

that they consider the merits of the points I have brought up today.

Indeed, we have the capability to open up this sliver—and it is a sliver—it is a very small fraction of a huge area the size of the State of South Carolina. We have 30 years of experience in the Arctic. As a consequence, nothing is risk free, but we have learned how to eliminate the risk dramatically.

I hope Members will visit ANWR when we take our Senate trip up there on March 30, 31, and the first day of April because I think it is necessary to see it, to talk to the people, to look at the old technology, reflect on the new technology, and get an appreciation for a very unique part of our great Nation, but a very, very harsh environment that is blessed with extraordinary resources in the oil and gas reserves that exist in the area.

Mr. President, I conclude my remarks and suggest the absence of a quorum.

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. The clerk will call the roll.

The assistant legislative clerk proceeded to call the roll.

Mr. WELLSTONE. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent the order for the quorum call be dispensed with.

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Mr. BUNNING). Without objection, it is so ordered.

PRESIDENT BUSH'S ADDRESS TO THE NATION

Mr. WELLSTONE. Mr. President, I know there will be other Democrats coming to the floor to respond to President Bush's address last night to the Nation. I thought I might just take a few minutes. First of all, I want to start by congratulating the President. When it comes to delivery and a sincere presentation, he deserves very high marks.

I am more worried about the substance. I am more worried about what the President was not very explicit about; in other words, what was left out of the speech, what were some unpleasant realities that were kind of put in parentheses.

I would like to just make a couple of points—because I think the people in the country ultimately, where this budget debate becomes most important and where the rubber meets the road and how all of these priorities affect people where they work, where they live, where their children go to school—about what wasn't in this speech last night.

In focusing on families and the benefits for families and children, the President neglected to say yesterday that one-third of all children in the United States of America live in homes that will not see one penny of the tax cut; about 56 percent of Spanish children in homes will not receive one penny of relief from the President's tax proposal, to the fact that over 40 percent of the benefits go to the top 1 percent.

That doesn't meet the Minnesota standard of fairness. I don't think it meets the standard of fairness for people in the country.

What the President didn't really focus on was whether or not in his budget proposal he is committed to having the Federal Government live up to its commitment on a very important program called the IDEA program for kids with special needs.

Governors talked about this at the conference. Our Governor from Minnesota talked about it. Every school, on demand, about every 2 weeks people talk about it. This is the program for children with special needs, the IDEA program that Senator HARKIN and others fought so hard on.

We are really supposed to be contributing 40 percent of the costs. I believe Minnesotans and people around the country, when they see the President's budget, are going to see a Robin Hood in reverse; a tax cut of 40 percent-plus of the benefits going to the top 1 percent, and crowding out any money or any investment or any commitment on our part to dramatically expanding our funding for the IDEA program. It is not going to be there. You are going to see no new significant investment of Federal resources in the IDEA program. The President didn't talk about that.

What was left out? The President did not focus on his proposal to drill for oil in the Arctic National Wildlife Refuge.

In just a few minutes, I will be at a press conference with Senator LIEBERMAN and others at which we are all going to support preserving 125 million acres of the Coastal Plain, a very precious area, as a wilderness area. We are going to be proposing that we not drill our way to energy security. Drilling for oil in the Arctic National Wildlife Refuge would be similar to doing it in the Boundary Waters Conservation Area in Minnesota. It really defines the very value that we should have as to preservation and conservation. We are all but strangers, I guess, on this land, and we ought to leave it better for our children and our grandchildren.

The President did not talk about his proposal for oil drilling in the ANWR, and he didn't talk about the cuts that are going to take place. Because if you have huge tax cuts, to be really honest about what it will cost and the surplus, and if you are not willing to raid the Medicare and Social Security trust fund—the President didn't talk about the fact that in order to make his numbers add up, they may very well have to do that—we are going to see some reductions.

There was a piece yesterday in USA Today that the President intends to cut the budget for renewable energy policy by 30 percent. For States such as Minnesota, a cold weather State at the other end of the pipeline, we are interested in the environment. We are not interested in importing more barrels of oil or millions of cubic feet of natural gas. We are interested in biomass, electricity, wind, saving energy, and fuel

efficiency standards which are clean technology, and where small business is more respectful of the environment and, indeed, where it would enable our country to be more energy independent. The President didn't focus on that in his speech last night.

