

management accounts of the Department of Energy and moved them into procurement and other Department of Defense accounts.

Let me tell you the effect this move will have on one place in my State. Probably the single biggest environmental problem on any of our former defense nuclear weapons sites is the 177 storage tanks filled with chemical and high-level radioactive waste at Hanford. Each of these tanks contains from a half million to a million gallons of toxic waste. Some of that waste is rock solid, some of it is soupy sludge, some of it is liquid, and some is poisonous gas. Several tanks have "burped" their noxious gases.

We have only recently begun making real progress in learning what chemicals and radioactive waste were put into these tanks and what substances have now been created through indiscriminate mixing of wastes.

The most troubling aspect of these tanks is that they are leaking, moving these vile substances into ground water and toward the Columbia River.

Let me say it again. These tanks are leaking, and they are located next to one of this Nation's greatest rivers. They are upstream from Richland, Kennewick, Pasco, Portland, and many smaller communities in Washington and Oregon. And their toxic waste is slowly migrating toward the Columbia River, which many view as the lifeblood of the Pacific Northwest because it provides fish, irrigation, power generation, recreation, and much more.

In this year's budget, the Department of Energy requested \$427 million in budget authority to continue a privatization initiative, called the tank waste remediation system, and another \$500 million plus for other environmental management privatization efforts. My colleague in the Washington delegation, Representative ADAM SMITH, was successful in getting the House National Security Committee to place \$70 million in the defense authorization bill for tank waste, nearly \$350 million short of the budget request, but the House gave no other sites any funds. Our Senate Armed Services Committee bill provides \$215 million for four privatization projects, including \$109 million targeted to tank waste. This is simply not adequate.

Yesterday, I submitted an amendment to the Department of Defense authorization bill that would increase these privatization accounts by about \$250 million. Most of that money goes toward solving the tank waste problem which almost everyone familiar with this issue agrees must be our top priority, but money is also added at Savannah River, Oak Ridge, Idaho Falls, and Fernald.

In addition, my amendment would facilitate the riskiest part of this privatization venture by helping to ensure DOE is able to meet its time lines for delivery of this toxic waste to a private company for vitrification or immobilization. I added \$50 million for this

initial stage of characterization and remediation of the tank waste. The offsets come from noncleanup programs and another privatization effort within the Departments of Energy and Defense.

Mr. President, I am talking about deadly risks to human health and the environment, and so far, this Congress is choosing to ignore them. Simply wishing that these enormously costly projects will go away will not make them disappear. It will only make them worse and more costly to clean up later.

The Department of Energy has proposed an innovative method of solving these problems by privatizing them and letting some of the best, most established companies in the world use their expertise to clean up these sites. In order for industry to succeed, this Congress must demonstrate its commitment to the privatization program by funding it. Going from a Presidential request of \$1 billion to \$70 million in the House and \$215 million in the Senate will not give the capital markets or private industry the confidence they need to make this work.

We need more money for the tank waste remediation system and other cleanup priorities. Let me remind my colleagues that even if my amendment prevails, this authorization bill will still contain about \$500 million less than was agreed upon by the President and Congress in the recent historic budget agreement. The President finds this funding shortfall so serious that he has issued veto threats on both defense authorization bills, citing this as one of his primary concerns.

I urge my colleagues to stand with me as we work to get our former defense nuclear weapons sites restored or at least stop them from causing further harm to our rivers, our air and our land. We cannot turn our backs on the nearby communities that have sacrificed so much for this Nation in the past. Let's make our victory of the cold war complete by leaving our children and our grandchildren a safe, healthy environment, not a contaminated wasteland that sites, like Hanford, will become without sufficient Federal cleanup dollars.

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

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Mr. INHOFE). The clerk will call the roll.

The legislative clerk proceeded to call the roll.

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

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

THE VERY BAD DEBT BOXSCORE

Mr. HELMS. Mr. President, at the close of business yesterday, Monday, July 7, 1997, the Federal debt stood at \$5,355,915,100,573.58. (Five trillion, three

hundred fifty-five billion, nine hundred fifteen million, one hundred thousand, five hundred seventy-three dollars and fifty-eight cents)

Five years ago, July 7, 1992, the Federal debt stood at \$3,970,574,000,000. (Three trillion, nine hundred seventy billion, five hundred seventy-four million)

Ten years ago, July 7, 1987, the Federal debt stood at \$2,326,212,000,000. (Two trillion, three hundred twenty-six billion, two hundred twelve million)

Fifteen years ago, July 7, 1982, the Federal debt stood at \$1,071,078,000,000. (One trillion, seventy-one billion, seventy-eight million)

Twenty-five years ago, July 7, 1972, the Federal debt stood at \$429,537,000,000. (Four hundred twenty-nine billion, five hundred thirty-seven million) which reflects a debt increase of nearly \$5 trillion—\$4,926,378,100,573.58 (Four trillion, nine hundred twenty-six billion, three hundred seventy-eight million, one hundred thousand, five hundred seventy-three dollars and fifty-eight cents) during the past 25 years.

CONCLUSION OF MORNING BUSINESS

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Morning business is closed.

NATIONAL DEFENSE AUTHORIZATION ACT FOR FISCAL YEAR 1998

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Under the previous order, the Senate will now resume consideration of S. 936, which the clerk will report.

The bill clerk read as follows:

A bill (S. 936) to authorize appropriations for fiscal year 1998 for military activities of the Department of Defense, for military construction, and for defense activities of the Department of Energy, to prescribe personnel strengths for such fiscal year for the Armed Forces, and for other purposes.

The Senate resumed consideration of the bill.

Pending:

Cochran/Durbin amendment No. 420, to require a license to export computers with composite theoretical performance equal to or greater than 2,000 million theoretical operations per second.

Grams amendment No. 422 (to Amendment No. 420), to require the Comptroller General of the United States to conduct a study on the availability and potential risks relating to the sale of certain computers.

Coverdell (for Inhofe/Coverdell/Cleland) amendment No. 423, to define depot-level maintenance and repair, to limit contracting for depot-level maintenance and repair at installations approved for closure or realignment in 1995, and to modify authorities and requirements relating to the performance of core logistics functions.

Lugar Modified amendment No. 658, to increase (with offsets) the funding, and to improve the authority, for cooperative threat reduction programs and related Department of Energy programs.

Mr. GORTON addressed the Chair.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Chair recognizes the Senator from Washington.

AMENDMENT NO. 645

Mr. GORTON. Mr. President, I call up amendment No. 645 and ask for its immediate consideration.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection, the pending amendments will be set aside.

The clerk will report.

The bill clerk read as follows:

The Senator from Washington [Mr. GORTON] proposes amendment numbered 645.

Mr. GORTON. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that further reading of the amendment be dispensed with.

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

The amendment is as follows:

Page 217, after line 15, insert the following new subtitle heading:

SUBTITLE A—HEALTH CARE SERVICES

Page 226, after line 2, insert the following new subtitle:

SUBTITLE B—UNIFORMED SERVICES TREATMENT FACILITIES

SEC. 711. IMPLEMENTATION OF DESIGNATED PROVIDER AGREEMENTS FOR UNIFORMED SERVICES TREATMENT FACILITIES.

(a) COMMENCEMENT OF HEALTH CARE SERVICES UNDER AGREEMENT.—Subsection (c) of section 722 of the National Defense Authorization Act for Fiscal Year 1997 (Public Law 104-201, 10 U.S.C. 1073 note) is amended—

(1) by redesignating paragraphs (1) and (2) as subparagraphs (A) and (B);

(2) by inserting “(1)” before “Unless”; and

(3) by adding at the end the following new paragraph:

“(2) The Secretary may modify the effective date established under paragraph (1) for an agreement to permit a transition period of not more than six months between the date on which the agreement is executed by the parties and the date on which the designated provider commences the delivery of health care services under the agreement.”.

(b) TEMPORARY CONTINUATION OF EXISTING PARTICIPATION AGREEMENTS.—Subsection (d) of such section is amended by inserting before the period at the end the following: “, including any transitional period provided by the Secretary under paragraph (2) of such subsection”.

(c) ARBITRATION.—Subsection (c) of such section is further amended by adding at end the following new paragraph:

“(3) In the case of a designated provider whose service area has a managed care support contract implemented under the TRICARE program as of September 23, 1996, the Secretary and the designated provider shall submit to binding arbitration if the agreement has not been executed by October 1, 1997. The arbitrator, mutually agreed upon by the Secretary and the designated provider, shall be selected from the American Arbitration Association. The arbitrator shall develop an agreement that shall be executed by the Secretary and the designated provider by January 1, 1998. Notwithstanding paragraph (1), the effective date of such agreement shall be not more than six months after the date on which the agreement is executed.”.

