

grids, determining the number and location of the dead and the extent of injuries inflicted on this defenseless population. More than 5,000 people were killed and another 10,000 were injured.

To see the images of the heaps of lifeless bodies and mothers still clutching their babies is to see a waking nightmare.

Eighteen years later, the people of Halabja are still suffering the effects. Physicians describe to me cancer and birth defects, stillborns and miscarriages. For the people of Halabja, the nightmare is still not over.

Nor did Saddam Hussein limit his use of weapons of mass destruction to just Halabja. He used these weapons of mass destruction to destroy scores of Kurdish towns and villages. These gruesome attacks were a part of a year-long campaign which resulted in the deaths and disappearances of more than 182,000 Iraqi Kurds.

These attacks bear on me heavily, as a Senator from Tennessee, because many of the Kurds migrated to Tennessee, especially the middle Tennessee area. Many live in Nashville. In fact, the other day as I was going through the airport, 20 or 30 of the Kurdish people came up to express to me their appreciation to the United States in receiving them and in Tennessee, in particular, for receiving them so well, so they could live lives that could move toward freedom and prosperity. Some of the people I now represent have friends and family who suffered at the hands of Saddam Hussein. He killed them. He tortured them. He oppressed the Iraqi Kurds for decades.

During the 1990s, the United States helped Iraq's Kurds achieve some degree of autonomy. Last year, we helped them achieve the right to vote for a Constitution and for a new Iraqi Government. The Kurds of northern Iraq knew for years what many Americans have been very slow to realize. Saddam and his chemical weapons were a threat not only to the Iraqi people but to the region, to our friends and our allies.

Saddam Hussein and his cohorts are now behind bars and standing trial for their crimes. Unlike the victims of his regime, they are being afforded the opportunity to defend themselves. The Iraqi people are committed to seeing justice done, they are bravely building a new order based on the rule of law and freedom. It has been a difficult journey, but they are working hard to reconcile their political differences and establish a government of national unity.

2005 was a year of progress. The Iraqis held three national elections. They approved a permanent Constitution. And thousands of young Iraqi citizens exhibited tremendous courage by joining the Iraqi security forces. They accomplished all of this in the face of vicious terrorist violence. The attack on the Golden Mosque in Samarra a few weeks ago was another cruel and craven attempt to ignite a civil war.

Iraq's political, ethnic, and religious leaders deserve credit for appealing for calm in working to diffuse the violence. They recognize that every Iraqi has a stake in their new democracy and that a free democratic and prosperous Iraq is in the best interests of all.

Their task now is to swiftly forge a national unity government so that leaders of Iraq's diverse population have the opportunity to peacefully appropriate the interests of their constituents. I am confident the Iraqi people will work to include all of Iraq's ethnic and religious communities in the democratic process. Indeed, they have no other choice.

Iraq's political leaders must come together and continue to work for national unity so that the Iraqi people can live in the freedom they deserve and so that tragedies such as Halabja remain irrevocably in the past. The fight for Iraq is far from over. Every day ruthless criminals are trying to smash all of the progress that has been made, but they will not succeed. Iraq has been set on a historic path.

This week, as we look back, we also press forward. With the continued courage and determination of the Iraqi people, Iraq will emerge a beacon of freedom and prosperity in the heart of the Middle East.

I suggest the absence of a quorum.

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

The legislative clerk proceeded to call the roll.

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

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

RESERVATION OF LEADER TIME

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

CONGRESSIONAL BUDGET FOR THE UNITED STATES GOVERNMENT FOR FISCAL YEAR 2007

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. Under the previous order, the Senate will resume consideration of S. Con. Res. 83, which the clerk will report.

The legislative clerk read as follows:

A concurrent resolution (S. Con. Res. 83) setting forth the congressional budget for the United States Government for fiscal year 2007, and including the appropriate budgetary levels for fiscal years 2006 and 2008 through 2011.

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. Under the previous order, there are 40 hours equally divided remaining for debate.

Mr. GREGG. I ask unanimous consent the time consumed since 9 o'clock be credited to the budget time and the budget time be reduced by that amount of time and that it be allocated to our side.

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

Mr. GREGG. Mr. President, I understand Senator FEINGOLD will speak to the amendment offered by himself and Senator CONRAD and after Senator FEINGOLD finishes speaking, I ask we go into a quorum call with the time equally divided as was ordered.

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. The Senator from Wisconsin.

Mr. FEINGOLD. I thank the Senator from New Hampshire. I am very pleased to join the Senator from North Dakota in the pay-go amendment, which I understand he will be offering soon.

There is no Senator more dedicated to a fiscally responsible Federal budget and to restoring sound budget rules than Senator CONRAD. He is an acknowledged expert on the budget and the rules that govern its consideration. One might say he is the "Robert C. Byrd" of the budget.

You do not have to be a Kent Conrad to understand the pay-go rule. Our amendment is the same amendment one or the other of us have offered since the original pay-as-you-go rule expired a few years ago. It simply reinstates the pay-as-you-go rule that had been such an effective restraint on the fiscal appetites of Congress and the White House.

Over the past 5 years, we have seen a dramatic deterioration in the Government's ability to perform one of its most fundamental jobs, and that is balancing the Nation's fiscal books. In January of 2001, the Congressional Budget Office projected, in the 10 years thereafter, the Government would run a unified budget surplus of more than \$5 trillion. But little more than 5 years later, we face immense deficits and backbreaking debt.

This must stop. Running deficits causes the Government to use the surpluses of the Social Security trust fund for other Government purposes, rather than to pay down the debt and help our Nation prepare for the coming retirement of the baby boom generation.

Every dollar we add to the Federal debt is another dollar that we are forcing our children to pay back in higher taxes or fewer Government benefits. When we choose to spend on current consumption—through appropriated accounts or mandatory spending or tax cuts—without paying for that spending, we are robbing our children of the opportunity to have their own choices.

When we spend on our wants, by cutting taxes or through Government programs, without paying for those decisions, we are saddling our children and even our grandchildren with debts they must pay from their tax dollars and their hard work. That is not right.

That is why I am joining Senator CONRAD in his amendment to fully reinstate the pay-go rule. We need a strong budget process. We need to exert fiscal discipline.

When the pay-go rule was in effect, that tough fiscal discipline actually

governed the budget process. Under the current approach, it is actually the other way around: the annual budget resolution determines how much fiscal discipline we are willing to impose on ourselves.

Obviously, it is not surprising to know that simply has not worked. When Congress decides it would be nice to create a new entitlement or enact new tax cuts and then adjusts its budget rules to permit those policies, we are inviting a disastrous result. And actually that is what we have seen happen—a disastrous result in terms of the fiscal health of our country.

I have tried in the past to contrast this approach to going on a diet. If you want to lose weight, you set the number of total calories you are allowed to consume first, and then what you are supposed to do, I understand, is to make the meals fit under that cap—not the other way around.

Imagine trying to lose weight by deciding what you want to eat first and then setting a calorie limit to accommodate all of your cravings. If you want a few extra beers, fine, just dial up the limit on your calorie intake. If you want some fudge brownies, that is fine, too, just raise the calorie limit accordingly.

It may taste pretty good at the time, but it is awfully sure you will end up gaining weight, such as the Nation is racking up debt. Because this ill-advised diet is exactly how the current, mutated version of pay-go works—and we have seen the results—the results are the debt we are leaving our children and grandchildren, and that debt continues to balloon and balloon.

In the case of the budget resolution before us, Members are permitted to indulge themselves in tax cut and mandatory spending policies—that are normally restrained by pay-go—to the tune of an estimated 10-year cost of \$270 billion without having to find offsetting savings.

We need to return to the wise restraints under which Congress functioned during the 1990s and which were instrumental in balancing the Federal budget. That is precisely what this amendment the Senator from North Dakota and I are offering would do.

Many of us have lived under this rule, and we know how effective it was. If this budget does nothing else, it should reinstate the old pay-go rule. If we do that, maybe we can begin to turn these annual budgets around and stop racking up these deficits and adding to the already enormous Federal debt.

I urge my colleagues to support the commonsense, time-tested pay-go amendment by my colleague from North Dakota.

Mr. President, of course, that time I used was, as I understand, to come off the budget resolution; is that correct?

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. That is the Chair's understanding.

Mr. FEINGOLD. I thank the Presiding Officer.

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

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

The legislative clerk proceeded to call the roll.

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

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

Mr. CARPER. Mr. President, what I want to do is to follow up today on the comments by Senator FEINGOLD, who has been talking about pay-go as a tool to begin reducing our budget deficit. As I do that, though, I want to say there are a lot of things we can do to reduce our budget deficit.

First of all, the fact is, the budget deficit last year was over \$300 billion; this one we expect to be over \$400 billion. That is on a cash basis of accounting. David Walker, the Comptroller General of our country, tells us if we were to use an accrual basis of accounting, which we require by law our businesses, our corporations to use, our budget deficit for the current year would be over \$700 billion. But we operate under a cash basis of accounting, so we are told it is going to be over \$400 billion.

As we look forward, down the road, by monkeying with the rules, by making some misassumptions, we can pretend the deficit is going to get smaller over the next several years. We can pretend, for example, we are not going to be spending more money in Iraq or Afghanistan, and we can pretend we are not going to fix the alternative minimum tax. We can pretend a wide variety of things. But the truth is, as the baby boomers get ready to retire and we play this game of pretend, the budget deficit does not get any smaller.

I think we are on a road to ruin. With the notion of \$400 billion budget deficits and \$700 billion trade deficits for as far as the eye can see, as the baby boomers get ready to retire, I do not see a whole lot of likelihood things are going to get better unless we do things differently in our Nation's capital. I am tired of hearing people just blame the Senate or just blame the House or just blame the administration. We are all in this together. If we are going to get out of this mess, we are going to get out of it together.

Let me mention a couple things before I talk about pay-go that we ought to be doing. The Internal Revenue Service reported last month that the tax gap for calendar year 2005 was about \$290 billion. What they mean by that is there was about \$290 billion—that is the net number—\$290 billion that was owed in taxes that were not collected by the Federal Government.

In a few minutes, I am leaving and going to a hearing of the Governmental Affairs Committee. We will be having a hearing on contractors, how we are doing with respect to making sure that contractors we retain to do work for

the Department of Defense or for civilian agencies; that before we start paying them the money they are charging for the work they are doing, we are taking out of that payment the taxes they owe and have not paid. We are talking about literally billions—with a “B”—billions of dollars that are going uncollected, going to contractors we retain.

The President has proposed in his own budget some things we can do differently, some additional moneys for the IRS, to enable them to collect taxes that are owed. For every extra \$1 we provide to the IRS, they will probably collect \$7 or \$8 that is not being collected that is owed. Senator BAYH, from Indiana, has a proposal that would probably enable us to collect another \$15 billion a year to cut the tax gap further. There are other ideas we need to consider.

But before we go raising taxes—and somewhere down the road we are going to have to—but before we raise taxes, we simply need to do a better job of collecting the taxes that are owed that are not being collected.

Let me also mention improper payments. We find, on the same committee I mentioned before, the Committee on Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs—one of the subcommittees that Senator COBURN and I serve on has been working on improper payments. What do I mean by an “improper payment”? It is a payment the Federal agency makes that is wrong. It is either too much or too little. As it turns out, there are a lot more improper payments that are too much than too little. Overall, the net number for improper payments is close to \$50 billion a year. That does not include all the agencies.

Another thing we can do a whole lot better on is with respect to oversight. I think there is something to be said for divided Government, where you do not have one party in charge of everything, whether it is Democrats or Republicans, because right now we do not do a very good job of oversight. The Democrats do not control the committees, do not control subcommittees. For the most part, we have not done the job we need to do on oversight of this Republican administration. I do not say that in a partisan way. It is the fact. If the shoe was on the other foot and the Democrats were running everything—the House, the Senate, and the White House—we might be guilty of the same kind of thing.

But there are moneys we are spending in the Department of Defense—and some of it is in Iraq and some of it is in other places—that is shameful in the way we are misallocating it. And even when it is pointed out by whistleblowers, we still go ahead and pay the money. It is crazy. We are doing the same kind of thing with some of our domestic agencies as well. We have begun putting a spotlight on this kind of behavior in order to reduce it, and I think it is actually starting to have an effect, but we need to keep it up.

The President has proposed something called expedited rescission powers. It is also called a line-item veto. It is another thing we are going to be probably debating here: whether it makes any sense to help reduce the budget deficit. We actually passed—in fact, I authored, when I was in the House of Representatives, gosh, almost 20 years ago, at least 15 years ago—expedited line-item veto power for the President. I called it a sort of 2-year test drive on line-item veto powers, to see if the President would abuse the power.

The Congress could override the line-item veto with a simple majority of either the House or the Senate. It was a power that would last for 2 years. If the President abused it, it would not be renewed. If the President did not abuse it and it was actually helpful, then it could be renewed beyond that 2 years. I think that is probably a better approach, if we are going to try something such as this, than what the President has suggested. I think his suggestion is wrought with the temptation for abuse by the executive branch.

That brings us to pay-go. Some of you have heard me quote Denis Healey, former chancellor of the Exchequer, many times—the “theory of holes.” What is the “theory of holes”? The Senator from North Dakota has heard me say this more than a few times. He has probably used this line a time or two as well: When you find yourself in a hole, stop digging. We are in a hole. It is time to stop digging.

