

year is abominable. Someone mentioned the word "tirade" yesterday. This is a tirade, and it is time for a tirade. It is time to be strong in talking to our colleagues in the House. We must have that bill today that covers the disasters the President recognized back in July. They are worse now than when he sent the bill to us.

I hope others who have the knowledge will talk about the firefighting. In Alaska, we have fire conditions we have never faced before. One of the real problems is we have been unable to cut into the areas of the Forest Service and the Fish and Wildlife Service owned by the Federal Government that have beetle kill.

I read just last night, two young fishermen were out and they had an accident. They tried to set a fire to attract the attention of small planes flying in their area. The fire got out of control and burned 40,000 acres before we could even get to it. I don't know how many acres that will burn. But that is the condition that exists in the West today. They built a signal fire and that signal fire is totally out of control now.

We have to have funds to meet this condition this year. It is not satisfactory to say they can borrow money from other accounts. When they borrow money from other accounts, they shut down those activities that primarily exist in the West in July, August, and early September.

I call on the House: Do something; react. The President asked on July 8th. Give us the bill we need to meet the disasters that are occurring right now.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Rhode Island.

Mr. REED. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent to speak as in morning business for 10 minutes.

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

CHILD TAX CREDIT

Mr. REED. Mr. President, I rise today to express my dismay about the failure to provide the child tax credit to millions of low-income Americans. In this regard, I join my colleague, Senator JOHNSON, and applaud his efforts to try today, through unanimous consent, to resolve that at least we will as a Congress commit ourselves to give the benefit to low-income families which many other families in America are about to enjoy.

Yesterday, the Internal Revenue Service began mailing out the first batch of advance \$400 checks to middle and upper-income American families who are receiving the child tax credit. The President was at a mailing facility to get a visual of these checks going out. That is good news for these families. But certainly low-income Americans have the same needs; in fact, one might argue even more compelling needs for help and assistance to raise their children.

Mr. President, 6.5 million low-income families will not receive a check today. They will be left out. Even though this body acted prudently to give them the opportunity, the House, in May, dropped the provisions and did not respond with an appropriate bill.

On June 5, nearly 2 months ago, this Senate, in a bipartisan manner, passed legislation that would provide for the refundability of these tax credits and in effect give the credit to low-income families. I commend all of the individual Senators who have led the way both on the Finance Committee and, in particular, Senator LINCOLN of Arkansas, who has been advocating strenuously for this very fair and very prudent approach.

The House, on the other hand, passed an expansive \$82 billion tax cut package surrounding this child tax care credit. As a result, they politicized and essentially frustrated the obvious and the compelling need to help these low-income families.

The President has called for the passage of this act, but frankly, other than appearing yesterday at a mailing facility, he has not done a great deal to force the House to pass this very simple, very necessary measure.

I hope we can make progress on this. This tax credit for child care is an important benefit for all of our families and, as I said before, very important for low-income Americans. They are struggling and with both parents working two jobs to make ends meet. These are the working Americans who are doing difficult work and working very hard. They deserve the same kind of assistance to raise their children we are providing for middle and upper-income Americans.

This is a question of fairness, certainly. It is unfair, in my view, that we would provide benefits for certain children—ironically, some of the most affluent children—and not provide similar benefits for low-income families with children. It is just patently unfair. Also, it is part of an emerging pattern of indifference, and worse, towards low-income Americans.

There is the issue of the Earned-Income Tax Credit. This has been an enormously successful program. It has, in my State of Rhode Island alone, provided \$90 million to over 57,000 families in the year 2001, giving them additional help based upon their work. Recall now, this is the Earned-Income Tax Credit; you have to be working, you have to qualify by accumulating income to get the tax credit.

This is one of those very ingenious mechanisms which help lift families and children out of poverty, and it has done so with remarkable success. It has been a tax provision supported by both sides of the aisle enthusiastically for several decades. But now the IRS has announced its intention to require elaborate precertification for EITC eligibility for about 45,000, as they term it, high-risk households. Generally these are households in which grand-

parents or single fathers are raising children.

But perhaps of more concern to me is that there are plans to expand this precertification process to 2 million households in the year 2004 and to 5 million households within 3 years. This is a move that President Bush clearly supports, because he requested \$100 million in additional funds for the fiscal year 2004 budget for this so-called compliance initiative.

