

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

PARTIAL-BIRTH ABORTION BAN ACT OF 1997

Mr. HELMS. Mr. President, there are many times when I am so inclined to pay my respects to Senators who have gone out of their way to take a somewhat different stand. And I imagine that during the past week—and throughout the days of debate on the Partial-Birth Abortion Ban Act in the 104th Congress, as a matter of fact—that if unborn children had a vote or a message of communication and a way to deliver it, they would be sending their love to the distinguished Senator from Pennsylvania, Mr. SANTORUM; and to the distinguished occupant of the chair, Mr. DEWINE of Ohio; and to the able Senator from New Hampshire, Mr. SMITH as well as to the able Senators from Texas and Tennessee, Mr. GRAMM and Mr. FRIST; and on and on.

It has not always been easy to take the pro-life position on this floor, but it is a lot easier and a lot more comfortable now, thanks to these great Senators and others. I personally pay my respects to all who have participated in the debate on the Partial-Birth Abortion Ban Act up to this point.

By the way, as one who has participated in the abortion debates since the Supreme Court's *Roe versus Wade* decision in 1973, and as one who has been condemned by many in certain quarters, I am so thankful that the cavalry has arrived in the Senate and now other Senators are standing up to be counted on an issue that involves the survival of this country. I have long felt if our country cannot reconcile with morality and decency and honesty, the position on the deliberate destruction of the most innocent, the most helpless of human life, that may be at peril—lying just down the road—is the survival of this country.

In any case, the abortion debate shifted dramatically when legislation was introduced in the 104th Congress to spare unborn babies from a merciless procedure known as a partial-birth abortion. Because of the debate in Congress and the heightened concern of the American people, the spotlight no longer is focused on the sanctimonious, so-called right to choose; instead, the debate now centers around the ultimate question: Does an innocent, defenseless, unborn child have a right to live? Senators have cast their votes for and against legislation outlawing partial-birth abortions on two previous occasions—first on December 6, 1995, when 54 Senators voted to ban partial-birth abortions. But the President of the United States, Mr. Clinton, saw fit to veto that bill. The Senate, on September 26 of last year, failed to override that Presidential veto. Fifty-seven Senators voted to override, but the 57 were 10 votes fewer than the two-thirds necessary and required to override.

Which brings me to where we are now and the reason I stand here to pay my respects to Senators like the distinguished occupant of the chair, Mr. DEWINE, Mr. SANTORUM, Mr. SMITH, and others. The Senate has been considering whether an innocent baby—partially born, just 3 inches from the protection of the law—deserves the right to live, to love, and to be loved. Interestingly enough, the House of Representatives has already passed H.R. 1122, which is the bill now before the Senate. In my judgment, the Senate must not squander this opportunity to outlaw partial-birth abortions, and I cannot believe it will.

Those who oppose the Partial-Birth Abortion Ban Act, as it is named, have again asserted the necessity of the procedure that enables doctors to deliver babies partially, feet first from the womb, only to have their brains brutally removed by the doctor's instruments. This procedure has prompted revulsion across this land, even among many who previously have been vocal advocates of the right to choose.

Well-known medical doctors, obstetricians and gynecologists have repeatedly rejected the assertions that a partial-birth abortion is needed to protect the health of a woman in a late-term complicated pregnancy. Dr. Pamela E. Smith, who is director of medical education in the department of obstetrics and gynecology at Chicago's Mount Sinai Hospital, in a letter to Senators described these assertions as—in her words, not mine—“deceptive and patently untrue.”

Also, Mr. President, there is much to be said about the facts surrounding the number of partial-birth abortions performed annually and the reason they are performed—or at least the given, stated reason. It is hard to overlook the recent confession of Ron Fitzsimmons, executive director of the National Coalition of Abortion Providers, who admitted that he, himself, had deceived the American people on national television about the number and the nature of partial-birth abortions.

Mr. Fitzsimmons now estimates that up to 5,000 partial-birth abortions are conducted annually on healthy women carrying healthy babies. This is a far cry from the rhetoric espoused by Washington's pro-abortion groups who maintain that only 500 partial-birth abortions are performed every year, and only in extreme medical circumstances.

Mr. President, I could go on and on, but Senators throughout this debate have provided ample evidence affirming the need to rid America of this senseless, brutal form of killing. And it is also important to note that the American people recognize the moral significance of this legislation. The continued outpouring of letters and phone calls from across the country in support of a ban on partial-birth abortions has been nothing short of remarkable.