There were rumors—only rumors because we don't have the numbers yet—that the SBA is going to take a huge cut. I tell you that small businesses are similar to family farms. We love them in the abstract. But when it comes to actually making the commitment to small businesses, that is where we fall short. The 504 program has leveraged a tremendous amount of money in the State of Minnesota to enable people to start a small business and to grow that business. I feel an outrage in just telling you that when people get a chance to look at the specifics of these numbers, they are going to see a set of priorities that is not going to be pretty. And I don't think they are going to be consistent with what most people believe.

Most people are saying tax cuts for all families. Don't do it disproportionately for the wealthy. Please make sure there is help for people who need help, and let's do it based on the standard of fairness. Most people are saying don't touch the Social Security and Medicare trust fund. Most people are saying we are interested in whether or not for our parents and grandparents we can cover prescription drug costs. We are committed to education and children. We want to see a commitment. What happened with expanded health care coverage?

All of that prioritizing goes out the window when you get rigorous in your analysis. It is the Yiddish proverb, "You cannot dance at two weddings at the same time." You can't have a tax cut over \$2 trillion and do what the President says he wants to do and make these investments. It won't happen.

Finally, I was at a joint congressional hearing where the VFW testified. There was a huge delegation of VFW representatives from Minnesota.

I would like to put all Democrats and Republicans on alert. The veterans are already very focused on this budget. They came up with an independent budget proposal. We fell short. Senator Johnson and I had some comments on this. We were only partially successful.

I will tell my colleagues that the veterans community wants us to live up to our commitment to them. This is a community that is getting older, and the issue is long-term care. In my State, it is an issue of whether or not our region gets its fair share of resources. There are too many veterans—about 2 percent of the homeless population in the United States—who are homeless, and many of them are Vietnam vets. That is a national disgrace.

They are interested in the commitment to those veterans. They are interested in making sure we can do good outpatient care. They are interested in

making sure there are not long waits for veterans who need health care. They are interested in whether or not we are going to fund veterans' health care. They are interested in whether or not this budget is going to make any sense.

Frankly, in the context of all these tax cuts mainly going to the wealthy, I am going to go on record today on the floor of the Senate to say that this administration will not be able to follow through on its commitment to veterans, its commitment to children, its commitment to leaving no child behind, its commitment to education, its commitment to covering prescription drug costs for senior citizens.

My mom and dad both had Parkinson's disease. Don't say to a couple: You make \$20,000 a year or \$21,000 a year; therefore, you make too much money to get any help. You are not making much money when you try to live on \$21,000 a year, or whatever it is.

So I simply say, I think ultimately what we have before us could be a grand and important debate. I am absolutely confident as to where people in the country will come down on this matter when they see the specifics and how it affects them, their children, where they live, where they work, where their children go to school. It is a value question. I think it is a spiritual question. We have done well. We have the prosperity.

The question is, What decisions do we make as a nation and as a community? What are our priorities? Is it going to be mainly Robin-Hood-in-reverse tax cuts, with the top 1 percent getting over 40 percent of the benefits or will we be talking about tax cuts that benefit all families? And will we be talking about making sure we protect Social Security and Medicare? And, yes, will we live up to our words, to our commitments for children, for education, for prescription drug costs, for expanded health care coverage? That is what we are about. That is what this debate is about.

I think it is more of a conservative saying, but I like it as a liberal, as a Senator from the State of Minnesota: There is no such thing as a free lunch. We can't do it all. So we need to make our priorities clear. We are going to have to make value choices.

I make a choice, as a Senator, for children and education. I make a choice for affordable prescription drugs. I make a choice for expanded health care coverage. I make a choice for two very important social insurance programs: Social Security and Medicare. And I make a choice for tax cuts that benefit all families, not just having benefits that disproportionately go to the top 1 or 5 percent.

I think that is what this debate is about. I think we are ready for it. I think the outcome of this debate is going to be hugely important to people in Minnesota and all over our country.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Illinois.

