

It is the policy of the Congress that—

(1) paperless filing should be the preferred and most convenient means of filing tax and information returns, and

(2) it should be the goal of the Internal Revenue Service to have at least 80 percent of all such returns filed electronically by the year 2007.

The House actually mandates 80 percent. This just says the goal. Later, I will try to get an amendment, and I urge you to look at it—I will get you copies of it—which will add a third item which would say “the Internal Revenue Service should work cooperatively and not competitively with the private sector to increase electronic filing of such returns consistent with the Office of Management and Budget Circular A-76.”

If this is going to develop correctly, I believe the IRS has to manage the competition with the private sector. We have to write the rules so the private sector can be called upon to answer the questions of how to use the technology correctly. I hope we can get an amendment adopted which will instruct the IRS not to compete but to work cooperatively with the private sector to get this done.

Mr. ROTH. Madam President, as my distinguished colleague indicated, this matter has been cleared with both sides. The amendment is acceptable.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. If there is no objection, the amendment is agreed to.

The amendment (No. 2348) was agreed to.

UNANIMOUS CONSENT AGREEMENT

Mr. ROTH. Madam President, I ask unanimous consent that notwithstanding the previous consent agreement, the following amendments also be considered in order to H.R. 2676, the IRS reform bill, with all other provisions of the previous agreement still in effect: Grassley, refund offset; Grassley, Iowa pilot project; Grassley, taxpayer advocate council; Nickles, relevant. I ask unanimous consent for these additions.

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

Mr. ROTH. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that at 9:30 a.m. on Thursday, the Senate resume consideration of the Thompson amendment No. 2356, and that the time until 10 o'clock a.m. be equally divided in the usual form. I further ask unanimous consent that at 10 o'clock a.m., the Senate proceed to a vote on, or in relation to, the Thompson amendment, and that no amendments be in order to the Thompson amendment prior to its disposition.

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

Mr. KERREY. Madam President, the distinguished chairman of the Finance Committee, Senator ROTH, and I will try to manage this bill so we can get it done tomorrow. There are what, 15 amendments approximately now on both sides. In order to get it done, Members who have amendments, I hope after we have our vote tomorrow morning, will stay on the floor and offer

them so we can finish this bill. If we don't, it is likely there will be an extremely late session tomorrow night. Most of the controversial items on this piece of legislation really have been dealt with. We have the Treasury employees representative amendment to be dealt with tomorrow. We have the Treasury Secretary to be dealt with tomorrow. Most of the controversial stuff has already been resolved. I hope Members who have amendments will come down here with them as quickly as possible so we can finish this important piece of legislation tomorrow.

Mr. ROTH. I want to underscore what the distinguished Senator just said. It is important that we complete consideration of this legislation tomorrow. But in order to do so, it is of critical importance that those with amendments come down early so that we can dispose of them expeditiously.

MORNING BUSINESS

Mr. ROTH. Madam President, I ask unanimous consent there now be a period for the transaction of morning business, with Senators permitted to speak for up to 10 minutes each.

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

NATIONAL EATING DISORDER AWARENESS DAY

Mr. REID. Mr. President, I want to extend my appreciation to every Member of this Senate for unanimously passing a resolution that dedicates today to be National Eating Disorder Awareness Day.

The purpose is to raise awareness and educate others so that we can end the silence that has shrouded eating disorders for so long. The reason this is important is, this affects 8 million people. Eight million people in this country have eating disorders; the vast majority of them are women.

A recent study of a group of fourth graders reveals that 50 percent of these little students believed they were overweight. Eighty-one percent of the girls in the same group reported that they had already been on diets. These are 9-year-old kids.

Today, younger and younger children are adopting restrictive eating procedures and patterns. What begins as abnormal behavior toward food and weight control may develop into anorexia, bulimia, and other forms of disordered eating.

As with any illness, I believe it is wise to invest in resources and programs working toward prevention. By heightening awareness and increasing education, we can save many young children before they become trapped in a life-threatening cycle of an eating disorder.

I extend my appreciation to the entire Senate for allowing this resolution to pass. It sends a message to the country that we care about the 8 million people who have eating disorders.

URGING PRESIDENT CLINTON TO RETRACT ULTIMATUM TO ISRAEL

Mr. D'AMATO. Mr. President, the reason I rise at this time is because certain matters have come to my attention and they are disturbing. Today, I have sent a letter to the President of the United States in regard to this.

Mr. President, Israel is our closest ally, it is our most trusted friend among the nations of the Middle East. We have a long history of working together and supporting one another for the benefit of both nations and all of our people.

