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House of Representatives

The House was not in session today. Its next meeting will be held on Monday, May 3, 1999, at 2 p.m.

Senate

FRIDAY, APRIL 30, 1999

The Senate met at 9:31 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:

Our loving heavenly Father, there are times when our hearts overflow with gratitude to You. Today is one of those times. This has not been an easy week in our Nation or our world. And yet, in the midst of the turmoil, You have blessed us with strength and courage. We thank You for the stabilizing security You give us in the midst of challenges and change. Bless the Senators and all who serve in the Senate with a special measure of Your sustained grace. You know the needs of each person and every office. Heal all physical and spiritual distress; comfort those who suffer pain in silence; strengthen those who have heavy burdens to bear. We commit to You the families of the Senators and their staffs. Watch over them; keep them in Your love. While we focus our attention on Your calling here, surround them with Your care. Through our Lord and Savior. Amen.

RECOGNITION OF THE ACTING MAJORITY LEADER

The PRESIDENT pro tempore. The able Senator from New Mexico is recognized.

Mr. DOMENICI. I thank the Chair.

SCHEDULE

Mr. DOMENICI. On behalf of the majority leader, I make the following opening statement.

Today the Senate will immediately begin 30 minutes of debate relating to cloture on the Social Security lockbox issue. Following that debate, the Senate will proceed to two rollcall votes. The first will be a cloture vote on the Abraham amendment to S. 557; the second on S. Res. 33 regarding National Military Appreciation Month, which will take place immediately following the first vote. Therefore, Senators can expect two votes at approximately 10 a.m.

For the remainder of the day, the Senate may continue debate on the lockbox issue or any other legislative or executive items cleared for action.

I yield the floor.

GUIDANCE FOR THE DESIGNATION OF EMERGENCIES AS A PART OF THE BUDGET PROCESS

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Mr. DEWINE). The clerk will report S. 557.

The assistant legislative clerk read as follows:

A bill (S. 557) to provide guidance for the designation of emergencies as part of the budget process.

The Senate resumed consideration of the bill.

Pending:

Lott (for Abraham) Amendment No. 254, to preserve and protect the surpluses of the social security trust funds by reaffirming the exclusion of receipts and disbursement from the budget, by setting a limit on the debt held by the public, and by amending the Con-

gressional Budget Act of 1974 to provide a process to reduce the limit on the debt held by the public.

Abraham Amendment No. 255 (to Amendment No. 254), in the nature of a substitute.

Lott motion to recommit the bill to the Committee on Governmental Affairs, with instructions and report back forthwith.

Lott Amendment No. 296 (to the instructions of the Lott motion to recommit), to provide for Social Security surplus preservation and debt reduction.

Lott Amendment No. 297 (to Amendment No. 296), in the nature of a substitute.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Under the previous order, there will now be 30 minutes for debate on the cloture motion on amendment No. 255.

Mr. ABRAHAM addressed the Chair.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Who yields time?

The Senator from Michigan.

Mr. ABRAHAM. Mr. President, might I just ask, is the 30 minutes of debate to be equally divided?

The PRESIDING OFFICER. That is correct.

Mr. ABRAHAM. In that case, Mr. President, I yield myself up to 5 minutes at this point.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Michigan.

Mr. ABRAHAM. Mr. President, just to remind our colleagues, as well as those who watch our deliberations, what we are trying to do with this amendment is to amend the budget process in such a fashion that we protect the surpluses that will be built up over the next 10 years in the Social Security trust fund. We have now entered an era in which we project very substantial surpluses coming into the Federal Government, not just as a result of

- This “bullet” symbol identifies statements or insertions which are not spoken by a Member of the Senate on the floor.



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Social Security trust fund payments but also in the rest of the budget as well. We do not need to use Social Security trust funds to balance the budget. We are at the point now where we can accomplish that without any Social Security money being used.

That, combined with the fact we are facing a huge long-term unfunded obligation problem in the Social Security trust fund, in my judgment, absolutely requires us at this time to protect those Social Security trust fund dollars so they can be used to modernize Social Security. The purpose of this amendment is to try to accomplish that.

In short, this amendment says that until we come up with a plan to modernize Social Security, the Social Security trust fund surpluses should be used to pay down the publicly held debt.

I do not think this is a very complicated proposal. I think it is one that people on both sides of the aisle were applauding just a few months ago when it was talked about by the President in the State of the Union Address, and yet now we hear one after another argument as to why we should not do this. The arguments range from those of some colleagues who say, well, let's just take all the Social Security trust fund surplus and, instead of paying down the national debt, put it in Fort Knox or some other place where it is secure—I can't quite even figure out how that one would work—to others who say this is not the right kind of lockbox; instead of just protecting the Social Security trust fund surplus, we should also save money for fixing Medicare.