(d) CONTRACTING OUT OF PRIMARY CARE SERVICES.—Subsection (f)(2) of such section is amended by inserting at the end the following new sentence: “Such limitation on contracting out primary care services shall only apply to contracting out to a health maintenance organization, or to a licensed insurer that is not controlled directly or indirectly by the designated provider, except in the case of primary care contracts between a designated provider and a contractor

in force as of September 23, 1996. Subject to the overall enrollment restriction under section 724 and limited to the historical service area of the designated provider, professional service agreements or independent contractor agreements with primary care physicians or groups of primary care physicians, however organized, and employment agreements with such physicians shall not be considered to be the type of contracts that are subject to the limitation of this subsection, so long as the designated provider itself remains at risk under its agreement with the Secretary in the provision of services by any such contracted physicians or groups of physicians.”.

(e) UNIFORM BENEFIT.—Section 723(b) of the National Defense Authorization Act for Fiscal Year 1997 (PL 104-201, 10 USC 1073 note) is amended—

(1) in subsection (1) by inserting before the period at the end the following: “, subject to any modification to the effective date the Secretary may provide pursuant to section 722(c)(2)”, and

(2) in subsection (2), by inserting before the period at the end the following: “, or the effective date of agreements negotiated pursuant to section 722(c)(3)”.

SEC. 712. LIMITATION ON TOTAL PAYMENTS.

Section 726(b) of the National Defense Authorization Act for Fiscal Year 1997 (Public Law 104-201, 10 U.S.C. 1073 note) is amended by adding at the end the following new sentence: “In establishing the ceiling rate for enrollees with the designated providers who are also eligible for the Civilian Health and Medical Program of the Uniformed Services, the Secretary of Defense shall take into account the health status of the enrollees.”.

SEC. 713. CONTINUED ACQUISITION OF REDUCED-COST DRUGS.

Section 722 of the National Defense Authorization Act for Fiscal Year 1997 (Public Law 104-201; 10 U.S.C. 1073 note) is amended by adding at the end the following new subsection:

“(g) CONTINUED ACQUISITION OF REDUCED-COST DRUGS.—A designated provider shall be treated as part of the Department of Defense for purposes of section 8126 if title 38, United States Code, in connection with the provision by the designated provider of health care services to covered beneficiaries pursuant to the participation agreement of the designated provider under section 718(c) of the National Defense Authorization Act for Fiscal Year 1991 (Public Law 101-510; 42 U.S.C. 248c note) or pursuant to the agreement entered into under subsection (b).”.

Mr. GORTON. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that Senators HUTCHISON of Texas, D'AMATO, and MURRAY be added as cosponsors to the amendment.

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

Mr. GORTON. Mr. President, this amendment refines legislation enacted last year to transition the uniformed services treatment facilities [USTF's] into the DOD's new health care program called TRICARE.

I hope that the managers of the bill, Senator THURMOND, chairman of the committee, and Senator KEMPTHORNE, chairman of the operative subcommittee, will accept it.

Mr. President, I am proud to have been associated with the USTF's since the program's inception over 15 years ago. I was an original cosponsor of the amendment offered on this floor in 1981 by the late Senator Henry M. “Scoop” Jackson that transitioned these former

public health service hospitals and clinics to facilities of the uniformed services to provide health care to dependents of active duty personnel as well as military retirees and their dependents. Most recently last summer on this floor, I sponsored the amendment that provided the future authority for the USTF's to continue providing care to military beneficiaries through the integration of their facilities into DOD's military health care delivery system.

The USTF's currently serve about 120,000 beneficiaries at facilities located in seven States: Maine, Maryland, Massachusetts, New York, Ohio, Texas, and Washington. The facilities provide high-quality care that has been judged by every major study done to date as cost-effective when compared to CHAMPUS and other DOD health care alternatives. The USTF's pioneered managed care principles such as enrollment and capitation that have become the hallmarks of the new TRICARE program.

The USTF's are very popular with the beneficiaries, many of whom would never consider receiving their health care from any other provider. Satisfaction surveys just completed by an independent firm conclude that the USTF's as a whole have a 91 percent satisfaction rate, 7 percentage points higher than the norm for civilian HMO's. The USTF in my State, Pacific Medical Center, enjoys the highest overall satisfaction rate of nearly 95 percent. I doubt that any DOD health care provider program can match the USTF's for satisfying the medical needs of military personnel and their families.

The introduction of TRICARE, however, has brought the USTF program to a crossroads. TRICARE has been operating in my State of Washington for over 2 years and started in Texas in November 1995. Its introduction has heightened interest within DOD to integrate the USTF's into TRICARE to ensure consistent application of the so-called uniform benefit. The amendment I offered last year which was enacted as part of the fiscal year 1997 National Defense Authorization Act set out the process for this integration of the USTF's into TRICARE to protect the beneficiary interests as well as to preserve the separate designated status of the USTF's. My amendment, which reflected the position passed by the House, called for an orderly process for negotiation of new agreements so Pacific Medical Center and the other USTF's could continue offering high-quality and cost-effective health care to military beneficiaries.

Despite my earlier amendment's good intentions, unforeseen problems have developed, largely because of institutional delays and the Defense Department's unconventional interpretation of some of the key provisions. Accordingly, I feel compelled to offer an amendment today that updates and perfects last year's language.

In a similar fashion to last year, my amendment today includes four straight-forward provisions already contained in the House-passed fiscal year 1998 Defense authorization bill. It is important to note that these four provisions are in every way substantively identical to subtitle C of title VII of the House-passed bill.

The first House-passed provision provides authority for a 6-month transition period in the implementation of the new USTF program to allow adequate time to educate the beneficiaries. The 6-month transition is entirely reasonable given that new TRICARE contracts provide at least 7 months for a proper transition. As we learned from the TRICARE transition in Washington, a compressed time period for transition will cause confusion and frustration for the beneficiaries.

The second House-passed provision provides authority to continue the existing USTF agreements during the transition period. The Seattle and Texas USTF's technically lose their statutory designation effective October 1 unless they have new agreements executed. But because of delays in commencing the negotiations with DOD, these two USTF's will not have new agreements implemented by October. An extension of the current agreement and all its provisions until the transition period is complete seems fair and appropriate.

The third House provision clarifies that the ceiling for capitation payments provided to the USTF's takes into account the health status of the enrolled beneficiaries who are under age 65. This reflects last year's clear intent that the actuarial benchmark for developing rates to reimburse the USTF's should be the health status of the actual USTF enrollees, not a national average of military health care patients.

The fourth and final House provision clarifies last year's provision so that USTF's still qualify to purchase pharmaceuticals under the preferred pricing levels applicable to military health care providers. All parties agree that last year's legislation was not intended to take away the right to continued acquisition of these reduced-cost drugs.

In addition to these four House-passed provisions, my amendment includes three other items to ensure that DOD negotiates fairly with the USTF's on the new agreements. These provisions would not be necessary if the Defense Department were earnestly negotiating in good faith with Pacific Medical Center and the Houston, TX, USTF. These two facilities are on the firing line because TRICARE is already in their regions and they are therefore required by law to have a new agreement executed by October 1, 1997. DOD, however, has chosen to negotiate first with three other USTF's that will not see TRICARE in their regions until mid-1998 at the earliest and consequently do not face the same immediacy faced by Seattle and Texas.

The first new provision tries to prod the negotiations with DOD with a requirement for binding arbitration for up to 90 days if DOD and the Washington and Texas USTF's do not reach an agreement with DOD by October 1, 1997. This arbitration amendment encourages both sides to work out their differences without giving extra leverage to either side. Without arbitration, DOD has no incentive to negotiate because it can literally run the clock out and present the Washington and Texas USTF's with a "take-or-leave-it" contract in late September just before the October 1 deadline arrives.

Binding arbitration is an eminently fair device to break an impasse and push the negotiations to completion by a date certain. The Seattle and Houston USTF's are fully prepared to accept the judgment of an independent arbiter. If DOD wants to avoid arbitration, the Department's Health Affairs Division should commence immediately good-faith negotiations with Seattle and Houston leading toward a fair agreement.

This was the result the last time Congress threatened to impose arbitration to push DOD and the USTF to an agreement. The conference report language accompanying the fiscal year 1991 National Defense Authorization Act stressed that Congress was prepared to require mandatory arbitration if the managed care model was not negotiated by DOD and the USTF's by a statutory deadline. This threat of arbitration was instrumental in pushing DOD back to the negotiating table.

The second new provision contained in my amendment clarifies how the USTF's can contract out their physician services. The clarification permits contracting out to primary care physicians provided the USTF's retain all risk and don't exceed their enrollment cap and their historical service area. The provision serves the beneficiary interest by allowing the USTF's to place primary care physicians where they are needed to enhance the convenience and accessibility of care. This change will also level the playing field with the TRICARE contractors that can contract out their primary care services.

The third and last new provision in my amendment is a conforming change that applies to the uniform benefit, with the accompanying higher enrollment fee and higher cost shares, when the new USTF agreements are fully implemented. This clarification is needed to ensure consistency with the 6-month transition of the arbitration period.

