Mr. REID. Mr. President, this bill we are going to take up also is an interesting bill in that it is $700 million less than the President requested, and that is unusual, especially in a Foreign Operations bill. We hope we can work through that legislation. Senator GREGG is certainly experienced, as is Senator LEAHY.

On our side, the time for morning business is going to be allocated as follows: 10 minutes each to Senator NELSON, Senator SALAZAR, and Senator SANDERS, the 30 minutes we have that will be beginning soon.

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, the Senate will now be in a period for the transaction of morning business for up to 60 minutes, with Senators permitted to speak for up to 10 minutes each, and with the time equally divided and controlled between the two leaders or their designees, with the majority controlling the first half of the time and the Republicans controlling the second half of the time.

The Senator from Colorado.

EXPANSION OF PINON CANYON MANEUVER SITE

Mr. SALAZAR. Mr. President, I come to the floor this morning to speak about an amendment we will be voting on in probably an hour and a half. It is amendment No. 2662, which has to do with the expansion of a training facility in my State of Colorado called the Pinon Canyon Maneuver Site. It is a training facility associated with Fort Carson.

In February of 2007, a few months ago, the U.S. Army made an announcement it would move forward with an effort to acquire an additional 400,000 acres-plus of land in my State to add to this training facility. What I am asking my colleagues to do today is to join with me and a vast bipartisan majority of the House of Representatives in saying we need a timeout before we move forward. I ask my Democratic and Republican colleagues to join us in supporting amendment No. 2662.

I say to everyone in this Chamber and to those who are listening, if you care about private property rights, you will support this amendment. If you care about ranchers and farmers in America, including those who make a living in southeastern Colorado, you will support this amendment. If you care about being wise in terms of how we spend taxpayers' dollars in expanding our military facilities, you will support this amendment.

I wish to make a few remarks about its history, to put this into perspective.

First, the Army in 1982 acquired 235,000 acres for the training facility now known as Pinon Canyon. That facility has been used since 1982. It is an integral component of the training capabilities for Fort Carson, CO.

In 2005, the BRAC Commission, in its recommendations which were approved in the Senate, recommendations which I supported, added additional troops to Fort Carson. The findings of the Base Realignment and Closure Commission said that Fort Carson had sufficient training facilities to provide all the training that is needed for our troops stationed at Fort Carson.

So the first question to be asked by all those who are going to be impacted by this 400,000-acre expansion is whether that amount of land is sufficient to carry on the training purpose required at Fort Carson. That question simply has not been answered.

If the Army moves forward with the expansion of the additional 400,000-plus acres, we will have a Pinon Canyon Maneuver Site in Colorado that will have 1,235 square miles. That is an area that is bigger than the size of the State of Rhode Island. Yet what the Army has proposed to do is acquire that land through condemnation or whatever necessary means to move forward with an unjustified need for an expansion of Pinon Canyon.

I am not saying we ought not look at whether we need to have additional training facilities at Fort Carson. We certainly should take a look at that. But until we get the answers as to what has changed from January of 2005 until 2007 that requires the expansion of this training facility so we have a training facility the size of Rhode Island-plus, it is important we ask questions of the Army.

I ask my colleagues to join us in moving forward with a timeout, with a 1-year moratorium on the EIS process which the Army has proposed, and during that 1 year we can ask some very important questions that will be important to those who will be most affected—the residents of southeastern Colorado. We need to ask those questions as well for the men and women in uniform, whom we train at Fort Carson and around our country, to be sure we have appropriate and adequate training facilities for them. Those are questions that do need to be asked.

The Department of Defense authorization and appropriations bills will be coming up, and I have proposed and will introduce legislation that will be cosponsored by my colleague, Senator ALLARD, where we get those questions answered. When we have those questions answered, then we can make a thoughtful decision about how best to move forward in a manner that, first, enhances and protects the national security of the United States; No. 2, make sure we are protecting the private property rights of the ranchers who have lived in this area for sometimes three and four generations; and No. 3, the investments we make with respect to any expansion of Pinon Canyon are investments that make sense from a fiscal point of view.

I ask my colleagues, when we get to amendment No. 2662 in about an hour, that they vote in support of this amendment.

