

at the Alamo several hundred miles away. Former Texas Senator John Tower began a tradition among Texas Senators. Senator Tower would read William Barret Travis' letter from the Alamo. As I alluded to a moment ago, as they were declaring independence at Washington-on-the-Brazos in 1836, 6,000 Mexican troops were marching to the Alamo. They were marching to the Alamo to take on soldiers who had come from many States—Kentucky, Tennessee, South Carolina, North Carolina, Georgia, and so on—to help defend Texas in its stand against the Mexican Army at the Alamo.

The declaration of independence said: . . . We, therefore . . . do hereby resolve and declare that our political connection with the Mexican Nation has forever ended, and that the people of Texas do now constitute a free, sovereign and independent republic . . .

Several days earlier, William Barret Travis had written from the Alamo his famous letter to the people of Texas and to all Americans. He knew that the Mexican Army was coming, and he knew that they had few people to help them defend the Alamo. Here is the letter by Colonel Travis:

Fellow citizens and compatriots: I am besieged, by a thousand or more of the Mexicans under Santa Anna—I have sustained a continual bombardment and cannonade for 24 hours and have not lost a man—the enemy has demanded a surrender at discretion, otherwise, the garrison are to be put to the sword, if the fort is taken—I have answered the demands with a cannon shot, and our flag still waves proudly from the wall—I shall never surrender or retreat. Then, I call on you in the name of liberty, or patriotism and of everything dear to the American character, to come to our aid, with all dispatch—The enemy is receiving reinforcements daily and will no doubt increase to three or four thousand in four or five days. If this call is neglected, I am determined to sustain myself as long as possible and die like a soldier who never forgets what is due to his own honor and that of his country—Victory or Death.

WILLIAM BARRET TRAVIS, LT. COL.,

Commander.

P.S. The Lord is on our side—when the enemy appeared in sight we had not three bushels of corn—we have since found in deserted houses 80 or 90 bushels and got into the walls 20 or 30 heads of beeves.

Despite that declaration, Mr. President, we did not win independence from Mexico at the Alamo. In the battle of the Alamo, known as the "13 Days of Glory," 184 brave men died fending off Santa Anna's huge army. But the Alamo was crucial. It gave time to Gen. Sam Houston, who was the commander in chief of our Armed Forces, to get more volunteers and to decide when to take on this vast Mexican Army again. And because those brave men at the Alamo held out for so long, Houston had time to muster his forces. Gen. Sam Houston was wounded in the battle, but was able to take the surrender of General Santa Anna. Texas won her freedom on April 21, 1836.

San Jacinto is near Houston, and home to the battle we commemorate as the "Great Battle of Freedom."

So, Mr. President, I like to recall this time because it is an important time in

the history of America as well as in the history of Texas. Our independent nation lasted for 9 years; for 9 years we brought our State together to prepare it for admission into the United States of America.

In fact, the debate recorded in the CONGRESSIONAL RECORD on whether Texas would become a State was very interesting.

Texas would join the Union if several conditions were met. Those conditions were outlined in a treaty. In the treaty, Texas was able to keep certain rights when she joined the Union—rights to her tidelands, rights to her public lands, which is why much of our public land is State owned rather than federally owned. This is why we have some different issues in Texas. We were able to control the tidelands because that was part of the treaty. We also had the right to turn into five States if the State of Texas decided to break away from the Union. Now, that causes a little concern here on Capitol Hill when they think of having the possibility of 10 Senators from Texas instead of 2. There are a few cold stares when that is brought up. But I must say that was all part of the treaty.

The treaty did not pass because supporters couldn't muster the two-thirds vote necessary to ratify it. So President John Tyler introduced a bill to annex Texas as a State. Texas became a State because of a bill, not a treaty. The interesting thing was that the bill passed by only one vote in each House of Congress. Any of those who think it might have been a mistake to annex Texas almost won a victory. We did have a long, hard-fought battle before we joined the Union. One of the annexation proposal's most vocal opponents at the time was President John Quincy Adams, who had returned to Congress by that time. He spoke every day on the floor against the annexation of Texas. The reason he was so far out on the limb against Texas is because he was afraid Texas would become another slave State. He did not want to disrupt the balance that existed in the United States of America at the time. Once we did become a State, I think we began a tradition of great contributions to the United States. And, of course, just recently we have become the second largest State in America—second to California, overtaking New York State.

