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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, we begin this day with the amazing assurance of Your lovingkindness. We hear Your word to us through Jeremiah, "I have loved you with an everlasting love; therefore with lovingkindness have I drawn you".—Jeremiah 31:3.—We respond with the grateful words of the psalmist: "How precious is Your lovingkindness, O God".—Psalm 36:7. "Because Your lovingkindness is better than life, my lips shall praise You."—Psalm 63:3.

As Your lovingkindness captures our thinking, we feel Your acceptance, forgiveness, and compassion. There is nothing we can do that will make You stop loving us but there is something we can do to realize Your love for us. We can love ourselves as loved and forgiven by You, and we can dedicate this day to communicating Your lovingkindness to the people around us. Remind us that practical, positive acts of lovingkindness heal the one who does them and those who receive them. Alert us to people who need Your lovingkindness through us and make this a "do it and say it" kind of day. Through our Lord and Savior. Amen.

PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

The PRESIDENT pro tempore. Senator ABRAHAM is designated to lead the Senate in the Pledge of Allegiance.

The Honorable SPENCER ABRAHAM, a Senator from the State of Michigan, 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, Senator ABRAHAM, is recognized.

SCHEDULE

Mr. ABRAHAM. Mr. President, today the Senate will immediately begin debate on cloture to the Social Security lockbox legislation for 1 hour, with a vote to occur at approximately 10:30 a.m. For the information of all Senators, that vote will be the only roll-call vote during today's session of the Senate.

Following the vote, Senator COVERDELL will be recognized for 1 hour of morning business. Senators KERREY and BREAUX will be in control of the second hour.

I thank my colleagues for their attention.

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Mr. SANTORUM). The Senator from Michigan.

PRIVILEGE OF THE FLOOR

Mr. ABRAHAM. Mr. President, before we proceed, I ask unanimous consent that privileges of the floor be granted to Sandy Davis, a detailee from the Congressional Budget Office working with the staff of the Budget Committee, during consideration of S. 557.

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

RESERVATION OF LEADER TIME

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Under the previous order, the leadership time is reserved.

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

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Under the previous order, there will now be 1

hour of debate evenly divided between the two leaders prior to the cloture vote on amendment No. 297 to the instructions to the motion to recommit the bill S. 557.

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 Congressional 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 (Social Security Lockbox).

Mr. ABRAHAM. Mr. President, I yield myself such time as I might need.

We find ourselves once again on the Senate floor. As I said to the Senator from New Jersey, some years back there was a movie called "Groundhog Day" in which the main character in the movie kept waking up each day in the same exact setting in which he found himself the previous day. Somehow that movie's theme seems to be playing itself out in this debate about the lockbox. We are once again to have a cloture vote to simply try to obtain the opportunity to have a vote on the amendment which was offered by myself, along with Senator DOMENICI and Senator ASHCROFT, to the underlying legislation.

We have previously tried to accomplish this without success. It is very frustrating because if we obtain cloture today, we would get this vote, but this legislation would then be open to further amendment by any Senator who wished to change its composition.

So I start the debate by pointing out to all my colleagues that all we are

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



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asking for is a chance to have a vote on one amendment.

Now, this past 4 days we have been debating the Patients' Bill of Rights. I remember back a few weeks ago the entire Senate was virtually shut down so a group of Senators who wanted to have that issue considered could have the entire issue considered and a full range of amendments brought up and voted on, and we did that. Here all we are asking for is a chance to have a vote on one amendment to a broader bill. I hope we will get the chance to do so.

The reason for that is very simple. Across my State, and I think across this country, Americans continue to want to see their Social Security dollars protected. They want to make sure every single dollar they send to Washington in their payroll taxes for Social Security is preserved and not spent on other programs or used for tax cuts or for any other purpose but for their Social Security protection. They want to make sure today's beneficiaries are protected. They want to make sure future beneficiaries are protected. So do the advocates of this amendment. It is not just one side that advocates this, as far as I can tell, because just in the last few weeks we have heard from the White House that the President, too, shares our view that we ought to have a Social Security lockbox.

It does not seem to me very clear why, as a result of that, we cannot have a vote on this proposal. If others have additions or deletions or counter-proposals, they will have their chance because the underlying bill will still be subject to further amendment. But those of us who think this is the right approach want to have a chance to have this approach ultimately debated and be voted on. We have been trying and trying without success. I hope today we can continue down the path we started just a few days ago when we ultimately obtained cloture on the motion to proceed.

As I open this debate, I implore Members on both sides of the aisle to give those of us who are advocating this amendment a chance to have a vote on it. If you have your own ideas, bring those, too, and once we have voted on this amendment, we will vote on yours. But let us at least get the ball rolling. If everybody is as strongly for a lockbox as they profess, then let us have a chance to start the debate, and let us start with this amendment which was the first one offered.

Mr. President, at this point I yield the floor.

THE PRESIDING OFFICER (Mr. VOINOVICH). Who yields time? The Senator from New Jersey.

Mr. LAUTENBERG. I thank the Chair.

As stated by our colleague and friend from the State of Michigan, we are kind of looking at the same thing again. He likened it to "Groundhog Day." I would say it is "deja vu all over again." That was said by a great philosopher in New Jersey, Yogi Berra.

What are we talking about? What we are discussing is whether or not the people on this side of the aisle and the people up there and the people out there will have a right to have their views included in this debate.

It is pretty simple. We are talking about a lockbox. A lockbox is a place where you can preserve treasure, where you can preserve family records, jewelry, et cetera. But I never heard of a lockbox where they put in one article of value and leave out the rest.

What we are hearing is that we are going to protect Social Security's surpluses, but we are not going to do anything, according to the majority, to extend the solvency of Social Security. We are not going to do anything to include Medicare's solvency. People do not get into these programs until they are 65 years old. At that time, do you want to have to worry about whether or not health insurance is going to be available? Do you want to worry whether that retirement fund is going to be there for your children who are now hard at work trying to take care of their needs while they also prepare for their retirement? The Republicans are saying: Leave it to us; we will figure out a way to take care of it some day off in Wonderland.