Whenever any of us come to the floor and we say we want to cut taxes, even though we know it is going to increase the deficit, we ought to have an offset for it. When any of us come to the floor and say we want to increase spending on our favorite program, however meritorious, we ought to come with an offset. We ought to come up with a way to have no effect on the budget deficit, which is already huge. And we can do it by either cutting spending somewhere else or we can do it with respect to raising some revenues somewhere else.

But these pages in front of me, I do not know how old you guys and gals are—probably 15, 16 years old—you are juniors in high school. Someday somebody is going to have to pay the debt. Someday these chickens are going to come home to roost. They probably are not going to come home on my generation. They are probably going to come home on your generation. You guys and gals are the same age as my own children. It is not fair. It is not fair to you.

We should simply decide to set aside some of the rancor that goes on around here, and with Democrats who have good ideas, and Republicans who have good ideas, and the White House that has some good ideas, take that collection of ideas, which includes, as far as I am concerned, looking at entitlement programs. I am never interested in saving entitlement programs, but they should not be off limits either.

If some of them can be means tested, we should consider doing that. We are

going to have to do some things we as Democrats don't want to do and some things Republicans and the White House don't want to do if we are going to make serious progress. We need to make serious progress because we have a serious problem. One way we can start is by adopting pay as you go. It had a great road test for many years. We ought to put it in place today.

I yield the floor.

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. The Senator from North Dakota.

AMENDMENT NO. 3013

Mr. CONRAD. Mr. President, I send an amendment to the desk.

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. The clerk will report.

The legislative clerk read as follows:

The Senator from North Dakota [Mr. CONRAD], for himself, Mr. FEINGOLD, Mr. NELSON of Florida, Mr. WYDEN, Mr. OBAMA, Mr. BAUCUS, Mr. HARKIN, Mr. KERRY, Mr. SALAZAR, Mrs. CLINTON, Ms. MIKULSKI, Mr. CARPER, Mr. BYRD, Mr. KOHL, and Mr. CHAFEE, proposes an amendment numbered 3013.

Mr. CONRAD. I ask unanimous consent that reading of the amendment be dispensed with.

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

The amendment is as follows:

(Purpose: To fully reinstate the pay-as-you-go requirement through 2011)

At the appropriate place, insert the following:

SEC. ____ PAY-AS-YOU-GO POINT OF ORDER IN THE SENATE.

(a) POINT OF ORDER.—

(1) IN GENERAL.—It shall not be in order in the Senate to consider any direct spending or revenue legislation that would increase the on-budget deficit or cause an on-budget deficit for any 1 of the 3 applicable time periods as measured in paragraphs (5) and (6).

(2) APPLICABLE TIME PERIODS.—For purposes of this subsection, the term “applicable time period” means any 1 of the 3 following periods:

(A) The first year covered by the most recently adopted concurrent resolution on the budget.

(B) The period of the first 5 fiscal years covered by the most recently adopted concurrent resolution on the budget.

(C) The period of the 5 fiscal years following the first 5 fiscal years covered in the most recently adopted concurrent resolution on the budget.

(3) DIRECT-SPENDING LEGISLATION.—For purposes of this subsection and except as provided in paragraph (4), the term “direct-spending legislation” means any bill, joint resolution, amendment, motion, or conference report that affects direct spending as that term is defined by, and interpreted for purposes of, the Balanced Budget and Emergency Deficit Control Act of 1985.

(4) EXCLUSION.—For purposes of this subsection, the terms “direct-spending legislation” and “revenue legislation” do not include—

(A) any concurrent resolution on the budget; or

(B) any provision of legislation that affects the full funding of, and continuation of, the deposit insurance guarantee commitment in effect on the date of enactment of the Budget Enforcement Act of 1990.

(5) BASELINE.—Estimates prepared pursuant to this section shall—

(A) use the baseline surplus or deficit used for the most recently adopted concurrent resolution on the budget; and

(B) be calculated under the requirements of subsections (b) through (d) of section 257 of the Balanced Budget and Emergency Deficit Control Act of 1985 for fiscal years beyond those covered by that concurrent resolution on the budget.

(6) PRIOR SURPLUS.—If direct spending or revenue legislation increases the on-budget deficit or causes an on-budget deficit when taken individually, it must also increase the on-budget deficit or cause an on-budget deficit when taken together with all direct spending and revenue legislation enacted since the beginning of the calendar year not accounted for in the baseline under paragraph (5)(A), except that direct spending or revenue effects resulting in net deficit reduction enacted pursuant to reconciliation instructions since the beginning of that same calendar year shall not be available.

(b) WAIVER.—This section may be waived or suspended in the Senate only by the affirmative vote of $\frac{3}{5}$ of the Members, duly chosen and sworn.

(c) APPEALS.—Appeals in the Senate from the decisions of the Chair relating to any provision of this section shall be limited to 1 hour, to be equally divided between, and controlled by, the appellant and the manager of the bill or joint resolution, as the case may be. An affirmative vote of $\frac{3}{5}$ of the Members of the Senate, duly chosen and sworn, shall be required to sustain an appeal of the ruling of the Chair on a point of order raised under this section.

(d) DETERMINATION OF BUDGET LEVELS.—For purposes of this section, the levels of new budget authority, outlays, and revenues for a fiscal year shall be determined on the basis of estimates made by the Committee on the Budget of the Senate.

(e) SUNSET.—This section shall expire on September 30, 2011.

Mr. CONRAD. The amendment I have sent to the desk is the pay-go amendment. In many ways I believe this is the most important amendment to be considered today. This amendment would reestablish the budget discipline that worked so well in previous years, a rule that has been allowed to lapse by our colleagues on the other side of the aisle.

Here is where we are. The debt of our country is skyrocketing. At the end of the first year of this Presidency, the debt stood at \$5.8 trillion. That year the President told us if we adopted his fiscal plan, he would have maximum paydown of the debt. In fact, he said if we adopted his strategy, we would virtually eliminate the debt. The President was wrong. The debt was not paid down. The debt was certainly not virtually eliminated. Instead, the debt has skyrocketed. At the end of this year, they now tell us the debt will be \$8.6 trillion. And if the budget before us is adopted, by 2011 the debt will be \$11.8 trillion. It will have doubled on this President's watch. All of this is before the baby boomers retire. We are on an unsustainable course, and it must be changed. We need to do it as soon as we can.

On the question of pay-go, that simply says if you want more spending on mandatory programs, you have to pay for it. If you want to have more tax cuts, you have to pay for them, or you

have to get a supermajority vote in the Senate. That is the pay-go discipline. It says, yes, you can have more tax cuts, but you have to pay for them; you can have more spending on mandatory programs, such as Medicare and Social Security, but you have to pay for them. That is what pay-go is about.

Here is what Chairman Greenspan said:

All I'm saying is my general rule is I like to see the tax burden as low as possible. And in that context, I would like to see tax cuts continued. But, as I indicated earlier, that has got to be, in my judgment, in the context of a pay-go resolution.

We have not only heard that advice from the Chairman of the Federal Reserve, but from the respected Concord Coalition, a bipartisan group that says deficits do matter, that the buildup of debt is unsustainable, and said this about pay-go:

Exempting tax cuts from pay-go does nothing to promote fiscal discipline. It would neither control spending nor shrink the deficit. All it would do is exempt any tax legislation from fiscal scrutiny, regardless of the circumstances. Such an enormous and unnecessary loophole would not be wise policy given that deficits are back for as far as the eye can see. Since spending and tax decisions both have consequences for the budget, there is no good reason to exempt either from enforcement rules.

I believe they have it exactly right. Our friends, having adopted an enormous loophole, say: You can have all the increased spending you want, all the increased tax cuts you want, as long as they are in the budget resolution. If they are in the budget resolution, they are exempt from pay-go.

Here is what has happened as a result. This chart goes back to 1990. We had a strong pay-go rule in effect from 1991 until 2002. We climbed out of the deficit ditch during those years. In fact, we actually went into surplus. In fact, we went into surplus to such an extent we stopped raiding Social Security trust funds to pay other bills.

Then our colleagues on the other side got control of the White House and both Houses of Congress, and they ended the pay-go rule. Look what has happened. Surpluses were eliminated. We have plunged back into deficit, bigger deficits than we had even back here.

That is what has happened without the discipline of pay-go. What we are saying today is, let's reinstitute the discipline of pay-go. Let's do it now.

This chart shows how we would eliminate the loophole that currently exists. The current loophole put in place by our colleagues on the other side exempts all tax cuts and mandatory spending increases assumed in any budget resolution, no matter how much they increase deficits. What we are offering today is the budget discipline, the pay-go rule that worked so effectively in the past. It says all mandatory spending and tax cuts that increase deficits must be paid for or require a supermajority, 60 votes, in the Senate. That is what we ought to do.

This is what has happened in terms of deficit increases when we had the budget pay-go loophole that is currently in effect. In 2006, \$12.5 billion allowed under the Senate GOP budget with their pay-go loophole. In 2007, \$36 billion of additional deficit allowed. In 2007 to 2011, almost \$214 billion is going to be permitted, if we don't shut it down.

I hope my colleagues will adopt the pay-go rule, the budget discipline that has worked so well in the past. It is critically important that we do that. This is our opportunity. For those who say they are fiscally responsible, here is your chance. You are going to be able to prove with one vote whether you are serious about doing something about these runaway debts and runaway deficits or whether it is all talk. This is going to be the chance. This will be a vote that tests whether Members are willing to stand up and take a tough vote and reimpose the budget discipline that has worked so well in the past.

I ask what the time situation is.

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. The Senator has consumed 7½ minutes on the amendment.

Mr. CONRAD. I thank the Chair.

If there are others who want to speak on pay-go, this is an opportunity. We have hopefully a few minutes left on this amendment before we go to the next one. We have been taking time so far this morning off the resolution. Perhaps when the chairman returns, we can make an arrangement to take additional time off the amendment as well so we can keep on our schedule.

With that, I suggest the absence of a quorum.

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

The legislative clerk proceeded to call the roll.

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

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

Mr. CONRAD. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the 5 minutes Senator FEINGOLD used be attributed to the amendment and taken off the amendment time.

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

Mr. CONRAD. If the Chair could inform me how much time is left on our side on the amendment?

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. There is 15 minutes remaining.

Mr. CONRAD. And how much time remains on the other side on the amendment?

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. There is 28 minutes.

Mr. CONRAD. I thank the Chair.

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. The Senator from New Hampshire.

Mr. GREGG. Mr. President, I rise to speak to the pay-go amendment. Pay-

go is a term that has sort of taken on a motherhoodlike atmosphere around here. There are some terms which occur in the legislative process or in the political arena that become perceptionwise different than what they are in substance. The perception becomes the issue versus the substance.

Pay-go has taken on that sort of status because it sounds like something that makes sense. But to be honest, what pay-go is is a tax increase. It is that simple. The way this amendment is structured, it guarantees a tax increase. Rather than saying they are for tax increases, they are saying they are for pay-go. In fact, the last chart the Senator referred to which showed very large numbers in this bill which he didn't call taxes were just that—taxes.

If you want to adjust those numbers, you are going to have to raise taxes by the \$214 billion he cited in that chart. So pay-go is a stalking horse for a tax increase. It is really that simple. It is also technically not an appropriate approach, and this is why.

CBO scores things around here, and CBO basically drives the decisions of the budget process because what the Congressional Budget Office says is what the baseline is; in other words, how much a program will cost in the outyears, how much tax revenue will occur in the outyears as a result of a tax proposal. But CBO uses different standards for different groups of spending and taxes. For discretionary spending, they have one set of standards. For entitlement spending, they have another set of standards. For tax revenues and tax cuts, they have another set of standards.

So when you create this pay-go language, which the Democratic side is offering, you are creating a one-size-fits-all and applying it to different accounting systems, and it produces perverse effects. The most perverse effect is it basically means you have to raise taxes, but you will never actually impact entitlement spending.

Why is that? Because under the way CBO works, they say entitlement programs never end. It is amazing. You can have an entitlement which had an authorization life of, say, 10 years, but CBO would score it as if it went on forever, never sunsets, never is perceived by CBO as having to be reduced or in any way adjusted. That is the decision they have made in scoring entitlements.

On the tax side, however, they take the exact opposite approach. If you have a tax cut which is authorized for 5 years or 10 years, at the end of the 5 years or 10 years, they presume that tax cut is followed by a tax increase and, as a result, they presume there has to be more income coming in because taxes will go up.

The practical effect of that is that this pay-go proposal will never actually be applied to an entitlement that already exists, but it will always be applied to a tax cut that already exists,

which results in tax cuts being significantly prejudiced by this approach because it is a one-size-fits-all approach.

If CBO were to change its scoring mechanisms and say that entitlements didn't go on forever, then it would be logical to have this type of an approach—potentially logical—because then you would actually have to pay for entitlements and you would have to pay for tax cuts. But under this proposal, that is not the case. Under this proposal, only tax cuts would have to be adjusted and paid for and would be affected by pay-go, and it would essentially be, therefore, a tax increase mechanism. So when our colleagues vote for this, they are voting for tax increases. It is that simple.

