

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—

nearly \$363 billion so far. If you stop to think about it, it costs about \$60 million to borrow every billion dollars.

Multiply \$60 million times 363 and see how much we save in interest on that debt. That \$60 million will go a long way in New Hampshire. It was a lot of money where I grew up. That is just on \$1 billion of borrowed money; we have paid \$363 billion of it already, and we are proposing to pay off \$2 trillion—with a “t”—in the next 10 years. There is a ripple effect through the economy when taking the American Government out of the borrowing market and putting money back into the taxpayers’ pockets.

By the end of this fiscal year, we will pay off another \$262 billion. That is \$625 billion of debt reduction. Putting it in perspective, in 1997, the first year we balanced the budget, the debt held by the public was \$3.7 trillion. By the end of this year, the debt will be \$3.1 trillion, still a lot. Over the next 10 years, we will take \$2 trillion more off that debt, leaving a little over \$1 trillion in debt. Over the next 2 years, our Social Security-Medicare lockbox policy will reduce the national debt by an additional \$400 billion.

I was very proud to support President Bush’s plan to reduce this enormous national debt which for so long has mortgaged our children’s future.

It is important to understand everything else. I will discuss some items, including returning money to the taxpayers, providing dollars for Social Security and Medicare, education, defense. Put the increases in perspective. You will get a tax refund. We will talk about that in a moment. Reduce the debt by \$2 trillion, and there is still money to do those things. That is amazing.

That is a great tribute to this President who didn’t come into the White House and say, this is the way we did it last year; we will budget the same way we did last year. He sat down with his key advisers and worked through this budget and found out where the needs were. At the same time, he said he will reduce the debt, put money back into the taxpayers’ pocketbooks, and fund programs that deserve to be funded.

The tax reduction is fair. It is responsible. It is tax relief for all Americans. It is certainly welcome news to my own State of New Hampshire. Do I think the tax cut could be bigger? Sure. But I plan to work with the President to expand tax relief. The President’s tax cut is bold. I support it. I will be with him all the way through this process.

Good men and women of my State—and I am sure it is true all over America—have always been weary of taxes. New Hampshire is one of the only States in the Union that does not have, at this date, a sales or income tax. There are some in our State who want to impose a sales tax. I am very encouraged to see the President provide tax relief to the citizens of my great State and this Nation.

There is some irony. When I came to Washington several years ago, I wanted to bring the New Hampshire example to Washington—less taxes, less spending. Now we are seeing the reverse. President Bush comes in to cut taxes, cut spending, reduce the national debt. Ironically, some officials in New Hampshire are doing just the opposite—raising taxes, trying to find more revenue.

Now more than ever, I believe that hard-working Americans deserve tax relief. If you buy a television set and pay \$600, and you get home and the price tag says \$450, you were overcharged. So you go back to the store and get your money back.

We hear all the fancy and somewhat bureaucratic terms—surplus; we have a big surplus in the Federal Government. What that means is the taxpayers of America have been overcharged. That is more money than we need to operate our Government. It ought to go back to you. It is that simple. We will hear it today. We have heard it all week. We heard it last night in the response to the President that we don’t need this tax cut; it is too big.

I make a suggestion to those who don’t need it and don’t want a refund: When you send in your tax return, put a little check mark on it that says you don’t want the money, and send a check back to the Federal Government. You don’t have to take the tax credit if you don’t want it. If you don’t want the tax cut, send the money back and we will put the money on the debt. I am fascinated by those who say they don’t want the tax cut. Fine, you don’t have to take it; you can turn it back.

There are a lot of people out there who do want it. For starters, Americans spend more money paying taxes than they do on food, clothing, and shelter combined. That is wrong, pure and simple. We need to change that.

President Bush last night in a bipartisan, nonconfrontational but firm and resolute way said let’s do this for the American people. We always hear the debates. That taxes will get cut, and they don’t get cut. It seems to be a bunch of words that don’t mean anything. The President reached out and said: Let’s not get into class warfare; let’s just reduce taxes on the American people. It is good for the economy. It is good for the people. It is their money. It is not ours; it is theirs.

Federal taxes alone cost American families \$7,238 per year. That is more than any other item in their budget for most people. Taxpayer freedom day, the average day Americans first start working for themselves, was May 10 last year. So from January 1 to May 10, you worked to pay your Federal taxes. Where is the incentive to move forward and to succeed and do better? I say return the money.

Not only are we returning money to the people from whom we took it; we are paying down the debt at the same time. A lot of people say, I don’t want tax relief; don’t give me tax relief; just pay down the debt. We are saying we

are doing both. If you own a Government savings bond, we cannot pay that because we owe that to you. And you may have a 20- or 30-year bond. If we wanted to pay it off in one fell swoop, we couldn’t. But a \$2 trillion reduction over 10 years is pretty doggone good.