The fact of the matter is, yes, we want to engage in an honest debate about this. It is not just let us have our vote. Let them have their vote means that under the proposal they have offered, this side gets no votes and the people we represent across this country get no opinion expressed. Look at the polls and see what they think about who is going to do the best job to protect Social Security and Medicare. They are going to say the Democrats are the people who worry most about it.

We are beginning to look at an examination of process, a process that a lot of people do not understand, even some in this body, but certainly across the country people do not understand it: Cloture motions.

Amendments, allow us to discuss them. Pure and simple, that is the way the American people want us to talk to them. Will they allow us, the Democrats, to register our view of how this Social Security so-called lockbox is going to look? Does it do the job the American people want? Or are we using terminology that has a certain ring to it that has no value?

That is the question. I say to my friend from Michigan, let us have some amendments so that we do not have to, up or down, just take what the Republicans have offered. Let us debate it. It is a big enough proposal, I think.

Yes, it has reared its ugly head several times. The fact of the matter is, we have not yet gotten to see the whole body there. We do not understand all the ramifications. At least the public does not understand them.

Give us a chance to have some amendments. They are saying: No, the first thing we are going to do is move

on to the Abraham-Domenici-Ashcroft proposal.

We do not want to do it that way. We are going to do our darndest to protect the American people. We are going to insist we have a lockbox that includes solvency for Medicare extended by 20 years, extend Social Security by 30 years or 40 years, and try during that period of time to work it out so it is extended for 75 years.

That is what our mission ought to be—look ahead and not simply try to shut things down and offer as a juicy incentive a tax cut that is best for the wealthiest in this country.

It is \$1 trillion for the cost of the House Republican tax cut. Out of that, they take \$55 billion away from Social Security to help it along. They take \$964 billion of the surplus to help that tax cut along. The American people are more interested in putting food on the table, providing for their education, and protecting their parents' health care in the future than they are about that kind of tax cut.

We want to give a tax cut, too. Everybody loves tax cuts. The difference is, we love them for the majority of the people where it counts. We love them because we want people to receive adequate child care, and we want to know they can take care of the elderly when medical services are necessary. It is not just tax cuts for tax cuts. No, tax cuts for political purposes is what we are looking at—tax cuts for the wealthy.

This economy is boiling. You cannot get help to do this. You cannot get help to do that. You want to buy a house. The housing market is exploding. If you want to go into fancy items such as boats and airplanes, you have to wait 3 years to get delivery on them. I do not feel sorry for a guy who has to wait 3 years for a new airplane. The fact of the matter is, that is where that money will go with a tax cut, and not into the homes of people who worked all their lives to save a few bucks and provide for their retirement, as well as for their medical care needs.

That is what this debate is about, and I hope that our colleagues will stick together on this side and insist that we have a chance to offer people's amendments. That is what we are discussing. We are not discussing anything else. There is no trickery. Let us express a view that maybe, if people listen to it, they will consider it and, if not, then we have the votes. They are the majority. They are going to get their way; we know that, but I do not think that is a good way to serve the public.

Mr. President, I ask the distinguished Senator from Michigan, shall we switch sides?

Mr. ABRAHAM. That will be fine, back and forth.

Mr. LAUTENBERG. I yield the floor.

Mr. ABRAHAM. Mr. President, before I yield the floor, I, once again, for all Senators, make the following point: We are not seeking cloture on the underlying bill. It will still be subject to

amendments that I believe the Senator from New Jersey is referencing. I do not know what those amendments are. They can be brought up if we obtain cloture. All we get is a chance to vote on our amendment. I cannot figure out why we are not being allowed a chance to vote on our amendment. I will continue to make that point today.

I yield such time as he may need to the Senator from Pennsylvania.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Pennsylvania.

Mr. SANTORUM. Mr. President, I thank the Senator. The Senator from New Jersey said, "This side gets no votes." I wrote it down word for word. The Senator from New Jersey said, "This side," meaning the Democratic side, "gets no votes." Does the Senator from New Jersey realize that this is a cloture motion on the amendment? This is not a cloture motion on the bill. The cloture motion on the amendment simply says that we get a vote on our amendment. After the amendment is adopted or rejected, the bill is still there, and it is open for amendment. The amendment which we adopt, if we adopt it, will be open to amendment. The Senator can amend it. He can substitute it. He can eliminate it. He can do whatever he wants. He will get all the votes he wants.

The Senator from New Jersey said, "Let us have some amendments." How many amendments does the Senator want? I will be happy to listen. How many amendments would the Senator from New Jersey like?

Mr. LAUTENBERG. I cannot speak for our leadership, but he has been waiting for a response from the majority leader as to whether or not amendments are going to be permitted. The Senator from Pennsylvania knows only too well that when we talk about this amendment, we are talking about the bill; we are talking about the issue. We are not talking about some abstract condition.

Mr. SANTORUM. Mr. President, reclaiming my time, the Senator knows, once we put the amendment in the underlying bill, it is then open and subject to amendment which the Senator can offer. In fact, he has an unlimited right in the Senate to offer amendments to the underlying amendment. All we are doing is asking to put in this budget bill an underlying amendment for the membership to then amend to its heart's content, vote as many times as the Senator from New Jersey wants to vote.

As we have seen in the last 4 days, we had multiple amendments. We had, what? We had an underlying bill. We had an underlying bill that was a Democratic bill and an underlying bill that was a Republican bill. All I am saying is let us put our underlying bill in place, and then my colleagues can have all the fun they want in trying to craft different amendments to that or substituting their own version of it.

The Senator from New Jersey said: All we want is an honest debate. We are trying to get an honest debate.

