

Mr. REID. I appreciate my friend, the Senator from Florida, for being his usual courteous self.

**COMMITTEE ON APPROPRIATIONS
REPORTING THIRTEEN APPROPRIATIONS BILLS BY JULY 31,
2002—Continued**

Mr. REID. Mr. President, what is the pending business?

The PRESIDING OFFICER. S. Res. 304.

Mr. REID. I ask unanimous consent that the Conrad amendment be modified with the changes at the desk; that the amendment, as modified, be agreed to; the resolution, as amended, be agreed to; and the motion to reconsider be laid upon the table, with no intervening action or debate.

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

The amendment (No. 4886), as modified, is as follows:

Strike all after the Resolved Clause and insert the following:

, That the Senate encouraging the Senate Committee on Appropriations to report thirteen, fiscally responsible, bipartisan appropriations bills to the Senate not later than July 31, 2002.

SEC. __. BUDGET ENFORCEMENT.

(a) EXTENSION OF SUPERMAJORITY ENFORCEMENT.—

(1) IN GENERAL.—Notwithstanding any provision of the Congressional Budget Act of 1974, subsections (c)(2) and (d)(3) of section 904 of the Congressional Budget Act of 1974 shall remain in effect for purposes of Senate enforcement through April 15, 2003.

(2) EXCEPTION.—Paragraph (1) shall not apply to the enforcement of section 302(f)(2)(B) of the Congressional Budget Act of 1974.

(b) PAY-AS-YOU-GO RULE IN THE SENATE.—

(1) IN GENERAL.—For purposes of Senate enforcement, section 207 of H. Con. Res. 68 (106th Congress, 1st Session) shall be construed as follows:

(A) In subsection (b)(6), by inserting after “paragraph (5)(A)” the following: “, except that direct spending or revenue effects resulting in net deficit reduction enacted pursuant to reconciliation instructions since the beginning of that same calendar year shall not be available”.

(B) In subsection (g), by striking “September 30, 2002” and inserting “April 15, 2003”.

(2) SCORECARD.—For purposes of enforcing section 207 of House Concurrent Resolution 68 (106th Congress), upon the adoption of this section the Chairman of the Committee on the Budget of the Senate shall adjust balances of direct spending and receipts for all fiscal years to zero.

(3) APPLICATION TO APPROPRIATIONS.—For the purposes of enforcing this resolution, notwithstanding rule 3 of the Budget Scorekeeping Guidelines set forth in the joint explanatory statement of the committee of conference accompanying Conference Report 105-217, during the consideration of any appropriations Act, provisions of an amendment (other than an amendment reported by the Committee on Appropriations including routine and ongoing direct spending or receipts), a motion, or a conference report thereon (only to the extent that such provision was not committed to conference), that would have been estimated as changing direct spending or receipts under section 252 of the Balanced Budget and

Emergency Deficit Control Act of 1985 (as in effect prior to September 30, 2002) were they included in an Act other than an appropriations Act shall be treated as direct spending or receipts legislation, as appropriate, under section 207 of H. Con. Res. 68 (106th Congress, 1st Session) as amended by this resolution.

The amendment (No. 4886), as modified, was agreed to.

The resolution (S. Res. 304), as amended, was agreed to as follows:

(The resolution will be printed in a future edition of the RECORD.)

Mr. REID. Mr. President, this resolution has been cleared by the minority. I said earlier today how much I appreciate the bipartisan work done on this measure by Senators DOMENICI and CONRAD. It is an example of what can be accomplished when we work together. This is extremely important for the country. As I said earlier today, those two Senators, together with the two leaders, are to be commended.

THE ECONOMY

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Florida.

Mr. NELSON of Florida. Mr. President, before the No. 2 Democrat retires from the Chamber, I want to congratulate him. He is a tireless worker. He is the consummate consensus builder. He is someone who in the midst of chaos and fracas calms the waters with the soothing balm that gets reasonable people to suddenly understand they can come together.

This agreement on the budget resolution, which contains the enforcement provisions of the Budget Act, is another testimony to his skill in negotiating, as he does so ably, with the Chairman and the ranking Members. So I am delighted. It is fitting this agreement on a budget enforcement provision has been agreed to, because of the condition of our economy.