I conclude by saying there are two values that have driven me in my discussions on this issue of the expansion of Pinon Canyon over the last several months. The first of those values is we need to make sure we are providing the necessary training facilities for our soldiers at Fort Carson and those who will train at the Pinon Canyon Maneuver Site. We need to make sure we are doing that, and we have a set of questions that need to be answered in that regard.

Second, we need to be sure we are protecting private property rights. When one thinks about the fact that in these 400-plus acres, there are many ranchers who have been there for three and four generations, ranchers who have come to me with tears in their eyes, who talk about the fact that their wife is buried on their ranch and that they took the ranch from their father and their mother and from their grandparents, it seems to me that if there is an opportunity for us to make sure we are protecting private property rights, this is a time for us to say we are going to protect the private property rights of those ranchers.

I say to my colleagues, I am not asking for the death knell to be put on any proposed expansion by the Army. All I am asking is that we have a 1-year timeout, a 1-year delay so we can get these fundamental questions answered on how we move forward with Pinon Canyon.

I urge my colleagues to please support amendment No. 2662 when we vote on it in about an hour.

Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent to have printed in the RECORD letters in support of my amendment and the position on the Pinon Canyon issue from Otero County, a resolution from Huerfano County, Las Animas County, Colorado Counties, Inc., LaJunta, the Bent County Commissioners, Baca County Commissioners, the Club 20, Action 22, Crowley County, as well as Alamosa County.

There being no objection, the material was ordered to be printed in the RECORD, as follows:

OTERO COUNTY,
OFFICE OF THE COMMISSIONERS,
La Junia, CO, August 27, 2007.

Senator KEN SALAZAR,
129 West B Street,
Pueblo, CO.

DEAR SENATOR SALAZAR: Through this letter, the Otero Board of County Commissioners officially registers its adamant opposition to the expansion of the current Pinon Canyon Maneuver Site and requests your support of the Musgrave-Salazar amendment. Although this office and individual commissioners have corresponded with you on this matter over the past several months we feel compelled to address once again the U.S. Army proposed expansion.

We appreciate your support in the disallowance of eminent domain to acquire any

land. However, simply halting condemnation will do nothing to truly support those communities that are depending on your representation to halt funding for the expansion entirely. A majority of state lawmakers and Congressional representatives, all 14 southern Colorado county commissions, and the people of Colorado agree there should be no expansion and no money spent on the expansion of the Pinon Canyon site. As you know, opposition to the Pentagon's plan has been overwhelming and bipartisan at every level—community, county, state and national. We urge you to heed the will of the people by ending any and all funding for any and all aspects of the expansion.

Thus, we ask you to protect the integrity of the regional and state agricultural economy by supporting the language authored by Rep. Marilyn Musgrave (R–4th CD), supported by Rep. John Salazar (D–3rd CD) and adopted overwhelmingly by both Republicans and Democrats in the U.S. House of Representatives in June.

Sincerely,

ROBERT BAUSERMAN,
Chair.
HAROLD KLEIN, Jr.,
KEVIN KARNEY.

RESOLUTION NO. 06–33

Whereas, the U.S. Army established the Pinon Canyon Maneuver Site in Las Animas County in 1982, through its acquisition of approximately two hundred and forty thousand acres of private land to provide a training facility for Army personnel stationed at Ft. Carson; and,

Whereas, the U.S. Army has initiated consideration of the expansion of the Pinon Canyon Maneuver Site to accommodate a significantly enhanced training program in expectation of additional Army personnel being stationed at Ft. Carson; and,

Whereas, the expansion of the Pinon Canyon Maneuver Site could result in approximately four hundred thousand acres of additional land being taken out of private ownership in southeastern Colorado; and,

Whereas, since the establishment of the Pinon Canyon Maneuver Site, Huerfano County has realized minimal or no economic benefit from the operations of the Pinon Canyon Maneuver Site; and,

Whereas, the U.S. Army has been forthcoming in providing information to Huerfano County regarding its plans for expansion of the Pinon Canyon Maneuver Site; and,