So that is a little bit of Texas history, which I am always glad to recall on Texas Independence Day. I like to read the letter from William Barret Travis to remind you of the pride Texans share for their independence from Mexico and their membership today in the United States of America. We are proud that we were an independent nation for 9 years and then took our rightful place in the United States of America. I hope that people feel that we have earned the right to be proud of that, and also hope that people feel that Texas has done her part as a State.

We are proud of our heritage. We are proud of our history. And most of all,

today, I want to pay tribute to the brave men who died at the Alamo and the brave men, numbering among them the first Senator to hold my Senate seat, the first Senator to hold the other Texas Senate seat, Gen. Sam Houston, and my own great-great-grandfather who signed the Declaration of Independence and later became the chief justice of Nacogdoches County.

These were brave men who forged a new nation at great cost. They went through many of the same things that our forebears in the United States of America did in wresting our independence from England. So I am proud of that. I am proud of the patriots who gave their lives for our freedom or who risked their lives for our freedom. I want to pay tribute to them today, and I will do so every year that I am able to serve as a Senator from the great State of Texas.

Mr. President, I thank you for your indulgence, and I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Under the previous order, the Senator from South Dakota [Mr. JOHNSON], is recognized to speak for up to 15 minutes.

BALANCED BUDGET AMENDMENT TO THE CONSTITUTION

Mr. JOHNSON. Mr. President, I rise today to express my opposition to Senate Joint Resolution 1, a version of a balanced budget amendment to the U.S. Constitution currently pending before the Senate.

Throughout the more than 10 years that I have had the honor and opportunity to represent the people of South Dakota as a Congressman and now as a U.S. Senator, I have consistently supported a policy of fiscal prudence and restraint. I have supported, among other initiatives, a line-item veto and enhanced line-item rescission, the 1990 budget agreement initiated by President Bush and the 1993 budget agreement initiated by President Clinton. The latter two budget agreements having played a very significant role in capping discretionary spending, placing our Government on a must-pay-as-you-go basis and contributing to over a 60-percent reduction in the annual Federal budget deficit. I am pleased that these and other efforts taken by the Clinton administration, though almost universally opposed by the Republican congressional caucuses have led to economic growth, prosperity, and now a deficit that is smaller relative to our economy than in any industrial nation on Earth. Even so, we have farther to go to bring our Federal expenditures and revenue into greater equilibrium. To that end, I have also voted in favor of various balanced budget amendments while serving in the other body.

I do not take the amendment of our Nation's Constitution lightly. I am mindful that this is the legislative body that served as the forum for Clay and for Webster and many other great names of American history. Unlike ordinary legislation, a constitutional

amendment cannot be easily changed if it proves faulty—it must be crafted in such a manner that serves the interests of our Nation not only now, but for 200 years and more from now. We must of necessity approach such a difficult task—that of drafting a constitutional amendment for the ages—with some humility and with a full recognition of the great care that is required if future generations are to look to our deliberations with the same respect that we today hold for the Founders of our Republic.

Over the past 4 years, we, and in particular the Clinton administration, have taken an exploding deficit that had reached nearly \$300 billion annually and a cumulative national debt that had quadrupled on the watch of Presidents Reagan and Bush, and cut that annual deficit by over 60 percent. Yet, despite this progress, I began my service in the Senate at the commencement of the 105th Congress with the assumption that I would cast a vote in favor of a constitutional amendment drafted in much the manner that Senate Joint Resolution 1 appears before us today. However, the findings of the nonpartisan Congressional Research Service later substantiated by an analysis of the Office of Management and Budget and the Center on Budget and Policy Priorities have cast such grave doubts about the wisdom of Senate Joint Resolution 1 as it is currently drafted, that I cannot cast a vote for an unamended version with the confidence I need to have that it truly will achieve the goals its advocates claim.

The CRS report makes it clear that Senate Joint Resolution 1 would prohibit the Federal Government from conducting its financial affairs in the same prudent manner that every South Dakota family attempts to achieve. It would effectively prevent the Federal Government from setting aside cash reserves in good times in order to have them available in times of crisis—a policy that flies in the face of common sense and one that certainly should not be imposed on all future generations of Americans.