Another problem with this technical problem is it again goes to CBO scoring. For example, under the CBO scoring, CBO uses capital gains as a revenue loser. It does not score capital gains for the dynamic effect it has on the economy. When we cut capital gains rates—it has been proven every time we have done it—we generate revenue. Why is that? It is called human nature, and human nature usually overwhelms accountants. They just sometimes cannot handle the concept of human nature, but human nature goes to work when you cut the capital gains rates because when somebody owns an asset and has owned it for a while, it is an asset which they know if they sell they are going to have to pay 30 percent taxes on. Then we cut the tax rate on that asset to 15 percent, if they sell it, and there is an incentive for them to sell that asset and to reinvest those dollars in something that is probably more productive. But if the tax rate stays at 30 percent, there is no incentive for them to go out and make that sale because they recognize they are going to pay a very high level of taxes on it. So assets get locked up. Stocks that might be sold get locked up, investments in real estate that might be converted get locked up, small businesses that might be converted get locked up, and farms that might be sold get locked up because the incentive to sell is reduced by the high level of taxes.

So when we cut capital gains rates, which is what we have done, we create this huge infusion of economic activity. People start to sell assets which they wouldn't otherwise have sold, and that generates income to the Federal Government because taxes are being paid that would not have been paid before and there would be no tax revenue coming in because people would sit on these assets. We generate a tax event.

More important, the money which was invested in that asset is reinvested and, by human nature, it is reinvested in something that, to the person doing the investing, is going to be more productive. By creating more productive investments, we end up creating more economic activity, more jobs—many more jobs—and, as a result, once again, we generate more revenue to the Federal Government.

A capital gains cut actually generates a lot of revenue. We see on this chart that CBO—the blue line—simply is not willing to score that type of economic activity, the real economic activity generated from capital gains cuts. We have had a huge infusion of revenues into the Federal Treasury as a result of the capital gains tax, huge—\$60 billion, \$75 billion, \$81 billion.

What happens is CBO uses these artificially low numbers to score that capital gains cut even though capital gains is paying for itself. If they used the accurate numbers, then pay-go wouldn't even apply to a capital gains cut because capital gains would pay for itself. It would pay for itself because it would generate so much revenue. But CBO scores it as a loser, even though it is a winner, so a capital gains cut is subject to the perverse approach under the CBO scoring rules of having to pay twice if you have pay-go in place. First, it would pay because it would generate the revenue to cover the cost of the cut, which CBO claims is a cost—it is not a cost; it is actually a revenue winner—and then it would have to pay on the presumption it was going to cost money, when, in fact, it is not going to cost money, and then you have to find revenues to cover it.

There is a perverse accounting mechanism working here if we put pay-go in place relative to items such as capital gains reductions. That is a technical reason this proposal does not work.

The bottom line of this proposal is simple: It is a tax increase. The basic engine of this proposal, the basic effect of this proposal would be the engine to drive tax increases.

There is a fundamental disagreement between the two parties as to whether we should have tax increases driven by an accounting mechanism or whether we should have them driven by policy. It may be we should do some tax increases around here in certain areas. The Senator from North Dakota has pointed out some loopholes that should be closed, and I am for that. And he has suggested we should collect more taxes that are owed. I am for that, too. But I don't think we should use an accounting mechanism to basically repeal the capital gains rate and the dividends rate, which is the purpose of this amendment.

This amendment is targeted to two tax cuts: dividends and capital gains. And then later on, when the rates adjust, when the rate adjustment comes to an end, it will be targeted on rates. It is like a laser beam aimed at those two issues. If it were to be in place today, it is unlikely we would have a capital gains rate or dividend rate at the present levels.

The result, in my opinion, would be to chill the economic recovery because I think a huge part of our economic recovery has been these numbers right here, capital gains activity: people realizing their gains, selling an asset, and reinvesting it in something more

productive, which creates economic activity, jobs, and revenue.

There is a fundamental disagreement here. This is a stalking horse for a tax increase, in my opinion. It is doing it through a technical vehicle, but it is clearly going to have that result. If we were to put a major new entitlement on the books, it would actually impact that, I give it credit for that. But we already have on the books a pay-go which affects new entitlements—new entitlements. I would love to have a pay-go that affects existing entitlements, and if they want to redraft the amendment to do that, I would be happy to take a look at that.

The practical effect of this amendment is singular in purpose: It will force a tax increase.

I yield the floor.

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. The Senator from North Dakota.

Mr. CONRAD. Mr. President, I could not disagree more. I could not disagree more. Pay-go doesn't require a tax increase. This is just not true. What does pay-go say? Pay-go says if you want to have new mandatory spending, you have to pay for it. If you want to have new tax cuts—new tax cuts—you have to pay for them. That is what pay-go says. Nowhere does it say anything about increasing taxes. The chairman is just wrong; it doesn't say that. It doesn't require that.

It does say if you want new mandatory programs, such as the new prescription drug benefit that was passed—if we had pay-go in effect at the time the new prescription drug program was offered, we would have had to pay for it either through increased revenue or from cuts elsewhere. That is what pay-go says. It doesn't say there has to be a tax increase. That is just a red herring argument. Frankly, I am surprised the chairman makes it.

Here is what the chairman used to say about pay-go not so very long ago. In 2002, the chairman, who now argues against pay-go, said this:

The second budget discipline, which is pay-go, essentially says if you are going to add a new entitlement program or you are going to cut taxes during a period, especially of deficits, you must offset that event so that it becomes a budget-neutral event that also lapses.

That is what the chairman said in 2002 when he was an advocate for pay-go. He went on to say:

... If we do not do this, if we do not put back in place caps and pay-go mechanisms, we will have no budget discipline in this Congress, and, as a result, we will dramatically aggravate the deficit which, of course, impacts a lot of important issues, but especially impacts Social Security.

That was the chairman 4 years ago, and he was absolutely right in his support of pay-go then and in his recognition that pay-go was essential to budget discipline. He was right. He wasn't talking about requiring a tax increase then. This is a new argument which has been concocted to try to derail putting back the budget discipline which is absolutely needed.

Pay-go doesn't require anything unless you try to increase mandatory spending, in which case you have to pay for it or get a supermajority vote. It doesn't do anything to taxes unless you try to cut taxes without paying for it. That is what pay-go does. There is no requirement of a tax increase here; there is a requirement we start paying for programs.

When—when, I ask—are we going to start paying for things around here instead of just increasing the spending, cutting the taxes, and running up the debt? Because that is what we are doing. Since pay-go lapsed, the deficits and the debt have exploded. This is an opportunity to begin the process to rein in the growth of deficits and debt. That is what pay-go is about, and that is why it should be supported today.

I thank the Chair and yield the floor.

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. The Senator from New Hampshire.

Mr. GREGG. Mr. President, let me briefly respond to the Senator from North Dakota. I was right then, and I am right now. Times change and dynamics of what is happening around here change substantively.

The only thing that will be impacted by this pay-go amendment, if it is adopted, is tax increases. That is it, because there isn't a major new entitlement being proposed. In fact, as I mentioned before, the way the scoring occurs around here, all the entitlements will continue.

These are the entitlements that are exempt: Food Stamp Program, TANF, Commodity Credit Corporation, veterans compensation, child care, State children's health, rehabilitation services, ground transportation, Federal unemployment insurance, child nutrition, and the list goes on of entitlement accounts exempt from the Senator's pay-go and pay-go generally. There is a pay-go in the bill.

What isn't exempt is the fact if this were in place today, capital gains and dividends would be subject to it. And that is totally inconsistent because capital gains, as I pointed out—what happened to my chart? Somebody took it down, I guess as a courtesy to the Senator from North Dakota because this is such a devastating chart and he didn't want it to undermine his arguments.

As this chart points out definitively, the money is in the bank, or at least it is in the Federal Treasury until we spend it. We are generating huge amounts of revenues from capital gains. Under this pay-go amendment, were it in place, you would have to pay for capital gains because CBO does not score it relative to what it actually does.

The next event to which this is going to apply is the death tax, if pay-go is in place. That is the only thing it will impact in this budget window over the next 5 years because the only thing that is planned in this next 5 years will be the death tax and the rates, and it

will be used as the club to generate tax increases. That is all it is for in the context of today.

You look over this 5-year window of what this budget says, you take this pay-go language and lay it over that 5-year window, and the only thing it will impact is taxes, and it will basically be used as a lever, as a club, to raise taxes. It shouldn't be called pay-go, it should be called tax-go. The Senator from North Dakota made this case for us when he held up his chart that showed all these bars—and he didn't identify what they were—of numbers that this budget allegedly doesn't cover that are losses of revenue, according to the Senator from North Dakota, because we have cut taxes. He didn't actually say they were loss of revenue from tax cuts, he used some other term for it. I don't know what the term was, but he had one bar that was \$216 billion. Well, that is death taxes, rate cuts, dividends and interest, for the most part.

There might also be some R&D tax credits in there and some State and local deductibility. So it is ironic, to say the least, that they would claim that this is a balanced approach.

Another ironic thing is we have heard the Senator from North Dakota and other Members come to the floor and say the AMT is an outrage, the alternative minimum tax. Well, I haven't heard them suggest how they are going to pay for fixing the AMT, but under their amendment, they would have to, and that is an \$800 billion hole. I happen to think we should fix the AMT, and we should fix it in the context of revenue neutrality. But I don't see any amendments floating around here, and I haven't seen any amendments floating around here to accomplish that.

So I don't see how you can argue anything other than the fact that this proposal, as it is presented, has one fundamental impact: and that will be that over the next 5 years any attempt to extend any tax cut will be put to a 60-vote point of order and will be, therefore, pressure to raise taxes. It will be pressure to raise taxes to do that extension. It will have no impact on anything else because there are no new entitlement programs planned in this bill. And because CBO scores all entitlements that already exist as going on forever, they won't be hit by this proposal.

So as I said earlier, it is a one-size-fits-all proposal that disadvantages tax cuts. The irony is the tax cuts that pay for themselves, such as capital gains and dividends cuts, which generate economic activity, which generate income, will end up having to be paid for twice. That really doesn't make any sense, and it will be driven by an accounting mechanism. I don't think policy should be driven by an accounting mechanism when it is so unfairly applied where it basically impacts tax policy one way and entitlement policy another way. I would rather see something that was fair. But, in any event,

I don't support this because it is a tax increase mechanism.

Mr. CONRAD. Mr. President, the chairman keeps repeating himself: this is a tax increase. You can use the words, you can repeat it 100 times, it doesn't make it true. It is not a tax increase. Pay-go very simply says: if you want to increase or create a new mandatory spending program, you have to pay for it. You don't have to pay for it with a tax increase, you can pay for it by cutting other spending. If you want to have more tax cuts, you can have them, but you have to pay for them, either through cutting spending or raising other taxes. That is what pay-go says. That is what pay-go does. It restores a budget discipline that is desperately needed.

The chairman says they have pay-go. They have a figment of pay-go because their pay-go exempts all tax cuts and mandatory spending increases that are assumed in any budget resolution, no matter how much they increase the deficit. The record is very clear. What has happened with weakened pay-go? What has happened?

Let's go back. Pay-go was put in place right here, and we climbed out of the deficit ditch and we actually achieved budget surpluses. When it was weakened, here is what happened: surpluses were eliminated, we plunged back into deficit, and the debt is skyrocketing.

That is the choice before the body. Do we really want to continue on this path of running up the debt of the country to record levels? That is the course we are on.

I would again remind my colleague of what he said in previous years. Back in 2002 the distinguished chairman, in floor debate, said this about pay-go:

The second budget discipline, which is pay-go, essentially says if you are going to add a new entitlement program, or you are going to cut taxes during a period, especially of deficits, you must offset that event so that it becomes a budget-neutral event.

He went on to say:

If we do not do this, if we do not put back in place caps and pay-go mechanisms, we will have no budget discipline in this Congress.

He was right then. He continued:

And, as a result, we will dramatically aggravate the deficit which, of course, impacts a lot of important issues, but especially impacts Social Security.

The chairman argues on one tax type alone. He argues on capital gains. Let me say that CBO has reviewed that question, and they wrote a letter to the chairman of the Finance Committee that said this:

After examining the historical record, including that for 2004, we cannot conclude that the unexplained increase in capital gains tax revenue is attributable to the change in capital gains tax rates.

This is after their careful analysis. I would acknowledge the chairman's chart that shows increased capital gains tax receipts higher than previously projected. CBO has studied

this, and they say they can't attribute that to the lower rates. I think most people would say the increased revenue is initially, in part, an effect of lower capital gains rates. But over time, a capital gains tax reduction loses revenue, not gains it. In other words, you get an initial bump, but after that you start losing it.

On the larger question of whether tax cuts pay for themselves, we don't have to have a theoretical discussion. We have what has happened in the real world.

In 2000, we collected over \$2 trillion in revenue. Then we had the big tax cuts of 2001, and our Republican colleagues and the President all assured us: Don't worry, that will generate more revenue.

Well, guess what. It didn't. That is the problem with their argument. It didn't work. It failed, and it failed miserably.

In 2001, we had almost \$2 trillion in revenue, big tax cuts, and the revenue went down; in 2002, less revenue than 2001; in 2003, less revenue than in 2001; in 2004, less revenue than in 2001. We didn't get back to the revenue base we had in 2000 until 2005. In real terms, we are nowhere close to the revenue base we had in 2000. We are nowhere close because this ideological argument failed in the real world. That is a fact. It failed. It didn't work.

One of the reasons we have runaway deficits and debts is our colleagues have just been wrong. They bet the farm on a concept that didn't work in the real world. Now the question is, Do we do something to reestablish budget discipline, or don't we? I hope we will.

I yield the floor.

