

amount of money being spent by candidates themselves is dwarfed by the amount of soft money spent by others in their own races.

The ban on soft money that the McCain-Feingold bill demands is an essential step to diminish the tremendous amount of money pouring into campaigns. Some opponents of the bill claim that banning soft money is unconstitutional. Senators MCCAIN and FEINGOLD have taken extra measures to ensure that the provisions in this bill comply with the Supreme Court's 1976 decision in *Buckley v. Valeo*. The court ruled that the Constitution permits the Government to regulate the flow of money in politics to prevent corruption or the appearance of corruption.

Political service remains a worthy calling, but anyone who enters it these days encounters a campaign fund-raising system that is debilitating and demeaning and distasteful. The fact that we so clearly have ineffective checks on the spiraling cost of campaigns and on the way campaigns are financed has tarnished our institutions of Government as well as the people we elect to those institutions.

It is important to bring our election process and Government back to the time when elected officials felt accountable to all of the people they represent, not disproportionately to the wealthy few. Our present system gives the wealthy a huge megaphone for expressing their views, while other Americans—the “financially inarticulate”—are left without an effective voice. That is why I have felt it important to take steps on my own to increase Vermonters trust in how I conduct my campaigns. Though not required by law I have disclosed every nickel in contributions I have ever received since I first ran for the Senate in 1974, and I used no political action committee money in my last two election campaigns. Passing the McCain-Feingold bill—without any amendments designed to weaken it or destroy it—is a fundamental step all of us can take to fix a system that is in dire need of repair. Vermonters and all Americans want to have faith in the campaign and election process. They want to believe that their Government is working in the public's interest, not on behalf of the special interests. Eliminating unregulated soft money will help to give elections and the Government back to the people.

I hope the Senate will not let this opportunity for reform slip away. I hope the Senate will approve this important and long-awaited bill and will refrain from adding any amendments that would jeopardize or kill this important effort.

UNANIMOUS CONSENT AGREEMENT—S.J. RES. 4

Mr. McCONNELL. Mr. President, pursuant to the agreement of February 7 with respect to S.J. Res. 4, I ask

unanimous consent that the Senate proceed to the resolution on Monday, March 26, at 2 p.m. and the time between 2 p.m. and 6 p.m. be equally divided between Senators HOLLINGS and HATCH. I further ask unanimous consent that at 6 p.m. on Monday, the resolution be advanced to third reading and a vote occur on passage without any intervening action or debate, notwithstanding paragraph 4 of rule XII.

This is the Hollings constitutional amendment.

Mr. DODD. Reserving the right to object, this is on Monday?

Mr. McCONNELL. Right. It is my understanding this had been cleared. This is a vote on the Hollings constitutional amendment. The debate would occur from 2 to 6 on Monday.

Mr. DODD. With a vote at 6 p.m.

Mr. McCONNELL. At 6 p.m.

Mr. MCCAIN. Is it also the understanding that there will be debate on the amendment starting at noon?

Mr. McCONNELL. Correct. There would probably be more than one vote at 6 o'clock. It would be a vote on the Hollings amendment and other votes—vote or votes, as well.

Mr. DODD. That is not part of the unanimous consent request.

Mr. McCONNELL. No. It is the intention of the managers to have more than one vote at 6 o'clock.

Mr. REID. Reserving the right to object, the Senator from Wisconsin had a question.

Mr. FEINGOLD. Mr. President, is the Hollings amendment being handled as an amendment to this legislation or as a separate piece of legislation?

Mr. McCONNELL. A separate piece of legislation.

Mr. FEINGOLD. I thank the Senator from Kentucky.

Mr. McCONNELL. An issue upon which the Senator from Wisconsin and I are in agreement.

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

MORNING BUSINESS

Mr. GRAMM. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that there now be a period for the transaction of routine morning business, with Senators permitted to speak up to 10 minutes each.

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

BUDGET COMMITTEE MARKUP OF BUDGET RESOLUTION

Mr. BYRD. Mr. President, I am a product of the West Virginia coal fields. I remember my heritage, and I am proud that it has served me well throughout my political career. I remember the legendary president of the United Mine Workers of America, John L. Lewis, who was a great student of Shakespeare, as I recall him in those days. And he once advised union coal miners of the adage:

when ye be an anvil,

lie very still,
when ye be a hammer,
strike with all thy will.