Let's put the measure in the underlying bill and have at it. Let's have a full and open debate. Maybe we can get a unanimous consent agreement to be on this for a couple of days and allow amendments on both sides. That is the way we do things in this body. All of us are willing to do that. I am certainly willing to do that. I am certainly willing to give the Democrats the opportunity to put forward their lockbox proposal and willing to put forward amendments to our lockbox proposal.

I welcome an open, honest, and fair debate, but we cannot get there, as the Senator from New Jersey knows, unless we have a bill with which to start. We cannot start amending nothing. We have to amend something. What we are trying to do is put something in place to start the ball rolling.

I understand the Senator would like to have a Democratic bill start the process. I understand that. As he knows, we have to start somewhere, and putting our bill up first, as the majority, is not an irrational thing to suggest as a starting point, as long as we give you the right to amend, which we do.

This vote does not limit your rights at all. It limits no rights on your side. You have all the full rights that a Senator has and that the minority has under the current set of rules. So this idea that this side has no votes or this side has no amendments is not factual. You have unlimited amendments and unlimited rights to amend this proposal.

This proposal simply says: Every dollar coming into Social Security should be used for Social Security. The Senator from New Jersey said: Well, the House tax cut uses Social Security money. If it does, guess what. We will have a vote right here on the Senate floor in which 60 Senators will have to say: We want to spend Social Security for that tax cut.

I do not think you will get 60 votes. I know you will not get 60 votes. This Senator will not vote for it. I know a lot of Senators over here who will not vote for using Social Security surplus funds for any tax relief.

I am perfectly willing—in fact, advocating—to use the onbudget surplus to give relief to the taxpayers of America. In fact, giving them that relief will help to buy the food and the medicines and other things the Senator just talked about. It is important to do that. We do not have to do everything for everybody. We can actually let people keep their own money and do it themselves. I think people would have the preference of doing it that way.

As to the idea that we have the power right now to stop raids on Social Security, we do not. We do not. We saw that last October. What happened last October was that the President got together with the leaders over there, and they raided the surplus, the Social Security surplus. We did not have the courage or the opportunity with a vote to stop it.

If we pass this lockbox proposal, any Senator has the right to ask for a vote,

and 60 Senators would have to get up and say: I would rather spend that money on whatever program or spend that money, in a sense, on tax relief. And you need 60 votes. That is a real protection for Social Security.

I, for the life of me, cannot understand why the Senate Democrats are now the only group of people in Washington, DC—and I daresay the country—who are opposing this. You have the President of the United States, a Democrat, who wants this. You have 99 percent of the Democrats in the House of Representatives who voted for it. You have every Republican who is supporting it.

The only group of people in the country, that I can see, who are against having Social Security money for just Social Security are 45 Members on the other side of the aisle. I am not too sure they understand what the American public wants and what everybody else has figured out is the right policy for America.

So I encourage the Senator—maybe his staff did not give him the correct information—to look at what this cloture motion does. It limits no rights for the minorities—none. You have unlimited right of amendment after this cloture motion is agreed to and we vote on this amendment. Then we can have the full and fair debate.

I am sure our majority leader, who cares very deeply about this bill—Social Security is very important to him—would devote as much time as necessary on the Senate floor to have that kind of debate, to get the kind of measure that can pass and be signed by the President, and we can begin the process of protecting Social Security.

I reserve the remainder of our time.

Mr. LAUTENBERG addressed the Chair.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from New Jersey.

Mr. LAUTENBERG. Before recognizing the Senator from South Carolina, I will tell you, the Senator from Pennsylvania has been here long enough that he has knowledge of the process. I have been here longer. I, too, have a knowledge of the process.

No matter what you say, if you are going to shut down the amendment process—which the majority has successfully done—you are not going to get amendments. You can say, we will take all the amendments.

I just heard the Senator from Pennsylvania make a commitment, I assume for the Republican majority, when he said: I have no objection to any amendments you want to offer.

Did I mischaracterize the Senator from Mr. Pennsylvania?

Mr. SANTORUM. I would have no objection to any amendments you have with respect to the Social Security lockbox, absolutely. Let's have a debate on Social Security. Let's have a debate on the Social Security lockbox.

Mr. LAUTENBERG. I thank the Senator.

UNANIMOUS-CONSENT REQUEST

Mr. LAUTENBERG. I ask unanimous consent that the cloture vote be vitiated, that the motion to recommit and the amendments be withdrawn, and that the bill be considered under the following time limitations:

That there be up to a dozen amendments for each leader, or his designee; that the amendments deal with the subject of lockbox protections for Social Security and Medicare, budget reform, and the availability of prescription drugs for seniors; and that the amendments be subject to relevant second-degree amendments.

Mr. SANTORUM. Reserving the right to object.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Is there objection?

Mr. SANTORUM. Reserving the right the object. That unanimous-consent request does not focus on the Social Security lockbox; it focuses on everything in the world; thereby, I would have to object because it is not about the Social Security lockbox. So I object.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Objection is heard.

Mr. LAUTENBERG. With all respect, then with the subject of lockbox protections for Social Security and Medicare reform—and we can leave it at that—that the amendments be subject to relevant second-degree amendments.

Mr. SANTORUM. Reserving the right to object, the Senator from New Jersey knows Medicare is not funded out of the Social Security trust fund.

Mr. LAUTENBERG. That is exactly the problem.

Mr. SANTORUM. So to expand the debate—

Mr. LAUTENBERG. I thank the Senator. That is exactly the problem.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Is there objection?

Mr. SANTORUM. So I would have to object.

Mr. ASHCROFT. I object.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Objection is heard.

Mr. LAUTENBERG. You heard it. Medicare is not included.

Finally, we have a frank admission on the floor of the Senate. Medicare is left out. So all of you who are like Senator HOLLINGS and I, with blonde hair up top, may not be concerned at all about where we go with our Medicare solvency—it may be too late for us—but there are other people in the line who may want to use it.

