

This is Sean from Jefferson City, MO:

I think the marriage penalty is a major cause of the breakdown of the family here in the U.S. . . . [Ending it] would do a lot to cut down on the incidence of cohabitation by unmarried couples and give more children two-parent families where there is a real commitment between the parents.

I don't know if I would go as far as what he said—that this has been the major cause of the breakdown of the family in the United States. I don't think that is the case. But it is the wrong signal for us to send. We send signals all the time across the country of what we think is good and what we think is wrong.

Welfare reform: When we went through that fight—it was a very important fight—we decreased the welfare rolls in the country by 50 percent. We sent a signal that we think it is good to work. That is a good signal.

We should eliminate the marriage penalty tax. That is a statement about what we think is good. People are married and they shouldn't be taxed and penalized for that.

According to a recent Rutgers University study, the institution of marriage is already having problems in the United States and is in a state of decline. From 1960 to 1996, the annual number of marriages per thousand adult women declined by almost 43 percent. That impacts and hurts a lot of children. Not that single parents don't struggle heroically to raise children; they do many times very successfully. But that family can have a bonded relationship. Studies are showing again and again that the most important place we can put that child is in a loving relationship between two married people.

I am going to continue to come down to the floor regularly raising this issue because this body will have a chance to vote on this issue in dealing with the marriage penalty tax. I believe there are Members on both sides of the aisle of goodwill who want to see this marriage penalty tax eliminated. I don't think the penalty makes much sense to many Americans at all.

I hope as we start to engage this debate, in this body, that Members on both sides of the aisle will stand up and say: Yes, this is an important issue. We are not going to load it down with a lot of amendments. We are not going to load it down with a lot of extraneous issues. It passed the House. If it passes this body, we can get it to the President for his signature. It is an important signal to send across the country, and we are not going to block it.

There are a lot of ways in this body that you can block something—that you can put it forward and say you are for it but you are blocking it. I hope this would be one that we could say we are going to pass for the 25 million American married couples.

For those in South Dakota, 75,114 are penalized, and for those in Nevada 146,142 are penalized—I see my colleagues from South Dakota and Ne-

vada—I hope they can say to them: We shouldn't be penalizing you.

We have the wherewithal to change this, and let's change it.

Thank you very much, Mr. President. I hope we will have a vote on a true marriage penalty tax bill before April 15 comes and goes. There will be other of my colleagues on the floor later on to address this issue as well.

I yield the floor.

CONCLUSION OF MORNING BUSINESS

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Morning business is closed.

EXPORT ADMINISTRATION ACT OF 1999

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Under the previous order, the Senate will now proceed to the consideration of S. 1712, which the clerk will report.

The legislative clerk read as follows:

A bill (S. 1712) to provide authority to control exports, and for other purposes.

The Senate proceeded to consider the bill.

Mr. REID. Mr. President, Senator GRAMM is not here. The manager of the bill for the Democrats, Senator JOHNSON, has graciously consented so that I can say a word or two about this legislation.

I rise to speak about an issue that is of particular interest to me and our national economy. The issue I wish to discuss is export controls. As I stated previously, it is critical that the Congress support the engine of our thriving economy while still protecting the integrity of our national security.

Today in America consumer confidence is at a record high. Unemployment is at a 30-year low. New home sales set a record last year. The rate of inflation is less than 2 percent. The stock market has been surging, and corporation profits are better than analysts dreamed.

It was announced last month that we are experiencing a record 107 months of economic expansion. This is all proof that Congress and the administration has done a stellar job in steering the country in the right direction. And yet, thus far, we have been unable to pass legislation to update our export controls. The Bureau of Export Administration and the Defense Department are still conducting business under cold war era regulations. The economic and political world has changed dramatically. That is why I am so pleased that this bill has come to the floor today.

Last year, I met with Senators GRAMM, ENZI, and JOHNSON, in my office, to discuss export controls. They informed me that The majority leader pledged to them that the Export Administration Act would come to the floor before the end of 1999.

Everyone tried, but as happens a lot of times at the end of the session, it was unable to be brought to the floor.

