

both sides of the aisle, people are more actively involved in management of their public lands, more people are using public lands for recreation than ever before, our air and waters are cleaner, hunting and fishing is better, our Government is more open about the effects of its actions on the health and safety of families and local communities, and rare species such as the bald eagle and grizzly bear are thriving.

By protecting our natural resource heritage, we have become a wiser, stronger, and healthier Nation.

At times we have a tendency to overlook the value—our moral and ethical obligation—to pass on healthy lands and waters to our children's children. How else can we explain efforts in the last Congress—and proposals by some of my colleagues today—to rewrite, overturn, or significantly weaken the protections afforded all Americans by these laws?

In this regard, I was encouraged by the recent words of Mike Dombeck, the new Chief of the Forest Service. His first day on the job, Chief Dombeck said:

More and more, people are realizing that their jobs and professions, the quality of the water they drink and the air they breathe—the very fabric of their lives—are dependent on the land that sustains them.

Dombeck told his employees that this Nation's environmental laws:

... represent the conservation values of mainstream America. Do not be disturbed by the debate surrounding their execution. This is background noise to a complex society and healthy, properly functioning democracy. There is an ongoing debate in this Nation over how national forests and rangelands should be managed. That's just fine. In fact, it is healthy. Debate and information are the essence of democracy. The people we serve, all of the American people, are now more fully engaged in defining how their public land legacy should be managed.

The new Chief succinctly stated what we inside the beltway sometimes forget, "We cannot meet the needs of the people if we do not first conserve and restore the health of the land." This Nation is blessed by a public land legacy that is the envy of the world. Our taxpayer-owned lands are the refuge of last resort for vanishing species. Moreover, these lands enable our children to experience the solitude of wilderness, pristine clear lakes, and a hunting and fishing experience unexcelled in pure delight anywhere else.

Last year many Members of Congress were shocked by the outrage of our citizenry over the efforts to dramatically cut the EPA budget. In 1960, 65 percent of our lakes and streams were neither swimmable nor fishable. Today 65 percent of our lakes and streams are swimmable and are fishable, and I can tell you, our people want that progress to continue until we reach 100 percent. I applaud Chief Dombeck's views and encourage my colleagues to allow him the time and resources to make the policy and personnel changes needed to achieve his critically important vision.

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

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will call the roll.

The legislative clerk proceeded to call the roll.

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

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

TAX CUT AND MEDICARE CUT PROPOSALS

Mr. BUMPERS. Mr. President, tonight the President will address the Nation on the State of the Union. I do not know precisely what the President is going to say, particularly about the economy and about the budget, tax cuts, the deficit, crime, education, the environment, and so on. I am sure he will address each one of those things and more.

But I would be less than candid with my colleagues and my constituents—and I would be less than honest with myself—if I did not voice some concerns about what I have been reading about what the Republicans want in the way of tax cuts and what the President wants in the way of tax cuts, what the President wants in the way of Medicare cuts, and what the Republicans want in Medicare cuts, what kind of incentives we want for our children to attend college, what kind of a tax cut we want for so-called middle class people.

So let me address those issues seriatim and say, first of all, it is my understanding that the proposal which has been in the public domain for some time now to cut Medicare by \$138 billion over the next 6 years will probably be fairly well applauded. Nobody is going to object to any proposal that makes the Medicare system sounder and gives our elderly Medicare recipients a better sense of security. Anything we can do to cause the American elderly population to sleep better at night because they know the Medicare system is sound and will be sound for the foreseeable future is a highly desirable goal.

Now, having said that, I think the Republicans will want to cut Medicare more than \$138 billion. And I am not saying they are right or wrong. I do not know what the figure ought to be. I might support additional proposals to do anything to make the Medicare system sounder than \$138 billion will make it.

But having said that, I am puzzled by how you achieve a balanced budget while you are cutting \$138 billion in Medicare, which alone would go right on the budget deficit over the next 6 years, I believe it is.

But we do not stop with that. The Republicans do not stop with it and the Democrats do not stop with it.

The Republicans have a proposal of a tax cut which they call the middle class tax cut. It is designed to provide a \$500 tax credit for each child in the family, but it is not refundable.

That means that if you are making \$30,000 a year, and you pay \$1,500 in taxes, you would get \$1,500 back if you have three children—\$500 for each child.

But if you happen to have a \$30,000 income, and six children, and you do not pay any tax, you get nothing.