Well, their argument seems to be that if we don't somehow address Medicare simultaneously, we should spend the Social Security trust fund surplus. That one I can't figure out, either. Then we have heard, from the Secretary of Treasury, various concerns raised about the process by which this amendment would work. We have offered to try to address those concerns. We attempt to do that. We address that in this amendment, responding to his initial letter. Then we heard additional concerns in a second letter. Yet, we have heard no proposal from either the White House or the Treasury as to how to put together a lockbox that would satisfy them.

Based on the vote last week, and what I expect to be the vote today, I think we are hearing an awful lot of protests, but I am increasingly questioning whether or not people are really sincere about truly trying to save this trust fund surplus.

So for those reasons we are going to keep pushing this issue. We are going to keep bringing this back to the floor. We believe the money people send in for Social Security which creates a surplus ought to be saved to either modernize Social Security or used to pay down the debt and not spent on more programs here in Washington. The peo-

ple pay in the money. They deserve to have it for their own retirement. We are going to keep working very hard to make sure they do.

At this point, Mr. President, I will yield back any remaining time I had in this first 5 minutes, and now for 5 minutes I yield to the Senator from Missouri.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Missouri.

Mr. ASHCROFT. I thank the Chair.

Mr. President, I rise today in favor of the provision to protect Social Security, to, in effect, put it in a lockbox to make sure it is not dissipated or misallocated or used to cover deficits in other parts of Government.

The votes we are about to cast are important votes. They relate to the future of Social Security, the integrity of Social Security, the strength of America and its ability to meet its obligations when individuals call upon Social Security to do what Congress has said Social Security would be able to do.

This vote is about making sure the Social Security surpluses are not used to pay for new budget deficit spending in other parts of Government.

Congress is committed to stopping the raid on Social Security. This Congress has passed a budget without using Social Security trust funds. This is historic and it is novel. We have not been passing budgets like this. We have not done it before.

It is important; we have passed a budget that says we are not going to raid the Social Security trust fund. In contrast, over the next 5 years, President Clinton's budget would have taken \$158 billion from the Social Security trust fund to pay for non-Social Security programs.

I think Congress is on the right track. Should we have a \$158 billion raid or no raid at all? I think Congress has it right: Don't have any raid at all on Social Security.

Frankly, this vote should be bipartisan and unanimous. Last month, the Senate voted 99 to nothing in support of legislation to protect Social Security. We are calling on every Senator to vote with us to pass the legislation that implements the unanimous resolution passed by the Senate 99 to nothing earlier this month.

The Abraham-Domenici-Ashcroft lockbox will make sure that Social Security funds do not go for anything other than Social Security.

The bill will achieve these three important results:

No. 1, the President will no longer be able to propose budgets that use Social Security funds to balance the budget. Write into the law the President is not to send us proposals for spending which include a backdoor raid on Social Security. It really establishes a priority. It says Social Security is more important than these other new programs or ideas for spending.

No. 2, Congress will no longer routinely pass budgets that use Social Security trust funds to balance the budg-

et. A congressional budget that uses Social Security funds to balance the budget will be subject to what is called a point of order.

All of us have been involved at one point or another in meetings where someone tries to bring something up and the chairman simply says with a thump of the gavel, "That's out of order; we are not going to discuss it." That is how it should be when people propose, for example, raiding the Social Security trust fund for other Government programs.

Mr. President, you, as the occupant of the Chair, should say, with a thump, "That is out of order, that is off the table, we do not discuss those things, that is not part of what we do." A point of order then simply allows, provides for the Chair to say, "That's out of order, that's not something we do, and if you want to do that, you have to change the way we do business around here, you have to change the rules or suspend them." I think that is a major step forward.

As a final tool to make sure Social Security trust funds are not used to finance new deficits, this provision will reduce the amount of debt held by the public by the amount of the Social Security surplus, so that when the Social Security surplus is not spent on programs but is invested to pay down the national debt so that we are stronger when we need to pay for Social Security, this makes sure the money will not go into other programs. This will ensure that any and all Social Security surpluses will be directed toward reducing the debt, which means strengthening the capacity to pay Social Security when the time comes.

Americans, including the 1 million Missourians who receive Social Security benefits, want Social Security protected, and they have a right to have it protected. They paid for it, they have earned it, and we should protect the integrity of the fund.

