

on Personnel of the Committee on Armed Services be authorized to meet on Wednesday, March 5, 1997, at 2 p.m. in open session, to receive testimony on recruiting and retention policies within the Department of Defense and the military services in review of the Defense authorization request for fiscal year 1998 and the future years Defense program.

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

SUBCOMMITTEE ON STRATEGIC FORCES

Mr. ROTH. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the Subcommittee on Strategic Forces of the Committee on Armed Services be authorized to meet at 2 p.m. on Wednesday, March 5, 1997 to receive testimony on Defense programs to combat the proliferation of weapons of mass destruction and the Department of Defense budget request for fiscal year 1998 and the future years Defense program.

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

SUBCOMMITTEE ON SUPERFUND, WASTE CONTROL AND RISK ASSESSMENT

Mr. ROTH. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the Subcommittee on Superfund, Waste Control and Risk Assessment be granted permission to conduct a hearing Wednesday, March 5, at 9:30 a.m., hearing room SD-406, on the reauthorization of Superfund, including S. 8, the Superfund Cleanup Acceleration Act.

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

ADDITIONAL STATEMENTS

BALANCED BUDGET AMENDMENT TO THE CONSTITUTION

• Mr. WELLSTONE. Mr. President, I chose to vote against the balanced budget amendment to the Constitution, like I have in the past.

Many good arguments were made throughout the debate against amending the Constitution of the United States to require a yearly balanced Federal budget. In fact, the Senate voted 14 times on amendments to improve the underlying resolution, in the hope of revealing its shortsightedness. In every instance, I supported my colleagues. I believe we were successful in painting a clear and honest picture of the disastrous effects such an amendment could have on the economic and social fabric of this country.

This debate is about our Nation's spending priorities as much as it is about constitutional integrity. During the course of debate, I offered an amendment that would have made it a policy of the United States that in meeting the requirements of an annual balanced budget no cuts would be made that disproportionately affect children's programs in the areas of health care, nutrition, and education. Look at the evidence.

In the 104th Congress, dramatic cuts were made to programs for low-income

families. According to the Center on Budget and Policy Priorities, more than 93 percent of the cuts in entitlement programs came from programs for low-income people. Congress reduced entitlement programs by \$65.6 billion over the period from 1996 to 2002. In a letter of opposition to the BBA, the Women Legislator's Lobby, a group that speaks for women legislators across the country, pointed out to Senators that in 1997 the Federal Government spent four times more on the military than on housing, education, job training, and community development combined.

The people of Minnesota sent me to Washington to make tough, responsible, fair decisions. Amending the Constitution to require a balanced budget would put a legally binding dollar target above the economic and social health of our country. Our goal of achieving fiscal responsibility should appropriately focus on critical investments in programs that provide basic nutrition, housing, health care, and education to those less fortunate, especially children.

Our fixation with a constitutional amendment and our hunger for political gain have detracted from that important task. I will continue to press forward on finding a fair and equitable way to balance the budget because I think it is important to our country's future. Amending the Constitution in this way is not the answer.●

WILSON K. SMITH

• Mr. BIDEN. Mr. President, while on a field trip to a Civil War site in the 1950's, a young African-American boy from Delaware asked his teacher why there was no mention of black soldiers. He learned a cold, hard lesson that day—that even though black soldiers fought and died for their country, they were not honored because of the color of their skin.

That field trip ignited what would become a 40-year crusade by a Delawarean named Wilson K. Smith. Mr. Smith is a retired Army Sergeant, who was decorated with a Bronze Star and Silver Star during the Vietnam war as a member of the 101st Airborne Division, First Special Forces. In 1957, Sgt. Smith began collecting war stories from black veterans. By 1979, he had tracked down all the African-American Congressional Medal of Honor recipients. In 1989, he began seeking financial pledges and support to build an African-American Medal of Honor monument.

I am proud to have worked closely with Mr. Smith over the last 5 years to see the realization of his dream.

Last month, the names of the 85 African-American Medal of Honor recipients were officially recognized in a permanent exhibit at the Pentagon. This exhibit replicates a monument honoring black Medal of Honor recipients now on permanent display at Morgan State University in Baltimore, MD. Mr.

Smith was the driving force behind the design and fundraising for this monument.

This monument will help keep the legacy of the African-American Congressional Medal of Honor recipients alive for generations to come. Never again will young African-American school boys and girls have to wonder why black veterans are not honored for their service and sacrifice to the United States of America.