Finally, Mr. President, I implore DOD to respond favorably to the request of Pacific Medical Center and the other USTF's for open enrollment season so that military retirees can sign up this summer for the USTF program. Since DOD did not permit Pacific Medical Center to conduct an open season last year, if there is no open enrollment this summer the effect will be to deny military retirees a chance to enroll in this program for 2 consecutive

years. The result is substantial pent-up demand and frustration by retirees who are simply looking for another choice in meeting their military health care needs. I urge DOD to adhere to the request in a recent Washington State congressional delegation letter to permit an open season, as clearly provided for in the USTF contracts.

Overall, Mr. President, this set of legislative refinements, as well as providing for an open season, should enable the USTF program to continue to serve the health care needs of its military beneficiaries. I appreciate the committee's understanding and hope it will soon be able to accept this amendment. Of course, I urge the full Senate to pass it.

I suggest the absence of a quorum.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will call the roll.

The bill clerk proceeded to call the roll.

Mr. WELLSTONE. 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. WELLSTONE. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent we lay aside the pending amendment.

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

AMENDMENT NO. 669

(Purpose: To provide \$500,000 for the bioassay testing of veterans exposed to ionizing radiation during military service)

Mr. WELLSTONE. Mr. President, I have two amendments I will discuss. The first is an amendment numbered 669.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will report.

The bill clerk read as follows:

The Senator from Minnesota [Mr. WELLSTONE], for himself and Mr. ROCKEFELLER, proposes an amendment numbered 669.

Mr. WELLSTONE. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent reading of the amendment be dispensed with.

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

The amendment is as follows:

On page 46, between lines 6 and 7, insert the following:

SEC. 220. BIOASSAY TESTING OF VETERANS EXPOSED TO IONIZING RADIATION DURING MILITARY SERVICE.

(a) NUCLEAR TEST PERSONNEL PROGRAM.—Of the amount provided in section 201(4), \$50,000 shall be available for testing described in subsection (b) at the Brookhaven National Laboratory in support of the Nuclear Test Personnel Program conducted by the Defense Special Weapons Agency.

(b) COVERED TESTING.—Subsection (a) applies to the third phase of bioassay testing of individuals who are radiation-exposed veterans (as defined in section 1112(c)(3) of title 38, United States Code) who participated in radiation-risk activities (as defined in such paragraph).

Mr. WELLSTONE. Mr. President, I will be relatively brief and take just several hours—just take a few minutes to speak about this. I wanted to see if everyone was awake today.

This is an amendment that would assist atomic veterans. Mr. President, I

actually could talk for several hours about the atomic veterans. But I would just say that I think the most moving and most emotional times for me as a Senator has been time spent with atomic veterans in Minnesota. These are veterans who were asked to go to ground zero during the atomic testing in States like Nevada and were put in harm's way by our Government, and no one told them what they might be facing, and no one gave them protective gear.

For many of these atomic veterans it has been a nightmare. This all started in the 1950's, and for decades many of them have had a pattern of illness in their families. I could go on for hours talking about what has happened to them, including high incidences of cancer for the atomic veterans themselves, and all sorts of problems of cancer and deformities with children and grandchildren.

And to this day they still wait for adequate compensation. They wait for justice. I think it is one of the most shameful things that has happened in our country. These are veterans.

I actually want to focus on just one small piece of this amendment. I am hoping to be able to receive good support from both Democrats and Republicans, and I am hoping this amendment may indeed be accepted. I know Congressman LANE EVANS has worked on this in the House, and I believe this provision has been accepted in the House of Representatives.

This amendment would authorize \$500,000 for the third and final phase of a Defense Special Weapons Agency program at Brookhaven National Laboratory to conduct—this will sound technical, Mr. President, but it is actually pretty important—to conduct internal dose reconstructions of veterans exposed to ionizing radiation while serving in the Armed Forces. DSWA is responsible for providing dose reconstructions for most atomic veterans filing claims with the VA. Out of the funding provided to DSWA—this, again, is the Defense Special Weapons Agency—for R&D under section 201(4), \$500,000 would be available for bioassay testing at Brookhaven National Laboratory for the purpose of conducting internal dose reconstructions of atomic veterans to find out what has happened to them.

That is what this is all about. This program is crucial to atomic veterans because it provides the means, I say to my colleague from South Carolina, who has been so supportive of veterans, for more accurate reconstruction of radiation dosage. This is a vital step in ensuring that atomic veterans receive the compensation they deserve and in reassuring veterans who did not inhale or ingest radioactive particles in quantities sufficient to cause cancer. In other words, they need to know where they stand. This is a terribly important test. We do not want to eliminate the funding for this. Many veterans who have radiogenic diseases have been

denied compensation often based on flawed dose reconstructions.

Mr. President, out of the hundreds of thousands of atomic veterans—I would like my colleagues to hear this, even if they are not on the floor now as they consider how to vote on this—out of the hundreds of thousands of atomic veterans, merely 15,000 have filed claims for service-connected compensation with the VA based on disability stemming from radiogenic diseases. Of these, only 1,438 have been approved, or less than 10 percent. Just imagine this, hundreds of thousands of atomic veterans, only 15,000 claims, and only a little over 1,000 have been approved. Of this low percentage, an indeterminate percentage may have had their claims granted for diseases unrelated to radiation exposure.

Mr. President, we have to make sure that we provide funding, a small amount of funding within the Department of Defense—that is where we have been doing this funding—to make sure that we continue this very critical test undertaken for atomic veterans.

The White House Advisory Committee on Human Radiation Experiments found “that the Government did not create or maintain adequate records regarding the exposure of all participants [in nuclear weapons tests and] the identity and test locales of all participants.” This finding calls into question the current capability of the Government to come up with accurate dose reconstructions on which the approval of claims for VA compensation for many atomic veterans depend. Again, the advisory committee has said we do not have adequate data. We have not been able to keep the records. If we do not have this dose reconstruction done well, then a lot of the atomic veterans who deserve compensation for the terrible illnesses that have been inflicted upon them or their family members are not going to have the chance to get the compensation.

The DSWA program at Brookhaven uses a technology called fission tracking analysis. It analyzes the results of urine samples from atomic veterans to arrive at internal dose reconstructions. The program seeks to improve the technique first used to establish the Marshall Islanders' exposure to ionizing radiation from atmospheric nuclear testing, the same tests that we have been using with Marshall Islanders. During the third and final phase of the program, Brookhaven plans to conduct bioassays of atomic veterans and provide technical assistance to DSWA in internal dose reconstruction.

Here is what has happened, here is the reason for this amendment, colleagues. Unfortunately, a conflict has now taken place between DOD and VA, and it has developed on funding the final phase of the program. DSWA declines to continue funding the program because it contends that it is not in the business of medical testing, even though the agency has performed medical testing for Marshall Islanders. The

VA simply claims it lacks the necessary funding. In the interests of the atomic veterans who served this country bravely and unquestionably, we need to end the bickering and ensure the program is carried out to fruition. The VFW, the National Association of Atomic Veterans, and the Disabled American Veterans agree and strongly back this amendment. It is a little bit outrageous that we have this bickering going on and at the same time you have these veterans for whom this test is the only way that they are ever going to be able to get any compensation.

Mr. President, in closing, I note that for many years the cover of the Atomic Veterans Newsletter, the official publication of the National Association of Atomic Veterans, contained the simple but eloquent statement: “The atomic veteran seeks no special favor, simply justice.” Their fight for justice has been too long, it has been too hard, and it has been too frustrating. But these patriotic and deserving veterans have persevered and they retain their faith in America.

I urge all of my colleagues to join me in helping atomic veterans with their struggle for justice and supporting my amendment. It is a matter of simple justice. Mr. President, Congressman LANE EVANS, who has been such a strong advocate for atomic veterans, has done this on the House side. I think the Senate should join in this effort. I think it would be absolutely unconscionable if we eliminated this funding for this small but very, very important program where we can have adequate data as to what kind of radiation dosage these atomic veterans were, in fact, vulnerable to, affected by, and what this means for them now. That, Mr. President, is the meaning of this amendment.

I ask unanimous consent this amendment be set aside.

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

AMENDMENT NO. 668

(Purpose: To require the Secretary of Defense to transfer \$400,000,000 to the Secretary of Veterans' Affairs to provide funds for veterans' health care and other purposes)

Mr. WELLSTONE. Mr. President, I call up amendment number 668.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will report.

The assistant legislative clerk read as follows:

The Senator from Minnesota [Mr. WELLSTONE] proposes an amendment numbered 668.

Mr. WELLSTONE. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the reading of the amendment be dispensed with.

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

The amendment is as follows:

At the end of subtitle D of title X, add the following:

SEC. . TRANSFER FOR VETERANS' HEALTH CARE AND OTHER PURPOSES.