If we were to propose an elaborate precertification for middle-income and upper-income tax advantages, there would be howls of protest. We would rush to this floor crying foul, accusing the IRS of overreaching and meddling with burdensome impacts upon taxpayers. But that is exactly what, in my view, is happening to low-income families in the budget proposal of the President for this precertification.

Again, I note the President has requested \$100 million for additional funds to supposedly precertify families qualifying for a tax advantage under the Earned-Income Tax Credit. Just yesterday we couldn't afford, according to the vote, \$100 million for improved transit security in the United States. That suggests to me the wrong, and perverse, if you will, priorities. If we are spending \$100 million to try to force low-income families to come up with documentation to qualify for a tax cut but we can't find the money to protect the subways and the trains and the buses in the United States, that suggests something askew in our policies and our priorities.

I think what the pre-certification does, frankly, and maybe intentionally, will dissuade some individuals who qualify for the EITC from coming forward and applying for it. They might not understand the new precertification. They might have to pay for tax advice to do it appropriately. And one other point: the IRS has the authority to release all this documentation to the Department of Justice and other Federal agencies at their discretion, which might cause some people concerns about privacy.

This is something that, again, if we proposed it for middle- or upper-income Americans, you could not hear yourself think because of the howls of protest in this body. Indeed, back in 1998 we passed the Internal Revenue Service Restructuring and Reform Act because of supposed taxpayer harassment inflicted upon middle- and upper-income Americans by the IRS. It seems when it comes to low-income Americans who work and who qualify for the EITC, harassment isn't a problem when it comes to proposals by the administration.

I am also disappointed that in line with this attack against low-income Americans is the inability of this body and the other body to pass a long-term unemployment compensation benefit that will really take care of all the Americans who are suffering because of an economy that is functioning poorly—and that is being polite—at this

moment. Unemployment in June was up to 6.4 percent, and those numbers don't even include the 4.5 million underemployed individuals, those who are working part time, looking for full-time employment but struggling to get by on part-time jobs. At least 1.3 million of these 4.5 million are in that category of looking for long-term, full-time employment but having to settle for something part-time. Yet they are excluded from our unemployment compensation provisions.

In addition, we will shortly be looking at new rules by the Department of Labor with regard to the Fair Labor Standards Act that relax overtime protection. We are also encountering proposals to increase the TANF requirements from 30 hours to 40 hours per week. Here, at a time when there are so many Americans struggling to find a job, struggling to find a few hours of part-time work, we are proposing to increase the number of work hours under the TANF Program. I think this approach to TANF will be another impact on the low-income children of this country because it will necessarily require mothers to spend less time with their children. Again, this is another example of a policy that is not good for the economy and it is certainly not good for children.

Then we are looking at Head Start proposals and AmeriCorps proposals, as Senator STEVENS just indicated, that are shortchanging so many people, particularly young people in this country. Again, I hope we can very quickly resolve this issue with respect to the child tax credit, the underlying point of my remarks today. There are 6.5 million wage earners who are working, contributing to our economy, and trying with all their might to raise their children. Today we are ignoring the plight of all of those 6.5 million people. I hope our indifference will end very quickly.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Ohio.

Mr. DEWINE. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent to proceed for 10 minutes as in morning business.

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

TRIBUTE TO HAL MCCOY

Mr. DEWINE. Mr. President, I rise today to pay tribute to a truly remarkable Ohioan—a man who has covered Cincinnati Reds baseball for the Dayton Daily News for the last 31 years. This weekend, Hal McCoy will join many legendary baseball players and sports writers when he is inducted into the writers wing of the Major League Baseball Hall of Fame. This is a fitting and well-deserved tribute to a man who reminds all his readers everyday about why we love baseball.

I am a life-long fan of the Cincinnati Reds. For the last 31 years, I have counted on Hal McCoy for complete, detailed, objective coverage of their

games. When I am back home in Ohio, the first thing I do when I pick up the Dayton Daily News in the morning is read Hal's reports. When I am in Washington, I read them off the Internet.

For more than 3 decades, Hal McCoy has brought to life in vivid detail thousands of Reds games. Through his words and insights, he has taken readers, like me, onto the field and into the clubhouse. With his stories, we have felt the players' pride in their wins and the pain in their losses. Hal McCoy has brought readers right to the game, giving us a real glimpse into the highs and lows of the Reds seasons.