The Medal of Honor is the highest award for bravery in military service to our country, but few are aware of the names, faces and stories of heroism of the Medal of Honor recipients. These are truly inspiring Americans, who continue to serve this country by their examples of courage, patriotism, and selfless dedication above and beyond the call of duty. From the Civil War to the World Wars to Vietnam to the Persian Gulf war, they have been the outstanding defenders of liberty, the highest hope of humanity in struggle, and the truest representatives of human strength. A memorial to bring that inspiration to African-Americans and to all of us, is a most worthy endeavor.

It truly has been my honor and pleasure to have strongly supported Wilson Smith's crusade, along with many other national and State leaders, including former Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, General Colin Powell. Wilson Smith is an outstanding man, Delawarean, U.S. veteran and historian. We all will forever owe him a double debt of gratitude for his service to our country.●

TRIBUTE TO LOUISIANA AFL-CIO PRESIDENT VICTOR BUSSIE

• Mr. BREAUX. Mr. President, next week working men and women from all over Louisiana will pause to honor a great and visionary leader and a remarkable man who has led Louisiana's AFL-CIO for the past 41 years. On March 10, my good friend Victor Bussie will retire as president of my State's AFL-CIO—marking the end of a truly historic public career during which time he was widely regarded as one of the most powerful and respected men in Louisiana public life.

Those of us who have known and admired Vic Bussie for many years understand that his power was not so much derived from the position he held, but from the force of his personality and the deep conviction and personal integrity that he brought to every debate or endeavor. Simply put, Vic Bussie will always be remembered as one of the most honorable and decent men who ever served in public life.

Perhaps the greatest testimony to Vic Bussie's extraordinary career is the many tributes paid to him by those who often found themselves on opposing sides in legislative and political battles. Almost without exception, those who fought with Vic Bussie over the issues never had anything but the highest regard for his integrity and his

tireless dedication to the cause of Louisiana's working men and women. Always aided by his wife, Fran, Vic Bussie was not only an effective and articulate spokesman for organized labor; he also brought his influence and moral persuasion to bear on a wide variety of issues, including civil rights, education, health care, government reform and economic development. In every case, I believe that the people of Louisiana are better off today because Vic Bussie took an interest in those issues and dedicated himself to making life better for all of our citizens, not just those in the labor movement.

Perhaps one of the greatest testimonies to Vic Bussie's influence and power were the many national political leaders who relied on him during his 41 years at the helm of Louisiana's AFL-CIO. From John F. Kennedy to Lyndon Johnson to Jimmy Carter to Bill Clinton, presidents of the United States have often sought Vic Bussie's counsel and have relied on him to build public support for their campaigns and their legislative initiatives. In the mid-1960s, when President Lyndon Johnson was attempting to persuade my predecessor, Senator Russell Long, to support his proposal to create the national Medicare system, he called on Vic Bussie. As the story goes, Vic was on the next plane to Washington and it was not long afterwards that Senator Long announced his support for Medicare. As Russell and I have learned so many times, it is awfully hard to say no to Vic Bussie.

Mr. President, the late Adlai Stevenson once remarked that "every age needs men who will redeem the time by living with a vision of things that are to be." I suspect that Vic counted Adlai Stevenson as one of his friends. In fact, I would not be surprised to learn that Stevenson had Vic Bussie in mind when he uttered those words. As leader of Louisiana's labor movement for the past 41 years, Vic Bussie has certainly redeemed his time well. All working men and women owe him a tremendous debt of gratitude and my wife, Lois, and I are very proud to be part of the chorus of well-deserved praise that is coming his way during the days leading up to his retirement.

I know I speak for many others when I say that Victor Bussie will always be gratefully remembered for the outstanding service he has rendered to his State and his Nation.

BALANCED BUDGET AMENDMENT TO THE CONSTITUTION

• Mr. ROCKEFELLER. Mr. President, I oppose amending the U.S. Constitution with a rigid requirement that every year the Federal Government must have a zero budget deficit. I don't think it is appropriate to use our Nation's most revered governing document to lock in a budget and economic policy that cannot respond to changing needs and circumstances. And I do not believe such a requirement could be en-

forced without forcing a constitutional crisis.