For every 8 hours of work performed, the average taxpayer in America works 3 hours to pay the tax collector. I think that is too much. I know some who hem and haw, saying, I don’t know whether I can support this tax cut; it is too big, too small—a thousand different reasons. I think if the average taxpayer has to work until May 10 to pay their Federal taxes, has to work 3 hours of every day to pay the tax collector, it is time the taxpayer got a break.

This is a big break. Today’s average taxpayer faces a combined Federal, State, and local tax burden of nearly 50 percent of their income. I am delighted to support this President in providing the typical family of four paying income taxes a full \$1,600 in tax relief.

We are in Washington talking about trillions. I don’t know what is after trillion. I hope we don’t have to deal with it during my tenure in the Senate. We are talking trillions and billions and occasionally millions. Let’s talk in hundreds and thousands. That is what the average American deals with—hundreds of dollars and thousands of dollars, not trillions and billions. Let’s bring it down. Ask yourself what you could do with \$1,600 if you didn’t have to give it to the Federal Government. What could you do? There are a lot of things you could do. I am sure you can think of them as well as I can. If you have a child, say, born this year, if you multiply \$1,600 times 18 years and add the compounded interest if you put it in a bank account somewhere or a CD, you will find you have a pretty doggone good downpayment on a college education—for the first year anyway—or perhaps a little more money for groceries, a little more money for clothing, perhaps a little bit for that first home mortgage. Add it up. That is real money, as Everett Dirksen used to say.

I think we have to get away from talking about all these trillions and billions of dollars and think about what that means to the average taxpayer of America. I say this in all sincerity: If there are taxpayers out there who do not want that \$1,600, send it back. But for the rest of us who might like to have it and the families all across America who struggle really hard to make ends meet who would like that \$1,600, why should we take it away from them? But some are proposing we do that.

President Bush is not. President Bush is saying we need to give that back to the taxpayers; nobody ought to spend more than one-third of their paycheck to support the Federal Government. I agree with him. It is refreshing to hear it.

But the President also believes a tax rate of 15 percent is too high for hard-

working men and women who earn low wages. So he has proposed we lower that even to 10 percent, down from 15 percent—I agree with that—and double the child tax credit to \$1,000 per child, and eliminate the marriage penalty, penalizing people who get married.

We in the Federal Government should be encouraging the makeup of the family not breakup, and, of course, eliminating the infamous death tax which the President mentioned last night. All your life, you work hard to earn money, pay taxes on that money, and have perhaps a business or home or some asset you want to leave to your children, and they cannot afford to receive it from you upon your death because they cannot pay the taxes on it, so they have to sell it, whether it be a business or home. That is not right. We ought to change it. Yet there are some who still want to fight the President on that—a million-dollar threshold or whatever. When you start talking about a business or what you build up all your life, if you have to sell it to pay all the taxes, what are you going to do?

This is a good plan: Pay down the debt and give money back to the taxpayers who provided the money for us. We—all of us, the taxpayers—funded the cold war. We won the cold war. We funded that national debt, unfortunately, for all those years, and now we are going to defund it. We are going to pay it off, and we are going to give money back to the taxpayers who earned it.

There is one great thing about this budget. I have been around here for a few years, and I have seen many budgets come and go. Most of them are dead on arrival, but I am hopeful this one will not be because this President not only reduces debt and provides tax relief for the American family but he also funds important priorities.

I can remember—and many of my colleagues can, too—year after year, people coming down here saying we were going to lose our money, we were going to lose this and that, we were going to get cut here and there because we were fighting for every single dollar because the interest on the debt was going up \$300 billion, \$400 billion a year just to fund that debt.

We are changing that now. We are reversing that. It is a new paradigm. It is a new America, a new century, a new President. There is new excitement here in Washington because we are paying off debt, we are paying back taxpayers the money they deserve to get back, and we are funding new initiatives and new priorities, good initiatives and good priorities.

Let's talk about some of them. One is the environment. I chair the Environment and Public Works Committee in the Senate. I commend President Bush's budget. It invests in one of our Nation's most important assets, our environment. Where are we without it? He is proposing to accelerate the clean-up of toxic waste sites called

brownfields. It is a reflection of the bill that Senator CHAFEE and I have introduced to clean up brownfields. The administration has endorsed that bill. I am very excited about it because brownfields, these toxic waste sites, are all over America. There are some 400,000 to 500,000 of them, some in New Hampshire.

What is a brownfield? A brownfield is a site that has toxic waste in it. It is not a Superfund site, not as bad as some of them, but for years and years contractors have been afraid to come on these sites and clean them up for fear the Federal Government would come in and say they did not do a good enough job and fine them, and so forth. We have now clarified this in the law so these sites can be cleaned up.