Mr. GREGG. Mr. President, how much time is left on this amendment?

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Mr. DEMINT). The Senator from North Dakota has 5 minutes. The Senator from New Hampshire has 11 minutes.

Mr. GREGG. Mr. President, let me simply respond to some of the things the Senator said.

We haven't seen a budget plan from the Democratic side of the aisle for the last 2 years. In fact, even when they were in control of the Senate, we didn't get a budget across the floor from the other side of the aisle. I think one of the reasons is because they would have to openly admit to the fact that what they are basically saying, in language which is not specific but which is clear, is that they are going to raise taxes, that they want to raise taxes, and pay-go is just a stalking horse to accomplish that. It is that simple. The facts are very clear.

If you take this pay-go language and you template it over this budget, there are no entitlements that are going to be impacted. None. But there are taxes that are going to be impacted: specifically, capital gains, dividends—if they aren't addressed in this reconciliation package that is still being worked on—and the death tax.

I think most people in this country know that when their rates go up, they

are getting a tax increase. And the effect of the pay-go language will be that if you get to the time when the rates have to be extended, the pay-go language will either force them to go up or force taxes to be raised somewhere else. It will be basically a major club used for the purpose of defeating the maintenance of things like the capital gains rate, dividend and interest rate, the dividend rate, and the death tax. That is the purpose, and it couldn't be any clearer from the facts.

I wish the Senator would present a budget because I think if he did, you would see that. Clearly, he hasn't addressed how they are going to do AMT. That amendment has been offered from their side. It was in committee, and it is, I presume, going to be offered again before we finish. Are they going to offset that with tax increases, that almost \$1 trillion tax event? If they are going to stick to their language, they should. I don't think they will. So there is a different standard.

The point is obvious. This language, as it is presently structured, because of the facts that we have before us, which is a 5-year budget which has no new entitlements in it, and because CBO scores entitlements as going on forever and therefore they are never impacted by this pay-go language, this pay-go language will not affect the spending side of the ledger at all. But it will affect the tax side of the ledger. And when the death tax needs to be extended, this pay-go language will require a tax increase. When rates need to be extended, this pay-go language will require a tax increase. When dividends and interest, dividends and capital gains, should they not be extended in this reconciliation agreement need to be extended, this pay-go will require a tax increase, and that is the purpose of this.

This concept that CBO writes us back and says: Well, we can't really figure out that the capital gains cut generated capital gains income, that is one of the problems here. The CBO is taking a very strict green-eyeshade approach to budgeting. The way they build their baseline, they use four or five different major assumption groups. The assumption group they use for entitlement, the assumption group they use for taxes is entirely opposite and unfair and disproportionately impacts the capacity to do anything on the tax side of the ledger around here. And this amendment, if it were agreed to, would lock in that unfairness.

Clearly, capital gains generate revenue. Now, maybe the Senator from North Dakota wants to repeal the capital gains rate. He is saying in the out-years they don't generate revenue, they lose revenue. I happen to think they create a great deal of capital activity and investment and people are willing to take risks because they have a tax rate that is reasonable.

In the industrialized world, in major industrialized countries, we still have one of the highest rates of taxation on

capital there is. Most industrial nations don't even tax capital formation because they recognize it creates jobs. We do, and the rate we have is reasonable, in my opinion. But if the Senator from North Dakota wants to raise it because he thinks in the out-years it is a revenue loser—fine. Say so. Offer a budget that does that. I would be happy to debate that rather than move under the terminology that is misleading, this motherhood terminology of pay-go, which is nothing more than "tax-go" in the way it will be applied to this bill and to the next 5 years. Obviously I oppose this amendment.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from North Dakota.

Mr. CONRAD. Mr. President, again the chairman repeats over and over that this requires a tax increase. He is wrong. No colleague should be fooled by that rhetoric. It requires new mandatory spending to be paid for. You can pay for things one of two ways: You could do it with a tax increase. You could also do it by spending cuts.

The same is true of new tax reductions. Under pay-go, you have to pay for them. You could pay for them with tax increases elsewhere, but you could pay for them by reducing spending elsewhere. The chairman seems to have forgotten that is the way pay-go works.

What the chairman is saying is he doesn't want to worry about increases in the deficit and debt. What the chairman is saying is he wants to continue this pattern because this is what has happened under his fiscal plan. The debt is skyrocketing: \$5.8 trillion at the end of 2001, \$8.6 trillion at the end of this year, headed toward \$11.8 trillion if this budget is adopted.

What the chairman is saying is he doesn't want to worry about paying for tax cuts or more spending. He wants to continue to charge up the credit card. He wants to continue sending this debt to our kids and our grandkids. He wants to be free to take the easy political course, that is saying we can have new spending, such as the new prescription drug plan, and not pay for it; that we can have more tax cuts even though we are deep in deficit and not pay for them. That is the position he is taking. If we want to be clear here, that is what this debate is about. Do you want to stay on this reckless course of running up the debt? And the chairman says, not only with his speech here today and his position on pay-go here today, but with his budget, that he wants to run up the debt. He wants to take no responsibility to either reduce spending or to pay for more tax cuts. Instead, he prefers to send the bill to our kids and our grandkids. Let the foreigners continue to loan us the money so they can buy up U.S. assets. That is his position.

I think that is a reckless position. I think that is a position that weakens America. I think that is a position that makes us more vulnerable. I take the chairman back to the position he took

previously on pay-go. At that point he was right. In 2002, he argued for pay-go and he said then:

... if we do not do this, if we do not put back in place caps and pay-go mechanisms, we will have no budget discipline in this Congress and, as a result, we will dramatically aggravate the deficit which, of course, impacts a lot of important issues but especially impacts Social Security.

That is what he said then. He was right then and it is the right position now. If you don't have this budget discipline, you are going to continue on this path and this course of running up the debt. That is what the chairman's budget does. It is precisely what we should not do.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from New Hampshire.

Mr. GREGG. Mr. President, I appreciate the Senator from North Dakota telling us what I am saying. I do wish the Senator from North Dakota had brought forward a budget so we could see what he is saying and what their side thinks they should do. Right now their budget is a blank piece of paper as an overall document, and it has been for the last few years. But if we look at what they did in committee, I think you can get an idea. They proposed amendments which would have increased discretionary spending by almost \$19 billion and mandatory spending by \$127 billion. That is a lot of new spending. And they raised taxes by about \$130 billion. That is a lot of new taxes. So there is no discipline on their side of the aisle relative to controlling the rate of growth of this Government. In fact, just the opposite. They want to expand the rate of growth significantly and they want to raise taxes on the American people to accomplish that. That has always been their position and we are going to see amendment after amendment offered to this budget which will essentially increase spending.

We have already got a few in line here. I think Senator KENNEDY is going to offer one for \$6.5 billion as the next amendment, or one of the coming amendments here. There are others coming down the pike. They are all going to be paid for by raising taxes.

The position of the other side of the aisle on this, although they manage to keep it a little foggy because they don't put forward their own budget, is pretty clear. They want to increase and grow the size of this Government significantly and they want to raise taxes to do that.

What the pay-go amendment does is raise taxes. You can't deny this. There are only three items of any significance that they are going to impact in this budget. My budget has no new entitlement spending in it so pay-go won't apply to any entitlement spending. It has a lot of entitlement spending presumed in it because entitlement spending is, of course, a big part of the budget. But none of that entitlement spending is affected by pay-go because,

as a practical matter, pay-go will be exempting those entitlement accounts.

This reflects what were the amounts of tax increases offered from the Democratic side in committee when we marked this bill up: \$133 billion, and the amount of new spending, \$127 billion. It puts in stark terms how much new spending was proposed in committee by the Democratic membership, and new taxes.

Now they want to use this vehicle of pay-go to essentially repeal the tax cuts. That is what they are trying to do. The only items, as I mentioned, that are going to be impacted by this pay-go language will be the extension of the tax cuts. What tax cuts will need to be extended in the next 5 years? There are the rates, there are capital gains and dividends, and there is the death tax. Those are the big ones. Also maybe State and local deductibility in that category; I am not sure. That may be extended further than this window. But in any event, those are the big ones.

They are saying to a person whose rates go up: Your rates are either going to go up or taxes are going to have to be raised somewhere else to keep them at their present level. This argument that you are going to cut spending around here, and to raise taxes—I would love to see the other side of the aisle come forward with that proposal. I might be willing to do that and there might be two other people on this side of the aisle who might be willing to do that, but I have not seen a proposal from the other side of the aisle to cut spending anywhere.

The Senator from North Dakota argues that this budget adds enormously to the debt. It adds a lot less to the debt than anything the Senator from North Dakota has presented because he is not willing to freeze nondefense discretionary spending. He has not put forward a budget that reduces debt.

What this budget at least does is put in place discipline on the discretionary side of the ledger. It sets a cap—\$873 billion. As long as you have that cap you have something around here to enforce so you can limit spending. It doesn't do as much as I would like to do on the entitlement side, but at least it puts in place a mechanism for us to have a point of order should entitlement spending get out of control—should more than 45 percent of an entitlement account, which is supposed to be an insurance account, end up coming out of the general treasury—and I understand they are going to try to repeal that point of order. And then they claim they are for budget discipline?

The inconsistency of their position is reflected by the facts on the ground and the facts on the ground are pretty clear. The only thing this pay-go amendment will affect is taxes and it will force tax increases and it will make the extension of the tax cuts much more difficult to accomplish, which will be a tax increase.

If your rates go up, if your tax rates go up, that is a tax increase. I think

everybody in America probably understands that. You can call it pay-go if that is the term you want to use. If that is the new term we are going to use around here for raising taxes, we will call it pay-go and I guess that is what they want to say. When you raise taxes around here, we will call it pay-go.

Mr. CONRAD. Mr. President, how much time do I have?

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator has 1½ minutes.

Mr. CONRAD. Mr. President, the chairman says we have offered no budget. The chairman well knows the majority has the responsibility to offer a budget. Our responsibility is to critique that budget. We have done so by pointing out that this is the effect of the chairman's budget. It increases the debt every year by over \$600 billion. That is the budget that has been offered by the majority. When we were in control, they didn't offer alternative budgets.

Mr. GREGG. That is because you didn't offer a budget.

Mr. CONRAD. They didn't offer alternative budgets.

Mr. GREGG. Will the Senator yield on that point?

Mr. CONRAD. I am afraid I have only got a minute left.

Mr. GREGG. I will give you another minute if you want to yield on that point.

Mr. CONRAD. I will be happy to complete my thought and finish.

Over all the years when we were in control, Republicans did not offer alternative budgets.

With respect to what we did in committee, every amendment we offered was paid for. The Senator is entirely correct. We offered amendments with revenue of \$133 billion and with increased spending of \$126 billion. So we paid for every amendment. We didn't pay for it with tax increases. We paid for it by closing the tax gap, money that is owed that is not being paid, which the revenue commissioner has said could be collected.

I ask for an additional 30 seconds.

Mr. GREGG. I ask for 30 seconds also.

Mr. CONRAD. Let's take a minute and a half.

Mr. GREGG. Take a minute.

Mr. CONRAD. We ask unanimous consent for a minute apiece.

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

Mr. CONRAD. And we offered to close tax loopholes, these egregious tax loopholes that we have pointed out repeatedly. That is not a tax increase. It is more revenue. It is not a tax rate increase on anyone.

But that gets us back to the fundamental question of, What is the direction we are going to take? Are we going to continue to run up the debt of the country, as the chairman proposes? Or are we going to take a new turn and go back to the budget disciplines that have worked in the past? I urge my colleagues to go back to the budget disciplines we have had in the past. If you

want to spend more money, you have to pay for it. If you want to have more tax reductions, you have to pay for them. It is a simple principle. We have had it in the past. The chairman has endorsed it in the past. It is the right course.

THE PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from New Hampshire.

Mr. GREGG. Mr. President, I think the Senator is making my case. Basically, he is admitting the fact that he is proposing to raise taxes by \$133 billion. You can't do it the way he is reflecting. You are going to have to do it some other way. In fact, all his offsets raise about \$11 billion, according to the Finance Committee. The uncollected taxes there—sure, we would like to get them, but CBO won't score them so we can't use it. The fact is the pay-go language is one way to generate a lot of new revenue because it will essentially say you can't extend the tax cuts and you are going to have to raise taxes dramatically if you do try to extend those tax cuts, so if you want to raise some big-time taxes around here you vote for this pay-go language.

Simply as an aside, I have to say the reason we didn't offer a budget, in response to the Senator, when they were in control of the Senate was because the last year they were in control of the Senate, they didn't offer a budget themselves. They haven't offered a budget now for 6 years, I think—maybe it is 5. We would love to have them offer a budget because then we would see very specifically this philosophy which is reflected in the amendment process, which is one of growing the Federal Government, spending a lot more money and raising a lot of taxes to do it.

Mr. President, I understand under the prior order the Senator from Missouri is to be recognized to offer an amendment.

Mr. OBAMA. Mr. President, I speak in favor of the PAYGO amendment introduced by my friend, and ranking member of the Budget Committee, Senator CONRAD. This amendment, of which I am a cosponsor, seeks to fully reinstate the pay-as-you-go requirement for direct spending and revenue legislation in the Senate through 2011.

During the 1990s, the Senate's PAYGO rule worked well to reduce Federal deficits, and the rule is badly needed today. Back then, PAYGO applied equally to increases in mandatory spending and decreases in revenue. It neither forced tax increases nor spending cuts but rather enforced fiscal balance and budget discipline. New spending or tax cuts could only become law if they were offset or found 60 votes in support.

