

Mr. SARBANES. Will the Senator yield?

Mr. DURBIN. I am happy to yield to my colleague.

Mr. SARBANES. Mr. President, I commend my very able colleague from Illinois for his very eloquent remarks about this tragedy, and I associate myself with his remarks. Our hearts do go out to both families, the Kennedy family and the Bessette family. The Bessette family has lost two children.

My State has been fortunate to be blessed by the extraordinary leadership of the next generation of the Kennedy family in terms of Kathleen Kennedy Townsend, who now serves as our lieutenant governor. So I have a direct sense of the strong responsibility of dedicated public service which has marked this family from the very beginning.

All of us are deeply struck by this tragedy. Our hearts reach out to the families. We extend them our very heartfelt sympathies. We feel very deeply about our colleague, Senator KENNEDY, who, of course, has assumed the family leadership responsibilities. We have to press on, but it really comes as a very saddening tragedy for all of us.

I thank my colleague for yielding.

Mr. DURBIN. Mr. President, I inquire of the time remaining under morning business.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator has 20 minutes under his control.

TAX CUTS

Mr. DURBIN. Mr. President, I wish to address an issue which is topical and one that most Americans will be hearing about during the course of this week and the next. It is an issue involving tax cuts. Can there be two more glorious words for a politician to utter than "tax cuts"?

People brighten up and their eyes open and they look in anticipation, and they think: What is this politician going to bring me by way of a tax cut?

Our friends on the Republican side of the aisle have decided that they will make the centerpiece of their legislative effort this year a tax cut, a tax cut which, frankly, will have an impact on America—positive in some respects but overwhelmingly negative in other respects—for decades to come. So I think it is important for us to come to the floor and discuss exactly where we are today and where we are going.

First, a bit of history:

In the entire history of the United States of America, from President George Washington and through the administration of President Jimmy Carter, our Nation accumulated \$1 trillion in debt—a huge sum of money over 200 years. But at the end of the Carter administration, and the Reagan and Bush administrations began, we started stacking up debts in numbers that were unimaginable. In fact, today we have over \$5 trillion in national debt. Think about that—200 years, \$1 trillion,

and, just in the last 20 years, another \$4 or \$5 trillion in debt.

What does it mean to have a debt in this country? You have to pay interest on it, for one thing. The interest we pay each year on that debt we have accumulated is \$350 billion out of a national budget this year of about \$1.7 trillion. You see that each year about 20 percent of our national budget goes to pay interest on the debt we have accumulated.

The new President came in—President Clinton—in 1992 and said: We have to do something about this. We can't keep going down this path of accumulating debt and paying more money in interest. It isn't good for our current generation to be paying out that money, and certainly we shouldn't saddle our children with that added responsibility.

In 1993, he came to the Congress and said: Let us take from what we have been doing over the past 10 years and do something new. The President proposed a new budget plan—a plan that was determined to bring down this debt. That plan passed without a single Republican vote. In 1993, the Clinton plan passed without a single Republican vote in this Chamber. Vice President Gore came to the Chair and cast the deciding vote to pass the plan.

It was a big gamble. Some Members of Congress on the Democratic side lost in the next election because they voted for the Clinton plan. Marjorie Margolies-Mezvinsky, one of my colleagues from the State of Pennsylvania, cast a courageous vote for that plan and lost in the next election.

But was the President right? History tells us he was dramatically so because in the last 6 years we have seen not only our economy grow dramatically in terms of the creation of jobs and businesses—low inflation, new housing starts, and all the positive things we like—but we have finally seen us turn the corner and move toward balance when it comes to our annual Federal budget.

Now, if you will, we are not discussing what to do as we swim through this sea of red ink but, rather, what to do with an anticipated surplus. In 6 years, we have moved from talk of a deficit to speaking of surplus.

There are two different views on what to do with this future surplus. The Republican side of the aisle is suggesting a \$1 trillion tax cut over a 10-year period of time. I am sure that is appealing to some, particularly if you are in the higher income groups in America who will benefit from this tax cut. But certainly we ought to step back for a second and say: Is that the responsible thing to do? Should we be giving away \$1 trillion in tax cuts over the next 10 years at the expense of virtually everything else?

Our side of the aisle, the Democratic side of the aisle, working with President Clinton, has a different approach, one which I think is more responsible and more consistent with the leader-

ship which the Democrats showed in turning the corner on these Federal deficits. It is basically this:

First, let us meet our current obligations to Social Security and to Medicare.