(a) TRANSFER REQUIRED.—The Secretary of Defense shall transfer to the Secretary of

Veterans' Affairs \$400,000,000 of the funds appropriated for the Department of Defense for fiscal year 1998.

(b) **USE OF TRANSFERRED FUNDS.**—Funds transferred to the Secretary of Veterans' Affairs shall be for the purpose of providing benefits under the laws administered by the Secretary of Veterans' Affairs, other than compensation and pension benefits provided under Chapters 11 and 13 of title 38, United States Code.

Mr. WELLSTONE. Mr. President, this amendment would not be subject to any point of order. It authorizes the Secretary of Defense to transfer some \$400 million to the VA budget for the health care for veterans.

Mr. President, this amendment is an effort to ameliorate some damage that was done in the budget resolution that—I say to my colleagues, I do not think any Senator was really familiar with—made significant cuts in VA health care.

My amendment to the Department of Defense authorization bill would, again, authorize the Secretary of Defense to transfer \$400 million from the DOD budget to restore cuts in VA discretionary health care spending. This amendment responds to the health care needs of veterans by restoring some badly needed funding for programs to the fiscal year 1997 level.

Mr. President, even with this restoration, chances are remote that the VA health care funding for fiscal year 1998 will exceed fiscal year 1997. We all know—I just want to make this clear to my colleagues—that we have an aging veteran population. We all know that as more veterans live to be over 65 and over 85, there is more of a strain on the health care budget. We want to be sure that the cut that took place in the budget resolution—which I don't think hardly any Senator was aware of, although all of the veterans organizations were aware, and there is a fair amount of indignation around the country on this question—we want to make sure that these cuts in veterans health care don't end up forcing veterans who were either disabled, ill, or poor to have to shift from VA health care to other health care. That would be a travesty for the veterans and their families, and it would also have negative consequences for VA health care in our country.

Mr. President, it has become clear that the cuts in the veterans' discretionary programs that were agreed to as part of the budget resolution are going to have some severe, if not devastating, consequences on the quality and availability of VA health care for disabled and needy veterans. The fiscal year 1998 cuts will limit VA's ability to serve all patients entitled to VA health care. If veterans health care benefits are delayed because of reduced staffing—you have to make your cuts somewhere—or a longer waiting period, then we are going to be shortchanging men and women who have risked their lives for our country.

Let me give you some sense of the impact of the \$400 million reduction in

VA discretionary spending in fiscal year 1998. Mr. President, to give you some idea about it, a \$400 million reduction in VA discretionary spending in fiscal year 1998 is roughly equivalent to the cost of operating one of the smaller of the VA's 22 integrated service networks.

I held a forum, I say to my colleagues, in May. It was unbelievable. We had a huge turnout of veterans representing, I think, all of the veterans organizations that I can think of—Vietnam Veterans of America, Disabled Americans, Paralyzed Veterans, Military for the Purple Heart, American Legion, Veterans of Foreign Wars, atomic veterans, you name it.

The Minnesota veterans were unanimous in denouncing the cuts in some really essential VA health care resources. Like my colleagues, I supported the sense-of-the-Senate amendment that was introduced by Senators DASCHLE, DOMENICI and ROCKEFELLER on May 21, which called for full funding of the VA discretionary programs, including medical care for fiscal year 1998. I supported it for two reasons. First, I don't think many of us were aware that in the budget resolution there were going to be cuts in our investment in resources for VA health care. Second, I think it is simply the wrong thing to do. I think there is a sacred contract with our veterans, and if we are going to be making cuts and do deficit reduction, we ought not to be doing it on their backs.

So, Mr. President, I am convinced that this amendment is appropriate. I am convinced that it is really quite appropriate to pass an amendment that gives the Secretary of Defense the authorization to authorize this transfer of funding because, after all, these veterans were fighting for the defense of the Nation. That is what it was all about. I think it is critically important that we live up to this commitment.

Mr. President, let me just finish up again and say to colleagues that I am just introducing these amendments because, as I understand this process, we are going to have a cloture vote this afternoon and we may not have votes for about a day and there will be more time to discuss these amendments. At least, that is my understanding. I do want colleagues to be familiar with each of them.

I think that the atomic veterans, unfortunately, have been out of sight and out of mind for all too many people in the country. This is a critically important amendment to those veterans so that they can know what happened to them. That is the very least we can do for those veterans, their children and grandchildren.

On the second amendment, I am absolutely convinced that very few Senators were aware of the fact that the budget resolution made these cuts. It was all done in good conscience. Some of my closest friends worked on the budget resolution and supported it. My amendment simply says that we should

take \$400 million and heal these cuts. My amendment authorizes the Secretary of Defense to do that. I know Dr. Ken Kaiser came out to Minnesota and met with veterans, and he wasn't aware of these cuts. I have not met one person in charge of delivering health care for veterans who believes that this can be done in such a way that it will not seriously damage the quality of health care. I am not just giving some kind of trump speech on the floor of the Senate. This is very important. We ought to, at the very least, be able to transfer this small amount of money and restore this funding for our VA health care.

With that, Mr. President, I yield the floor. I see my colleague from Georgia. Mr. CLELAND addressed the Chair.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Georgia is recognized.

Mr. CLELAND. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent to lay aside the pending amendment.

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

AMENDMENT NO. 712

(Purpose: To express the sense of Congress reaffirming the commitment of the United States to provide quality health care for military retirees)

Mr. CLELAND. Mr. President, I send an amendment to the desk and ask for its immediate consideration.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will report.

The assistant legislative clerk read as follows:

The Senator from Georgia [Mr. CLELAND] proposes an amendment numbered 712.

Mr. CLELAND. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that reading of the amendment be dispensed with.

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

The amendment is as follows:

At the end of title VII, add the following:

SEC. 708. SENSE OF CONGRESS REGARDING QUALITY HEALTH CARE FOR RETIREES.

(a) **FINDINGS.**—Congress makes the following findings:

(1) Many retired military personnel believe that they were promised lifetime health care in exchange for 20 or more years of service.

(2) Military retirees are the only Federal Government personnel who have been prevented from using their employer-provided health care at or after 65 years of age.

(3) Military health care has become increasingly difficult to obtain for military retirees as the Department of Defense reduces its health care infrastructure.

(4) Military retirees deserve to have a health care program at least comparable with that of retirees from civilian employment by the Federal Government.

(5) The availability of quality, lifetime health care is a critical recruiting incentive for the Armed Forces.

(6) Quality health care is a critical aspect of the quality of life of the men and women serving in the Armed Forces.

(b) **SENSE OF CONGRESS.**—It is the sense of Congress that—

(1) the United States has incurred a moral obligation to provide health care to retirees from service in the Armed Forces;

(2) it is, therefore, necessary to provide quality, affordable health care to such retirees; and

(3) Congress and the President should take steps to address the problems associated with health care for such retirees within two years after the date of the enactment of this Act.

Mr. CLELAND. Mr. President, one of the reasons I sought membership on the Senate Armed Services Committee is my commitment to supporting our men and women in the Armed Forces. I am particularly pleased to be the ranking Democratic member of the Personnel Subcommittee.

My focus on that committee has been and will be to improve the overall quality of life of our military personnel. Where possible, the level of the compensation they receive, improve military health care, and expand access to educational benefits.

One of the areas that I am most concerned about is the availability and adequacy of military health care. In particular, I believe this Nation has incurred a fundamental responsibility to provide for the health care of military retirees. We must adhere to this commitment.

I am especially concerned about what happens to retirees when they reach the age of 65. They are ineligible to participate in TRICARE. In addition, as the military begins to close and downsize its military treatment facilities, retirees over 65 are unable to seek and obtain treatment on a space available basis. Medicare does not currently reimburse the Department of Defense for health care services. The retirees over 65 are, in effect, being shut out of the medical facilities promised to them.

I am reminded of the quote from one of Wellington's troops: "In time of war and not before, God and soldier men adore. But in time of peace with all things righted, God is forgotten and the soldier slighted."

I know we live in an environment in which resources are constrained. We are going to have to make some tough choices between people, modernization, and procurement while maintaining readiness. We are going to have to strike a balance between these competing priorities. But we must not allow budget constraints to force us to slight our soldiers. This is morally wrong. We have a sacred responsibility to take care of those who took care of us. We have incurred a moral obligation to attempt to provide health care to military retirees who believed they were promised lifetime health care in exchange for a lifetime of military service.

One alternative is Medicare subvention. It would appear that subvention would be fiscally beneficial to Medicare and would improve the ability of the Department to provide health care to military retirees over 65. However, I have several questions regarding possible shortcomings of subvention:

First, does subvention meet the needs of military retirees over 65 who do not live near military treatment facilities?

Second, as the Department continues to reduce its health care infrastructure, will maintaining access to all beneficiaries increase in difficulty?