Mr. DURBIN. Mr. President, are we in morning business? That is my understanding.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Illinois controls the time from 11 until 12 o'clock.

Mr. DURBIN. I thank the Chair.

Mr. President, I salute my colleague from Minnesota. I know he is leaving the floor. I came in at the end of his remarks. I know he was responding to the President's State of the Union Address and probably has another meeting to go to, but he captured my sentiment on this completely.

I think what we have to look at now is what is in the best interest of this Nation in terms of the long haul. We have just finished the 20th century which we called the "American Century." Will the 21st century be an American century? I think some of the decisions we are making today will decide that.

I think the Senator from Minnesota put his finger on it: What are the most important things for the future of families in America? I think over and over they tell us: Education, Senator, Congressman, Governor. We want you to do something about education.

I heard the President talk about education last night. I think the Senator from Minnesota believes, as I do, there is a lot we can do to make this a stronger nation in this century, but it means an investment in education. If we decide, instead, that we are going to give a tax cut primarily to the wealthiest people in America instead of investing in education, instead of expanding health care coverage, instead of protecting Social Security and Medicare, then it is very shortsighted.

The President's remarks were well received. I thought he did an excellent job in his first State of the Union Address. But now it is time to step back and reflect. We not only reflect on his remarks, but we reflect on his record in Texas where he tried the same thing—a tax cut that did not work, a State that is now out of money. We do not want to go down that same road.

I thank the Senator from Minnesota for his remarks.

Mr. WELLSTONE. Mr. President, I thank my colleague. I apologize; I am going to be with other Senators at a gathering that will focus on oil drilling in the Arctic National Wildlife Refuge, to which we are opposed. That is the only reason I leave the floor.

One thing I wish to say to my colleague from Illinois, I congratulate the President's delivery, and I think he is sincere in what he said. That is the good part. I think there is one maybe bad part to last night, and I think it is a very important challenge for President Bush, which is, that if you talk about education and children and leaving no child behind and you talk about covering prescription drug costs for elderly people and helping people with that hardship—to use but two examples—then people hear that and they say: You know what, this is going to be

a Government that responds to us. The hope builds up, and ultimately, if you are not able to back that with the investment of resources, and it is just symbolic because you basically put it all into a tax cut, mainly going to the wealthy people, the top 1 percent or 5 percent, then that really invites—mugtiny is too strong a word—anger.

You can't play around with those issues. You have to back the rhetoric with the resources. If I had to critique the President's speech last night, to me that is the disconnect. I am troubled by that because these issues affect real people and their lives. And why are we here except to do better for people.

I think we have to back up our speeches and our rhetoric with our priorities.

Mr. DURBIN. I thank the Senator from Minnesota.

Really, after the President's speech last night, the question most people in America are asking is, Can we have it all? Frankly, last night the President said: Yes, we can have it all. We can have a tax cut for the wealthiest people in America. They receive 43 percent of the Bush tax cut. Sadly, there are literally millions of families that receive no benefit from the President's tax cut. They are people who pay a payroll tax and not an income tax. They are taxed families. They need relief. They need help with heating bills and paying education and health care expenses. There is no help for them in the President's tax cut package.

We on the Democratic side believe we have to take a sensible, fiscally responsible approach to this. We have been down this road before. It was not that many years ago that we were deep into deficits. We had these deficits that now have accumulated into a national mortgage, a national debt of \$5.7 trillion. It is still there. When the President says we are going to pay off \$2 trillion on the national debt, the debt is \$5.7 trillion.

We on the Democratic side believe that we have a responsibility to continue to bring down that debt even more. We collect \$1 billion in taxes a day—every day—to pay interest on the old debt. It does not educate a child, pay for a teacher, or make America's defense stronger. It is money paid to bondholders all over the world who own America's mortgage.

We believe the President, in saying he would spend \$2 trillion in paying down the debt, has really broken a promise. If he is going to keep the promise that Congress has made to keep Social Security first, to protect the Social Security and Medicare trust funds, the \$2 trillion paydown does not do it. In fact, it requires the President, under his projections, to reach into the Social Security and Medicare trust funds to create his so-called rainy day fund. I do not think that is going to work.

