

now proceed to consideration of S. Res. 285, submitted earlier today.

The PRESIDENT pro tempore. The clerk will report the resolution by title.

The legislative clerk read as follows:

A resolution (S. Res. 284) recognizing 2004 as the "50th Anniversary of Rock 'n' Roll."

There being no objection, the Senate proceeded to consider the resolution.

Mr. ALEXANDER. Mr. President, I rise today in support of the resolution commemorating the 50-year history of rock 'n' roll. Senator FRIST, the sponsor of this resolution, and myself are both from the State where rock 'n' roll was born—Tennessee. On July 5, 1954, Elvis Presley recorded his first record, "That's All Right," at the legendary Sun Studio in Memphis and rock 'n' roll was officially born.

Memphis being the birthplace of rock 'n' roll should be of no surprise, since rock 'n' roll isn't the first genre of music to be officially born there. During the Civil War era another musical tradition was born from the sons and daughters who followed freedom up the Mississippi River. The soul-wrenching folk melodies of black Southerners laid the foundation for what would become the blues. Memphis has a vast history of being the center of American musical innovation.

The heart of this music innovation is grounded in the cultural life of Beale Street. It was Beale Street where W.C. Handy, a wandering black musician and composer, was the first to put down on paper the sometimes grim but always hopeful fix of field hollers, gospel songs, cotton-baling calls, and African tribal songs. Forty years later, Beale Street and those same rhythms infected a young, aspiring musician named Elvis Aaron Presley. Elvis Presley came to Sun Records to make a record for his mother and ended up forever changing music and society.

Sun Studios is the place where Sam Phillips created his Rockabilly dynasty with Carl Perkins, B.B. King, Roy Orbison, Johnny Cash, Jerry Lee Lewis and Elvis. Rock 'n' roll evolved in the 1950s from rhythm and blues, and was characterized by the use of electric guitars, a strong rhythm with an accent on the offbeat, and youth-oriented lyrics. Last July, Senator FRIST and I joined Secretary of the Interior Gale Norton in a singing ceremony, which designated Sun Records recording studio as a National Historic Landmark. Sun Records in Memphis, TN, is the true home of the blues and the birthplace of rock 'n' roll.

No other city in the United States can claim equal influence on the music of this Nation.

Mr. FRIST. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the resolution be agreed to, the preamble be agreed to, the motion to reconsider be laid upon the table, and that any statements relating to the bill be printed in the RECORD.

The PRESIDENT pro tempore. Without objection, it is so ordered.

The resolution (S. Res. 285) was agreed to.

The preamble was agreed to.

The resolution, with its preamble, reads as follows:

#### S. RES. 285

Whereas Elvis Presley recorded "That's All Right" at Sam Phillips' Sun Records in Memphis, Tennessee, on July 5, 1954;

Whereas Elvis' recording of "That's All Right", with Bill Black on bass and Scotty Moore on guitar, paved the way for such subsequent Sun Studio hits as Carl Perkins' "Blue Suede Shoes" (1955), Roy Orbison's "Ooby Dooby" (1956), and Jerry Lee Lewis' "Whole Lotta Shakin'" (1957)—catapulting Sun Studio to the forefront of a musical revolution;

Whereas the recording in Memphis of the first rock 'n' roll song came to define an era and forever change popular music;

Whereas the birth of rock 'n' roll was the convergence of the diverse cultures and musical styles of the United States, blending the blues with country, gospel, jazz, and soul music;

Whereas the year 2004 provides an appropriate opportunity for our nation to celebrate the birth of rock 'n' roll, and the many streams of music that converged in Memphis to create a truly American sound known throughout the world: Now, therefore, be it

Resolved, That the Senate—

(1) recognizes 2004 as the 50th Anniversary of rock 'n' roll;

(2) commemorates Sun Studio for recording the first rock 'n' roll record, "That's All Right"; and

(3) expresses appreciation to Memphis for its contributions to America's music heritage.

