Ultimately, we are being maneuvered into a position, are you going to shut down the Government by refusing to enact a continuing resolution or are you going to accept that and accept it at last year's levels, which would totally not have our country prepared for the defense of this homeland? That does not make sense to this Senator, and that is not in the interest of my State particularly since it seems as if whatever happens often happens first in Florida.

Anthrax happened. We even had a kid flying a plane into a tall building. We have the threats in the 14 deepwater ports in Florida of what kind of cargo could come in that would never be inspected. It could not even come in on a commercial cargo ship. It could come in on a pleasure craft. So many of the ports of this Nation have deepwater access all the way up to a highly urbanized downtown area. There is the opportunity for mischief by those who want to do damage to the United States.

I urge upon my colleagues that we be very careful as we approach these decisions on the appropriations bills, and on the concurrent decisions on tax policy, that we do what is in the interest of the defense of this country and also in the interest of the stimulus of getting this sick economy moving again.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Michigan.

Ms. STABENOW. Mr. President, I rise today to speak about the need to truly stimulate our economy and create jobs and how we can do that in a way that is fair for everyone, that puts dollars back in the pockets of middle-class Americans who we know literally drive the economic engine by buying cars, homes, clothes for their children, groceries, and all of the other purchases that keep our economy going.

I have grave concerns about the so-called economic proposal that has come from the President. In fact, it does not meet the definition of that term, and I have great concern because it does not put the majority of money back in the pockets of people who drive the economic engine.

We can come together on issues such as eliminating the marriage tax penalty, increasing the child credit, and helping small businesses, which by the way are the majority of new jobs being created today. The majority of new jobs is coming from small businesses. We need to be focusing on ways to help small businesses pay for their health care and to have the kinds of incentives they need to invest back in their companies so they will grow.

When we look at the proposal the President has brought forward, if we were to come together, we could easily pass relief as it relates to the marriage tax penalty, with bipartisan support. We could easily pass increases in the child tax credit on a bipartisan basis. We could easily support small business in ways that we can provide tax relief and other kinds of support.

The problem is two-thirds of the President's plan, the vast majority, does not do any of that. Two-thirds of the plan is focused on the very top income earners in the United States who already have one, two, or three homes, multiple cars, and who are not necessarily going to be spending these dollars back into the economy, at the expense of everyone else.

When we look at what this proposal from the White House means to Americans, taxpayers with incomes of over $1 million would get back an average of $88,873, almost $89,000 coming back to them. The majority of taxpayers, the typical middle-class taxpayer in the United States of America, would get $265. That is a huge disparity.

Some say, well, if we talk about the differences, if we talk about the fact that the majority goes to those at the very top, we are engaged in class warfare. With all due respect, that is a bunch of baloney. We are talking about how we can fairly put money into people's pockets. We want to make sure the majority of the middle-income taxpayers, the ones who are keeping the engine going, have tax relief and get dollars back in their pockets. Of course, that happens in a variety of ways. Tax relief is one. This kind of a difference is not fair. It is simply not fair.

There is another way to make sure we have money in people's pockets. That is to make sure we are not exploding the national debt and causing interest rates to rise. There is another kind of tax on people we went through in the 1980s and the 1990s. That is high interest rates. When citizens buy an automobile—coming from Michigan, I am very interested in people buying a lot of automobiles, a lot of domestically made, American-made automobiles; we want people to be able to afford that—high interest rates affect your ability to buy that new car. High interest rates affect your ability to buy your new home, or to be able to afford to send your children to college. Interest rates which directly relate to the national debt affect how much money goes in people's pockets.

This proposal of the President is not fair on its face. We are looking at the top .2 percent, 226,000 millionaires, receive more than half, almost two-thirds of all of the tax cuts being imposed; 68 percent of the people receive $15 billion; and .2 percent of the taxpayers get $20 billion. It is not fair on its face. If you add in the fact this is a proposal that will greatly increase the national debt on the back end, what we are doing is saddling these middle-class taxpayers and our baby boomers—of which I am one—and our children and grandchildren with more debt. We will increase interest rates and take more money out of people's pockets.