I understand the Department has expressed concern that, under certain circumstances, Medicare subvention could result in diminished access to military treatment facilities for other DOD health care beneficiaries. That raises my third question. Will subvention increase access to some beneficiaries at the expense of others? If so, is this what we really want?

Another option that has been discussed is the idea of allowing retirees over 65 the option of enrolling in the Federal Employees Health Benefit Program [FEHBP].

The Congressional Budget Office has estimated that the cost of enrolling Medicare-eligible military retirees in the FEHBP is between \$3.7 and \$4.2 billion. The primary advantage to FEHBP enrollment is the ability of beneficiaries to seek and obtain healthcare anywhere in the Nation that insurers in the FEHBP provide service. I am concerned about additional cost this program would incur especially if offered in addition to the benefits currently available to retirees over 65. My question: Is there a better way to provide similar levels of service while not adding significantly high levels of cost to the Department of Defense?

A third option would be to allow military retirees over 65 to enroll in TRICARE. This would require additional resources to be made available to military treatment facilities to ensure that all TRICARE beneficiaries were guaranteed access. The Armed Services Committee was presented with an estimated \$274 million shortfall in the budget request to fund the Military Health Service System. Frankly, without corresponding changes in the TRICARE system, continued enrollment in TRICARE will only exacerbate the current difficulties TRICARE faces in meeting all the needs of Military Health Service System beneficiaries. Under this option, we might also face the prospect of providing new access to some at the expense of those presently in the system.

Mr. President, I know there are significant difficulties involved with choosing the optimal approach to addressing military health care concerns. We have to deal with this problem. It is one of the highest priorities listed by the men and women in the armed forces. It is also the highest priority of those who represent the retired military population in this nation.

I believe that a comprehensive approach to reforming the DOD health care system is required. In addition to ensuring access to health care coverage, it is also necessary to ensure that health care is available to beneficiaries wherever they serve or retire.

In 1995, the Congressional Budget Office prepared a report entitled "Restructuring Military Medical Care." The report estimated that the total

cost to the Department of Defense of providing the Federal Employees Health Benefit Program for all non-active duty beneficiaries ranged between \$5.9 billion and \$10.7 billion annually depending upon the percentage the Government pays for the average premium. The report also estimated the total cost of maintaining a wartime combat medicine capability for active duty personnel at \$6.5 billion. Some have asked if it would be feasible to replace the bulk of the Department of Defense Health service system with FEHBP while maintaining a combat medicine capability given that the Department of Defense spends approximately \$16 billion per year for health care.

I sponsored language in the Senate Armed Services Committee report that directed the Department of Defense to conduct a study of this issue. I believe this is an important step toward gathering the necessary information we need to make an intelligent decision which honors our commitment to the personnel in the military. We need to know what impact this would have on the entire medical infrastructure in the military. I hope we can begin to find the answers that will allow us to resolve this matter. Our men and women in uniform and those who have served deserve nothing less.

I look forward to working with my colleagues here in the Senate, especially my good friend Senator KEMPTHORNE, who is the chairman of the Personnel Subcommittee, on this most important matter.

Mr. President, I yield the floor.

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

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will call the roll.

The assistant legislative clerk proceeded to call the roll.

Mr. DORGAN. 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. DORGAN. Mr. President, we are on the defense authorization bill. I have been privileged to listen to a number of presentations. They deal with, in many instances, very significant and very important issues for the future of this country.

Mr. President, I rise today to talk about two issues. One is an amendment that I intend to offer later in the consideration of this bill. The second is to support an amendment that is to be offered by Senator LUGAR and, I believe, cosponsored by Senator BINGAMAN and a group of others, dealing with the Cooperative Threat Reduction Program and the funding for it.

Before I discuss those two, let me indicate, however, that it is curious to see a cloture motion filed on a bill like the defense authorization bill this early in the process. A cloture motion suggests somehow that we should have a vote cutting off debate when debate has hardly begun on this defense authorization bill. This is a very significant piece of legislation. There needs

to be time for significant debate on issues that are very substantial.

I hope this is not going to be habit forming—filing cloture motions virtually at the same pace when a piece of legislation like this comes to the floor of the Senate. A desire to shut off debate ought not be initiated before there is some demonstration that debate is going to go on forever. If a bill is moving at a reasonable pace, there is no reason, in my judgment, for anyone to be offering cloture motions or shut off debate. I just say that is a curious thing to have happen on this bill right at the start of the legislation. I hope that won't be a habit.

Now to the issue of the Cooperative Threat Reduction Program, Mr. President, folks in my hometown, in most cases, won't know much about this program because the American people have not been given much information about the Cooperative Threat Reduction Program. It is kind of a foreign title to a program that in most cases benefits the lives of every American citizen.

I want to describe what it is and why it is important and why I support the amendment that was offered, I believe, by Senator LUGAR, along with many other distinguished colleagues, and is now pending before the Senate.

The Cooperative Threat Reduction Program is a program by which we engage with our resources under an arms control agreement to help a former adversary, the former Soviet Union, now Russia, and its surrounding States to reduce the number of nuclear weapons and warheads that were previously in place aimed at the United States of America. Doing so reduces the threat against our country. I think it makes eminent good sense to see a missile destroyed in its silo rather than having a missile fired and have to deal with a missile that is flying toward a target of the United States.

Obviously, things have changed dramatically with the Soviet Union now being gone, and we now have Russia and other independent States. We are dealing with a new world, and we have a cold war that is largely ended. We have a circumstance in which we want to work with what had been a former adversary to reduce the amount of nuclear weapons that that adversary now possesses in concert with the arms control agreements that we have already had with them and that we have negotiated and signed with that former adversary.

Mr. President, let me ask unanimous consent to have an object on the floor that I might use to demonstrate to my colleagues that this, in fact, works.

Mr. President, I want to show my colleagues a picture. This is a picture of some workers in Russia with power saws sawing the wings off Russian bombers. These folks are bent over a wing of a bomber sawing the wings off Russian bombers. Why are they sawing the wings off Russian bombers and sending these bombers, now unable to

fly, to the boneyard? Because of arms control agreements. They are required under arms control agreements to reduce the number of bombers they possess in their arsenal.

A smaller picture shows former Secretary of Defense Perry inspecting an SS-24 silo. This is a missile silo in the Ukraine. This silo had 550-kiloton warheads on top of a missile—nuclear warheads capable of being delivered over 6,200 miles. This silo is now empty of warheads. There are no nuclear warheads in that silo. And our former Secretary of Defense Perry is inspecting a silo that is now cleared of its missile and its nuclear warheads.

Finally, this picture. This is a picture of silo No. 110 near Pervomaisk in the Ukraine which held an SS-19 missile. As you can see, it is now only a hole. And, in fact, if you saw a later picture you would see sunflowers planted where missiles were previously planted poised and aimed at the United States of America. This is a hole. The hole is now covered up. There is no missile, no warhead. And, in fact, sunflowers are now planted there.

Mr. President, this piece of metal comes from that missile and the missile silo. This piece of metal was removed from this missile silo in the Ukraine. This little piece of metal is a demonstration of the success of the Cooperative Threat Reduction Program. This was part of an armament in the ground on an intercontinental ballistic missile with nuclear warheads aimed at the United States of America. Now it is here in this Chamber. And where this silo and missile with a warhead used to sit there is now planted sunflowers.

Why? Why at silo 110 near Pervomaisk in the Ukraine is there now a planting of sunflowers rather than a nuclear missile or an intercontinental ballistic missile with a nuclear warhead aimed at the United States? Because this program works. This program makes sense. This program reduces the number of missiles, the number of bombers, and the number of nuclear warheads in an arms control agreement. It reduces the number of those weapons that previously had been poised to strike at the United States of America.

Let me describe the facts about how this program has worked. We have seen the elimination of 212 submarine launchers, 378 intercontinental ballistic missile silos, 25 heavy bombers, more than 500 ICBM's.

Fiscal year 1997: 131 additional ICBM silos—70 of them in Russia, 61 of them Kazakhstan—and 43 heavy bombers gone under this program; and 80 submarine launchers, all in Russia, gone; 84 missiles—48 in Ukraine, 36 in Russia—gone under this program. In effect, we helped a former adversary destroy weapons that had previously been poised and aimed at us.

I can't think of anything that makes more sense than to destroy a missile by dismantling its silo, the missile and the warhead, and it is gone.

That is exactly what the Cooperative Threat Reduction Program has done. Senators LUGAR and Nunn were the authors of this program. Many others in the Chamber have worked hard on this program.

There is an amendment pending that will restore the money for this program which is necessary to continue the progress to reduce the number of nuclear arms in Russia and the independent states under this program. It is a bargain by any stretch. It makes eminent good sense for this country to do it.

I am proud to say that I support the amendment. I commend Senator LUGAR, Senator BINGAMAN, and so many others for offering the amendment today.

Mr. President, let me turn then to one other item. We will in the context of debating this piece of legislation also discuss whether we wish to authorize two additional rounds of military base closings or whether we want, to say it another way, create a base realignment and closing commission that would recommend, in two rounds, closing certain military installations in our country.