This bill does what America wants and what every Senator has previously said they want to do as well in behalf of their constituents. It is time for the Senate to vote now to end the debate on this bill, to pass this bill, to do this month what we said last month we wanted to do when we passed the budget resolution; that is, to protect the Social Security trust fund, to reserve it for the benefit of the recipients of the fund, to strengthen and protect the integrity of the fund. I call upon other Members of the Senate to join in this noble cause to which they have already registered their serious commitment.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Who yields time?

Mr. ABRAHAM. Mr. President, I inquire as to how much time is left on our side.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Michigan has 6 minutes 20 seconds.

Mr. ABRAHAM. It is my understanding that the chairman of the

Budget Committee, Senator DOMENICI, wants to be the final speaker on our side for approximately 5 minutes, and Senator LAUTENBERG, who is the ranking member of the committee, wants to have approximately 5 minutes before that. I suggest the absence of a quorum and ask, in our desire to protect the time on our side, that the time be assessed against Senator LAUTENBERG's time.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection, it is so ordered. The clerk will call the roll.

The assistant legislative clerk proceeded to call the roll.

Mr. LAUTENBERG. 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. LAUTENBERG. Mr. President, what is the parliamentary situation?

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from New Jersey has 10 minutes 20 seconds left, and the Senator from Michigan has 5 minutes 51 seconds left.

Mr. LAUTENBERG. I thank the Chair.

Mr. President, I rise to support walling off all Social Security surpluses and in strong opposition to the pending Social Security lockbox.

I stand in opposition to the Social Security lockbox proposal that is in front of us because I believe this legislation is a lockbox in name only. In reality, instead of protecting Social Security benefits, I believe it would actually threaten them, and I think the threat is a serious one. It could cause a Government default and trigger worldwide economic instability.

Before I review the problem with the Social Security lockbox, I will take a minute to talk about saving Social Security and my continuing hope that we can address this issue in the near future.

I am fairly optimistic, Mr. President, but I have heard a lot of gloomy comments about the prospects for legislation to protect and preserve Social Security for the future. I hope we do not give up on this.

I do not want to be critical in any way of any of my colleagues. I know many are concerned that this issue is just too hot to handle politically, but I do not see it that way. In fact, I think we have a unique opportunity this year to really prepare our country for the future, and it is an opportunity we should seize.

President Clinton has made Social Security reform a top priority. He is in his second term and is eager to take on this politically difficult task and can lend us the leadership it requires. We are now in pretty good financial shape. We are projecting budget surpluses for years to come. And with the economy going so strong, our Nation is ready to accept some of the hard choices that will be necessary to get the job done.

If we cannot solve the Social Security problem now, I would ask, When can we? This is the time to act, and we

need to do it soon before we get too close to the next year's Presidential election. And we need to do it on a bipartisan basis. Frankly, that is the only way it can be done—through direct negotiations between the congressional leadership of both parties in both Houses and the White House.

One thing should be clear to everyone, and that is that the Social Security lockbox amendment before us does not represent Social Security reform. It does nothing to prepare our country for the financial pressures which will be created when the baby boomers retire. It does not extend Social Security solvency by even a single day. I just hope it will not be used as an excuse to avoid dealing with Social Security in a real and meaningful way.

I have reviewed this before, but I want to again recount for my colleagues the three serious problems I see with this legislation.

First, it directly threatens Social Security benefits. Treasury Secretary Rubin has explained in a letter that under this proposal an unexpected economic downturn could block the issuance of Social Security checks, as well as Medicare, veterans', and other benefits.

Additionally, the amendment contains a huge loophole that would allow Social Security contributions to be diverted for purposes other than direct Social Security benefits. Anything the Congress labels as "Social Security reform" would be exempt from the lockbox. So this could include privatization plans that might be risky, tax cuts, or who knows what.

I know some of my colleagues dispute my interpretation of this provision. But I would simply point to the broad language of the legislation itself. It effectively exempts from the lockbox any legislation which includes a provision designating itself as Social Security reform. So if Congress passes a big tax cut, even if it provides significant benefit to wealthy retirees, we can just claim that this represents Social Security reform, and all the costs of the legislation will be exempt from the lockbox. Some of the bill's cosponsors may say that is not their intent. But that is what the bill says.

I would like to be able to offer an amendment to correct this problem. The majority, however, has prohibited us from offering any amendments whatsoever. So we have had little opportunity to do anything but point out the loophole.

Mr. President, the second major problem with the pending bill is that it does absolutely nothing to protect Medicare. Instead, it allows Congress to squander funds needed for Medicare on tax breaks which go largely to the wealthier among us.

