

helps people here in the District, it helps people across this country, Haiti, India, Russia, and that is why it is so important; that is why we are pulling together the great science we have today. Once we get rid of the virus, it goes away across the world.

I did not intend to talk about this little virus except that it is so devastating.

Madam President, I suggest the absence of a quorum.

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. The clerk will call the roll.

The assistant legislative clerk proceeded to call the roll.

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 Madam President, I ask unanimous consent that the order for the quorum call be rescinded.

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

RESERVATION OF LEADER TIME

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. Under the previous order, the leadership time is reserved.

MORNING BUSINESS

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. Under the previous order, there will be a period for the transaction of morning business, for statements only, with Senators permitted to speak for up to 10 minutes each.

RECOGNITION OF THE MINORITY LEADER

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. The Democratic leader is recognized.

Mr. DASCHLE. I thank the Presiding Officer.

MIDDLE-CLASS SQUEEZE

Mr. DASCHLE. Madam President, over the course of the last several weeks, many of us have come to the floor to talk about the question raised by our former President, Ronald Reagan, back in the 1980 Presidential campaign. His question at that time, which we are told was paraphrased from a question posed by Franklin Roosevelt in 1934, was: "Are you better off than you were four years ago?"

Unfortunately, in 2004, the answer to that question is all too clear for most middle-class Americans. Four years ago, our economy was booming. The stock market had reached record heights. Twenty-two million jobs had been created in 8 years. We built a record Federal surplus. And millions of American families enjoyed newfound prosperity and felt the optimism of even better times ahead.

Four years later, we have lost nearly 2 million private sector jobs, the stock market has dropped, record surpluses have turned to record deficits, and middle-class families are truly being squeezed.

This chart tells the story. Since President Bush came to office, wages have been stagnant. Average weekly earnings have not increased in the last 4 years, but the costs facing Americans have skyrocketed. Gas prices have increased 23 percent; college tuition has gone up 28 percent; and family health care premiums, as we can see from the chart, have actually increased 36 percent.

All that has come out of average weekly earnings, which have been stagnant.

This is not what was predicted. This certainly is not what the White House said would happen under its economic policies.

In his annual economic report released in February, the President predicted the economy would create 3.8 million jobs in 2004.

As of today, we are still 2.5 million jobs short of that goal. Even more troubling, the jobs being created today pay less than the jobs we have lost. And even Americans who have been fortunate enough to keep their jobs have failed to see the pay raises they need and they deserve.

Just this morning we received confirmation from the Department of Labor that working Americans are still being squeezed by this economy. In fact, the new numbers indicate the squeeze is actually getting worse. According to the Labor Department, real earnings in June fell \$2.16, the second largest monthly drop in 14 years.

The Labor Department report also reveals what has happened over the past year. As this chart shows, the real earnings of our working people over this last year have actually decreased by 1.4 percent. They have less purchasing power today than they did in June 2003. But a typical commodity, a grocery that most families buy every week, milk, has gone up 30 percent. All this money is coming out of weekly earnings.

As people across the country know, gas prices have also risen dramatically. There was an article on the front page of the Wall Street Journal about this development. It concluded that at current prices, the average driver will pay nearly \$300 more for gasoline this year than last year. And the story only gets worse when it comes to prescription drugs.

According to a recent report by the AARP, drug companies raised their prices for the top 200 brand-name drugs at nearly three times the rate of inflation in the first 3 months of 2004. Some of my colleagues on the other side of the aisle think these increases are less important to American families than the rise of gross domestic product, GDP. But Americans don't live on GDP, they live on earnings. That is what they use to pay for milk, gas, medicine, health insurance, and tuition. They live on earnings, and those earnings clearly are not keeping up with the costs they are facing today.

Remarkably, the administration's response to this problem has been to fur-

ther undermine wages by limiting overtime rights. This week, an independent study showed that the White House's new overtime regulation, which goes into effect next month, will strip 6 million workers of their right to overtime. That is unacceptable. Democrats continue to fight at every opportunity to reverse the administration's misguided policy. Middle-class Americans are being squeezed, and the last thing they need is for their Government to make it worse.

What Congress should do is raise the minimum wage. It has been 8 years since we last voted to raise it. In that time it has become nearly impossible for minimum wage workers to make ends meet, especially when they are trying to raise a family. In my home State of South Dakota, a worker earning the minimum wage has to work 82 hours a week to afford rent for a two-bedroom apartment. And that is without taking into account other family costs, such as clothing, groceries, and health care.

