be done in a bipartisan way. We can only get important issues addressed in Washington, DC, if we work in a bipartisan way. That is what I have teamed up with Senator SNOWE for more than a year to do.

I hope, as I bring additional cases to the floor of the Senate and talk about the extraordinary suffering we are seeing among our seniors, that we can come together on a bipartisan basis to deal with this issue. I have spoken with Senator DASCHLE and Senator LOTT about it. I know Senator SNOWE is doing so as well. This is an issue to which every single Member of the Senate can point as an achievement if we come together and address it in a bipartisan way.

Towards that end, I intend to keep coming to this floor and describing these cases. I have believed since the days I was codirector of the Oregon Gray Panthers that this was an important issue to address. It becomes even more important by the day as these new drugs are key to keeping seniors well and keeping them from landing in the hospital and incurring greater expenses.

I hope seniors will take heed of this poster and send copies of their prescription drug bills to their Senators in Washington, DC, 20510.

I will keep coming to the floor of this body again and again urging bipartisan support on this issue. It is my top priority for this session, and it ought to be a top priority for every Senator.

I look forward to working with my colleagues to have this issue addressed in this session of Congress and give our older people meaningful relief from their prescription drugs bills.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Minnesota.

DAIRY

Mr. GRAMS. Mr. President, I take this opportunity to address concerns about the direction our country is taking in agriculture policy for our Nation. It has been very frustrating to me that our Federal dairy policy has been driven by what I can only describe as urban myths about the supposed benefits of dairy compacts in our country. These myths, just like stories on the street, have been repeated so many times in Congress that they are assumed to be true, despite their total lack of a factual basis.

I would today like to discuss the myth that dairy compacts are necessary to provide an adequate supply of fresh, locally produced milk to consumers. As I have said before, I believe this assertion is a deliberate attempt to mislead consumers into believing that if we do not have compacts, there may not be milk in the dairy case the next time they go to the grocery store. Perhaps the statement is not a total deception because it says that the dairy compact is designed to guarantee fresh, locally produced milk. But as we enter the 21st century, we as consumers know that a product in the grocery store does not have to be produced locally to be ‘‘fresh.’’ If it is produced locally, all the better, but we regularly go to the grocery store and buy fresh, perishable food that comes from all over the United States, including fruits, vegetables, meats, poultry, and any of a number of other foods. Similarly, fresh milk and dairy products can now be safely and rapidly shipped all over the country in refrigerated trucks—there is no need to restrict interstate trade in our country to guarantee fresh milk to our consumers.

One of the reasons that America thrives economically is because we allow individuals to produce what they are most skilled at producing. And this principle extends to geographic regions of the country. As an example, Americans buy most of their citrus products from Florida and California, cotton and rice from the South, and potatoes from the West. Economists call this ‘‘comparative advantage’’—regions produce and sell whatever they are most efficient at producing, and everyone benefits because trade and efficiency is maximized. Lower price; better products to the consumer. It all seems very simple, but it is not allowed to work that way in our dairy industry.

The upper Midwest, due in part to its climate, low feed prices, and an abundant water supply happens to have a comparative advantage in milk and dairy products. However, unlike the rest of the country, it is not permitted to freely sell the product that it so efficiently produces. Instead, Congress has chosen to protect entire regions of the milk industry against competition from the upper Midwest through dairy compacts and/or outdated milk marketing orders.

Basically, in dairy, the Government is picking winners and losers, not who can produce the best, not who can be competitive, what area of the country it is. But under a Government program, the Government is saying who is a winner and who is a loser when it comes to the dairy industry.

Dairy compacts require that processors pay a minimum price for the milk they sell for fluid consumption. Compact proponents will claim that producers outside the compact region are not prevented from selling into the region, but for all practical purposes, this is exactly what it does. If you have a floor price, it eliminates the ability of lower cost producers to sell in that region. There is no incentive for processors to buy from producers outside the region because the price they pay is already set. So they are not able to buy at the lower price or more competitive supply, but because of the compact setting the price, that is where they buy it.

