United States
*of* America

# Congressional Record

PROCEEDINGS AND DEBATES OF THE *106th* CONGRESS, FIRST SESSION

*Vol. 145* WASHINGTON, WEDNESDAY, OCTOBER 27, 1999 *No. 148*

# *Senate*

The Senate met at 9:30 a.m. and was called to order by the President pro tempore [Mr. THURMOND].

PRAYER

The Chaplain, Dr. Lloyd John Ogilvie, offered the following prayer:

Gracious Father, it is through an experience of Your grace that joy surges in us this morning. For life and strength, for work and friends, for every gift Your goodness sends, we praise You, loving God. May this be a day dedicated to gladness. Chase from our hearts all gloomy thoughts. Make us glad with the sheer delight of being alive. We are uplifted by Zephaniah's assurance that in spite of everything that we do or fail to do, You sing over us with gladness—Zephaniah 3:17. And that motivates us to accept the Psalmist's admonition as our motto today: ''Serve the Lord with gladness.''—Psalm 100:2.

May the Senators and all of us who work with them grasp the opportunities and meet the challenges this day holds with divinely inspired gladness. You are our God, the Sovereign of this Nation, our Lord and Savior. Amen.

## PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

The Honorable WAYNE ALLARD, a Senator from the State of Colorado, led the Pledge of Allegiance, as follows:

I pledge allegiance to the Flag of the United States of America, and to the Republic for which it stands, one nation under God, indivisible, with liberty and justice for all.

## RECOGNITION OF THE ACTING MAJORITY LEADER

The PRESIDENT pro tempore. The acting majority leader is recognized.

## SCHEDULE

Mr. ALLARD. Mr. President, this morning the Senate will be in a period of morning business until 10:30 a.m. By previous consent, the Senate will then begin consideration of H.R. 434, the African trade bill. It is the hope of the majority leader that the Senate can complete action on the bill prior to the close of business on Friday. Therefore, Senators are encouraged to work with the bill managers if they intend to offer amendments. The Senate may also consider any legislative or executive items cleared for action during today's session of the Senate.

I thank my colleagues for their attention.

I note the absence of a quorum.

The PRESIDENT pro tempore. The clerk will call the roll.

The bill clerk proceeded to call the roll.

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 President, I ask unanimous consent that the order for the quorum call be rescinded.

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

## REPUBLICAN CONGRESSIONAL CAMPAIGN COMMITTEE ADS

Mr. CONRAD. Mr. President, I rise this morning to respond to a series of ads that are being run in my State by the National Republican Congressional Campaign Committee. These ads are false. They are what can only be charitably termed misleading, and they diminish the credibility of the National Republican Congressional Campaign Committee.

That is not just my conclusion, Mr. President. That is the conclusion of the major newspaper of my State, the Fargo Forum, which has written an editorial in which it says:

Politics is often a down and dirty business, but the National Republican Congressional Campaign Committee's early TV ads 13 months before the election, and even before State Republicans have an endorsed congressional candidate, are a new low in the campaign gutter. They're false on every level. Decent North Dakota Republicans should tell the national group to clean up its act.

Well, amen to that because the National Republican Congressional Campaign Committee ought to be ashamed of the ads they are running in North Dakota. They are claiming that Democrats are raiding the Social Security trust fund here in Washington. They must have forgotten they are in control in the House of Representatives and they are in control in the Senate. It is not Democrats who are determining the spending priorities in the House of Representatives. The Republicans are in control. They are deciding the budget outcome in the House of Representatives. If ever there was a case of the pot calling the kettle black, this is it because we know that the majority party themselves are, in fact, raiding Social Security.

That is not just the conclusion of the senior Senator from North Dakota. That is the conclusion of the Washington Post which had a major news story with the headline ''GOP Spending Bills Tap Social Security Surplus.'' It is the Republican Party's plan that is tapping the Social Security surplus.

For them to then run ads claiming the Democrats are doing it is just a giant diversionary tactic. They are trying to avoid responsibility for what they are doing. It is not only the Washington Post that has made this point. We also have the Congressional Budget Office. The Congressional Budget Office, which they control, has sent a letter which says very clearly that the Republican spending plans have tapped Social Security for $18 billion. In other words, they are raiding the Social Security accounts for $18 billion. That is their plan, that is their responsibility, and to avoid accountability apparently they have decided, or their campaign consultants have decided, that the best defense is an offensive attack.

