

know we get plenty of television in politics. But most of it is 30-second incendiary, negative ads talking about who is the worst rather than who is the best. Very few of them have any ideas or talk about issues.

The question is, as Commissioner Copps points out in his editorial published in the New York Times, are the networks serving this country's interests by deciding they shall air only 3 hours every 4 years of a major political convention?

In 1976, the three major television networks provided more than 50 hours of television convention coverage. In 1996, 20 years later, that had dropped to 12 hours. This year it dropped to 6 hours.

The New York Daily News said that before cable and satellite, ABC, CBS, and NBC turned over their prime time to the conventions as a matter of civic duty.

It is interesting to me that these conventions are staged so tightly. One of the reasons they are created as tightly as they are with respect to agenda is to fit into the very short time period the networks now offer for the coverage of the conventions.

Mr. President, the issue of broadcast ownership and the concentration of broadcast ownership remains at the FCC. The question is, what will they do with these rules and how will the rules affect what people see and hear in the future? How does concentration of economic ownership in broadcast properties affect what we saw this year, the coverage of only 3 hours of the Republican and Democratic Conventions? I have described significant speakers the American people did not have an opportunity to see or hear. Someone made a decision it wasn't worth it. This is what Senator LOTT and I and others have been concerned about for a long while—about the concentration of ownership in broadcast properties.

Again, I am not against big in every circumstance. I don't think big is always bad or small is always beautiful. But in broadcast properties—radio, television, and newspapers—I think broad-based economic ownership best serves this democracy. I think when we see more and more concentration, where you have fewer and fewer people—in some cases a handful—deciding what the American people will see, hear, and read, frankly, I think that is unhealthy. One sign of that is what they decided to air at a time when they decided the two political conventions by the national Republican party and the national Democratic party were unworthy. I think it goes without saying that they have shortchanged the American people.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Under the previous order, the Senator from California is recognized for 10 minutes.

Mrs. BOXER. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that upon completion of my remarks Senator HARKIN be recognized for up to 20 minutes.

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

ISSUES BEFORE THE SENATE

Mrs. BOXER. Mr. President, it has been quite a while since the Senate has been in session. I spent the entire time traveling up and down my State learning a lot from my people, as I always do. I am coming back here ready to work for as long as it takes to protect the American people, to do what we can about the health care crisis, Medicare, and the rest. How much we get done is going to be up to us. Of course, the leadership around here has to go to the bills that will make us safe, help our seniors, take up the issue of health care, and will get the deficits under control. That is their job. We will see what happens.

I hope we go to Homeland Security appropriations because there is a lot of work we need to do on that bill to make sure it truly does protect the American people.

BEST WISHES TO FORMER PRESIDENT CLINTON

Mrs. BOXER. Mr. President, I want to use this opportunity to send my best wishes to President Clinton as he recovers from very serious surgery, which, thank the Lord, appears to be successful. I know the first few days are the toughest. We have had a number of calls into our office from my constituents. I wanted to say that if they want to send a message to President Clinton, they should, if they have access to a computer, go to the following site: www.clintonpresidentialcenter.org.

Then they can go to the right side of the page and there is a link where they can send personal best wishes to President Clinton.

As usual, President Clinton is going to teach the country something about heart disease. I thought I would take a moment to say this is something I have been working on for years, since 1997. I introduced the Women's Cardiovascular Disease Research and Prevention Act. I was proud to do it with Congresswoman Maxine Waters. Together, we wrote this bill and it was to expand and coordinate the efforts of fighting heart attack, stroke, and other cardiovascular diseases in women.

A lot of women don't think cardiovascular disease—heart attack and stroke—is a threat to them. Yet, if you look at the numbers, nearly 500,000 women die of cardiovascular disease each year. The number is far less for breast cancer. Of course, we live in fear of breast cancer, which kills far fewer. But cardiovascular disease in women is the biggest killer. More than 20 percent of Americans have some kind of cardiovascular disease, with over half being women.

So President Clinton, I know, is going to do very well. He has taught us so many things about issues and I know he will teach us a lot about how to prevent heart disease and how to make sure, if you have a family his-

tory, you take the right exams so that you find out early if you have it. I am proud my bill became law in 1998 as part of a larger bill on women's health.

AMERICAN DEATHS IN IRAQ

Mrs. BOXER. Mr. President, according to CNN this morning, there have been 999 total U.S. deaths in Iraq. We are one away from 1,000 deaths. When the President stood on the carrier with the "mission accomplished" sign behind him, 138 of our soldiers had died. That was May 1, 2003. Since the President declared mission accomplished—and he did it, as many of us said on both sides of the aisle, without a plan for the aftermath of the war, which was brilliantly executed—we have lost 861 more soldiers.

When I was home, I met with veterans from this war and the one in Afghanistan. Mr. President, 6,916 Americans have been injured in Iraq. According to a report in the L.A. Times, 57 percent have been injured so severely that they are unable to return to duty. I asked what the suicide rate was in Iraq. I learned from the military that the suicide rate is very high—64 percent higher than the suicide rate in our country, and it is 34 percent higher than in any other war theater. So we better be ready for the veterans who are coming back from that war, with 6,916 wounded.