Senator CONRAD and I have developed a different lockbox to protect both Social Security and Medicare. Our bill, S. 862, would reserve all of the Social Security surpluses exclusively for Social Security, and 40 percent of the non-Social

Security surpluses for Medicare. We would like an opportunity to offer that lockbox amendment to this bill, but again the majority is blocking all of these amendments.

Finally, and perhaps most importantly, the Republicans' so-called lockbox threatens a potential Government default. In the short term this could undermine our Nation's credit standing and increase interest costs. Ultimately, it could block benefit payments and lead to a worldwide economic crisis. That is why the Treasury Secretary, Robert Rubin, has said he would recommend that the President veto the bill if it ever reaches his desk.

Mr. President, the lockbox Senator CONRAD and I have developed avoids the risk of default, while protecting both Social Security and Medicare. Our lockbox would not establish a new debt limit. It would use supermajority points of order and across-the-board cuts to guarantee enforcement. I think it is a far better, more responsible approach.

So I urge my colleagues to oppose cloture on this legislation. Let's establish a Social Security lockbox. In fact, let's establish a Social Security and Medicare lockbox. Let's make it a real, responsible lockbox, not one that actually, in its implementation, could threaten Social Security benefits, risking a worldwide financial crisis. And then, Mr. President, let's sit down with the White House and negotiate a compromise which will truly protect Social Security and Medicare for the long term.

I yield the floor.

Mr. KENNEDY. Mr. President, the Republican "lockbox" proposal is deeply flawed, and does not deserve to be adopted. It does nothing to extend the life of the Social Security Trust Fund for future beneficiaries. In fact, it would do just the reverse. This legislation actually places Social Security at greater risk than it is today. It would allow payroll tax dollars that belong to Social Security to be spent instead on risky privatization schemes. And, because of the harsh debt ceiling limits it would impose, this plan could produce a governmental shutdown that would jeopardize the timely payment of Social Security benefits to current recipients.

It is time to look behind the rhetoric of the proponents of the "lockbox." Their statements convey the impression that they have taken a major step toward protecting Social Security. In truth, they have done nothing to strengthen Social Security. Their proposal would not provide even one additional dollar to pay benefits to future retirees. Nor would it extend the solvency of the Trust Fund by even one more day. It merely recommitts to Social Security those dollars which already belong to the Trust Fund under current law. At best, that is all their so-called "lockbox" would do.

By contrast, President Clinton's proposed budget would contribute 2.8 trillion new dollars of the surplus to Social Security over the next 15 years. By doing so, the President's budget would extend the life of the Trust Fund by more than a generation, to beyond 2050.

There is a fundamental difference between the parties over what to do with the savings which will result from using the surplus for debt reduction. The Federal Government will realize enormous savings from paying down the debt. As a result, billions of dollars that would have been required to pay interest on the national debt will become available each year for other purposes. President Clinton believes those debt savings should be used to strengthen Social Security. Since it is payroll tax revenues which make the debt reduction possible, those savings should in turn be used to strengthen Social Security. I wholeheartedly agree. It is an eminently reasonable plan. But Republican Members of Congress oppose it.

Not only does the Republican plan fail to provide any new resources to fund Social Security benefits for future retirees, it does not even effectively guarantee that existing payroll tax revenues will be used to pay Social Security benefits. They have deliberately built a trapdoor in their "lockbox." Their plan would allow Social Security payroll taxes to be used instead to finance unspecified "reform" plans. This loophole opens the door to risky schemes to finance private retirement accounts at the expense of Social Security's guaranteed benefits. If these dollars are expended on private accounts, there will be nothing left for debt reduction, and no new resources to fund future Social Security benefits. Such a privatization plan could actually make Social Security's financial picture far worse than it is today, necessitating deep benefit cuts in the future.

A genuine "lockbox" would prevent any such diversion of funds. A genuine "lockbox" would guarantee that those payroll tax dollars would be in the Trust Fund when needed to pay benefits to future recipients. The Republican "lockbox" does just the opposite. It actually invites a raid on the Social Security Trust Fund.

The Social Security reform proposal put forth by Chairman ARCHER and Congressman SHAW earlier this week demonstrates that the real Republican agenda is to substitute private accounts for traditional Social Security benefits. That plan would spend the entire Social Security surplus on tax credits to subsidize private accounts. There would be no money left for debt reduction, and thus no debt service savings which could be used to help fund future Social Security benefits. In fact, their plan will ultimately require either enormous new borrowing or drastic program cuts to continue funding the private accounts after the Social Security surplus is exhausted. These costly tax credits would go to

subsidize private accounts disproportionately benefiting the most affluent workers. Low and middle income workers would receive little or no net benefit from the Archer plan. Their retirement security would not be enhanced at all.