I remember so vividly the day in January 1973, when the Supreme Court

handed down the decision to legalize abortion. It was hard to find many people to speak up, certainly on the floor of the Senate, on behalf of unborn babies.

But it is time, once again, for Members of the Senate to stand up and be counted for or against the most helpless human beings imaginable, for or against the destruction of innocent human life in such a repugnant way. The Senate simply must pass the Partial-Birth Abortion Ban Act, and I pray that it will do it by a margin of at least 67 votes in favor of the ban.

THE VERY BAD DEBT BOXSCORE

Mr. HELMS. Mr. President, at the close of business Friday, May 16, 1997, the Federal debt stood at \$5,343,648,869,296.26. (Five trillion, three hundred forty-three billion, six hundred forty-eight million, eight hundred sixty-nine thousand, two hundred ninety-six dollars, and twenty-six cents)

One year ago, May 1996, the Federal debt stood at \$5,113,663,000,000. (Five trillion, one hundred thirteen billion, six hundred sixty-three million)

Twenty-five years ago, May 1972, the Federal debt stood at \$427,214,000,000 (Four hundred twenty-seven billion, two hundred fourteen million) which reflects a debt increase of nearly \$5 trillion—\$4,916,434,869,296.26 (Four trillion, nine hundred sixteen billion, four hundred thirty-four million, eight hundred sixty-nine thousand, two hundred ninety-six dollars, and twenty-six cents) during the past 25 years.

THE RAPID CITY FIRE OF 1997

Mr. DASCHLE. Mr. President, last week a fire devastated downtown Rapid City, consuming the historic Sweeney Building in a furious blaze that threatened to destroy the entire block. Only the heroic efforts of the Rapid City Fire Department and emergency workers from all over the county ensured that the damage, as severe as it was, was contained.

This terrible blaze took a much-loved part of our heritage from us. The Sweeney Building had towered over Rapid City for 111 years, and was one of the oldest buildings in the Black Hills. Its builder, Tom Sweeney, was legendary. His name and slogan “Tom Sweeney Wants to See You” were famous throughout the hills, and his showmanship put Buffalo Bill to shame. His store was full of everything from gold pans to wagons for the early pioneers, and it was said that he could—and did—sell anything. Tom's store is gone now, and it will be missed.

Although part of our past, the Sweeney Building also was a vibrant part of our present. Seven businesses located in the building were lost in the Rapid City fire. They ranged from the State Barbershop, where Vern Johnson cut hair for 37 years, to the 1-week-old Blue Moon nightclub. No one is yet

sure how the fire started, but shortly after firefighters arrived to investigate reports of smoke, a broken window fed the fire with a sudden rush of oxygen. The result was a fiery explosion that shattered storefront windows and blew out the rear wall of the building, causing a rain of bricks to fall on Larry and Mike Blote, two owners of the building, and Pat Dobbs, a reporter for the Rapid City Journal. Thankfully, they had just minor injuries.

Soon after the explosion, Fire Chief Owen Hibbard made the difficult decision to retreat from the building. Few choices are more painful for firefighters. They are by nature people whose instincts urge them to save and preserve, and to fight a fire until the end. Yet as the flames of the Sweeney Building climbed higher and 40 mph winds blew cinders and sparks onto the roofs of neighboring buildings, Chief Hibbard recognized that the out-of-control blaze could destroy the entire block. Ordering his people back, he formed a defensive line around the fire and began the difficult work of containing it. Over the next 2 hours, with the sounds of exploding gunpowder and ammunition thundering from the burning First Stop Gun and Coin shop, the firefighters labored to cool nearby buildings and reduce the intensity of the blaze. By 4 p.m., the fire had been successfully contained, and dozens of homes and businesses that could have been destroyed were saved.

Mr. President, I commend the Rapid City Fire Department for their outstanding job containing this fire. It is due to their preplanning, training, and strong leadership that no one sustained serious injuries, despite dangerous circumstances ranging from backdraft explosions to ricocheting bullets. I also want to thank Mayor Jim Shaw for his calm and solid leadership throughout this crisis. The loss of the Sweeney Building has been difficult, especially for those men and women who lost their livelihood, but I am confident that, together, we will recover.

I yield the floor and I suggest the absence of a quorum.

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Ms. COLLINS). The clerk will call the roll.

The bill clerk proceeded to call the roll.

