can buy a few months or a few years on the short-term problem, but it will not solve the long-term problem. In fact, it may exacerbate it. The reductions must be accompanied by true reimbursement reform. Let's move more of the program into a prospective payment system so the incentives for the wise use of services are in place. Let's pay managed-care plans a fair amount and be certain

the care provided is of the highest quality and that funds meant for teaching and indigent care are spent correctly. The real problems faced by rural plans as well as by urban providers must be addressed as should Medicare's role in paying to train our nation's physicians.

Form a Medicare commission. It may turn out that no matter how much is done, it still will not be enough to offset the long-term challenge we face with the retirement of the huge baby-boomer generation. If the president and Congress cannot agree on how to preserve Medicare long term, as a last resort, a bipartisan commission should be authorized. Sen. William Roth and Sen. Daniel Patrick Moynihan should be applauded for recently proposing legislation to establish such a commission. As the 1983 Social Security Commission demonstrated, a bipartisan commission can recommend sound long-term solutions. But if some politicians hope they can dodge the tough choices by creating a commission, I have news for you: It won't work. Creating a commission won't let you off the hook to enact needed Medicare changes now to avoid bankruptcy in 2001, and even the commission's recommendations to address the long-term problem will require members of Congress to vote on sticky issues and the president to sign or veto the legislation.

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

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

TAX FREE STADIUM BOND FINANCING

Mr. SPECTER. Mr. President, I have sought recognition to discuss the pending unanimous-consent request on the tax measure. I do so because of my concern about a matter which is pressing for my State, in a number of particulars, most specifically the Wilkes-Barre arena, where financing is being held up because legislation has been introduced by Senator MOYNIHAN, which has an effective date on the date of committee action, and bond counsel have, as I understand it, given an opinion that industrial development bonds cannot be issued from the State.

After discussing the matter with Senator MOYNIHAN, it is my understanding that he is concerned about the statutory limits on other tax-exempt bonds, which would affect hospitals and universities. It is a relative rarity that a tax bill comes through the Senate. This is an occasion where I would have an opportunity to introduce an amendment to try to move this process along. I am well aware of the fact that this is an important measure which needs to be cleared through the Senate. But I wanted to take this opportunity—and I have so advised our distinguished majority leader of my intention—when the unanimous-consent request is propounded, to reserve the right to object to see if we might get

some sort of a schedule for consideration of the underlying issues here.

I note the presence of the distinguished majority leader on the floor. I await his action on propounding the unanimous-consent request. I take advantage of this break in the action to state my position.

I yield the floor.

Mr. LOTT. Mr. President, with my apologies to the Senator from Pennsylvania, was there anything I needed to respond to at this juncture, or would you like to go ahead with the unanimous-consent request?

Mr. SPECTER. If I may respond to the majority leader, there is nothing for him to respond to.

UNANIMOUS-CONSENT AGREEMENT—S. J. Res. 1

Mr. LOTT. Mr. President, I just had a discussion with the Democratic leader with respect to the pending balanced budget constitutional amendment. This agreement would allow the Senate to conclude the matter on Tuesday, March 4. Having said that, I now will propound a unanimous consent for final disposition of the constitutional amendment.

I ask unanimous consent that the time between 9:30 a.m. on Tuesday and 12:30 be equally divided between the two managers for closing remarks on Senate Joint Resolution 1. I further ask that, at 2:15 on Tuesday, there be 1 hour under the control of the manager on the Democratic side of the aisle, with the first 20 minutes under the control of Senator BYRD, to be followed by the next hour under the control of Senator HATCH, to be followed by the next 30 minutes under control of Senator DASCHLE, or his designee, with the final 30 minutes under the control of the majority leader or his designee.

I further ask that following the conclusion or yielding back of time, a vote occur on the passage of S.J. Res. 1 at 5:15 p.m. on Tuesday, and that paragraph 4 of rule XII be waived and all occur without intervening action.

Mr. DASCHLE. Mr. President, the majority leader and I have had the opportunity to discuss this matter, and I concur with the unanimous-consent request, with the understanding—which we have discussed—that if there is a family emergency or an illness that would preclude a Member from having the opportunity to vote on such an important issue as this, that we would revisit the issue. I don't anticipate that. I expect 100-percent attendance. And, as I say, we have had that understanding in our discussion also. So I do not object.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Is there objection?

Without objection, it is so ordered.

Mr. LOTT. Mr. President, if I could just comment on the Democratic leader's comments of a moment ago. First of all, I think we have had a good and full debate on this issue. I said from the beginning that I hoped we would do

that, and that it would be a thoughtful and provocative debate that would cause Members to think seriously about this issue. I think that has happened.

There has been some suggestion that we put it off, and I thought about that. If there were some reason to do that, I would be willing to delay it further. But I think we should be ready to vote. We have had amendments and the debate, and we would be prepared to do that, then, on Tuesday under this agreement. But, as always is the case, we need to be aware of and respectful of extenuating circumstances beyond our control. I will join the Democratic leader in moving the vote to the next morning, or whatever, if we have that need, based on a genuine illness or family problem that could not be avoided.

UNANIMOUS CONSENT AGREEMENT

Mr. LOTT. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that in the event a motion to reconsider the final passage vote is entered, and the motion to proceed and the motion to reconsider are agreed to, then at that time Senate Joint Resolution 1 be debatable.

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

Mr. LOTT. Mr. President, for the information of all Senators, the Senate will close the debate on the Monday or the Tuesday session of the Senate with a final passage vote occurring on the constitutional amendment at 5:15 p.m. on Tuesday, March 4.

I thank my colleagues for their cooperation and announce that no votes will occur on Friday of this week or Monday, March 3.

MORNING BUSINESS

Mr. LOTT. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that there now be a period for the transaction of morning business with Senators permitted to speak for up to 5 minutes each.

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

INVESTIGATE CONGRESSIONAL ABUSES

Mr. KERRY. Mr. President, today on the front page of the Washington Post there is a story that I think should not simply slide by the concern and consideration of all our colleagues in the Senate. The headline is, "GOP Senators Seek To Curb Panel's Fund-Raising Probe."

The heart of the story is a basic expression, on behalf of some Senators, that they only want to focus on President Clinton. They do not want an investigation that somehow looks into the activities of the Congress itself.

I know the Congress is plenty good at taking care of itself. Through history it has proven that. But the American people will not be satisfied with such