Now as we celebrate the 50th anniversary of Israel's independence, we should reaffirm our commitment to their peace and security and our support for their continuation as a strong, reliable, independent nation.

I am proud of what Israel has accomplished over 50 years. I am proud of their commitment to freedom and justice. Israel should be praised for what it has accomplished and for doing so over a very long period of time in which it has faced terrorism from within and without its own borders.

Israel has always fought its own battles. Its young have shed much blood to protect their freedom and they continue to this day to defend their right to exist. And their very right to exist is being threatened. Nations hostile to Israel throughout the region are a continuing threat to Israel's existence. And the Palestinian Authority to this day has yet to recognize Israel's legitimate right to exist.

It is wrong for the Clinton administration to pressure Israel to forgo its own security needs at this critical time. It is just wrong. It is counterproductive. It is dangerous to a legitimate peace effort. The brave Israeli citizens who stand ready to defend their nation should be supported by us in every fashion. To place an ultimatum on Israel at this time undermines the peace process and it denies a good friend the right to determine its own security needs. It is not just bad policy; it is wrong.

I urge President Clinton in the strongest terms to retract his ultimatum to Israel and to return America to our proper role as a friendly mediator in the search for peace and security for all nations in the Middle East.

Mr. President, I yield the floor.

U.S. FOREIGN OIL CONSUMPTION FOR WEEK ENDING APRIL 24TH

Mr. HELMS. Mr. President, the American Petroleum Institute's report for the week ending April 24, that the U.S. imported 8,287,000 barrels of oil each day, an increase of 304,000 barrels over the 7,983,000 imported each day during the same week a year ago.

Americans relied on foreign oil for 56.3 percent of their needs last week. There are no signs that the upward spiral will abate. Before the Persian Gulf War, the United States obtained approximately 45 percent of its oil supply

from foreign countries. During the Arab oil embargo in the 1970s, foreign oil accounted for only 35 percent of America's oil supply.

Politicians had better give consideration to the economic calamity sure to occur in America if and when foreign producers shut off our supply—or double the already enormous cost of imported oil flowing into the U.S.—now 8,287,000 barrels a day.

THE VERY BAD DEBT BOXSCORE

Mr. HELMS. Mr. President, at the close of business yesterday, Tuesday, May 5, 1998, the federal debt stood at \$5,486,129,027,438.95 (Five trillion, four hundred eighty-six billion, one hundred twenty-nine million, twenty-seven thousand, four hundred thirty-eight dollars and ninety-five cents).

One year ago, May 5, 1997, the federal debt stood at \$5,332,472,000,000 (Five trillion, three hundred thirty-two billion, four hundred seventy-two million).

Five years ago, May 5, 1993, the federal debt stood at \$4,243,813,000,000 (Four trillion, two hundred forty-three billion, eight hundred thirteen million).

Ten years ago, May 5, 1988, the federal debt stood at \$2,516,506,000,000 (Two trillion, five hundred sixteen billion, five hundred six million).

Fifteen years ago, May 5, 1983, the federal debt stood at \$1,255,471,000,000 (One trillion, two hundred fifty-five billion, four hundred seventy-one million) which reflects a debt increase of more than \$4 trillion—\$4,230,658,027,438.95 (Four trillion, two hundred thirty billion, six hundred fifty-eight million, twenty-seven thousand, four hundred thirty-eight dollars and ninety-five cents) during the past 15 years.

"YOUTH HEALTH ISSUES"

Mr. LEAHY. Mr. President, I rise today to recognize a commendable group of Vermont teens. Oftentimes, society shortchanges teenagers by placing unfair stereotypes upon them and by not listening to what they have to say. The eighth grade students of Barton Academy have written an article to prove that they, as teens, are vital members of their community and of society as a whole. I was particularly impressed with not only the message but with the eloquence of this article. I ask unanimous consent that the article be printed in the CONGRESSIONAL RECORD so that all Senators may read the words of these fine teenagers.

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

[From the 1997 Vermont Kids Count]

YOUTH HEALTH ISSUES

The following article, written by a class of Barton eighth graders, introduces this section on youth health issues. It provides the

much-needed perspectives of teenagers, drawing attention to not only their daily lives but to the heart of many teen issues—the adult society in which they live and grow.

TEENS DEFEND THEMSELVES AGAINST STEREOTYPES

We present ourselves not as problems to society, but as we really are, 32 teens looking at themselves and society. Not statistics, but the real thing, us. We would like to present what we do that we are proud of, feel we have accomplished, and what we have given to others. We come from all social and economic backgrounds and come together each day in our town school. We have our ups and downs with each other, but get along more often than we do not. Life is not perfect, but neither is yours.