So the simple question must be asked, who needs a tax cut more, the parents with three children or the parents with six children?

Move on down the ladder to \$25,000, move on down the ladder to \$20,000, a single mother with one child who is working as a waitress in a Senate cafeteria. Her tax bill is \$1,000, we will say. She would get \$500. But if she had three children and was still paying \$1,000, she would get \$1,000, but nothing for the third child.

The third scenario: If she has children and is paying no tax, she gets nothing. And on top of that, as the Presiding Officer will tell you, and recall, we cut the earned income tax credit last year, which is so beneficial to the mother who is a waitress in a Senate cafeteria that I just described because she is entitled to an earned income tax credit by staying on the job and off of welfare.

No less a person than Ronald Reagan said it was the greatest incentive for staying off welfare he could think of. Every President since that thing first came into effect has said that this is one of the best incentives to keep people off of welfare we have. That is to say, "If you stay on the job all year long, don't get on welfare, and if you make less than \$28,000 a year, we'll give you a sum of money at the end of the year, as high as \$2,000."

So what are we doing here? What kind of social policy is it? Forget economics. What kind of social policy is it when we give money to people who have one or two children and pay income tax, give no money to people who work and pay no income tax because they have enough dependents to keep them from paying taxes and maybe whose income was cut this year because we cut the earned income tax credit? What kind of fairness is that?

So, Mr. President, I am troubled about the so-called \$500 tax rebate for all your children. It is not refundable. Only if you pay taxes do you get it. Obviously, the people who are hurting most are not paying taxes because they do not make enough money.

Then we have this proposed capital gains tax cut. As I read the Republican proposal, CBO scores it to cost \$33 billion over the next 5 years and \$111 billion over the next 10 years. And who do you think gets the majority of the benefit? Why, it is the people who own stock in Microsoft and Intel and IBM. It is the people who are big investors in the stock market.

The rate of 28 percent on capital gains may be a tad high. There is probably nobody in this room who would quarrel with that. But if you are trying to balance the budget, which we have

been doing a magnificent job of for the past 4 years, why do we want to muck it up and start cutting taxes, which is absolutely guaranteed to start the deficit back up again?

We tried that in 1981, cutting taxes massively, increasing defense spending massively, and winding up today with a \$5.2 trillion debt. This is the slowest learning crowd I have ever seen. It is worse than trying to housebreak a dog I had one time. We just could not do it.

So what are we doing talking about these massive tax cuts and balancing the budget at the same time? It has never worked, and it never will. Where did all this talk get started? If you are going to cut taxes, cut taxes for people who honestly need the money.

If you cut capital gains, with 75 percent of the benefit going to people who make over \$100,000, where is it going to go? Probably into the stock market. The mutual funds are putting \$15 billion a month into the market right now. Who here believes that the stock market can absorb those kinds of investments? Everything that goes up has to come down at some point or another. But I am talking about the Republican proposal.

And now the President is going to announce tonight apparently a proposed capital gains tax cut for people who have homes worth \$500,000. If you bought a home 20 years ago for \$100,000 and you sell it today for \$500,000, under the proposal of the President you would not pay a nickel tax.

I remember many years ago when we passed an exemption for homeowners to exclude \$150,000 of the price tag. You could do that one time in your life, a \$150,000 exclusion. If you had a \$500,000 home that you had paid \$100,000 for, you not only get your \$100,000 cost back, you can add \$150,000 to that and you have \$250,000 capital gains on which you would pay a 28 percent tax. The President's proposal is that if you have a \$500,000 home and you sell it for \$500,000 there is no tax, no matter what you paid for it. You may have paid \$25,000 for it and it may be worth \$500,000 today because somebody wants to build a McDonald's where you are living, no tax. Now, Mr. President, would you like to know how many people in this country have a home that is valued in excess of \$500,000? The answer is 1 percent. The President's proposal of a \$500,000 exclusion will take care of 99 percent of all the homeowners in America. I do not know what the cost of it is supposed to be.

These things are all laudable. I never lost a vote voting for a tax cut. When you tell people you are for tax cuts, everybody applauds. If there is anything people want to hear, it is that they are overtaxed, they are overregulated, they are overeverything. I understand their frustration.