Placing Social Security on a firm financial footing should be our highest budget priority, not further enriching the already wealthy. Two-thirds of our senior citizens depend upon Social Security retirement benefits for more than fifty percent of their annual income. Without it, half the nation's elderly would fall below the poverty line.

To our Republican colleagues, I say: "If you are unwilling to strengthen Social Security, at least do not weaken it. Do not divert dollars which belong to the Social Security Trust Fund for other purposes. Every dollar in that Trust Fund is needed to pay future Social Security benefits."

The proposed "lockbox" poses a second, very serious threat to Social Security. By using the debt ceiling as an enforcement mechanism, it runs the risk of creating a government shutdown crisis. The Republicans propose to enforce their "lockbox" by mandating dangerously low debt ceilings. Such a reduced debt ceiling could make it impossible for the federal government to meet its financial obligations—including its obligation to pay Social Security benefits to millions of men and women who depend upon them. The risk is real. It is fundamentally wrong to put those who depend on Social Security at risk in this way.

The "lockbox" which proponents claim will save Social Security actually imperils it. As Treasury Secretary Rubin has said, "This legislation does nothing to extend the solvency of the Social Security Trust Fund, while potentially threatening the ability to make Social Security payments to millions of Americans."

While this "lockbox" provides no genuine protection for Social Security, it provides no protection at all for Medicare. The Republicans are so indifferent to senior citizens' health care that they have completely omitted Medicare from their "lockbox".

By contrast, Democrats have proposed to devote 15% of the surplus to Medicare over the next 15 years. Those new dollars would come entirely from the on-budget portion of the surplus. The Republicans have adamantly refused to provide any additional funds for Medicare. Instead, they propose to spend the entire on-budget surplus on tax cuts disproportionately benefiting the wealthiest Americans.

I urge my colleagues, on both sides of the aisle, to reject this ill-conceived proposal. It jeopardizes Social Security and ignores Medicare. It is an assault on America's senior citizens, and it does not deserve to pass.

Mr. GRASSLEY. Mr. President, today we are taking a critical step toward saving Social Security. However, in considering this measure we are

seeking to reaffirm provisions in the current law stating that money earmarked for Social Security should not be considered for purposes of the Federal budget. Furthermore, this measure would make it very difficult for this Congress and Administration, or future Congresses and Administrations, to use Social Security surpluses to achieve a balanced budget.

In his 1998 State of the Union address, the President pledged to save every penny of the Social Security surplus for Social Security. Many of us supported his pledge and worked not to spend Social Security surplus money. However, his fiscal year 2000 budget request would require the use of \$158 billion in Social Security surplus money over the next five years.

The "lockbox" measure we are considering today would prohibit Congress or the President from spending Social Security trust fund money but would still allow Congress the flexibility needed in case unforeseen emergencies, such as a war or a recession, develop. It is vital that we take steps to exercise fiscal restraint so that we don't squander the surpluses necessary to enact improvements to the Social Security program which would enhance the retirement security of our children and grandchildren.

I believe that this is of critical importance in the path toward saving Social Security, so much so that I am missing a field hearing by the Senate Committee on Commerce, Science and Transportation back home in Iowa that Senator MCCAIN was gracious enough to hold on the difficulties Iowa faces with competition in the airline industry. Unfortunately, I can't be there right now, but I hope my being here to cast this vote supporting this proposal is a testament to the importance of taking steps to bring us closer to saving Social Security.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Who yields time?

Mr. DOMENICI addressed the Chair.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from New Mexico.

Mr. DOMENICI. How much time do we have?

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from New Mexico has 5 minutes 51 seconds.

Mr. DOMENICI. I yield myself such time as I use.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from New Mexico.

Mr. DOMENICI. Mr. President, first, let me suggest that this idea that we are locking out any amendments with our Social Security Protection Act is nice to say, but it isn't true. If the Democrats let us vote on this, we will see whether it passes or not, but once it passes, it is subject to amendments.

The good Senator from New Jersey, my dear friend, can offer his substitute or his amendment, but first we have to have an opportunity to vote on this amendment, which for some strange reason, while the other side of the aisle and the President keep saying, "Let's

not spend any of the Social Security trust fund," they somehow do not want to vote for a proposition that will really lock it up so it cannot be spent, it cannot be embezzled, as some Democrats called it a few years ago, when you use it. They said you were embezzling the trust fund. I would think if that is true—I never used that word—you ought to lock it up tough, you ought to put a whopping key on it that can't hardly be moved. So that is what we have done.