Whereas, the United States Army has not recognized the serious destruction and loss of public access to the historical artifacts located in the areas such as Vogal and Picket Wire Canyons, including the Santa Fe Trail and other closely situated sites which have scientific, historical, paleontological and tourist-related interest. Now, therefore, be it

Resolved by the Huerfano County Board of County Commissioners, That the Southern District Counties of Colorado Counties, Inc. hereby take a position of opposition to the expansion of the Pinon Canyon Maneuver Site, for the following reasons:

1. that the U.S. Army has not provided sufficiently detailed information to Huerfano County regarding its plans for the expansion of the Pinon Canyon Maneuver Site; and,

2. that the U. S. Army has not agreed to refrain from use of eminent domain to acquire privately owned land for expansion of the Pinon Canyon Maneuver Site; and,

3. that the U.S. Army has no committees to fund a thorough and object socio-economic study of the impacts that will result from the expansion of the Pinon Canyon Maneuver Site; and,

4. that the federal government has not committed to fully compensate impacted counties in Southeastern Colorado with Payments of In Lieu of Taxes (PILT) in conformance with federal law and to provide compensation for all additional land that may be acquired for the expansion of the Pinon Canyon Maneuver Site; and,

5. that the federal government has not committed to provide financial compensation to all local governmental entities that will be economically impacted by the expansion of the Pinon Canyon Maneuver Site, including counties, cities and towns, school districts, special districts, etc.; and,

6. that the U.S. Army has not committed to provide long term employment opportunities for support jobs necessary to operate the Maneuver Site nor afforded local business with opportunities to provide goods and services to support the Pinon Canyon Maneuver Site.

LAS ANIMAS COUNTY,
BOARD OF COUNTY COMMISSIONERS,
Trinidad, CO, July 16, 2007.

DEAR COMMISSIONERS: The Board of County Commissioners of Las Animas County, wish to make you aware of its concerns regarding the potential expansion of the U.S. Army's Pinon Canyon Maneuver Site, located within this county.

The U.S. Army recently released its latest map iteration reflecting the area of interest for expansion of the Maneuver Site by more than four hundred thousand acres. The majority of that land is located within Las Animas County. Should this expansion be approved, the U.S. Army may seek further expansion within Southeastern Colorado in the future.

In the early 1980s, when the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers undertook the acquisition of privately owned land in Las Animas County, to create the Pinon Canyon Maneuver Site, not all land owners were willing sellers. While the Army Corps of Engineers negotiated for acquisition of several properties, it proceeded to utilize the federal government's power of eminent domain to acquire land from those property owners with whom it was not able to negotiate a purchase price or who were unwilling to sell. In the end, it took the properties and let the Court determine just compensation.

The acquisition of additional privately owned land will further impact the agricultural community, displace population, reducing the number of school-aged children in K–12 rural schools and reduce the tax base depended upon by this county and the schools districts and special districts in the area of the Maneuver Site. Further, the federal government has never fully funded the Payment In Lieu of Tax (PILT) program to offset lost tax base revenues.

In June, the House of Representatives of the United States Congress overwhelmingly, approved an amendment to the federal military spending bill for 2008, prohibiting the U.S. Army from proceeding forward with its plans for expansion of the Pinon Canyon Maneuver Site. Within the next several days, that same amendment will be considered by the U.S. Senate. You are respectfully requested to contact both of Colorado's United States Senators, Kenneth Salazar and Wayne Allard, and request that they support the Musgrave-Salazar Amendment to the military funding bill to preclude the U.S. Army from pursuing expansion of the Pinon Canyon Maneuver Site. They may be contacted at the following addresses and phone numbers:

U.S. Senator Kenneth Salazar, 702 Hart Senate Office Building, Washington, DC 20510.

U.S. Senator Wayne Allard, 521 Dirksen Senate Office Building, Washington, DC 20510.

Your support of this effort is sincerely appreciated.

Sincerely,

JIM D. MONTOYA,
Chairman.
KENNETH M. TORRES,
Chairman pro tem.
GARY D. HILL,
Commissioner.

Hon. WAYNE ALLARD,
Dirksen Senate Office Building,
Washington, DC.
Hon. KENNETH SALAZAR,
Hart Senate Office Building,
Washington, DC.