The stock market today has gone down another 220 points. Stocks stumbled, slamming the brakes on any kind of rally we might have thought was occurring over the last few days. Sales outlook was weak, there were disappointing earnings, and it has brought profit jitters back into the market.

Is it any wonder investors, large investors such as pension funds or small investors such as the Presiding Officer and myself, with our own little hard-earned savings that we invest in the stock market, all across this land, indeed, have jitters because of the uncertainty of the economy? As a matter of fact, in the last 2 years, stock market wealth has been down 35 percent for a \$5.7 trillion loss in that 2 years.

If anyone doubts this, in January of 2001, all the stock markets had a combined asset value of \$16.4 trillion. In September of 2002, that value went down to \$10.7 trillion, a loss of \$5.7 trillion. Is it any wonder that reduction in stock market value, which is huge—35 percent in a year and two-thirds—is a reflection of the feeling of uncertainty people have toward the economy, a slumping economy?

It is one thing that certainly 2 million jobs have been lost since January of 2001. In January of 2001, private sector jobs were at 111 million. In September of 2002, a year and two-thirds later, private sector jobs were down to 109.6 million jobs—2 million jobs lost, another indicator of the slumping economy.

It is not as if we did not have a warning. Early last year it became clear our economy was slowing down. During our Budget Committee hearings on the topic, almost every economic analyst said responsible tax cuts could help solve the problem. They said the best way to stabilize the economy was to get money into the hands of the people who would spend it, those with low-to-moderate incomes. Above all else, we were told that whatever we did, we should not pass any tax package that would cause long-term fiscal harm.

As the Presiding Officer knows, we tried to heed those warnings. Last year, I supported a tax cut to provide immediate tax relief for all families. That tax cut would have made sure every taxpayer, including those who pay only payroll taxes—there are a vast number of Americans who do not pay income tax because they do not have enough income—that monthly payroll tax is deducted from their pay. The tax cut would have made sure that every taxpayer would also get a tax cut.

It would have also reduced the 15-percent income tax rate paid by all income-tax payers. It would have reduced that to 10 percent and to a permanent reduction. It would have been fair. It would have been fiscally responsible, and it would have been economically stimulative. But the final version of last year's tax cut was enacted by this Chamber. This Senator did not vote for it, and I did not vote for it because it did not meet the criteria that the Social Security and Medicare trust funds would not be touched now or in the future.

I remember when I was sworn in as a freshman to the Senate, the talk was so uplifting and upbeat about how we had a surplus that was projected for 10 years and that we were not going to have to invade the Social Security trust fund to pay bills; indeed, that we were going to fence it off. We promised that. We were going to fence off the Social Security trust fund so that by it remaining untouched, its surpluses over the next decade would have paid down most of the national debt, a debt that averages out in the range of about \$200 billion to \$250 billion a year we pay in interest on the national debt. Just think what that savings on interest payments could provide if we had followed through on the promises and paid down that national debt, what that would have meant to the economy as another indicator that we were getting our fiscal house in order.

The final version of last year's tax cut did not meet that criteria of walling off Social Security trust funds.

Because of the fiscally irresponsible way the bill was drafted, with gimmicks such as changing the beginning and ending dates of key tax provisions, because of those gimmicks the bill amounted to flawed public policy that would, in fact, cost our country much more than the \$1.35 trillion at which that tax bill was advertised. The true cost of that tax bill which advertised at \$1.35 trillion, and allowed by the budget resolution, over a 10-year period is closer to \$2 trillion instead of \$1.35 trillion. Now we know. The administration-supported tax cut plan that we passed last year has a cost that explodes to \$250 billion in deficit in the year 2011 alone.

Now, after going from record surpluses to real deficits, we are seeing just how bad that decision was last year. Now we are experiencing the worse market decline since the 1930s, as evidenced by the slumping stock market and again the 220-point loss today in the Dow Jones Industrial Average.

