

As the No. 1 contributor of greenhouse gases worldwide, I believe it is our responsibility to show leadership; and every day we wait, we lose an opportunity to reduce the threat of global warming. It is not too much to ask the world's economic and political superpower to provide the necessary leadership to address global warming and, one day, to celebrate an Earth Day in which the United States has truly taken the lead.

Thank you, Mr. President. I yield the floor.

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

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will call the roll.

The legislative clerk proceeded to call the roll.

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 President, I ask unanimous consent that the order for the quorum call be rescinded.

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

Mr. LIEBERMAN. Mr. President, I further ask unanimous consent that I may proceed as in morning business.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection, it is so ordered. The Senator from Connecticut is recognized.

Mr. LIEBERMAN. I thank the Chair. (The remarks of Mr. LIEBERMAN pertaining to the submission of S. Res. 247 are printed in today's RECORD under "Submission of Concurrent and Senate Resolutions.")

Mr. LIEBERMAN. I suggest the absence of a quorum.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will call the roll.

The assistant legislative clerk proceeded to call the roll.

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 President, I ask unanimous consent that the order for the quorum call be rescinded.

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

Mr. GRASSLEY. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent to speak for 15 minutes as in morning business.

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

#### WHERE IS THE DEMOCRATIC BUDGET RESOLUTION?

Mr. GRASSLEY. Mr. President, Monday was April 15. That is the day Americans file their income tax return with the IRS.

April 15 was also the deadline for Congress to complete its work on the budget resolution for the Federal government. But, the deadline has come and gone and we still don't have a budget.

It seems the Democratic leadership is reluctant to bring their proposed budget to the floor of the Senate for a vote. According to recent press reports, they don't know if they have the votes to pass their budget.

What is interesting about the Democratic leadership's inability to find enough votes to pass a budget is that the makeup of the Senate this year is exactly the same as last year. With

this same membership, Republicans last year produced a bipartisan budget supported by 65 Senators, including 15 Democrats.

After taking a closer look at their budget, I am not surprised they do not have the votes. The Democratic budget is a case study in contradictions.

They claim to support the war on terrorism, but they don't fund the Presidents' request for defense. They say the President's tax cut was too big, but they don't delay or repeal it. They claim to protect Social Security and Medicare, but they spend trust fund money on other programs for the rest of the decade. In short, the Democratic budget says one thing and does another.

Take a closer look at these contradictions.

First, according to the Democratic Budget Committee Report, "the budget resolution provides all of the resources requested by the President for the Department of Defense for the next 2 years. It includes a reserve fund that will provide all of the defense funding requested by the President in 2005 through 2012 if it becomes clear that the funds are needed."

In other words, the Democratic budget funds the President's request for 2 years and then cuts it by \$160 billion the next 8 years.

Their so called defense "reserve fund" is fraud. Unlike the other reserve funds in their budget—for Medicare, health care, and the Individuals with Disabilities Act—no money is actually being set aside for defense.

Admittedly, the war on terrorism may not cost as much as the President has requested, but instead of honestly setting aside the extra money until we know for sure, the Democratic budget spends the money on other programs.

According to the Democratic Budget Committee Report, "The President's budget does represent an appropriate response to the September 11 attacks—it provides the resources that will allow our armed forces, homeland security personnel, and citizens to respond to the challenge posed by terrorists. But—just as last year—the President's budget does not respond adequately to the other major challenges facing this nation."

In other words, the Democratic budget recognizes the potential need to fund the President's defense request, but insists other programs must come first. Compared to the President's budget, the Democratic budget spends \$160 billion less on defense and \$348 billion more on everything else.

The second contradiction in the Democratic budget is the issue of tax cuts.

The Democratic Budget Committee Report says, "Last year our national leaders were presented with a golden opportunity to set this Nation on a course to deal with the challenges facing it . . . But the President and Republicans in Congress instead pushed through a plan that had only one pri-

ority—tax cuts . . . Because of the huge tax cut, there were not enough resources left to address other challenges . . . The effects of this squandered opportunity are being felt this year."