DEAR SENATORS: We, the undersigned County Commissioners, comprising the Southern District of Colorado Counties, Inc., and representing our respective counties within Colorado, wish to express our appreciation to both of you Senators, for your position opposing the use of eminent domain by the U.S. Army.

Your support is respectfully requested to adopt the Salazar-Musgrave Amendment, as approved by the U.S. House of Representatives, to prevent any funding for the study of the expansion of the maneuver site, as the matter is taken up by the U.S. Senate.

While the U.S. Army has withdrawn its official map of expansion published in June, nevertheless, any expansion plan, should it be allowed, would have significant negative social and economic impacts to our respective counties and to southeastern Colorado, as a whole.

Respectfully,

(Signatures of Boards of Commissioners of the counties comprising the Southern District of CCI.)

RESOLUTION NO. R–20–2006

Whereas, the City of La Junta is cognizant of its neighbors and the manner in which its neighbors have maintained their livelihood; and

Whereas, it is the belief of the City Council that Otero County continues to be a predominantly rural area, neighboring other counties with a similar preponderance of rural related industries; and

Whereas, the City of La Junta is cognizant of the proposal by the United States of America acting through the Department of the Army and Department of Defense requesting the expansion of the Pinon Canyon Maneuver Site to include a substantial expansion in Otero County and other neighboring counties; and

Whereas, the City of La Junta is cognizant of the great hardship that will be realized by the citizens of La Junta, to include the neighbors of La Junta in Otero County and in surrounding counties as the impact of this increase in the Army maneuver site will have a radical and adverse affect upon the rural, predominantly agricultural related farming and ranching operations of the area; and

Whereas, a substantial number of wholesale and retail businesses, retail feedlots and retail transportation entities are directly related to and participate in activities which are primarily agriculturally related and which would be severely impacted by the expansion of the Pinion Canyon Maneuver Site; and

Whereas, the United States Army has not recognized the rather serious esthetic destruction to historical artifacts located in Vogel and Picket Wire Canyons, including the Santa Fe Trail and other closely situated sites which have both scientific and historic and tourist related interest; and

Whereas, the City of La Junta is desirous of protecting the rights of its citizens and

the rights of its neighbors to enjoy the blessings provided to all Americans to include the business operations that they participate in; and

Whereas, it is the judgment of the City Council of the City of La Junta that the Pinon Canyon Maneuver Site Expansion Project would adversely affect the economy of the City of La Junta, the economy of Otero County, and the region as a whole; and be it therefore

Resolved by the City Council of the City of La Junta, That the City of La Junta does adamantly oppose any expansion efforts in the Pinon Canyon Area by the Department of the Army or the Department of Defense as currently proposed.

BENT COUNTY
BOARD OF COUNTY COMMISSIONERS,
Las Animas, CO, July 25. 2007.

Hon. KENNETH SALAZAR,
Hart Senate Office Building,
Washington, DC.

DEAR SENATOR SALAZAR: Although the Bent County Commissioners have corresponded with you on this matter over the past several months we feel compelled to address once again the U.S. Army proposed expansion of the Pinon Canyon Maneuver site located in our neighboring counties of Otero and Las Animas.

We do recognize the necessity of our military troops to be adequately and professionally trained in their mission of defending the freedoms that all of us as United States citizens wish to preserve, however, the potential expansion of the Pinon Canyon site by more than four hundred thousand acres is not a viable solution. Property owners in both Otero and Las Animas Counties have already made considerable sacrifice on this project. The acreage previously acquired for the Pinon Canyon site was, for the most part, secured by the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers utilizing the Federal government's power of eminent domain. The compensation paid to those sellers unwilling to sell was therefore determined by the Court and in many cases was an unjust dollar figure.

The removal of lands in the affected counties will further impact the agricultural communities of southeast Colorado thereby displacing our already sparse population. Experience from the previous purchase by the Federal government of the Pinon Canyon lands has already shown a significant negative impact on the tax base used to fund the counties, schools, and special districts. The Federal government has never fully funded the Payment in Lieu of Tax (PILT) to offset the loss of tax base revenues.