For those who say, "If you can't spend the Social Security trust fund, you are going to destroy the economy of America," that is just absolutely untrue. Would anyone believe that taking a trust fund which belongs to Social Security, using it to pay down the debt until we need it for Social Security reform, would anybody submit that that is going to harm America? That is going to help us. We are going to be reducing the debt right at the right time by a huge amount, which is going to keep inflation down, which is going to keep interest rates down, all of which helps Social Security.

All of these arguments about cash management, and you can't pay Social Security—just read the bill. The bill says, under all circumstances the Social Security checks are forthcoming, just by specific item. The management problems that the Treasury Secretary has have been fixed.

The truth of the matter is, those on the other side of the aisle think it might be easy to spend this money if you do not have this lockbox. And they are right, it will be easy to spend it. In fact, the President of the United States, in his budget, spent \$158 billion of it in the first 5 years. No wonder he does not want this lockbox. It wrecks his budget, because he is already going to spend it. We say, "No, No, you can't spend it. You challenged us not to spend it. We are for real." That is what this is all about.

Last but not least, let me suggest that it is really amazing for some on the other side of the aisle to talk about saving both Medicare and Social Security in some kind of a lockbox when you see what it really is. It is sort of a Democratic position that we should not cut taxes for the American people or, if we do, we ought to do it their way—even though we are in the majority and the President has a veto pen, we ought to do it their way.

We say there is plenty of money outside of Social Security to give the American taxpayers back a real tax reduction over the next decade. Whenever you say, let's take more of that surplus that does not belong to Social Security, and say let's spend it on something else, you are really choosing not to give the American people a tax reduction that they deserve.

Frankly, I do not believe today we are going to get cloture. But I think sooner or later—and hopefully it will not be too much later—we will make this filibuster a real one. We will stay

down here until we wear out, around the clock. And let's stay here a couple nights so everybody will understand this is serious business, and who is keeping us from voting on it, to protect our seniors and their money for the next decade when it is most in jeopardy. It will be those on that side of the aisle who will not vote today. They will probably not vote for it the next time. But sooner or later, a lot of Americans are going to be asking, who is holding up the real lockbox that will protect our money? It is going to dawn on a few people on the other side of the aisle that they are and that the American people are cognizant and aware of it, and maybe some people will change their minds.

With that, if I have any remaining time, I yield it back. I understand we have agreed to start voting at this time, in any event.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from New Jersey has 3 minutes remaining.

Mr. LAUTENBERG. Mr. President, does the Senator from New Mexico have some time remaining, may I ask?

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator has 1 minute remaining.

The Senator from New Jersey.

Mr. LAUTENBERG. Mr. President, with all due respect and friendship for my colleague, the chairman of the Committee on the Budget, we both would like to get to the same place. I am sure he has never heard me use terms like "embezzlement." I don't do that kind of stuff. Frankly, I do not like that terminology. I don't care from where it comes.

But what we see here is what I would call a couple of escape hatches in the legislation that worry the devil out of us. That is, perhaps in the interest of Social Security reform or retirement security, we are locking ourselves into a position where we would be unable to respond to changes in the economy. That is not where we ought to be.

This economy is too important in the whole world scheme of things. It is too important in terms of those who are very dependent, totally dependent, in some cases, on the benefits derived from Social Security, veterans' benefits, Medicare. That is all they have in many cases. With the threat of creating a debt limit, and I think artificially creating a new debt limit, I think we could immediately be damaging the possibility that these benefits might be offered.

That is where we differ. I always enjoy my work with the distinguished Senator from New Mexico, except when he wins, which we do so often. But other than that, we ought to be able to sit down and reason out some of these things.

I hope this vote, by discouraging cloture, will give us some impetus to sit down and try to work the problems out.

I yield back the remainder of my time.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from New Mexico.

Mr. DOMENICI. I have 1 minute?

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator has 1 minute.

Mr. DOMENICI. Mr. President, I want to use it at this point to make a couple of points.

Senior citizens, what some like to do is to say, to protect your Social Security trust fund, we are going to hurt other people who are entitled to Federal money because we may have a recession one of these days and things may change.

We are aware of that. Read the bill. It says the lockbox is held in abeyance in the event we have two quarters of economic downturn, which normally is called a recession. You hold it steady there and see where we come out. Anybody who would be looking at this kind of proposition would think that is a prudent thing to do. We did that.