It is amazing to me, as I listen to the Republicans talk about all of our future challenges, that there is one word they are afraid to utter—the word "Medicare," the health insurance program for over 40 million senior and disabled Americans, a program which needs our attention and help.

What the Democrats and the President propose is to take a portion of the future anticipated surplus as it comes in to solidify Social Security for another 50 years and to make sure Medicare can start to meet its obligations past the year 2012.

We will have to do more, believe me. But at least by dedicating that portion of the surplus, I think we are accepting the responsibility, before we give money away for any new program or give money away for any tax cut, to take care of the programs that mean so much to American families and in the process bring down the national debt and start paying off this \$5 trillion national debt.

Is that important? It is critically important because not only by bringing down this debt will we reduce our annual interest payments of \$350 billion, but we will free up capital in America for small businesses, large businesses, and families alike to borrow money at a low interest rate.

Mrs. BOXER. Mr. President, will the Senator yield for a question?

Mr. DURBIN. I am happy to yield to my colleague, Senator BOXER.

Mrs. BOXER. Mr. President, I am happy to see our colleague, Senator SARBANES, because we all serve on the Budget Committee because we know what a turning point this is for our Nation.

My friend said that with the Clinton plan we have finally turned a sea of red ink into a fiscally responsible situation. Is my friend saying—I want to make sure we all understand—that in the Republican plan for the projected surplus there is not \$1 set aside for Medicare? Is that what my friend is telling me?

Mr. DURBIN. I thank the Senator from California.

I point to this chart. I hope this can be seen because the Republican tax cut plan of \$1 trillion over the first 10 years leaves nothing for Medicare—not a penny for Medicare, as if the Medicare program itself is self-healing. It is not.

If you were going to deal with the Medicare problems—and they are substantial—you have only two or three options: raise payroll taxes and increase the amount paid by those under Medicare or cut benefits. We may face some combination of those, as painful as they will be. But they will be much worse if, in fact, we don't dedicate a portion of the surplus to the Medicare program.

The Senator is right. If you take a look at this, there is not a penny of the Republican tax cut plan for Medicare and other priorities.

Mrs. BOXER. Could I ask a final question?

My friend and I have been on this floor on numerous occasions as proposals have come forward to raise the eligibility age for Medicare to 67 or 68. We have said, at a time when there are so many Americans with no health insurance, let us not raise the eligible age for Medicare.

I know how strongly the Senator feels, and how Senator SARBAKES and I feel about Medicare. Does my friend not believe, as I do that, when we talk about the safety net for our senior citizens, we must talk about Social Security and Medicare—that, in fact, they are the twin pillars of the safety net?

I ask my friend—and I will yield to him—that if we save Social Security—and both parties have agreed, because President Clinton laid down the challenge, that that was good—and then do nothing about Medicare—which is the Republican plan—and suddenly those on Medicare have to pay \$200, \$300, or \$400 a month more for their health care because Medicare is strapped, does that not mean there really is no safety net because the seniors will have to use their Social Security to pay out-of-pocket expenses for their health care?

Does my friend believe, as I do, that to say you are reserving the safety net for seniors and at the same time you do nothing for Medicare, it is really kind of a fraud on the people?

Mr. DURBIN. Mr. President, I agree with the Senator from California.

I think we should take this a step further. It is not only a disservice to seniors who are covered by Medicare but to their families as well.

Those of us who have dealt with aging parents and their medical problems understand that a family often has to rally together to try to figure out how to help a mother, a father, a grandmother, or a grandfather. If the additional expenses that are being shouldered because of the refusal of the Republicans to deal with the Medicare challenge end up falling on the shoulders of the frail and elderly, they will be expenses shared by many members of the family.

I think it is an element that has to be brought to this basic consideration. It is one thing to say we are giving you a tax cut on the one hand and yet we are going to increase the cost of Medicare to you on the other.

I want to make two points which I think are important as well. I am, I guess, right on the age of what is known as the baby boom generation. I took a look at this Republican tax cut not just for the first 10 years. This isn't a tax cut where they want to change the law for 10 years and then go back to the old one. It goes on indefinitely. We have a right and a responsibility to chart out what the Republican tax cut means beyond the first 10 years, to see

what it means in the next 10 years and the following 10 years.