Of course, not everyone in America is feeling the pinch. As this chart shows, while workers continue to struggle, our big corporations are thriving. In just the past year, corporate profits have risen 30 percent. The White House likes to talk about how we are now in an economic recovery. That is true for corporate America. But American workers are being left behind. As the New York Times recently reported, take-home pay, as a share of the economy, is at its lowest level since the Government started keeping track in 1929.

Economic policies that lead to these kinds of results don't do right by middle-class families, and they don't do right by America.

The good news is, we can do right by America. We proved during the Clinton administration that we can create millions of jobs, raise wages, and increase the quality of life for families all through the country. We did right by America then, and we can do it again.

With the help of the American people, and with some resolve by this body, we will do it again.

I yield the floor and suggest the absence of a quorum.

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. The clerk will call the roll.

The legislative clerk proceeded to call the roll.

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

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

LEAK INVESTIGATION

Mr. HARKIN. Madam President, I have taken the last several days on a daily basis to come to the Senate floor to talk about the treacherous and damaging leak of the identity of a covert CIA operative by the name of Valerie Plame, leaked to a columnist by the

name of Robert Novak, reportedly by high-ranking White House officials. I spoke a number of times last year when the events occurred. I spoke about it before a special prosecutor was assigned to investigate. After that special prosecutor was assigned, I did not say much more because I believed things would take their course, the special prosecutor would do his job, and we would get to the bottom of this.

July 14 marked 1 year, and this being July 16, it is now 1 year and 2 days since we first learned of the exposing or the outing of Valerie Plame as a covert CIA operative.

That was the date 1 year ago when this columnist, Robert Novak, publicly exposed Ms. Plame. This was done in an act of political retribution because her husband, former Ambassador Joseph Wilson, published a column in the *New York Times* that questioned one of the key administration justifications for the war in Iraq; namely, that Iraq sought to buy yellow cake uranium ore from Niger.

Sadly, Republicans are still at it. They are fixated on Mr. Wilson. They are intent upon destroying his credibility. In columns and editorials and floor statements, the smear campaign continues. Their reason is they want to deflect and distract from the fact someone in the White House—high ranking—appears to have committed a crime, a treacherous crime.

I am not here to defend or criticize Joe Wilson. I have tried to follow the debate over his findings and statements and all that. Obviously, we are all concerned about finding out the facts about whether Saddam Hussein's government did try to obtain yellow cake uranium ore from Africa, the country of Niger, in the 1990s. That is a question of importance. But none of that has anything to do with the way we judge an illegal White House action that was used to undermine and endanger human intelligence resources, and was done only to disparage Mr. Wilson.

Here is the statute, and it is clear, 50 U.S.C., section 421. It says:

Any person who has access to classified information that identifies a covert agent and intentionally discloses that information to an unauthorized person, knowing that the Government is seeking to keep the agent's identity concealed, shall be fined under Title 18 or imprisoned not more than 10 years, or both.

Robert Novak said it in his column. He said it was high-ranking White House officials who gave him the information. We know that one or two high-ranking White House officials called, I think, up to six reporters to give them that information. Interestingly enough, it was only Mr. Novak who published this in a column.

Mr. Novak has been around this town a long time. He also had to know this was a violation of law to come out with the name of a covert CIA agent. Yet Mr. Novak put that name in his column. Shame on Mr. Novak. I am not certain that it is totally unclear as to

whether he could also be prosecuted under the same provisions of law, 50 U.S.C., section 421. He also identified a covert agent.

Now, under the law, there is no exception for cases where a spouse of the agent has questioned administration policy. It doesn't say in the law that a person could be fined under title 18 or imprisoned for not more than 10 years, or both, unless the spouse of the agent questioned the administration policy. It doesn't say that in the law.

I understand the ongoing investigation by prosecutor Fitzgerald has been somewhat thorough. However, I have repeatedly criticized the President and Vice President for refusing to settle the matter quickly, which they could have done a year ago. Again, I am calling for the special prosecutor to put the President and the Vice President under oath—put them under oath and film it.

This is what they did to President Clinton. The special prosecutor put him under oath and filmed it. We sat here in the Senate and watched it. That had to do with actually something, I guess, that wasn't even a crime. It may have been immoral, but it wasn't a crime—certain indiscretions committed by the President in the White House.

What are we talking about here? We are talking about the exposure of the identity of a covert CIA agent, destroying her credibility, putting at risk all of her contacts and people she had worked with around the world. And, as we have learned from other retired CIA agents, this also puts a cloud over all other covert CIA operatives who may think that sometime in the future they too could be outed. What about all of their contacts who may think that, well, gee, I know someone who was giving information to Ms. Plame. Now, they may know that person was giving information, and I may have another contact. Well, I guess I better not get involved in that because they may out my source or my contact, also.