Mr. President, I yield 5 minutes to my friend from South Carolina.

Mr. HOLLINGS. Mr. President, you heard the objection. We asked for 12 amendments—just a dozen, not unlimited—and there was objection.

I have three amendments. One is a true lockbox. I made the motion back in 1990, as a member of the Budget Committee, for the lockbox. We reported it out 19 to 1. I then went on the other side of the aisle and got the late Senator John Heinz from Pennsylvania, and he and I joined together,

and by 98 votes—when the present distinguished Senator from Pennsylvania said everybody, that was everybody then; all except 2—98 Senators voted for the lockbox, passed it, it passed the House, and it was signed on November 5, 1990, by President George Bush.

But they do not obey it; they do just as the Abraham amendment presently before the body. When you use that expression, “paying down the debt,” what they do is take the Social Security money and use it for any and every thing but Social Security. That is what is occurring.

We presently owe Social Security \$857 billion. That is why I have three amendments.

The true lockbox is to keep a reserve, as we require under the 1994 Pension Reform Act for corporate America; I say we are going to do the same thing for Government America.

I have a second amendment with respect to actually getting a return since we are using Social Security money. We only get a 5-percent return on these special Treasury securities. Standard & Poor's shows from 1990 to 1998 the real return on private securities is 14 percent and the nominal return is 18 percent.

Since we passed this in 1926, over the 72-year period, including the Depression, we have a 10.9-percent return on average.

So I think if you are going to use our money, do not use it on the cheap, do not get a free ride. Pay in the 10.9 percent rather than the 5.6 percent, and we begin to rejuvenate Social Security rather than drain it. Otherwise, I want to cut out the monkeyshines of the chairman of the Budget Committee, calling over to the Congressional Budget Office and saying: Give me \$10 billion more. How does he do it? He uses different economic assumptions.

Under the law, under section 301(g) of the Budget Act, they are required to use the same economic assumptions as contained in the budget resolution. But rather than maintaining those particular assumptions, they just make new assumptions. We had nothing to do with it. I am on the Budget Committee. We were never called or notified or anything else of the kind. All of a sudden we find out there is \$10 billion left for defense. There is another \$3 billion for transportation, another \$1 billion. Already we have busted the caps, just by a telephone call, \$14 billion.

I have three amendments. I am ready to offer them, but they won't let us offer them. That is why I am not voting for cloture. Everybody ought to understand what is going on. They won't let it be treated as an unlimited measure, as we always have had discourse in the Senate in my almost 33 years, until this kind of control. We had to fight to get up the Patients' Bill of Rights. We had to hold up all the appropriations bills. Now we can't even get an objective discussion of Social Security because they know how to gear it. They have it geared where they are going to

pay down the debt, always talking lockbox, lockbox, lockbox.

They are in violation right now of the 13301 lockbox, and they will continue to do so. It is all politics, election 2000.

I thank my distinguished colleague. I yield the floor and reserve the remainder of our time.

Mr. SANTORUM addressed the Chair. The PRESIDING OFFICER (Mr. HAGEL). The Senator from Pennsylvania.

Mr. SANTORUM. Mr. President, before I yield to the Senator from Missouri, one of the sponsors of this legislation, I remind the Senator from New Jersey and the Senator from South Carolina, the President spoke in favor of the Social Security lockbox. He said he wanted a Social Security lockbox, period. He didn't talk about Medicare.

Nobody is talking about Medicare. No one in this town has talked about commingling two separate trust funds. I don't know what kind of great admission the Senator from Pennsylvania supposedly made. It is something that is obvious to every taxpayer. There are two separate trust funds, one for Medicare and one for Social Security.

To suggest that we should commingle those funds is a very dangerous suggestion. I think that is what the Senator from New Jersey is intimating. That is not what the President wants. That is not what the House wants, Democrats and Republicans. It is certainly not what we want.

If the Senator from New Jersey is suggesting that, I think he is alone on a very dangerous suggestion and one that is not healthy for either fund. That is certainly something we will not allow to have happen in the Senate.

I yield 5 minutes to the Senator from Missouri.

Mr. ASHCROFT. Mr. President, I thank the Senator from Pennsylvania for his insightful comments. There are two distinct funds. To commingle those funds would be irresponsible—not only irresponsible, but it would go against the intentions of the American people in developing those two separate funds for separate purposes. I believe we should proceed to do what we responsibly should do with the money we have taken from the American people for Social Security, and that is to make sure that we spend the money for Social Security, for which we taxed the American people saying we would use it for Social Security.

We have spent a little time this morning in the Senate jargon of exchanges on procedure. It is enough to make the head of a Philadelphia lawyer swim, with all deference to the Senator from Pennsylvania. The American people are not interested in convoluted explanations of Senate procedure. They want to know why is it that this body alone stands between them and the integrity of protecting Social Security resources for the exclusive use of Social Security.

They have heard the President of the United States come forward—belatedly come forward, but he has come forward—and say: I want a lockbox for Social Security. Those are his words. Not a lockbox for Social Security that starts doing other things for other trust accounts, a lockbox for Social Security.

They have watched as the House of Representatives voted 416 to 12. Talk about bipartisan support; talk about a near unanimous vote. You have it in the House of Representatives. They see on the Republican side of the Senate a very strong desire, reflected now in our sixth effort to get the Democrats to break the filibuster against reserving Social Security taxes for the use of Social Security. We are determined to keep voting to break this logjam. The American people have seen that everyone wants this: The President, the overwhelming majority of House Democrats, and Republicans, all but 12 of a 435-Member body want a lockbox, and we need it in the Senate.

President Clinton's budget this year, prior to his endorsement of the lockbox, would have spent \$158 billion out of the Social Security trust fund over the next 5 years. That is the kind of thing we need to guard against. The President has now said we need to guard against that.