That is not because the Senators I visited with—ENZI, GRAMM, and JOHNSON—didn't try. These three Senators, for whom I have the greatest respect, have all worked hard and in good faith to bring all parties to an accommodation.

When this bill passed out of the Banking Committee, it had the full support of the committee and the business community, while still protecting our Nation's national security. I am afraid with the addition of many of the amendments in the so-called managers' package that this bill is losing support both from the business community and the national security interests. I hope we can work something out and not have to adopt the managers' amendment as it is written.

In January of last year, along with the distinguished majority leader, I, Senator DASCHLE, and a group of Senate Democrats, got together to form a high-tech working group. This group came about because we as Democrats realize the importance of high tech to the Nation's economy. Senator JOHN KERRY, through his leadership capacity, has worked very hard in this regard.

We also recognize that Congress can have a large impact on the growth, or potential growth, of this sector of our economy. Our initial goal was to educate our caucus on the high-tech issues. Because of the generation gap between those who run this industry and most Members in the Senate, this took a little time. However, we got to speed very quickly. We toured sites all over the United States, including high-tech sites in Maryland, Virginia, and Silicon Valley.

As with many issues, I often hear that Congress would best serve the public and industry by doing nothing at all. One of the areas most believe we can be of help is in the area of export controls of high-performance computers. There are currently a number of U.S. products that cannot compete with national competitors due to export control limitations, not because of national security interests but because of the slow review process here in Congress.

In June of 1999, and then in January of this year, with the urging of Senator DASCHLE, myself, and other Senators, the administration agreed to ease the level of controls which were referred to as MTOPS—million theoretical operations per second.

We, as well as those in the computer industry, were elated. There is a 6-month congressional review period for raising the level of MTOPS. The Banking Committee bill reduces the review from 180 to 60 days. By the Senate Banking Committee agreeing to the shortened review period of 60 days, the committee recognized a few important things:

No. 1, 180 days is too long for an industry whose success depends on its ability to beat its foreign competition to the marketplace;

No. 2, a shorter time period gives the Congress adequate time to review the national security ramifications of any changes in the U.S. computer export control regime.

While this is a good step in the right direction, I, along with Senators BENNETT, DASCHLE, KERRY, MURRAY, BINGAMAN, KENNEDY, and BOXER, believe that further reduction of this to 30 days makes more sense.

The high-performance computers we are talking about have a 3-month innovation cycle. Therefore, if 60 days are taken up in Congress, on top of the turnaround time for new regulations at the administration, the innovation cycle is long overdue.

There is no precedent for such a long review period. Even the sales of items on the munitions such as tanks, rockets, and high-performance aircraft only require a 30-day review period. The reality of the situation is that by limiting American companies to this degree we are not only losing short-term market share, but we are allowing foreign companies to make more money and, in turn, create better products in the future. This could lead to the eventual loss of our Nation's lead in computer technology, which has propelled the United States to the good economic standing we see today.

This amendment is critical to our Nation's economy and the success of our high-tech industry.

AMENDMENT NO. 2883

(Purpose: To amend the National Defense Authorization Act for Fiscal year 1998 with respect to export controls on high performance computers)

Mr. REID. I send this amendment to the desk for Senators REID of Nevada, BENNETT, DASCHLE, KERRY of Massachusetts, MURRAY, BINGAMAN, KENNEDY, and BOXER.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will report.

The assistant legislative clerk read as follows:

The Senator from Nevada [Mr. REID], for himself, Mr. BENNETT, Mr. DASCHLE, Mr. KERRY, Mrs. MURRAY, Mr. BINGAMAN, Mr. KENNEDY, and Mrs. BOXER, proposes an amendment numbered 2883.

Mr. REID. I ask unanimous consent reading of the amendment be dispensed with.

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

The amendment is as follows:

On page 27, beginning on line 6, strike all through line 9 and insert the following:

(2) CONFORMING AMENDMENTS.—Section 1211(d) of the National Defense Authorization Act for Fiscal Year 1998 (50 U.S.C. App. 2404 note) is amended—

(A) in the second sentence, by striking "180" and inserting "30"; and

(B) by adding at the end, the following new sentence: "The 30-day reporting requirement shall apply to any changes to the composite theoretical performance level for purposes of subsection (a) proposed by the President on or after January 1, 2000."