Likewise, in case of a national emergency like a war, we have said, you cannot not spend money on that, and so there is an emergency that takes place then and you can temporarily use it. Remember, we are holding \$1.8 trillion for the seniors and these emergencies of which we are speaking. If they occur, they will be very small in proportion to the good we are doing under this proposal.

I, too, hope we can get a true lockbox put together. If bipartisan, fine; if not, I am very comfortable with this one.

CLOTURE MOTION

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Under the previous order, pursuant to rule XXII, the Chair lays before the Senate the pending cloture motion, which the clerk will state.

The legislative assistant read as follows:

CLOTURE MOTION

We, the undersigned Senators, in accordance with the provisions of rule XXII of the standing rules of the Senate, do hereby move to bring to a close debate on the pending amendment to Calendar No. 89, S. 577, a bill to provide guidance for the designation of emergencies as a part of the budget process.

Trent Lott, Pete Domenici, Ben Nighthorse Campbell, Jeff Sessions, Kay Bailey Hutchison, Craig Thomas, Slade Gorton, Chuck Hagel, Spencer Abraham, Pat Roberts, Thad Cochran, Conrad Burns, Christopher Bond, John Ashcroft, Jon Kyl, and Mike DeWine.

VOTE

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The question is, Is it the sense of the Senate that debate on amendment No. 255 to S. 557, a bill to provide for designation of emergencies as a part of the budget process, shall be brought to a close?

The yeas and nays are required under the rule. The clerk will call the roll.

The assistant legislative clerk called the roll:

Mr. NICKLES. I announce that the Senator from Texas (Mr. GRAMM), the Senator from Utah (Mr. HATCH), the Senator from Kentucky (Mr. BUNNING), and the Senator from Arizona (Mr. MCCAIN), are necessarily absent.

I further announce that the Senator from Alaska (Mr. STEVENS) is absent on official business.

Mr. REID. I announce that the Senator from Iowa (Mr. HARKIN), is necessarily absent.

I also announce that the Senator from New York (Mr. MOYNIHAN), is absent due to surgery.

I further announce that, if present and voting, the Senator from New York (Mr. MOYNIHAN), would vote "no."

The result was announced—yeas 49, nays 44, as follows:

[Rollcall Vote No. 96 Leg.]

YEAS—49

Abraham	Fitzgerald	Murkowski
Allard	Frist	Nickles
Ashcroft	Gorton	Roberts
Bennett	Grams	Santorum
Bond	Grassley	Sessions
Brownback	Gregg	Shelby
Burns	Hagel	Smith (NH)
Campbell	Helms	Smith (OR)
Chafee	Hutchinson	Snowe
Cochran	Hutchison	Specter
Collins	Inhofe	Thomas
Coverdell	Jeffords	Thompson
Craig	Kyl	Thurmond
Crapo	Lott	Voinovich
DeWine	Lugar	Warner
Domenici	Mack	
Enzi	McConnell	

NAYS—44

Akaka	Edwards	Lieberman
Baucus	Feingold	Lincoln
Bayh	Feinstein	Mikulski
Biden	Graham	Murray
Bingaman	Hollings	Reed
Boxer	Inouye	Reid
Breaux	Johnson	Robb
Bryan	Kennedy	Rockefeller
Byrd	Kerrey	Roth
Cleland	Kerry	Sarbanes
Conrad	Kohl	Schumer
Daschle	Landrieu	Torricelli
Dodd	Lautenberg	Wellstone
Dorgan	Leahy	Wyden
Durbin	Leahy	

NOT VOTING—7

Bunning	Hatch	Stevens
Gramm	McCain	
Harkin	Moynihan	

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Mr. SESSIONS). On this vote, the yeas are 49, the nays are 44. Three-fifths of the Senators duly chosen and sworn not having voted in the affirmative, the motion is rejected.

NATIONAL MILITARY APPRECIATION MONTH

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Under the previous order, the Senate will now proceed to the consideration of S. Res. 33, which the clerk will report.

The legislative clerk read as follows:

A resolution (S. Res. 33) designating May 1999 as "National Military Appreciation Month".

The Senate proceeded to consider the resolution.

Mr. THURMOND. Mr. President, I rise today in support of Senate Resolution 33, which designates May 1999 as "National Military Appreciation Month." I congratulate Senator MCCAIN for introducing this important legislation, and I am proud to be a co-sponsor.