Mr. FRIST. Mr. President, the resolution just agreed to is a resolution recognizing the year 2004 as the "50th Anniversary of Rock 'n' Roll." Indeed, it was 50 years ago in a small recording studio in Memphis, TN, that a young Elvis Presley recorded his first record. It was called "That's All Right." And at that point, rock 'n' roll was born. That recording by legendary producer Sam Phillips at the now famous Sun Studio in Memphis paved the way for such subsequent hits which titles we all know: Carl Perkins' "Blue Suede Shoes" in 1955, Roy Orbison's "Ooby Dooby" in 1956, and Jerry Lee Lewis' "Whole Lotta Shakin'" in 1957. These early hits catapulted Sun Studio and Memphis to the forefront of that musical revolution.

Throughout the 1950s, the unique sound, tremendous vision, and incredible talent coming out of Memphis, TN, with such artists as Elvis Presley, the "King of Rock 'n' Roll," B. B. King, Johnny Cash, Jerry Lee Lewis, and Carl Perkins, just to name a few, became the hallmark of that Sun Studio and later the hallmark of American rock 'n' roll music.

Indeed, some of the most meaningful contributions to American music were made at that Sun Studio. It is where our country, in many ways, came together and spoke with a new, a uniquely American voice that was and still is heard around the world.

The fact that rock 'n' roll was born in Memphis is no coincidence. That city's location on the banks of the Mis-

issippi River made it a place where the diverse cultures and musical styles of our Nation came together, where they converged, blending the blues with country and with gospel and with jazz. That merging of cultures and styles continues today.

The year 2004 provides the opportunity for our Nation to celebrate the birth of rock 'n' roll and those many streams of music that converged in Memphis to create a truly American sound known throughout the world.

#### PRESIDENT'S ADDRESS TO CONGRESS

Mr. FRIST. Mr. President, at this juncture, on this second day of the new session of the 108th Congress, I will spend a few moments reviewing a bit but also looking ahead, setting the stage for what we are likely to expect in this body.

Last night, the President of the United States delivered a powerful challenge to the U.S. Congress and to the American people. He told us the state of the Union is strong and confident. The substance of the talk last night reflected just that.

There is much to celebrate as we enter this second session of the 108th Congress. Perhaps most important is the capture of Saddam Hussein. It was only 1 month ago that the world woke up to those astonishing images—the President described it last night—of Saddam Hussein in a hole and now in a cell. They were images of that dirty and dishevelled dictator emerging out of that spider hole.

Our brave and resourceful soldiers caught the "butcher of Baghdad." As the President said last night, Saddam Hussein now is in a cell, a military prison, awaiting his fate. He will be brought to justice by the Iraqi people whom he so mercilessly terrorized, and he will be judged as the entire world looks on.

Today, because of the war on terror, the capture of Saddam, the death of his two sons, and the destruction of his wicked regime, America and her allies are safer and more secure. As we enter the new year, we are also stronger. America's vibrant economy is beginning once again to hum. The Federal Reserve confirms that the recovery we began to observe last fall is gaining momentum each and every day. Worker production is up. Industrial production is up. Exports are on the rise. Home construction is booming. More Americans than ever own their own homes. Their total household wealth is approaching historic highs. Businesses are investing. Manufacturing is at its highest level in 20 years. In short, those tax cuts, those jobs and growth packages are working.

The first round of tax cuts indeed helped end that recession that began in the year 2000. The second round of tax cuts put America on a path to solid growth. Americans today have more money to save, invest, and spend as

they, as individuals, choose. Business owners have more opportunities today to realize their entrepreneurial spirit and potential. America is moving forward because President George Bush and the Republican-led Congress believed in that creativity, in that ingenuity, in that common sense of individuals, the American people. The risk-taking, willingness to invest, irrepressible optimism of the American people is in truth what has turned this economy around from recession to where today we are in the midst of the fastest growing economy in not just the last 5 years, 10 years, or 15 years but the fastest growing economy in this country in the last 20 years, since 1984.

As the President pointed out last night, now is not the time to rest. We cannot really rest until that economic recovery is complete. Every American who is looking for work should be able to get a job and should be able to get that work. Thus, we have to have smart pro growth fiscal policy to lead this country to job creation.