I am not here to support having more capability in military bases than we need. That would be wasteful. I understand that. On the other hand, we have had three full rounds of base closings and one abbreviated round. In the three rounds of closing military installations, we have ordered the closure of over 100 military installations in this country. My understanding is that only 50 of them have been finally and completely closed. We have no accounting at all—none—of what the costs and the benefits have been from the closings that have occurred so far.

I think it is far better for us to decide that we should finish the job on the previous rounds of base closings before we authorize two additional rounds.

I have another motive, obviously. I am concerned about what the rounds of base closings that are authorized do to communities in our country. We have had a couple of Air Force bases put on the list and taken off the list, put on the list and taken off the list. What happens in communities when you have a base closing round is that the minute your community or your facility is remotely involved in that round of base closings, economic growth is stunted and new investment is stopped.

There isn't anyone who will come to Cheyenne, WY, or to Grand Forks, ND, or Minot, ND, or Rapid City, SD, or you name it, where they have military installations, and say, "Oh, by the way, there are going to be new rounds of base closings here."

So what we want to do is make a new investment in the community of apartment buildings or commercial property, or a plant here or a plant there. That is not the way it works. What they say is, "Gee, we do not know what the future is going to bring." You

might have 30 percent unemployment in that region 2 years from now because they might close that military installation, and if they do, the last thing I want to have done is to have made an investment in that community and find that investment going belly up. It terribly stunts economic growth in these communities while you have these base closing rounds.

In fact, at the Defense Appropriations Subcommittee hearing, the subcommittee of which I am a member, General Fogleman, who indicated in response to a question of mine that he would not likely be here when we have additional base closing rounds and said he would not recommend that we have two additional rounds. If we have additional rounds, and he indicated that he felt there would be some overcapacity, we should have only one, he said. That would be his recommendation. But I believe very strongly that we should not authorize two additional base closing rounds in this defense authorization bill for a number of reasons.

The Congressional Budget Office stated the following. The Congressional Budget Office said:

The Congress could consider authorizing an additional round of base closures if DOD believes there are surplus military capacity after all rounds of BRAC have been carried out. That consideration, however, should follow an interval during which DOD and independent analysts examine the actual impact of measures that have been taken thus far. Such a pause would allow DOD to collect the data necessary to evaluate the effectiveness of initiatives and to determine the actual costs incurred and savings achieved.

The Congressional Budget Office thinks it would be unwise to initiate additional base closing rounds without having the information available about what have been the costs and the benefits of the previous three rounds. I think we would be wise to heed the admonition of the Congressional Budget Office on this issue.

A good many Senators have expressed an interest in this amendment on both sides of the aisle—Senator DASCHLE, Senator CONRAD, Senator LOTT, Senator DOMENICI, Senator FEINSTEIN, Senator DODD, and others. I know we will likely have a significant and robust debate when this occurs.

I simply wanted to alert my colleagues that some of us feel very strongly that we should not initiate additional base closing rounds in this defense authorization bill until we receive the information that we think we should have about costs and benefits on previous rounds.

Let me close with a word about the subject that I originally discussed; that is, the Cooperative Threat Reduction Program.

There are those who are critical of the political process, and I suppose in many cases justifiably, because there are a lot of things that are done in the democratic process that are not efficient, some not effective. It is not a very efficient form of government—the best form of government but not the

most efficient form of government. But I say to all of those who question the effectiveness or the efficiency of Government that the program called the Cooperative Threat Reduction Program in which we help finance the destruction of weapons—bombers, missiles, and nuclear warheads—that previously were aimed at the United States of America is a program that is a bargain by any standard of measure. That makes this world safer; it makes it a better world; and to the extent that we can continue this program and fund it the way it should be funded, I want to be a part of that. I hope very much we can get a vote on the amendment that is now pending, and when we do I hope very much the amendment will prevail.

Mr. President, I yield the floor.

Mr. WELLSTONE addressed the Chair.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Chair recognizes the Senator from Minnesota.

Mr. WELLSTONE. I would ask unanimous consent that the pending amendment be laid aside.

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

AMENDMENT NO. 670

(Purpose: To require the Secretary of Defense to transfer \$5,000,000 to the Secretary of Agriculture to provide funds for outreach and startup for the school breakfast program)

Mr. WELLSTONE. Mr. President, I call up amendment 670.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will report.

The assistant legislative clerk read as follows.

The Senator from Minnesota [Mr. WELLSTONE] proposes an amendment numbered 670.

Mr. WELLSTONE. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that reading of the amendment be dispensed with.

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

The amendment is as follows:

At the end of subtitle D of title X, add the following:

SEC. . TRANSFER FOR OUTREACH AND STARTUP FOR THE SCHOOL BREAKFAST PROGRAM.

(a) TRANSFER REQUIRED.—In each of fiscal years 1998, 1999, 2000, 2001, and 2002, the Secretary of Defense shall transfer to the Secretary of Agriculture—

(1) \$5,000,000 of the funds appropriated for the Department of Defense for that fiscal year; and

(2) any additional amount that the Secretary of Agriculture determines necessary to pay any increase in the cost of the meals provided to children under the school breakfast program as a result of the amendment made by subsection (b).

(b) USE OF TRANSFERRED FUNDS.—Section 4 of the Child Nutrition Act of 1966 (42 U.S.C. 1773) is amended by adding at the end the following:

“(f) STARTUP AND EXPANSION COSTS.—

“(1) DEFINITIONS.—In this subsection:

“(A) ELIGIBLE SCHOOL.—The term ‘eligible school’ means a school—

“(i) attended by children, a significant percentage of whom are members of low-income families;

“(ii)(I) as used with respect to a school breakfast program, that agrees to operate

the school breakfast program established or expanded with the assistance provided under this subsection for a period of not less than 3 years; and

“(II) as used with respect to a summer food service program for children, that agrees to operate the summer food service program for children established or expanded with the assistance provided under this subsection for a period of not less than 3 years.

“(B) SERVICE INSTITUTION.—The term ‘service institution’ means an institution or organization described in paragraph (1)(B) or (7) of section 13(a) of the National School Lunch Act (42 U.S.C. 1761(a)).

“(C) SUMMER FOOD SERVICE PROGRAM FOR CHILDREN.—The term ‘summer food service program for children’ means a program authorized by section 13 of the National School Lunch Act (42 U.S.C. 1761).

“(2) USE OF FUNDS.—Out of any amounts made available under section ____ (a)(1) of the National Defense Authorization Act for Fiscal Year 1998, the Secretary of Agriculture shall make payments on a competitive basis and in the following order of priority (subject to the other provisions of this subsection), to—

“(A) State educational agencies in a substantial number of States for distribution to eligible schools to assist the schools with nonrecurring expenses incurred in—

“(i) initiating a school breakfast program under this section; or

“(ii) expanding a school breakfast program; and

“(B) a substantial number of States for distribution to service institutions to assist the institutions with nonrecurring expenses incurred in—

“(i) initiating a summer food service program for children; or

“(ii) expanding a summer food service program for children.

“(3) PAYMENTS ADDITIONAL.—Payments received under this subsection shall be in addition to payments to which State agencies are entitled under subsection (b) of this section and section 13 of the National School Lunch Act (42 U.S.C. 1761).

“(4) STATE PLAN.—To be eligible to receive a payment under this subsection, a State educational agency shall submit to the Secretary of Agriculture a plan to initiate or expand school breakfast programs conducted in the State, including a description of the manner in which the agency will provide technical assistance and funding to schools in the State to initiate or expand the programs.

“(5) SCHOOL BREAKFAST PROGRAM PREFERENCES.—In making payments under this subsection for any fiscal year to initiate or expand school breakfast programs, the Secretary shall provide a preference to State educational agencies that—

“(A) have in effect a State law that requires the expansion of the programs during the year;

“(B) have significant public or private resources that have been assembled to carry out the expansion of the programs during the year;

“(C) do not have a school breakfast program available to a large number of low-income children in the State; or

“(D) serve an unmet need among low-income children, as determined by the Secretary.

“(6) SUMMER FOOD SERVICE PROGRAM PREFERENCES.—In making payments under this subsection for any fiscal year to initiate or expand summer food service programs for children, the Secretary shall provide a preference to States—

“(A)(i) in which the numbers of children participating in the summer food service program for children represent the lowest

percentages of the number of children receiving free or reduced price meals under the school lunch program established under the National School Lunch Act (42 U.S.C. 1751 et seq.); or

“(ii) that do not have a summer food service program for children available to a large number of low-income children in the State; and

“(B) that submit to the Secretary a plan to expand the summer food service programs for children conducted in the State, including a description of—

“(i) the manner in which the State will provide technical assistance and funding to service institutions in the State to expand the programs; and

“(ii) significant public or private resources that have been assembled to carry out the expansion of the programs during the year.