Unfortunately, the original PAYGO rules were abandoned to provide for a series of unfunded tax breaks. Those tax breaks were not paid for by reductions in Federal spending and there was only one way to pay for them—by increasing our deficit to historically high levels and borrowing more and

more money. Now we have to pay for those tax breaks plus the cost of borrowing for them.

Instead of reducing the deficit, as some people claim, the fiscal policies of this administration and its allies in Congress will add more than \$600 billion in debt for each of the next 5 years. This budget does nothing to reduce our deficits and, in fact, makes them worse.

Americans deserve better financial leadership. The people I talk to in Illinois are not fooled by what's going on. Working families understand that the same principles that apply to their family budgets should apply to our national budget as well. They understand that, in this life, you get what you pay for and if you don't pay for it today, it will cost you more tomorrow.

You don't have to be a deficit hawk to be disturbed by the growing gap between revenues and expenses. Americans are willing to share in the hard choices required to get us back on track, as long as they know that everyone is pulling their weight and doing their fair share. That's why it is so important that we reinstate PAYGO in a way that meaningfully enforces the budget discipline that both sides of the aisle need in order to honestly tackle our country's short-term and long-term fiscal challenges.

This is an important amendment at an important time for our country. I am pleased to once again join Senators CONRAD and FEINGOLD on this amendment and to be part of a bipartisan group of cosponsors. I urge my colleagues to vote for fiscal responsibility and for good budget leadership. I urge my colleagues to support this PAYGO amendment.

THE PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Missouri.

AMENDMENT NO. 3011

Mr. TALENT. Mr. President, I thank the chairman and the ranking member for arranging the debate on this amendment. I call up an amendment we have at the desk, Talent-Lieberman amendment No. 3011.

THE PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will report.

The assistant legislative clerk read as follows:

The Senator from Missouri [Mr. TALENT], for himself, Mr. LIEBERMAN, Mr. THUNE and Mr. WARNER, proposes an amendment numbered 3011.

The amendment is as follows:

(Purpose: To increase funding for defense)

On page 9, line 20, increase the amount by \$3,000,000,000.

On page 9, line 21, increase the amount by \$3,000,000,000.

On page 27, line 23, decrease the amount by \$3,000,000,000.

On page 27, line 24, decrease the amount by \$3,000,000,000.

Mr. TALENT. I ask unanimous consent to add Senator CARPER as a cosponsor of the amendment.

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

Mr. TALENT. Mr. President, this amendment is a rather simple one. It

raises the number in the budget for defense up to what the administration proposed. The budget resolution, as it came out of committee, would have reduced the amount of money requested for national defense by \$3 billion. This restores that. It is in my judgment, as I said often on the Senate floor, not all we need to do but it is a first step.

We have to understand context here. The number the President submitted was itself almost \$4 billion the President submitted was itself almost \$4 billion less than what only a year and half ago the President and the administration said they would need for fiscal 2007.

Under the pressure from the Office of Management and Budget, the Department of Defense has had to reduce its request for the last 2 fiscal years by an amount totaling almost \$10 billion and, at the same time, has reduced the amount it said it is going to request for the next 5 years by almost \$670 billion—this while we are in a war and this while our responsibilities around the world and even outside the global war on terror have never been greater is a mistake.

I think the first step to correcting that mistake is to pass this bipartisan amendment and restore at least what the President has requested for fiscal 2007.

Let me give some history, some context. We need to go back to the early 1990s and the collapse of the Soviet Union.

At that time, there were concerns about the budget as well and the Government took those concerns out on the national defense. All throughout the 1990s, the Defense budget shrunk. It was the only part of the budget that shrunk. There were some years it shrunk in normal dollars, not even just as against inflation. There was a belief at the time of the collapse of the Soviet Union that we were in an era of peace and we would not need to spend as much on the national defense. Certainly, that was true with regards to certain parts of the national defense. Unfortunately, it turned out not to be true with the Defense budget. I will explain that in a minute.

First, in order to accommodate those shrinking budget there were reductions in the force structure. The number of people we have in the Department was cut across the board by anywhere from a quarter to a third.

The problem with that is we anticipated we would need the men and women in America's military less with the collapse of the Soviet Union, but it turns out that we needed them more. It turned out that history had not ended—it had been frozen during the time of the Cold War, and it thawed out with a vengeance. All the regional and ethnic rivalries that had been submerged in the bipolar nature of the Cold War era came to the surface. We had to deploy our men and women in conventional exercises of one kind or another far more in the 1990s than we

had to do in the Cold War decades in the years before.

What happens when you have fewer people and you use them more? You stress the force, you stress the people, you stress the equipment, you increase the operation and maintenance budgets.

In an era when we thought we would be able to save money on defense, we actually had to spend more, and increasingly the urgent crowded out the important.

Money was put in O&M in order to keep the tip of the spear sharp, if you will, while the rest of the spear rusted.

We took, for many years as a practical matter, a procurement holiday. We did not buy the equipment we needed to buy to recapitalize the platforms, which is what we in the Armed Services Committee call the weapons, the trucks, the support equipment that the men and women in America's military use.

In the 15 years from 1975 to 1990, we typically bought 78 scout and attack helos. In the years from 1991 to 2000, we bought, on average, seven. Whereas, we would buy 2,083, tanks, artillery, and other armored vehicles; we bought, on average, 145. In some cases we acquired about 10 percent of the platforms that we had bought in the 15 years previous to 1990. As a result, the capital equipment that the military is using is old.

Let us talk about some of our aircraft: B-52 bombers are 44 years old; C-130 transports, 33 years old; and KC-135 tankers, 43½ years old. I could give similar statistics for the other parts of the services as well.

The number of ships we have is going down. In the 1980s we aimed at a 600-ship Navy, and we are now below 300. If we continue at the current shipbuilding levels, we will get down to 200 or below. That is not consistent with the national security of the United States.

But what happened? The Bush administration took over, and to their credit, they raised Defense spending above inflation. There were modest increases in the early part of this decade, and part of the hope was we could recapitalize the infrastructure and make up for that procurement holiday. For a lot of reasons, that didn't happen. The operational tempo continued to grow.

We all know about the military employment level in the global war on terror. There has been what we call mission creep in other areas as well. Think about the tsunami that occurred about a year and a half ago. It was American military forces that were the structure through which we delivered that relief.

We have increased the homeland security mission, the international humanitarian relief operation, special operations, ongoing training operations. The operational tempo was at a historic high, and that ate up a lot of the increases.

Personnel costs: We have great men and women in the military. They are

very highly skilled people. There is no such thing as a "grunt" anymore in America's military. Today, you have highly skilled people, and we owe it to them, and we must pay them accordingly.

Personnel costs are now \$17 billion more per year, adjusted for inflation than in 1999. Seventeen billion dollars more comes out of the hide of the rest of the budget.

China is 5 to 10 years ahead of schedule in what we figure would be a rearmament process. I am not saying China needs to become an enemy of the United States. I hope that doesn't happen. I believe it need not happen. But they are clearly attempting to develop a military capability to exclude the United States from the Western Pacific, should she choose to do so. And the thing that is more likely to encourage them in that ambition than anything else is the reality or even the perception of American weakness.

In addition, we now have the new generation of platforms coming on line. Remember, platforms are ships, planes, tanks, trucks, and other kinds of support equipment.

For the generation of platforms that the new generation of servicemen and women are going to be using to replace the old ones, it is essential that we complete the development of these programs and that we buy out the platforms that we have proposed to buy. The DDX destroyer and the Joint Strike Fighter combat systems, which is the heart of America's Army, its F-22, air-to-air superiority fighter, the new aircraft carriers, the submarines which are essential to our national defense strategy both for intelligence and also in the western Pacific, all of these are coming online in the next few years.

Even with the President's submitted proposal, we cannot purchase the required new generation of platforms.

For all of these reasons, I have been urging for months—in fact, my advocacy on this point goes back to 1993, when I was a new Congressman in the House—I have been warning that we needed to spend more on defense.

I need to point out to the Senate that this is an obligation of the United States we cannot escape. It is similar to the basic capital assets of a company. You have to keep it up. It is not optional to allow the military equipment that our men and women use to age and eventually to collapse. We are going to pay this bill. The longer we wait, the bigger the bill will be.

That is one of the reasons why the investments which the President has proposed and which this Congress has provided in the last 5 years have not been enough even to allow us to tread water. We have continued to slip backward because we did not do what we needed to do in the 1990s.

What do we need to do now? There are a number of us on both sides of the aisle who are proposing, first of all, to restore the number the President has proposed.

I would like to see us go above that in this fiscal year, about \$3 billion more than what the President has proposed. That is the amount that the Department of Defense said it needed for fiscal 2007 in the fall of 2004. That was the last budget projection we got from the Department of Defense that was unaffected by the stricture of the OMB. I think we need to go to that point. I said that in speeches on the floor of the Senate last fall. A number of us sent a letter to the President urging him to submit a budget at that number. That is about \$443 billion apart from the spending on the Department of Energy that is also included in the defense budget.

Then I think we need to take next year for a searching and honest review of what the Defense budget needs to be in the near future.

I am not the only one who has proposed that. There are a number of Senators on both sides of the aisle and the Armed Services Committee who suggest that we need a systematic increase in the Defense budget. It is now about 3.7 or 3.8 percent of the gross domestic product.

Let me emphasize that. I don't want that figure to slip by without people marking it.

We are spending about 3.8 percent of the gross domestic product on national defense. That includes the supplemental, 3.8 percent in a time of war.

Whatever else is causing the deficit—and there are obviously disagreements on the floor of this body, and we just witnessed an eloquent debate highlighting those disagreements—whatever else is causing it, the Department of Defense and military budget is not. That figure is historically very low. It is much lower than the late 1970s when Jimmy Carter was President.

To try to save money on defense, to believe that you are saving money by reducing the Defense budget below the minimum, is a classic example of being pennywise and pound foolish because the bill comes due. We do not have the option of not meeting our responsibilities in the world today.

The reality, the perception but much less the reality of American weakness encourages instability in the world. Instability in the world is antithetical to the kind of security that people need for economic growth. So I can put it on as low a level as possible. If we do not adequately support the national defense, we are certainly going to get ourselves into bigger economic trouble.

American weakness leads to conflict abroad, conflict abroad can lead to war, and war is very bad for the national deficit.

So we need this searching review. We can have that. We can decide where we need to be structurally beginning next year. I think the Armed Services Committee is going to do that.

I want to close on a hopeful note. This is well within our capability. This is a great nation, a strong nation.

If the Government will meet its obligations and do what it is supposed to

do, the people will drive the prosperity of this country. They will produce the wealth on which they depend, on which this Government depends, to sustain those programs that are necessary to protect our security and also help the weak and the helpless among us.

We had a funeral for President Reagan in the recent past. He laid in State. And I thought Members of both parties did a wonderful job eulogizing him.

We should learn the lesson of history that his administration taught us. He understood the importance of American power in the world.

When he became President, we also had gone through a time when the forces had become hollow, when that shaft of the spear, if you will, had rusted. President Reagan dealt with it decisively. He proposed two double-digit increases in the national defense, which the Congress sustained him on. And it was that action which was a key factor in winning the Cold War because the rest of the world saw America's commitment, America's willingness, America's strength, America's confidence in the future and eventually decided that freedom and democracy was the future of the world because we were leading in that direction. We were willing to make the commitment necessary to walk that path.

Let us do the same thing today. This is a bipartisan amendment. Senator LIEBERMAN and I are offering it.

I have been handed a note that Senator GRAHAM wishes to be added as a cosponsor.

I ask unanimous consent that he be added as a cosponsor.

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

Mr. TALENT. We can do this.

Yes, we have to resolve the other problems in the budget that are causing the deficit, but defense is not that area. Defense has given at the office. Now it is time to tend to American security and American needs. For that reason, I offer the amendment. I hope the Senate will sustain it and support our men and women in uniform.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from North Dakota.

Mr. CONRAD. Will the Senator yield for a question?

Mr. TALENT. Sure.

Mr. CONRAD. Mr. President, I will not argue with the Senator on the need for this additional defense spending. My own view has been that what the President asks for at a time of war with respect to the defense, we ought to provide. We ought to stand shoulder to shoulder with the President at a time of war with respect to defense expenditures.

What I do want to ask the Senator, how is he funding this increase? Is it correct that the Senator is paying for this increase with cuts in function 920?

Mr. TALENT. The Senator is correct.

Mr. CONRAD. Am I correct, then, in understanding that the Senator would

pay for this increase in defense in part by cutting homeland security?

Mr. TALENT. The function 920, as I understand, is essentially the overhead across the board from a number of different agencies. So it comes out of administrative overhead, travel, et cetera, and I believed that funding these essential programs for the military was more important than that. So I challenge the agencies to find that funding to support this amendment.

It is similar to what has happened in the past. We had several amendments last year that took substantial amounts out of function 920 in order to increase programs.

Mr. CONRAD. Mr. President, I say to my colleague, the Senator is correct; function 920 is the other discretionary accounts. So the effect of the Senator's amendment is to "plus up" defense, but he does so by cutting homeland security, cutting law enforcement, cutting veterans' benefits, cutting defense itself.