We respectfully request that you support the Musgrave-Salazar amendment to the military spending bill, as was overwhelmingly approved in the House of Representatives in June, which would prohibit the U.S. Army from proceeding forward with its plans for the expansion of the Pinon Canyon site.

On behalf of the Bent County Board of Commissioners

Respectfully yours,

BILL LONG,
Chairman.

BACA COUNTY
BOARD OF COUNTY COMMISSIONERS,
Springfield, CO, May 8, 2006.

DEAR SENATOR SALAZAR: The Baca County Commissioners wish to express our opposition to the expansion of the Pinon Canyon Maneuver site, more specifically in the use of condemnation or eminent domain to secure property from unwilling sellers. We also object to the expansion based on the negative economic impact to our county because of the large amount of goods and services provided by our constituents to the residents of the expansion area.

Sincerely,

TROY CRANE,
Chairman.
BILL WRIGHT,
District 2.
GLEN R. AUSMUS,
District 1.

CLUB 20,
Grand Junction, CO, August 1, 2007.

Re CLUB 20 concern about proposed expansion of Army's Pinon Canyon Training Area.

Senator WAYNE ALLARD
U.S. Senate,
Washington, DC.
Congressman MARK UDALL,
House of Representatives,
Washington, DC.
Senator KEN SALAZAR,
U.S. Senate,
Washington, DC.
Congressman JOHN SALAZAR,
House of Representatives,
Washington, DC.

DEAR SENATORS ALLARD AND SALAZAR, AND CONGRESSMEN UDALL AND SALAZAR: CLUB 20's membership recently discussed the proposed expansion of the U.S. Army's Pinon Canyon Training Area in southeastern Colorado and we want to make you aware of two concerns that we have regarding that proposal. While we are quick to acknowledge that this particular issue is obviously outside of the geographic scope of CLUB 20's Western Slope constituency, the concerns that we have regarding this proposal relate to matters that could establish dangerous precedents for private landowners and local governments everywhere.

CLUB 20 fully supports the need for our government to maintain the best-equipped and most highly-trained fighting force in the world. However, with respect to this need, we would like to raise for your consideration the following two concerns related to the proposed Pinon Canyon expansion:

(1) It is the policy of CLUB 20 that the federal government should only acquire additional land when such proposals have strong support from the local county and municipal governments where the lands would be acquired. As concerns the Army's proposed Pinon Canyon expansion, we are aware of a significant amount of concern which has been raised by local governments and private landowners in that area. Because of the importance of securing local support for such projects, we request that you urge the Army to make a more diligent effort to engage these local governments in a collaborative dialogue to effectively address the concerns of the local community.

(2) As with all such proposals which transfer land from private to public ownership, CLUB 20 is concerned about the resulting reduction in property tax revenues and the historic unwillingness of Congress to fully fund Payments-In-Lieu-of-Taxes (PILT) to help offset this economic hardship to the local community. While we recognize that related troop increases at Fort Carson may yield additional economic benefits for the larger Colorado Springs community, the removal of these private lands from the tax rolls will likely pose little economic benefit to more rural areas like Las Animas County. We encourage you to fully explore the potential adverse tax revenue impacts associated with the conversion of such private lands and the removal of the private agriculture enterprises currently dependent on those lands.

Thank you for your consideration of these two concerns, and thank you for your continued support of our military institutions and the men and women who proudly serve our country in uniform.

Sincerely,

REEVES BROWN,
Executive Director.

RESOLUTION 07–08 AG 8

Whereas, the U.S. Army wishes to acquire additional needed land to expand the Pinon Canyon Maneuver Site; and

Whereas, the expansion of troops into Ft. Carson, as provided in the BRAC report, is not contingent upon the expansion of the Pinon Canyon Maneuver site, and

Whereas, the new technology permits smaller units to operate in and control significantly greater battle space than was previously possible,

Whereas, The expansion of the Pinon Canyon Maneuver Site could currently result in approximately four hundred thousand acres of additional land being taken out of private ownership in southeastern Colorado; and

Whereas, Since the establishment of the Pinon Canyon Maneuver Site, counties in Southeastern Colorado have realized minimal or no economic benefit from the operations of the Pinon Canyon Maneuver Site;