In my view, Congress does not need an amendment to the U.S. Constitution to perform its responsibility to enact responsible, balanced Federal budgets. The President and the Congress have all the tools they need to reduce the deficit, to respond and adapt to the country's changing needs, and to keep us militarily and economically strong. It is not a constitutional amendment that makes these choices, but strong leadership and judgment. We must make the choices through realistic cuts in spending, reasonable and fair tax policies, and the setting of obtainable goals that show the specifics—every spending cut and every tax.

Congress can and should act to reduce the deficit. A Democratic Congress did just that in 1993, and the deficit has been cut by more than 60 percent. Including an artificial, unworkable mandate in the U.S. Constitution is not the appropriate path to fiscal responsibility.

I offered and withdrew an amendment which would have protected Medicare from the autopilot of the balanced budget amendment. I offered the Medicare amendment with the intention of engaging in a debate that would expose the balanced budget amendment for the budgetary strait jacket that it is. I offered the amendment with the firm belief that a debate about the effects of a balanced budget amendment on Medicare may help some of my colleagues think through what their actions will mean. People don't want Social Security to be used to balance the budget—and, I believe Medicare is just as important to our constituents as Social Security. Medicare provides West Virginia seniors with health care security—Social Security with a measure of retirement security. My amendment says that the pursuit of a balance budget should not rob seniors of the health care security they need and deserve.

The current constitutional balanced budget amendment, if passed, would force deep and devastating cuts on the Medicare Program. Such cuts would increase the already too high out of pocket costs senior citizens are forced to pay for basic health care. The pending constitutional amendment is sure to drive up the percentage of a senior's total income they must spend on health care services. Currently, seniors' out of pocket costs are, on average, about 21 percent of their total income. This balanced budget amendment is likely to force seniors to spend 25, 30, 35, or even 50 percent of their total resources on the health care services they need. This increased burden on seniors would force many seniors into poverty and make a greater proportion of them dependent on Medicaid services, in essence, shifting even more health care costs to the states.

I want my colleagues to recognize the real world consequences of their vote for an automatic, constitutional

balanced budget—the imposition of devastating cuts in the Medicare Program. Every Senator who I have heard speak publicly about Medicare has said they want to protect, preserve, and strengthen the program. A balanced budget amendment to the Constitution will do the opposite by devastating Medicare—simple math tells us this is true. If my colleagues mean it when they say they want to protect Medicare, they will oppose this constitutional amendment. I urge my colleagues to vote against Medicare being used as a piggy bank to be raided at the end of the year, when the budget isn't in balance, for whatever unforeseen economic reason.

I think my colleagues should consider the admonition of the Secretary of the Treasury about the consequences of a Constitutional balanced budget amendment for Medicare beneficiaries. I asked the Secretary what he thinks would happen to Medicare beneficiaries under a balanced budget amendment when he appeared before the Finance Committee two weeks ago. Here is our exchange about the effects of the balanced budget amendment:

Senator ROCKEFELLER. Now we have this thing called a balanced budget amendment, which, according to one of the papers this morning, may lose steam in both chambers, and I hope that is the case.

But, in the event that it is not, it will be, I think, very problematic for Medicare if we go into a situation where, let us say—Senator MOYNIHAN has heard me talk about this many times—back in the early 1980's in West Virginia we had unemployment that ran up to 21 percent, and devastation to the extent that we were laying off tens of thousands of workers. And this was not common just to West Virginia, it was true in the industrial heartland, as we were making a major economic shift that was painful.

Now, if that were to happen again, and I see no reason why it will not; Japan is now going through exactly that same kind of difficulty, one that we would not have guessed that they would have gone through 10 years after we did, but they are. They are very down about it. They are going to be fine in the long-term.

But if we were to run into that situation again in this country and we had a balanced budget amendment and we had to balance by the end of the year and we had to do our part here in Finance, would we not run into what we used to call sequestration?

Secretary RUBIN. I think that you could easily run into a situation, Senator. I think this is only one of the many problems that a balanced budget amendment creates, and that is, I do think it creates an additional threat to Medicare, if that is what you are saying. If you get to the end of the year and there is a very large, unexpected shortfall, which happens from time to time, then I think the President could be in a position where he would be forced to simply cease sending out all checks.

Well, if you cease sending out all checks you will cease sending out Social Security checks, you will cease sending out Medicare checks, and you will cease sending out all other kinds of checks, I think, instead of being able to deal with it in some sort of a reasonable and sensible fashion.

The Medicare trust fund should not be used as a cash cow to balance the budget in an effort to meet the restrictive requirements of a constitutional