I say to my colleague, there is no new money here. This is taking out of one pot and putting it into the other pot. And one of pots that is being taken from is defense itself, homeland security, law enforcement, and others. My own assessment of cutting these function 920 accounts is that it is kind of robbing Peter to pay Paul. I hope we do not do much of this in the process of writing this budget.

I support the underlying interest of the Senator in restoring the defense money that was cut in the Committee on the Budget by the mark of the Committee on the Budget chairman. However, I alert my colleagues, it is being paid for—are you willing to cut homeland security and law enforcement, veterans, and other defense accounts?

Mr. TALENT. No. I am willing to ask all the agencies to sacrifice travel budgets and expenses in order to fund the national defense.

I say again, this has happened in the past to support other important programs. The Coleman amendment last year, for example, increased CDBG funding by \$2 billion with a function 920 offset. I am telling the Senator what he knows. The Senator is an expert on the budget.

So we have gone into administrative overhead in the past, where necessary, to support important programs. I cannot think of anything more important than giving the President at least what he has asked for for national defense. This is a question of whether we will fund the national defense in time of war at the President's request, at least.

Who has the floor, Mr. President?

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator yielded for a question. The Senator from Missouri still has the floor.

Mr. TALENT. Again, I thank the Senator and admire very much the sincerity with which he confronts these budgetary problems.

Perhaps in view of the Senator's question, it would be good for me to emphasize the point I made during the

speech. There are certain functions of the Government which, if we do not perform at least at a minimal level, have the opposite effect that people want when they seek to reduce the deficit. This is one of them. These bills must be paid, and the longer we wait to pay them, the more they will cost.

For me, it is *deja vu* all over again. I said this in the 1990s. We were successful as a Congress in the 1990s in the latter part of the decade in getting more money into the budget above what the Clinton administration requested, but we did not get enough in. So those bills which were not paid have accumulated, with compound interest, at very substantial amounts.

It is true that an increase which is slightly above inflationary rates, which would have been adequate if we had done it in the 1990s, is not adequate anymore. And if we do not do something of the nature I am talking about now—not just with this budget but next year's budget as well—then the bill will grow and grow and grow, and 2 and 3 and 4 years from now, it will be even greater. My friend and the Senator from New Hampshire are going to have an even bigger problem to confront in trying to deal with the budget deficit.

It is not an option to not sustain the national defense. To the extent America is perceived as weak, much less to the extent that America is weak, it promotes instability and conflict in the world. Apart from the threat to human freedom, I will say to those who are concerned about the budget, that is very bad for the deficit. That is really negative for the deficit.

Let us sustain the national defense. I encourage the Senator to continue working with his friend and my friend from New Hampshire to solve these other structural problems in the deficit and would be happy to support some bipartisan resolution. Let us not take it out on defense.

I yield the floor.

Mr. CONRAD. Mr. President, let me say this Senator agrees with the Senator on the need to deal with the fundamental defense needs of the country. I say to the Senator, I know it is his intention to be cutting travel and overhead, but the way function 920 works is these will be across-the-board cuts to the other domestic elements of the budget; that is, homeland security will take a cut. They will decide where it goes. The Committee on the Budget does not decide that. So homeland security, in the programs themselves, may take reductions. That will be up to the Committee on Appropriations. Law enforcement will be cut to pay for this increase in defense. Defense itself may well be cut to pay for this increase in defense. Veterans programs will be cut, or at least the veterans function will be cut.

I want my colleagues to understand how this works. Although I know it is the stated intention to cut overhead and to cut travel, that may well not be

the result here because the way function 920 works, there will be an across-the-board cut to discretionary programs, and those accounts—and this will be a decision by the appropriators, how they spread these reductions—will be the money used to pay for an increase in defense. I find it a troubling approach in terms of the pay for—not the plus-up. The Senator is correct to ask that we provide the funding the President has requested in defense.

Let me say that one of the great concerns I have in these defense accounts going forward—and I say this to my colleague from Missouri, and I think the Senator referenced this—we have these systems which are aging, whether it is our bombers, our fighters, our ships in the Navy, our aircraft carriers. The tanker fleet is more than 40 years old, much of the bomber fleet is more than 40 years old, and many of our naval ships are reaching the end of their useful lives. So how are we going to recapitalize the defense accounts? It will be one of the great challenges of our generation. I don't begrudge for a moment this increase in defense. It will help us take on some of those very substantial challenges we will confront in the future.

We will have to do some thinking outside the box on how we will recapitalize the force going forward. I am told by National Guardsmen that much of the equipment they took to Iraq is never coming back. It is junk. The incredible heat, the combat conditions they have faced—much of this equipment is simply being eaten alive.

Mr. TALENT. Will the Senator yield?

Mr. CONRAD. I am happy to yield.

Mr. TALENT. Given the time available, I did not speak as long as I could on this subject, but the Senator is referring to what the Pentagon calls resetting the force. In other words, after a war, we pay through the supplementals for the equipment that is actually destroyed. But a lot of the equipment is not destroyed; it is either left there or it suffers what a business would call accelerated depreciation. It comes back, but it only has a few years of useful life.

The Senator is correct, we have that bill to deal with, as well.

Mr. CONRAD. I have now talked to officials at the Department of Defense, I have talked to the leaders of the services, at least some of them, about the daunting challenge we face for the future. My own view is we are probably going to have to think outside the box in terms of how we fund recapitalization on the force going forward. It will behoove us to begin thinking how we will take on those challenges.

I personally believe we will need to consider leasing or some other way of spreading costs instead of our current practices of paying for new systems with cash on the barrelhead. I do not believe we are going to be able to recapitalize the force in the way we have in the past.

I thank the Senator for, on the one hand, the proposal on restoring some of

the proposed cuts here, but I am concerned about the way it is being paid for. I know the intention is to take it out of overhead. The way 920 works, we really do not know how it will be done. The fact is, the budget resolution controls the numbers that will be given to the Committee on Appropriations, but it does not tell them how to make the reductions. We do not control that. That is controlled in the appropriations process, as the Senator knows. The unintended consequence might be that actually this increase in defense be paid for by reducing homeland security, law enforcement, veterans, and defense itself. Those are decisions which will be made by the appropriators. That is why I wish that instead of paying for it in this way, we paid for it in some other way that assured that it was not just taking out of one pocket and putting it in the other.

With that said, we need to restore this funding. We have a very serious problem going forward. Because of the burgeoning debt of the country and the deficits, defense is going to face very difficult challenges in the future when we try to rebuild these aging systems which are critically important to our national defense.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Missouri.

Mr. TALENT. I think I had half an hour. How much time remains?

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator has 11 minutes.

Mr. TALENT. Mr. President, I will not take the whole 11 minutes. I will do the Senate that favor, anyway.

First of all, the Senator is tremendously knowledgeable about the budget. I respect very much what he is saying. I am pleased he recognizes the importance of the underlying thrust of the amendment. My understanding is the function 920 line has about \$11 billion in it, so what I am calling for is a reduction of about a quarter in our overhead expenses, travel expenses. That has been done in the past in order to fund important programs.

We are in agreement that there is a shortfall in defense. Nothing is more important across the board right now than sustaining at least the President's request. I argue, and perhaps will argue further in this process, that we need to do a little more this year, but we should at least do this, and we can do this with a reduction in overhead that occurs all the time in the private sector. I think we should.

Now, the Senator mentioned various efficiencies we can use to make the money go further. I have been a strong supporter of those on the Armed Services Committee. I think there are efficiencies we can gain in terms of leasing and other kinds of measures. I would not want to leave the floor this morning leaving the Senate with the impression that is going to be enough to meet the obligations we have before us for national defense and national security.

Remember, we are talking about the security of our homes, our families, our

jobs. Remember what the attack on 9/11 did to the economy. We just saw numbers about how revenues were off in the early part of the decade. Well, that was not unrelated to the fact we were attacked. I am not saying we would not have been attacked had we been stronger throughout the 1990s; I am saying that right now, we are too far out on a margin of risk. The further you go on that margin of risk, the greater instability, the greater the lack of confidence in the world, and that hurts our economy.

I said substantially the same thing a couple years ago when we were debating the highway bill. I was arguing in favor of bonding for infrastructure investment. Investment in defense, like investment in infrastructure, is not an optional expenditure of the Government. We have, if you want to look at it this way, a deficit in the national defense. As bad as the budget deficit is, I would argue the deficit in the national defense is worse because that deficit imperils both the national security and the economic security of the United States.

So we need to make some tough decisions. I agree with the Senator when he says that. We can at least take this decision now. This amendment is offered on a bipartisan basis. And this concern is bipartisan in the Armed Services Committee. When we had what we call our posture hearing, looking at the posture of defense, Senator INHOFE, Senator DAYTON, Senator MCCAIN, Senator LIEBERMAN, and I all raised the issue of whether, going forward, we needed a structural increase in the national defense.

We are not asking for that here. We are not asking for that this year. We want to do a study of this issue. We want to look at it in a searching and bipartisan way and then report back, I hope next year—early next year—to the Senate on what we need to do. But right now, we need at least to give the President what he has asked. I would hope we could find a way to go a little further than that in this budget and give the President what he asked for in the fall of 2004, before the Office of Management and Budget got at the Defense projections. That is why I am offering the amendment.

I very much appreciate the spirit in which the Senator has responded. I hope he can stretch a point and perhaps find a "yes" vote for this amendment, and then debate, in as bipartisan a fashion as possible, the other structural issues we are dealing with with the deficit.

I thank the Senate again, Mr. President.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Mr. SUNUNU). The Senator from North Dakota.

Mr. CONRAD. Mr. President, first of all, I wish to say to the Senator, I intend to support his amendment.

Mr. TALENT. I am very grateful.

Mr. CONRAD. Even though I think using section 920 is the wrong way to

go. The Senator indicated he has been informed there is \$11 billion in the 920 accounts. I just direct the Senator's attention to page 29 of the concurrent resolution on the budget.

If the Senator would direct his attention there and go down the table to allowances, 920, I think the Senator would see there, in fact, is no money in section 920. In fact, section 920 is \$500 million in the hole. There is no \$11 billion there. That is the problem we have. There is no \$11 billion there. Section 920 is actually \$500 million underwater. This will just put it further underwater, which will require an across-the-board cut in these other areas: homeland security among them, law enforcement, veterans benefits, defense. Actually, we do not know what the appropriators will do. So I just say that for the information of my colleagues, who may have some sense that there is money in this account, that there really is not.

Mr. President, is the Senator prepared to yield back his time? Because I would be willing to yield back our time in the interest of trying to get back on schedule.

Mr. TALENT. Mr. President, I am more than happy to yield back.

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

Mr. CONRAD. Mr. President, I am prepared to yield back time on this side as well, so we can go to Senator KENNEDY's amendment and try to get back on schedule as much as we can.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection, it is so ordered. All time on the pending amendment is yielded back.

Under the previous order, the Senator from Massachusetts is now recognized for the purpose of offering an amendment. Under the agreement, there will be 1 hour of time equally divided.

The Senator from Massachusetts is recognized.

AMENDMENT NO. 3028

Mr. KENNEDY. Mr. President, I send an amendment to the desk on behalf of myself, the Senator from Maine, Ms. COLLINS, and the Senator from New Jersey, Mr. MENENDEZ, and ask for its immediate consideration.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will report the amendment.

The bill clerk read as follows:

The Senator from Massachusetts [Mr. KENNEDY], for himself, Ms. COLLINS, and Mr. MENENDEZ, proposes an amendment numbered 3028.

The amendment is as follows:

(Purpose: To support college access and job training by: (1) restoring program cuts slated for vocational education, TRIO, GEAR UP, Perkins Loans, and other student aid programs; (2) increasing investment in student aid programs, including increasing the maximum Pell Grant to \$4,500; and (3) restoring cuts slated for job training programs; paid for by closing \$6.3 billion in corporate tax loopholes.)

On page 3, line 13, increase the amount by \$1,479,000,000.

On page 3, line 15, increase the amount by \$3,988,000,000.

On page 3, line 17, increase the amount by \$634,000,000.

On page 3, line 19, increase the amount by \$206,000,000.

On page 3, line 21, increase the amount by \$19,000,000.

On page 4, line 1, increase the amount by \$1,479,000,000.

On page 4, line 2, increase the amount by \$3,988,000,000.

On page 4, line 3, increase the amount by \$634,000,000.

On page 4, line 4, increase the amount by \$206,000,000.

On page 4, line 6, increase the amount by \$19,000,000.

On page 4, line 13, increase the amount by \$6,326,000,000.

On page 5, line 4, increase the amount by \$1,479,000,000.

On page 5, line 6, increase the amount by \$3,988,000,000.

On page 5, line 8, increase the amount by \$634,000,000.

On page 5, line 10, increase the amount by \$206,000,000.

On page 5, line 12, increase the amount by \$19,000,000.

On page 18, line 24, increase the amount by \$6,326,000,000.

On page 18, line 25, increase the amount by \$1,479,000,000.

On page 19, line 4, increase the amount by \$3,988,000,000.

On page 19, line 8, increase the amount by \$634,000,000.

On page 19, line 12, increase the amount by \$206,000,000.

On page 19, line 16, increase the amount by \$19,000,000.

On page 53, line 1, increase the amount by \$6,326,000,000.

On page 53, line 2, increase the amount by \$1,479,000,000.

