The Rutherford Institute
Sagebrush Sea Campaign
Semmelweis Society International
Snake River Alliance
Society of American Archivists
Society of Professional Journalists
Southern California Association of Law Libraries
Southwest Research and Information Center
The Student Health Integrity Project
Tax Analysts
Tri-Valley CAREs (Communities Against a Radioactive Environment)
Union of Concerned Scientists
VA Whistleblowers Coalition
Western Environmental Law Center
Western Lands Project Western Resource Advocates
The Wilderness Society
Wild Wilderness
Wilderness Workshop.

THE BUDGET

Mr. DODD. Mr. President, last week the Senate and House of Representatives voted to adopt a budget resolution for the upcoming fiscal year. I was proud to support this budget, which, in my view, represents an important first step towards returning our nation to a healthy and strong fiscal and economic course. Like the budget of any family or business, the federal budget provides a framework for responsibly meeting our nation's most important priorities while ensuring that we are living within our means. This year's budget restores much-needed fiscal discipline while better targeting our resources towards the investments that will best promote economic growth, national security, and broad-based opportunity.

First, the budget resolution reinstates pay-as-you-go rules, which require that any new spending or tax cuts be paid for with spending cuts or new sources of revenue—rather than simply adding the cost to the national debt for our children and grandchildren to repay with interest. These rules played a major role in helping us to achieve Federal budget surpluses in the late 1990s. The resolution also puts a stop to procedural abuses that had been used by the previous leadership in the Congress, notably the use of budget reconciliation protections—designed for legislation that reduces the deficit—to ram through passage of budget-busting tax bills. These procedural improvements, combined with reasonable and responsible spending limits and revenue targets, provide for much-improved—and much-needed fiscal discipline on both the spending and revenue sides of the ledger.

In the 1990s, we saw how responsible budget policies and economic growth reinforced each other in a cycle that lifted Americans' standard of living across the board. Under the current administration, by contrast, Americans have seen the opposite effect, as irresponsible and poorly targeted fiscal policies have squandered the previous decade's fiscal gains while economic growth has accrued more and more narrowly to a smaller segment of the population. The Federal budget has declined from a surplus of $236 billion in 2000 to a deficit of $248 billion last year, while the national debt has grown from $5.6 trillion to $8.8 trillion. Over the same period, real median household income in our country has fallen by nearly $1,300.

Within the context of fiscal responsibility, the budget adopted last week puts in place a framework for restoring the investments necessary for broad-based economic growth and a return to budget surpluses. Rather than leaving middle-class families behind, it focuses on strengthening the middle class—the backbone of our economy.

This begins with promoting an agenda of innovation and entrepreneurship. The President's budget this year—for the second consecutive year—proposed the largest cut to education in the history of the Department of Education, along with cuts to research and development and technology transfer. It would be hard to find a worse idea than to cut the investments that allow our children to fulfill their maximum potential and drive our nation's economic growth now and in the future. This budget rejects the president's cuts, providing an additional $6.3 billion for education from preschool to graduate school. As I have said numerous times before, we can be confident that the investment we make here will be returned to us many times over.

This year's budget also directs more resources towards improving heath care quality and coverage, and reducing cost—an issue that affects every American family and businesses' bottom line. The resolution includes a deficit-neutral reserve fund to help cover uninsured children and funds for health information technology and comparative effectiveness to help reduce skyrocketing costs.

Just as importantly, with our military being stretched to its limits, the budget includes full funding for restoring force readiness and adequately equipping our military personnel serving in harm's way. It also includes $3.6 billion above the Bush administration's budget to address the needs of veterans when they return home, because the brave Americans who have served our country deserve much better than the conditions that were revealed in the recent Walter Reed Army Medical Center scandal.

The priorities laid out in the budget adopted last week contrast sharply with the agendas of recent years. Where the Bush administration and previous leadership in the Congress sacrificed all else at the altar of high-income tax cuts, this year's budget will keep taxes low while restoring the importance of education, health care, clean and renewable energy, and the needs of our military. This change is a welcome development that puts our Nation on a better, stronger, more prosperous, and more secure course for the future.

AGING REPORT

Mr. SMITH. Mr. President, it is my pleasure to present to the Senate report No. 110–71, titled ''Economic Developments in Aging,'' as compiled by the Senate Special Committee on Aging for the 109th Congress. The Special Committee on Aging is required to report to the Senate at least once a Congress on findings from the work done by the committee. This report contains valuable insight uncovered by the committee over the past 10 years on the subject of the economics of retirement.

The Aging Committee has a long and distinguished history of investigating and debating issues of importance to America's aging population. Along with robust deliberations on retirement security, the committee also has initiated discussions on ways to strengthen Medicare and Medicaid, and to expose companies that prey upon seniors using fraudulent marketing scams. I was proud to serve as chairman of this committee in the 109th Congress, when we began the process of compiling this report, and am pleased to continue my service as ranking member of the committee in the 110th Congress.

The Aging Committee is tasked with a significant challenge to ensure that we, as a nation, are prepared for the significant demographic shift with the aging of our population. In a few short years, a vast wave of Americans will begin to retire. In fact, between 2010 and 2030, the number of people age 65 and older is projected to increase by 76 percent. This change will impact a wide range of social and economic issues, such as labor shortages, loss of experienced workers many of whom have skills that simply are not replaceable—and put a significant strain on the senior entitlement programs of Social Security, Medicare and Medicaid.

To keep pace with the growing aging population, it is critical that Congress address these issues in a thoughtful manner that preserves benefits for those in need. The report compiles relevant high-level summaries of committee hearings related to retirement security that demonstrate the ongoing debate within Congress regarding the best approach to address these important issues.

I look forward to continuing a healthy debate on ways to best prepare for the challenges that await us with our aging nation. I hope this report provides valuable insight as we continue these discussions throughout this Congress.

I thank all the members of the Senate Special Committee on Aging from the past 10 years for their participation in these vital discussions. I especially want to thank the committee's current chairman, Senator HERB KOHL, as well as the committee's past chairmen for their dedication to ensuring a positive future for America's seniors.