

Robinson in a 7-6 second set and thrashed her 6-1 in the third. They've been best friends ever since. Evert uses the friendship to boost both players' performance on the court: While Baker leans how to defend against pure power, Robinson gets a lesson in wiliness from the freckle-cheeked Southerner.

"John doesn't really play us together competitively," Baker says. "He knows we are good for each other as training partners, but he doesn't want us to get too much of a rivalry going."

A straight-A student through primary and middle school, Baker is also managing to keep up with her academic work through it all. While vacationing at the beach last year. Retired Daniels Middle School teacher Lynn Reynolds heard about Baker's decision to go to Florida. She immediately called up the family and volunteered to come out of retirement and "sign up for the team" as a home schoolteacher. Reynolds and her young charge have since become close friends, constantly in touch via e-mail and fax—the methods they also use to exchange homework assignments and tests. Daily, the teacher and student log onto the College Boards web site to work out a daily test question posted there—just to make sure Baker is ready for the SAT's when that time comes.

"This high-tech teacher and student relationship has really been fun for both of us," Reynolds say. "She's a quick study and a very smart girl. We've become great friends. This is one of the best teaching assignments of my whole career."

In two short years, Baker has traveled from Prague to Paris, from Palm Springs to Rio. She says she's enamored with this lifestyle that a simple game has already given her. She misses her friends, but they'll come visit, they promise. Everyone says they will.

If the "tennis thing" doesn't work out, Baker says, "with all the agents I've already met, I've got a chance with my singing"—country, that is, her backburner passion. Already the world has opened its doors to a talented Raleigh kid with enough sense to know that dreams are out there for the getting. "I mean, if this were to give me a leg up to go to a school like Stanford or Duke, then it's already worth it," she says. "Plus, just look at this place," she adds, holding out her hands as if to weigh the fresh, precious Florida air. "This is perfect."

Mr. HELMS. I thank the Chair. I yield the floor.

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

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will call the roll.

The bill clerk proceeded to call the roll.

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

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

TAX BREAKS

Mr. KENNEDY. Madam President, between last Friday and today, in the span of just 4 days, Republican Senators will pass tax breaks, overwhelmingly targeted for the wealthy, that will cost the Treasury one and a half trillion dollars over the next 20 years. You would think that careful attention would be paid to the merits of these astronomical tax giveaways before they are passed. Instead, they are being

rammed through by a right-wing Republican majority in Congress bent on rewarding the wealthy and ignoring the country's true priorities that have a far greater claim on these enormous resources.

What about prescription drug coverage for millions of senior citizens under Medicare? I have just returned from Massachusetts where I met with the elderly people. They are asking, Will the Senate of the United States, will Congress, take action to provide some relief to the elderly people in my State and across the country? Really, the unfinished business of Medicare is the prescription drug program. We did not debate that last Thursday and last Friday. We are not debating that issue today. We have basically said, let's find out how we can give the one and a half trillion dollars away over the next 20 years, instead of dealing with the Medicare issue on prescription drugs.

What about greater Federal aid to education to help schools and colleges across the country and the students who attend them? We put into the RECORD last Friday the most recent studies of the Congressional Research Service that showed that by moving to smaller class sizes, there was an enhancement of academic achievement and accomplishment by students in California. That supports the STARS Program of Tennessee. Senator MURRAY of the State of Washington has been our leader championing for smaller class sizes, because we believe that that can be enormously important in enhancing academic achievement. If we do that, plus ensure that teachers get training and professional advancement in their classrooms, working to enhance their professionalism, we will see a very important, significant gain in academic achievement and accomplishment.

We also know the value of after-school programs, tutorials, and accountability, as Senator BINGAMAN has talked about; the newer digital divide that Senator MIKULSKI has talked about; construction, the need to make sure our schools will be safe and secure and not crumbling, as so many of them are. But, no, we have set that aside. We are not going to have the resources to do that. Make no mistake about it, I say to American families, we have made enhancing academic achievement for our teachers, smaller class sizes, afterschool programs, a lesser priority than providing \$1.5 trillion from the Federal Treasury to the wealthiest individuals.

What about health insurance for the millions of hard-working Americans who have no coverage today? We made a downpayment in terms of the children in the CHIP program in a bipartisan way. We reach out to try to get coverage for their hard-working parents, an increasing number of Americans, who do not have health insurance. But we have not put that on the agenda. We are not debating that here on the floor of the Senate. There will

not be the resources to try to do that. We are saying we want \$1.5 trillion for the wealthiest individuals. Health insurance for hard-working Americans is put aside.

What about raising the minimum wage for millions of low-income Americans, the 13 million Americans, the majority of whom are women who have children? It is a women's issue, it is a children's issue, and it is a civil rights issue because so many of these men and women are men and women of color. It is a fairness issue. People who work 40 hours a week, 52 weeks a year, should not have to live in poverty. No, we cannot debate that up here in the Senate. We can get tax breaks for the wealthiest individuals in this country, but we will not debate an increase in the minimum wage. We will not do it.