The Standard & Poors 500 stock index has lost nearly half of its value. In the last 2 years, Americans have seen the markets lose \$5.7 trillion in value. That amounts to \$9.5 billion a day in losses in value on the stock market.

Homeowners now are having such a hard time paying bills. Home foreclosure rates have reached the highest rate in 30 years. That is another indicator. The poverty rate has reached an increased mark for the first time in 8 years and 1.3 million more Americans are now falling into poverty. Median household incomes have fallen for the first time in a decade.

Another indicator is consumer confidence. Consumer confidence and consumer spending have both fallen. Retail sales just took their worst drop since November of last year, and consumer sentiment has dropped to levels last seen in the fall almost a decade ago, 1993.

Look at another indicator. The number of Americans without health insurance rose by almost 1.5 million, to 41.2 million. In a nation of plenty, in a nation where we pride ourselves on the best health care in the world, there are 41 million people who do not have health insurance. Not only are the low and middle-income class families losing income, but because of the escalating price of health care premiums and prescription drug costs, they are now also losing their health insurance.

I thank the previous Presiding Officer, my colleague from Minnesota, for his personal interest. He is a soul brother in what I am saying, and I appreciate it so much. In my immediate past government job before having the privilege of coming to the Senate, I was the elected insurance commissioner of Florida. I can see the trends of the rising health insurance premiums. There are a lot of factors on that. But I will tell you, the economy is one big factor. Where it crunches the little guy, where it crunches those in

the middle-income and lower levels of income who do not have the beneficence of having the Government provide their health care through the Medicaid Program, where it crunches the little guy is in declining incomes in a slumping economy at the same time of rising health insurance premiums; it gets to the point they cannot afford it. That includes the rising cost of prescription drugs.

Interestingly, we can get 52 votes in this Senate, a majority—plus 2—to modernize Medicare with a prescription drug benefit—but we can't get the 60 votes required to cut off the filibuster.

Because of the slumping economy, Americans are faced with growing uncertainty over job security. With corporate scandals, a slumping stock market, a growing national debt and various forms of economic turbulence related to September 11, it is no surprise that unemployment is rising at a staggering rate. We have recently seen an increase in the number of 60 to 70-year-olds in the workforce. They are trying to make ends meet.

In the last 2 years, unemployment has jumped by 1.5 percent. More than 2 million people, as I said earlier, have lost jobs in the last year and two quarters, and many who have lost their jobs are having trouble finding new work.

In my Orlando office we have a bright college intern. This is a college graduate from one of our State universities who cannot get a job. While this college graduate is biding his time, he has very graciously come to offer his services as an intern in one of our Florida offices.

Many who have lost their jobs, clearly are having trouble finding new work. A million and a half people have been unemployed for over 6 months. Now they are also losing their unemployment insurance.

Last month, the Bureau of Labor Statistics reported that in the previous month, manufacturing lost 68,000 jobs; retail businesses lost 55,000 jobs. Last month, over 8 million Americans were unemployed; over 2 million more, as we said, above January of 2001 figures. Two million fewer people are working to support their families and contribute to the economy. They are gone—two million taxpayers, two million people forced to find other work because they lost their jobs.

In a slumping economy, it is no easy task to find new employment, as that college graduate has found. People are now spending over 17 weeks unemployed compared to an average of 12 weeks a year and a half ago.

The unemployment rate is rising—5.6 percent last month compared to 3.8 percent back in January of 2001, when the three Senators I see on the floor were sworn in. It is a little over a year and a half ago. The economy is failing, and we are arguing about the merits of extending unemployment compensation for American families. That is what some of the argument concerns.

But instead of focusing on how to get the economy going again, this administration is proposing new tax cuts for the wealthy and extending those for the wealthy that were passed last year.

New tax cuts in the year 2011 will have no immediate effect on our economy. In fact, adding an additional \$4 trillion in debt during the next decade will only hurt our economy in the short term by pushing up interest rates. What we ought to focus on is the slumping economy now and how to correct it.

Right now, most Americans are distracted with thinking about the war in Iraq and thinking about a war that is ongoing against terrorism. These are life-and-death matters. These are the gravest concerns of the Nation and should have our utmost attention, as it has had over the last couple of months. But we also must pay attention to our bottom line and to the economic security and the fundamental financial strength of America.