I cannot emphasize enough the seriousness of this crime. Yet the President treated it rather cavalierly when he was asked about it. He said: You know, there are leaks all over the White House. It is a big administration. We may never find out who did it. And he smiled, as if this was not a big deal. It is a very big deal. Someone in the White House—to this Senator's thinking—committed treason. The number of people in the White House with access to this kind of information can be counted on one hand—OK, maybe two hands. Maybe there are 10 people. But what the President should have done was call them into his office, have them sign a piece of paper that they did not do this, put them under oath.

The President could have solved this in 24 hours. Yet he sort of dismissed it out of hand, as though it was not a big deal.

Well, that is why I think the President and the Vice President must be

put under oath and asked about this. Perhaps they do know. Perhaps the President does know who leaked this information and is just covering it up. Perhaps the Vice President also knows and he is just covering it up.

You have to look at what happened and how this whole thing progressed, and why the administration obviously is trying to deflect this onto Mr. Wilson and others, because the chronology of events shows that the administration clearly knew these claims were not real. So you have to look at the chronology.

Let me summarize it and then I will go through it. Even after CIA Director Tenet told the White House not to use this information in a speech, and even after the State Department later came out and said that some of these documents were forgeries, even after the same individual who had talked to Director Tenet in October and had taken the words out of the speech—that same individual put those words back in the President's State of the Union Message 3 months later. Curious, very curious.

By the fall of 2002—let me put it more succinctly. In October of 2002, the White House sought to include the claim that Iraq had tried to buy uranium from Africa in a policy speech by the President in Cincinnati.

What did the CIA do? Here is the chronology. In February 2002, Joseph Wilson travels to Niger to find out whether Iraq had attempted to buy uranium ore. On October 5, 2002, after the President indicated he was going to give a speech in Cincinnati and these claims were in the speech, the CIA sends a memo to the National Security Council concerned about these uranium claims in the Cincinnati speech. That is October 5.

They must have clearly felt they were not being taken seriously, because the following day a second memo was sent that urged that the information be deleted because the evidence was weak and the CIA had told Congress that "the Africa story was overblown, and this is one of the two issues where we differed with the British."

They must have been still pretty seriously concerned because CIA Director Tenet personally calls Deputy National Security Adviser Stephen Hadley. He personally called him.

Get this, they send a memo on the 5th, they send a memo on the 6th, and the Director himself calls on the 6th. So obviously they were very concerned about it. Guess what. Mr. Stephen Hadley—keep that name in mind—Deputy National Security Adviser Stephen Hadley takes the claims out of the speech the President gives in Cincinnati.

Then on October 16, the State Department gets copies of uranium purchase documents and forwards them to the CIA. I am told this came from the Italians. I don't know if that is right or not, but that is what I was told. This is what they claim were forgeries. This is what our State Department analyst

tells the CIA later on, that the documents are likely forgeries.

On January 13, 2 weeks before the State of the Union, a State Department analyst sent an e-mail to the CIA about the documents, outlining his reasons why the uranium purchase agreement is probably a hoax. This is a State Department analyst who sends an e-mail to the CIA saying these are probably a hoax, forgeries.

So between the Cincinnati speech in October and the State of the Union speech in January, there is even more reason to doubt the credibility of these uranium purchase claims. Nonetheless, these mysterious 16 words—"The British Government has learned that Saddam Hussein recently sought significant quantities of uranium from Africa"—were left in the State of the Union speech.

Here is where we come full circle. Who is the individual responsible for vetting national security issues before the State of the Union speech? Mr. Stephen Hadley oversees the State of the Union speech. Mr. Hadley was vetting national security concerns.

Let's loop back. It was Mr. Hadley who talked to Director Tenet in October and who got these memos saying these claims were not real. Stephen Hadley in October took them out of the Cincinnati speech. Mr. Hadley in January leaves them in the State of the Union speech. It is the same individual. He could not have forgotten this. He had to have known this.

Why, I ask, was this left in the State of the Union Message? Was it left in to help the President make his case for an invasion of Iraq? After being told it was dubious by the CIA Director himself, after the State Department said these were probably forgeries, the issue is, Why the White House still has not been held accountable for breaking the law and betraying the intelligence community by exposing Valerie Plame, all done in an attempt to discredit her husband Joseph Wilson and his criticism of the uranium claim.