I hope we are not going to hear long lectures from the other side about how we ought to be funding, now, the special needs programs. We had great statements from the other side: We have failed in meeting our responsibility to special needs children, to help local communities in the area of education. We have heard that time in and time out, while we have been trying to do some of these other actions for children in this country. We had an opportunity to pay for all those special needs children, but I did not hear from the other side that this is a priority. We did not hear it when they had the \$780 billion tax cut 2 years ago, and we could have taken a fifth of that tax cut and funded special needs education for every child in this country for 10 years. No, no, that is not enough of a priority. We are not going to do it. Our tax cut is too important. We are going to give \$1.5 trillion away without spending a single nickel on special needs children.

The list goes on about protecting Social Security and Medicare. Right now, I am sure there are scores of Members of the Congress and the Senate going on about how we ought to protect Medicare and Social Security. It is very clear what the priority has been in the Senate: \$1.5 trillion, not to protect Medicare, not to protect Social Security, but to provide it to the wealthiest individuals in this country.

That is what has happened over the period of these last 4 days, including a Sunday when we were not even here. All of these priorities and many more are being blatantly ignored by this Republican Congress in their unseemly stampede to enact these tax breaks for the wealthy. Never, in the entire history of our country, has so much been given away so quickly to so few with so little semblance of fairness or even thoughtful consideration.

I make that statement. I wait to be challenged on that. Never, never in the history of this body has so much been given away to so few, in such a short period of time, with such little semblance of fairness and even thoughtful consideration.

I hope we are not going to hear from the other side: We need to study these

issues more carefully in our committee; this hasn't been carefully considered by the committee—when they come out with that \$1.5 trillion tax cut, that never even saw the light of day in committee, on the estate tax. Think of having a committee report, think of having a committee discussion, think of having some debate about what the implications of this might be in terms of a wide range of different issues? Absolutely not. We just took it, faced it, and passed it.

So it goes on. Plums for the rich and crumbs for everyone else will be the epitaph of this Republican Congress. It's a dream Congress for the superwealthy and their special interest friends, and a nightmare Congress for hard-working families across America.

The Republican's trillion-dollar tax breaks will eminently deserve the veto that President Clinton is about to give them. The Republicans fail to honestly weigh the nation's priorities, and I believe that this is an irresponsible and reckless way to legislate. Some may view it as good political theater, red meat for the Republican right wing on the eve of the Republican convention. But it is a disservice to all Americans because it prevents action on the many true priorities facing this Nation.

I suspect that Americans who see and understand what is happening here this week in Washington will ask a single question: What if George W. Bush were in the White House? He would sign these irresponsible tax break monstrosities, and the nation would suffer for years to come.

I suspect that millions of Americans who see what is happening here would say: No thanks, we don't need a Congress that would pass such irresponsible legislation—and we certainly don't need a President who would sign it.

Last Friday's estate tax bill gave \$250 billion to America's 400 wealthiest families, yet this same \$250 billion would buy 10 years of prescription drug coverage for 11 million senior citizens who don't have access to coverage now. Our senior citizens face a crisis today. The extraordinary promise of fuller and healthier lives offered by new discoveries in medicine is often beyond their reach. They need help to afford the life-saving, life-changing miracle drugs that are increasingly available. Cutting a trillion dollars from the federal budget clearly jeopardizes our ability to add a prescription drug benefit to Medicare.

Today, in schools across the country, students face over-crowded classrooms, teachers go without adequate training, school buildings are crumbling, and violence is a constant threat. One would think that at some opportunity over these past few days we would have debated what most families are concerned about, as well as insuring academic achievement for their children in a safe and secure area.

No, we are denied that opportunity. We cannot debate that. We are told

somehow that it is not relevant. It is relevant to what parents care about, which is their children in school. I daresay it is a lot more relevant than the fact that we will be giving \$1.5 trillion, \$250 billion of which will go to the 400 wealthiest families. It is a lot more relevant to their lives than that other factor, the giveaway.

Yet, Republicans are rushing through a trillion dollars in tax cuts without serious consideration of what it means for the nation's unmet education needs. Today, the booming economy is helping many Americans, but those who work day after day at the minimum wage are falling farther and farther behind. A recent study by the pro-business Conference Board finds that the number of working poor is actually rising, in spite of the record prosperity. The number of working poor families who seek emergency help in soup kitchens and food pantries across the nation is far ahead of the ability of agencies to meet their needs.

Read the reports from last week about what is happening to children in our society. The total number of poor children has gone down by about a percentage point, a point and a half, maybe, in the last 2 years. But the ones who are living in poverty are living in deeper poverty than they have ever experienced.