So how does the Democratic budget propose to deal with this so called squandered opportunity. The Democratic Budget Committee Report states "the budget resolution assumes no repeal or delay of tax rate reductions that are scheduled to occur in future years under the law enacted last year."

So if last year's tax cut was such a "squandered opportunity," why doesn't the Democratic budget do something about it?

The reason is simple. They know the American people are overtaxed. They know twelve Democratic Senators vote for the tax cut signed into law by President Bush last year. They know their Senate colleagues will not vote to delay or repeal the tax cut.

But instead of admitting these facts, the Democratic leadership continues its partisan attacks on Republicans for "squandering" the surplus and "raiding" Social Security.

That brings us to the third and most outrageous contradiction of them all.

The Democratic Budget Committee Report states, "The budget resolution recognizes that it is crucial to return the budget to balance without Social Security as soon as possible . . ."

So how does the Democratic budget propose to do this? It contains a so called "circuit breaker" that would create a budget point-of-order against the consideration of next year's budget if it does not get to balance—excluding Social Security—by 2008.

In other words, the Democratic budget believes it is so "crucial" to balance the budget without Social Security that it proposes to wait until next year. Apparently, "as soon as possible" doesn't apply to this year.

During the Budget Committee markup, the chairman explained that he was not requiring a plan to protect Social Security this year because the economy was still weak and that it is unwise to engage in further deficit reduction during our recovery.

One might be tempted to accept this explanation. But consider what the chairman had to say when OMB Director Mitch Daniels testified before the Budget Committee.

The Budget Committee chairman stated, "I'd be quick to acknowledge I could live with [a deficit] in a year of economic downturn and at a time of war. But you're not forecasting economic downturn for even later this year—you're forecasting economic recovery. And for the rest of the decade, you're forecasting rather strong economic growth and yet year after year you propose taking money from Social Security, taking money from Medicare . . . How do you justify it?"

Blaming the economy for their failure to make any effort to protect Social Security is especially ironic given the Budget Committee chairman's view of how the economy works.

According to the chairman, the tax cuts reduced the surplus, thereby driving up long-term interest rates which have a negative impact on the economy.

If one accepts the chairman's view of the economy, the sooner Congress enacts a deficit reduction package, the sooner we can bring down long-term interest rates and stimulate the economy.

But instead of having the courage of his economic convictions, the Democratic budget fails to make any effort to reduce the deficit. Instead, it just digs the hole deeper.

The Democratic budget resolution dips into the Social Security trust fund and spends \$1.3 trillion of the Social Security surplus on other programs.

What is even more ironic about the Democratic budget "circuit breaker" is that it only applies to Social Security. Last year, the chairman of the Budget Committee insisted that it was equally important to protect the Medicare trust fund as well.

Last year during the debate over the Social Security lockbox, the chairman stated, "Some of us believe it is critically important that we protect both the Social Security trust fund and the Medicare trust fund so they are not used for other spending in the Federal budget." Apparently, that was then and this is now.

Now, the Democratic budget proposes to dip into the Medicare trust fund and spend \$360 billion of the Medicare surplus on other programs.

The Democratic leadership would like the American public to believe their opposition to tax cuts is based on their desire to protect Social Security and Medicare. But the budget they have produced this year shows that is simply not true.

Despite what the Democratic leadership might say, their opposition to tax cuts has nothing to do with protecting Social Security and Medicare.

If they were so committed to protecting Social Security and Medicare, they could have proposed to delay or repeal the tax cut. If they were so committed to protecting Social Security and Medicare, they could have proposed to reduce other spending. But they chose to do none of the above.

Instead, the Democratic leadership chose to produce a budget that increases Federal spending and thereby spends \$1.7 trillion of the Social Security and Medicare surplus on other programs. That is the dirty little secret of the Democratic budget.

After spending all of last year and the first part of this year engaged in partisan attacks on a so called Republican tax cut—that passed with the votes of twelve Democrats—they have decided they would rather increase spending than protect Social Security and Medicare.

Now, I believe we all know why the Democratic leadership doesn't want to bring their budget resolution to the floor of the Senate for a vote—they are

too embarrassed. I have to admit, I would be embarrassed, too.