Mr. President, I am not an anvil—not an anvil—which explains, in part, why I joined the Senate Budget Committee this year. First, I am very concerned about Congress approving permanent tax cuts based on highly uncertain surplus estimates, which threaten to put us back in the deficit ditch. Second, I strenuously oppose the use of the reconciliation process—now, Mr. President, that is the way I have pronounced that word for years. I was called to order a little earlier today because I did not pronounce it “reconciliation,” which is all right with me, just so it is understood what we are talking about—to ram a \$2 trillion tax-cut package through the Senate. Such a misuse of the reconciliation process abuses the rights of every Senator to debate this significant legislation. That is an important thing. Third, in recent years, I have become increasingly concerned about the unrealistically low spending levels established by the annual budget resolutions for programs under the jurisdiction of the Appropriations Committee, on which I serve as the ranking member and which is chaired by the most able and distinguished Senator from Alaska, Mr. STEVENS, who recently won the award “Alaskan of the Century.” And I would say at this point, I think he is the Alaskan of the Century. He deserves that award.

These unrealistically low funding levels in recent budget resolutions have forced the Appropriations Committee to resort to all manner of gimmicks and creative bookkeeping to ensure that we could adequately fund the 13 annual appropriations bills, despite not having sufficient resources to address the ongoing infrastructure needs of the Nation, much less begin to address the funding backlog in those funding needs in many critical areas.

So as a member of the Budget Committee, my hope was that this year I would be able to assist in crafting a budget resolution that would more accurately determine the spending levels that will be necessary to produce the FY 2002 appropriations bills. I wanted to actively participate in that committee in a markup of the budgetary blueprint that will guide the Nation's fiscal policy, not only for FY 2002, but for the next decade. This year's budget resolution will address not only the discretionary funding needs to which I have alluded, but also will involve efforts to allow for perhaps a massive tax cut of \$2 trillion or more, over the next 10 years. That is a big—\$2 trillion is just something that is beyond my comprehension, and probably that of most Members of this body.

I might say to the distinguished Senator who presently presides over the Senate that, much to his surprise, perhaps, it would take 32,000 years to count \$1 trillion at the rate of \$1 per second. At the rate of \$1 per second, it

would take 32,000 years to count \$1 trillion. That is a little more money than we are used to counting in West Virginia. But when we talk about a \$2 trillion tax cut, that means it would take 64,000 years to count \$2 trillion at the rate of \$1 per second. Perhaps that will give us some better idea of how much \$1 trillion really is.

This year's budget proposal will also be based on flimsy 10-year surplus projections, that, I assure you, are not worth the paper on which they are written.

Marvel at how much confidence we put in projections of the surpluses over the next 10 years when we cannot really judge 24 hours ahead that the stock market is going to drop 436 points.

It was for these reasons, Mr. President, that I was pleased to see that the distinguished Chairman of the Senate Budget Committee, Senator DOMENICI, and his very capable ally on the Budget Committee, Senator CONRAD, scheduled a series of highly informative hearings in order to enable the 22 members of the committee to have the views of an outstanding group of experts before it was time for those committee members to vote on this year's budget resolution. Committee members did benefit by actively participating in those hearings and by interacting with a vast array of expert witnesses, who addressed such important subjects as: the Nation's infrastructure needs; the need for prescription drug benefits for Medicare recipients; the need to reform Social Security and Medicare, and other health care issues, education needs; national security needs, including the need for a national missile defense system; the problems of our Nation's farmers; and questions as to how much of the national debt can be retired over the coming decade. We had an opportunity to have the views of such experts as Federal Reserve Chairman Alan Greenspan on such questions as to whether a tax cut should be enacted, and if so, how large. We had the Deputy Director of the Congressional Budget Office, Mr. Barry Anderson, testify on the CBO's projections of surpluses and the likelihood that their 10-year projections would come to pass. I know, that I gained a greater understanding through these hearings in virtually all of the aforementioned areas of national policy. Not only did my increased knowledge come from these expert witnesses, but also from the very incisive questioning of the witnesses by virtually every member of the Senate Budget Committee.