Mr. REID. I recognize the leader has said there will be no votes on this bill today; therefore, I will ask for the yeas

and nays at such time as the leadership determines it is appropriate.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from South Dakota.

Mr. JOHNSON. Mr. President, in the absence of Chairman GRAMM and Chairman ENZI, in order to expedite consideration of this very important legislation, I will go forward with a brief discussion and my view of the Export Administration legislation.

I rise today in support of the Export Administration Act. I have worked closely on export control issues with Senators ENZI, GRAMM, and SARBANES, and I am pleased that we have reached consideration of this important issue by the full Senate. There are several different classifications of exports. Items which can have both civilian and military applications are considered to be dual-use technology, and those goods are governed by the EAA.

There have been numerous attempts to reauthorize the EAA in the years since it expired in 1990. It is unfortunate that this legislation has gone unauthorized for most of this decade, and I strongly urge the Congress to not forgo this opportunity. Reauthorization becomes even more critical as legal challenges to the continued reliance on the expired EAA through emergency powers winds its way through the courts. After ten years of congressional silence, I am fearful that one of these challenges will ultimately succeed, leaving us without any control over sensitive dual use technologies. At that point, even technology which is universally agreed to be dangerous could be freely exported to countries considered to be direct threats to the United States. Reauthorization of the EAA in of itself adds a tremendous component to our national security.

I want to especially thank Chairman ENZI for his work on this issue. Without his hands-on leadership, we frankly would not be at this point today. S. 1712 is a testament to MIKE's hard work and the widespread support this bill enjoys derives from Chairman ENZI's commonsense approach to issues.

I want to note the important roles played by Banking Committee Chairman GRAMM and Ranking Member SARBANES of Maryland. We have had constructive participation across the board, and that bipartisan cooperation has brought us to this point. That spirit contributed to the unanimous 20-0 vote in support of S. 1712 in the Banking Committee.

We had a simple goal when we embarked on this effort: reduce or eliminate controls on items that do not have security implications and tighten controls on items that raise security concerns. While most everyone can agree on these principles, it is much more difficult to draft the language to accomplish that end.

We worked very closely with concerned Senators, the national security establishment, the administration, and the impacted industries. I believe we addressed the major concerns of each

entity. We increased the penalties, making violators of export control laws pay a real price. We made the foreign availability and mass market standards a true measure of what items could be accessed regardless of U.S. sanctions, and provided for those items to be decontrolled.

S. 1712 strengthens our national security. For the first time, the Department of Defense will have unilateral appeal rights if it disagrees with an approved export. Penalties move from \$10,000 per violation to up to \$1 million per violation.

At one of our eight hearings on this bill, we heard from Representatives COX and DICKS on the Cox Report relative to exports to the People's Republic of China. We directly incorporate fifteen of the Cox Report recommendations in our bill to enhance national security. I might add that reauthorization of the EAA is one of the specific recommendations from the Cox Report.

America benefits when our businesses prosper. Exporting technology has long been an American success story. The technology field will lead our economy into the next century. But, new technologies could prove dangerous in the wrong hands, and our national security depends in part on limiting access to certain technologies. That is the balance we seek to strike, and I believe S. 1712 does that.

I look forward to a vigorous debate of these important issues. Passage of this EAA bill will make a significant contribution to our national security and will help bring transparency to our export control system. I encourage my colleagues to join this bipartisan, balanced approach to these critical issues.

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

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Mr. Burns). The clerk will call the roll.

The assistant legislative clerk proceeded to call the roll.

Mr. DURBIN. 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. DURBIN. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that I be allowed to speak as in morning business for 10 minutes.

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

THE AMERICAN ECONOMY

Mr. DURBIN. Mr. President, the Senate is about to engage in a debate about our Nation's budget for the next fiscal year which begins in October. When one tries to measure the values of politicians and political parties, the first place to look is how they spend money. Speeches are one thing, but the way we spend our money really explains who we are and what we value.

There is a real difference of opinion now between Democrats and Republicans about how we are going to spend our money in the next budget. On the