To have military strength we need an undergirding of moral, and economic strength. With projected huge deficits projected all over the rest of this decade, can we really afford to dig an even deeper hole in the next decade right at the time when the baby boomers are going to start retiring and demanding more in terms of retirement and Social Security and Medicare?

Last year's administration spending and tax cut plan has resulted in today's collision course of more deficits, more debt, more economic insecurity, higher interest rates, lower economic growth, and lower employment. There is no way to sugar-coat that. You may as well say it like it is. To anybody who says, "Oh, why didn't you support the tax cuts," I say I did. I supported a tax cut up to \$1.2 trillion over a decade. But what we said at that time was that is a responsible, balanced approach. A \$2 trillion tax cut, particularly skewed to the latter end of the decade, is not a responsible way to rejuvenate our economy.

All of this is occurring right under our noses. Yet it doesn't seem as if there are a lot of folks in this Chamber, nor down there on Pennsylvania Avenue, who are paying much attention.

I appreciate this ongoing dialog that we have had, but there seems to be a war coming in the Middle East. So we better be paying attention to other battles. We must do something to reinvigorate our economy. We must pay attention to our Government's bottom line. We must not continue to raise the debt for our grandchildren.

One of the things we can do in a slumping economy is get with the appropriate kind of tax cuts, and we can stimulate the economy by getting dollars into the pockets of people so they can go out and spend it. That could start rejuvenating the economy. We have a Christmas season coming up. It is going to be critical for retailers. We can do that with a responsible tax cut.

We could also do that by extending unemployment benefits. The unemployment insurance system was designed to provide aid when it is needed most. When the economy is healthy, unemployment insurance revenue rises because taxes are being paid. Program spending falls because there are fewer unemployed.

Conversely, in a recession, unemployment insurance revenues fall while spending rises, helping to stimulate the economy.

But the problem now is that American families in this economic decline which has existed over many months are exhausting their benefits, and they need our support. The unemployment insurance program was designed exactly for the situation we are in today. This is the rainy day for which unemployment insurance saves. If we would extend those benefits from the required number of weeks that are under law now, it would amount to an economic stimulus in the most direct way, allowing families to continue functioning while they search for jobs in this poor economy.

In the 1980s, when I had the privilege of being at the other end of the Capitol in the House of Representatives, Democrats and Republicans came together to agree to extend unemployment insurance—three times. That is what we need to do today for some economic stimulus.

What we need to do is provide immediate fiscal relief for States. We heard the Senator from West Virginia talking about the plight of the States. They have this huge additional drain on these Medicaid funds. States have diminished revenues. States need some assistance from the Federal Government on Medicaid, which is health care for the poor. Right now States are facing severe budget shortfalls, and many of them are finding themselves forced to cut bedrock services such as education, health care, and transportation. So the States need assistance with these and other crucial programs.

What we need to do is to provide a strong bill to protect pensions. We have heard these heartrending stories about the people of the Enron Corporation and other corporations such as WorldCom. They have been saving and playing by the rules. They have been working hard and saving. Where have they been saving? They were saving in their corporate pension plan. They had a retirement system.

We had several Floridians come up here because Enron had many employees of the Florida Gas Company in the Orlando area with headquarters in Winter Park. We had a number of those employees come up here and tell how they had their entire life savings, and now—instead of having their nest egg of about \$750,000—because of the scandals in that Enron Corporation, and because those pensioners were not protected, they had less than \$20,000 of retirement left out of \$750,000.

We need a plan that allows workers to hold employers accountable and help

workers get their money back. If people responsible for protecting their investments abuse that trust, as we have seen over and over again in the scandals that erupted last fall and that were played out in front of the committees of this Senate—we need to make it easier for workers to sell their company stock in those pension plans and diversify their holdings.

Most importantly, what we need to do is have a serious debate about how best to get our economy moving again. We need to think outside the box and look at some fresh ideas such as those presented at last week's bipartisan economic forum.