So in my State of North Dakota, 13 months before the election, they are running ads that the major newspaper in my State says are ''a new low in the campaign gutter. They are false on

every level.'' And, indeed, they are. They are false on every level. The people of America who are being subjected to these ads ought to know exactly what is going on and who is doing what with respect to the budget of the United States.

One of the things I find most ironic is that the National Republican Congressional Campaign Committee which is sponsoring these ads are the very same folks who sponsored a constitutional amendment a number of years ago that had as its base that they would raid the Social Security trust fund in order to balance the budget. These folks who trumpeted this constitutional amendment to balance the budget had as a definition of a balanced budget the raiding of the Social Security trust fund.

Now they have the chutzpah to come before the American people and run ads saying the Democrats are raiding the Social Security trust fund surplus. And the Democrats are not in control. We don't control the U.S. House of Representatives. We don't control the Senate.

Again, the major newspaper in my State has called these ads false on every level.

Maybe it is helpful to review the record of who has done what with respect to budget policy.

I am on the Budget Committee. I am on the Finance Committee. I am known in the Budget Committee as the ''deficit hawk.''

I have been involved in every effort to get our fiscal house in order. I believe deeply in the need for fiscal discipline. That is primarily why I ran for the Senate. I saw back when I ran in 1986 that things were running amuck; that the deficits were growing; that we were getting deeper in debt, and this country was in real trouble. I believed then and I believe now that it is threatening the national security of the United States.

If we go back and review the record of the Reagan years, he inherited a deficit of about $80 billion. Very quickly, under Reaganomics the deficit exploded up to over $200 billion a year. In fact, during this time we tripled the national debt. This trickle-down economics was a disaster.

Then we saw in the Bush years, again, the deficit took off like a scalded cat. It went from $150 billion a year up to $290 billion a year.

That is the record of our friends on the other side of the aisle. They were in charge. They were in control. Reaganomics was carrying the day.

We saw headline after headline about how the Republicans in the House and the Senate in conjunction with boll weevil Democrats were passing Reaganomics and Reaganomics exploded the deficit and exploded the debt. That is the record.

When the Clinton administration came in in 1992, we passed a plan in 1993 that reduced the deficit—a 5-year budget plan. We can go back and check the record. It is not a matter of running television ads. It is a matter of fact. Facts are very clear.

The deficit under that 5-year plan declined each and every year. The deficit went down from $290 billion in the last year of the Bush administration to $255 billion. And each year that deficit was reduced in the 5 years of that budget plan.

By the way, we passed that budget plan without a single Republican vote—not one, not one. In 1997, we agreed on a bipartisan plan to finish the job.

There I commend our colleagues on the other side of the aisle because we did join together in 1997 for a balanced budget plan to finish the job. But the truth is most of the heavy lifting had been done by the 1993 plan. But we didn't have a single Republican vote—not one.

I heard another ad this morning, this time attacking Bill Bradley and AL GORE. This was run by some committee called the National Republican Council. I never heard of it. But they were running ads attacking Bill Bradley and AL GORE saying they had voted for increased spending and increased taxes.

Do you know they were here and they were fighting for the 1993 plan that eliminated this deficit? That is the fact. The fact is Federal spending in real terms, as measured as a percentage of our national income, is at its lowest level since 1974. Back in 1993 when we passed that plan, Federal spending was 22 percent of our national income. It is now down to 19 percent of our national income.

So the truth about Mr. Bradley, who voted for that 1993 plan, and the truth about Mr. GORE, who was Vice President and argued for that 1993 plan, is that in real terms they supported a reduction in Federal spending. That is the truth. That is the truth of the matter.

But I guess political consultants don't have to worry about the truth. They are more interested in scoring rhetorical points. They don't have to worry apparently about the factual record.

Let's look at the factual record. Here is the history going back 20 years in Federal receipts and Federal outlays.

The blue line shows expenditures of the Federal Government. The red line is the income of the Federal Government, the receipts. You can see during the Reagan years there was an enormous gap between the two. That is why we had these budget deficits because we were spending more than we were taking in.

