

course, we all know so well that we are involved now in this war on terrorism, and I wanted to speak a moment about that, the fact that it affects us all. Since that terrible day on September 11, virtually none of us have been untouched by those acts of cowardice and the effort to break the American spirit. Fortunately, they did not succeed. We were shaken but probably strengthened from that. Our efforts to combat the production and proliferation of weapons require that we prepare forces in the Middle East, and everyone has a role in that.

I just learned that one of my staff members will be called in the Reserve to active duty tomorrow. Sgt. John Travis Deti of the Marine Corps Reserve will be serving as an operations specialist with the Marine Corps combat engineers.

He was promoted from legislative correspondent to legislative aide just 1 day before learning of his orders to report to duty. As a fellow marine, I know that Travis is ready to do what he can, prepared to serve his country. I am very proud of what he is doing during this difficult time. Travis, *semper fi*.

SENATE ORGANIZATION

Mr. THOMAS. Mr. President, I wish to talk a little about the congressional session we are in now for our second week. We have lots of things to do. Certainly, the American people are anxious that we move on to do those things. Yet we find ourselves in sort of a stall on the floor, which is disappointing. We know we have actions to take. We know we have to be organized. Yet we are held up in being organized. That is discouraging to many of us.

The fact is that 2 years ago, when the Senate was 50-50, we had an agreement as to how to work and how to fund the committees. Now we find, particularly on the other side, that we can't come to agreement.

As I understand it, we had then a 50-50 arrangement with 10 percent going to the majority committee because there are lots of common costs. So it broke it down really into a 60-40 arrangement. That was satisfactory.

Now it seems that we can't find a satisfactory agreement. I urge the leadership to move forward so we can get on to do the things we are here to do. We have a lot of things to do, many of which are held over from the last session.

One of the most pressing is ready to be acted upon whenever we are ready to act on it, and that is 11 of the 13 appropriations which we did not even get to last year. The other is to begin on a budget of which we had none last year. A lot of people say it doesn't make much difference whether you have a budget anyway; You always break it. The fact is, it is important because it has a restriction in it. When a budget is set and the spending goes beyond

that budget, you can raise a point of order, and it takes 60 votes instead of 50. That is a protection from overspending. We hear a lot about spending. I am one who wants to control spending.

So here we are with things to do in the new year. We are here with items left over from last year, and we are not able to get going with it.

Everyone, of course, has their own priorities, but there are some fairly commonly agreed upon. Certainly education is one. There is nothing more important. When I talk to people about Government programs and things they want to do more about, education is always among the top. It is true that the Federal contribution to the financing of education is only about 7 percent of the total. But nevertheless, it is an important part, particularly when Federal rules and regulations provide some unfunded mandates to the States to do the things they must do.

I am in favor of having some common methods of having an assessment of how schools are doing partly because now we move so freely in this Nation; if you are educated in Wyoming, you may end up working in New York. You need to know that your education is comparable so you will do as well there as you could anywhere else.

We are talking about funding. We are talking about IDEA, funding for special education, which is very important. I hear a great deal about that. My wife happens to be a special education teacher, and it is terribly important that we give everyone an opportunity. To do that, you have to have special education.

The Perkins Act, which funds vocational education, whether it be agriculture, business, whatever, is apparently in somewhat of a controversy at the moment. It is very important that we be able to provide vocational education and opportunities for young people to become trained in what they want to do.

Testing, of course, is very controversial, but I believe it is a test as to whether or not schools are keeping up with others. Some argue, well, you just teach to the test. I suppose there is some danger of that. If the tests are adequate, perhaps that is not a bad idea, but there has to be accountability. So that is where we are with education.

On energy policy, we spent a great deal of time with that last year, more probably than we should have had to spend because it was pulled out of committee and the committee did not make the decisions. We brought it to the floor. I believe we were here 7 weeks on energy policy. Then it went into committee to facilitate the differences between the House and Senate and, frankly, we never did come to a successful conclusion.

Energy policy is very important at any time because nothing touches more of us than does energy—whether it is light, heat, automobiles, what-

ever. Even more important now, as we deal with economic difficulties, is that we find the price of energy going up, partly because of the unrest in the Middle East. So energy policy, it seems to me, is very important, and we ought to get back on that.

We can have an energy policy. We have not had one for years. We need to have one that has to do with domestic production, so that we are not 60-percent dependent upon exports as we are now. We need a policy that provides for more research into new sources of energy, so that we have renewables, so that we have various other kinds of opportunities. We have to have research to make sure that what we use now—coal, for instance—is as clean as it can be for air quality. That is the kind of balanced policy we need. But here we are with that need to move forward and we are not able to do that.

Certainly, health care is one. In my State of Wyoming, health care has become particularly important over the last couple years, largely because of cost and accessibility. Often, when we talk about health care, we talk about Medicare, and certainly we should. Medicare is very important to a large number of people who have higher costs generally. Nevertheless, Medicare is there and we need to make some changes with it, particularly as we look forward to what we are going to do over the next few years—a program that gives some choices and hopefully brings in more private operations and a more private distribution of resources that will fund a program that is needed over a period of time. The one we have now isn't going to do that.

We have to make some changes. I suspect we will be looking at more short-term changes originally, as we first go about it. We need to look at the long term, what we want to have over time and what it takes to provide a health care distribution system that is useful. It is not all Medicare. For example, in our State the prices have gone up substantially. There are a number of reasons, of course. Part of it is liability insurance for physicians. Many have given up certain kinds of practices because the cost of liability insurance is out of sight. We can do something about that, and we can do something about it here as well as in our States.