What we need to do is get this economy moving again. That is what we need to do. What we need to do is focus on the needs of constituents who elected us to serve here in this Chamber and to make decisions for them, and to protect them in these many ways that I have tried to enumerate in these remarks. What we need to do is focus our attention and our resources on the American working family members.

It is a time of partisan politics. We are just before an election. I guess my only disappointment in Washington in a job that I dearly love—I love the work. I love the people, I love these Senators, and they know I do. It is with a spring in my step that I come to work every day. My only disappointment is that this place gets too excessively partisan, and it gets too excessively ideologically rigid and extreme.

So when the time comes, as the Good Book says, "Come, let us reason together," there is a poisoned atmosphere and there is a rigidity and extremism so that it is hard to reach out and bring people together.

In a slumping economy, you have to be able to reach out and bring people together. You have to be able to have Senators not insist that it is their way or the highway, but yet they have to recognize there are many people in this vast, broad, beautiful, complicated, and very diverse country who need to be represented instead of just that particular Senator's point of view. That is why our title is United States Senator—to represent the entire country and to represent all the people.

I hope as we wind down in the closing days of this session, as we address some of these major economic problems, that we will consider it in the spirit of building a consensus to solve these problems.

Thank you, Madam President, for the privilege of addressing the Senate.

Mr. DAYTON. Madam President, will the Senator yield for a question?

Mr. NELSON of Florida. I certainly yield to a good friend, my colleague, my wonderful companion as a freshman, the Senator from Minnesota.

Mr. DAYTON. I thank the Senator from Florida.

I want to be sure I heard the Senator correctly.

First, I heard the Senator say earlier that the stock market dropped by 35

percent from January of 2001 to the present time. Is that correct? I was doing some mathematics here. Someone had holdings of \$50,000 in January of 2001, and those holdings are now worth only \$32,500; \$17,500 of that would be lost.

Does the Senate recall the tax package which I opposed as being skewed unfairly to the rich and giving a few hundred dollars in rebates to the average taxpayer? I was thinking to myself: Whatever that amount is, to lose \$17,500 out of a \$50,000 retirement savings in a 401(k) or an IRA, it seems to me, is a pretty bad economic deal for most Americans.

Does the Senator concur or is my math that bad?

Mr. NELSON of Florida. The Senator is absolutely right. And if you just put it in round terms of someone with a nest egg of \$100,000 a year and two-thirds ago, in January of 2001, that is only worth \$65,000 today. They have lost \$35,000 of value in their retirement portfolio, mirroring the stock market wealth, the total stock market wealth down 35 percent between January of 2001 and September of 2002. It is a sad commentary.

Mr. DAYTON. Will the Senator yield for another question?

Mr. NELSON of Florida. I am happy to yield to the Senator.

Mr. DAYTON. I appreciate the Senator going back to that point in time when the two of us and the Presiding Officer were sworn in here. I recall, for myself, the excitement I felt back then of the opportunities we had because the surpluses projected for the next decade, at that time, were \$5.4 trillion.

I wonder if the Senator recalls, as I can, the anticipation of all the good things we could do on behalf of the people of Minnesota, Florida, and the rest of the country.

In my campaign, I made a promise of prescription drug coverage for every senior in Minnesota and sent busloads of seniors at the time up to Canada where they could get prescription drugs for half or less than half the cost of those same drugs in the United States.

I recall saying back then the solution was not to bus every senior from Minnesota to Canada—and I think that would have been more problematic to travel from Florida to Canada—but the solution was to provide the kind of coverage here from our Government that the Canadian Government provides.

I wonder if the Senator from Florida recalls other instances of the kinds of hopes and dreams we shared back then as a freshmen group of Senators as to what we could do for this country, and if you can think, as I can, back to the days when we were talking about surpluses for 10 years rather than deficits.

Mr. NELSON of Florida. We had hopes and dreams. Indeed, we had realistic plans, if we had been conservative in our approach, if we had been balanced in our approach with that projected surplus.

First of all, we said: Those economic projections for a surplus are way too

rosy. Let's be conservative in our planning. Let's scale back that projected surplus so we can be conservative in what we plan for the surplus.