In 1993, right here when we passed the plan, again, without a single Republican vote, that cut spending. You can see the blue line—the spending line—is coming down, and it raised revenue. Yes, it did. We raised taxes on the wealthiest 1 percent in this country; raised income taxes on the wealthiest 1 percent. And it was that combination of cutting spending and raising revenue that eliminated the deficit.

That is how we balanced the budget. Thank God we did. Thank God there was a Bill Bradley who was courageous enough to stand on this floor and cast a tough vote to get our fiscal house in order. Thank God there was an AL GORE as Vice President of the United States who had the courage to stand up and support a plan to get our fiscal house in order after the disasters of the Reagan and Bush administrations when it was all talk about fiscal responsibility and it was all deficits and debt. That is their legacy.

If we want to debate, I am ready to debate this anytime anywhere with anyone about what happened and when and what the results have been. But they have these smear ads running in my State and smear ads running nationally that distort the truth.

That is going to get a response because we are not going to allow people to tell falsehoods about what occurred. Too many people took real risks in order to get the fiscal house of our country back in order, and the record is abundantly clear about who did what.

This is the reality. In 1993, a 5-year budget plan was passed that worked, that cut spending in real terms, that raised revenue, and that balanced the budget. The result is a dramatically strengthened economy—the longest record of economic expansion in our history, and an economic performance that is the envy of the world.

The inflation rate is the lowest in 33 years. Here we went. In 1993, the plan was passed. Inflation came down. The unemployment rate is the lowest in 41 years. The central reason was the budget plan that was passed in 1993 that moved us toward a balanced budget and towards fiscal discipline to getting our fiscal house in order.

Debt held by the public is coming down dramatically. In 1993, the first year of the plan, publicly held debt in comparison with our gross domestic product was 50 percent. If we stay on the course that we have set now, we will have this debt down to 9 percent of our gross domestic product in 2009. We can eliminate publicly held debt in 15 years.

That is the course we are on. That is the course the Democrats established. That is the course which is the result of the 1993 plan that brought fiscal discipline back to this government and led to an incredible economic expansion.

Welfare caseloads: Another benefit of getting our fiscal house in order.

This is also not only a result of a good economy, but it is also a result of welfare reform, which in fairness I should say was done on a bipartisan basis. We had help from our Republican friends, and many of us felt strongly that welfare reform was required, and, indeed, it has produced incredibly positive results. Welfare caseloads are the lowest they have been in 29 years.

Republicans, this year, have engaged the Congress in a series of what I can

only call sort of baffling gimmicks, in order to try to make it look to the American people that they are not raiding Social Security.

They are running ads that the major newspaper in my State has described as ''a new low in the campaign gutter. They are false on every level.'' That is what the Republican Congressional Campaign Committee is instituting in my State. The facts show something quite different.

The Congressional Budget Office says the non-Social Security surplus for the year we are working on, fiscal year 2000, is $14 billion. What does that mean? That means if we take out the Social Security surplus, we have $14 billion of what I call a true surplus in fiscal year 2000. If we take the House and Senate committee actions to date, the Budget Committee directives to CBO spent $18 billion of that.

Emergency spending: The Republicans have labeled a whole series of spending initiatives ''emergencies'' to avoid the requirements of fiscal discipline—$13 billion is declared emergencies, including the census. The census is provided for in the U.S. Constitution. We have been instituting the census for 200 years in this country, and they declare it an emergency. They declared the low-income heating program in this country an emergency—a program we have had for 24 years. That is absolutely nonsense.

Social Security administrative costs: They have taken those and don't want to count them, debt service costs and others. Add this up, and they are into Social Security by $21 billion. They are raiding Social Security by $21 billion and are trying to hide the raid by running television ads that some clever campaign consultant told them is their best strategy for avoiding their own responsibility. To try to avoid their own accountability, they are claiming the Democrats are instituting it. The problem with that: Democrats are not in control. Republicans are in control, and this is what they are instituting. They are raiding Social Security. The record is abundantly clear.

One of the last times I came to the floor was when the Republicans came up with the gimmick—and they have come up with a whole series of them to try to avoid the charge that they are instituting precisely what they claim Democrats are instituting—of having a 13th month. They came up with kind of a clever idea to get around the problem by declaring a 13th month in this country. The last time I checked the calendar, there were only 12 months. But the Republicans decided they would come up with a 13th month to make it look as though they were not raiding the Social Security trust fund surplus. That is a novel idea. I came to the floor and wondered, what would they call it? ''Spend-tember''? Would they call it ''Fictionary''? What would we call a 13th month?