We have a problem with the number of uninsured in this country. Of course, the notion of insurance, the concept of insurance is that you have a broad participation of people, some of whom are less likely to need services than others, so that it levels out the costs. But when you have a large segment of the most healthy people who do not carry insurance, then that concept is weakened. So those are broader issues that we need to have. We have a shortage of nurses. We need to do something about that. It has very little to do with Medicare.

The other one that is important, of course, and I suspect will be dealt with

more quickly, is pharmaceuticals. Some say we have an overutilization of pharmaceuticals. For many people, particularly the elderly, the cost is extremely high for pharmaceuticals and is unable to be handled by many people. We need to find a better way of distribution, find a better way of using generics, find a better way of examining the pharmaceutical requirements.

We had some meetings. In one case, we had a retired pharmacist take a look at the pharmaceutical needs of the people employed by his former company. He was able to reduce it substantially and still provide the same kind of health care. So there are a lot of things that we can do.

As to jobs and the economy, obviously, nobody is unaware of the fact that we need to do something there. We need to have a program. All we have heard in the last 2 weeks is criticism of the President's economic program. I believe the President has a very well-balanced effort at doing something about the economy. He does something initially with payments, such as child care, reduction of income tax withholding, which would put more dollars in right away. I suppose we can talk about the size of the package because of dividends on some of the payments that are made. But the fact is, it is a balanced program that has initial impact; it has long-term kinds of tax reductions that create jobs.

Now, it is one thing to just sling money out there, which some folks like to do. The real answer is to develop jobs so people have them long term, and that is what it is all about.

On judicial nominations, we are behind from last year. We still haven't organized a committee to do that.

We are faced with lots of opportunities to do some things that need to be done. Yet here we are waiting to begin to move. I think the pressure needs to be on the leadership to resolve this issue and get us into a position to move forward so we can deal—as we are here to do—with the issues before us and resolve many of the questions that are pending.

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

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

EXTENSION OF MORNING BUSINESS

Mr. McCONNELL. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the time for morning business be extended until 4 p.m. and the time be equally divided in the usual form, with Senators allowed to speak for up to 10 minutes each.

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

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

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Mr. SUNUNU). Without objection, it is so ordered.

FUNDING GOVERNMENT

Mr. REID. Mr. President, hopefully we will be able to move forward on the most important matter facing the country today, in my opinion, and that is getting something done to be able to fund Government.

As the Democratic leader said earlier today, we all recognize the country is in a deep economic decline. Last month alone we lost over 101,000 jobs as reported by the Department of Labor. As we talked earlier this morning, we need only look at the article in the Wall Street Journal today which is entitled, "Slump in Job Market Is Longest in Decades. Near-term Prospects For Workers Remain Grim."

This is Monday. Thursday is fast approaching, and that is when people are always saying they have to catch a plane. If we cannot complete our business this week and deal with the 11 appropriations bills, we should work next week. The majority leader should tell everybody right now that they should put on hold their business for next week, that this is an important time for the country. With the economy being in the recession and no prospects in the near future of getting out of it, and the only proposal we have coming from the White House is to give more tax cuts to the rich—and from the reports in the press today part of the tax dividends would go to both the President and Vice President in the sums of hundreds of thousands of dollars if this crazy dividend scheme goes through—hopefully we would work through next week, if necessary, to deal with the problems the country faces.

There is no plan for creating jobs. It seems the only answer that comes from the administration to every problem is more tax cuts for the wealthy.

I suggest the absence of a quorum.

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Mr. BENNETT). The clerk will call the roll.

The assistant legislative clerk proceeded to call the roll.

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

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Mr. CHAFEE). Without objection, it is so ordered.

Mr. HARKIN. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent to speak as in morning business for up to 30 minutes.

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

Mr. HARKIN. I thank the Chair.

THE NATION'S ECONOMY

Mr. HARKIN. Mr. President, last Thursday I spoke at some length about the Nation's economy and pointed out what I thought at that time were some of the deficiencies in the President's plan for economic recovery.

In my remarks on Thursday, in reading them over in the RECORD, I thought maybe I might have been a little harsh; maybe my remarks were a little too pointed in that they referred to the President's economic plan as one that would unduly benefit the wealthiest in our country and that would not do much to really help working Americans.

After reading the newspapers over the weekend, I have come to the conclusion that what I said on Thursday was not nearly as harsh a judgment on the President's economic policy as that of some of our foremost economic thinkers and writers in America today.

So after reading these newspapers this weekend, I thought I would call the attention of my colleagues and others to several articles that appeared on this topic over the weekend, which I think are graphic in their detail and analysis of how awful the President's economic program is, and will be for this country if we enact his latest version.

The first thing I saw was, on Saturday morning, a front-page article that said the economy lost 100,000 jobs in December. The unemployment rate remains at an 8-year high. This was on the front page of the Washington Post on January 11:

U.S. companies shed more than 100,000 jobs last month, reducing payrolls to their lowest level since the recession began in early 2001, while the unemployment rate remained at 6 percent, its eight-year high, the Labor Department reported yesterday.

Again, unemployment is high and continues to get worse. So clearly we have to do something in this country to stem the rising tide of people who are not working.

Looking back a couple of years ago to when the first economic downturn started, when the President put his recovery program into place, in 2001, it is clear it is not working. We are 18 months later and it is not working. It is going in the wrong direction. So do we keep going down that road or do we start to make some changes? That is what we have to do. We have to recognize we are going down the wrong road and we have to make some changes.

The President has now proclaimed his new economic program to build on the misguided one of 2001. This is a David Broder column from Sunday's Washington Post entitled: "It Reeks of Politics." I wondered what he was talking about. I thought maybe he was talking about judicial appointments or something like that—"It Reeks of Politics." No. What Mr. Broder was talking about was the economic program. I will quote some parts of it.