Based on CBO latest projections, including the economic stimulus bill, the Federal budget will not have a surplus—excluding Social Security and Medicare—until 2011.

Instead of addressing these long-term deficits, the Democratic budget proposes to increase spending by \$1.1 trillion.

"New Spending" shows how the Democratic budget would dig the deficit hole even deeper.

The Democratic budget only achieves balance in 2012 by assuming the tax cut will expire.

Between now and 2011, the Democratic budget would spend \$1.7 trillion from the Social Security and Medicare trust funds—\$362 billion from Medicare and \$1.32 trillion from Social Security.

The Democratic budget "circuit breaker" would require next year's budget to get the balance—excluding Social Security—by 2008.

But this year's Democratic budget proposes to spend an additional \$428 billion between 2004 and 2008.

In order to comply with the "circuit breaker," next year's budget would have to reduce spending or increase taxes by \$424 billion.

In other words, next year's budget would have to repeal virtually every dollar of additional spending provided by this year's budget.

If the "circuit breaker" were expanded to include Medicare, then next year's budget would have to reduce spending or increase by \$536 billion.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from North Dakota.

#### U.S. FARM PRODUCT SALES TO CUBA

Mr. DORGAN. Mr. President, it is one thing to shoot yourself in the foot, it is quite another thing to take aim before you shoot. That is what has happened in the last couple of weeks with respect to the State Department deciding to revoke the visas they previously granted to Pedro Alvarez and other officials from a group called Alimport, which is a Cuban state-run purchaser of foreign goods.

Mr. Alvarez and others were invited to come from Cuba to the United States, to come to North Dakota, to Iowa, and to other parts of farm country in the United States because they need food. The Cuban economy has been injured, of course, by the hurricane, and they need food. As a result of that, they have been purchasing food from the United States. Why have they been purchasing food from the United States? Because I and some others took the lead in Congress to end the embargo with respect to the shipment of food from the United States to Cuba.

That embargo has existed for decades. We ended that in the year 2000. The result is that Cubans have bought \$70 million-plus worth of food from us in the last few months.

It is kind of byzantine, because in order to buy food from us, they are required to pay cash and do it through a French bank. They work the transaction through a French bank. Nonetheless, that is what they have done.

Mr. Alvarez and the organization Alimport applied for visas to come to this country at the invitation of U.S. farm groups to buy additional wheat, eggs, dried beans, and other commodities. So they were given the visas. Just a couple days later, the visas were yanked. The passports were asked to be returned, and the visas were revoked. When I learned of that, I called the State Department.

Here is what the State Department told my staff. My staff asked: What is going on? Why did you revoke the visas of the people who were going to come from Cuba to purchase some additional United States food from our farmers?

It is the policy of this administration not to encourage agricultural sales to Cuba.

Let me read that again. That is a most byzantine position.

It is the policy of this administration not to encourage agricultural sales to Cuba.

We sell it to Communist China. Yes. That is a Communist government. We sell food to Vietnam. Yes. That is a Communist government. We sell food virtually all around the world. We fought for years to lift this embargo on food sales to Cuba. We are now selling food to Cuba, and we have some people taking a brainless position down at the Department of State that it is not our position to encourage food sales to Cuba; therefore, we will revoke the visas we previously granted to the head of Alimport to come into this country, to visit farm States, to purchase some dried beans, wheat, eggs, and other food products.

I am writing a letter today to Mr. Alvarez inviting him to come to the United States. It is not from farm organizations. It is from me. I am sending a copy of that letter to the State Department saying: You have an obligation to play straight.

When this country has the opportunity for family farmers to sell food to those in Cuba who need it and who are hungry and want access to that food, we have a responsibility to our farmers, and the State Department has a responsibility to the Congress to help make that happen.

Our farmers are facing really tough times. Prices have collapsed. They have remained down for a long while. Then we have this embargo on food sales and shipments to Cuba. We opened it just a bit and sold them \$70 million worth of food. Now we have folks down in the State Department trying to play games with it once again.

I have asked the State Department: Who made these decisions? How did you make the decision? Who demanded that the visas be revoked? I want to know who has their foot on the brake. I want to know who has one of these hardheaded embargoes still going on