Whereas, Homeland Security is of utmost importance to the United States and the proper training of our soldiers is needed; now, therefore, be it

Resolved, That ACTION 22 believes that the use of eminent domain is not an acceptable means in the on-going discussion in the expansion of the Pinon Canyon Maneuver Site, and be it further

Resolved, That ACTION 22 stresses the need for timely, positive discussions on the economic future of Southern Colorado and the region as whole, and be it further

Resolved, That ACTION 22 will not consider supporting the expansion of the Pinon Canyon Maneuver Site until the U.S. Army provides sufficient detailed information to Action 22 counties** regarding its plans and needs for the expansion of the Pinon Canyon Maneuver Site.

CROWLEY COUNTY
BOARD OF COUNTY COMMISSIONERS,
Ordway, CO, July 31, 2007.

Hon. KENNETH SALAZAR,
Hart Senate Office Building,
Washington, DC.

DEAR SENATOR SALAZAR, We would like to lend our support to out friends and neighbors in Las Animas County by requesting your consideration of the Musgrave-Salazar Amendment to the military funding bill when the legislation reaches the Senate. Under the present set of circumstances it is difficult to imagine transferring 400,000 plus acres from private ownership to federal government control, without large economic, social and cultural dislocations occurring.

We very much appreciate your thoughtful consideration in this matter.

Sincerely,

T.E. ALLUMBAUGH.
KATHLEEN MEDINA.
MATT HEIMERICH.

COMMISSIONERS,
ALAMOSA COUNTY,
Alamosa, CO, July 30, 2007.

Hon. KEN SALAZAR,
Hart Senate Office Building,
Washington, DC.

DEAR SENATOR SALAZAR: This letter is in support of the Las Animas County Commissioners who are troubled with the potential expansion of the U.S. Army's Pinon Canyon Maneuver site.

The Board of Alamosa County Commissioners is troubled about the expansion because of the agricultural community and the

reduction of the tax base for Las Animas County. By reducing the tax base this could have a major economic impact on the schools and the community. The County like other Counties in the state is struggling with revenues and this expansion could do more harm.

The Board of Alamosa County Commissioners is respectfully asking that you support Las Animas County in prohibiting the expansion of Pinon Canyon Maneuver site.

Sincerely,

DARIUS ALLEN,
Chairman.

Mr. SALAZAR. I yield the floor.

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. The Senator from Florida.

Mr. NELSON of Florida. I thank the Chair.

(The remarks of Mr. NELSON of Florida pertaining to the introduction of S. 2024 are printed in today's RECORD under ''Statements on Introduced Bills and Joint Resolutions.'')

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. The Senator from Vermont.

AMENDMENT TO H.R. 2642

Mr. SANDERS. Mr. President, later on this morning, I will be offering an amendment which, frankly, in terms of dollars, is not one of the big amendments as part of the Military Construction and Veterans Affairs bill, which is over $100 billion. This amendment is only $20 million. But while it is small in the amount of money it deals with, it is enormously significant to the millions of men and women who have served our country in war, and it is especially relevant to disabled veterans, those people who have given as much as anyone can expect defending their country—the people without arms, the people without legs, the people in wheelchairs. It is for them I am offering this amendment, and I am very pleased that this amendment has the support of the American Legion, the Veterans of Foreign Wars, the Disabled American Veterans, the Paralyzed Veterans of America, and AMVETS.

The amendment I am offering addresses an ongoing and an emotional concern within the veterans community. It is the concern that we in the U.S. Government are nickel and diming veterans in an absolutely shameful way through the so-called rounding-down process in terms of the checks that go to disabled veterans. Some years ago, as a temporary budget Band-Aid, the Congress initiated the so-called rounding down of veterans disability benefits and a few other categories of benefits that affect veterans, their spouses, and their children. Under this rounding-down process, every year when we calculate the new disability benefits veterans will receive as a result of their COLAs, the resulting amount is rounded down to the whole dollar.

Let me give an example of what I mean. A veteran receives a check, or should receive a check, every month for hypothetically $200.99. What we have done is say to that veteran: We are taking away, every month, that 99 cents, and you are going to get a check for $200.