The Washington Post got hold of the veterans budget of this administration, and what did they learn? They learned that the Bush draft budget for 2006 includes an overall VA cut of \$910 million. If we love our soldiers—and I believe we all do—how could we possibly cut the VA budget at a time when we are getting close to, at this point, 7,000 injured vets coming home?

The total of California's deaths is 254. I have paid tribute to each and every one of those who died from California—those who were either born in California, lived in California, or went to Iraq or Afghanistan from a California base. Today, I want to pay tribute to 48 more casualties that happened between the time we left 6 weeks ago and now.

This relates to those killed in Iraq, not Afghanistan, since July 5. All of them are from California or based in California. So I will go through these names.

LCpl John Vangyzen, age 21. Lance Corporal Vangyzen died on July 5 as a result of enemy action in Al Anbar Province. He was assigned to the 3rd Battalion, 7th Marine Regiment, 1st Marine Division, at Twentynine Palms, CA.

LCpl Michael S. Torres, age 21, died July 5 as a result of enemy action in Al Anbar Province, 3rd Battalion, 7th Marine Regiment, 1st Marine Division, Twentynine Palms, CA.

Cpl Dallas L. Kerns died on July 5 as a result of enemy action in Al Anbar Province. He was assigned to 3rd Battalion, 7th Marine Regiment, 1st Marine Division, at Twentynine Palms, CA.

LCpl Justin T. Hunt died July 6 as a result of enemy action in Al Anbar

Province. He was assigned to 2nd Light Armored Reconnaissance Battalion, 2nd Marine Division, II Marine Expeditionary Force at Camp Lejeune, NC. He was from Riverside, CA.

SPC William R. Emanuel, IV, age 19, was from Stockton, CA. He died July 8 in Baghdad. He was in the Iraqi National Guard Headquarters when it came under a mortar attack. He was assigned to 1st Battalion, 26th Infantry Regiment, 1st Infantry Division, Schweinfurt, Germany.

Cpl Terry Holmes, age 22, died July 10 due to a noncombat-related vehicle accident in Al Anbar Province. He was assigned to 3rd Battalion, 1st Marine Regiment, 1st Marine Division, Camp Pendleton, CA.

Sgt Krisna Nachampassak, age 27, died July 10 due to a noncombat-related vehicle accident in Al Anbar Province. He was assigned to 3rd Battalion, 1st Marine Regiment, 1st Marine Division, Camp Pendleton, CA.

PFC Christopher Reed, age 20, died July 10 due to a noncombat-related vehicle accident in Al Anbar Province. He was assigned to 3rd Battalion, 1st Marine Regiment, 1st Marine Division, Camp Pendleton, CA.

SSgt Trevor Spink, age 36, died July 10 due to a noncombat-related vehicle accident in Al Anbar Province. He was assigned to 3rd Battalion, 1st Marine Regiment, 1st Marine Division, Camp Pendleton, CA.

PFC Jesse J. Martinez, age 20, died in Talafar, Iraq, when his vehicle rolled over as the driver tried to avoid another vehicle. He was assigned to the Army's 5th Battalion, 20th Infantry Regiment, 3rd Brigade, 2nd Infantry Division, Fort Lewis, WA. He was from Tracy, CA.

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

Mrs. BOXER. Mr. President, I did not have any time limit on my unanimous consent request.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The request was for 10 minutes for each of the three people.

Mrs. BOXER. I ask unanimous consent for enough time until I conclude these names and another 10 minutes to talk about other issues. It should be another 10 to 15 minutes.

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

Mrs. BOXER. If the Presiding Officer could tell me when I have used 10 minutes.

I wish I did not have to take so much time, Mr. President. These are 48 of our best and brightest over there.

LCpl Bryan P. Kelly, age 21, died July 16 due to injuries received from enemy action in Al Anbar Province. He was assigned to 1st Combat Engineer Battalion, 1st Marine Division, Camp Pendleton, CA.

SSgt Michael J. Clark, age 29, died July 20 due to combat action in Al Anbar Province. He was assigned to Combat Service Support Battalion 1, Group 11, 1st Force Service Support Group, Camp Pendleton, CA.

LCpl Mark E. Engel, age 21, died July 21 at Brook Army Medical Center, Fort Sam Houston, TX, of multiple wounds he received as a result of enemy action in Al Anbar Province. He was assigned to 2nd Light Armored Reconnaissance Battalion, 2nd Marine Division, Camp Lejeune, NC. He was from Grand Junction, CA.

LTC David S. Green, age 39, died July 28 due to enemy action in Al Anbar Province. He was a reservist assigned to Marine Light Attack Helicopter Squadron 775, Marine Aircraft Group 16, 3D Marine Air Wing, Marine Corps Air Station, Miramar, CA.

GySgt Shawn A. Lane, age 33, died July 28 due to enemy action in Al Anbar Province. He was assigned to Headquarters Battalion, 1st Marine Division, Camp Pendleton, CA.

SPC Armando Hernandez, age 22, died in Samarra, Iraq, when an improvised explosive device exploded near his guard post. He was assigned to the Army's 1st Squadron, 4th Cavalry, 1st Infantry Division, Schweinfurt, Germany. He was from Hesperia, CA.

