

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator has 8½ minutes remaining.

#### FOREST FIRES

Mr. DOMENICI. Mr. President, for a couple of weeks, every time Americans look at their TV screen, they see a huge fire, a piece of America burning. Forests in our Southwest and West are on fire. We have seen huge fires in the State of Arizona, small but significant fires in New Mexico, and very large fires in the State of Colorado.

I do not want to discuss the why of the fires today, but I am very hopeful that another year will not pass in the Congress, at least the Senate, without a thorough analysis and research by a committee of Congress on why our forests are burning. Some say it is natural. Others say it is a terrible management mistake. They claim that we have gone along without pruning, thinning, or taking care of forests and are inviting either manmade fires, lightning, or some kind of natural fire starter.

We have a very serious problem with reference to our national forests and these fires. So far this year, over 3 million acres have burned, and the fire season is not yet over. This is 1 million acres more than the devastating 2000 fire season and twice the 10-year average. So far, twice the 10-year fire average has already occurred in our forests! This fire season has had a detrimental impact on communities throughout the West and Southwest, disrupting thousands of people's lives, hurting the economies in ways we cannot measure, and destroying homes and property. We must act in each instance to put out the fires, to contain them, and, yes, after that, provide whatever help we can to those suffering.

While the fires burn, there are people who need help. There are people in both the BLM and the Agriculture Department who are busy, day by day, using millions and millions of dollars, which we have provided.

I suggest today that the Department of the Interior and the Department of Agriculture indicate they will have to move resources from all kinds of activities that are supposed to occur during the rest of this year over into fire accounts because nobody expected such a huge, onerous, and costly fire season. The Department of the Interior and Department of Agriculture are about \$850 million short for 2002.

Those managing the bills, and the White House, should know it is a very difficult situation to let a supplemental catch up with the problem. That is what happened here. We have a supplemental appropriations bill waiting around. Now we have a new problem that did not exist when the supplemental started—reimbursement to the Departments of our Government that have used their money to pay for the forest fires that are burning down America.

We ought to either find a place for that amendment on the supplemental

or in some way accommodate it. We always say if it is an American problem, we will pay for it. If it is an earthquake, we pay for it. If it is a tornado, we pay for it. That is the collective insurance of America that we will pay for those emergencies, either on the supplemental or on the Interior appropriations bill, neither of which at this moment has money for these forest fires—neither bill, neither the supplemental nor the full yearly appropriation bill.

The whole of next year is ready to be appropriated without the fire money in it. So we need to provide the money the way I see it. It has been waiting long enough. I know the President does not want the supplemental over a certain amount. I will accommodate to arrange the additional funding, however he and others in the appropriations process and the Congress desire.

I repeat, the money that has been used to fight the forest fires has come out of various and sundry accounts, including the accounts for rehabilitation and restoration of burned lands. For those in the West who are suffering from these fires, we will get a bill ready.

I close by saying there is also a growing problem in Texas and other States regarding excessive water. The floods have caught up with this supplemental. I have been discussing the issue with the Senator from Texas, KAY BAILEY HUTCHISON. I have also talked to Senator GRAMM. We will be asking that they present their water issues, and maybe we can provide funding on one emergency supplemental bill to the extent it is necessary to accommodate the emergencies of our people.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Under the previous order, the Senator from Kansas is recognized.

Mr. MCCAIN. Mr. President, will the Senator yield for a unanimous consent to be placed in the queue to speak?

Mr. BROWNBAC. I yield.

Mr. MCCAIN. I ask unanimous consent that at the appropriate time, which I believe is following Senator MCCONNELL, I be allowed 15 minutes to speak in support of the Leahy amendment.

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

The Senator from Kansas.

#### COMMISSION ON THE ACCOUNTABILITY AND REVIEW OF FEDERAL AGENCIES ACT

Mr. BROWNBAC. Mr. President, I rise to spend a few minutes talking about a growing fiscal and budgetary problem we have in the Senate, something I am not joyous about bringing up, but we have a problem. We are quickly sliding into it, if not falling into it, and we need to get it addressed. We need to address it before we get completely caught up in the fiscal and budgetary track.