Then we said: Let's be balanced. Let's have a substantial tax cut that would be about a third of the surplus, and let's take another third of the surplus and reserve that third, over the next decade, for the spending increases that need to occur, such as the Senator talked about, which is modernizing Medicare with a prescription drug benefit.

We knew, for example, defense expenditures were going to go up and, therefore, there needed to be some spending increases there, and you could go on down a host of other items.

Clearly, education was one of the major ones. We wanted to take a good part of that surplus, projected over 10 years, and invest that in education back to the States and local governments that run the educational systems.

Then what we said was, to balance it out, the remaining third of that surplus we did not want to do anything with. We wanted that to be the surplus from the Social Security trust fund that was not going to be touched. That part of the surplus was going to pay down the national debt over the next 10 years.

That balanced approach of a third, a third, and a third was going to get our fiscal house in order, was going to revive the confidence of the American investor in American companies because the economy was going to be stable. We were not going to have all these dire economic facts we have recited tonight that would not have occurred if we had been balanced in our approach.

Mr. DAYTON. I am glad the Senator brought up the balanced approach and, earlier, the Social Security surpluses. Of course, the Senator from Florida has a great many senior citizens in his State, and I have a quite a number in mine. I would have even more if not so many of them would move to Florida and enjoy your better climate.

But as I recall, President Clinton, when he departed office, had left not only a balanced budget for the first time in this country in almost 30 years, but he had actually balanced the non-Social Security part of the budget. So as the Senator said, the surpluses were accumulating in the Social Security trust fund year by year that would pay down, I believe it was, over \$3 trillion of debt that would put our fiscal house in order, that would be ready for the baby boom retirement years.

What happened to all of that financial responsibility in such a short time? Does the Senator recall? Where did all that money go?

Mr. NELSON of Florida. Two-thirds of that projected surplus vanished primarily because of the overeager, rosy, incorrect economic projections of a budget surplus, plus absorbing so much more of the existing surplus from a tax cut that exceeded that balanced approach I talked about.

Mr. DAYTON. The Senator brought up earlier today, along with the Senator from West Virginia, this terrible dilemma we face in the Senate, that we cannot get a conference agreement with the House on concurrent receipt for our veterans, for those who have served this country, for those who have suffered injuries, disabilities, and the like.

I believe the Senator was referring—maybe he could refresh my memory—to the conference committee gathering this afternoon; we both serve on the Armed Services Committee. I could not attend, but the Senator, as I understood correctly, said the House conferees did not even attend the gathering.

They did pass in the House by over 400 votes support for the Senate position. But the White House, if I recall correctly, has now said the President will veto the Defense authorization bill because it includes concurrent receipt because it costs too much money.

Back when this \$2 trillion tax cut was being discussed, this Senator does not recall any real concern being expressed that we could not afford it, and I hear now, over and over again, we cannot do prescription drug coverage. We cannot even do Medicare reimbursement equalization. We cannot do concurrent receipt for our veterans. We cannot afford to do anything for benefits for people, such as extending unemployment benefits, as the Senator pointed out, because we don't have the money. But back when it was tax cuts for the wealthy, we seemed to have all the money we needed.

Mr. NELSON of Florida. The Senator is correct. It is a sad commentary all these things that were promised to veterans—that everybody was so eager, elbowing one another aside to try to get to the front of the line to support—through such things as concurrent receipt, eager to get to the front of the line to support a prescription drug benefit for Medicare seniors—have all been cast aside. Yet I cannot believe what I am seeing on the television when I go home. I see all these TV advertisements about how all these people who have blocked a prescription drug benefit to modernize Medicare say they have voted for one. Well, they voted for one. They voted for a version that was a subsidy from the Federal Government to insurance companies supposedly to provide prescription drug benefits. But in every State where a similar law has been passed to get insurance companies to provide a prescription drug benefit, the insurance companies will not do it because they cannot make money on it and, therefore, the senior citizens are the ones who suffer because they do not get the prescription drug benefit.