Here is what it accomplishes: No. 1, it cleans up a blight in a community. These are not just large cities. It is also the small town of Bradford, NH. I say to any of my constituents in Bradford, if you are listening, help is coming for you. In the town of Bradford, there is a toxic waste site that needs to be cleaned up. It has not been cleaned up because the law has not allowed it to be cleaned up. They want to make a park there. All they have been trying to do is get the funds to clean up this site to make a park. This is what we can do because the President has laid out a budget that pays down that debt, puts money back in the taxpayers' pockets, and allows us to fund programs such as this for the first time in so many years—truly fund them.

I am excited about it. When you clean up that brownfield, you are going to create jobs because somebody is working to clean it up; No. 2, you are going to eliminate the blighted site in the community; and, No. 3, maybe somebody builds something there, a new business or something that does not go outside of town and bulldoze off 10 acres of green space. It is just a fantastic opportunity, and President Bush came right out of the gate and mentioned it specifically last night in his speech: Brownfields legislation. We are going to help clean up brownfields. That is good news for certainly every large city in America and thousands of small towns all across America.

It is a great opportunity we have not had in the past because we had this debt. Now we are not only putting money back directly in the pockets of the taxpayers, under this budget, but we are also putting money back into the community. So if you are a taxpayer in Bradford, NH, you are going to get a Federal tax cut if you pay taxes and, second, you are going to have your community improved with dollars that are going to come into that community because we have the opportunity to do it now because we are running these surpluses.

This is exciting news. It is not just brownfields. I could go on and on with a number of environmental priorities where we could do this—water infrastructure, sewerage pipes, clean

water—all kinds of environmental initiatives now that we will be able to fund.

Another one is the Land and Water Conservation Fund where moneys can be provided to help create parks and trails and so many other positive things—habitats. It is just a great opportunity for us.

Another item is defense. The defense of the United States has been neglected over the past several years. Everybody knows it. The President has proposed a \$5.7 billion increase in pay and benefits. I just came back from the Mediterranean, visiting the troops out there, worried about terrorist attacks and so forth, putting their lives on the line every single day. And some of them are on food stamps? Come on, America. We can do better.

The President of the United States, within days of the beginning of his term, went directly to the military aboard ship and on bases and told our sailors, our airmen, our marines, who are defending our interests and values all over the world: We are going to increase your pay and benefits. He lived up to that promise, and he put it in the budget.

It should be there. It absolutely should be there. We take for granted what these men and women do. Believe me, we take it for granted. If you have a young son, or daughter, or husband, or wife, or a dad, or a mom who is out there, you know we take that for granted. They are the best in the world, and they deserve the best we can provide them. Now, finally, with this budget we are able to do that. It will give the military the vital funds to compete with the private sector in order to recruit the best people.

President Bush has correctly realized our increasingly high-tech military requires that special steps be taken in order to attract and retain personnel with computer science and other disciplines. Right now, there is a great opportunity out there in the private sector. A lot of people are pulled to that, but many people want to serve in the military, and if they just have the opportunity to do it, with better pay and better benefits, we can pull more people toward the military.

In addition to the military pay and benefits, the President has pledged to increase pay incentives for highly trained military personnel, and I know that is good news for the military.

Let me discuss a couple of other issues: Education. I am a former teacher. I taught school for 6 years. You are never a former teacher; you are always a teacher. I also served on a school board. I have also been a father for 25-plus years. So I think I know a little bit about education from four or five different perspectives, if you will.

I agree; decisions regarding education are best done at the local level, period. That is where the best decisions are made. You cannot sugar-coat that any other way. The best decisions are made at the local level. We don't need

a national school board running our public schools.

We need the local school boards to run those schools with the parents, with the teachers, with the administrators, and with the students working together.

Some will say there is a lot of money in President Bush's education plan. There is an 11-percent increase in education funding at the Federal level. Look how it is applied. This plan provides the local schools, local districts, and States more freedom in administering the Federal dollars. They are going to have more choices. They are going to combine dozens and dozens of Federal education programs into only five and allow the States and the local communities to spend the money as they see fit in the categories that they see as best.

President Bush said last night: Leave no child behind. I think this is the best opportunity we have had in many years to make that come true. Passing year after year a child who can't read or write doesn't do any good. It puts them at a tremendous disadvantage when they come out into society. It is not necessary. Our schools and teachers should be about kids. If they can't compete, then parents ought to have the opportunity to say, well, I am going to go over here to this school or this school. That is what rich folks do. They send their kids to some private school, if they want to. They borrow money to do it because they don't like the public school.

I am a former public school teacher. I am a strong advocate of public schools. They ought to be competitive and good. And if they are not and won't improve, then parents ought to have the right to choose another school.

The Bush plan provides schools with more freedom in administering these Federal dollars. But it also holds States accountable for improving student achievement, which will be demonstrated through assessments in reading and math. The plan provides reading programs which will be available to States to provide research-based reading programs in the early elementary grades and low-income preschools.