Looking to the future—and our obligation is to look to the future—there are critical structural problems that we in this body need to take head on, not to shy away from but to go right after, to tackle head on.

The one area that is critical to job growth—the President mentioned it last night—is tort reform. Over the last decade, class action lawsuits have exploded. State court class action filings have skyrocketed by over 1,300 percent in just the last 10 years. It is really not just the statistic, not just the figure, but it is the result. The result of this glut of claims is to clog our court system, our State courts. They simply cannot handle them all. It is inefficient in terms of government. It wastes taxpayer dollars. It stifles the innovation to which I just referred. That innovation and that entrepreneurship that is so crucial to taking a growing economy and translating it into job growth is stifled, is shackled, is handcuffed by this glut of claims.

Last night the President also mentioned medical liability, another aspect of tort reform. The President said “frivolous lawsuits,” and it was wonderful for me to see the Members of Congress stand up, but now we need to act. We cannot just talk about it; we need to act. Those frivolous lawsuits are exploding health insurance premiums. So when we are talking about the 44 million people uninsured, and we are talking about the cost of insurance and frivolous lawsuits are driving those premiums sky high out of the reach of hard-working men and women, we must respond. We must address it directly.

I encourage my colleagues to talk to their own doctors and ask them what the impact of this exploding malpractice, medical liability is doing to their own practice, how it affects the quality of care. I was just in a town meeting 3 days ago with physicians. I just come straight in. Being a physi-

cian I can sort of cut through a lot of the conversation. I said: What is the biggest problem today in terms of the quality of care that you give that patient coming into the room?

It was pretty amazing. That group of physicians, without any hesitation, just one after another, said medical liability, medical malpractice premiums; I cannot afford it; it affects quality; it affects access; it affects the way I practice medicine in a negative way.

Being a doctor, I receive letters about this problem from doctors all over America. It is real. The problem is increasing, and thus we in this body must respond to it. It is driving doctors out of the practice of medicine. When babies are being delivered, in some States the tax on that baby is as much as \$1,000 the mom or family has to pay, somebody has to pay, at the end of the day. That \$1,000, being a tax, goes to medical liability service. It hurts access to care. It hurts the quality of care. It is threatening our health care system. It is costing the country billions of dollars.

As a physician, I am concerned about the care and the quality end of it, but even though the numbers are hard to calculate, if we just stand back and look in the aggregate, it is expensive. Well-researched reports predict that if we reform the medical liability system, make sure that there is equity, fairness, and appropriate compensation, if we have appropriate reform, we will save the economy anywhere from \$70 to \$126 billion a year. Just the Federal Government would save about \$14.9 billion over 10 years through savings just in the Medicare and the Medicaid programs.

So when we are talking about what is the biggest issue in health care today, clearly this issue of the uninsured and the cost of health care must be put on the forefront.

Staying with this whole area of tort liability, I very much would like to address the issue of asbestos litigation. Right now things are out of control. A very good law has run amok over time and the intended consequences no longer are being accomplished, but they are unintended consequences which are hurting America.

The torrent of asbestos litigation has wreaked havoc on the victims of asbestos. Many of them develop either cancer or a type of cancer called mesothelioma. It has wreaked havoc on Americans' jobs. Companies are going bankrupt. About 20 companies have gone bankrupt from the cost of this out-of-control asbestos litigation system over the last 2 years. And it is wreaking havoc on the economy. The approximately 600,000 claims that have been filed already have cost \$54 billion in settlements, judgments, and litigation costs.

The sad thing is that even with all of these billions of dollars that are being spent in the system, the current asbestos tort system has become nothing more than a litigation lottery. A few

victims receive adequate compensation. But far more, far more today, the way the system is constructed, the way it has evolved, suffer long delays for unpredictable awards, for inequitable awards—if they receive anything at all. This is the victims, the people who have been hurt by asbestos.