In March, Senator DOMENICI and I introduced S. 502, the Protect Social Security Benefits Act, which would have instituted a point of order preventing Congress from spending any Social Security dollars for non-Social Security purposes. In April, the Senate budget resolution included language endorsing the idea of locking away the Social Security surplus. The language in the Budget Act passed unanimously. Those on the other side of the aisle have passed this language already, including the point of order process. Also in April, Senators ABRAHAM, DOMENICI, and I introduced the Social Security lockbox amendment, about which we have been talking today.

In May, the House of Representatives overwhelmingly passed Congressman HERGER's measure to protect the Social Security surplus, and the vote there was 416 to 12. That is an amazing vote for the House of Representatives.

In late June, after Senate Democrats had blocked four efforts to proceed to the lockbox, after Senate Democrats had said, we won't let you move to this, President Clinton announced that he had changed his position and that he finally supported a lockbox that would protect 100 percent of the Social Security surplus. His quote is this: "Social Security taxes should be saved for Social Security, period." Not Social Security taxes should be saved for Social Security and tax cuts, no, and Medicare, no, and anything else; it is Social Security, period. That happens to be what Senator ABRAHAM, along with Senator DOMENICI and I, has brought to the floor as an amendment. That happens to be what we are asking

Senate Democrats to allow us to move forward on.

A few days after the President's announcement, we obtained a motion to proceed on the lockbox. But now we are faced, again, with the prospect of Senate Democrats blocking a forward motion on this lockbox concept. The House has voted for it. The President has come out in favor of it. Senate Republicans support it. The American people are demanding it. Senate Democrats still stand in the way.

Over the next 5 years, Social Security taxes will bring in an estimated \$776 billion in surpluses—not just in revenue, \$776 billion in surpluses. The lockbox would protect every dollar of those current Social Security surpluses for future obligations to America's retirees.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator's 5 minutes have expired.

Mr. ABRAHAM. Would the Senator from Missouri like additional time?

Mr. ASHCROFT. Thirty seconds.

Mr. ABRAHAM. The Senator from Missouri is yielded whatever time he needs.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Missouri.

Mr. ASHCROFT. Mr. President, we have five times previously been denied this, in spite of the House vote, in spite of the President's endorsement, in spite of the overwhelming support of the American people. I ask Members of this body to vote to give us the opportunity to make the progress necessary to protect 100 percent of the Social Security surpluses so they can be used to strengthen, and provide integrity to, the Social Security system.

I thank the Senator from Michigan for this opportunity to speak, and I thank the Chair.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Who yields time? Who seeks recognition?

Mr. LAUTENBERG. Mr. President, under a quorum call, how is the time charged?

The PRESIDING OFFICER. It will be charged to the side that requests the quorum call.

Mr. ABRAHAM. Mr. President, I gather the Senator from New Jersey does not choose to yield time at this point.

Mr. LAUTENBERG. That is correct.

Mr. ABRAHAM. Then I yield up to 5 minutes to the Senator from Wyoming.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Wyoming is recognized for 5 minutes.

Mr. THOMAS. Mr. President, I won't even take 5 minutes. I want to share some of the frustration I have about where we are, trying to move forward with what I think is one of the most important issues before us and, of course, that is Social Security. Everybody is talking about it, of course, and they say, oh, yes, we want to do something. When the time comes, how many times have we been frustrated in trying to get to what is essentially the first step to do something about Social Security? That, of course, is to have a

lockbox, take the money coming in for Social Security and put it there so that we can do something with Social Security.

So this is clearly the first step that we have to take. I think this is the fifth time we have been trying to move forward with this. Each time all the people on the other side of the aisle say they are for Social Security, and the President says he is for Social Security, but they never want to do anything. I guess maybe this is part of the frustration that has been building up over the last month or so, and this week there has been frustration.

I think it is time to invoke cloture and move forward on the lockbox issue to make sure the American people who are paying into Social Security, particularly young people who are starting to work and putting their money aside, will have some hope that there will be benefits for them. And we do that only by moving forward with our lockbox. I suggest that we do that. I thank the Senator for the time.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Who seeks recognition? Who yields time? If no one yields time, time will be charged equally to both sides.

Mr. ABRAHAM. Mr. President, I inquire as to how much time remains on each side. We want to reserve some time for the Senator from New Mexico to close on our side, and I wanted to know how much that would be because we do want to make a closing argument.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The majority has 10 minutes remaining, and the Democrats have almost 16 minutes remaining.

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

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will call the roll.

The legislative assistant proceeded to call the roll.

Mr. ABRAHAM. 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. ABRAHAM. Mr. President, I suggest the absence of a quorum and ask that the time be charged equally to both sides.

Mr. LAUTENBERG. I object.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Objection is heard.

The clerk will call the roll.

The legislative assistant proceeded to call the roll.

Mr. DOMENICI. 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. DOMENICI. Mr. President, it is my understanding that the Republicans have 10 minutes and the minority has 16 minutes.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Republicans have 9 minutes 30 seconds; the minority has 15 minutes remaining.

Mr. DOMENICI. I would like to use 3½ minutes, if I might.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator is recognized for 3 minutes.

Mr. DOMENICI. Mr. President, this is a very simple proposition. The American people, by overwhelming odds, would like us to take every single penny of the Social Security that belongs to the Social Security trust fund and lock it up so it can't be spent. The issue is not only a Republican issue; the President of the United States has said we should lock it up. He didn't say lock up something for Medicare; he said lock up the trust funds for Social Security, period.

Senator DASCHLE, leader of the minority, said very recently that there ought to be some common ground. We ought to lock up the Social Security trust fund. What are we doing on the floor? We have six times tried to get an amendment up—not a bill, not a final action but an amendment, after which you can have amendments to your heart's desire.