Look what happens. It explodes from the years 2000 to 2004, \$156 billion; \$636 billion in the next 5 years; \$903 billion in the following 4 years, and over \$1 trillion in the last.

What does it mean? For the so-called baby boomers such as myself, when the time comes for retirement, the debt is going to start exploding again. The service of that debt, the interest paid on the debt because of the Republican tax cut proposal, will be a new burden to be shouldered by that future generation. It is not responsible. The Republican approach is not responsible. Not only does it ignore Medicare but it drags America right back into the sea of red ink. They are so determined to give these tax cuts to wealthy Americans that they are going to do it at the expense of fiscal sanity. Haven't we learned a lesson over the last 10 or 20 years, that we cannot do this without jeopardizing the possibility that we are going to have some kind of fiscal sanity for decades to come?

Think about this in the private sector. My friends on the Republican side say run government like a business. Microsoft is a very profitable business. Would Microsoft give shareholders huge dividends based on expected future profits? Of course not. They declare a dividend when the money is in the bank.

The Republican tax cut programs wants to declare a national dividend in anticipation of money coming into the bank; the Democratic alternative says no, dedicate a portion of that surplus to Social Security and to Medicare, and if there is to be a tax cut, let it be a reasonable, affordable tax cut to help middle-income families first. That is the difference. It is an important difference.

We also have to take into consideration that if the Republican tax cut is enacted, it is going to put pressure on Congress to cut spending in future years. Some people say Congress should cut spending; we ought to live within our means. The amount of money that will be taken from the Treasury by the Republican tax cut in the outyears would have a dramatic negative impact on America.

This chart illustrates that. If the Republican budget passes, and the tax cuts which they have propose are enacted, here are the cuts we will face. The Head Start Program—a program for the youngest kids in America, in some of the most vulnerable families, who are given a chance to start school ready to learn—will be cut for 375,000 children. The Republican tax cut leads to a cut in Head Start of services to 375,000 kids.

What will happen to these children? They will show up for kindergarten and the first grade and they may not be ready to learn. So school districts will have added responsibilities and society will have added responsibilities. We see it reflected in crime statistics, in wel-

fare statistics. When we cut back in early childhood education, which the Republican plan leads us to, we will pay for it dearly.

Veterans, VA medical care. If the Republican plan passes, forcing the budget cuts which inevitably follow, they will cut treatment for 1.4 million patients, veterans who come to hospitals asking for the care they were promised when they served our country. Is that a reasonable alternative? I think it is not.

Under title I, education for the disadvantaged, cutting services for 6.5 million children; The FBI, eliminating over 6,000 agents.

The Republicans smile and say, come on, we can give tax cuts, we can cut the budget, and none of this will occur.

We have lived through that era, that era of overpromising, that era that built up the red ink in this country to the point where we faced a national crisis and pleas from the Republican side to enact a constitutional amendment so that the courts could force Congress to spend its money responsibly. We don't want to return to that again.

This morning I had a meeting with the superintendent of the Office of Education from the State of Illinois, Max McGee, and the chairman of the State board of education, Ron Gidwitz, a businessman from Chicago. They came in asking for more Federal dollars. They want to have early childhood programs so kids get a better start at learning. They want the schoolday to go from 3 o'clock in the afternoon until 6 o'clock where kids have added adult supervision. They want school extended in the summer so kids have an added chance to learn.

These are all wonderful consensus ideas in education, and each one of them costs money. Naturally, our State education officials come to us asking for more Federal dollars. I told them they came at exactly the right moment because the debate starts across the Rotunda in the House today on whether or not the Republican tax cut plan will pass. If it does, and if it is enacted—which I doubt the President would see in the future—we will face the possibility of fewer dollars available for education at a time when most people believe if the 21st century is to be another American century, we need to dedicate resources to education and to our kids. That is the choice. It is stark. It is difficult. It is politically treacherous.

We must do the responsible thing. The responsible thing is to take whatever surplus comes in the future, dedicate it first to Social Security, then to Medicare, and then to retiring the national debt so that families across America and businesses alike can enjoy continued prosperity, a responsible approach which guards the prosperity for the future.

I don't think the American people will be deceived in believing this tax cut is their deliverance from concern in the future.

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Mr. BROWNBACK). The Senator from Maryland.

Mr. SARBANES. Will the Senator yield?

Mr. DURBIN. I am happy to yield to the Senator.

Mr. SARBANES. I commend the Senator from Illinois.