Mr. KENNEDY. Mr. President, this amendment will provide \$6.3 billion to restore the cuts in key student aid programs, vocational education, and job training, and increase investment in those programs by 15 percent. That is the total: \$6.3 billion. To pay for these investments, we close tax loopholes, laws that have no purpose, that allow corporate tax evasion. These offset provisions have been passed in the Senate on numerous occasions and have not survived the conference. But they have been voted on and passed. So this amendment effectively pays for itself. That is enormously important.

These two charts indicate where the United States is internationally in the areas of math and science. The chart on the right shows that the United States has fallen behind in mathematics, and this other chart shows that American colleges and universities have fallen behind in the development of professionals in the natural sciences. That is effectively math, science, and engineering. If you look at this chart, it shows that in 1975, the United States was third in the world. If you look at the year 2000, we are 15th in the world. Really, no one disputes these findings and these conclusions.

I once again draw the attention of our Members to three excellent studies. These three excellent studies, which have been done by the National Academy of Sciences, the Academy of Engineering, and the Institute of Medicine, all make the same case as these charts

do and make a number of recommendations. We have included a number of the recommendations that these institutions which reviewed our education system have made in order that the United States continue to be a highly innovative economy in the next 15 to 20 years. They make the very strong and powerful case that by being an innovative economy, we are also going to be the strongest economic power in the world and also have the strongest national security.

Education is key to our national security. This is "Rising Above the Gathering Storm", the report by the National Academy of Sciences. That report was requested by our former Secretary of Education, Senator LAMAR ALEXANDER, and JEFF BINGAMAN. It is an excellent study and review. I am going to include just selected parts of these reports in my remarks.

And now we have the report from the Council on Competitiveness which has reached effectively the same judgment and decision as the National Academies report. The Council on Competitiveness talks about recommendations organized in three broad categories: education; training; and lifelong skill development, the continuation of training. That is exactly what our amendment addresses.

And then, finally, the National Association of Manufacturers—not known to be a particular Democratic organization—talks about the importance—again, these are studies that were completed in 2005—the importance of emphasizing science and math technology, including enhancing our education, career training, and continuing education and training programs.

These are exactly the programs included in our particular amendment that the Senator from Maine and I offer with the Senator from New Jersey. It is in response to the challenge we are facing internationally. We offset that by closing tax loopholes.

First let's talk about Pell grants. In this amendment, we have increased the maximum Pell grant to \$4,500. As you can see, this has been frozen at \$4,050 over the period of the last 4 to 5 years. There will be those who will say: Well, we have increased the total amount of funding because there are more children who are receiving the Pell grants. But the reason there are more students receiving Pell grants is because there are more students in need.

This amendment will increase immediately the Pell maximum up to \$4,500. This is not enormously inconsistent with what the President has said. In his last two Presidential campaigns, he has indicated that he favored the \$4,500 maximum. The cost for this will be \$1.8 billion. So this is the increase in the Pell Grant Program.

The second aspect of this amendment is to open up access to educational opportunity by investing in the TRIO Program, the GEAR UP program, and the LEAP program. This amendment provides the additional help and assistance for those programs.

Let me show who is affected by these programs. Nearly 1.5 million students benefit from the tutoring, the counseling, and other services provided by the Gear Up programs in over 1,700 schools. This program keeps students interested in school and prepares them to attend college. It has been enormously successful in opening up opportunities for helping young children, many from disadvantaged communities, into the colleges and universities across our country.

The amendment also addresses the TRIO Talent Search and Upward Bound Programs, special programs to recognize talented young people who perhaps might not have had the range of courses in their high schools but, nonetheless, have demonstrated a commitment and a desire to enhance their own educational opportunities. The results have been absolutely extraordinary.

If you look at the difference in the success of students in these programs compared to students who don't participate, you will see that nearly 90 percent of the Upward Bound students graduate from high school, compared to only 68 percent of all low-income students.

You will also find that nearly 70 percent of Upward Bound students attend college, compared to only 54 percent of low-income students. And 50 percent of Upward Bound students attend a 4-year college, compared to just 22 percent of low-income students. So this is really about access to higher education. We are basically saying, with these reports, the United States needs every talented person in our country, and these programs help achieve that goal. We are offering an amendment that is going to open up that kind of opportunity for individuals to take advantage of and participate in this effort to maximize our ability to be competitive.

Next, there is an important aspect for us in this amendment, as it will invest in critical career and technical education programs. I have taken the figures from Massachusetts, but this is typical of what is happening around the country. We have a total of 61,000 students in career and technical education in Massachusetts, and about 90 percent of them pass what they call the MCAS test. That is a stringent test that our State has instituted and has been commended on for years as being the gold standard in terms of measuring the academic achievement of students. This is the continuing vocational education programs, and it amounts to \$1.3 billion of the amendment.

What this does show is that individuals are gaining the skills they are going to need to compete in this era of globalization. About 90 to 95 percent of those who graduate from career and technical education programs in Massachusetts go on to college or get good jobs. This amendment invests in these programs that are critically important.

We have seen in the chairman's mark on the budget that with regard to dis-

cretionary spending in 2000, the chairman's mark includes the President's proposed level of \$873 million. You will hear descriptions of how that provides additional opportunities to enhance education for young people. But the fact remains, we need a quantum jump in investing in young people. We need it in the areas I have outlined, and we need it in additional areas. This year the Chinese will be graduating 600,000 engineers, according to one report. India graduates 350,000 engineers. The United States is graduating 72,000 engineers, and half of those are foreign students. We have seen the expansion of research that is taking place in India, where Intel has just hired 2,500 Indian engineers to do some of their most advanced research. IBM is following a similar kind of program. We are talking about outsourcing and offshoring jobs, and we are not talking about blue-collar jobs. We are talking about those who are going to be at the cutting edge of investment.

What we are saying now is that we have to equip every young person with the ability to deal with the challenges of globalization. That means they are going to have to attain these kinds of skills for themselves. This is going to be a continuing learning process, and it has to be a national commitment.

This Nation has responded when it has been educationally challenged. When we had the Industrial Revolution, we developed the public school system. At the end of World War II, we had 10 to 12 million Americans serving in the armed forces who had given 3 to 4 years out of their lives. We had the GI bill. Those Americans came back and they participated in our educational system. What we found is that they repaid \$7 for every dollar invested in them. When you are investing in education, the benefits to society are huge. They come back manyfold in terms of our prosperity and our world leadership. This is not a no-sum game. This is a process by which the Nation gains.

Then we were faced with the Sputnik challenge when the Russians sent Sputnik into space. Virtually overnight Republicans and Democrats came together and passed the National Defense Education Act. Many of those students who have gone through the National Defense Education Act Scholarship Program serve in our Defense Department today with great success.

Today we have a similar challenge with globalization. Are we going to say it is business as usual, as this budget says, or are we going to say this is serious business? In a budget that reflects a nation's priorities, are we going to say we are sufficiently concerned about this kind of challenge that we are not going to hold the young people behind by denying them the opportunity to deal with the challenges of global education? That is what the amendment is basically about. That is why we strongly believe in it. It is clearly in the national interest. It is a reflection of

what the priorities are for the American people. The American people understand the importance of investing in students and workers. It is key to their prosperity. We cannot have a competitive economy with breakthroughs in innovation unless we have highly skilled, highly trained individuals. If you look over the various scientific magazines you see that in the last twenty years the U.S. share of research articles has declined from 38 percent to 30 percent. Meanwhile, China's share of articles more than doubled. Other countries are investing in their young people, and the United States can't afford to fall behind in this regard. The challenge to the Senate is whether we are going to begin that process of investing in the young people of this Nation or whether we are going to be an also-ran Nation down the line.

I will include in the RECORD the names of the more than 100 groups that support this amendment. I ask unanimous consent to print that in the RECORD.

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

100 GROUPS SUPPORT THE KENNEDY-COLLINS
AMENDMENT

Association of Jesuit Colleges and Universities.*

American Association of Community Colleges.*

Coalition of Higher Education Assistance Organizations.*

National Council for Community and Education Partnerships.*

National Association of State Directors of Career and Technical Education.

National Association for College Admission Counseling.

National Women's Law Center.

National Alliance for Partnerships in Equity and its 30 members: American Association of University Women, Washington, D.C.; American School Counselors Association, Alexandria, VA; Barre Technical Center, Barre, VT; Bismarck State College, Bismarck, ND; Burlington Technical Center, Burlington, VT; Cape Cod Community College, W. Barnstable, MA; Career Communications, Overland, KS; Center for Technology, Essex, Essex Junction, VT; Cisco Systems, Inc., Annapolis, MD; Cold Hollow Career Center, Enosburg Fall, VT; Douglas County School District, Highlands Ranch, CO; Educational Equity Consultants, St. Joseph, MO; Feminist Majority Foundation, Arlington, VA; GrayMill Consulting, Tehachapi, VT; Her Own Words, Madison, WI; MAVCC, Stillwater, OK; Mid-Atlantic Equity Center, Chevy Chase, MD; Minot Public Schools, Minot, ND; Missouri Gender Equity Program, Columbia, MO; National Women's Law Center, Washington, D.C.; Nontraditional Career Resource Center, New Brunswick, NJ; North Dakota Department of Public Instruction, Bismarck, ND; Northeast Community College, Norfolk, NE; Northern New England Tradeswomen, Essex, VT; Patricia A. Hannaford Career Center, Middlebury, VT; Project Lead the Way, Clifton Park, NJ; Randolph Area Vocational Center, Randolph, VT; TALL, The College of New Jersey, Ewing, NJ; Thompson School District, Loveland, CO; Tradeswomen Now and Tomorrow, Chicago, IL; West Virginia Women Work!, Morgantown, WV; Wider Opportunities for Women, Washington, D.C.; Williston State College, Williston, ND; Women Work!, Washington, D.C.

PIRG Higher Education.*
 US Student Association.*
 The Workforce Alliance.

Student Aid Alliance (66 Members): American Association of Colleges of Nursing; American Association of Colleges of Pharmacy; American Association of Colleges for Teacher Education; American Association of Collegiate Registrars and Admissions Officers; American Association of Community Colleges; American Association for Higher Education; American Association of State Colleges and Universities; American Association of University Professors; American College Personnel Association; American College Testing; American Council on Education; American Dental Education Association; American Federation of Teachers; American Indian Higher Education Consortium; American Jewish Congress; American Psychological Association; American Society for Engineering Education; American Student Association of Community Colleges; APPA: The Association of Higher Education Facilities Officers; Association of Academic Health Centers; Association of Advanced Rabbinical and Talmudic Schools; Association of American Colleges and Universities; Association of American Law Schools; Association of American Medical Colleges; Association of American Universities; Association of Catholic Colleges and Universities; Association of Community College Trustees; Association of Governing Boards of Universities and Colleges; Association of Jesuit Colleges and Universities; Citizen's Scholarship Foundation of America; Coalition of Higher Education Assistance Organizations; College Board; College Parents of America; College and University Personnel Association for Human Resources; Council for Advancement and Support of Education; Council for Christian Colleges and Universities; Council on Government Relations; Council of Graduate Schools; Council for Higher Education Accreditation; Council of Independent Colleges; Council for Opportunity in Education; Educational Testing Service; Hispanic Association of Colleges and Universities; Lutheran Educational Conference of North America; NAFSA: Association of International Educators; National Association for College Admission Counseling; National Association of College and University Business Officers; National Association of College Stores; National Association for Equal Opportunity in Higher Education; National Association of Graduate and Professional Students; National Association of Independent Colleges and Universities; National Association of State Student Grant and Aid Programs; National Association of State Universities and Land-Grant Colleges; National Association of Student Financial Aid Administrators; National Association of Student Personnel Administrators; National College Access Network; National Collegiate Athletic Association; National Council for Community and Education Partnerships; National Council of University Research Administrators; National Education Association; NAWA; Advancing Women in Higher Education; United Negro College Fund; United State Public Interest Research Group; United States Student Association; University Continuing Education Association; and Women's College Coalition.

*Also members of Student Aid Alliance.

Mr. KENNEDY. I withhold the remainder of my time.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from New Hampshire.

Mr. GREGG. Mr. President, this amendment is a classic tax-and-spend amendment of which we have seen a large number coming from the other

side during markup. In fact, \$133 billion in new taxes and \$126 billion in new programs were offered by the other side. That is called growing the Government—dramatically. It is also called putting a lot of burden on people working to pay taxes.

This amendment is a continuation of that approach. The euphemism “loop-hole” is used to try to avoid the fact that what we are proposing is major tax increases to pay for this. If you are going to have a responsible budget, you have some budget discipline. You have set priorities. We have attempted to do that with this budget.

Certainly this Presidency has done a great deal in the area of education. The Senator from Massachusetts says we need a massive effort in the area of education. I would say adding \$9 billion just last month into the higher education accounts is a pretty big effort. The Senator from Massachusetts voted against that. It was in the Deficit Reduction Act where we took a big chunk of money and put it into higher education. I believe \$4.5 billion went to low-income students who were college bound. There was about \$4 billion which went to reduce origination fees for students who want to go to college. Those are big numbers. And \$1.9 billion went to people who were taking up special education as their vocation when they got out of college or math/science. There was loan forgiveness for those folks who decided to pursue those disciplines which are in great need. That was a huge infusion, and this administration supported that.

In general, this administration's support for education has been so much more dramatic than the last Democratic administration that it is almost embarrassing. I would think, for members of the other party to come to the floor and claim this administration hasn't done too much in this area when you consider what they have done in comparison to what the Clinton administration did.