We can't get the other side to agree that we will do that. We will have limited debate on that amendment, after which they can have all the debate and all the amendments they wish. It is only the amendment that we would like to get voted on. Why? Because it is time that, rather than talking about making sure we don't spend under the pressure of emergencies and all kinds of other things, we don't spend the Social Security trust fund money.

Now, the President of the United States came our way already. He said lock up 100 percent. At one time in his budget, he said lock up 62 percent. He came with us and said lock up every single penny.

That is what we are trying to do. We are trying to get a vote on doing that, after which time, if the Democrats see fit, they can muddy the water and bring up amendments on other issues, and if we had time today, we could debate the foolhardy issue that even Democrats think makes no sense—that we should take the surplus that belongs to the people of the United States and put it into the Medicare trust fund with IOUs to be paid for by increased taxes on our children later on. We can debate that if you would like. But that is not the issue.

The issue is Social Security money, the senior citizens' pension money. Time is wasting. The pressures to use it are growing. The opportunities to come to the floor and say let's spend it, with the passage of each day, are getting closer and closer. Somebody will say we need this for something. Who knows what. It could be agricultural policy for America or any kind of thing you can dream up.

I say to my friends on the other side, let's get on with it and let's close the debate on the amendment. Then we can open the debate after that vote occurs on anything you wish.

I yield the floor.

Mr. THURMOND addressed the Chair.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from South Carolina is recognized.

Mr. THURMOND. Mr. President, I commend the able Senator from New Mexico on what he has said. Social Security money is for Social Security. It should not be used for anything else. Now is the time to nail this thing down so no question will arise in the future. There are demands now for everything, but this is a particular trust fund. It belongs to the Social Security fund, and we should keep it there and not let it get away. I again commend the able Senator from New Mexico.

Mr. DOMENICI. I thank the distinguished Senator.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Who yields time?

Mr. LAUTENBERG. Mr. President, we are debating a proposition that I think probably lends some confusion to the recognition of what it is we are attempting to do. One can call it a lockbox, a safe deposit box; call it what you will. I say we want a lockbox, too, but we want a lockbox that is without holes, without rust, without a broken lock on it. We want a lockbox that is secure, that holds our valuables, and that no one can get their hands on, and that is the Social Security lockbox that cannot be used.

Our friends over there say they want to keep it from being a pot for people to reach into when they want to spend money. The fact of the matter is that they create a condition as a result of the structure of their bill, their proposal, that says that if the economy turns sour, in fact, perhaps this country could be put into default, unless Social Security is used, because of overarching criteria, then that is what is going to happen. Social Security will be that safe deposit box that is now open for other purposes in Government.

I hear the plea for letting the debate get started. But we have been waiting to hear from the majority leader—our leader and the majority leader; that is where these discussions take place—that he has a commitment that we can offer amendments.

We have a commitment from the Senator from Pennsylvania. He said he had no objection to our having amendments. But we haven't heard that from the top.

That is what we are asking for; that is what I tried to do with a unanimous consent agreement.

I said: OK. Let's talk about a dozen amendments that our two leaders can agree upon. Let's talk about that. Let's put that aside, and then we can end the debate. But they do not want to do that.

The majority has the upper hand. That is life in the Senate. They are not going to let us get our amendments up because—even though they say, yes, you will have all the amendments you want—the fact is there is a system here. Everybody in this Chamber knows there is a system. It is called the amendment tree. Once you fill it up with first-degree amendments followed by second-degree amendments, the majority leader always has the privilege

of initial recognition, and you shut down the amendment possibilities.

Let's stop fooling each other. Let's stop trying to fool the people out there in the countryside. Do they want Medicare included as a security measure, as a safe deposit measure, as a lockbox measure? Ask them. Let's have a vote on that. Let's have it straight up or down. Do you want Medicare?

I heard a statement made today that, no, the Republicans don't want Medicare included. Let the public hear that. Let the public hear that the one measure for protecting health may not be of concern to them. It is fine with me. I just want to make sure the record is clear that people understand what we are saying.

Look at this. The Republican House committee proposes a tax cut of \$1.19 trillion. In order to accomplish that, they are going to have to take \$55 billion from the Social Security surplus and \$964 billion from the onbudget surplus.

We are using arcane language to try to pull the wool over the people's eyes.

Say it straight. They on that side of the line don't want Medicare included. We want Medicare included on this side of the line. We want to lock up Social Security, and we all agree a lockbox is a desirable thing, a place where those funds are going to be protected. We are saying you can't touch the Social Security surplus.

Remember this: In 10 years, forecasts being as they are, we expect to have almost a \$1 trillion surplus in non-Social Security funds. That is pretty astounding. Imagine, we could be out of public debt in 2015, barely 15 years from now—not only the public debt but anything. It would be an unheard of condition in terms of a major government around the world. The fact of the matter is it would be certainly a benchmark that people never thought would arrive.

We are trying to do it. We are saying we support a modest tax cut for those who really need it—a targeted tax cut for child care, savings accounts, and health care for the elderly. But friends over here want to use it to spread the tax cut around for all of the benefit. It would go largely to the wealthiest in the country.

I once again ask if we can get an agreement. It can be done away from the microphones or it can be done in front of the microphones. Give us the assurance that we can have amendments and not be barred by second-degree amendments and not barred by other parliamentary procedures. We would be happy to consider a different position, but we are not going to do it knowing full well that once we step over the line we are in a trap that is going to silence our voices in terms of any modifications. We are talking about just the motion to proceed. Just let us get started.

The fact of the matter is this amendment would be a substitute for an underlying bill. It would be the bill itself. We have to be on guard for the public

interest. That is where we are going to stand.

I urge my colleagues to vote against cloture until we understand fully what this debate is about for the benefit of the public.