It is interesting that the argument that compacts are necessary to guarantee a supply of fresh milk to a region was also made to justify the unreasonably high support prices in the 1980s that resulted as you will remember, in massive government purchases of surplus dairy products. The Federal Government spent $2.6 billion on surplus purchases in 1983 alone, more than 12 percent of U.S. milk production. Congress consequently had to begin a dairy termination program which paid dairy farmers not to produce milk for 5 years.

Congress today is perpetuating the same myths as in past years, with the same predictable results of producer surpluses and higher milk prices to consumers. Upper Midwest producers could sell cheaper milk to consumers almost nationwide, but instead, not only can they not compete for markets outside the region, but their prices in cheese markets are depressed by the oversupply of production in the compact region that flood into the Midwest.

Finally, it appears that not only are dairy compacts not necessary to guarantee a fresh supply of milk to consumers, but they seem to only offer Government protection to dairy farmers within the compact area and guarantee decreased consumption by families due to the high milk prices. If something costs more, you sell less of it, and milk is no different. For example, in 1998, each consumer drank an average of 23.8 gallons of fluid milk products. That is compared to 56.1 gallons of soft drinks, 15 gallons of fruit juices, and 14 gallons of bottled water. Moreover, beverage milk consumption declined from 28.6 gallons in 1975 to 23.9 gallons in 1997. This is not a trend we can ignore. If we went to encourage milk consumption, we cannot do so by artificially raising the price and keeping less expensive, domestically produced milk out of the market.

As we begin the second session of the 106th Congress, I ask my colleagues to be truthful in the dairy debate and not perpetuate the falsehood that compacts are necessary to ensure a fresh supply of milk to consumers. There are, unfortunately, other dairy myths to be exposed, so you can look forward to me returning to the Senate floor to make sure Congress and the American people learn the truth about our Federal dairy policy.

We need some fairness in our dairy policy.

I thank the Chair, and I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from North Dakota.

LONGEST ECONOMIC EXPANSION

Mr. CONRAD. Mr. President, we have now reached a milestone in our economic history with the report the other day that our economic expansion is now the Nation’s longest. We have now enjoyed economic expansion of 107 months. That is the longest economic expansion in our Nation’s history. I thought it might be useful to reflect on some of the policies that have contributed to that success.

First and foremost is the fiscal policy of the Nation. The policies that determine our economic success are the fiscal policy of the United States and the monetary policy of the United States.

The fiscal policy of America is controlled by the President, working with the Congress of the United States. That is the spending policy and the tax policy of America.

The monetary policy is controlled by the Federal Reserve Board. Of course, we had a vote this morning on the question of the continued leadership of Chairman Greenspan over the monetary policy of our country.

With respect to the fiscal policy of the country, I thought it would be useful to compare and contrast the records of our last three Presidents.

Under President Reagan, starting in 1981, we saw a dramatic increase in Federal budget deficits. In fact, they nearly tripled from $79 billion a year, when he came into office, to over $200 billion a year. Then we saw some improvement in the final 2 years of his administration.

Then, with President Bush, we saw a dramatic increase in our Federal budget deficits, going from $153 billion in his first year to $290 billion in his final year in office. At that point, we were advised that we could expect red ink for as far into the future as anybody could project. In fact, they were expecting, at that point, this year we would have budget deficits of over $600 billion if there was failure to act.

Thank goodness we did not fail to act because in 1993 President Clinton came into office, put forward an ambitious 5-year plan to reduce the budget deficit, and we were able to pass that plan. We were able to pass that plan; and for the next 5 years, under that 5-year plan, each and every year the budget deficit came down, and came down sharply, to $22 billion at the end of that 5-year plan.

