

term average of President Clinton was 11.3 percent. It is 9.9 percent today. The unemployment rate for Hispanics during the first term of President Clinton was 9.7 percent. It is 7.2 percent today. America's standard of living is on the rise. Real after-tax incomes are up nearly 10 percent since December 2000, substantially better than the comparable time period in the previous business cycle. Consumer confidence continues to be substantially high. The national home ownership rate was at an alltime high. Minority ownership has set a new record of 51 percent in the second quarter and is up 2.1 percentage points from a year ago. Core inflation remains low. Mortgage rates remain at historic lows.

There are challenges in this economy, but to draw a comparison to the Great Depression is a little excessive. The reality is, we do have things to do. But I urge my colleagues on the other side of the aisle: Set us free. Let's get an energy bill passed, an energy bill that had 44 Republicans voting for it, 13 Democrats. The reality is that if the minority leader wanted to get this done, it could get done.

I represent the State of Minnesota. We are neighbors of the folks in South Dakota. I know they want an energy bill. Within that energy bill is a renewable fuels standards that would double the production of ethanol and will bring to life the soybean biodiesel industry, a great opportunity for our communities. If you want to grow jobs, get an energy bill passed. Give us the number of votes we need to get through cloture.

Let us have class action reform. We came within a few votes of getting that done. You want to grow jobs, talk to the manufacturers in this country, talk to the small business people. They will tell you what they need. They need class action reform. Our friends on the other side won't give it to us.

We need asbestos reform. We need medical malpractice reform. We couldn't even get welfare reform done. Again, those on the other side of the aisle were filibustering, saying: We will not allow it to happen. There is no work requirement today in welfare, if the welfare reform change that was previously passed expires.

We have a lot of work to do. There is a plan and a vision out there. The vision is to make American business competitive with businesses all over the world. We do that by cutting taxes. We don't do that by raising the tax on small businesses, many of which are subchapter S corporations or sole proprietorships that pay taxes at the rate of the highest level. They pay more than large corporations pay. Yet my friends on the other side of the aisle talk about rolling back that tax cut, which would have a devastating effect on small business.

In Minnesota we sometimes talk about the Scandinavian who loved his wife so much he almost told her. As I listened to the distinguished minority

leader, I got this sense that folks care so much they will almost do something.

We have a path to do something. It lies through an energy bill. It lies through medical malpractice reform. It lies through class action reform. It lies through getting the FSC/ETI JOBS bill through. Right now American manufacturers are paying a double-digit tax, in effect, because of a WTO violation.

We can lower that. We can change it. Instead, we find it blocked. No, it is not the Great Depression. There is more work to be done. There is a path, but the path doesn't lie with obstruction. I know the people of Minnesota and of South Dakota need an energy bill, and they want one.

In the last few minutes I have, because I want to give some time to my friend and colleague, the Senator from Pennsylvania, I want to talk a little about what is happening in the war on terror and in Iraq.

This week, the forces of freedom won a major battle. We reclaimed the city of Samarra. We reclaimed it by working with the 5,000-member joint force of Americans and Iraqis liberating that city from insurgents and foreign fighters. The fact is that we are not out there by ourselves, and the reality is that we need the Iraqis to step forward, and they are doing so. Yet the Prime Minister of Iraq came here and addressed a joint session of this body and the House. He then was disparaged by the Democratic nominee for President; the Iraqi sacrifice was disparaged.

Last night, we heard the Democratic Vice Presidential candidate simply dismiss the sacrifice of our strongest ally. We are not in this alone. We are not going to win it alone. But we can win it. We are not going to win it if we take an attitude that it is simply a diversion, if we take an attitude that things are so messed up that nothing will come together. We are not going to win it with folks who don't have the resolve to see this through or have the consistency to say, yes, it is a good thing that Saddam is no longer in power. We are not going to win by dismissing the contributions of our allies—the Polish, the English, the Italians, the Salvadorans, and on and on. We are not going to win it if we dismiss the sacrifice of the Iraqi people. We need them to step forward. We saw in Samarra what happens when you come together: You can liberate a city from insurgents.