“(7) RECOVERY AND REALLOCATION.—The Secretary shall act in a timely manner to recover and reallocate to other States any amounts provided to a State educational agency or State under this subsection that are not used by the agency or State within a reasonable period (as determined by the Secretary).

“(8) ANNUAL APPLICATION.—The Secretary shall allow States to apply on an annual basis for assistance under this subsection.

“(9) GREATEST NEED.—Each State agency and State, in allocating funds within the State, shall give preference for assistance under this subsection to eligible schools and service institutions that demonstrate the greatest need for a school breakfast program or a summer food service program for children, respectively.

“(10) MAINTENANCE OF EFFORT.—Expenditures of funds from State and local sources for the maintenance of the school breakfast program and the summer food service program for children shall not be diminished as a result of payments received under this subsection.”

Mr. WELLSTONE. Mr. President, before I go any further, I ask unanimous consent that Justin Page, who is an intern, be allowed to be in the Chamber during the duration of this debate.

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

Mr. WELLSTONE. I thank the Chair.

Mr. President, I rise today to introduce some amendments so that my colleagues have some knowledge of them. We will get back to them when there is more time to debate these amendments.

The School Breakfast Program was established back in 1966 as a pilot program. It was primarily located in rural districts. The idea was that children who lived in rural areas with long bus rides might not be able to have time to eat breakfast at home. Since then, the School Breakfast Program has really become a wonderful program upon which parents and students heavily rely. In many families, a single parent is working or both parents are working, and school breakfasts are recognized as one of the most beneficial nutrition programs we have.

Let me make it clear that a hungry child cannot learn and will likely grow up to be an adult who cannot earn. We are talking about a very wise investment. One more time. Sometimes we debate in this Chamber and we make issues out to be so complex. This is simple. A hungry child cannot learn

and later on that child is quite likely to end up being an adult who cannot earn.

To give some context, we still have some 27,000 schools that are not able to make breakfast available or that do not make breakfast available to eligible students, and 8 million low-income children who need breakfast but do not participate. What my amendment does is correct an action that we as Congress took which was egregious. In the welfare bill that we passed, we eliminated a \$5 million fund which was an outreach and start-up grant for school breakfast programs. It was created in 1990, and it was made permanent in 1994. These outreach grants are one-time grants that help States develop school breakfast programs.

Let me be crystal clear as to what is going on here. Every low-income student who is eligible for a free lunch is eligible for breakfast as well but only 40 percent of those students are able to get the assistance they need for a healthy and nutritious breakfast. The \$5 million grant program was eliminated because it was an effective catalyst toward school districts expanding both their School Breakfast Programs. The welfare bill eliminated it because it was a success.

Now, why in the world do we want to eliminate a small grant program which was such an important tool in providing a nutritious breakfast for low-income children in America? What this amendment does is to point out that in the budget plan we have \$2.6 billion for the Pentagon above and beyond what the President requested. Can we not authorize the Secretary of Defense to take \$5 million out of \$2.6 billion more than the President even requested and put that into a grant program for States and local school districts so they can start up school breakfast programs?

I submit that part of our definition of national security has to be the security of local communities—where every child is able to reach her and his full potential—because when our children do well, we do well. It is unconscionable that we eliminated an effective, crucial \$5 million grant program when so many low-income children who need a nutritious and healthy breakfast are not able to have it.

So this is an amendment which gives the Secretary of Defense the authority to transfer to the Secretary of Agriculture \$5 million from the \$2.6 billion above and beyond what the President requested for the Pentagon. Is that too much to ask, \$5 million to help State and local school districts expand the School Breakfast Program so more of the vulnerable children in this country can at least have a nutritious breakfast? That is what this amendment speaks to. This is amendment 670.

Mr. President, I now would ask unanimous consent that this amendment be laid aside.

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

AMENDMENT NO. 666

(Purpose: To increase funding for Federal Pell Grants)

Mr. WELLSTONE. I call up amendment 666.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will report.

The assistant legislative clerk read as follows.

The Senator from Minnesota [Mr. WELLSTONE] proposes an amendment numbered 666.

Mr. WELLSTONE. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that reading of the amendment be dispensed with.

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

The amendment is as follows:

At the end of subtitle D of title X, add the following:

SEC. . TRANSFER OF FUNDS FOR FEDERAL PELL GRANTS.

(a) TRANSFER REQUIRED.—The Secretary of Defense shall transfer to the Secretary of Education \$2,600,000,000 of the funds appropriated for the Department of Defense for fiscal year 1998.

(b) USE OF TRANSFERRED FUNDS.—Funds transferred to the Secretary of Education pursuant to subsection (a) shall be available to carry out subpart 1 of part A of title IV of the Higher Education Act of 1965 (20 U.S.C. 1070a) for fiscal year 1998.

Mr. WELLSTONE. Mr. President, we have a budget plan that provides an excess \$2.6 billion to the Pentagon above and beyond what the President requested. This amendment would authorize the Secretary of Defense to invest that \$2.6 billion in Pell grants instead of \$2.6 billion into the Pentagon budget.

If this amendment passes, we would see the maximum Pell grant go up to \$3,800, and Pell grants stretch to reach 4,278,000 students.

This would make a huge difference. There was an excellent piece by Larry Gladieux in Monday's New York Times. Gladieux made the argument that what is now being proposed—and by the way, I am trying to provide a rigorous, if you will, critique of both Republicans' and Democrats' plans on this—both the President's plan and what is being done here in the Congress through tax deductions and tax credits does not reach those families for whom higher education really has not been attainable. He pointed out, for example, that if a tax credit program is not refundable, many families with incomes under \$28,000 and many community college students are not going to benefit at all.

Talk to your financial aid offices. Talk to your students. Talk to people in your States. I know this is the case in New Mexico as well. I know that Senator BINGAMAN has been a huge advocate of the Pell Grant Program. You talk to many in these community college programs, many of whom are older and going back to school, and they will tell you that the Pell Grant Program is the most effective, efficient way of meeting their needs.

Mr. President, I do not remember exactly the statistics, but there has been something like a flat 8 percent graduation rate for women and men coming

from families with incomes under \$20,000 a year since the late 1970's. That is a disgrace. We know higher education is key to economic success. All of us wish that higher education will be there for our children and our grandchildren, but still we have a lot of families for whom it is not affordable. The best way to make sure they have the assistance they need, the best way to make sure the Pell Grant Program can help working families, moderate-income families, even reach into the middle-income range, is to expand the Pell Grant Program. I suggest that when we have all sorts of reports that there are tens of billions of dollars the Pentagon cannot even account for in its expenditures—Senator GRASSLEY from Iowa has done an excellent job in continuing to focus on this issue—and when you have a situation where the Pentagon in the budget resolution receives more money than the President even requested, it would seem to me we could take that \$2.6 billion in excess of what is needed or has been requested and instead put it into a very successful higher education program which is all about our national defense.

We do not do well as a nation unless we have a skilled work force. As we look to the next millennium, when so many of the industries are going to be womenmade and manmade—and many of them, Mr. President, since you are a strong advocate of small business, are small businesses—let us make sure that higher education is affordable. Let us do something that will make a huge difference. And one of the things we do is take a small amount of money—it is a small amount of money in the context of the Pentagon budget—and put it into expanding the Pell Grant Program.

There is not one of my colleagues, Democrat or Republican, who is going to hear from the higher education community, the students or their families that more of an investment in the Pell Grant Program is not extremely important to them. It is very important to the families we represent. It is very important to the future of our States. It is very important to the future of our country. I look forward to a full debate about our priorities as we go forward with this defense authorization bill and get back to debate on each of these amendments.

With that, Mr. President, I thank my colleagues for their graciousness in letting me introduce these amendments today and I will yield the floor.

Mr. THURMOND. Mr. President, I rise today to oppose the amendment offered by Senator WELLSTONE to reduce defense spending. The budget agreement represents what is available for defense spending, not what is required. This amendment reduces defense funding below the amount that was agreed to by both the congressional and administrative budget negotiators.

Mr. President, we have been down this road before, but it seems that some of my colleagues have forgotten

where it leads. Those who oppose a strong defense often attempt to justify their position by reminding us that the cold war is over. They conclude that defense spending should be lower because we do not face an obvious danger from a threat like the Soviet Union. They make a simple argument. This argument is appealing because it provides an easy solution to our funding problems—but the argument is wrong and dangerous.

While our Nation no longer faces a cold war danger, the world is still a dangerous place. The belief that continual reductions to defense are in order is not only ignoring reality, it also overlooks requirements for both present and future force readiness. We ask our men and women in uniform to respond to crises all over the world every day. Right now, we have United States troops on duty in Bosnia, in the skies over Iraq, and on ships at sea near any actual or potential trouble spot in the world.