Mr. REID. If I could ask my friend from Michigan to withhold. The majority leader is on the floor with important business.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The majority leader.

COMMITTEE RESOLUTION

Mr. FRIST. Mr. President, I will take this opportunity to update Members as to where we are in the process. We have been working in very good faith—I might add, frustrating in many ways, but very good faith—making progress over the last 8 or 9 days. That is the committee resolution. As I pointed out earlier this morning and last night, in order to get on with the Nation's business, it is important to organize our committees so Members can be on committees. On the Republican side, we began this process, assigning Republican Members to their various committee assignments. I assume, that being very basic, the other side has done that as well.

The American people do want Congress to continue to tackle the challenges we face today as a country, homeland security, the issues surrounding the spending bills and appropriations bills from the last Congress.

CONCLUSION OF MORNING BUSINESS

Mr. FRIST. I ask that morning business be closed, and I now send a resolution to the desk which would make majority party committee appointments.

Mr. REID. I have no objection to morning business being closed.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection, it is so ordered. Morning business is now closed.

MAKING MAJORITY PARTY APPOINTMENTS

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will report the resolution by title.

The assistant legislative clerk read as follows:

A resolution (S. Res. 18) making majority party appointments to certain Senate committees for the 108th Congress.

Mr. FRIST. Mr. President, I hope we can agree to this resolution in short order. Following its approval, we will proceed to the minority committee appointments, which will allow the Senate to begin the real work.

Mr. REID. On behalf of the minority leader, and I spoke to him just before coming out here, the Democratic leader and I have spoken. He feels, as does the majority leader, that we need to try to move this organizing resolution along, and both leaders have worked and assigned staff to work on it. It is moving along. We hope it can be accomplished very quickly. We are both going to go now to our weekly party conferences and this will be discussed at length with other important matters before the Senate.

I, on behalf of the Democratic Senate, understand the frustration of the majority leader. We had the same problem a year and a half or so ago. It took a while to resolve that almost 6 weeks. I certainly hope this does not take that long. I appreciate the manner and tone

that the resolution is offered. Of course, it is fully debatable. We hope it does not have to be fully debated.

It is my understanding now that morning business is closed and the Senate will recess, is that right?

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senate will proceed with consideration of the resolution.

RECESS

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Under the previous order, the Senate now stands in recess until 2:15.

There being no objection, the Senate, at 12:30 p.m, recessed until 2:15 p.m. and reassembled when called to order by the Presiding Officer (Mr. VOINOVICH).

MAKING MAJORITY COMMITTEE APPOINTMENTS—Continued

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Missouri.

Mr. BOND. Mr. President, I rise today to share some memories with my colleagues. As I watched what is going on in this body, I was trying to think of something. I have seen this before. It is sort of a deja vu all over again. I was thinking back to maybe 14 or 15 years ago when my son was playing T-ball. You remember T-ball? That is the kids' game.

The kindergarteners played T-ball. They had a lot of fun. But in one game we had a problem because after the other side was out, they had their outs and they were finished, they wouldn't put down their bats and go out in the field. They didn't want to play the game. They thought that once they had been at bat they were going to stay at bat, even though their side was out and it was time for them to leave.

The more I thought about it, the more I thought maybe that is what is happening in the Senate today. We had an election and the people of America sent some new Republicans, a new Democrat or two, to Washington, and they established a 51-to-48-plus-1 majority. I mean, 51 is more than 48. It is more than 48 plus 1. It seems to me it would be common math, it would be reasonable politics, it would be just common civility, to say once you have a majority and the people of America have voted for members of the Republican Party to be the leadership, to be the majority party in the Senate, it ought to move forward.

All the time I have been here, once we have had an election we have shifted power, if there has been a shift in power. A year and a half ago when one of our Members switched and we lost the majority, I handed over the gavel immediately to my ranking member and she became the Chair. That is because this is a democracy. That is how this is supposed to work. We are supposed to have reasonable rules.

But today I am reminded of that T-ball game when the side that was out, they had lost but wouldn't put down their bats and go out in the field. Guess what. The game can't go on. Everybody is a loser.