Mr. President, we have a lot of work to do. The situation is not perfect, but we can get it done with the leadership of this President.

I yield the floor.

Mr. SANTORUM. Mr. President, how much time is remaining?

The PRESIDENT pro tempore. There is 1 minute remaining.

GOOD SAMARITAN VOLUNTEER FIREFIGHTER ASSISTANCE ACT

Mr. SANTORUM. Mr. President, I was going to talk about the Kerry

health plan, but I will do that later. I want to talk briefly on the Good Samaritan Volunteer Firefighter Assistance Act. We have been trying to clear a provision that would allow more equipment—used equipment—to go to volunteer firefighters from companies all over the United States by giving a slight change in the liability standard for companies that donate this equipment.

We have done this in the area of the Good Samaritan Food Donation Act, which resulted in billions and billions of dollars in additional food going out to hungry people in America. Nobody has been sued, by the way. What was sued under the Good Samaritan Food Donation Act—we were not taking money out of anyone's pocket with lawsuits. No one, to my knowledge, has been sued by donating firefighting equipment. Nobody is going to lose out—no lawyers—from lawsuits by this donation. It is an opportunity for companies that waste a lot of resources to be able to give back.

UNANIMOUS-CONSENT REQUEST— H.R. 1787

Mr. SANTORUM. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the Senate proceed to the immediate consideration of Calendar No. 748, H.R. 1787, the Good Samaritan Volunteer Firefighter Assistance Act.

Mr. DURBIN. Reserving the right to object, Mr. President, I might say to the Senator from Pennsylvania, it is a very good bill and one I may be anxious to support. I think one Senator has a problem, but I am told it is very close. I will object at this moment, but I encourage the Senator to work actively because I believe we can clear this bill quickly.

Mr. SANTORUM. Mr. President, we have been working for several weeks on this bill. I know both Senators COLLINS and LIEBERMAN have been helpful. We are getting to the end of the bill. It is vitally important to be able to get this passed so we can get this help on the way. It only had three negative votes in the House of Representatives. This is something we should be able to do for our first responders.

The PRESIDENT pro tempore. There will now be a period under the control of the minority leader for 15 minutes.

The Senator from Illinois is recognized.

VICE PRESIDENTIAL DEBATE

Mr. DURBIN. Mr. President, last night, I was in Cleveland, OH—I got back in the early hours of this morning—to be present at the Vice Presidential debate between our colleague, Senator EDWARDS, and Vice President CHENEY. It is an interesting responsibility and assignment that I had, along with several of my colleagues on the Republican side, to provide the so-called spin after the debate. You would think that voters could reach their

own conclusions about who said what and how they should vote, but there are many who line up in an effort to stress the important and strong points made by their candidate. That was my role last night.

I am not going to presume to tell anybody who watched that debate who won or lost. I will point out two specific things that were said by Vice President CHENEY that I believe demand some clarification. He said at one point in the debate that he had never met Senator EDWARDS. In fact, he said:

In my capacity as Vice President, I am President of the Senate, the presiding officer. I am in the Senate most Tuesdays in session. The first time I met you [Senator EDWARDS] was when you walked on the stage tonight.

That is what Vice President CHENEY said last night. You know, all of us forget from time to time when we have met someone. In this particular instance, the Vice President had forgotten that at least on two previous occasions he had not only met Senator EDWARDS but had been in very close contact with him. In fact, at the National Prayer Breakfast on February 1, 2001, Vice President CHENEY acknowledged Senator EDWARDS, who was in the audience. They were at the same event. Then, at the swearing-in ceremony for Senator EDWARDS' colleague, Senator ELIZABETH DOLE, in 2003, in fact, Vice President CHENEY was standing right next to Senator DOLE and Senator EDWARDS.