Sgt Juan Calderon, Jr., age 26, died August 2 due to enemy action in Al Anbar Province. He was assigned to 3rd Battalion, 1st Marine Regiment, 1st Marine Division, Camp Pendleton, CA.

Cpl Dean P. Pratt, age 22, died August 2 due to enemy action in Al Anbar Province. He was assigned to 2nd Battalion, 1st Marine Regiment, 1st Marine Division, Camp Pendleton, CA.

CPT Gregory A. Ratzlaff, age 36, died August 3 due to a noncombat-related incident at Forward Operating Base Duke, Iraq. He was assigned to Marine Medium Helicopter Squadron 166, Marine Aircraft Group 16, 3rd Marine Aircraft Wing, Marine Corps Air Station Miramar, San Diego, CA.

GySgt Elia P. Fontecchia, age 30, died August 4 from injuries received from enemy action in Al Anbar Province. He was assigned to 3rd Battalion, 7th Marines, 1st Marine Division, Marine Corps Air Ground Combat Center, Twentynine Palms, CA.

LCpl Joseph L. Nice, age 19, died August 4 due to enemy action in Al Anbar Province. He was assigned to 3rd Battalion, 7th Marines, 1st Marine Division, Marine Corps Air Ground Combat Center, Twentynine Palms, CA.

Sgt Moses D. Rocha, age 33, died August 5 due to injuries received from enemy action in An Najaf, Iraq. He was assigned to Battalion Landing Team 1/4, 11th Marine Expeditionary Unit, Camp Pendleton, CA.

Sgt Yadir G. Reynoso, age 27, died August 5 due to enemy action in An Najaf Province. He was assigned to Battalion Landing Team 1/4, 11th Marine Expeditionary Unit, Camp Pendleton, CA.

LCpl Larry L. Wells, age 22, died August 6 due to enemy action in An Najaf, Iraq. He was assigned to Battalion Landing Team 1/4, 11th Marine Expeditionary Unit, Camp Pendleton, CA.

Cpl Roberto Abad, age 22, died August 6 after being struck by an explod-

ing mortar during enemy action in Najaf. He was assigned to Battalion Landing Team 1/4, 11th Marine Expeditionary Unit, Camp Pendleton, Ca. He was from Los Angeles, CA.

LCpl Jonathan W. Collins, age 19, died August 8 due to enemy action in Al Anbar Province. He was assigned to 2nd Battalion, 4th Marine Regiment, 1st Marine Division, Camp Pendleton, CA.

LCpl Tavon L. Hubbard, age 24, died August 11 in a helicopter crash in Al Anbar Province. He was assigned to the Command Element, 11th Marine Expeditionary Unit, Camp Pendleton, CA.

SSgt John R. Howard, age 26, died August 11 in a helicopter crash in Al Anbar Province. He was assigned to Marine Medium Helicopter Squadron 166 (Reinforced), 11th Marine Expeditionary Unit, Marine Corps Air Station, Miramar, CA. He was from San Diego, CA.

LCpl Kane M. Funke, age 20, died August 13 as a result of enemy action in Al Anbar Province. He was assigned to 2nd Battalion, 7th Marines, 1st Marine Division, Marine Corps Air Ground Combat Center, Twentynine Palms, CA.

PFC Fernando B. Hannon, age 19, was killed August 15 while conducting combat operations in Al Anbar Province. He was assigned to 3rd Battalion, 1st Marine Regiment, 1st Marine Division, Camp Pendleton, Ca. He was from Riverside, CA.

PFC Geoffrey Perez, age 24, was killed on August 15 from an explosion while conducting combat operations in Al Anbar Province. He was assigned to 3rd Battalion, 1st Marine Regiment, 1st Marine Division, Camp Pendleton, CA. He was from Los Angeles, CA.

LCpl Caleb J. Powers, age 21, died August 17 due to enemy action in Al Anbar Province. He was assigned to 2nd Battalion, 4th Marine Regiment, 1st Marine Division, Camp Pendleton, CA.

Sgt Harvey E. Parkerson, III, age 27, died after sustaining a fatal gunshot wound to the head while conducting combat operations in Najaf Province. He was assigned to Battalion Landing Team 1/4, 11th Marine Expeditionary Unit (Special Operations Capable), Camp Pendleton, CA. He was from Yuba City, CA.

PFC Nachez Washalanta, age 21, died August 21 from injuries received due to enemy action in Al Anbar Province. He was assigned to 1st Light Armored Reconnaissance Battalion, 1st Marine Division, Camp Pendleton, CA.

LCpl Seth Huston, age 19, died August 21 due to enemy action in Al Anbar Province. He was assigned to 2nd Battalion, 1st Marine Regiment, 1st Marine Division, Camp Pendleton, CA.

Sgt Jason Cook, age 25, died August 21 from injuries received due to enemy action in Al Anbar Province. He was assigned to 1st Light Armored Reconnaissance Battalion, 1st Marine Division, Camp Pendleton, CA.

Cpl Nicanor Alvarez, age 22, died August 21 from injuries received due to

enemy action in Al Anbar Province. He was assigned to 1st Combat Engineer Battalion, 1st Marine Division, Camp Pendleton, CA. He was from San Bernardino, CA.