The President says he did not know anything about it. Ken Lay of Enron last week claimed he did not know anything about what was going on in his company, either. He is the CEO, and what is his defense? "I didn't know it was going on." Either the CEO of a corporation knows what is going on and he is not being truthful or he did not know anything about it. Either way, it is inexcusable. If the President of the United States says he did not know anything about it, that is inexcusable. If the President did know about it and left that claim in his State of the Union Message, that is inexcusable. Either way, the buck stops on President Bush's desk. It is time to quit passing the buck. It is time for the American people to learn who committed these crimes and to have these people prosecuted.

What is going to happen in the future if this is swept under the rug? Does that mean some other administration,

the next one, whatever it may be, Democratic or Republican, that a President or his people under him in the White House can break the law and not be held accountable?

Again, I take you back several years to when President Clinton was put under oath and filmed. We watched it right here on the Senate floor during the impeachment proceedings. Regardless of how one may have felt about that, it sent a very powerful message to the American people: No President is above the law; no President is above the law, neither Mr. Clinton nor Mr. Bush.

So I ask, Why hasn't President Bush, why hasn't Vice President CHENEY been put under oath and asked these questions under oath? Again we will let the American people know that no President is above the law and no one who works for a President is above the law.

This is serious business. I see that in a column by Mr. Novak of July 15—Mr. Novak's whole column is about Joe Wilson—he said:

It's as though the Niger question and Joe Wilson have vanished from the Earth.

No, they have not, Mr. Novak; no, they have not. But Mr. Novak is all on whether Mr. Wilson was telling the truth, whether he was misinterpreted, whether his wife recommended that he be sent to Niger. Nowhere is it claimed Ms. Plame was in a position of authority to actually send him to Niger, but Mr. Novak goes on about how a State Department analyst told the committee about an interagency meeting in 2002 by Wilson's wife who had recommended that he go there because he had contacts there.

What does all this mean? It means what Mr. Novak is trying to do is to take the focus off of a clear violation of the law by individuals in the White House in exposing a covert agent's identity; take it off that and focus it on all this stuff about whether she recommended her husband, or whether her husband gave an honest analysis. I am sorry, Mr. Novak, that is not the issue. The issue is, someone in the White House broke the law, clearly, unequivocally. The point is, the President of the United States has expressed not one iota of outrage. The point is, the President and the Vice President, neither one, have sought to get to the bottom of this. Neither the President nor the Vice President have been put under oath to be questioned about this.

The point is, Mr. Novak, a year and 2 days have passed, and this lawbreaking activity in the White House has not been dealt with. No one is saying Ms. Plame broke any law, violated any ethics. No one is claiming Mr. Wilson broke any law or violated any ethics. You can say they may have made a mistake, he may have been wrong, he may have been wrong in his analysis—fine. I am not saying he was right or wrong. I don't know. What I do know is, two individuals in the White House broke the law—to my way of thinking, basically committed treason—and no

one is getting to the bottom of it. And Mr. Novak continues to try to deflect the attention from that, to try to talk about whether Mr. Wilson was right in his analysis.

That is not the point. You can debate that issue if you want. What is not debatable is that someone in the White House broke the law, and they should be held accountable.

As I took the floor yesterday and the day before and the day before, I take the floor today, and I will every day that we are in session, to ask that simple question: Why isn't the President coming clean? Why isn't he getting to the bottom of this? Why, 1 year and 2 days later, has nothing happened in the White House to find the identity of these lawbreakers? The sooner we get to the bottom of it, the sooner we can allow the criminal justice system to do its job.

I call upon the President and the Vice President to get to the bottom of this. I call upon the special prosecutor to put them under oath and to ask them these questions. That may be the only way we get to the bottom of it.

I yield the floor and suggest the absence of a quorum.

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. The clerk will call the roll.

The legislative clerk proceeded to call the roll.

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

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

OBESITY IN AMERICA

Mr. FRIST. Mr. President, in a few minutes we will be closing out for the weekend. I will briefly comment on a couple of current issues before addressing some of the business before the Senate.

The first issue is a brief comment on President Bush's decision or his administration's decision yesterday to have the Federal Medicare Program recognize obesity as a disease.

Earlier today, we were talking about public health issues, and I mentioned in some African countries, because of an HIV/AIDS virus, the total length of life will be 33 years of age. In Botswana, if you were born in 1970, you would live 17 years longer than if you are born today because of that little virus. I mentioned that. That has gotten worse over the last 30 years, which we probably did not know anything about in this country until about 20 years ago. And it is getting much worse.

Another problem, very similar to that, is one that is apparent to anybody who has kids today and picks them up from school. If you just watch, you see the kids are much heavier than 20 years ago, 30 years ago. And that has lifelong consequences. It comes down to obesity.

There are many reasons for obesity, and I am not going to address all the