Having heard these witnesses, Mr. President, and having had a chance to enter into a dialog with them regarding these great issues facing the Nation, I have become very concerned in recent weeks that the Budget Committee chairman might be entertaining the idea that there should be no committee markup of the budget resolution at all this year. I inquired of the very able chairman on two occasions during the committee's hearings as to

whether the chairman intended to mark up the budget resolution.

I am concerned at the prospect that the Senate will take up this year's very important budget resolution without having the benefit of the committee's views in the form of its marked-up resolution and an accompanying Budget Committee report. It is because of this concern that I joined my Democratic colleagues on the committee in signing a letter to our able committee chairman respectfully requesting a markup of the budget resolution before the April 1st statutory deadline. As pointed out in the letter, circumventing a committee markup of the budget resolution is unprecedented and has never been done before in the history of the Senate Budget Committee, as far as I have been able to determine. It ought not to be done this year, of all years. If we do not intend to mark up a budget resolution, then I ask the Senate, why did we go through the process of hearing the expert witnesses? Was this hearing process merely intended to be a charade to enable the leadership of the Senate to act as though it had fulfilled its responsibilities, while knowing all along that there was no intention of allowing any member of the committee an opportunity to participate in a committee markup? If that be true, it didn't really matter, then, in the end, perhaps, what the witnesses said or what the questions of the Senators on the committee revealed.

Is none of this knowledge to be utilized during the forthcoming days of debate on the resolution? Why should we not have had a markup, a markup where Senators may offer their amendments to the chairman's recommendations and have those amendments debated and voted upon, either up or down?

Having been chairman of the Appropriations Committee in the Senate once upon a time, I know how that works. The chairman prepares, with his staff, the bill or resolution that is to be worked on by the committee, and that is what we call the chairman's mark, and, of course, it is always made available to the ranking member what the appropriations bill mark will be. Then laying it before the committee gives every member a chance to offer amendments thereto, have them voted up or down, and debate the bill.

Apparently, there is some fear that such a markup of a budget resolution would result in a deadlock, that a tie vote might occur on adoption of the budget resolution. That concern should not in any way prevent the Budget Committee from marking up a budget resolution. If such an event occurs, if the committee were to be deadlocked on reporting this year's budget resolution, there would still be no impediment to having the leadership call up the budget resolution. In other words, it is provided for that such a resolution can be called up on April 1 and, if it is not reported from the committee by April 1, the committee is automatic-

ally discharged of the resolution. So the Senate could be assured that even if there were a tie vote in committee, the resolution could still be called up by the majority leader.

The agreement that was entered into not so long ago by the majority leader and the Democratic leader and by the Senate as a whole provided that in the case of a tie vote in committee, the majority leader could proceed to call up the resolution. That is in accordance with the agreement, as I understood it, that we entered into earlier this year.

In other words, the leadership would still have the ability to call up the Republican chairman's budget resolution. But the American people, as well as other Members of the Senate and their staffs, will have an opportunity to watch and listen to the debate, if we had a committee markup. This would be healthy for the budget process. It would greatly enhance the knowledge of those who might participate in such a markup, as well as those who might observe it.

It does not bode well for the Senate or for this administration, for that matter, in my judgment, to begin this year's budget cycle on such a sour and unprecedented note. I repeat the request that we Democratic members of the committee have made in our earlier letter to the chairman of the Budget Committee, namely, that the committee convene at the earliest practicable time to mark up the fiscal year 2002 budget resolution, and that the committee meet its April 1 statutory deadline in doing so.

I feel I must also address another concern that I have regarding this year's budget process. After having been told several weeks ago by various administration officials that the President's detailed budget would be received by the Senate on April 3, in time for Senators to take into account the details behind the document entitled "A Blueprint for New Beginnings," we were advised just a few days ago—I believe on Monday of this week—that the Senate will not receive the detailed budget until April 9. It just so happens that April 9 falls on the Monday beginning a 2-week Easter recess, and also occurs 3 days after the Senate Republican leadership has expressed an intention of having completed Senate consideration of the budget resolution.

In other words, we have learned just this past Monday that Senators will have no opportunity, none, to consider the details of the Bush administration's fiscal year 2002 budget until after the Senate has finished consideration of the budget resolution.