At that point, we passed, on a bipartisan basis—unlike in 1993, where nobody on the other side of the aisle in either Chamber supported the 5-year plan put forward by President Clinton—but in 1997, we joined hands, on a bipartisan basis, to finish the job.

Indeed, we did finish the job, so that in 1998 and 1999 we saw unified budget surpluses. In fact, in 1999, we had a surplus of $124 billion, on a unified basis—that means counting all of the accounts of the Federal Government. And even better news; we were able to balance that year without counting Social Security.

This year, the year we are currently in, we anticipate a $176 billion unified budget surplus, again, without counting Social Security.

Those are very dramatic improvements that we have had in the fiscal policy of the United States.

I will go to this chart first because it shows the changes that were made in the two key elements in determining whether or not you have a budget deficit. The blue line is the outlays of the Federal Government; that is, the spending. The red line is the revenues. You can see, we had a big gap between the two for many years. That is why we had a budget deficit. We were spending more than we were taking in.

In 1997, when we passed that 5-year plan to close the gap, you can see from the chart we reduced expenditures and we raised revenue. That combination has eliminated the budget deficit. That is why we are in surplus today.

Let's go back to the chart that shows, on the spending side of the ledger, how things changed.

We are now at the lowest level of Federal spending in 25 years as measured against our gross domestic product, as measured against our national income, which is the fairest way to measure these things so you see changes over time, so that you are able to put in context the time value of money.

What you see is, we are now spending 18.7 percent of our national income on the Federal Government. That is, again, the lowest level since 1974, 25 years ago. If we stay on this course, you can see we will continue to see declines down to about 17 percent of our national income going to the Federal Government. That is a dramatic improvement over where we were back in 1992, when we were spending over 22 percent of our national income on the Federal Government.

Some have said: We have the highest taxes in our history.

Let me go back to the chart that shows revenue and spending. This, again, is measured against our gross domestic product, our national income.

The red line is the revenue line. It is true that the revenue line has gone up, just as the spending line has come down. That is how we balance the budget. We cut spending and we raised revenue so we could eliminate the deficit.

One of the key reasons we have more revenue is because the economy is doing well. It has been revived because we got our fiscal house in order in this country. Some say that translates into the highest taxes individuals have paid. That is not the case.

The fact is, the tax burden is declining for a family of four. This is not the Senator from North Dakota's analysis. This is the respected accounting firm of Deloitte & Touche, that compares the tax burden for a family earning $35,000 a year in 1979 to 1999. This chart shows their overall tax burden. This includes payroll taxes, income taxes. It shows that their tax burden has declined. The same is true of a family income of $85,000 a year. Their taxes have not gone up. Their taxes have gone down. Their taxes have been reduced.

Overall, revenue has increased because the economy is strengthened. Goodness knows, anybody who looks around at America's economy understands we are in the best shape we have been in in anybody's memory.

How do we keep this successful economy going? I think it is useful to reflect on how very important the successful economic policy we have been pursuing has been. It has produced the lowest unemployment rate in 41 years. This chart shows the dramatic improvement in the unemployment rate in this country. We have also experienced the lowest inflation rate in 33 years.

You remember we used to talk about the misery index. We used to combine the unemployment rate and the inflation rate and look at the so-called misery index. The misery index would be as favorable as it has been in almost anybody's lifetime because we have seen unemployment and the inflation rate come down dramatically.

The fact is, this economic policy has been working—a policy of balancing the budget and getting our fiscal house in order.

Now the question is, What do we do going forward? We have these projections that say we are going to be experiencing substantial surpluses in the future.

Chairman Greenspan, who we voted for overwhelmingly on the floor of the Senate, has given his recommendation. As recently as January 27, he told Congress: ''Pay down the debt first.'' That is what he is urging. He is saying: Continue the policy that we have pursued to eliminate deficits, reduce debt because that lifts an enormous burden off of the American economy. We reduce the interest costs; we reduce the competition for funds; we reduce the Government's call on money that is available in this economy; and there is more money available for the private sector at lower interest rates. That means higher rates of investment. That means stronger economic growth. We ought to pay attention to what Chairman Greenspan is telling us: ''Pay down the debt first.''