So to suggest that he never met the man last night—it turns out that he had a lapse in memory. It happens to us all. It is a rather incidental thing in the scheme of things but for the other lapse of memory the Vice President had last night. I listened to him say these words, and I could not believe it. He said:

I have not suggested there is a connection between Iraq and 9/11.

I wrote that down and underlined it, saying I can't believe that, because I have heard him say repeatedly that there was a connection between 9/11 and Iraq that warranted our invasion of Iraq before we put together a broad and strong coalition to share in the burden. So with some research we find that at least on two occasions, and many others perhaps, the Vice President has forgotten again. This is what he said on December 2, 2002:

His [Saddam Hussein] regime has had high level contacts with al-Qaida going back a decade, and has provided training to al-Qaida terrorists.

That is a direct quote from Vice President CHENEY, who said last night he had never suggested that connection.

Then again, on January 22, 2004, on National Public Radio, the "Morning Edition," he said:

I think there is overwhelming evidence that there was a connection between al-Qaida and the Iraqi government.

Those are his quotes. Last night, he denied them. I will tell you why he

should have denied them. He was wrong. He was wrong then and wrong the other times he suggested the connection between Saddam Hussein and al-Qaida to justify our invasion of Iraq. In fact, the 9/11 Commission, a bipartisan commission, has dismissed that premise. The Senate Intelligence Committee, which I serve on, has dismissed that premise and said the intelligence community failed us when they made that suggestion. And here is the best part. On October 4 of this year, Secretary Donald Rumsfeld, in the President's Cabinet with the Vice President, said he had no hard evidence to link al-Qaida and Saddam Hussein. The Secretary of Defense said:

To my mind, I have not seen any strong, hard evidence linking the two.

Why is this significant? It is significant for the same reason that the report that is about to come out today, ordered by this administration, a report prepared by the chief U.S. weapons inspector in Iraq, again says that there is no evidence of weapons of mass destruction. This administration is in denial when it comes to the reality of Iraq.

Mr. STEVENS. Would the Senator like to yield there?

Mr. DURBIN. No, not until I have completed my statement; then I'll be happy to yield.

This administration is in denial when it comes to the reality of Iraq. We have a Vice President who linked Saddam Hussein and al-Qaida, and that has been debunked and dismissed by several sources, including his own Secretary of Defense, and an administration that still clings to this notion of weapons of mass destruction despite report after report of no evidence of weapons of mass destruction, and they tell the American people that is why we had to do this; that is why we had to invade before we put together a coalition, that is why we had to send troops into combat before they had the necessary body armor to protect themselves, before the Humvee vehicles that our brave soldiers were driving in Iraq were protected with armor, before our helicopters had the necessary defensive equipment, we sent our troops into harm's way.

The Bush administration saw an urgency based on wrong information. Today, neither the President nor Vice President will accept the reality that they were wrong. How can you make a policy in America to make it stronger unless and until you accept the reality?

Last night, Vice President CHENEY could not accept the reality that he was wrong linking 9/11 to Saddam Hussein, and the President cannot accept the reality that there were no weapons of mass destruction. In fact, now the report says the best they can find was a desire to build weapons of mass destruction. Is that what it takes to justify a preemptive attack on a country, that its leader may desire to create a weapon that could threaten us? I cer-

tainly hope the standard would be much higher.

If you look at the record—I listened to the Senator from Minnesota who talked to us about domestic issues—it is hard to imagine that they are going to make an argument on the Republican side that this has been a successful administration when it comes to domestic issues.

Just take a look at private sector jobs. Under President Clinton, 20.7 million private sector jobs were created; under President Bush, we lost 1.6 million private sector jobs. You have to go back 70 years through Democratic and Republican Presidents to find such a failure in the creation of jobs. But this administration clings tenaciously to the notion that their economic policy is the best.

I see the Senator from Delaware. How much time do I have remaining in morning business?

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator has 7½ minutes.

Mr. DURBIN. Will the Chair advise me when I have 1 minute remaining?