We have a marvelous opportunity at this point, having come out of this deficit box as a consequence of the fiscal policies pursued by this administration, to reduce the national debt for the first time in a great number of years. Indeed, if we maintain proper discipline, we can in effect eliminate the national debt for the first time since the first part of the 19th century.

All of that is at risk of loss, as the Washington Post says, because of the “egregious recklessness of the Republican proposal” which goes way out to the extreme.

I ask unanimous consent that this editorial be printed at the end of this discussion.

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

(See Exhibit 1.)

Mr. SARBANES. Mr. President, the Senator from Illinois has pointed out very carefully, first of all, this is an exploding tax cut. The cost of this tax cut escalates very quickly as time goes by. While the projections are over the first 10 years, in the second 10 years it virtually triples in terms of cost.

Secondly, it is premised on the proposition there will be about a 20-percent cut in existing programs; Head Start, VA medical care, title I for the disadvantaged—all the investments we need to make for the future strength of our country. The Republican appropriations bills are zeroing out the COPS program which is putting community police on the streets all across America and bringing down the crime rate.

Thirdly, it does not adequately provide for Medicare. In fact, it doesn't provide at all for Medicare looking out into the future.

The real question is whether we are going to take advantage of this opportunity to exercise a responsible fiscal policy. Furthermore, if we start stimulating the economy with a tax cut at the very time that we have gotten unemployment down to 4.2 percent—an unprecedented low level, the best in the last 30 years—then we are going to run the risk that we will start pressure on prices, have an inflation problem, and the Federal Reserve will start raising the interest rates.

In fact, at the last Open Market Committee, the Federal Reserve raised the interest rates a quarter of a point. If the Republicans controlling the Congress start stimulating the economy, you can assume that the Fed will take up these interest rates in order to dampen down economic activity, and we will be right back in the box with a problem we had in terms of how to encourage economic growth and have a

responsible economic policy. We have done a good job.

Mr. DURBIN. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent for 10 additional minutes.

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

Mr. SARBANES. Mr. President, as the Senator from Illinois pointed out, in 1993 when we enacted the President's economic program, not one single person from the other side of the aisle supported that program. Not only did they not support the program, they made all sorts of dire predictions of what would happen to the Nation's economy. In the debate on this floor, Members stood up and it was as though the sky was going to fall in if this program was carried through.

Only a few have been willing subsequently to own up to the inaccuracy of their prediction—only a few. The others sort of, I guess, forgot they ever made the prediction. But the fact of the matter is, the policy has worked extraordinarily well: Unemployment at a 30-year low; inflation at a 30-year low; we have come out of deficit and into surplus. Now we have the opportunity to move ahead in a responsible manner, not in an egregiously reckless manner, as the Washington Post points out in this editorial.

So I commend my colleague from Illinois for his comments. This is an extremely important decision we are about to make in terms of the future course of this Nation. If we make it responsibly, we can continue on the path of prosperity. We can continue to invest in the future strength of our country through education, research and development, and developing our Nation's infrastructure, our transportation, and our communication infrastructure. We can shore up the Social Security system. We can address the problems of Medicare. We can bring down the debt. We can even do targeted tax measures to help middle-income people and to help improve and increase productivity in our Nation. All of those are possible.

But things must be done in moderation. We cannot go to extremes, and the Republican proposal is an extreme proposal. Subjected to analysis, it does not stand up. We must not go down that path. I commend the Senator from Illinois for making that point so effectively here on the floor this morning.

EXHIBIT 1

[From the Washington Post, July 20, 1999]

A TAX PARTY

In part to placate party moderates whose votes they need, House Republican leaders are proposing modest cuts in the cost of the tax bill they are scheduled to bring to the floor this week. But no one should be fooled by this, least of all the moderates whose stock in trade is that they take governing seriously. The leadership trims don't begin to undo the egregious recklessness of this bill. There are three main problems.

(1) The surplus the sponsors are using to finance the tax cut the bill would grant is mostly phony. It is predicated on a willingness of future Congresses to make deep

spending cuts from just the first phase of which this Congress already is retreating. Most programs would have to be cut more than 20 percent in real terms. Without such cuts, about three-fourths of the imaginary surplus in other than Social Security funds disappears; the amount goes from \$1 trillion over the next 10 years to perhaps \$250 billion. If they set aside some money for Medicare, as they are bound to do, even less will be available for tax cuts—most likely nothing.