But let me ask you this: When you have an economy that grew at 4.7 percent in the fourth quarter of 1996—that is a staggering growth rate—with an inflation rate of 2.2 percent, about as

low as you can ever get it, Treasury bills at 5 percent as of yesterday, the unemployment rate as low as it ever gets, in short, you have an economy that is performing absolutely magnificently, and the deficit has gone from \$290 billion in 1992 to \$107 billion, a 63-percent reduction in 1996, what are we going to do? We are going to start pandering again. Why can we not focus on that deficit? The people of this country have a nonnegotiable demand that we balance the budget.

Do you know why a lot of people are going to vote for the balanced budget amendment to the Constitution of the United States? Do you think it is because they think it is sound economic or social policy? I do not like to denigrate other people. It is arrogant to do that. But I can tell you one reason is because they have seen the polls. I know what the polls show. One of the reasons the polls show so many people want a constitutional amendment to balance the budget is two things. No. 1, they think a constitutional amendment to balance the budget and a balanced budget are the same thing. A constitutional amendment does not guarantee you anything. Yes, it does, too: It guarantees you chaos. It is the biggest political scam ever perpetrated and foisted off on an unsuspecting public that can bring nothing but utter chaos to this Nation down the road.

Do you know something? People did not elect 100 Senators to come up here and vote however the polls show every time. They elected people to come up here and to think, to read the Constitution, understand the sacredness of the Constitution, understanding that every single little problem that comes up ought not to be solved by tinkering with that sacred document. I have never voted for a constitutional amendment. I thought in 1984 when I voted against that great constitutional amendment of prayer in school that I was serving my last term in the Senate. Do you know something? I went home and I went from one end of the State to the other explaining to the people of my State what that meant, how the school boards could pick the prayers the children would say and tell them how many times a day they would say them. What kind of nonsense is that, giving up the greatest religious freedoms we have to the local school board? Do you know what? I had the fundamentalists and the mainliners and everybody clapping and cheering because they did not want that either. But at least I did not hesitate to talk to them about it and tell them where it would lead us.

So I do not have any hesitancy today in coming to the floor and saying I am very apprehensive about all the tax cut proposals. Why are we going to cut \$138 billion from Medicare and turn right around and give it away in tax cuts to the wealthiest people in America? That is not my idea of responsible legislation. That is not my idea of a responsible economy. If you want a balanced

budget, now is the time to show it, and do not tell me you will hide behind this constitutional amendment and go home and say, "I did my part. I cut taxes and then I voted for a constitutional amendment to balance the budget."

Mr. President, I yield the floor and 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. BOND. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the order for the quorum call be rescinded.

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

CONCERNING THE NEED FOR ACCURATE GUIDELINES FOR BREAST CANCER SCREENING

The Senate continued with the consideration of the resolution.

Mr. BOND. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent to be added as a cosponsor and urge my colleagues to vote for the resolution.

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

Mr. BOND. I thank the Chair.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The question is on agreeing to the resolution. The yeas and nays have been ordered.

The clerk will call the roll.

The assistant legislative clerk called the roll.

Mr. NICKLES. I announce that the Senator from South Carolina [Mr. THURMOND] is necessarily absent.

Mr. FORD. I announce that the Senator from Washington [Mrs. MURRAY] is absent because of attending a funeral.

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

The result was announced—yeas 98, nays 0, as follows:

[Rollcall Vote No. 5 Leg.]

YEAS—98

Abraham	Dorgan	Kohl
Akaka	Durbin	Kyl
Allard	Enzi	Landrieu
Ashcroft	Faircloth	Lautenberg
Baucus	Feingold	Leahy
Bennett	Feinstein	Levin
Biden	Ford	Lieberman
Bingaman	Frist	Lott
Bond	Glenn	Lugar
Boxer	Gorton	Mack
Breaux	Graham	McCain
Brownback	Gramm	McConnell
Bryan	Grams	Mikulski
Bumpers	Grassley	Moseley-Braun
Burns	Gregg	Moynihan
Byrd	Hagel	Murkowski
Campbell	Harkin	Nickles
Chafee	Hatch	Reed
Cleland	Helms	Reid
Coats	Hollings	Robb
Cochran	Hutchinson	Roberts
Collins	Hutchison	Rockefeller
Conrad	Inhofe	Roth
Coverdell	Inouye	Santorum
Craig	Jeffords	Sarbanes
D'Amato	Johnson	Sessions
Daschle	Kempthorne	Shelby
DeWine	Kennedy	Smith, Bob
Dodd	Kerry	Smith, Gordon
Domenici	Kerry	H.