Let me also talk about our fiscal situation. When we talk about the need for more money for education, more money for health care, tax credits for small businesses to provide health insurance, tax deductions for families to help pay for college tuition, we find we are in a difficult position to even consider it. Why?

Here is the chart that tells the story. Take a look at this. As President Clinton left office, there was a \$236 billion surplus in the Federal Treasury. Today, under President Bush's leadership, there is a deficit of \$422 billion, the largest deficit in the history of the United States.

We have our hands tied when it comes to doing things to help American families get through this tough time when they see the cost of gasoline, the cost of health care, and the cost of college tuition going up, while their personal incomes are not increasing.

Take a look, as well, at the specifics when it comes to real household income for families in America under President Bush. It declined by \$1,535, 4 years of President Bush; real family income down \$1,500.

Now take a look at the cost to families. Under President Bush's leadership, the cost of family health care premiums has gone up \$3,599. When Senator EDWARDS turned last night to Vice President CHENEY and said, I don't think America can take 4 more years of this, this is what he is talking about. Real family income is declining and the cost to families for the necessities of life is increasing.

What we are finding out over and over is that families are not better off. We have seen household income go down under the Bush administration, gasoline prices up 22 percent, college tuition costs up 28 percent, family health care premiums up 45 percent. That is the harsh reality of the cost of

living for working families across America.

When Senator EDWARDS confronted Vice President CHENEY last night with those realities, what the Vice President said was, Well, we certainly hope everyone can find a job. Hope is not enough. You need a policy that does not reward the wealthiest in America with tax cuts, but that instead helps working families deal with the realities of the costs of life.

The Vice President and the President are wrong. They are wrong in their policies and some say resolute, I say perhaps too resolute, in sticking with the policy that has failed.

We are in a position where we need new leadership. We have that opportunity, and last night's debate showed the sharp contrast between the projected programs and hopes and policies of the Kerry/Edwards ticket as opposed to the harsh realities of the programs we have seen over the last 4 years.

Mr. President, I yield the floor.

Mr. STEVENS. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that I have 5 minutes and the Senator from Delaware have 5 minutes.

Mr. DURBIN. I object to that request. If the Senator from Alaska is going to address me, I would like to have 5 minutes.

Mr. REID. Parliamentary inquiry.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Nevada.

Mr. STEVENS. If the Senator will not yield to me, I will not yield to him. I want 5 minutes and the Senator from Delaware wants 5 minutes. Does the Senator object?

Mr. DURBIN. I object, Mr. President.

Mr. STEVENS. 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. REID. 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. REID. Mr. President, it is my understanding that, under the order that is now before the Senate, we on the minority side have about 3½ minutes remaining; is that correct?

The PRESIDING OFFICER. That is correct.

Mr. REID. I ask unanimous consent that the Senator from Delaware be given 5 minutes and the Senator from Alaska be given 10 minutes.

Mr. STEVENS. I object. I only want 5 minutes, and I want to be able to respond to the Senator from Illinois. He would not yield to me. I see no reason why I should yield to him.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Objection is heard.

Mr. REID. Senator CARPER has 3 minutes now. There is no unanimous consent request pending now, is there?

The PRESIDING OFFICER. There is not.

Mr. STEVENS. What is the time situation?

Mr. REID. I yield 3 minutes to the Senator from Delaware, Mr. CARPER.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator has 2½ minutes remaining. The Senator from Delaware is recognized for 2½ minutes.

Mr. STEVENS. Mr. President, I cannot hear.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Delaware has 2½ minutes.

The Senator from Delaware.

ESTABLISHING A NATIONAL PARK

Mr. CARPER. Mr. President, later this morning, I will introduce legislation, along with Senator BIDEN, calling for a feasibility study by the Department of the Interior for establishing a National Park Service unit in a State that has never had a national park.

Believe it or not, the State that started the Nation, the first State to ever ratify the Constitution, has no national park.

The State in which the first Swedes and Finns came to America and landed on what is now Wilmington, DE, calling it New Sweden, has no national park.