It has been suggested that we are filibustering it. We just had a major bill go through this Chamber yesterday, and we were allowed a limited number of amendments. In 3 days, we had 11 amendments that were considered. That was it. That was the most we could negotiate, instead of as it used to be with an open process. If it took a long time, it took a long time.

I remember working through the night until 6 in the morning. We don't do that anymore. We shut down nice and early so we are not too tired at the end of the day.

But I say the time is the property of the public. They let us use it. We ought to use it fully instead of shutting down the debate and shutting down the opportunity for the American people to understand what is really taking place.

It is tough. It is tough because the route that is being used is kind of inside-the-beltway stuff.

How much time remains on both sides?

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator has 6 minutes on his side, and the majority side has 6 minutes as well.

Mr. LAUTENBERG. Mr. President, the unanimous consent that we are operating under had a call for a vote at 10:30. Is that right?

The PRESIDING OFFICER. That is correct.

Mr. ABRAHAM. Mr. President, I yield 2 minutes to the Senator from Pennsylvania.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Pennsylvania is recognized for 2 minutes.

Mr. SANTORUM. I thank the Chair.

Mr. President, the Senator from New Jersey said we should have Medicare included in this lockbox proposal. The President of the United States said: I can't believe the Republicans don't want to include it. He just finds that incredulous.

The Senator should talk to his own President. His own President doesn't want Medicare included in this lockbox proposal. The President has been clear.

Social Security money should be used for Social Security, and once you say it can be used for Medicare, it can be used for Medicare, it can be used for education, or for whatever.

I can tell you that Social Security recipients want Social Security to be used for Social Security. They do not want to expand the program to include other things. In fact, one of the biggest complaints I hear from seniors is that if you would quit taking money out of Social Security for every program that comes down the line, Social Security would be OK.

I think if we took a poll it would be overwhelming not to include any program—any program—other than Social Security in Social Security.

I also find it incredulous that he said there is a hole in the Social Security lockbox.

We wrote a provision in this bill; if we were in a recession, because we hold the debt limit, there could be a default on the credit of the United States. Is the Senator suggesting we should allow the United States to default? Isn't that what the provision says? I ask the Senator from New Mexico if he can explain that.

Mr. DOMENICI. Absolutely. The Secretary of the Treasury made some objections to the original bill because it was too rigidly drawn in case of emergencies. We took care of that.

We also took care of the problem we had with reference to the end of the year and the way the surpluses come and go because of the way you collect taxes in large quantities in other parts of the year a little bit.

We fix that, too.

Mr. SANTORUM. So the Senator from New Jersey, when he objected to our "hold" on the lockbox, his objection is counter to what the administration demanded of us to fix in our lockbox?

Mr. DOMENICI. Absolutely.

Mr. LAUTENBERG. Mr. President, I don't know why it is not clear, but we have said and we mean that Social Security funds, surpluses, are sacrosanct. They are untouchable.

The Medicare solvency we want to create comes out of the non-Social Security budget surplus. We have talked about this 60 times. Apparently the message has not gotten through. We want to do it. We want to deal with it.

By the admission of some on that side, Medicare isn't part of the thinking in this. If it is not part of the thinking now, I wonder when it will be.

There is also an opportunity, if I may suggest with a degree of temerity, that Social Security funds can be used in the name of Social Security reform. That is kind of a catch-all. It says if we can't get it one way, we will get it another way. We face the specter of a huge tax cut that is being proposed. It is not much different here from on the House side. We are talking about something close to \$800 billion.

We understand each other very clearly. The question is, Does the public understand why we are? We want to save Social Security, and we want to save Medicare. We want to increase the solvency of Medicare, and we are committed to a reform of both programs. During that period, it is said by the President that we will extend the life of both of these programs even longer than the 50-some years for Social Security and the 20 years for Medicare.

That is where we are, my friends.

If we are ready to conclude the debate, I am prepared to yield back our time—if we are prepared.

Mr. ABRAHAM. We are not.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Michigan.

Mr. ABRAHAM. Mr. President, how much time does the majority have?

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The majority has 3 minutes 53 seconds.

Mr. ABRAHAM. I yield to the Senator from New Mexico such time as he consumes.

Mr. DOMENICI. Mr. President, I want to clarify this from the standpoint of what a Democrat on the other side who is well versed in this had to say about this issue. On March 22, 1999, Senator BREAU, on a CBS newscast, avoided criticism of Clinton. Senator BREAU said: Some people want an issue of Medicare rather than solving the problem. They talk about wedge issues.

Senator BREAU added that one of the problems is that some people want an issue out of Medicare rather than solving the problem. They talk about wedge issues.

Are you going to have a tax cut or are you going to save Medicare?

That is old politics, he said. I think the American people are tired of it. They want us to solve the problem, not give them political slogans.

Now, to stand on the floor of the Senate and even imply that the proposed tax cuts in the budget resolution of \$782 billion over a decade would in any way infringe upon the Social Security trust funds is to confuse the public of America, and it is exactly what the distinguished Senator from Louisiana is saying—sloganizing, making an issue by slogans.

Secondly, if there is any implication that there are not sufficient reserves in our budget to take care of Medicare, that is an absolute error and an untruth. There are huge amounts of money left over after the tax cut. In fact, it approaches \$450 billion that is not allocated to anything during the next decade other than what we choose to use it for in the Congress.

I remind everyone, the President said we can fix Medicare with how much? Forty-eight billion dollars will give us prescription drugs, he said. We had \$90 billion left over in our budget resolution that was unspent, and now, with the new estimates, there is more money there. We can fix Medicare, put this money in a lockbox, have the tax cut, do that by the end of this year, and fix things for American seniors on both fronts: Lock up the money that is theirs and fix Medicare.

To talk about this trust fund as if it has something to do with fixing Medicare is an absolutely erroneous stating of the situation in the Senate and in the fiscal policy of America.

Mr. LOTT. Mr. President, I will wrap up by using leader time.