While the Social Security trust fund is the source of the greatest attention in this debate, and that is understandable since Senate Joint Resolution 1 would convert the Federal Government's largest effort to set aside resources for a future generation into a virtual fraud on the taxpayers, the implications of denying the Federal Government the ability to raise funds now for future needs goes far beyond damage to Social Security. Such a provision diminishes the usefulness of all our trust funds, especially those that have been designed to gain revenue during good times and to be available to fall back on during bad times. It makes any realistic effort to set aside funds now to be available for a future countercyclical economic strategy much more difficult—a criticism that has been the chief reason why Republican economic experts such as Alan

Greenspan, Chairman of the Federal Reserve, 11 Nobel laureate economists, and even the conservative Wall Street Journal have condemned Senate Joint Resolution 1.

While a few Members of this body may attempt to lecture me about what pledges I have made to the people of South Dakota during the past campaign, I will refrain from attempting to impugn their motives or to engage in self-righteous assertions about their responsibilities to their constituents or to their oath of office.

I have pledged to the people of South Dakota that I would support a balanced budget and that I would vote for a balanced budget amendment—one that works—one that would help achieve the goal of balancing the Federal budget without destroying Social Security or otherwise placing our Nation's economic growth and prosperity at great risk. What arrogance for anyone to suggest on this floor that a vote for any proposed amendment other than Senate Joint Resolution 1 constitutes a breach of honor.

I have voted, and it is duly recorded in the Senate Journal, for a balanced budget amendment and for modifications to Senate Joint Resolution 1 which would promote a balanced budget without the disastrous flaws of Senate Joint Resolution 1.

I am a fourth generation South Dakotan. My family homesteaded in our State and I'm proud that my children now represent the fifth consecutive generation of our family to claim Clay County, SD as home. With that background, I have a profound appreciation for the concerns and more importantly the values of the citizens of my State. During this past campaign I pledged to them the most important pledge of all—that I would exercise my best judgment and greatest care in casting my vote in the Senate and that in doing so, I would ignore the immediate winds of political pressure and cast my votes in a manner consistent with the long-term needs of our State and Nation.

There is no doubt that the easy thing for me to do would be to capitulate to the current political pressures ginned up and funded by the special interests promoting exclusively Senate Joint Resolution 1. That would be the path of least resistance, and, clearly, the negative impact of that particular version of balanced budget amendment would not be felt until after my next election where I too choose to run for another term in this body.

It would take, frankly, several years to ratify any amendment and some years beyond that before the public would fully recognize the enormous wrong this body would have done to the Constitution. But I told my constituents that I would do the right thing, not the politically expedient thing. While I respect the integrity of everyone's professed views, as I look about this Chamber, I have to wonder if there would in fact be a close vote on

Senate Joint Resolution 1 if the ballot were secret, and intellect and conscience the only driving forces in this debate.

Mr. President, when this debate concludes tomorrow, I will have the satisfaction of knowing that I have honorably lived up to my pledges to the people of South Dakota and to my sacred responsibilities to this Nation and to the U.S. Senate. To cast a vote for this specific version of a balanced budget amendment knowing what I know today, would constitute a betrayal of the people of my State, and inasmuch as I am a U.S. Senator, it would be a betrayal of my commitment and my love for our Nation—that I will not and cannot do.

I yield back the remaining time.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Montana.

CONSERVATION RESERVE PROGRAM

Mr. BURNS. Mr. President, last month, the Secretary of Agriculture announced the new rules and regulations on the Conservation Reserve Program in the U.S. Department of Agriculture. We find that we are starting to take a program that has been claimed as one of the great success programs, as far as soil conservation, watershed management, wildlife habitat, in our respective States. There is no doubt about it, that we have land that was taken out of production that was marginal land, should never have been in row crop or crop production, should have been grass all those years, and we have noticed an increase, a notable increase in upland bird populations, also in white tail deer and other wildlife that depend on a habitat that the CRP would afford.

There has been a rule change, however. This was brought to our attention by our good friends and neighbors who are living and working on the grain farms of Montana, and especially in eastern Montana. The announcement by U.S. Department of Agriculture to start a sign up for an extension, or increased acreage received into the program going up to 220 million acres across this country. Now, it would look like the acreage is capped around 36.4 million acres, but there have been new rules made on about half of American cropland making it now eligible for CRP. It was brought up in this new announcement and the timing is flawed.

The new rules give the worst lands the lowest rate, the best lands the highest rate. So right now we have figures coming in from the different counties and it could be on dirt farms as low as \$17 an acre. What happens when you get a bid to take lands out of production at \$17 an acre—I do not care what you do on that land, it will produce more than \$17 an acre. So, what is happening is that the good land is going into the CRP—in other words, taken out of production—and we will farm our worst land, having the exact