This is not a T-ball game. This is time to handle the business of this Nation. The people of America voted for us. They voted for Republicans and Democrats. They voted for House Members and Senate Members because they expected us to come to Washington and be serious about doing the people's business.

One of the defining marks of democracies in the modern day is that there is a peaceful transition of power. The winners take over and lead. The losers relinquish their leadership and join in the governmental efforts. That is the rule in democracies throughout the world.

Here is the U.S. Senate sticking out like a sore thumb, an exception to the principle that when there is an election and there is a change of power, the winning side takes over. This is truly regrettable when we have so much business to be done. We have all the business that did not get done last year. Unfortunately, I believe the leadership last year would not let us go to a budget.

They wouldn't let us pass appropriations bills. As a result, we are now funding 11 of the 13 appropriations bills for the jurisdictional functions of the Federal Government based on a continuing resolution. Things have changed. We need more money for these functions. We need to pass appropriations bills. We are ready to move on appropriations bills, but we can't set up a committee. We can't get the committee set up until we pass a resolution and find out who is on the committee.

This is a serious failure to live up to our responsibility, to do the work the people of America have a right to expect us to do. The longer we wait, the more difficult the appropriations process is going to be, and the more difficult it will be for us to do this year's work, which is to do the 2004 appropriations bills.

There are a lot of things we really shouldn't even have to bother with on the floor. The T-ball team is not just keeping the bats. They are saying some of our people who have assumed new leadership positions can't even get into leadership offices.

This is a new day. This is 2003. There was an election in November of 2002. The people in the United States by their votes said you as Republicans should move forward. We can't do that. We can't do that until we get cooperation.

This is a body that operates on common decency, respect, and civility. It works on unanimous consent. Obviously, we can't get unanimous consent. We haven't so far. There are a lot of arguments in the negotiations. But the fact is we need to get on to the people's business. I can tell you, I know our majority leader, BILL FRIST. He is a man who is more than willing to make decent provisions for the minority, and he will do that. But nothing we say is good enough. We can't move forward in this circumstance.

I think that is a real tragedy. We have a lot of work to do this year. We need to confirm judges to make sure our judiciary works. We need to pass an energy bill. We are looking at possible hostilities in the Middle East where we face potentially a cutoff of some of our supply of petroleum. What are we going to do about it? We haven't had an energy policy for 9 or 10 years. Our energy policy bill last year was blocked. This year wouldn't it be nice if we allowed the Energy Committee to work on a bipartisan basis and report a bill out to the floor, then vote on it, send it over to the House, work in conference, and bring it back to vote it up or down? We ought to be doing that. But we haven't done that.

There are some who suggest maybe the Democratic Party lost the election because they were obstructionist. I happen to think that is true. I happen to think that was one of the most telling arguments in campaigns in which I participated. People of America don't want to see obstruction, roadblocks, and red tape. There are others who say, Well, maybe the Democrats lost because they weren't confrontational enough and they weren't obstructionist. It looks like those people have won the day, or at least they are calling the shots. I believe many of my Democratic colleagues would feel the way I do. They know the election is over. They know we have some very important work to do this year. We have to do the basic appropriations to get the Government operating and to fund programs. We need to do an energy bill. We have to do a highway bill this year.

If you are worried about where we are going to get stimulus, as some of my colleagues on the other side of the aisle said, we need stimulus to make sure we have a highway bill that continues funding of the vitally important construction on our Nation's highways. That is one of the most important bills we are going to have to pass this year. But we can't do it when we can't even get the Senate organized.

I am very discouraged. I am very discouraged that we have run into this problem. I hope the people who are listening or watching back home will call, write, or e-mail. I guess you can't write anymore. You can't write us here. You can write to our offices in our States, call, and send faxes and messages, and tell those of us who are in the Senate it is time for us to get to work.

All of last year I waited to bring an appropriations bill to the floor under the good leadership of my colleague and friend who was chairman at the time. I am still waiting to bring an appropriations bill to the floor. It is a bipartisan bill. It is one we have worked on. We will work on it together, and it will be a bill which we hope reflects the