This causes me grave concern, particularly as it relates to the levels of discretionary spending being proposed by the administration. We do not have the details of what the President intends to propose as spending levels for a myriad of Federal Government programs and activities that affect virtually every citizen of this Nation. In

the document that we have received from the Bush administration entitled "A Blueprint for New Beginnings," we find that table S-4 on page 188 contains the following items under the heading "Offsets": Non-repetition of earmarked funding \$-4.3 billion; non-repetition of one-time funding, \$-4.1 billion; and Program decreases \$-12.1 billion. The figures again, to repeat them, \$-4.3 billion, \$-4.1 billion, and \$-12.1 billion, minuses in each case, respectively. And following these three cuts in discretionary spending for fiscal year 2002 is a footnote which states: "The final distribution of offsets has yet to be determined."

So, Mr. President, we have no idea as to what the specific reductions will be for \$20 billion in spending cuts that are proposed on page 188 of the President's "blueprint" for this year's budget.

We do know that nondefense spending overall will have to be cut \$5.9 billion below what the Congressional Budget Office says is necessary to maintain purchasing power for current service levels. We know the Agriculture Department will be cut by 8.6 percent. The Commerce Department will be cut by 16.6 percent. The Energy Department will be cut by 6.8 percent. The Justice Department will be cut by 8.8 percent. The Labor Department will be cut 7.4 percent. The Transportation Department will be cut by 15 percent.

What we do not know—and what we cannot know until the President submits his complete budget on April 9—is what specific programs the administration proposes to cut, and by how much, in order to accommodate the President's \$2 trillion tax cut plan. So we are operating in the dark; really, that is what it amounts to. Why should Senators be asked to take up and adopt a budget resolution calling for a \$2 trillion tax cut without knowing the specific spending cuts that would be required? Why should we buy a pig in a poke? Why should we engage in a river-boat gamble, just like we did with the Reagan-Bush tax cut of 1981, which put us in the deficit ditch for 17 years? We ought not make that same mistake again.

In recent weeks, I have seen Senators swept up in the political whirlwind, a vortex that has been blown in from Texas. Neither the Office of Management and Budget nor the Congressional Budget Office is able to accurately project surpluses at the end of the current fiscal year, let alone for 10 years. Yet the Senate will soon be considering a 10-year spending and tax cut plan. We are being asked to do so without the benefit of seeing the President's complete budget, or the benefit of having a committee markup. So I wonder if the inmates have not finally taken over the asylum.

Earlier, I commented on how the budget process has deteriorated in recent years because of unrealistically tight spending caps that forced the Appropriations Committee to resort to all manner of measures to pass the 13 ap-

propriations bills. Sometimes I wonder how Senator TED STEVENS has been able to do it. The budget process has truly taken another turn for the worse. It is a massive charade when Budget Committee members are not even allowed to mark up this year's budget resolution, or to have the benefit of the details behind the President's budget blueprint before acting on this vitally important fiscal plan for the Nation.

The American people do not send us here to be anvils. They do not send us here to lie very still and simply accept whatever is put before us. The committee should be given the opportunity to hammer out an acceptable budget that will benefit all Americans. Such a budget could be hammered out upon the anvil of free and unlimited debate. I don't mind having a limitation, as far as that is concerned. I may be very opposed to such a radical tax cut, but I am not for killing it by filibuster. That would not be my desire at all. The committee members should be allowed to offer amendments and have those amendments be considered and voted upon. I studied for these hearings like a school boy preparing for an exam. I am new on the committee and I wanted to understand as much as I could about the budget and about the new President's proposals so that I could be a useful force—limited though I may be—at the committee markup. I have had my staff prepare amendments which I had hoped to offer. But, apparently, the hearings which many members so faithfully attended are going to amount to little more than a TV show with Senators on the committee serving as convenient props. Why have a Budget Committee at all if the committee is not going to be allowed to work its will on the budget resolution? Why ask questions? Why have testimony? Why take up the time of witnesses and members?

Especially when the new budget embodies such radical tax cuts and deep spending cuts, the committee should be able to work its will. That is all I am asking. So I hope the distinguished Budget Committee chairman will think about this more over the weekend and reconsider his earlier announced intentions. Especially when the budget sets fiscal policy for the next 10 years, the committee should be able to work its will. Especially when the American economy has lately been behaving like a roller-coaster ride at the State fair, the committee should be able to work its will.