One of the things I admire most about Hal is his incredible work ethic—unbelievable. Hal McCoy is, some people have said, almost a machine. I have always been amazed by his ability to crank out so much material and so many anecdotes and "notes" from the games. Nothing stops him.

You pick up the paper in the morning and you see the account of a game. Sometimes you will see a column to go along with that, you will see another story on the back page, and then you will see the notes of the game—sometimes three, sometimes even four stories just in one paper by one writer. That is Hal McCoy. He works and works and works and has an unending, unfettered enthusiasm, after all these years, for the game of baseball.

Hal McCoy is a very special man. I wish to take a few minutes today to tell my colleagues a little bit about his life and his career as a sports writer.

Hal was born and raised in Akron, OH. He played Little League baseball in Summit County and later graduated from Akron East High School. He then graduated from Kent State University in 1962, with a Bachelor of Fine Arts and a major in Journalism. Upon receiving his diploma, Hal immediately put his degree to good use when he started a job as a Dayton Journal Herald reporter, covering the Dayton Public prep league.

Hal first covered the Cincinnati Reds for the Dayton Daily News in 1973. No one knew at the time that Hal would be holding our Nation's longest-running tenure, covering one team continuously or that he would be recognized as one of the finest journalists in Ohio history, let alone one of the finest ever in his profession.

A few years ago, Hal suffered a stroke in his right optic nerve while covering a Reds game in St. Louis. He lost half of his vision as a result. While this would cause most people to slow down or stop, Hal could not be deterred. He overcame this adversity with grace and continued his post with the Reds.

Then, on January 23, 2003, Hal suffered a stroke in his other eye. Suddenly, legally blind, Hal was faced with a seemingly insurmountable obstacle—the eyes that he had been using for years to "show" the game to his readers essentially stopped working for him. But, Hal wouldn't let that stop

him. He persevered. He never complained. And, when faced with the choice to retire, his resolve to write his legendary stories only became stronger.

Today, Hal continues to attend and report on Reds games using a special large-size scorebook that he designed. He says:

I tell everybody I'm going to do this until my head hits the laptop, when I pass out in the press box. That's how much I love this job.

And let me tell you that Hal's fans couldn't be happier! Many, many Reds fans, like me, still can't wait to get up in the morning and read his stories. That is how much we enjoy his work and what he produces every day.

The publisher of the Dayton Daily News, Brad Tillson, has said this of Hal:

I've been reading Hal McCoy's coverage of Major League Baseball and the Cincinnati Reds for more than 30 years, and I never cease to be amazed at his insight into the game and his ability to communicate it to the readers. He calls the games as he sees them with candor, integrity, and authority. Sometimes it's more illuminating to read Hal's account of the game than it is to watch it.

I must also add that the respect of the players Hal McCoy covers is also very illuminating. When Hal was faced with the loss of his sight, some of the players went to him and told him: You can't quit. You need to keep doing what you love to do.

He is held in respect by the people he covers. I think that says a lot about Hal McCoy.

Of course, if you ask Hal about the secret to his success, he would respond that it is "the readers, the people." That connection with the people is very powerful. It is not at all surprising that Hal hasn't missed a road series in 30 years. Hal has said:

When I sit down at my laptop, it is the readers I have in mind. What would they want to know? I've tried to inform them, entertain them, and tell them the truth to the best of my capacities . . . I can never thank all the readers who have been so supportive. You are what we are all about.

It is this humble spirit and gratitude for his readers that Hal's friends and readers love most.

As Hal takes his destined place in the writers wing of the Baseball Hall of Fame, I join many other proud Ohioans in saying thank you. Hal McCoy is a terrific writer, a magnificent storyteller, and an exemplary and well-respected member of his community. My family—my dad and my children—extends its warmest congratulations and sincerest thanks to Hal for his wonderful writing and his dedication to continuing to do what he loves despite difficult challenges. We thank him for his service to the Dayton community, to the Miami Valley, to Ohio, and to our Nation.

I look forward to many more Cincinnati Reds seasons that Hal will cover and many more great stories.

Thanks Hal. We appreciate the great work you do.