

the local education agencies; with the vote being 61 to 38, some 6 Democrats joined the 55 Republicans.

When the choice issue was articulated along a slightly different line, the vote was 78 to 21, with some 23 Democrats joining 55 Republicans. That amendment also had provisions to keep the guns out of schools, which was doubtless an incentive to make that a stronger bipartisan vote than on some of the others.

Two of the other amendments were 59 to 40, with 4 Democrats joining the Republicans and, 57 to 42, 2 Democrats joining—and although we did have 3 votes along party lines, 55 to 44, there was a very definite bipartisan flavor to the votes on this matter.

It is always difficult when we have votes which are 55 to 44, strictly along party lines, with the question being raised: Isn't there any independence among 55 Republicans or the 44 Democrats? But the party line was adhered to in order to get the bill passed, even though, as I say, in voting against new teachers, against dropout prevention programs, and against afterschool programs—those are good ideas, and on another day we will be able to take them up. But if we were to maintain these programs, I think this bill could not have been passed; if we had not drawn the line to focus on Ed-Flex in this bill.

The flexibility I think is a very good idea. The Federal Government funds some 7 to 8 percent of the total funding. Last year, again in the subcommittee, we increased the funding by about \$3.5 billion, about 10 percent, bringing the total Federal share to about \$34.5 billion. But the principle of federalism continues to be sound, and that is that we ought to leave as much to the States as we can and we ought to leave as much to the local education agencies as we can, with the people at the local level knowing best what their needs are. So if there is a limited amount of funding, let them make the choice among special education or new teachers or dropout prevention programs or afterschool programs; leave it to the people who are closest to the problems.

So, all in all, there was a bit of partisanship here but I think it was justified to get the bill passed—not too much, with only three votes being along party lines—and deferring to another day the important programs which were not enacted today, but maintaining a very important point of flexibility to allow local education agencies to have the dominant voice in meeting their needs as they see them, being closest to them.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Washington.

ASSAULT ON WASHINGTON STATE'S CROWN JEWELS

Mr. GORTON. Mr. President, over the past few years, Vice President AL GORE

has made a series of trips to my home State of Washington. His goals on these trips are simple: to raise money for his political campaigns; to recruit supporters for his Presidential endeavors; and to distract Washington State voters from the administration's true agenda for the Pacific Northwest.

The Vice President's visits to Washington State are nothing new, but recently the administration, of which he is a vital leader, has chosen to adopt policies that pose a threat to the continued vitality of our economy. Those policies are aimed at the destruction of two of Washington State's economic crown jewels: our hydropower system and Microsoft.

During the past year, I have welcomed the Vice President to Washington State by repeatedly asking him two questions: The first, Will you commit to the preservation of each of the dams on the Columbia and Snake Rivers unless Congress or the people of the Northwest agree to the removal of each or all of them? The second question: Mr. Vice President, if you are elected President, will you end the Justice Department's suit against Microsoft?

At first, these questions were answered with silence. Now the Vice President answers them with personal attacks. Whether it is silence or personal attacks, the Vice President makes clear that he does not intend to answer these two questions so fundamental to every family and community in the Northwest. These questions deserve and should receive straight answers from the Vice President, and I will continue to ask them until the Vice President does so.

His silence, of course, is eloquent. Vice President GORE's administration is responsible for the Microsoft lawsuit and for a flatout refusal to subject dam removal either to congressional authority or to the consent of the people of the Northwest. What is most illuminating is that the Vice President's silence and personal attacks in response to these questions about dams and Microsoft run counter to positions taken by top Democratic officeholders in Washington State. When it comes to protecting dams on the Columbia River, our Democratic Governor and Democratic U.S. Senator, two of the most powerful Democrats in Washington State, have already publicly opposed efforts by national environmental organizations to take out dams. But the Vice President is silent.

Last week I suggested that he had a political motive. That is my opinion, but, frankly, it doesn't matter why he pursues policies to dismantle our hydro system without being willing to say so openly. What matters is whether he will make his position clear. So who loses out on the equation? The people of Washington State, of course. And then there is Microsoft.

The good news is that most Democrats in Washington State have come forward to defend Microsoft's freedom to innovate, but the Vice President

won't stand with his fellow Democrats in Washington State in support of the company. When he answers this one, he is either silent or he attacks and then attempts to evade the question.

Here is a recent example of the Vice President's verbal dance when it comes to the issue of protecting Microsoft: Last week, I admonished the administration for its assault on that company. In responding to my statement, the Vice President's spokeswoman said that I am "suffering from a Y2K bug" and have forgotten all the wonderful things AL GORE has done for Washington State. Specifically, the spokeswoman cited hundreds of thousands of new jobs, higher home ownership rates and lower welfare rolls, as if he were responsible for them.