The Budget Committee hearings must not be reduced to a "Gong Show" charade designed to make members feel good, but deny them any real vote. I hope the decision to avoid a markup will be revisited. I hope it will be revisited. The Senate deserves the full committee's judgment and nothing less.

Mr. President, I thank the distinguished Senator from Kentucky, Mr. McCONNELL, and I thank the distinguished Democratic whip, Mr. REID, and all other Senators, for the oppor-

tunity to make these remarks. As I said earlier, I would not have come to the floor at this time were it not for the fact that I noted on the television screen that the Senate was in a prolonged quorum.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Kentucky is recognized.

Mr. McCONNELL. Mr. President, I will soon suggest the absence of a quorum and ask that the time be charged equally to both sides. Before that, if all of the time is used on this amendment, what time would the vote occur?

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Approximately 4:35.

Mr. McCONNELL. I say to the Members of the Senate who may be listening, or staff members, it is our hope to vote well before that.

I suggest the absence of a quorum and ask unanimous consent that the time be charged to both sides.

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

The clerk will call the roll.

The legislative assistant proceeded to call the roll.

Ms. STABENOW. Mr. President, I have just come from the Senate Budget Committee where we have concluded a series of hearings. We have now held 16 different hearings on all facets related to the budget, tax cuts, and domestic spending. I am very deeply concerned about the conclusion that has been reached at the end of these very important hearings.

I must rise today with deep regret that the Republican leadership, in fact, appears to be bypassing the important work of the Budget Committee in order to bring the budget resolution directly to the floor without debate about a budget resolution and without an opportunity for us to vote and to come together on a bipartisan budget resolution that reflects our values and priorities for the families that we represent in our States.

We have, in fact, been diligently at work. As a new Member of not only the Senate but the Senate Budget Committee, I have taken this work very seriously. We have been meeting, sometimes several days in a row, hearing from Chairman Greenspan, the Congressional Budget Office, the Office of Management and Budget, the Secretary of the Treasury, the Secretary of Health and Human Services, the Secretary of Education, and the Secretary of State.

We have held hearings on long-term budget projections and demographic trends and Medicare. I have been meeting with people throughout my great State of Michigan to talk about their values and priorities for the future, and how they would like to see us come together and fashion this budget.

Unfortunately, all of this work seems to be for naught because the Republican leadership wants to avoid committee debate on the budget resolution for the first time since Congress passed

the Congressional Budget Act of 1974. When you think about it, this is at a time when we have seen our new President come forward to reach out his hand and talk about bipartisanship. Yet, once again, we are forced to come to the floor of the Senate and ask to be partners in this process and to truly move ahead in a bipartisan fashion.

It is not enough just to speak about bipartisanship, just as it is not enough to just speak about issues. Our constituents expect us to act. And we have a right to expect what will happen will fulfill the words that are being talked about on Capitol Hill.

Our committee should debate all of the critical issues before us: How we pay down the maximum public debt we can so we can put money in our constituents' pockets through lower interest rates, and put money in their pockets through a tax cut, and making sure we have an economic policy that means they have a job. There are several ways in which we need to put dollars back into the pockets of the people we represent.

We also need to debate Social Security and Medicare for the future, education, which drives this economy, research, technology and education, increased labor productivity, which drives the economy, as we have heard over and over again in the Budget Committee. We need to debate national defense and protecting the environment.

One issue that I think needs great debate is the issue of protecting the Medicare trust fund. We have found, during this budget process, that the President's budget does not protect the Medicare trust fund. The President's budget does not protect the Medicare trust fund. In fact, it takes it from a protected status and moves it over into a contingency fund to be used for spending.

We tried a week ago, through Senator CONRAD's legislation, to create a lockbox for Social Security and Medicare, and say—as the American public wants us to do—that we will keep our hands off Social Security and Medicare and protect it for the future.

In this budget, we go in the exact opposite direction. We not only don't protect it and strengthen it by adding dollars for the future, it is put over into spending which, in fact, could cause Medicare to become insolvent 15 years sooner, when we expect the strain of the baby boomers coming into the system and the fact that we are going to have a long-term liability on Medicare and Social Security.

The American people need to understand that if we don't protect the Medicare trust fund, there will be a severe strain when baby boomers begin to retire in 2012. This could mean benefit cuts or increases in taxes at that time. It is not necessary for us to be put in this kind of a situation.