We are finding an increased number of children who are not being immunized against basic diseases, and here we are cutting \$1.5 trillion, when we are not immunizing our children and cannot find ways to make those programs workable and effective. We are not debating that and trying to find ways to improve it.

The cost of rental housing is skyrocketing in most cities because of the economic boom, but the wages of millions of families who need that housing has failed to keep pace.

My colleague and friend from Massachusetts, JOHN KERRY, made this case so well last week to, effectively, a deaf audience in the Senate. Cutting tax revenues by a trillion and half dollars jeopardizes our ability to respond to these needs.

The American people cry out for action on many other basic priorities, but the tax breaks being passed by the Republican Congress would make fair action on all those priorities virtually impossible. Republicans are well aware that their tax-cutting extravaganzas would not survive if it were honestly weighed against the nation's real priorities. That is why Republicans resort to gross distortion of the facts.

They apply the phony label "death tax" of trying to deal with family farms and small businesses. Republicans told story after story about how the estate tax hurts owners of small businesses and family farms. Our Democratic alternative would grant them protection, but it wasn't enough for Republicans. Their position was to basically hold small business owners and small farmers hostage until they

could get the larger breaks for the largest estates and the wealthiest individuals in the country.

They know this President is going to veto this measure, and instead of truly doing something that would benefit those small family farms and small businesses, they say: Oh, we would rather have it vetoed. We will serve those small family farms up rather than deal with them. They know this is true in the marriage tax penalty as well.

Listen to this: They apply the phony label "marriage tax penalty" to the current bill even though 58 percent of the tax cuts go to couples who pay no marriage penalty at all. Do my colleagues hear that? Fifty-eight percent of the benefits of this measure, according to the Joint Tax Committee, a measure which we will start voting at 6:30 this evening, will go to couples who pay no marriage tax penalty at all.

The Democrats have a simple alternative to address the marriage penalty: Let them file as a single person if it will mean it lowers their taxes. What in the world could be simpler than that? If one is paying more because of their marriage situation as a result of commingling of the funds, Democrats say: OK, file as single individuals. That will solve it. There is no red tape and no administrative bureaucracy. It is simple. It meets a particular challenge.

The Republicans: Oh, no. We want our program which will provide this extraordinary windfall to the wealthiest individuals.

Our Democratic alternative would cost \$11 billion a year less than the Republican bill—but it would provide greater marriage tax penalty relief to families with incomes below \$150,000 a year. But, our sensible Democratic approach does not overwhelmingly benefit the wealthy so the Republicans reject it. Republicans intentionally designed their bill to give 78 percent of the total tax savings to the wealthiest 20 percent of taxpayers.

Ending the marriage tax penalty is a thinly veiled pretext to their latest installment of massive tax breaks for the wealthy. We saw the same tactics during the debate on the estate tax. We heard story after story of how the estate tax will hurt owners of small businesses and family farms.

I found Senator CONRAD's presentation of our Democratic alternative compelling and effective, virtually unchallenged on the floor of the Senate. Oh, yes, there was a challenge saying: Look, why are we supporting that because all of the various groups evidently support the Republican position?

I thought that was very interesting coming after our debate on HMO reform where we had 330 organizations support our HMO reform, and this particular Senate voted against it when they did not have a single one supporting their proposal and the responses by Senator CONRAD were responsive to this challenge.

They are holding small businesses and farmers hostage to their flagrant scheme to help the super-rich even while they talk piously of helping the middle class.

This Republican Congress is the trillion-dollar-travesty Congress. Fortunately, President Clinton and AL GORE are here—in this case, President Clinton—with a veto pen to burst their bubble. But thank goodness that working families, middle-income families, have a President who really cares about the economic and financial situation in this country.

I take pride that I was one of 11 Members of the Senate who voted against the Reagan tax cut that took us from \$400 billion to \$4 trillion in debt. That is why I am always interested in listening to those on the other side talk about what wonderful economic programs we have had over the recent times.

Let me finally use these charts to demonstrate, once again, what this repeal of the estate tax will cost. It is \$55 billion per year that we are effectively giving the wealthiest individuals by the year 2010. This could fund every program in the Department of Education.

We are not saying that just throwing money at it answers all the problems. But it is a pretty clear indication about what a nation's priorities are, about how we are going to allocate resources. We could have fully done that, funded all of education, on this. We could have funded the total cost of prescription drug medicines for every beneficiary and had \$15 billion left over. We could have had funding for all the beneficiaries, for all of our senior citizens. We could have provided the funding for the \$20 billion which takes care of all the medical research in the National Institutes of Health, and you would still have \$35 billion left.

This is an indication of priorities. This is another indication.

This chart depicts that from the Republican estate tax, those who are going to benefit from it, benefit from it to the average of \$268,000. All we are trying to get is a Medicare prescription drug benefit that will be valued for our senior citizens at \$900.