Time is growing short. This body has yet to pass a budget resolution. We

have not passed a single 1 of the 13 annual appropriations bills yet. Here we are in the middle of July; no budget resolution, not 1 of the 13 annual appropriations bills. We are quietly moving into position for a fiscal train wreck. Many Members of the body expressed grave concern and doubt in 1998 when we did an omnibus appropriations bill. The course currently being charted by the Senate leadership will make that train wreck look like a fender bender.

We need to first consider the budget resolution created by the Budget Act of 1974. The budget resolution, which the Senate is legally required to pass by April 15—nearly 3 months ago—established caps on total annual discretionary spending. To waive the limits requires a 60-vote point of order. Without the mechanism in place, amendments to increase spending can be passed in the appropriations bills, regardless of their impact on Social Security, by a simple majority. So we are subjecting the Social Security surplus to simple majority movement by this body.

It is astounding, but despite the legal requirements for passage of the budget resolution by April 15, the leadership of the Senate has failed to even bring up the measure for consideration. And in the 27 years since the Budget Act of 1974, the Senate has had a budget.

To further put our current situation in perspective, consider the fact that just a year ago this body was composed of the exact 100 people here today, and we passed a budget resolution offered by Senator DOMENICI with the support of 65 Members.

Regardless of how the votes stack up, at the least, the Senate should pass a budget resolution so we have the fiscal caps in place that would take 60 votes—not just a majority, but 60 votes—to be able to raid the Social Security surplus. That is just prudence on our part that we ought to put the budget mechanisms in place.

I think we are sliding quickly into a situation where we are going to be spending ourselves into a bigger hole and not have any of these restraints or the mechanisms in place to help hold us back.

On the appropriations bills I mentioned at first, when the Senate should have passed 4 or 5 of these at least by this point in time, of the 13, we have passed none. These bills can take weeks to debate and pass. Then there are conference committees to work out the differences between the House and the Senate bills.

When considering these factors, coupled with the finite time remaining on the legislative calendar, it seems evident that a super-omnibus bill, larger than the 1998 omnibus, may very well be necessary to break the inevitable logjam.

Most of us in this Chamber have been privileged enough to serve during the recent period of historic, large federal surpluses. While large surpluses can be

an indicator of a robust economy, they are not necessarily an indicator of good fiscal management. Large surpluses, as I think we have seen, can lead to complacency with, and in some instances even misuse of, taxpayer dollars. While we should always be dedicated to ensuring the maximum benefit of every tax dollar that comes to Washington, we are now faced with the real possibility of a \$100 billion deficit in fiscal year 2002—a \$100 billion deficit.

Between increased funding for both the War on Terrorism and other domestic programs, our federal surpluses have vanished, and we are reentering the realm of deficit spending. We need to exercise fiscal restraint in our spending, and yet we appear to be heading for another omnibus appropriations bill at the end of this congressional session. Surely, Members on both sides of the aisle can understand that if this is the case, it means that there will be even more pork-laden measures tucked inside of these bills. Whether you are conservative or liberal, surely, it is an unacceptable strain on hard working Americans and our economy to have that type of pork barrel spending. The bottom line is that an omnibus appropriations bill prevents the proper individual consideration of spending measures, and it is bad for America.

Now more than ever, we should take steps to assure taxpayers that their hard-earned tax dollars are being well spent. Two months ago, I introduced the bipartisan Commission on the Accountability and Review of Federal Agencies Act—or CARFA Act for short. As in any bureaucracy, inefficient or low priority use of taxpayer's dollars are often serious threats to the credibility of an agency or program. We must be certain that the money we spend is not just allocated that way because we have historically spent it this way. Priorities change and our spending must change with it.

The CARFA Act would create a commission that is modeled on the successful Base Realignment and Closure BRAC Commission. Whereas the BRAC Commission examined military bases and the Department of Defense, CARFA would review Federal domestic agencies, and programs within agencies using a narrow set of criteria, which should produce significant results. The three areas of review are duplicative programs, wasteful or inefficient spending, outdated, irrelevant or failed programs.

If this legislation is enacted, the Commission, upon completion of its two-year review, would submit to Congress both its recommendations for the realignment and elimination of domestic agencies and programs, and proposed legislation to implement these recommendations. The Congress would then consider the Commission's proposed legislation in an expedited manner, with input from the committees under who's jurisdiction the affected agencies or programs fall. Following the committee's comment period, the

proposed legislation would be brought to the floor of each Chamber for debate and a vote. Like BRAC, the Commission's proposed legislation would be voted up-or-down without amendment.