So isn't it interesting they always want to run to the front of the line and talk about how they are for all of these things, but when it comes to doing it, where are the votes, particularly in a body such as the Senate, in which in

order to pass anything you have to get 60 of 100 Senators because of our rules to cut off debate?

Mr. DAYTON. If I may indulge the Senator for just another minute, the Senator from Florida, being a former insurance commissioner and having such a large senior population, I wonder if he could explain the point he just made about how the insurance companies themselves don't want to provide the kind of coverage that some of our colleagues claim would be the solution to this problem.

Mr. NELSON of Florida. Since our colleague from Nevada has joined us, I will use his State as an example. About 4 years ago, the State of Nevada passed a prescription drug benefit that was very similar to the one that has been sponsored by the White House and that, in fact, has passed the House of Representatives. It is a subsidy to insurance companies to provide a prescription drug benefit.

In the case of the bill here, it is a Federal subsidy. In the case of Nevada, it was a State subsidy. But the fact is, not one insurance company stepped forward in Nevada, after the passage of that law, to offer a prescription drug benefit because the insurance companies want to make money. They realized they could not make money.

Sure, we are having a problem with escalating costs of prescription drugs, and we should deal with that, too. The question is, Are we going to fulfill our promise to provide a legitimate and workable prescription drug benefit to senior citizens on Medicare? We have offered that, and we have only gotten 52 votes here. We have to get 60 to cut off debate. We need eight more Senators, and then that thing will pass and pass overwhelmingly.

But you see what is being blocked right now. And then people back home claim credit for voting for a version that really is not going to be a workable version, as experienced in the laboratories that we see out in our States.

Mr. DAYTON. The people who watch us debate must wonder about the mathematics of the Congress. The Senator from Nevada, who is a champion of the concurrent receipts legislation, sees it passed by the Senate and then by over 400 votes in the House. And then it does seem strange that these matters just can't quite make it through the rest of the process to become law.

This Senator holds out hope that the administration, which is going to be visiting my home State of Minnesota—we have not seen such an interest by an administration in our State, in my own recollection—will come in and seize the opportunity to support two things that would be of great benefit to my State. One would be disaster assistance for our farmers who have now suffered the second year in a row, and another would be the support for concurrent receipt for our veterans. It would seem a fitting way to recognize the kind of suffering some are still going through

and also the kind of contributions that have been made, once again, to see that there would be the same enthusiasm for fitting within this budget framework some of the benefits we would like to provide for our citizens, the same as we provide for the very wealthiest corporate executives who seem to be doing very well despite the difficult economic times.

I thank the Senator from Florida for bringing these matters to the Senate this evening. It was an excellent discussion. I look forward to our continuing it again soon.

Mr. NELSON of Florida. I thank my distinguished colleague. It is always a pleasure to hear from him. I appreciate his undergirding of my comments this evening.

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

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

MORNING BUSINESS

Mr. REID. Madam President, I ask unanimous consent that the Senate now proceed to a period of morning business with Senators allowed to speak for up to 10 minutes each.

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

UNANIMOUS CONSENT AGREEMENT—H.J. RES. 123

Mr. REID. Madam President, I ask unanimous consent that when the Senate receives a continuing resolution from the House, provided it is identical to H.J. Res. 123, the Senate proceed to consider the resolution, that it be read three times and passed, and the motion to reconsider be laid upon the table, all without intervening action or debate.

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

Mr. REID. I now ask unanimous consent that a copy of the resolution be printed in the RECORD upon the granting of this consent.

There being no objection, the joint resolution was ordered to be printed in the RECORD, as follows:

H.J. RES. 123

Resolved by the Senate and House of Representatives of the United States of America in Congress assembled, That Public Law 107-229 is further amended by striking the date specified in section 107(c) and inserting in lieu thereof "November 22, 2002".

Mr. DASCHLE. Mr. President, as we all know, Congress has not yet completed action on 11 appropriations bills. These bills fund such important domestic priorities as homeland security, education, and veterans medical care.

In order to keep these important functions of Government up and run-

ning, we have already worked with the House to pass two continuing resolutions, the last of which expires on Friday.