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

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

Mr. THOMAS. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent to speak for 7 minutes as in morning business.

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

THE BUDGET

Mr. THOMAS. Mr. President, we are going to, this week, enter into one of the most serious debates that we will have all year, one of the matters that I think is the most serious that we will address all year, and that is the ques-

tion of the budget. As a matter of fact, it is my understanding we will talk about two budgets. One will be the appropriations for the supplemental budget, designed to deal with disaster and other matters, but then the real budget for the year which will outline the spending for this country.

I think this is important, particularly important, because there is much more to it than arithmetic. It is not simply numbers. It is not simply what we will spend. I think it has to do with a number of things that are of particular significance. I hope that we give some consideration to these broader things as we talk about numbers, which we inevitably will do. One has to do with the size of the Government. It has to do with the potential and the opportunity to reduce the size of Government. I happen to believe that Government has become too large and that it could be smaller. It could be much more efficient. I suspect it would be more efficient if it were smaller. The budget is one of the ways that you do that.

Government by its nature does not get smaller unless somehow there is a restriction on the amount of money available. I think it also gets more efficient when there is less money to do the job, and it is similar to what has to be done in the private sector.

Second, it has, of course, to do with priorities. Each of us, as we spend our money, whether in business or personal and private family lives, have to set priorities. There is never enough money for everything. Certainly that is increasingly true with Government. So it is necessary to set priorities, to decide which of the many functions of Government are most important, which ones need to be financed, which ones need to be funded, which ones, indeed, could be reduced or eliminated.

Third, it has to do with taxing. It has to do with how much money we are going to allow families to keep, to spend for themselves. Average family spending for taxes now is nearly 40 percent, 40 percent of revenue from the family. It was just recently that we had tax day, so that everything we earned up until just a week or so ago all went for taxes.

The budget has to do with the potential, the possibility of reducing the burden on the families in this country. It has to do with the incentive for investment. Tax reduction is also an opportunity to have investments for people to put into their businesses, to create jobs, to strengthen the economy. There is a direct relationship, particularly in tax reductions such as capital gains which encourages people to invest.

The budget gives us an opportunity to keep Medicare and entitlements available.

I just met this morning with a great group of young people, high school people. We talked a little bit about entitlements. We talked specifically about Medicare. Frankly, all of them, 18

years old, said, "We really do not think there will be any Medicare for us." Indeed, there will not be unless we make some changes. Budgets, of course, are where it is possible to do that.

Budgets also test our willingness to be financially responsible, to balance the budget and not spend more than we take in, which we have done for more than 30 years here in this Congress. I have to say I have not done it for 30 years because I have not been here for 30 years.

Finally, and related to that, of course, budgets determine what will we leave to our kids to pay in terms of budgets, in terms of debts. What we have done, of course, over the last few years, is we have spent more than we took in and put it on the old credit card, and it is maxed out. So we will determine how much of a debt we leave to our kids.

That is what we are talking about in terms of budgets. It will be difficult. It will be difficult. American voters, as someone said, and I think it is true, sent two teams to do the same thing, two teams with quite different philosophies. If everyone here had the same philosophy then we would have a certain kind of a budget. If everybody believed we ought to have smaller Government, we would have smaller Government. If everybody thought we ought to have more tax relief, we would have that, but everybody does not. There are two different points of view that will have to be reconciled before anything can be done.

So we approach a budget with, I think, a certain amount of reserve. Certainly this is not a breakthrough budget. This is not a turnaround. This is not a change, a sea change, I do not believe. I do not think it is designed for meaningful reduction in the size of Government or spending reductions. It is not dedicated to real honest-to-goodness tax relief.

Now, on the other hand, I think in fairness, and we will have to talk about it, it does provide some of the principles that most of us have talked about for some time. It probably comes closer, and I hope it does, to a real balance than any budget in recent history over a period of 5 years, a real balanced budget.

Now you have to keep in mind you can balance the budget in many ways. You can continue to increase taxes and increase revenue and balance the budget up here, when the real idea that most people want to balance the budget is down here, and reduce some of the spending.

Second, it provides some tax relief. We are told that there will be an opportunity on the floor for debate of tax relief. One will be \$500 per child for family relief. That is good. Another would be some relief of capital gains taxes. That is good. It will help the economy. And in the short term, at least, it will increase revenues. Some reduction in estate taxes, I think, is good.

In my State of Wyoming, there are lots of family farmers, ranches, and