The Commission on the Accountability and Review of Federal Agencies Act is about maximizing the benefit of Federal funds. Like BRAC, which directed that all funds saved be placed back into the DOD budget, any funds saved by implementation of CARFA's recommendations would be directed to support other more efficient domestic programs and agencies. In other words, any money saved would be put right back into other, higher priority domestic programs. That would be the best way we could spend the money.

The CARFA Act is about fiscal responsibility, and the Federal Government is accountable to the hard-working Americans who foot the bill. Personally, I think it would be wonderful if we were able to further increase the research budget for the National Institutes of Health, or IDEA—Individuals with Disabilities Education Act—because funds saved through the work of the CARFA commission would be more money available there. Priority spending would be done. This Commission has the potential to help us truly root out inefficiency, in the Federal Government in such a way that we can more fully realize the benefit of all Federal funds.

The CARFA Act is a good measure, and its enactment would send a positive signal to the American people that the Senate is attempting to exercise sound fiscal policy. I urge my colleagues to support it.

I urge my colleagues to look at the fiscal situation we are setting up right now with the spending and the lack of a budget bill, the lack of passing any appropriations bill, the \$100 billion fiscal deficit we are looking at for this fiscal year. We cannot afford this train wreck, and it is not wise at all for us to allow ourselves to slip into it. We really need to show the leadership to pass a budget resolution, to pass appropriations bills, to put caps in place, and to pass this CARFA bill.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Minnesota.

Mr. WELLSTONE. My colleague from Indiana wanted to speak for 5 minutes, so I ask unanimous consent he be allowed to speak for 5 minutes, after which I have the floor.

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

Mr. BAYH. Mr. President, I thank my colleague, the Senator from Minnesota, for his courtesy.

Mr. President, it is good to see you in the chair again. You have had the misfortune of being in the chair the last few times I took the floor, and I appreciate your forbearance as well.

#### ACCOUNTING REFORM ACT

Mr. BAYH. I come to the floor of this august body to call for the swift enact-

ment of the accounting reform measure, including the Leahy amendment. I do so because I believe very strongly that it is in the best interests of America at this critical time in our history. I believe it goes way beyond mere accounting issues.

What we are debating today deals with the financial security of millions of individual investors across this country, the security of their pensions, their 401(k) programs, and their other investments for the future of their children and their grandchildren.

What we are talking about today involves the very vitality of our economy, for those who have invested and not invested alike, the amount of investment that will take place in the economy, the number of jobs that will be created, the vitality of farms. What we are debating today involves the standing of America in the international economy; whether we will continue to be a safe haven for investments from those abroad, attracting the capital that helps us build a strong foundation for America's economy.

More than anything else, what we are debating today is nothing less than the basic values upon which this country has been based; whether we will continue to encourage those virtues that have always characterized America, whether we will continue to be the land of opportunity based upon hard work, ability, thrift, honesty, and playing by the rules or, instead, whether we will be perceived as the land of opportunity based upon artifice, avarice, and financial deceit. I believe the choice is clear and that the right thing, based upon traditional values and virtues, is embodied in the Sarbanes bill, including the Leahy amendment.

I congratulate our colleague, Senator SARBANES. He has demonstrated leadership and foresight in this issue. I believe the record will show that Senator SARBANES was a leader in this issue a long time before it became popular. It is wonderful when events combine with leadership to give us an opportunity to truly make historic progress in this body. I think Senator SARBANES has seized the moment.

I congratulate Senator LEAHY for his protection of whistleblowers and strong penalties against document shredding and financial fraud. He has made this a better bill.

Mr. President, as you know, we serve on the Intelligence Committee together, and since the tragedies of 9/11, our country has been involved in twin struggles: One, the physical national security of this country; and, second, getting this economy moving again to ensure the economic security of Americans across this country. There are parallels between these two challenges. Both occurred as a result of unexpected tragedies but have presented us with opportunities to make this an even better, stronger, more secure Nation. Both involve breaking the political gridlock and the bureaucratic inertia that all too often make progress in this Capitol