The House of Representatives has just passed and sent to the Senate a third continuing resolution. House Republicans are now proposing that we leave town and let the Government run on autopilot until November 22.

Why November 22? By picking a Friday a week before Thanksgiving, House Republicans are signaling they are not serious about completing the appropriations bills in November either. It will be extraordinarily difficult, in the several days before Thanksgiving, for us to get all the parties together to settle all the issues that have been insoluble for the past several months.

The House Republican proposal seems designed to be an auto-pilot until next year, a recipe for a CR that starves basic Government programs essential to the health and well-being of millions of Americans. Indeed, several leading Republicans have indicated this is really their preference.

Senators should not be under any illusion: a long-term CR will do just that. It will starve vital functions of Government. And you don't have to take my word for it. According to Representative BILL YOUNG, the Republican chairman of the House Appropriations Committee, a long-term CR, "would have disastrous impacts on the war on terror, homeland security, and other important Government responsibilities."

Chairman YOUNG wrote that sentence in a memo he sent to Speaker HASTERT. The memo went even further, detailing the impact of a CR on a host of important domestic programs. Here is a sampling of what Chairman YOUNG said will be cut: FBI, funding to hire additional agents to fight terrorism and to continue information technology upgrades would be denied; bioterrorism, no funding for President's \$800 million initiative to increase funding for new basic bioterror research, to develop and test a new improved anthrax vaccine, and to assist universities and research institutions; first responders, no funding for President's \$3.5 billion initiative to provide assistance to local law enforcement, fire departments, and emergency response teams; SEC/corporate responsibility, insufficient funding to support current staffing requirements let alone significant staff increases needed to monitor corporate behavior; veterans medical care, long-term CR would leave veterans medical health care system at least \$2.5 billion short of expected requirements; firefighting, \$1.5 billion taken from other Interior Department programs to pay for firefighting costs will not be replaced; Pell grants, a freeze in this program will result in a shortfall of over \$900 million; Medicare claims, no funding for the President's \$143 million increase to ensure that the growing number of claims are processed in a timely manner; Special Sup-

plemental Feeding Program for WIC, funding would be reduced by \$114 million below current levels, meaning less will be available for families that depend on this program; Social Security claims, no funding for the President's increase to process and pay benefits to millions of Social Security recipients.

In addition to the program cuts listed by Chairman YOUNG, the House CR omits assistance for thousands of farmers all over this country who are confronting the worst drought in more than 50 years.

This is the wrong way to do business. We should be completing our work on the bipartisan appropriations bills, not cutting education, veterans affairs, homeland security and other important priorities.

Each of these bills properly funds key priorities. And, most importantly, each enjoyed the unanimous support of the Democrats and the Republicans on the Committee.

There is no reason why the full Senate cannot do the same. Passage of these bills would fund Government for a year, with no need for any more stop-gap, starvation diet CRs.

Regrettably, our Republican colleagues in the House have refused all year to consider appropriate funding levels for crucial functions of Government, even though all Senators on the Senate Appropriations Committee, Democrats and Republicans, were able to agree on all 13 bills.

The difference between the aggregate total of spending for the bipartisan Senate bills and the aggregate total proposed by the House Republican budget resolution is roughly \$9 billion in budget authority. That's a tiny fraction of the \$5.6 trillion 10-year surplus that's been squandered since the current administration came to office.

To hold up funding for all the non-defense areas of Government in order to claim credit for fiscal responsibility over such a tiny proportion of overall spending is the height of irresponsibility.

Unfortunately, it is crystal clear that is precisely what our Republican colleagues would like to see happen. They want to run the Government on a starvation diet into next year. Because the House resolution is now the only way to keep the Government operating, it will be passed by voice vote. But I want to be very clear that, if there had been a recorded vote on this measure, I would have voted no.

Mr. REID. Madam President, basically what we have just done is pass a continuing resolution until November 22. This is done with some trepidation and really with the complete understanding that this is not the right way to run Government. It would have been so much better had we been able to pass our appropriations bills. We have not been able to do that. We have 13 appropriations bills we should pass every year. I don't have the exact number, but I think following the passage of the Defense appropriations bill, we have