Some think we are going to put all of this taxpayer money on the public debt and not do anything else and that we are going to cut these programs. We are not. That is the beauty of the budget. It is one of the best, if not the best, budgets I have seen since I have been in Washington. It preserves and protects Social Security. It locks away every penny—\$2.6 trillion goes right into the lockbox for Social Security. We cannot touch it for anything else. There will be no more Government greedy hands in there borrowing the money and using it for something else.

In addition, the President talks about making those dollars in Social Security go further.

With Medicare, it is the same thing. It spends every dime for Medicare. That is what it is gathered for and col-

lected for, and that is what it should be spent for. It passes it on.

I have spent a year looking at the prescription drug issue. It can be done without hurting the program's solvency. We can provide help for our senior citizens who need prescription drugs. They deserve it and are going to get that help under this budget.

Finally, faith-based initiatives are somewhat of a controversial matter. It is not controversial to me. I think the President made it very clear last night. Faith-based proposals can get the job done. There are so many people out there working in various charitable organizations, whether they be religious or not. They are trying to do a job. We are not picking sides. The President is simply saying why not help all of these good-hearted Americans who are working and doing a wonderful job to restore and heal the lives of men and women in need? They can do it better than any Federal Government program. They can do it better than any bureaucrat in Washington, and they are doing it OK. God bless them. If you have ever been out to see what they do, your heart goes out to them. In spite of everything, they are out there day in and day out begging for more money. We need a chance to provide the dollars to these folks who can get people back on track and be productive again.

Billy Graham once said that our basic problems today are not social problems; it is not a lack of education. The problems are the problems of the human heart, a heart that is not right to God. These organizations recognize that God has the power to change lives and heal wounds and instill an inner drive in people so they have tools to change destructive behavior.

Faith-based organizations provide needed community services. This is a nation under God. We are not supposed to take God out of our Government. We are just not supposed to have a state-sponsored church. Sometimes we forget that. Why not help these people? President Bush does. He took it head on. He knew he was going to get hit for it. But he is doing it anyway. That is leadership. Faith-based organizations are very effective, and they are going to get help. That is why I support President Bush's plan.

Let me close with this point: Under this budget, we pay back \$2 trillion of the national debt over the next 10 years. We provide \$1.6 trillion to go back into the pockets of the people from whom we took it. And we do all of these things that I mentioned. I haven't even gotten started with the things I could have added to the list. That is a good budget.

I tell you, ladies and gentlemen, that is leadership. When you step up to the plate and take on something such as that, that is leadership. President Bush deserves a lot of credit for coming up here last night and laying that out in a concise and clear way and not being afraid to take on these tough challenges.

I sincerely hope my colleagues will act quickly to pass this budget so the country will be the beneficiary of it.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Tennessee is recognized.

Mr. FRIST. Mr. President, I understand we are in morning business.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. That is correct.

DALE EARNHARDT

Mr. FRIST. Mr. President, I rise today to pay tribute to an American legend, a workingman who rose from his roots to the very top of his profession, indeed, to the top of the world, the racing world, that is. And that is why we loved him.

As all legends, he was the best at what he did. He was the greatest race car driver in the history of NASCAR and perhaps the greatest driver who ever lived.

With an uncanny feel for his car in a take-no-prisoners attitude on the track, he brought millions and millions of fans into the sport. That is why we loved him.

He was the people's champ, the last cowboy, iron head, the intimidator, but most of all and most appealing about him was that he was funny and warm. He was like us. He was human. He was accessible. And that is why we loved him.

But Dale Earnhardt was much, much more. When a young fan was dying of cancer, Dale spent 15 minutes on the phone with him and flatly rejected any attempt to publicize it. When a local pastor came around seeking donations to pave the parking lot in his church, Dale wrote out a check for the full amount on the condition that the pastor never reveal that all the money came from one person, and especially not who that person was. He routinely aided high school bands and church groups and once gave John Andretti a motor so he could qualify.

When the wife of the doctor who tended drivers injured at the track had to travel across the country, leaving his pregnant wife behind, Dale called to make sure she was all right, and then sent two men with a pickup to the mountain retreat where they lived just in case she needed a fast trip to the hospital.

His favorite charity, one that is familiar to many of us, was the Make a Wish Foundation—perhaps because he knew what true magic was all about.

Describing the tough racer with the tender heart, one NASCAR publicist said: He'd do nothing for you on the track but anything for you off it. That is why we loved him.

As we all know, Dale Earnhardt died a week from last Sunday on the final lap of the Daytona 500 doing what he did best—racing for victory. Victory alluded him but death did not. After 281 finishes in the top 5, 428 in the top 10, and 76 wins, including 9 at the world's fastest half mile in Bristol, TN, where, by the way, he was also Rookie of the