It is a system where, if you look at it, there is only one real winner. It is not who was intended to win in the initial legislation or the laws or the regulations; that is, the victim or potential victim of exposure to asbestos. No, the only one real winner today is the plaintiffs' trial lawyers, the only certain winner. They are taking about half of every dollar that is awarded to victims. So you have a victim, you have a system with a lot of money going to it, but only 50 percent of it ends up going to the victim. The other 50 percent gets lost in the system. There can be a system where there is fair and adequate compensation both for the lawyers and especially for the victims.

While the attorneys collected their fees, the asbestos-related bankruptcies have already cost about 60,000 Americans their jobs. These job losses are unnecessary. If we act and update and modernize the asbestos tort system and bring everybody to the table, and do it in a bipartisan way, we can stop this unnecessary job loss—60,000 jobs to date. For those who lose their jobs, the average personal loss in wages over a career is as much as \$50,000. That is in wages. That doesn't even include the losses in health benefits as well as in lost retirement.

Remember, when I say 20 companies in the last 2 years have gone bankrupt, these are big companies, big employers. About 60 companies have gone bankrupt over the last two decades because of the asbestos-related matters.

So passing this asbestos reform will create enormous economic benefits. It will benefit the victims themselves. The certainty that flows from the bill itself will also stimulate capital investment which will go to preserve existing jobs and create new jobs. Again, I mention a bipartisan spirit. We have to have everybody at the table. We began the work in the last session. I would like to finish it in this session in a bipartisan spirit to accomplish this reform.

In early February we will be turning to the highway system. It will be shortly—February 2, hopefully, somewhere, depending upon when we finish the appropriations bills, which I hope we will finish this week—that we can turn to America's highways. It is another jobs issue. It is also an infrastructure issue. It is a safety issue. It is an issue we will address in this body. It is estimated the highway bill, from a jobs perspective, will help create as many as 2 million much needed jobs, and it is easy to understand why.

We are blessed in many ways because this country is interlaced with 4 million miles of roads and highways. Our

transportation infrastructure is estimated to be worth about \$1.75 trillion. We are blessed in many ways.

It is interesting that every \$1 billion we invest in transportation infrastructure turns around and generates, for every \$1 billion investment, \$2 billion in economic activity. That, of course, translates into jobs.

Our roads, our ports, our railroads are that infrastructure, that transportation infrastructure that is fundamental to our Nation's economic success. If things are so good, we are so blessed, why do we have to have a highway bill? Because if we look at that infrastructure, we see much of it is deteriorating or is becoming painfully crowded. Probably people listening to me now over their radios as I am talking are sitting in line in their cars. Commutes that used to take 10 minutes now take 20 minutes or that used to take 30 minutes now take an hour. Some people are probably sitting in bumper-to-bumper traffic as I speak, not during just rush hour but throughout the day.

From a safety standpoint—I have to put it on the table because it is another reason we have to address this highway bill early—we have more accidents.

There is less time to spend with families as you spend more time in the car. There will be about 23.6 billion hours spent by Americans in delays, it is estimated. Americans waste 5.7 billion gallons of fuel just sitting in traffic in these delays. We can't ask our fellow citizens to join the great American workforce and then simply sit idly by and allow our roads to decay as that daily commute stretches from a few minutes to 30 minutes to 60 minutes—indeed, to hours.

It is a jobs issue. It is a quality of life issue. It is a safety issue.

Last year we addressed similar types of issues. We addressed the issue of spam with legislation, the Do Not Call phone registry. We just hit the issue of spam head on. This year we need to upgrade our transportation system. We are losing billions of dollars in lost productivity and billions of hours stuck in traffic.

It is that image of being stuck in traffic that kind of moves me to a topic that is unfinished business, that we worked hard on but we were unsuccessful with in the last session. It is an issue that affects every single American, every one of my colleagues, every one of my colleagues' families, everybody listening to me, their families—and that is energy. Our Nation simply does not have a comprehensive energy policy that addresses the unfortunate dependence on foreign sources of oil and energy today, a dependence which is increasing. It used to be 30 percent, 40 percent, 50 percent. Now it is up to 60 percent dependence on oil from overseas—an energy plan.