Now, somebody here may say: Hey, 99 cents is not a lot of money. Multiplied by 12 months a year, you are talking about less than $12 a year. What is the problem? Well, the problem is, if you are a low-income veteran, it does matter. But I think even more significantly than the dollars, what we are saying to that veteran who opens that check, sitting in a wheelchair, we are saving 99 cents a month on you. But by the way, we are giving no-bid contracts out in Iraq which cost the taxpayers hundreds of millions of dollars, or perhaps billions of dollars, and we are going to balance the budget on your 99 cents per month.

So the amount of money we are talking about here is not a whole lot, but symbolically, to thousands of disabled veterans, it says something about how we in the Congress feel about them. We are saving 99 cents a month. Well, I think we can afford to give that 99 cents to those guys in the wheelchairs, the people without one arm, the people who are blind, the people who can't hear, the people coming home from Iraq with traumatic brain injury. I think we can afford to give them that 99 cents, and that is what this amendment is about. This amendment is going to cost all of $20 million—$20 million in a bill which is over $100 billion.

Let me quote from the Independent Budget. I think many Members of the Senate know that the Independent Budget is the budget brought together by all of the major veterans groups, and this is what they say when they describe this process:

> Disability compensation and dependency and indemnity compensation rates have historically been increased each year to keep these benefits even with the cost of living. However, as a temporary measure to reduce the budget deficit,—

A temporary measure.

> Congress enacted legislation to require monthly payments, after adjustment for increases in the cost of living, to be rounded down to the nearest whole dollar amount.

And let's remind ourselves what kind of benefits we are talking about. Disability compensation benefits are benefits that veterans receive if they have a service-related disability and were discharged under other than dishonorable conditions.

Furthermore, this rounding down applies to what is known as the clothing allowance. When veterans have prosthetics or orthopedic appliances such as a wheelchair, they understandably have a high chance of wearing down or tearing clothing at a faster rate than the average person. In other words, you are in a wheelchair, it rubs, your clothing gets worn out. You get help with that. We are rounding down those checks.

This is not a complicated piece of legislation. This is legislation that says to people who have done as much as a human being can do for this country that we are no longer going to continue to nickel-and-dime you. I hope very much the Members of the Senate will join me and the American Legion, the Veterans of Foreign Wars, the Paralyzed Veterans of America, the Disabled American Veterans, and AMVETS in supporting this legislation.

I yield my time.

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. The Senator from Nevada is recognized.

Mr. ENSIGN. Mr. President, are we in morning business now?

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. The Senate is in morning business.

REAGAN'S ECONOMIC POLICY

Mr. ENSIGN. Mr. President, an interesting economic trend is sweeping through countries around the globe. It is one that started right here in the United States, and it would be wise for us to consider some of the amazing results that are being documented internationally.

More than 25 years ago, Ronald Reagan took the helm of an economy that was tanking quickly and bringing American families down with it. The economy was shrinking; inflation was in double digits; more than 7 million Americans were unemployed; and the prime interest rate was through the roof.

Ronald Reagan fought for an aggressive plan to rein in non-defense government spending, provide tax relief, and eliminate unnecessary government regulation. There were many critics who argued that Reagan's plan would create greater inflation. They cried that tax relief would be paid for out of entitlements and leave the elderly and needy worse off. However, John F. Kennedy's assertion that a rising tide lifts all boats was true.

As Reagan prepared to leave the presidency, spending was down, as were tax rates and inflation. Employment had climbed to record heights—there more jobs and better, higher paying jobs. Family income had been on the rise for 4 straight years. America's poor were able to climb out of poverty at the fastest rate in 10 years. It marked the longest economic peacetime expansion in history.

In his farewell address to the nation in 1989, Reagan stated: Common sense told us that when you put a big tax on something, the people will produce less of it. So, we cut the people's tax rates, and the people produced more than ever before. The economy bloomed like a plant that had been cut back and could now grow quicker and stronger.

Among the loudest critics of Reagan's philosophy of lower taxes and less government regulation were European countries that taxed high to offer more social services to their citizens.

The tide has changed all right. Countries around the world, including those in Europe, are racing to cut their taxes. France, Spain, Italy, Sweden,