(2) The bill when fully effective would actually cost much more than the projected surplus. The cost is masked by the fact that so many provisions have been carefully backloaded—written to take effect only toward the end of the 10-year estimating period. The estimated cost of the first 10 years of the Ways and Means Committee bill is \$864 billion. The likely cost of the next 10 years would be three times that; one estimate puts it at \$2.8 trillion. This is a ludicrous bill, a lemming-like effort to put political points on the board whose effect would be to return the government to the destructive cycle of borrow-and-spend from which it only now is painfully emerging. The economy and the ability of the government to function both would be harmed.

(3) The principal beneficiaries would be people at the very top of the income scale. The rhetoric and some of the analysis surrounding the bill suggest otherwise. But here again, backloading comes into play. Some of the provisions slowest to take effect are those that would be of greatest benefit to the better-off. In the end, one analysis indicates that nearly half the benefit of the bill would accrue to households in the top one percent of the income distribution.

This is a bill that would mainly benefit relatively few people at the expense of many. It would once more strand the government—leave it with obligations far in excess of its means—and in the process do serious social as well as fiscal and economic harm. Not even as a political billboard that the president can be counted upon to veto should it pass. There ought not be a tax cut. The parties ought not use imaginary money to cut a deal at public expense. The greatest favor that this Congress could do the country would be to pass the appropriations bills and go home.

Mr. DURBIN. Mr. President, I thank the Senator from Maryland who has been recognized for his work with the Budget Committee and the Joint Economic Committee. He is a thoughtful analyst of our Nation's economy. I certainly agree with his conclusion.

I would like to make two points, though, that we have not raised so far, to take a closer look at the tax cuts proposed by the Republicans.

The Citizens for Tax Justice have done an analysis of the House tax cut proposal, and they have found that 44 percent of all the benefits in that tax cut bill will go to the wealthiest 1 percent of Americans. I am sure Mr. Gates, Mr. Trump, and all the others who have done so well in this economy would love to see a tax cut. But I am not sure they need a tax cut.

Take a look at this. Mr. President, 60 percent of the Republican tax cut would benefit the wealthiest 5 percent, three-quarters of it to the wealthiest 20 percent. Whom have they left behind? Working families—working families who will see little or no tax relief as a result of this Republican plan.

I think about Governor Ann Richards of Texas who used to make comments

about the other party, the Grand Old Party, and say: They just can't help themselves. When it comes to tax cuts, they just can't stay away from giving tax cuts to the wealthiest people in America at the expense of working families, at the expense of Medicare, at the expense of paying down the national debt, and at the expense of our current economic prosperity.

The Republican Party is adrift, searching for an issue. The one they think they can coalesce behind is a tax cut, the one thing that brings every wing of their party, from extreme right to right and everything between it, together. Yet every time they do it, it turns out they have tipped the scales so heavily to the rich that the American people say we do not want any part of this. If this is just going to be a cheering section of people from country clubs who think the tax cuts are really going to be something for the future, so be it, but it is not good enough for the country.

Mrs. BOXER. Will the Senator yield for a very quick question?

Mr. DURBIN. Yes.

Mrs. BOXER. I have to again say thank you to the Senator. I was looking at some of the analysis of the Republican tax cut, the across-the-board one. It said, if you earn about \$300,000 a year, you would get a \$20,000-a-year tax cut. I wonder if the Senator has thought about this. The tax cut, therefore, for those folks who earn over \$300,000, would be almost twice as much money as a person working on the minimum wage earns, which is approximately \$11,000, \$12,000. Could my friend just talk about the unfairness of that situation?

Mr. DURBIN. Mr. President, I think it is fundamentally unfair. I agree with the Senator from California. Most people who are in these high-net-worth situations would not miss a decimal point in their net worth, but the Republican tax cut plan wants to give them more money. Yet when we try to bring up an issue such as increasing the minimum wage from \$5.15 an hour, the Republicans just will not accept that. So we are going to have that fight later this year, I am sure, on the floor of the Senate.

That gives me an opportunity to summarize, if I may, my view of this Congress and the difference between the two parties. Take a look at the Senate over the last 2 months if you want to know the difference between this side of the aisle, the Democratic side, and the Republican side.