A lot of this reminds me to at least comment on what happened last summer. Fifty million people suffered the

biggest blackout in American history. It came at an instant from New York City to Cleveland to Detroit to Toronto; tens of thousands of citizens were trapped at that instant, trapped in elevators and subways, trapped in trains, and they were stranded on dark city streets. We saw just with a sort of snap of the fingers in that instant the potentially fatal consequences of operating on a grid, upon which we are all so dependent, that is outmoded, that is outdated, that can crash at any time.

The Senate must respond. Our Congress must respond. It is our responsibility to respond, to act—not just talk, not just try, but to respond and pass legislation that addresses in a comprehensive way energy supply and conservation and renewable resources and the uses of more efficient types of energy.

We have to address what people are beginning to feel in the last several weeks, especially with the cold wave and the cold streak that has hit New England in historic proportions, and that is the cost of energy and the cost of oil and natural gas. U.S. chemical companies are closing plants. They are laying off workers. They are looking to expand production abroad. All because of what? The cost of high energy prices. We will import approximately \$9 billion more in chemicals than we exported this year. American consumers are getting hit with higher and higher energy prices.

Small businesses are struggling just to contain these rising energy costs. It is our responsibility, this body, the Senate, to act. We acted in the last Congress. We came two votes short. Now it is incumbent upon us to go back and address that challenge before us.

I should add, not only will the energy plan lower prices, it, too, will have a real impact on jobs and on the economy—on thousands of jobs. It is estimated that the energy package will create about a half a million jobs. The Alaskan pipeline alone will create at least 400,000 jobs.

Hundreds of millions of dollars will be invested in research and development and new technology. All of this will create jobs. Engineering will create jobs in math, chemistry, physics, and science. Reforming the litigation system, upgrading our highways, and passing a comprehensive energy plan will lead to more jobs and higher economic growth.

We also must think beyond our borders in relation to what happens within this country, what happens within other countries, and address the energy issue of trade—specifically trade with Central America and Australia. Free trade is essential to the creation of jobs and to growing the economy.

Two weeks ago, I had the opportunity to spend 2 days in Mexico City where I met with representatives from the senate there. I had the opportunity to look back over the last 10 years of NAFTA. Indeed, under those 10 years of much freer trade with Mexico, the

value of two-way trade between the United States and Mexico tripled. It went up three times—from \$81 billion to over \$230 billion. While I was there, I was talking to my legislative counterparts in the senate. And I was talking to President Fox. It was apparent to me that free trade does much for growth and economic opportunity.

But it also does much more than that. They described to me how elections there have become much freer and much more open at the state level and at the national level. We also need to make sure those trade agreements that we are part of are fair and equitable—that they strengthen the rules of international trade, and we will work hard in this body to achieve that right mix of benefits and obligations.

In addition to these types of structural reforms, we will continue to pursue strong fiscal policy and deficit reduction.

Again, the President mentioned last night the importance of this fiscal responsibility. In about 2 weeks, the President of the United States will deliver a budget to this body. We will work with that budget to accomplish that fiscal discipline. The President last night laid out a plan to cut the deficit in half over the next 5 years.

Now that the economy is beginning to hum once again, thanks to the tax relief package and the jobs and growth package of the President from 2001 and 2003, we must turn our attention to reducing the deficit. The deficit depends in part on revenues and in part on how much we spend. To grow those revenues, we have to focus like a laser, which the President has done and which we in this body have done growing the economy. Now is the time to focus on that spending.

We are also committed to promoting fairness in the Tax Code. Last summer we passed a tax bill to provide additional tax relief for families with children. We created a uniform definition of a child. Instead of five confusing and conflicting categories in terms of defining a child, the Tax Code was simplified to make it easier for folks to fill out the forms and get the tax relief to which they are entitled.

Tax simplification: We will not solve all of it this year, but I pledge this body—working with the appropriate committees—to work along the line for tax simplification. We will continue to pursue reforms that make the Tax Code clearer, more understandable, and less burdensome for America's tax filers. We will address the issue of Internet tax, for example. We will work hard to pass manufacturing tax incentives.