GySgt Edward T. Reeder, age 32, died August 21 in a noncombat-related vehicle incident in Al Anbar Province. He was assigned to Headquarters and Service Battalion, 1st Force Service Support Group, Camp Pendleton, CA.

LCpl Jacob R. Lugo, age 21, died August 24 as a result of enemy action in Al Anbar Province. He was assigned to 3rd Battalion, 7th Marine Regiment, 1st Marine Division, Marine Corps Air Ground Combat Center, Twentynine Palms, CA.

LCpl Alexander S. Arrendondo, age 20, died August 25 as a result of enemy action in An Najaf. He was assigned to Battalion Landing Team 1/4, 11th Marine Expeditionary Unit (Special Operations Capable), Camp Pendleton, CA.

PFC Nicholas M. Skinner, age 20, died August 26 from injuries received due to enemy action in An Najaf, Iraq. He was assigned to Battalion Landing Team 1/4, 11th Marine Expeditionary Unit (Special Operations Capable), Camp Pendleton, CA.

SPC Omead H. Razani, age 19, died August 27 in Habbaniyah, Iraq, of noncombat-related injuries. He was assigned to the 1st Battalion, 506th Infantry Regiment, 2nd Brigade, 2nd Infantry Division, Camp Greaves, Korea. He was from Los Angeles, CA.

LCpl Nickalous Aldrich, age 21, died August 27 from a nonhostile vehicle accident in Al Anbar Province. He was assigned to 2nd Battalion, 4th Marine Regiment, 1st Marine Regiment, Camp Pendleton, CA.

Sgt Edgar Lopez, age 27, died August 28 due to enemy action in Babil Province, Iraq. He was assigned to 1st Battalion, 2nd Marine Regiment, 24th Marine Expeditionary Unit, Camp Lejeune, NC. He was from Los Angeles, CA.

CPT Alan Rowe, age 35, died September 3 due to enemy action in Al Anbar Province. He was assigned to 1st Battalion, 7th Marine Regiment, 1st Marine Division, Marine Corps Air Ground Combat Center, Twentynine Palms, CA.

LCpl Nicholas Perez, age 19, died September 3 due to enemy action in Al Anbar Province. He was assigned to 3rd Battalion, 7th Marine Regiment, 1st Marine Division, Marine Corps Air Ground Combat Center, Twentynine Palms, CA.

1LT Ronald Winchester, age 25, died September 3 due to enemy action in Al Anbar Province. He was assigned to 1st Battalion, 7th Marine Regiment, 1st Marine Division, Air Ground Combat Center, Twentynine Palms, CA.

LCpl Nicholas Wilt, age 23, died September 3 due to enemy action in Al Anbar Province. He was assigned to 1st Battalion, 7th Marine Regiment, 1st Marine Division, Marine Corps Ground Combat Center, Twentynine Palms, CA.

As my colleagues know, I have paid tribute to every Californian who has

died in Iraq from the beginning of the war. I have paid tribute to them if they were born and raised in California or if they were assigned to a California base. I have read into the RECORD and paid tribute now to 254 soldiers. It takes a lot of time, but this time is nothing compared to a lifetime of grieving, tears, and pain these relatives are going through, not only from my State but all over the country.

Mr. REID. Will the Senator yield?

Mrs. BOXER. I will.

Mr. REID. I express my appreciation to the Senator from California for her diligence in coming to the Senate floor and spreading on the RECORD the names of these soldiers who were killed in Iraq. As the Senator knows, about 25 percent of all the deaths in Iraq are related to the State of California.

Mrs. BOXER. Yes.

Mr. REID. We are within a score of having a thousand deaths in Iraq. I say to my friend from California, I appreciate it so much because I have been on the Senate floor where I have lamented the fact and have referred to major newspapers around the country where the deaths of our servicemen have been relegated to page 14 and page 7 of newspapers around the country. Each one of these 254 deaths involves the sons, daughters, husbands, wives, mothers, fathers, cousins, and neighbors, people who will long remember those who died in service to their country.

We cannot take for granted what is happening in Iraq.

Mrs. BOXER. Mr. President, how much time remains on my time?

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator wanted to be notified when she used another 10 minutes.

Mrs. BOXER. I ask unanimous consent for an additional 5 minutes after my additional 5, so it would be an additional 10.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Is there objection?

Without objection, it is so ordered.

Mr. REID. I simply want to say that it is important to me to do what we can to recognize what is going on in Iraq. It is a situation that is extremely difficult and desperate. It appears now that we have not solved the Sadr problem. We have moved from Najaf to where we lost 7 Marines last night in Sadr City where he now resides, with more than 2 million people residing in that city.

So I again want the record to reflect my appreciation to the Senator from California for giving recognition to these gallant servicemen who have lost their lives in Iraq. I wish she would continue to do so. At the very least, the relatives and friends of these gallant soldiers should have their names recognized. They deserve more than that, but certainly that is a step in the right direction.

Mrs. BOXER. If I could respond to my friend, and also say to my friend from Iowa, I have found there is so little focus on these young men and women who are sacrificing. We do not

see them when they come home. We do not hear about them and the ones who are wounded. I say to my friend, and he may not be aware of this, one more soldier and we are going to see a thousand dead. It is 999 today.

Mr. REID. I did not realize that. The last number I saw was about 978.