As someone said yesterday, if a businessperson wanted to reach in the pension plan of his employees for some

other purpose, he would find himself in a Federal institution, and it would not be the White House. In this situation, we believe that paying down that debt and protecting the Social Security and Medicare trust funds is really a solemn obligation and a first priority.

We also believe that if there is to be a tax cut, it should not be one that primarily benefits the wealthy and leaves millions of families behind. We believe there should be a tax cut for everyone in this country. And we believe the tax cut should be fair. If you talk about 43 percent of his tax cut going to the top 1 percent in income, these are people who make over \$319,000 a year. People who have an income of over \$25,000 a month receive the most benefit from President Bush's tax cut.

I would like to see our tax cut be something we can afford, something that is sensible, consistent with debt reduction, consistent with important investments in this country, and one that really focuses on families.

I just did a radio talk show with WLS Radio in Chicago. They asked me: What are you thinking about when you talk about these families? I said: I think about a couple who are Chicago public school teachers, and their combined income might be \$100,000 a year. I do not consider them to be a wealthy family. They are the type of family that struggles with mortgage payments and school expenses and all the things that go with bringing up a family.

If we focus our attention on people with family incomes below \$100,000 and say these are the folks who need a helping hand, that is a sensible starting point. Yes, there will be a tax break for the wealthiest among us, but why should they take 43 percent of the total tax cut?

People believe they are overtaxed. I think we can help them. In time of surplus, we should help them. We also should help them to understand that we want America's economy to start moving again. We hope this slowdown will come to an end soon, that we will turn away from this downturn, or recession, or whatever it might be, and once again get on the path of prosperity on which we have been for the last 8 or 10 years. If we are going to return to that path, we have to make the right decisions now. The President's tax cut, sadly, is not the right decision.

Unfortunately, he will spend over 90 percent of the projected surplus over the next 10 years on this tax cut and leave little or nothing for prescription drug benefits under Medicare, for investments in education, for expanding health insurance coverage for more American families, or for putting more money in our national defense.

We cannot have it all. Last night the President told us: You can have it all. You can give a tax cut to the wealthiest in America, primarily; you can go ahead and spend all this money I am promising and everything is going to be fine.

Those of us who have studied the history of our Nation know that sometimes the most pleasing and appealing political promises don't pay off for America. I am afraid what the President has proposed is just such a promise.

I understand the President is now going out, touring America, to sell the idea of a tax cut. I can't imagine this political assignment. The President has to convince America we need a tax cut. If the President were going out trying to sell a tax increase, I could understand it. That is a tough job. You have to explain the circumstances and try to convince the American people you are right. Here he is, trying to sell the American people on the idea of a tax cut. They are reluctant; they are not buying it. They want to have some questions answered.

One of the questions they ask is, How do you know we are going to have a surplus? If we are not going to have a surplus next year, 5 years, 10 years from now, why would you change the Tax Code in a permanent way and give a tax cut that gives away a surplus that you are not sure of? That is a valid question.

What it boils down to is that a lot of people think the President is gambling with the economy on budget predictions that are no more reliable than weather forecasts. These people who make these predictions have been wrong in the past, consistently wrong. Many of us believe we should deal with a tax cut and a spending program phased in to make sure there is always enough money for America's priorities, priorities such as Social Security, Medicare, education—to make certain that if we have a surplus, the tax cut is really shared by all Americans and does not go just to the wealthiest among us.

We are facing a balloon payment in Social Security in just a few years. The baby boomers are going to turn up at the Social Security window. When they do, there will be a lot of them, a lot more than we have ever had in our history. If you know that balloon payment is coming, should you not plan ahead?

Remember what the President said last night. He is going to appoint a Social Security commission to look into the future of Social Security.

Time out. He appoints the commission after he has already announced the tax cut. He will have used up the surplus and then said to the commission: How are we going to take care of Social Security? Wouldn't responsible leadership suggest we do it just the opposite, that we have a Social Security evaluation or commission, decide what we are going to need, and make sure the money is there, that if there is a surplus, it will be there for Social Security and for Medicare, and then decide if, with the remaining surplus, we can afford a tax cut? Not so. The President wants the tax cut first. That is the mistake he is making.