Why stop there? Why not have 14 or 15 months? What would be the additional month that would be added? Would we have two Augusts or two Decembers? I favored two Octobers because I enjoy baseball; we could have two World Series. Maybe we could have two Decembers so we could celebrate Christmas twice.

I know it sounds far fetched, but this is the headline in the Washington Post: ''GOP Seeks to Ease Crunch with 13–Month Fiscal Year.'' That is the length to which they go to avoid accountability and responsibility. That is what happened.

That is not the only gimmick they came up with. They got the 13th month. They have the census emergency—the census we have been instituting for 200 years they claim is an emergency. They declared LIHEAP an emergency, the low-income heating program. We have had that program for 24 years. They proposed delaying earned-income tax credit payments to people. They were even chastised by their own leading Presidential candidate. He made it very clear they were way out of tune with the American people when they proposed that gimmick.

That is what is going on to cover this mismanagement and to cover this fiscal irresponsibility. The National Republican Congressional Campaign Committee is running television ads in my State claiming Democrats are raiding Social Security. That dog doesn't hunt. That is not going to fly. We are going to respond very forcefully when people try to misrepresent the record.

As I began, I conclude: The major newspaper in my State called these ads ''a new low in the campaign gutter. They are false on every level.''

That is the truth. I hope the National Republican Congressional Campaign Committee will stop running these ads because they are false. They are irresponsible. They are misleading. They ought to be stopped. That is the record. That is the fact. I hope people, as they evaluate candidates in this next election, will inquire: What is the record of candidates on the question of spending Social Security surpluses, on raiding Social Security trust funds?

I am prepared to answer that question. Every budget plan I have offered, every budget plan Senate Democrats have offered, has maintained the Social Security surplus. We haven't touched the Social Security surplus. We wouldn't engage in a raid of the Social Security surplus. That is true of the plan Senate Democrats offered in the Finance Committee. That is true of the plan Senate Democrats offered in the Budget Committee. For anyone to say anything else is an absolute falsehood.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Mr. ASHCROFT). The Senator from New Hampshire.

Mr. GREGG. Mr. President, I understand under a previous order the Senator from Wyoming controls 30 minutes.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator is correct.

Mr. GREGG. I ask the Senator from Wyoming to yield me 10 minutes.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from New Hampshire is recognized for 10 minutes.

## THE BUDGET

Mr. GREGG. Mr. President, I want to respond to some of the comments made on the floor relative to where we are going with the budget. I specifically want to talk about the issue as it relates to a committee of which I am chairman. The committee I chair is the Commerce, Justice, State, and the Judiciary Subcommittee. The President of the United States opted to veto our bill. In his veto message, his representation was that we simply had not spent enough money. That was essentially what it came down to.

His representation on the other bills he has vetoed is also that we have not spent enough money as a Congress. In fact, in listening to the President and the proposals he puts forward, we find he is talking about spending billions and billions more than what the Congress suggested we spend.

The Senator from North Dakota has come to the floor and said that the Republicans have used gimmicks, that we have forward-funded, which we have, which is not a gimmick; it has been done in the Congress before on many occasions; that we have declared items emergencies, which we have. In fact, the Senator from North Dakota supported, I suspect rather strongly and with enthusiasm, the declaring of the agricultural situation as an emergency. It has been declared an emergency every year since I have been here, so I don't know why it is an emergency. But it has been declared an emergency. It is a way of funding agricultural issues, and there are severe strictures in the agricultural community today.

The Senator from North Dakota didn't mention where we are going to get the extra money the President asked for. Where are we going to get it? The Republicans have allegedly used gimmicks so we could not take it from Social Security—which we have not, by the way; we have managed not to take any money from Social Security. Where is the President going to get it from? The President is going to get it from Social Security because the only other option is to raise taxes and we have already seen a vote in the House of Representatives—415–0 I think was the vote—saying they were not going to raise taxes. So that is not an option. It is not even on the table.

The President makes these proposals: We are going to raise spending here; we want more money here; we want more money here. The Democratic Members, on the other side of the aisle, say: Hooray, hooray, more money for this, more money for that. When Republicans say, Isn't that coming out of Social Security? there is just this silence from the other side of the aisle.