There was no answer to the central question—will you work to end the suit against Microsoft?

There was another troubling side to this statement. The Vice President, of course, was attempting to take credit for the booming economy in the State that I represent. He should understand that that success comes from the hundreds of thousands of hard-working Washingtonians, plus Microsoft and the amazing group of entrepreneurs who have developed new and better systems, plus our natural resources, not the least of which is our low-cost electricity, or all of the smaller high-tech companies that have sprung up overnight. This success does not come from the Vice President.

As to the specifics of the Justice Department's case against Microsoft, the so-called high-tech Vice President says he will not comment on or involve himself in the Justice Department's case against the company. Can we believe that as the administration's point man on high-tech issues, he has no opinion whatsoever on the highest profile high-tech issue before his administration—the future of Microsoft? I do not believe it, nor does anyone else.

To claim that he is not involved in an action spearheaded by his own administration is unbelievable. When the Vice President continually refuses to answer the question of whether or not he supports this attack, he has not been straight with the people of the State of Washington.

There is a simple answer to the Microsoft question. The answer is for the Vice President to tell us that if he is elected President, he will stop the Justice Department's pursuit of Microsoft. We Washingtonians are 3,000 miles away from the center of AL GORE's universe, but we know only too well that the actions of this administration can have a long and detrimental impact on our economy, our way of life and on our future. We deserve more from the Vice President than silence, distraction and personal attacks.

We will remember his silence on what are perhaps the most important Federal public policy questions to face our State in years. We will remember his evasive comments. We will remember

his refusal to denounce or even comment on the antitrust case against Microsoft and his unwillingness to make clear his position on protecting Columbia and Snake River dams. I challenge the Vice President again today to tell us plainly whether he supports this administration's assault on two of Washington State's economic crown jewels.

Do you, Mr. Vice President, support the Justice Department's antitrust action against Microsoft or not? And do you, Mr. Vice President, support the efforts by national environmental groups to destroy dams on the Columbia and Snake Rivers or not?

We in the Northwest await the Vice President's answers, and you can be sure that so long as silence and evasiveness carry the day, I will continue to ask these questions.

RETIREMENT OF WILLIAM D. LACKEY, JR.

Mr. LOTT. Mr. President, on February 28, 1999, the Senate said farewell to a valuable employee. William D. "Bill" Lackey, Jr., Journal Clerk of the Senate, retired after 34½ years of service to the Senate.

Bill arrived at the Senate's doorstep on September 1, 1964, from North Carolina. He served the Senate in a number of important capacities, including Assistant Executive Clerk, Bill Clerk, Assistant Parliamentarian, Assistant Journal Clerk, and from 1987 to 1999, as Senate Journal Clerk. During the last 12 years, Bill was responsible for the production of the Senate Journal. This role required that he sit at the dias here on the Senate floor to record the minutes of the Senate's legislative proceedings. His became a very familiar face to us all.

Bill Lackey has been the source of wise and good counsel to many over the years. We commend him for his outstanding service to the Senate and the Nation, and wish him Godspeed as he returns to the beloved foothills of his native Shelby, NC.

THE VERY BAD DEBT BOXSCORE

Mr. HELMS. Mr. President, at the close of business yesterday, Wednesday, March 10, 1999, the federal debt stood at \$5,652,343,384,711.69 (Five trillion, six hundred fifty-two billion, three hundred forty-three million, three hundred eighty-four thousand, seven hundred eleven dollars and sixty-nine cents).

One year ago, March 10, 1998, the federal debt stood at \$5,525,631,000,000 (Five trillion, five hundred twenty-five billion, six hundred thirty-one million).

Five years ago, March 10, 1994, the federal debt stood at \$4,546,801,000,000 (Four trillion, five hundred forty-six billion, eight hundred one million).

Ten years ago, March 10, 1989, the federal debt stood at \$2,737,909,000,000 (Two trillion, seven hundred thirty-

seven billion, nine hundred nine million) which reflects a debt increase of almost \$3 trillion—\$2,914,434,384,711.69 (Two trillion, nine hundred fourteen billion, four hundred thirty-four million, three hundred eighty-four thousand, seven hundred eleven dollars and sixty-nine cents) during the past 10 years.

MESSAGES FROM THE HOUSE

At 12:41 p.m., a message from the House of Representatives, delivered by Mr. Hanrahan, one of its reading clerks, announced that the House has passed the following bills, in which it requests the concurrence of the Senate:

H.R. 540. An act to amend title XIX of the Social Security Act to prohibit transfers or discharges of residents of nursing facilities as a result of a voluntary withdrawal from participation in the Medicaid Program.