It also troubles me that after all of the years of promising that the Social Security and Medicare trust funds would be sacred and inviolate, the President's approach calls for taking out \$1 trillion from these trust funds. That is going to be a hard sell. Somebody said: Is the President going to be grabbing the third rail of politics if he does that? I think he will.

Many of us on both sides of the aisle believe you do not play with the Social Security trust fund. This is part of a sacred contract, a promise we made to people, an investment that today's wage earners are making in a trust fund so the money will be there when they need it as well.

Taking money out of the trust fund, as the President's proposal would lead us to, to create a rainy day fund or whatever it is not going to fly. Congress is going to resist it. We are going to insist that those trust funds be protected.

On Medicare, the President, unfortunately, has not proposed any new spending. These baby boomers and others who retire count on Medicare to pay for their health care bills. If we don't take Medicare seriously, we will find ourselves facing budget shortfalls in that critical program, and 40 million Americans today and even more in the future will wonder whether or not there are adequate funds in Medicare to pay for their medical expenses.

In making this commitment to our future, we have to talk sense to the American people. Maybe we won't say the most popular things on Capitol Hill, maybe we won't hold out the prospect of the big tax cut immediately, but we do believe that a tax cut is something we can support, as Democrats and as Republicans, once we put it all in perspective. The perspective is, what is a realistic projection, a realistic prediction in terms of the surplus we are going to have? What is the safe way each year to decide how much we can afford to put in a tax cut? How can we take care of other priorities such as paying down this national debt in a systematic way, a way that brings us to a point where we can say to our children: We just burned the mortgage. It is your America now, mortgage free. Make your own plans for your own future, and you won't have to compete with the Federal Government when it comes to interest rates, because we are not borrowing money any longer for a \$5.7 trillion national debt. We are not competing with you when you want a mortgage for your home or a loan for your car or your credit bills, whatever it is.

These things are good for the future of this country. Although they may not be as popular as the two words "tax cut," they offer things Americans will look forward to.

When it comes to education, people always say: That is our highest priority. If it is our highest priority, are we willing to set goals for this Nation and live up to them? Are we willing to

say that the schoolday our children live through each day should be a complete day that is positive and constructive, that from the moment those children are left at school until they can be returned to a parent, they are going to be in a positive, safe, and learning environment?

That isn't the case today in schools across America. Children are turned loose at 2:30, 3, 3:30 in the afternoon, long before their parents come home. Afterschool programs should be part of a schoolday. Maybe it will not be tutorials for kids who are doing well. It might be enrichment classes or art classes or music classes—even sports, for that matter—but something that is constructive and positive. America's schools should reflect America's families.

When we talk about a vision for the 21st century in education, our schools have to be part of that vision. They ought to be safe buildings, too. In my home State of Illinois, we have many great school districts but a lot of them where the schools are just crumbling around the students. Schools are not what they should be so the students are able to learn in a safe, clean, and healthy environment. The Federal Government should make that investment with the States, with the local school districts, to make those schools safer.

In the classrooms themselves, our teachers are facing a lot of challenges. I think about how little I know about computers, though I tried to learn a little bit more. I wonder if I could ever teach a course in computers even to a youngster. Most kids know a lot more about computers than I do. If our teachers are going to be able to use computers and teach our kids technology that will make their lives more meaningful, teachers need training and opportunities and they need adequate pay. We should treat them as the professionals they are and hold our schools accountable.

I agree with the President on this: Let's make sure our schools are productive. If we have testing, it is a good way to see whether or not the kids are making progress. I believe in tests. The President was right last night: You can overdo it in teaching to a test. However, if you are teaching to a standard of learning so that a child can move to the next grade successfully, I support it. We did it throughout my school career many years ago, and we do it now in the city of Chicago and across the State of Illinois.

It makes sense; I support the President's proposal, but if we are to leave no child behind, if we are going to invest in education as we should, then certainly we have to step back and say, is this tax cut of \$1.6 trillion—primarily for the wealthiest people in this country—the first thing America needs in the 21st century?