In Congress, we spend many hours discussing this Nation's national security and how our Armed Forces will be used to secure America's defenses. We spend far too little time discussing

what is central in making our national security possible—the individual service member. Great warplanes, warships, tanks and ground weapon systems are only as good as the soldiers, sailors, airmen and marines who man the front lines. American military service members are unique in their mission, their special culture and have a special place in our society.

The American military lives by fundamental values: duty, honor, country. We are unique in the world in this respect. Our service personnel put their lives on the line not for danger or the thrill of combat, but for a higher cause. To do their job effectively, those in the military must have faith in the society they serve. In turn, our society must support and honor its Armed Forces. General Matthew Ridgway strongly believed that those in uniform must be forthright with the American citizen they serve. He said, "The professional soldier should never pull his punches, should never let himself for one moment be dissuaded from stating honest opinions based on his own military experience and judgment which tells him what will be needed to do the job required of him." No factor of political motivation should excuse, and no reason of political expediency should interfere with the supreme duties our military undertake. General Ridgway went on to note that "Since George Washington's time, no top soldier has forgotten that he is a citizen first and a soldier second, and that the troops under his command are an instrument of the people's will." This is why the American people have always had a special relationship with its military.

This is what makes the American military men and women unique. If you have been there, you know exactly what I mean. For those who have not had the opportunity to serve, you should speak with our military men and women. Learn more about their accomplishments, challenges, and sacrifices. In combat, in conflict and violence, bonds of trust and love are forged. This is a very powerful experience which contributes to how the words duty, honor, country have a sacred meaning to our military. As the military, we learn that every decision we make calls upon us to act on our own personal integrity and our own willingness to sacrifice. No commitment is more powerful.

The military instills a sense of purpose, a sense of belonging, a sense that the military matters to the citizens they serve. After all, this is a profession where people are called upon to make the ultimate and most personal sacrifice. The military is not a mere interest group. In the turmoil following Vietnam, General Fred Weyand wrote, "The American Army is really a people's Army in the sense that it belongs to the American people who take a jealous proprietary interest in its involvement . . . The American Army is not so much an arm of the Federal Government as it is an arm of the

American people." We Americans should keep this in mind before we make the serious decisions which may put our best youngsters into harm's way. The American military is a national treasure, for which we all are accountable.

The military professional is set apart from those who have followed other walks of life. It is a family. This is true throughout the services and down to the level of small units, whose cohesiveness was clearly illustrated during the Gulf War. When a television correspondent interviewed a young African American soldier in a tank platoon on the eve of Desert Storm and repeatedly asked him to speak to his fear of the impending battle, the young soldier just as persistently repeated his answer: "This is my family and we'll take care of each other." The values and beliefs that form the substance of military professionalism determine in no small measure the role of the military in our great Nation.

We Americans should at the very least show appreciation to our military service members.

Mr. President, I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The question is on agreeing to the resolution. The yeas and nays have been ordered, and the clerk will call the roll.

The legislative clerk called the roll.

Mr. NICKLES. I announce that the Senator from Texas (Mr. GRAMM), the Senator from Utah (Mr. HATCH), the Senator from Kentucky (Mr. BUNNING), and the Senator from Arizona (Mr. MCCAIN) are necessarily absent.

I further announce that the Senator from Alaska (Mr. STEVENS) is absent on official business.

Mr. REID. I announce that the Senator from Iowa (Mr. HARKIN), is necessarily absent.

I also announce that the Senator from New York (Mr. MOYNIHAN) is absent due to surgery.

I further announce that, if present and voting, the Senator from New York (Mr. MOYNIHAN) would vote "aye."

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Are there any other Senators in the Chamber who desire to vote?

The result was announced—yeas 93, nays 0, as follows:

[Rollcall Vote No. 97 Leg.]

YEAS—93

Abraham	Conrad	Hagel
Akaka	Coverdell	Helms
Allard	Craig	Hollings
Ashcroft	Crapo	Hutchinson
Baucus	Daschle	Hutchison
Bayh	DeWine	Inhofe
Bennett	Dodd	Inouye
Biden	Domenici	Jeffords
Bingaman	Dorgan	Johnson
Bond	Durbin	Kennedy
Boxer	Edwards	Kerrey
Breaux	Enzi	Kerry
Bryan	Feingold	Kohl
Burns	Feinstein	Kyl
Byrd	Fitzgerald	Landrieu
Cleland	Frist	Lautenberg
Chafee	Gorton	Leahy
Cochran	Graham	Levin
Collins	Grams	Lieberman
	Grassley	Lincoln
	Gregg	Lott