Mrs. BOXER. Right, 999. Now is the time, if ever there were a time, to reflect on this policy. Now, President Bush says we are not turning back. One has to ask themselves: What does that mean? We are not turning back from what? We are not turning back from a war without a plan?

Well, I hope we will get a plan. We need a plan. Just as we had a military plan, we need a plan. Things are at a state now where I have to come and take the time to do this. There is discontent on the other side. It takes a long time to read 48 new names of Californians. Is that not the least we can do? I have talked about what the potential of each of them was. These are the sons and daughters of our people.

Mr. REID. Would the Senator yield?

Mrs. BOXER. Yes.

Mr. REID. We are focused today, and certainly I support the Senator in doing so, on the soldiers who are dead. As the Senator indicated, it is now 999. The one thing we do not focus on is this war is different than any war we have ever had. The ratio of deaths to casualties is much different. The casualties in this war—those people being wounded—are very severe although they have the use of body armor and other protections included in most of the vehicles. We have many severe burns, people being blinded, paralyzed, losing limbs. These are people who are nameless, hundreds and hundreds, into the thousands now, of people who have been severely wounded, not wounded but severely wounded. I wish there were some way we could recognize the suffering that is going on.

Mrs. BOXER. I say to my friend, when I opened up my remarks, I stated that 6,916 Americans have been injured in Iraq. My friend is right, it is an enormous number. According to a report in the L.A. Times, 57 percent have been injured so severely that they are unable to return to duty. These are very severe injuries.

My point is, is this the time, then, to have a budget that the President—we found out about it because The Washington Post got a copy—cuts VA by \$910 million? There are these many Americans, and God knows what the total will be by the end of the month.

“We are not turning back.” The President says that over and over again. “We are staying the course.” Well, why do we not look at this course? Why do we not look at these policies? Why do we not see if there are ways to better handle this, to internationalize this, to take the burden off of the backs of our young people, as Senator KERRY has said? Where is the plan?

I yield to my friend.

Mr. HARKIN. I ask the Senator to yield. I thank the Senator for her very perceptive and very sensitive approach on this issue of what is happening with our troops in Iraq. The Senator from Nevada is absolutely right about this, that this war is different than any we have ever had. I suppose the good news is we are saving a lot more lives than we have ever in the past. We are there with our medical equipment, as the Senator said, as well as because of body armor and a lot of other things. But what we are also experiencing, as the Senator from California pointed out, is a higher level of individuals with severe injuries, injuries that not only won't allow them to return to active duty but will mean they are going to carry their burdens the rest of their natural lives, for them and their families.

What is unanswered, among all the other things that are unanswered—how we are going to get out of Iraq, how we are going to protect our troops better, how we are going to get other countries to come in, how we are going to pay for it, endless questions—the one nagging question, which I believe the Senator from California has just put her finger on, is: Will we, will this administration, and will this Congress commit itself to ensuring that these young men and women who have been so severely injured will have the supporting mechanisms, the educational benefits, the kind of things that are needed so they can live a full, rich, productive life here in America? That has never been committed to by this administration.

When the President says he wants to stay the course, is that one course on which he wants to stay, I ask my friends, that we will not commit ourselves to making sure these brave young men and women are taken care of, that all their medical needs are met, but more important that they are able to lead full, productive lives here in America?

Mrs. BOXER. Absolutely. The sad truth is we got a copy of their budget.

Mr. HARKIN. That is right.

Mrs. BOXER. President Bush, this is going to be an issue. People are going to take a look at this. It is one thing to send our troops to war; it is another thing to not be there with what they need when they come back. And we are going to make that an issue.

There is one other thing we need to make an issue because there are some things going on in this country that are on the wrong track. I know my friend agrees with this. The seniors in this country just got hit with a 17.4-percent increase in their Medicare premiums. I say to my friend from Iowa, who is a champion not only of veterans but of seniors and children and education and all these other issues, how are our elderly going to handle this? This is the largest single premium increase in nearly 40 years of history with Medicare.

My friend and I know why. The No. 1 reason is this: This administration

worked on a Medicare bill that has a \$14 billion slush fund to the HMOs, to "convince them," to convince them to take Medicare patients. That is \$14 billion.

What else? Medicare is prohibited from negotiating for lower drug prices. I say to my friend, if you walked down the street in Des Moines or anywhere in your State, and you went up to someone and said: Guess what. The Government is telling you you can't shop around for the best price. If you want to go around and buy a bike for your kid, you have to go to Mike's bike shop, not Ray's bike shop or Barbara's bike shop.

Your constituents would say: Senator, if that is the kind of Government I have, hey, this is not the country I know it is.

Yet and still, this administration, backed by the majority party, tied Medicare's hands. Now our people are paying through the nose and they are frightened.

I have been home for the last 2 months, and my senior citizens—first of all, they say this is the worst prescription drug benefit they ever saw. They don't understand it. The only time they can take advantage of it is if they fit a certain profile. Most of them don't even want it. Now they have to pay for something they didn't want because it is built into these premiums. That is what the administration says. They are giving you a great new benefit. Now you pay for it. And they are paying for a slush fund for the HMOs.