H.R. 800. An act to provide for education flexibility partnerships.

The message also announced that the House had passed the following bill, without amendment:

S. 447. An act to deem as timely filed, and process for payment, the applications submitted by the Dodson Districts for certain Impact Aid payments for fiscal year 1999.

ENROLLED BILL SIGNED

The message further announced that the Speaker has signed the following enrolled bill:

H.R. An act to nullify any reservation of funds during fiscal year 1999 for guaranteed loans under the Consolidated Farm and Rural Development Act for qualified begging farmers or ranchers, and for other purposes.

MEASURES REFERRED

The following bill was read the first and second times by unanimous consent and referred as indicated:

H.R. 540. An act to amend title XIX of the Social Security Act to prohibit transfers or discharges of residents of nursing facilities as a result of a voluntary withdrawal from participation in the Medicaid Program; to the Committee on Finance.

MEASURES PLACED ON THE CALENDAR

The following bills were read the first and second times and placed on the calendar:

H.R. 540. An act to amend title XIX of the Social Security Act to prohibit transfers or discharges of residents of nursing facilities as a result of a voluntary withdrawal from participation in the Medicaid Program.

H.R. 800. An act to provide for education flexibility partnerships.

INTRODUCTION OF BILLS AND JOINT RESOLUTIONS

The following bills and joint resolutions were introduced, read the first and second time by unanimous consent, and referred as indicated:

By Mrs. FEINSTEIN:

S. 585. A bill to require health insurance coverage for certain reconstructive surgery; to the Committee on Health, Education, Labor, and Pensions.

By Mr. KOHL (for himself and Mr. SESSIONS):

S. 586. A bill to amend title 11, United States Code, to limit the value of certain real property that a debtor may elect to exempt under State or local law, and for other purposes; to the Committee on the Judiciary.

By Mr. ASHCROFT:

S. 587. A bill to provide for the mandatory suspension of Federal benefits to convicted drug traffickers, and for other purposes; to the Committee on the Judiciary.

By Mr. BUNNING:

S. 588. A bill to amend title II of the Social Security Act to provide for retirement security amounts funded by employee social security payroll deductions, to establish the Protect Social Security Account into which the Secretary of the Treasury shall deposit budget surpluses until a reform measure is enacted to ensure the long-term solvency of the OASDI trust funds, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Finance.

By Mr. HARKIN:

S. 589. A bill to require the National Park Service to undertake a study of the Loess Hills area in western Iowa to review options for the protection and interpretation of the area's natural, cultural, and historical resources; to the Committee on Energy and Natural Resources.

By Mr. FEINGOLD (for himself and Mr. LEAHY):

S. 590. A bill to amend the Internal Revenue Code of 1986 to repeal the percentage depletion allowance for certain hardrock mines, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Finance.

By Mr. GRASSLEY:

S. 591. A bill to authorize a feasibility study for the preservation of the Loess Hills in western Iowa; to the Committee on Energy and Natural Resources.

By Mr. BOND:

S. 592. A bill to improve the health of children; to the Committee on Finance.

By Mr. COVERDELL (for himself, Mr. TORRICELLI, and Mr. ABRAHAM):

S. 593. A bill to amend the Internal Revenue Code of 1986 to increase maximum taxable income for the 15 percent rate bracket, to provide a partial exclusion from gross income for dividends and interest received by individuals, to provide a long-term capital gains deduction for individuals, to increase the traditional IRA contribution limit, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Finance.

By Mrs. FEINSTEIN:

S. 594. A bill to ban the importation of large capacity ammunition feeding devices; to the Committee on the Judiciary.

By Mr. DOMENICI (for himself and Mr. INHOFE):

S. 595. A bill to amend the Internal Revenue Code of 1986 to establish a graduated response to shrinking domestic oil and gas production and surging foreign oil imports, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Finance.

By Mrs. BOXER (for herself, Mr. DODD, and Mr. GRAMM):

S. 596. A bill to provide that the annual drug certification procedures under the Foreign Assistance Act of 1961 not apply to certain countries with which the United States has bilateral agreements and other plans relating to counterdrug activities, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Foreign Relations.

By Mr. SMITH of New Hampshire (for himself, Mr. INHOFE, Mr. BURNS, Mr. ENZI, and Mr. MURKOWSKI):

S. 597. A bill to amend section 922 of chapter 44 of title 28, United States Code, to protect the right of citizens under the Second Amendment to the Constitution of the