Mr. LAUTENBERG. Then I can use the rest of our time.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from New Jersey.

Mr. LAUTENBERG. Mr. President, the overwhelming recommendation by the House Republicans says use Social Security funds if necessary.

But there is an issue beyond that. It is quite apparent, if you use \$792 billion for tax cuts, it reduces the possibility

that you can pay down the debt. That is where we would like to go. We want to get rid of this constant threat of higher interest rates. We want to be able to be free to take care of the needs we have to operate our society, our country.

There is no confusion about where we are. We want to protect Social Security. We want to protect Medicare out of non-Social Security surpluses. That is where we are. One ought not confuse it with discussions about other things: A, Do you want to protect Medicare? B, How? That is the question. That is what we would like to have answered.

I hope my colleagues will stick together and say we want to have an open debate, we want to continue to discuss the issues, and not to be shut down on this pretense that this cloture vote will take care of the problems.

The majority leader is on the floor. We all have great respect for him. We would love to be able to be assured of amendments. I know our leader has been interested in a discussion of that and is awaiting the majority leader's response. If we knew that, perhaps we could be reacting differently.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senate majority leader.

Mr. LOTT. Mr. President, I yield myself such time as I might need for leader time. I know Members expect to vote at 10:30. I will try to be brief.

I am compelled to make a couple of points. First of all, our Republican budget plan reduced the national debt by \$1.9 trillion. That is the most significant and the only real contribution of reducing the debt in our lifetime. The point I want to make is, the American people overwhelmingly support the idea of the Social Security lockbox.

After resistance, the President even adopted that exact word, that he supported a Social Security lockbox. I don't know what the numbers are but in the high seventies, 80 percent of the American people think this is something we should do: Take all of the Social Security taxes, the FICA tax, and set them aside for what they were intended—Social Security, and only Social Security, a lockbox.

OK, so we advocated that—Senators DOMENICI, ABRAHAM, SANTORUM, and others. And finally the President apparently checked the polls and said: Oh, yeah, me, too; I want a lockbox.

Then the House voted for a lockbox—not as tight as this one, not as good as this one—with a vote of 415-12. Even the Democrats in the House of Representatives voted overwhelmingly without a lot of shenanigans, playing around, distractions, and a dozen amendments. They voted for the lockbox. Apparently they got serious.

Now, here comes the point: We go down in our bipartisan meeting to the White House on Monday to meet with the President. I am hopeful. I am optimistic. In fact, I come out and say: Yes, maybe we can have a lockbox; work together on Medicare reform; we can get some tax relief.

Let me tell Members what happened. We go in there. The first subject I brought up was the Social Security lockbox. The President said: We need to do that. I'm with you. We can do that.

Senator DASCHLE said: Yeah, we ought to do that.

What happened?

I go out and say: We are going to get this done.

The President hasn't lifted a pinkie since—nothing. All he has done is run around and whine and threaten that he is going to veto a legitimate Patients' Bill of Rights bill, the health care needs of the people of this country. That is all he has done all week—maybe a fundraiser or two, but he has done nothing to help us get a Social Security lockbox.

So I invite, in fact I challenge, the President: Talk to the Democrats in the Senate, Mr. President. They are the only obstacle to setting aside Social Security in a lockbox for Social Security.

That is what I have to deal with all the time. I get a lot of soft soap: Oh, yes, we will work together; we will get it done. And then nothing. If the President wants a Social Security lockbox, make one call, Mr. President, one call. Call Senator DASCHLE and say: Get it done. And we will get it done next Monday.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from New Jersey.

Mr. LAUTENBERG. We yield back our time.

CLOTURE MOTION

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Mr. ROBERTS). All time is yielded back. Under the previous order, the Chair directs the clerk to read the motion to invoke cloture.

The assistant legislative clerk 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 No. 297 to Calendar No. 89, S. 557, a bill to provide guidance for the designation of emergencies as a part of the budget process:

Trent Lott, Pete Domenici, Rod Grams, Michael Crapo, Bill Frist, Michael Enzi, Ben Nighthorse Campbell, Judd Gregg, Strom Thurmond, Chuck Hagel, Thad Cochran, Rick Santorum, Paul Coverdell, James Inhofe, Bob Smith, Wayne Allard.

CALL OF THE ROLL

The PRESIDING OFFICER. By unanimous consent, the quorum call has been waived.

VOTE

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The question is, Is it the sense of the Senate that debate on amendment No. 297 to Calendar No. 89, S. 557, a bill to provide guidance for the designation of emergencies as part of the budget process, shall be brought to a close?

The yeas and nays are required under the rule.

The clerk will now call the roll.

The legislative assistant called the roll.

Mr. NICKLES. I announce that the Senator from Arizona (Mr. MCCAIN) and the Senator from Montana (Mr. BURNS) are necessarily absent.

I further announce that, if present and voting, the Senator from Montana (Mr. BURNS) would vote "yea."

Mr. REID. I announce that the Senator from California (Mrs. BOXER), the Senator from Connecticut (Mr. DODD), and the Senator from Massachusetts (Mr. KERRY) are necessarily absent.

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

The yeas and nays resulted—yeas 52, nays 43, as follows:

[Rollcall Vote No. 211 Leg.]

YEAS—52

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

NAYS—43

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

NOT VOTING—5

Boxer	Dodd	McCain
Burns	Kerry	

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Three-fifths of the Senators duly chosen and sworn not having voted in the affirmative, the motion is rejected.

Mr. LOTT addressed the Chair.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The distinguished majority leader is recognized.

Mr. LOTT. I thank the Chair.

UNANIMOUS CONSENT REQUEST—H.R. 1555

Mr. LOTT. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the Senate now turn to H.R. 1555, the intelligence authorization bill, and under the provisions of the agreement of May 27, 1999, following the reporting of the bill by the clerk, I would send an amendment to the desk regarding national security at the DOE.