Here is the deal. This President says we are not going back; we are not changing course. All well and good if the course is working. But when it is not working, when we are paying the cost of Iraq, 90 percent of it both in the injuries and in the pocketbook, and we are spending now in excess of \$200 billion over there and the deficits are—what are they now, \$400 billion plus? The highest ever in the history of our country? Stay the course? Don't turn back from debts that are falling on our people? Don't turn back from Medicare premium increases?

I ask for 1 additional minute.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Is there objection? Without objection, it is so ordered. One additional minute.

Mrs. BOXER. So it is one thing to stand in front of a microphone and say don't turn back, if you have policies that are working. But when you have policies that are costing us lives in Iraq, 90 percent of the casualties, 90 percent of the cost, and then you turn your back on our allies? When the President landed on that "mission accomplished" carrier, our allies begged to help us in Iraq. Oh, no, we weren't going to share the spoils of this with them. The rebuilding was just going to Halliburton folks.

That is the price our people are paying. I love them dearly and I want to see them come back home and be relieved by people from all over the world. And I want to see our senior

citizens not have to choose between medicine and food. This is wrong.

So, hopefully, we will see some changes in this country. I think you and I agree they are sorely needed. I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Iowa is recognized for 20 minutes.

Mr. HARKIN. I thank the Senator from California for her very clear presentation today. What is happening to make America weaker? We are getting weaker all the time. As the Senator from California pointed out, we are getting weaker because our seniors now are denied the medical care they need and ought to have. We are getting weaker because our deficits are going up at an alarming rate. We are getting weaker because we are getting sucked further and further into the quagmire of Iraq with no end in sight. We are getting weaker in this country because the middle class is getting squeezed. The wealthy are getting the tax breaks.

I am beginning to think that George W. Bush stands for George Weaker Bush. Weakening America, that is what is happening in this country. We are weaker than what we were.

I thank the Senator from California for her very perceptive analysis and for her continued progressive views on turning our country in the correct direction.

I like the expression, what the Senator from California said about President Bush, saying he wants to stay the course or don't turn back. Don't turn back.

Mrs. BOXER. Right.

Mr. HARKIN. It seems to me, if you are on a highway in a car, and you are headed towards a cliff and there is a bend in the road that you can take and it will save you, what sense does it make to keep going straight off the cliff?

Mrs. BOXER. Good one.

Mr. HARKIN. That seems to me what the President is saying: Stay in the car with me. I do not change course.

We are already kind of over the cliff. We are going to go down it.

We could make some changes in our economic policy, our fiscal policy. Certainly, we can make changes in our foreign policy, in our policy in Iraq, to turn this country so we do not continue to go off the cliff.

I guess the President says that he knows where he is going. There is one thing about being resolute in one's determination to do certain things. But there comes a point where you are stubborn in the face of facts and reality. I am afraid this President does not realize the difference between being resolute and carrying out policies, and being stubborn when those policies are hurting America and making us weaker.

I want to change the focus of the discussion. I want to talk about the economy. This morning the Congressional Budget Office announced it now

projects this year's budget deficit will rise to \$422 billion, an all-time high. Actually, if you look at this chart, if you look at the red, that is the budget deficit of \$422 billion for 2004. But if you exclude Social Security surplus, the budget deficit is really \$574 billion.

Bear in mind, this comes from a President who originally pledged he would not run deficits and he would protect Social Security surpluses. Talk about flip-flopping, this is the flip-flop of all time.

Now we see these deficits are not only huge but they are going to continue as far as the eye can see. It is shocking when we look at where we were 4 years ago when we had an all-time-high budget surplus and we could see these surpluses continuing on through this decade when we were strong in the world, when we had other countries supporting us, and now to see where we have come in 4 short years.

Right now our operating budget deficit, without counting the Social Security surplus, is about 5 percent of the gross domestic product.

Last year the President's Council of Economic Advisers predicted normal job growth would be 228,000 jobs a month, about the average level during the Clinton administration. The Council of Economic Advisers said the job growth would be even more if we passed the 2003 tax bill which was done. It said we would create 305,000 jobs a month. Unfortunately, over the past 3 months job creation has been about one-third that rate. A million jobs have been lost since Mr. Bush took office.

It seems to me the appropriate question to ask is are we better off today than we were 4 years ago as a nation? Again, look back. It seems almost like a distant utopia when I read the figures. We were the envy of the world in 2000, with 23 million new jobs created and the largest budget surplus in U.S. history—\$236 billion in 1 year. But now, 4 years later, we are weaker in almost every respect in this country.

Data released by the Census Bureau paints a very disturbing picture. Since Mr. Bush took office, real median household income has fallen by \$1,535. During the Clinton administration the real median household income went up \$5,489. Look at the difference. Median income up under the Clinton administration, median income down \$1,535 a year under the Bush administration.

Then look at poverty. The number of Americans living in poverty has risen by 4.3 million under President Bush through 2003. During the Clinton administration, 6.4 million Americans were lifted out of poverty. In 4 years of Bush, 4.28 million have been driven into poverty.

Is that progress? We should stay the course? We should not turn back? I would love to turn back to the economic policies of the Clinton years. No. This President says no, stay the course.

In every single way we are weaker.

The number of Americans without health insurance has gone up 5.2 mil-

lion in the last 4 years. The policies of this administration have weakened our economy. They have depleted our Federal Treasury. They have made America a weaker country.