I hope the Republican leadership will reconsider, as we asked the chairman of the committee to do today, and reach out to us to get a bipartisan

budget and tax agreement. I was fortunate to be in the House of Representatives in 1997, when the President and the Congress, of different parties, worked together to balance the budget, make critical investments in education and in our future needs, and cut taxes. If we did it then, we can do it now. We have to do it together.

If we hold a markup in committee and work together, we can get the job done. If not, I fear we continue to go back to policies we have all denounced—the practice of partisanship, one side versus the other. Our committee has worked hard, our members have been there and involved in these hearings. I commend the Chair for holding such comprehensive hearings to be able to bring forward the issues that relate to this budget so we can put together the values and priorities of our country in the form of a budget for the future.

It is extremely unfortunate that we find ourselves in this position now, at the end of the road, when the budget hearings come to a conclusion, where we do not have the opportunity to work together to draw up that budget resolution and show, in fact, that we can work together on behalf of the families we represent.

I urge the Republican leadership to allow the Budget Committee to do our work and allow us to come together to protect Social Security and Medicare for the long haul, to provide a tax cut to make sure we are paying down the debt for the future for our children, and to make sure we have outlined the priorities for the country that are most important for our families.

BUDGET RESOLUTION

Mr. DOMENICI. Mr. President, a little earlier in the day, a very distinguished Senator from West Virginia and a very good friend—and I say that in all honesty—came to the floor and talked a little bit—more than a little bit—about the budget resolution and the current chairman of the Budget Committee. Not in negative terms. I happen to be that person. They were not negative at all.

There were a few things the distinguished Senator said that I seek to clarify. I did not do this without telling him. I sent him a copy of the budget schedule for the winter-spring of 1993 because one of the points the Senator from West Virginia made was we are moving ahead to bring a budget resolution up on April 1 or April 2.

I believe one of his major points was we do not yet have a detailed budget from the President of the United States, George W. Bush.

I will soon put this schedule in the RECORD, but here is what happened in 1993 when President Clinton was elected President. One of the big differences was they had 54 votes on that side, and we had 45 votes on our side. Understand, they could do what they wanted with the budget resolution with or

without a President's budget. They could order reconciliation instructions to increase taxes with or without Republican support.

This Senator finds himself in a very different position. We have 11 Republicans and 11 Democrats, and they just happen to call me chairman, but I do not have any votes. I am one of the 11 Republicans and there are 11 Democrats.

The distinguished Senator said we were proceeding even without a detailed final budget from the new President of the United States. Here is the budget schedule for the winter-spring of 1993:

February 17, the President issues a preliminary budget overview called a "Vision of Change for America." We looked at that. It is very much like what George W. Bush sent us maybe a month ago. It was a very minor document when it comes to detailed budget documents.

On March 3, the CBO gave some preliminary estimates on that. Just look at this schedule: On February 17, the President sends us this vision, this document of a few pages, and by March 12, less than 1 month, the Senate Budget Committee, on partisan lines—namely, they had the majority, we had the minority—guess what. They reported out a budget resolution.

Then the House Budget Committee did that by March 15, less than a month.

Then on March 18, 1 month after the issuance of the "Vision of Change for America" proposal—and I call it a proposal—the conference report was filed on the 1994 budget resolution. The House agreed to the conference report, and on April 1 the Senate agreed to a conference report on the 1994 budget resolution.

Guess when the Senate in 1993 got the budget of the President of the United States. On April 8, 8 days after they had already approved everything, including a budget resolution.

I only state that because it was suggested that it was sort of untoward and maybe not the best thing for us to do the budget resolution before we have the President's final documents, the detailed documents.

President Bill Clinton asked his democratically controlled Congress that they approve a budget resolution before he sent them the budget, and they did. That is all right with me. I was a member of the opposition. I argued as much as I could against what I thought was not the right thing to do, but understand that by April 1 everything was finished in both Houses on a budget resolution aspect, following on with the President's plans, and the President had not yet put his budget together in detail.

We have as much detail today, I assure you, Mr. President, as the Senate and House Budget Committees had when they produced budget resolutions less than 1 month after the President issued his vision plan, a rather flimsy