I wish to talk a little about these projections of surpluses we have heard about. When the Congressional Budget Office released their projections, they put out three different calculations of what the surpluses might be over the next 10 years.

The first one was based on an assumption that we have a so-called capped baseline; that is, we go back to the 1997 agreement. That would mean very sharp cuts in spending this year over the spending we had last year. In fact, this baseline assumes that we would cut spending this year by $66 billion over last year's spending.

Now, that is not going to happen. We have had a Republican-controlled Congress the last 2 years. They have not been reducing spending from the previous year. They have been increasing the spending, even though the caps existed. In fact, we shattered the caps last year. So it is an unrealistic expectation to suggest that all of a sudden we are going to start following them this year. In fact, that would require a $66 billion cut in spending to get the projection of a non-Social Security surplus over the next 10 years of $1.9 trillion.

The second estimate put out by CBO was, if we froze all domestic spending for the next 10 years, that would give us a non-Social Security surplus of $1.8 trillion. Again, how realistic is that? Are we really going to freeze for the next 10 years all the spending on education? Are we going to freeze for the next 10 years all the spending on defense? Are we going to freeze for the next 10 years all the spending on law enforcement? Are we going to freeze for the next 10 years all the spending on parks in this country, roads, and highways? That is not a realistic projection. That is not an honest projection.

The third estimate put out by the Congressional Budget Office is if we adjusted for inflation each of the years going forward for the next 10 years. That resulted in a non-Social Security budget surplus of $838 billion. In order to evaluate how reasonable that forecast is, I think you have to look at what has happened the last 2 years. This Republican-controlled Congress has been increasing spending by higher than the rate of inflation, which would reduce this number even further. That means instead of a $1.9 trillion Social Security surplus that has been bandied about in the press, or a $1.8 trillion surplus over the next 10 years that has been discussed in some circles, we are much more likely to face a surplus over the next 10 years in the non-Social Security accounts of about $800 billion. That is reality, that is facing the most likely prospect, instead of the kind of dreamworld anticipations we have had in the first two scenarios.

In the proposal of Governor Bush and the Republican side over the next 10 years, he is proposing a tax cut of $1.3 trillion, when we only likely will have a non-Social Security surplus of $800 billion. That means Governor Bush would have to take $500 billion out of Social Security to pay for his tax cut scheme, a tax cut scheme that gives 60 percent of the benefit to the wealthiest 10 percent in this country. That is a dangerous plan for this Nation's economy.

Instead of further reducing the debt with this non-Social Security surplus, he would devote every penny of it to a tax cut disproportionately going to the wealthiest 10 percent in this country. That is a dangerous plan.

It is especially dangerous in light of what Chairman Greenspan has told us, which is that the highest priority ought to be to pay down the debt—not to have a massive tax cut scheme, not to have a massive new spending scheme, but to have our first priority being to pay down the debt. Goodness knows, our generation ran up this debt. We have a responsibility to pay it down. Not only do we have a moral obligation, but it is the best economic policy for this country. It will take pressure off interest rates. It will mean greater economic growth. It will mean we are preparing for the baby boom generation, which all of us know is coming.

I am a baby boomer; many of us are. We know there is a huge bulge in the population. When these baby boomers start to retire, they are going to put enormous pressure on Social Security spending, on Medicare spending, and we ought to get ready for that day. We ought to be responsible. The responsible thing to do is not to engage in some big new spending scheme, not to engage in some massive tax cut scheme, but to have a balanced approach, one that puts the priority on paying down this debt, one that puts a priority on strengthening Social Security, extending the solvency of Medicare, and also addressing certain high-priority domestic needs such as education and defense, which I think many of us in this Chamber believe needs to be strengthened.

I come from agriculture country. I come from a farm State. Agriculture needs attention. That is a domestic priority for many of us.