Now look at taxes. A new study by the Congressional Budget Office tells us the real story. The share of taxes borne by those making more than \$1 million a year was reduced by 10 percent thanks to the tax cuts of this administration. But the share of taxes borne by the middle-income taxpayers actually increased by almost 5 percent. Meanwhile, interest on the public debt because of these huge deficits will nearly double in the next 4 years. By 2009, every year we will be paying \$1,000 in interest for every man, woman, and child in America. That is \$4,000 for a family of four. It is making our future weaker.

We hear a lot of talk from this administration about doing away with the so-called death tax, the tax on accumulated wealth—so-called estate taxes—the idea being that we don't end up with those with billions of dollars being able to pass it all on while average Americans have to face more and more debt. The Bush administration says they want to get rid of the estate tax.

What about the birth tax? What about the tax this administration is leveling on every child who is going to be born in America in the future? Every child born in the United States henceforth will have \$1,000 taxes put on his or her head as soon as they are born. No one is talking about the birth tax. We ought to be talking about that rather than trying to have the wealthy pay a little bit more fair share of their taxes in this country.

Again, because of the interest on the national debt, a family of four, as I said, will be paying \$4,000 a year. Guess what? That is one tax that cannot be cut. Who is going to be paying it? Middle-income taxpayers, \$4,000 a year. That is a new birth tax on every child born in America. But no, we do not hear the administration talking about that.

The real reason the economy is so weak is that for 4 years the Bush administration has been preaching fiscal conservatism, but has been practicing a reckless "damn the torpedoes" brand of fiscal radicalism. We have had a radical fiscal policy over the last 4 years. The Bush team sees cutting taxes as the be-all and end-all of their political existence. For them, cutting taxes is not an economic plan; it is not even an ideology. It is a theology of one size fits all. If the economy is weak, you cut taxes. If the economy is strong, you cut taxes. If there is a surplus, you cut taxes. If there are huge deficits, you cut taxes. You have a war on terrorism, cut taxes.

How many Americans realize that the wars in Afghanistan and Iraq are the first wars in American history to be paid for and financed by tax cuts? In the past, we have always asked the

American people to help fight our wars by paying increased taxes. Now tax cuts for the wealthy, birth tax on the kids of middle-income taxpayers, more costs for medical health for the elderly, and the deficit continues to go up.

As I said, this year it is really \$577 billion, not \$422 billion—\$577 billion. That is because you have to count the Social Security surplus.

The President says stay the course, don't turn back. For 4 years this President and his team have pursued policies that have led to deficits, debt, drift, and decline. He is leaving a dramatic and weakened economy and Treasury to his successor and to the next generation.

We have to do better. We can do better. The answer is not to stay with the driver of the car who is going to drive you over the cliff because he is too stubborn to recognize what is weakening America. The answer is to modify our policies, change our course to build a brighter and a stronger and better America for our children and grandchildren. Vice President CHENEY famously asserted that "deficits don't matter." I couldn't disagree more. So do all mainstream economists. The truth is deficits do matter and they matter profoundly. Chronic, long-term deficits that we now see mean the Federal Government must accumulate huge and growing debt held in bonds. That means the Government is competing with limited dollars and crowding out other borrowers. This puts other pressure on interest rates. That is bad for job creation.

Second, as the Government's debt increases, it is harder to find resources to make investments here at home in our roads and our bridges, our schools and educational systems. That means a less efficient transportation system and a less skilled workforce. That is bad for business.

Third, as we are already seeing, a far larger share of our Government's bonds are being bought up by foreign governments. Japan, China, and South Korea have particularly heavy purchases of our bonds.

Should that be a worry? It means their future decisions can have a major impact on our economy. In the long term, sooner or later we have to expect the dollar to fall dramatically if our policies don't change. That will hurt our economy by driving up inflation as we pay more for the imports that come into our country.

Lastly, as I have said before and I will keep repeating it, it is especially troubling for the young people in America for them and their future; for our obligations that we have to meet the obligations of the baby boomers who will soon retire and make sure we keep our commitment to them to meet their health needs and to make sure Social Security is sound.

We do not make Social Security sound by driving us further and further into debt. We do not solve the problem by privatizing Social Security. We already see in the private sector more

and more retirement plans under fire. United Airlines and others. Now they want to take Social Security and put it out there on the stock market, too.

Lastly, our incomes are down in America. We know that. What is the answer of this President? Cut overtime. A couple weeks ago the President put into effect administration rules that will take away overtime pay protection for over 6 million Americans. Before that rule was promulgated by the administration, they never had one public hearing.

Thanks to the Senator from Pennsylvania, we did have a couple of hearings—two or three—in the Senate, but that was after the horse was out of the barn. At least we had the hearings. Every time we had the hearings, it became clear the overtime rules were going to hurt working Americans; that they were not going to clear up, as they said, ambiguous rules that already existed; that, in fact, this was an assault on overtime. It was a way of allowing employers the ability to redefine what you do as a worker, to reclassify you, have you work over 40 hours a week, and not have to pay you overtime. That is what is happening.