The Chief of Staff of the Army, General Reimer, testified that,

Requirements have risen 300 percent. . . . Excessive time away from home is often cited by quality professionals as the reason for their decision to leave the military. It is common to find soldiers that have been away from home . . . for 140, 160 or 190 days of this past year.

The Secretary of the Air Force, Dr. Widnall, testified that,

Since Desert Storm, we have averaged three to four times the level of overseas deployment as we did during the Cold War.

The problem remains that we will not require less of our servicemen and women. At the same time, some of my colleagues seek to continue to reduce defense spending. This is not right. Deployments to trouble spots have not slowed down. We have not stopped sending our young service people all over the world.

Arguments are made that the Pentagon could find all the money it needs by eliminating wasteful spending. Mr. President, this is probably true of many programs, not just defense. No one supports wasteful spending. But concerning the Defense Department, Secretary Cohen is taking action. He has just finished and delivered the Department's report on the Quadrennial Defense Review [QDR], a review of the national military strategy, force structure, and assets necessary to carry out it out. He has recently established another panel to push the Defense Department toward more business-like operations. The Armed Services Committee has already held one hearing concerning the QDR. More hearings will be held.

Mr. President we must remember that the QDR is an attempt to define our military requirements for our future military security, but we must deter wars with ships, planes, and tanks today. There is a price for freedom. This is the price for world leadership. As Secretary Cohen stated:

Having highly ready forces that can go anywhere at any time really spells the dif-

ference between victory and defeat and it also spells the difference between being a superpower and not being one.

Mr. President, I strongly urge all of my colleagues to oppose this amendment that would intend to cut defense spending. It is absolutely necessary that we maintain defense for the security of this Nation. I yield the floor.

Mr. WELLSTONE addressed the Chair.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Chair recognizes the Senator from Minnesota.

Mr. WELLSTONE. Mr. President, just a very brief response. I appreciate the comments of my colleague from South Carolina. I always appreciate what he has to say.

I do want to point out that one of my amendments—and I am hoping we can have some agreement on it—just says we should really follow the action of the House and do not eliminate a program within DOD which is a critical testing program for atomic veterans to find out what happened to them.

The second amendment I have has a lot to do with defense. It has to do with veterans who found out after the fact that in the budget resolution we essentially put into effect cuts in veterans' health care. I just have to say to all my colleagues, these veterans are very much about our national defense. I don't think it is too much out of a \$2.6 billion excess of what the President and Pentagon even asked for to say, look, let's take \$400 million and put that into the VA health care budget. These veterans are all about our national defense. I think this is going to be a critically important vote, and I look forward to the debate on it.

The third amendment I offered was an amendment which dealt with the School Breakfast Program. I again have to say, it would seem to me when we are talking about \$2.6 billion more than what the President asked for, it is not so much to take \$5 million which is so critical to enabling States to start up school breakfast programs and put it towards making sure that children have a nutritious breakfast before they go to school. This is all about priorities. It is not a question, I say to other Senators, of not wanting a strong defense. This is a small amount of money we are saying the Secretary might be authorized to transfer, a small amount of money with a very big bang.

I just finished talking about how my Pell grant amendment, too, impacts our national defense.

So, again, these amendments all focus on the \$2.6 billion above and beyond what the President requested for the Pentagon. These amendments say we ought to at least give the Secretary the authority to transfer some of the small amount of funding to make sure veterans get the health care that they need or to make sure that we re-establish startup grants for the School Breakfast Program, to make sure we keep the program that we have had for the atomic veterans, and, finally, I

have raised questions about an investment in education, but it is all done within the framework of an excess \$2.6 billion. This is a debate about priorities, it is not a debate about who is for a strong defense.

Mr. President, I yield the floor, and 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. BINGAMAN. 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. BINGAMAN. Mr. President, since there is no other Senator wishing to speak right now, let me say a word about the procedure that we seem to be agreed upon of having a cloture vote this afternoon at 3 o'clock. I know the majority leader has requested unanimous consent to do that and has been granted unanimous consent to do that. I certainly did not object. But I have to say, Mr. President, that the procedures in the Senate, as is said in Alice in Wonderland, get curiously and curiously. Having a cloture vote at this stage in our deliberations on this Defense authorization bill seems to me the most curious of any procedure I can recall.

We are, as I understand it, being advised by the leadership, the majority leadership, Senator LOTT, that we do not want any votes on this bill until at least 6 o'clock tomorrow evening when the absent Members who are in Madrid with the President attending the meeting on NATO return. I understand that is a very important meeting, and I certainly commend them for being there to attend that. I do not object to postponing votes on this important defense authorization bill until they return.

But for us to be, on one hand, being told that we should not vote because Members are absent and, on the other hand, being told that we should invoke cloture because someone is delaying the Senate in concluding action on this bill, the only people delaying the Senate in concluding action are the absent Senators or the leadership in trying to protect them from votes. So I have great difficulty understanding why we are having this cloture vote today.

Obviously, if that is the majority leader's will or desire, he has that right under Senate rules. But for people who try to understand the proceedings around the Senate, I think they need to understand that invoking cloture does cut off debate. That is the purpose of it. It limits the number of amendments each Senator can offer. It limits the length of time each Senator can speak. It prevents us from seriously considering legitimate proposals that may be made to improve or alter this bill.

So I think it would be a big mistake for us to invoke cloture. As I said in my early comment, I think it is really very confusing to this Senator to un-

derstand why we are having the vote at all. I hope that the majority leader will reconsider and vitiate the yeas and nays and put off any votes on cloture until such time as there is some evidence at least that some Senator is trying to delay action on the bill. I see no evidence of that at the present time. I think all of the Senators who have come to the floor this morning to offer amendments have had those amendments set aside because of their agreement with the majority leader's position that we should postpone votes until tomorrow evening after our colleagues return from Madrid.

Mr. President, I wanted to make that statement because I have great difficulty understanding myself the procedure that is being followed.

I yield the floor, and 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. LOTT. 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. LOTT. Mr. President, for the information of all Senators, the cloture vote scheduled for today will occur at 3 p.m. It is my hope that cloture will be invoked so that the Senate can complete action on this very important Department of Defense authorization bill this week.

It is my understanding that perhaps as many as 150 first-degree amendments have been filed to the bill. Needless to say, there remains a tremendous amount of work to be done in order to complete action this week.

SENATOR ENZI RECEIVES GOLDEN GAVEL AWARD

Mr. LOTT. Mr. President, today, the Senate pauses to recognize a colleague who has now presided over the Senate for 100 hours during this session of Congress. It has been a longstanding tradition in the U.S. Senate to honor those Senators who preside 100 hours in a single session. To those individuals who achieve this height, we bestow the Golden Gavel Award.

While many Senators have won this prestigious honor, few have done so as swiftly as Senator MIKE ENZI of Wyoming. Indeed, Senator ENZI has surpassed all other records that have been set by Republican Senators in the history of the Golden Gavel Award. Today he completes his 100th presiding hour. The Senate has been in session this year for approximately 615 hours, and the freshman Senator from Wyoming, as Presiding Officer, has filled 100 of those hours with matchless enthusiasm and dedication.

So, on behalf of my colleagues, I extend my congratulations to the first Golden Gavel recipient of the 105th Congress, Senator MIKE ENZI, who is presiding at this time.

Congratulations, Senator ENZI. Thank you for all the time that you have spent in the chair. The week before the Fourth of July recess period I had noted what an excellent job you had been doing as a Presiding Officer, having been in the chair late, I think it was, on Thursday night and back in the chair through a long, extended period of time on Friday morning.

We appreciate your good work. Now that you have reached this milestone, we hope you will continue on. You are doing such a good job we will just keep this pattern going in the future.

ORDER OF PROCEDURE

Mr. LOTT. Mr. President, Senators should be on notice that the Senate will begin having rollcall votes on Mondays and Fridays in order to make substantial progress on appropriations bills prior to the August recess. I have discussed this with the Democratic leader. He understands and agrees we should be prepared to have these votes on Mondays and Fridays so that we can make substantial progress on appropriations bills.

We hope to do a minimum of five appropriations bills as well as the balanced budget and the tax fairness conference reports before the Senate adjourns for the August recess.

Consequently, Senators need to be aware that votes should be anticipated on Mondays and Fridays, at least up until noon on Fridays. We will need the cooperation of all Senators.

We also, of course, could have some Executive Calendar nominations that would be required to either get clearance or to actually have them called up and have votes on them. We will be providing more information on that as the week goes forward.

I yield the floor, Mr. President.

RECESS

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Under the previous order, the Senate stands in recess until 2:15 p.m. today.

Thereupon, at 12:38 p.m., the Senate recessed until 2:15 p.m.; whereupon, the Senate reassembled when called to order by the Presiding Officer (Mr. HAGEL).

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

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

MORNING BUSINESS

Mr. COCHRAN. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent there now be a period for morning business during which Senators may speak for up to 5 minutes each, lasting until the hour of 3 p.m.