On the issue of gun control, sensible gun control, after the shootings in schools across America, the Democrats pushed a sensible gun control plan which attracted the support of six Republican Senators. I salute their courage for joining us, giving us finally enough votes, as a minority, to bring in Vice President GORE casting the tie-breaking vote for sensible gun control—trigger locks for guns that are safer for kids, trying to make sure peo-

ple buying guns at gun shows are not criminals or children, trying to make sure we do not keep importing these high-capacity ammunition clips of 240 rounds of ammunition. Who needs that for hunting or safety in their homes?

We passed it, sent it over to the Republicans in the House, and they just beat it to pieces. There is nothing left. We have to get back and pass sensible gun control—a clear difference between Democrats and Republicans.

On the Patients' Bill of Rights, we on the Democratic side came in and said what is going on is scandalous; doctors should make decisions, not insurance companies; and insurance companies should be held accountable when they make the wrong decision. The Democrats stood for that position. The Republicans, with the exception of two Senators, opposed us. The difference between the Democrats and Republicans: We believe in the Patients' Bill of Rights, the Republicans oppose it.

When it comes to this issue, what a change of hats. The Democrats are in the role of fiscal conservatives. The Democrats are saying mind our own business when it comes to Social Security, the future of Medicare, and retiring the national debt; the Republican side says at least \$1 trillion in tax cuts the first 10 years, and then watch it explode in the outyears.

For the American people following this debate in the Senate, they have a choice. If you buy into the Republican philosophy of runaway tax cuts and irresponsible spending in the future, if you buy into the idea of standing up on the floor of the Senate for the health insurance companies and opposing the efforts of families and doctors and hospitals to bring some sanity back to health care, if you buy into the Republican position supporting the National Rifle Association and the gun lobby, then that is your party, that is where you should turn, and be proud of it.

But if you think there is a better choice, if you think coming together on a bipartisan basis for sensible gun control, for the Patients' Bill of Rights, and for a fiscally responsible approach to our budget in the future, I think that is the better way to go. That is the clear choice, and politics is about choices.

I thank my colleagues from California and Maryland for joining me in the morning business, and I yield the remainder of my time.

CONCLUSION OF MORNING BUSINESS

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Morning business is now closed.

INTELLIGENCE AUTHORIZATION ACT FOR FISCAL YEAR 2000

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Under the previous order, the Senate will now resume consideration of H.R. 1555, which the clerk will report.

The legislative clerk read as follows:

A bill (H.R. 1555) to authorize appropriations for fiscal year 2000 for intelligence and intelligence-related activities of the United States Government, the Community Management Account, and the Central Intelligence Agency Retirement and Disability System, and for other purposes.

Pending:

Kyl amendment No. 1258, to restructure Department of Energy nuclear security functions, including the establishment of the Agency for Nuclear Stewardship.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from New Hampshire.

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

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will call the roll.

The legislative clerk proceeded to call the roll.

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

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

Under the previous order, the Senator from New Mexico, Mr. BINGAMAN, is recognized to offer an amendment.

AMENDMENT NO. 1260 TO AMENDMENT NO. 1258

(Purpose: Relating to the field reporting relationships under the Agency for Nuclear Stewardship)

Mr. BINGAMAN. Mr. President, I send a second-degree amendment to the desk and ask for its immediate consideration.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will report.

The legislative clerk read as follows:

The Senator from New Mexico [Mr. BINGAMAN], for himself, Mr. DOMENICI, and Mr. REID, proposes an amendment numbered 1260 to amendment No. 1258.

Mr. BINGAMAN. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the reading of the amendment be dispensed with.

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

The amendment is as follows:

In section 213 of the Department of Energy Organization Act, as proposed by subsection (c) of the amendment, at the end of subsection (k), insert the following:

“Such supervision and direction of any Director or contract employee of a national security laboratory or of a nuclear weapons production facility shall not interfere with communication to the Department, the President, or Congress, of technical findings or technical assessments derived from, and in accord with, duly authorized activities. The Under Secretary for Nuclear Stewardship shall have responsibility and authority for, and may use, as appropriate field structure for the programs and activities of the Agency.”

Mr. BINGAMAN. Mr. President, I offer this amendment on behalf of myself and my cosponsors, Senator DOMENICI and Senator REID.

The amendment does two things. The first sentence of the amendment says:

Such supervision and direction of any Director or contract employee of a national security laboratory or of a nuclear weapons production facility shall not interfere with communication to the Department, the President, or Congress, of technical findings or technical assessments derived from, and in accord with, duly authorized activities.