Lastly, the income tax of this country is moving away from being an income tax. It is under this Administration becoming a wage tax. If you work and you make wages, you get taxed. However, if you have investment income, dividend income, and a bunch of other things such as that, well, under the President's plans, you will not have to worry too much about paying taxes anymore.

So what we will have in America is a work tax. If you work for a living and make a wage, you will pay taxes. You pay the full brunt of taxes. But if you are a very high income person, and most of your income is off of dividends, your taxes have already been sharply reduced and if the President's wishes come to pass, you do not pay much in taxes.

We are robbing our kids. We are hurting our elderly. We are making America weaker and weaker as every day, every week goes by in this crazy economic policy of this administration. I cannot think of any other word for it other than to say it is beyond the pale. I don't mind an administration that takes a chance, that has maybe a new economic theory to test. OK, fine. But when it proves, year after year after year that it does not work, why keep doing it?

Someone once defined insanity as doing the same thing over and over again and expecting a different result. Why do we keep trying the same economic policy year after year after year? We see the same results: higher unemployment, less family income, more people in poverty, higher deficits, higher debt. Yet the President says: Keep me as your driver, stay in the car, as we continue to make America weaker and drive over a cliff.

It is time to change course in this country. It is time to put our country

back on a fiscally sound basis in this country or else this country is going to be facing even larger deficits, bigger debts, more foreign countries buying more bonds. As the old saying goes, he who pays the piper calls the tune. I am afraid a country that owns all of our debt will call our tune and that will be the ultimate weakness for America.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Mr. CORNYN). The Senator from Arizona.

Mr. MCCAIN. Mr. President, thank you.

(The remarks of Mr. MCCAIN, Mr. SPECTER, Mr. LIEBERMAN, and Mr. BAYH pertaining to the introduction of S. 2774 are located in today's RECORD under "Statements on Introduced Bills and Joint Resolutions.")

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

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

Mr. DOMENICI. Parliamentary inquiry: Are we still in morning business?

The PRESIDING OFFICER. That is correct.

Mr. DOMENICI. Is it appropriate for the Senator from New Mexico to ask to speak at this time?

The PRESIDING OFFICER. It is.

Mr. DOMENICI. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that I be permitted to speak for 10 minutes.

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

ENERGY POLICY

Mr. DOMENICI. Mr. President, across this land, our people are driving up to the gasoline pumps, and they are filling their tank. In the last 6 or 8 months, every time they filled up their tank, the amount went up, up, and up. It peaked for a while, but still, in some parts of America, it is \$2 a gallon, \$1.90, \$1.96.

Everybody understands that America has no energy policy. A few months ago, we had a blackout—remember—in the northeastern part of America, something a country such as ours should not have unless somebody intentionally and physically destroyed power lines or big connectors. But it happened because of overload, and it happened because we do not have an energy policy.

Natural gas, our most plentiful fuel and the one that is best for America's future, we thought we had enough for anything forever and ever. It turns out that unless we do something to increase our supply, it, too, is going to be in short supply. As a matter of fact, as tough as it is to admit this, unless we bring some huge new natural gas supplies on in America, this great land will go from dependence on crude oil to another state of dependence: dependence on foreign sources for natural gas.

We have solar. We have all the renewables. And at this time in our history,

they are stalemated. The reason they are stalemated is because they need an energy policy. They need the Energy bill that is sitting up at that desk. It has production credits that existed before for all the renewables, for clean coal and its development. All of those are in this bill. The Energy bill is up there at the desk.

Rising oil prices and the fact we have no energy policy is dangerous for our national security, for our environment, for jobs, and for the personal prosperity of our people and our consumers.

Around the world, we are seeing increased demands for energy, increasingly thin reserves of fossil fuels, and increased instability of oil-producing countries. Demand for oil is growing. The price goes up and down, not so much because of supply but because there is no assurance of supply—interruptions, revolutions—and so America sits by and we look at it all, and I guess we would all like to say somebody else is to blame.

I hear in the campaign that nobody wants to talk too much about energy. One of the candidates said we have to stop being dependent on foreign oil. I am not standing here saying that Energy bill at the desk does that because we are already 60—and going up—percent dependent, and I defy anybody to have a plan to get rid of that. I guess if you want to order Americans to get rid of all their cars and buy little ones that get 100 miles to a gallon or 60, you might do something. But nobody will vote for that.

Is my time running out?

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator has 7 minutes.

Mr. DOMENICI. I thank the Chair.

So here is what we have to do. We have to look at ourselves and say: What can we do to produce all kinds of new alternative fuels that will give us a chance to prove to the world that we are not going to sit by and do nothing? We are going to say we are going to do something big about natural gas. This bill says some of the available outer continental gas, which is not environmentally precluded, can be gotten. We are going to say there is a huge supply from Alaska. Not the one everybody objects to. I should not say everyone. Some do, but I don't. But other natural gas can be brought to the central part of America, to Chicago, and in a few years it will provide another great source.

We have language in this bill that will stabilize electricity, in terms of regions. It will put in some standards. Yes, from everything we understand, it has a real chance of doing two things: encouraging investment in electricity, which we need desperately; second, seeing that we do not have any blackouts in the future.

Frankly, for the past 21 months—not alone but with other people—we have worked to develop a consensus on an energy bill. The other side, the Democrats, have insisted, because they filibustered the Energy bill, that we get 60