Each of these will reduce the burden that the Government imposes on American workers and on American businesses. They, too, are critical to adding jobs to the economy. Reducing taxes on manufacturing profits especially will increase the competitiveness of American businesses by creating a fairer and a more sound system of taxing income. We will work hard this year to lower

manufacturing taxes and streamline the Tax Code; all of that as we focus on taxes because taxes ultimately is not about dollars but about people—people who go to work every day, who start businesses, who hire new workers, who contribute to their communities, who raise their families, and who expand the economy.

Tax relief and tax reform grow the range of opportunities for people to make the very best choices for themselves and for their families, whether that is to spend their hard-earned dollars on a dishwasher or whether it might be to take the family on a vacation.

For some families, however, the choices are stark. They are not thinking about even a new dishwasher. They are not thinking about a vacation. They struggle just to pay the bills. Often health insurance for their loved ones is a necessity they do without.

The President last night mentioned the importance of addressing the cost of health care today. Forty-four million people are uninsured in this country. It varies between 40 million and 44 million. Whatever the figure is, it is too high. The primary cause is the cost of health insurance. It is one of the most daunting policy challenges facing our Nation.

As a physician, it is clear to me that if somebody does not have health insurance they simply don't get good care or high-quality care. They do not tend to get things that are important in preventing diseases such as preventive services. The uninsured are four times less likely to receive needed medical and health treatment. The uninsured are five times less likely to obtain prescription drugs. The uninsured are four times more likely to enter the health care system through the emergency room.

The lack of affordable health care coverage is also one of the key factors accounting for the health care disparities among minorities—addressing specifically access to quality care.

As we heard last night, the President offered specific proposals. He didn't just say we need to address the problem by saying we are going to take care of everybody no matter what it costs and sort of stick one's head in the sand about the issue or overpromise. The President offered very specific proposals which we in this body should consider.

Refundable tax credits for low- and middle-income Americans are important. It means that people who are on the margin and can't afford health care insurance all of a sudden have a pool of resources to be able to buy that insurance.

He proposed to expand the number of community health centers and to increase access to this new entity of health savings accounts where you, in essence, own your health savings account. You are able to put in money tax free and take it out tax free. You control that health care dollar.

He introduced the concept last night of making the premiums deductible, to encourage and to make it more affordable to have these health savings accounts.

We have to control costs through, as I mentioned earlier, addressing head on the frivolous and unnecessary medical lawsuits.

The President mentioned promoting association health plans—again, a specific proposal. It will be debated on the floor of the Senate.

But the point is the President says we need to reduce the cost of the health insurance policies. He feels very strongly that one of the answers would be lowering the cost by allowing association health plans to enter the market and to compete.

In this body, I have asked Senator JUDD GREGG to lead a Senate Republican task force to explore ways in which this body can respond to the uninsured—this daunting challenge which is before us.

America is a strong nation. America is a compassionate nation. We are committed to protecting the most vulnerable before us. The President last night mentioned immigration policy. The reception to his immigration policy statements from a few weeks ago has been very mixed. We know that. A lot of people are getting phone calls from constituents. But the point is the President says this is a problem, and the reality is we have 8 million people or 9 million people in this country who are in the shadows. We don't know who they are or where they are or what they are doing. Our immigration policy is outdated. It must be addressed.

Indeed, in this body we must address immigration policy. I have asked my chairmen of the appropriate committees to come together and see what the appropriate response is in discussing, pulling together and addressing what the immigration policy might be and to report back.

It was feared that the President's plan was either amnesty or welfare. But the President was very direct last night. This year we will work to find ways to improve the system.

In 2004, we will also work to build on the success of the No Child Left Behind Act and the education bill. We are committed to improving Head Start and making sure that every child in America learns.

We will also address the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act in this session, and to get education out of the courtroom and into the classroom focusing on the individual—to focus on individuals themselves who have disabilities and to make sure they have that opportunity to learn. We will examine how we can expand access to higher education. The President last night mentioned the support for community colleges. If you are a minority or your family is poor, you are less likely to attend college. We must examine how to close this gap so that college is within reach for all children,

regardless of race, regardless of income. We will work hard in this body this year to make sure, from Head Start all the way up through college, every child in America has that opportunity to learn and to achieve.