If you knew us, lived with us, celebrated and grieved with us there would be no need for this response. However, it is our experience that most adults simply ignore, disregard or fear teens. How many adults can you see in any given line at a movie even nod recognition of a teen's humanity, much less start a short conversation? We want to start that conversation.

Hey Mister, did you know that some of us do barn chores before we even go to school every morning. We do evening chores, too. In between, we go to school, make honor roll on occasion, play sports, participate in band and chorus and ride the roller coaster of adolescence.

Some of us have part-time jobs to earn the money we want for things. We shovel snow, mow lawns, baby-sit and clean houses for less than minimum wage. We've saved our money for a few years to get what we wanted. We also earn money to buy some of our own clothing, sports equipment and entertainment. Some of us even earn money to contribute to family necessities. Imagine that.

We have a sense of community. Who do you see picking up the trash along our roads and fields during Green Up Day? Who is collecting bottles for a class trip? Who are the crossing guards so younger children won't get hit by cars? Whose clothes have thoughtfully been gone through and chosen with care to give to clothing centers, or victims of fires? We have given our clothes, our bicycles, games, money and music to others in need just because we were asked.

We, the 32 teens of the eighth grade of Barton, have volunteered to carry elders' grocery bags just because we saw them struggling. We also volunteer to shovel out our grandparents' dooryards, and even accept the money they insist we take because we know it makes them feel good, too. We march and play our musical instruments in Memorial Day and Veterans Day parades in honor of those who served. Sometimes we go to local nursing homes and play our instruments or sing. Sometimes we go just to share and talk.

Most of us have family responsibilities that we honor. We split wood and stack it; and move it from one place to another. We trudge through snow and mud to gather sap and help sugar. We do the laundry for the family, set the table, cook some meals, and clean up afterward and empty the trash. We grumble, but we do the chores. We watch our younger brothers and sisters. For the most part, we think we are pretty helpful. Some of us were even responsible for bringing the possibility of recycling into our homes.

Did you know that teens in our community volunteer to tutor younger children? Some of the teens at Lake Region Union High School coach our junior hoop program and referee our games. Most of us would gladly lend a hand if we were asked.

Society says that our job is school. Mandatory. We do that, too. We go, learn, try to learn, and try to learn again. Sometimes we give up but not too often. The dropout rate at Lake Region Union High School is less than 2 percent, according to Lake Region Annual Report, Jan. 15, 1997. We might not be in the top 10 percent of the world's smartest kids, but do we really need to be? Society is a problem to us sometimes, too. If you want to separate society into parts, we, as teens and citizens, are not responsible for the pollution of the world, the genocide in most corners, poverty, homeless people, pornography, gridlock and the corruption of our national leaders. Drugs are everywhere. Do we manufacture them or smuggle them into the country? Society has taught us from the first time we viewed a sporting event that beer is where it's at. How are we to sort out the mixed messages we are bombarded with? We listen weekly to the adults in the news who compare us unfavorably with the test scores of other countries. We do not make the movies rated PG-13 that include more profanity than we would ever think of using. Where are the everyday role models that you would like us to emulate?

Our advice—get to know a teen up front and personal. We don't like the word scapegoat for anyone. It makes it too easy to cast the first stone.

MESSAGES FROM THE PRESIDENT

Messages from the President of the United States were communicated to the Senate by Mr. Williams, one of his secretaries.

EXECUTIVE MESSAGES REFERRED

As in executive session the Presiding Officer laid before the Senate messages from the President of the United States submitting sundry nominations which were referred to the appropriate committees.

(The nominations received today are printed at the end of the Senate proceedings.)

REPORT CONCERNING THE PROPOSED AGREEMENT FOR COOPERATION BETWEEN THE UNITED STATES OF AMERICA AND UKRAINE CONCERNING PEACEFUL USES OF NUCLEAR ENERGY—MESSAGE FROM THE PRESIDENT—PM 122

The PRESIDING OFFICER laid before the Senate the following message from the President of the United States, together with an accompanying report; which was referred to the Committee on Foreign Relations:

To the Congress of the United States:

I am pleased to transmit to the Congress, pursuant to sections 123b. and 123d. of the Atomic Energy Act of 1954, as amended (42 U.S.C. 2153 (b), (d)), the text of a proposed Agreement for Cooperation Between the United States of America and Ukraine Concerning Peaceful Uses of Nuclear Energy, with accompanying annex and agreed minute. I am also pleased to transmit my written approval, authorization, and determination concerning the agreement, and the memorandum of the Director of the United States Arms