Here it is: \$268,000, by 2010, for those who will benefit under the Republican tax cut. All we are trying to do is get \$900 for our senior citizens, our 40 million senior citizens we will have at that time. Or to put it another way, the beneficiaries will have the estates worth \$2.3 million. The people we are trying to help average \$13,000 a year. They are the people we are trying to look out for.

This is the contrast. I believe, as I have said, never has so much been given to so few in such a short period of time—without, I think, the fair, adequate national debate or discussion in terms of what is really necessary, in terms of meeting the human needs of families in this country, the educational needs, the health needs, of

what is needed in terms of housing for working families and what is necessary in terms of prescription drugs.

How are we going to have clean air? How are we going to have clean water? How are we going to clean up the brownfields? How are we going to make sure people are going to continue to have an opportunity to work in employment and have the training and the skills in order to be able to compete in the new economy?

All of those priorities have been washed away. With \$1.3 trillion, we would be able to provide the investments for the American people. We have given that away. We have given that away without adequate and fair consideration of these priorities. I welcome the fact that we have a President who is going to veto those measures.

I yield the floor.

DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR AND RELATED AGENCIES APPROPRIATIONS ACT, 2001—Continued

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Mr. ROBERTS). The Senator from Rhode Island.

AMENDMENT NO. 3798

Mr. REED. Mr. President, I have amendment No. 3798 at the desk, and I ask for its immediate consideration.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will report the amendment.

The assistant legislative clerk read as follows:

The Senator from Rhode Island [Mr. REED] proposes an amendment numbered 3798.

Mr. REED. 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:

(Purpose: To increase funding for weatherization assistance grants, with an offset)

On page 182, beginning on line 9, strike “\$761,937,000” and all that follows through “\$138,000,000” on line 17 and insert “\$769,937,000, to remain available until expended, of which \$2,000,000 shall be derived by transfer from unobligated balances in the Biomass Energy Development account and \$8,000,000 shall be derived by transfer of a proportionate amount from each other account for which this Act makes funds available for travel, supplies, and printing expenses: *Provided*, That \$172,000,000 shall be for use in energy conservation programs as defined in section 3008(3) of Public Law 99-509 (15 U.S.C. 4507): *Provided further*, That notwithstanding section 3003(d)(2) of Public Law 99-509, such sums shall be allocated to the eligible programs as follows: \$146,000,000”.

Mr. REED. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that Senator KENNEDY and Senator SCHUMER be added as cosponsors of this amendment.

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

Mr. REED. Mr. President, this amendment would provide an additional \$8 million for the Department of Energy's Weatherization Assistance Program.

Across the country this summer, Americans have faced unacceptably high gasoline prices. Last winter, our

constituents, particularly in the Northeast, saw extraordinary increases in home heating oil prices.

Members of this body have offered various proposals to address this issue, ranging from urging OPEC to increase production; increasing domestic crude oil production, by drilling in new areas; building up our refining capacity; and expanding our use of ethanol and alternative fuels. Essentially, all of these proposals are supply side proposals, increasing the supply of energy.

In fact, we are reaching a point now where the proposal to encourage OPEC might be running out of time. I note that the Saudi Arabians are asking for a meeting of OPEC in the next few days, because if there is not a meeting immediately, even if there is an increase in production, it will be insufficient in terms of reaching our markets for the winter heating season.

All of these supply side proposals are interesting, but we are neglecting an important aspect of the overall composition of the heating market—and that is demand.

The weatherization program goes right to this critical issue of demand. By weatherizing homes, by making them more energy efficient, we are literally cutting down the demand for energy, and typically foreign energy.

As Congress debates these proposals for supply relief, we should also start thinking seriously about demand reduction. That is critically involved in the whole issue of energy efficiency and weatherization. At the same time, our weatherization program protects the most vulnerable people in our society because they are aimed at the elderly, individuals with disabilities, children, all of them being subject to huge increases in heating costs, not only in the wintertime—that is the case in the Northeast—but in the Southeast and Southwest and the very hot parts of this country in the summertime.

In fact, it was not too long ago—several years ago—in Chicago where there was an extraordinary heat spell. People literally died because they could not afford to keep their air-conditioners running, if they had air-conditioning. Or they could not afford to keep paying exorbitant energy costs because their homes were inefficient in terms of retaining the cool air from air-conditioning. So this is a program that cuts across the entire country.

The Weatherization Assistance Program supports the weatherization of over 70,000 low-income homes each year. To date, over 5 million American homes have been weatherized with Federal funds, and also local funds, which must be part of the formula in order to provide this type of assistance for American homes.

Last December, I had a chance to witness this program in action. I was in Providence, RI, with Secretary of Energy Bill Richardson. We went to a low-income home in Providence. In just a few hours, a contractor was able