Our commitment to opportunity also brings me to mention welfare recipients as they work to gain independence and self-reliance. Since the enactment of the historic 1996 welfare law, 5.4 million fewer people live in poverty than when the law was passed. Caseloads have declined by more than half. Families once trapped in the clutches of government dependency are now on those first rungs of the economic ladder.

It is by no means an easy climb, but these hard-working Americans are succeeding for themselves, they are succeeding for their families. Today, 2.8 million fewer children live in poverty. Among African-American children, poverty has dropped to its lowest level ever.

Welfare reform is working. It is working because it is based on the belief that everyone can succeed if given the chance. This year, in this body, we will work to extend the promise of welfare reform which is at its heart the promise of the American dream.

As we move America forward on the domestic front, we must also continue to meet international challenges to the safety and security of the American people. There are many but none more important than the war on terror. The fight against terror will be a long and difficult struggle, unlike any struggle this Nation has known before. Let there be no mistake about it; we are at war, but we will prevail. Already we have made tremendous progress. After years of indifference to the threat of terrorism, the U.S. Government has, under the leadership of President Bush, made enormous strides in taking the fight to the terrorists. In just 2 years, America has toppled two terrorist-sponsoring regimes. In just 2 years, America has liberated millions of people. In just 2 years, America has brought avowed adversaries to the table of peace. Our bold, tough, unwavering leadership has yielded spectacular results. As the President said last night in the State of the Union Message, "No one can doubt the word of America."

Previously recalcitrant rulers are beginning to cooperate in the war on terror. After seeing our troops roll into Baghdad, the Libyan dictator, Muammar Qadhafi, called the Italian Prime Minister and said: I will do whatever the Americans want because I saw what happened in Iraq and I am afraid. Libya will now dismantle its nuclear weapons programs and join the Chemical Weapons Convention.

With the military defeat of the Taliban regime in Afghanistan and Saddam's regime in Iraq, American diplomacy has been further strengthened toward ending the nuclear ambitions of North Korea and Iran. North Korea and

Iran now feel the combined pressure of the international community to abandon their nuclear ambitions. I am confident in time they will.

Finally, change wrought by war has given old adversaries an opportunity to lay aside their grievances and begin the work of peace. India and Pakistan have agreed to peace talks. Syria has established diplomatic relations with Turkey. In each case, the opportunity to pursue a new course of peace between these historic antagonists is a direct result of the United States determination to oppose international terrorists and the regimes that sponsor them.

This is not to say the war against terrorism has been won. We are far from that. Yasser Arafat continues to cling to the tools of terror, frustrating the latest efforts for peace in the Middle East. In Colombia, a courageous new government fights a stubborn terrorist movement. But with clear-eyed determination we can find solutions to these conflicts as well.

Victory in the war against terrorism is inevitable because of the leadership of our President, because of the perseverance of our people and, most of all, because of the courage and sacrifice of our men and women in uniform. Every day they serve the Nation, our service men and women give this Nation their very best. They are not the first, but they are the latest generation to take up and bear arms, to travel from home and loved ones and risk all so we may live in safety, so we may live in peace. They deserve our deep gratitude.

I take one final moment to pay a special thanks to the 101st Airborne which is based in my home State of Tennessee and also in the adjoining State of Kentucky. Under the leadership of MG David Petraeus, a friend, the 101st is doing extraordinary work. You may remember it was the 101st that found and dispatched Uday and Qusay Hussein in Mosul. Since then, the 101st has moved more quickly than any other American unit in training guards and policemen for the new Iraqi civil defense guard.

They have also shown that the Iraqi people have tremendous generosity in their relationships with the United States. They have demonstrated the generosity through their action, through the action of the 101st Airborne, the generosity, the heart displayed by our service men and women in helping Iraq rebuild its infrastructure, rebuild its civic institutions and, even more fundamentally, the pride and hope of the people in Iraq, that pride and hope in the future. Together with the support of the Congress and the American people, the 101st is helping plant the seed of democracy in the heart of the Middle East.