The State where John Dickinson grew up, who is a coauthor of the Great Compromise creating a bicameral legislature, has no national park.

I could go on.

The heritage of our State and the history of our State together create a fabric which, in a sense, is the tapestry of America. Senator BIDEN and I thus call on the Department of the Interior to conduct a feasibility study to see if maybe a wonderful idea that has evolved from a committee led by Dr. Jim Soles, a professor at the University of Delaware, might win favor with the Department of the Interior and maybe with our colleagues in the year to come.

What is being proposed is a Delaware national coastal heritage park.

It would weave together many of the elements and attractions along the coast of our State, which include the Atlantic Ocean, the Delaware Bay, and the Delaware River.

For the last year or more, a wonderful group of Delawareans has worked together with the Delaware State Division of Parks and Recreation, with the National Park Service, with the Delaware Division of Historical and Cultural Affairs to develop what we believe is a unique and innovative concept, a concept that would include four hubs. The major hub would be in Wilmington, DE, at the rocks where the first Swedes and Finns came ashore in 1638 to America to establish what is now the longest living active Episcopal church, Old Swedes Church, in North America.

That hub would be almost like the hub of a wheel, with spokes emanating to historic sites, natural areas, recreational opportunities, and other attractions in the area. There would be three other similar hubs up and down the State of Delaware as well.

Later today, when I have more time, I welcome the opportunity to share with my colleagues a bit more about this proposal. I have

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator's time has expired.

The Senator from Alaska.

Mr. STEVENS. I yield myself time under the intelligence bill.

Mr. REID. Has the bill been reported?

The PRESIDING OFFICER. No.

NATIONAL INTELLIGENCE REFORM ACT OF 2004

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Under the previous order, the Senate will resume consideration of S. 2845, which the clerk will report.

The assistant legislative clerk read as follows:

A bill (S. 2845) to reform the intelligence community and the intelligence and intelligence-related activities of the United States Government, and for other purposes.

Pending:

Kyl Amendment No. 3801, to modify the privacy and civil liberties oversight.

Stevens Amendment No. 3839, to strike section 201, relating to public disclosure of intelligence funding.

Leahy/Grassley Amendment No. 3945, to require Congressional oversight of translators employed and contracted for by the Federal Bureau of Investigation.

Reid (for Harkin) Amendment No. 3821, to modify the functions of the Privacy and Civil Liberties Oversight Board.

Roberts Amendment No. 3742, to clarify the continuing applicability of section 504 of the National Security Act of 1947 to the obligation and expenditure of funds appropriated for the intelligence and intelligence-related activities of the United States.

Stevens Amendment No. 3827, to strike section 206, relating to information sharing.

Stevens Amendment No. 3840, to strike the fiscal and acquisition authorities of the National Intelligence Authority.

Stevens Amendment No. 3882, to propose an alternative section 141, relating to the Inspector General of the National Intelligence Authority.

Warner Amendment No. 3876, to preserve certain authorities and accountability in the implementation of intelligence reform.

Levin Modified Amendment No. 3809, to exempt military personnel from certain personnel transfer authorities.

Levin Amendment No. 3810, to clarify the definition of National Intelligence Program.

Stevens Amendment No. 3830, to modify certain provisions relating to the Central Intelligence Agency.

Warner Amendment No. 3875, to clarify the definition of National Intelligence Program.

Reid (for Leahy) Amendment No. 3913, to address enforcement of certain subpoenas.

Reid (for Leahy) Amendment No. 3916, to strengthen civil liberties protections.

Reid (for Leahy) Amendment No. 3915, to establish criteria for placing individuals on the consolidated screening watch list of the Terrorist Screening Center.

Collins (for Frist) Modified Amendment No. 3895, to establish the National Counterproliferation Center within the National Intelligence Authority.

Collins (for Frist) Amendment No. 3896, to include certain additional Members of Congress among the congressional intelligence committees.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Under the previous order, the time until 11:30