I don't believe it is. I think the first thing we need to do is carefully look at the books, see what is on hand, and then a tax cut across the board for all

families, pay down the national debt, and invest in these priorities—Social Security, Medicare, and education.

Finally, I will mention the issue of health insurance. It is almost disgraceful that at this moment in our history, with our prosperity, over 43 million Americans have no health insurance at all. I can't imagine getting up and going to work as the head of a household with a family without the protection of some type of health insurance. Yet we know that happens day after day.

I was glad to see the National Governors' Association come together in Washington this last week. They are proposing changes in Medicaid—changes that could lead to universal coverage so that every family in America would at least have a primary health insurance plan. I think we ought to move in that direction—not a Government plan or a Government-run program but a program that opens up to private health insurance sources and others so we can allow people to have that basic protection and peace of mind.

That is not the case today. As a consequence, many kids in America go without immunization. People with basic care who can live a long period of time don't have the chance. I am sorry that the President's speech last night really didn't address this. I think if the President, as he moves around and talks to working families, sits down and asks families about their priorities, they will tell him that health care is one of the most important, and that they are worried about the cost and availability of it.

The last point is this. Last night the President brought in from Philadelphia a family who seemed to be two people who were working very hard to make a good living. We stood and applauded them as the President described them as a "typical American family." I am glad they were with us as a reminder of why many of us serve in the Senate and in the House of Representatives. The President said this lower income family is going to need the help of a tax break. I think lower income families do need the help of a tax break.

I remind the President and his party that for the last 6 years they have consistently resisted every effort to raise the minimum wage in America. It has been stuck at \$5.15 an hour for 14 million Americans. So if we have sympathy for these families, if we value hard work, if we believe in the dignity that comes with those activities, for goodness' sake, why aren't we increasing the minimum wage? We have waited too long. That wage is continuing to deteriorate because of inflation, and we should be sensitive to it.

I hope as we get into this tax cut discussion we will not forget the basis—that is, that these folks who get up every morning and go to work, to clean off the tables in restaurants, make the beds in hotels, tend to our parents and grandparents in nursing homes, to be

there to make sure the workplace is safe for kids in day-care centers, are the people making \$5.15 an hour.

The Republican Party has resisted for 5 years now every effort to raise that minimum wage. For that family in Philadelphia, for 350,000 Illinois families that are working for a minimum wage, I implore the President and the Republican Party not only to think of tax cuts but to think about increasing the minimum wage to show that they value work, as we all should in America.

Mr. President, I yield the floor and suggest the absence of a quorum.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will call the roll.

The legislative clerk proceeded to call the roll.

Mr. SMITH of New Hampshire. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the order for the quorum call be rescinded.

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Mr. BURNS). Without objection, it is so ordered.

PRESIDENT BUSH'S BUDGET FOR AMERICA

Mr. SMITH of New Hampshire. Mr. President, last night I had the privilege of personally witnessing President Bush deliver remarks outlining his budget for America and outlining the priorities of that budget. I must say, it was refreshing, for one who has long fought over the past 16 to 17 years in both the House and the Senate, to hear tax cuts being proposed, and not only tax cuts being proposed, but also the opportunity to finally downsize the national debt so we can stop mortgaging our children's future.

The President, in that plan for America's priorities, included tax relief, debt reduction, and some much needed reform for some very important programs. One of the negatives over the past 20 or 30 years is that as our deficits and our debts became larger, many times we neglected a lot of key initiatives, areas where the Federal Government could be helpful to the American people. So it is a pleasure to see the debt diminished and money being returned to the taxpayers at the same time, and, in conjunction with that, we are going to provide dollars in much needed areas. I want to talk about that.

First, in President Bush's budget, we will see the largest debt reduction in American history. Think of that: The largest debt reduction in American history. It is good news and bad news. It is good that it is the largest debt reduction; it is bad that we have debt that large in the first place.

The key thing to understand is that this proposal pays down the national debt by \$2 trillion over the next 10 years. That is the largest reduction in debt to the lowest share of the economy since the First World War. With the leadership of the Republican Congress, we have already paid off an enormous portion of the national debt—