There is yet much to be done, but it must be said that none of these developments was even imaginable 3 years ago. Because of the extraordinary leadership of President Bush and the courage of our men and women in uniform, America is safer. Millions of people

around the world are for the first time free.

Strengthening our homeland security, prosecuting this war on terror, addressing domestic issues such as education and health care and tort reform are just a few of the issues we will address this year. The President's judicial nominees will get the up-or-down vote they deserve. We will not allow a small minority of Senators to thwart our constitutional duty to advise and consent.

Look for action to protect unborn victims of violence, child custody protection, gun liability, bankruptcy, and many other legislative efforts.

We have laid out an ambitious agenda, one worthy of a great nation, one that will require strong, bipartisan work. We will be aggressive. We will fulfill our duty to serve the American people and make our Nation strong.

Some cynics say in a narrowly divided Congress, especially during an election year, that we are doomed to gridlock, that we can accomplish little. I strongly disagree. I believe everyone in this Chamber will do what is right and what is best for the American people and that is to move America forward.

There is much to be done and there is no time to waste. I thank my fellow Senators for their dedication. I look forward to another extraordinary year in the Senate.

I yield the floor.

#### RESERVATION OF LEADER TIME

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Mr. SMITH). Under the previous order, the leadership time is reserved.

#### AGRICULTURE, RURAL DEVELOPMENT, FOOD AND DRUG ADMINISTRATION, AND RELATED AGENCIES APPROPRIATIONS ACT, 2004—CONFERENCE REPORT

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Under the previous order, the Senate will resume consideration of the conference report to accompany H.R. 2673, which the clerk will report.

The assistant legislative clerk read as follows:

A conference report to accompany H.R. 2673, making appropriations for agriculture, rural development, Food and Drug Administration, and related agencies for the fiscal year ending September 30th, 2004, and for other purposes.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Under the previous order, the time until 6 p.m. will be equally divided between the chairman and ranking member of the appropriations committee or their designees for debate only.

The Senator from North Dakota.

Mr. DORGAN. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent to consume as much time as I will.

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

Mr. DORGAN. Mr. President, I listened to my colleague, Senator FRIST,

who is the majority leader. I have great respect for him. His call for bipartisanship is certainly welcome. I say to him and to others that those of us who serve in the Senate come here wanting to do good things for our country. We have a passion for good public policy that will advance America's interests.

But I must say, in the past year or so the evidence of bipartisanship is hard to find with respect to the way the White House and the majority in this Senate have dealt with the minority. We would welcome true bipartisanship.

I must also point out, while I think there are areas where we have made progress in this country, there are some very significant issues with which we must deal.

We have the largest budget deficit in history, and, no, it is not because of a war, it is not because of a recession. We had testimony at a hearing yesterday that said the largest part of this deficit is as a result of recurring tax cuts, very large tax cuts, the bulk of which went to the largest income earners in this country. If you earn \$1 million a year, good for you; you are very fortunate. You, also, under this administration's tax plan, get nearly \$100,000 in a tax cut each year as well.

We have a very large and growing Federal budget deficit, the largest in history. The President proposes increased defense spending, increased homeland security spending, and then decreased revenue. I went to a really small school, but mathematics is still the same. One and one equals two. That fiscal policy equals very large budget deficits.

We have a responsibility—all of us, Republicans and Democrats—to our children to put this fiscal policy back on track. This President inherited a large and growing budget surplus. We now have the largest budget deficit in history, and we must fix it.

We have the largest trade deficit in history, and we have to fix that. This administration is negotiating new trade agreements that, incidentally, will once again ship more American jobs overseas. It makes no sense to me for us to do that. We do have a global economy, but we ought not set American workers and American businesses up for competition against those around the world who will work 12-year-olds 12 hours a day for 12 cents an hour and then ship their products to the store shelves in America. That is not fair competition for American workers and American business. That is only about larger profits for multinationals. We need a better trade policy and to reduce those trade deficits as well.

We have many problems, significant problems, we have to address. I welcome bipartisanship. I hope Republicans and Democrats, who seek the same goal, who have the same interests and urges to improve this country, can work together.