Finally, yes, we can have tax reduction as well, but we certainly shouldn't put that as the highest priority. We certainly should not take all of the non-Social Security surplus and devote it to that purpose. We absolutely must not take money out of Social Security to provide a tax cut. That is irresponsible. That is dangerous. That threatens our economic security and our economic expansion.

Over 5 years, the Bush tax cut plan is even more dramatic in terms of its effect on Social Security. I talked about a non-Social Security surplus over 10 years of just over $800 billion. Over 5 years, it is about $150 billion. Yet the Bush tax cut plan over 5 years approaches $500 billion. Let me say that again. Over the next 5 years, the most realistic projection of surpluses is just under $150 billion. Yet the Bush tax cut plan over 5 years is over $480 billion. Where is the difference coming from? It can only come from one place. That is the Social Security surplus. That is profoundly mistaken, profoundly wrong. That is exactly what we should not do in terms of the fiscal policy of this country. The last thing we should do is put this thing back in the old ditch of deficits and debt.

I end as I began. Chairman Greenspan has advised us that what we ought to do as the highest priority is pay down this debt—$5.6 trillion of total debt, $3.6 trillion of publicly held debt. Let us keep our eye on the ball. Let us put as our highest priority the paying down of this national debt. Our generation ran it up. We have an obligation to pay it down.

I thank the Chair and yield the floor.

Mrs. FEINSTEIN addressed the Chair.

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Mr. VOINOVICH). The Senator from California.

Mrs. FEINSTEIN. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent to speak for such time as I may require as in morning business and that, by unanimous consent, Senator FEINGOLD be recognized to speak directly following the conclusion of my remarks.

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

HIV/AIDS IN AFRICA

Mrs. FEINSTEIN. Mr. President, this afternoon Senators will come to the floor to speak about a problem we believe is a very serious one; that is, the HIV/AIDS epidemic in Africa. I know the distinguished Senator from Illinois, Mr. DURBIN, will speak, and the Senator from Wisconsin, Mr. FEINGOLD will speak. I believe others will as well.

Mr. President, I rise to join my colleagues here this afternoon to address what I consider to be one of the most pressing and important national security and international health issues that we will face in the coming decades: The HIV/AIDS pandemic, which is currently sweeping Africa.

I wish to begin by giving my colleagues a sense of the scope and scale of this problem.

Sub-Saharan Africa has been far more severely affected by AIDS than any other part of the world. Today, 23.3 million adults and children are infected with the HIV virus in Africa, which only has about 10 percent of the world's population, but nearly 70 percent of the worldwide total of infected people.

Worldwide, about 5.6 million new infections will occur this year, with an estimated 3.8 million in sub-Saharan Africa—3.8 million people will contract HIV. Every day, 11,000 additional people are infected—1 every 8 seconds.

All told, over 34 million people in Africa—the population of my State of California—have been infected with HIV since the epidemic began, and an estimated 13.7 million Africans have lost their lives to AIDS, including 2.2 million who died in 1998.

Each day, AIDS buries 5,500 men, women, and children. We saw a very compelling documentary made by the filmmaker Rory Kennedy, which showed the burials of some of these children as well as the enormous cultural problems that exist in Africa because of HIV/AIDS. By 2005, if policies do not change, the daily death toll will not be 5,500, it will be 13,000—double what it is now—with nearly 5 million AIDS deaths that year alone, according to the White House Office of AIDS Policy.

AIDS has surpassed malaria as the leading cause of death in Africa, and it kills many times more people on that continent than war.

The overall rate of infection among adults is about 8 percent, compared with a 1.1-percent infection rate worldwide. In some countries of southern Africa, 20 to 30 percent of the adults are infected.

AIDS has cut life expectancy by 4 years in Nigeria, 18 years in Kenya, and 26 years in Zimbabwe. As these numbers suggest, AIDS is devastating Africa.