This chart reflects that in dollar terms, the type of increases we have seen on an annual basis. You can see that the Clinton increases for title I, for example, were about a third of what this President did. Clinton increases in IDEA special education were about one-seventh of what the President has done. The Pell grants, this President has significantly increased Pell grant funding. The Clinton administration actually reduced it. And the total discretionary funding on an annual basis, this administration has added an annual \$3 billion increase; the Clinton administration about half a billion dollars. Those are big numbers, a big commitment to education.

Yes, the President's budget, as it was sent up, in some of those accounts that have grown so dramatically did limit the rate of growth this year. But we actually adjusted that in our bill, and we have put another \$1.5 billion into these accounts which is reasonable.

Of course, I have to emphasize that we don't actually control that number.

That is controlled by the Appropriations Committee. All we do is control the top number. The Appropriations Committee makes the allocations. We have departed from the guideposts which the President put out there and put in some ideas of our own, but they will all be decided, of course, by the allocations made by Senator COCHRAN, chairman of the Appropriations Committee.

The number commitment which is shown by this chart is dramatic, and it is reflected in the fact that we just did a \$9 billion infusion in the higher education accounts over 5 years, which is significant. Every time we have done a Republican budget, the Senator from Massachusetts has, in his own inimitable way, come to the floor and offered an amendment to dramatically increase spending. This year isn't any different. I am not surprised by the amendment. But I do think if you are going to have a disciplined budget, you have to live within the spending restraints with which you are confronted.

We have heard a lot from the other side about the failure to address the issue of debt. The failure to address the size of the Federal Government is what drives debt. If you are going to allow the Federal Government to grow by \$6.3 billion, which is what this amendment does, if you are going to raise the cap so that spending is not limited but is suddenly exploded by \$6.3 billion, you are going to aggravate the debt. You are going to pay for it with loop-hole closings, but we all know it is a little difficult to do that. The spending is easy, but the paying for it is hard. As a result, you will end up without any discipline.

This amendment is essentially an attempt to break the caps, to eliminate fiscal discipline, and to do it in account areas in which every account could use more money, but these accounts have not been underfunded. These accounts have been aggressively funded by this administration, especially in comparison with the prior administration. It is hard to argue that on top of these dramatic increases, the \$9 billion which we specifically put in for higher education is not a fairly significant commitment—in fact, a very large commitment—to funding higher education. Where this money is going to flow, I am not sure. That will be the decision of the Appropriations Committee. But I am confident that, because year in and year out the Appropriations Committee has supported programs such as TRIO and GEAR UP, those accounts will be funded because we have adequate resources to do it.

I strongly oppose the amendment on the grounds that, A, it breaks the caps and therefore ends fiscal discipline; B, it is a tax-and-spend amendment in the tradition of some of our more liberal colleagues; and, C, it is spending money in accounts where we have already made very strong commitments as a party and as a Government under

this President. Those accounts have received substantial increases and will continue to receive strong support.

I yield the floor and reserve the remainder of my time.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Under the time agreement, the Senator from Massachusetts controls 15 additional minutes; the Senator from New Hampshire controls 23 minutes. Who yields time?

Mr. KENNEDY. I yield myself 1 minute and then I yield 10 minutes to the Senator from Maine.

I quickly want to respond to my colleague from New Hampshire. When you say there was \$9 billion in aid added last month to higher education, this includes 3.7 billion for a grant program that only helps ten percent of students who need it. Most of this \$9 billion helps banks, not students. The \$6 billion increase for the Pell grant that I supported and worked on with the Chairman of the HELP Committee was jettisoned completely in the Senate bill. Instead there was no additional grant aid for 90 percent of poor students, and this is at a time when 400,000 students would like to go to college, are ready to attend college, but can't because of cost. Now I will yield to the Senator from Maine.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Maine is recognized for 10 minutes.

Ms. COLLINS. Mr. President, I am very pleased to join my colleague from Massachusetts in sponsoring this important amendment. I want to recognize that the Senator from New Hampshire is a longtime champion of education programs and, indeed, under President Bush, education programs have received considerable additional spending. But we can and we should do more. There is no greater investment in the future of this country than to invest in the education of our young people. This amendment would restore cuts and increase funding for absolutely critical education and job training programs in this budget.

Let me talk about some of those programs. Let's begin with the Pell Grant Program. Pell grants go to our neediest families. The average income of a family whose student is receiving a Pell grant is only about \$16,000 a year. We are proposing to provide a \$450 increase in the Pell grant maximum award. That would increase it from \$4,050 to \$4,500.

The maximum award has not been increased for 4 years, while the cost of higher education has skyrocketed. Let's look at the impact on students.

In 1975, the year I graduated from college, the amount of the maximum Pell grant award was sufficient to cover approximately 80 percent of the average costs of attending a public 4-year institution—80 percent. Today it covers less than 40 percent of those costs. That disparity means that higher education is further and further out of reach for too many low-income students.

Let's talk about the impact of another program. It is the TRIO Programs, the aspirations-raising programs. I know firsthand what a difference these programs make in my home State of Maine where too few families have experience with higher education and, thus, their children find higher education to be something unknown or something they are not sure they can handle.

These aspiration-raising programs give the mentoring assistance, the encouragement, the help that is needed so that talented young people realize that higher education is within their grasp.

The Upward Bound Program is a wonderful program that has changed so many lives. Just yesterday, I talked with a student from the University of Southern Maine who told me that but for the TRIO Programs, he would not today be in college.

The GEAR UP Program has been very successful in my State. I have met with members of the University of Maine at Farmington GEAR UP partnership which partners with the middle school in Dicksfield, ME. Listen to these results and I think it will help convince my colleagues of the need to maintain an increased funding for this important program.

When this middle school first got its GEAR UP grant in 1999, only 37 percent of the graduating high school students went on to postsecondary education—only 37 percent. But last June, the first group of students that had gone through the GEAR UP Program graduated. Mr. President, do you know how many of them went on to higher education? More than 82 percent. What a difference this program has made. It doubled the number of students going on to higher education. It has completely changed the aspirations of students growing up in this small rural community in western Maine.

Another important restoration in the Kennedy-Collins amendment is for vocational education under the Perkins program. Again, I have seen firsthand the incredible results of Federal investments in vocational education. The United Technology Center in Bangor is a wonderful example of a regional technical high school that encourages students to stay in school, to expand their horizons, and to gain new skills.

I visited the United Technology Center twice and, believe me, the Federal funding, the \$171,000 that this school receives, is making all the difference in the lives of the students enrolled there. I saw an excitement about learning. I talked to students who told me that the standard high school curriculum didn't reach them. They are learning so much in this vocational education setting, and that Federal investment, again, changes lives.

I hope very much that we will adopt this amendment. The budget is all about setting priorities, and surely—surely—in this country we can make the investments we need to help our

neediest students pursue higher education, to help families who may not have the experience of going on to college so they receive the encouragement, mentoring, and support they need, and to help our vocational education programs.

Finally, my State has seen a real loss of manufacturing jobs in the past decade. The workforce investment training programs have been essential in helping displaced workers start new careers and new lives.

I hope we will adopt this amendment. I think it will make a great deal of difference to individual families, to our States, and to our economy.

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Mr. BURR). The Senator from New Hampshire.

Mr. GREGG. Mr. President, I am not sure what budget the Senator from Maine is talking about, but it is not the budget we brought to the floor as a Republican Senate. The budget that was reported out of committee by the Republican membership funds vocational education. The President's may not have, but our does, and there is \$1.4 billion in the budget for that program. We actually put in money that would allow the TRIO Program, the GEAR UP Program, the LEAP Program, and the Perkins loan programs to be increased if the committee wants to do that. We added \$1.5 billion of additional funding.

What the Senator from Maine and the Senator from Massachusetts are suggesting is that we should blow the caps by \$6.3 billion, raise taxes by \$6.3 billion, and do that to fund accounts which already have received significant dollars and which are going to continue to receive significant dollars.

As I mentioned, the higher education funding has received a \$9 billion infusion just by the passage of the reconciliation bill in February which was voted against by the Senator from Massachusetts.

This budget has a very strong commitment to education, as have budgets that have come before this body, as has this President who has done more for title I, IDEA, and Pell grants by a factor of three, four, five times what the prior administration did and has made a stronger commitment in the education accounts than probably in any other account, with the exception of accounts necessary to fight the war on terrorism that are discretionary.

It does seem to me a bit over the top to say that within the number \$873 billion, which is what we are already spending in discretionary money, there is no ability to adequately fund education in light of the track record that we have funded education very well.

I yield 5 minutes to the Senator from New Hampshire, Mr. SUNUNU.

Mr. SUNUNU. Mr. President, I rise in opposition to the amendment. The senior Senator from New Hampshire I think has laid out a very strong case for why this amendment fails to enact the kind of basic fiscal restraint, basic fiscal responsibility that is essential—

essential in this particular time and place in our country's history, but I think essential at any time exercising that financial responsibility on the behalf of the taxpayers.

I wish to talk, though, about the broad failings of this amendment, and I am concerned that we are going to see similar failings in amendment after amendment offered in this debate. This amendment fails on a number of counts.

First, to pick up on the point that was made by the committee chairman, there is a complete failure to recognize the additional funds and resources that are already part of this budget, the additional funds in the education account that have been made available for vocational education, for TRIO, for Perkins, depending on what the priorities and desires and goals of the committees of jurisdiction are.

By offering this amendment, the suggestion is that those resources mean absolutely nothing in this debate, that we cannot possibly get the job done with the allowances made in those areas, and I think that suggests either a lack of leadership within the Congress or the Senate on those particular areas, a lack of confidence in the committees of jurisdiction to do their job, or a lack of homework being done to understand how much has been made available in the last several years and what resources are actually available.

Second, this amendment carries with it a suggestion that under no circumstances should any program in the education accounts ever be eliminated or redirected to better use those resources elsewhere. I think anyone outside of Washington who hears that statement—that no program should ever be eliminated, no funds should ever be redirected—would think that cannot possibly be so; people within Washington, within the beltway, within the Senate cannot possibly think in those terms. But, unfortunately, this amendment makes plain they do think in those terms and, in fact, some legislation now being proposed in this very area creates 10 or 15 new education programs without looking at what exists currently and trying to find a way to better use those dollars.

It is unfortunate because it does those who are in the greatest need of these kinds of programs, support, and services an injustice because we don't want to do the hard work of oversight, of looking at when programs were created and how funding can be better used.

In the case of TRIO, for example, which has been mentioned, it is a worthwhile program, it is a program I have supported, but I have always made clear that I am willing to look at other programs in the Department and redirect funds and redirect resources to make sure a worthwhile effort such as TRIO gets the resources it needs.

So, one, there is no regard made for the resources that are actually in the budget.

Two, there is the suggestion that we couldn't possibly ever modify or eliminate a program to get more resources into the areas targeted by this amendment.

Three, there is the suggestion that we couldn't possibly redirect resources in any other part of the budget to education, that we wouldn't want to touch something politically sensitive such as agricultural subsidies, such as spending subsidies for fossil fuel, oil and gas research and development, which we greatly expanded in the Energy bill that was passed last year. No effort has been made to honestly identify areas that should be a lesser priority than those targeted by this amendment.

Fourth is the assumption that seems all too common, that if we want to spend more money, we should just raise taxes. We can talk about loopholes all we want, but the fact is, it is a tax increase, and they are tax increases that may have been passed in the United States Senate but were not signed into law, were not supported in the other body, and have little or no likelihood of ever making it through. So I think throwing out a tax increase in an effort to make an amendment budget neutral when you know those resources are never going to be delivered is deficit spending, pure and simple. It is wrong, it is not fiscally responsible, and it should be rejected.

Budgets are about setting priorities. We can do a better job, a more honest job of setting priorities. I am always willing to look at redirecting resources, whether it is from within the Department of Education to things that should be a priority, whether it is from other programs to this. If we are not willing to do that, we shouldn't be willing to vote for amendments that blow the budget caps.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Who yields time?

Mr. KENNEDY. Mr. President, how much time remains?

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Massachusetts has 6 minutes remaining.

Mr. KENNEDY. Mr. President, I yield 4 minutes to the Senator from New Jersey and 1 minute to the Senator from Maine.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from New Jersey is recognized for 4 minutes.

Mr. MENENDEZ. Mr. President, I rise in support of the Kennedy-Collins-Menendez amendment. It is an amendment that sends an important message to our Nation. Yes, budgets are about values and priorities. We tell our children in this country that education is a fundamental value that is of the highest importance, and then we submit a budget that speaks of much different values than that which, in fact, we hold up to our children.

If this amendment is passed, it says: If you work hard, if you are aiming for a goal, we will help you achieve it. It says no matter the happenstance of where you were born, the station in life

into which you were born, we will give you the opportunity to fulfill your God-given potential. That is what this amendment says. It says we are willing to make the investments necessary in our young people to strengthen our country's future.

However, the budget before us does none of those things. I sat as a member of the Budget Committee listening through this process and, I must say, eventually cuts have to come from someplace. The suggestion that everything is in the education budget that we have had in the past is simply not reality. At the end of the day, we are still over \$700 million short in higher education than from where we were. It does nothing to increase the maximum Pell grant, and we can see from this chart no matter what we talk about in terms of how we try to portray the numbers, there is one unmistakable fact: In the cost of attendance at a 4-year college institution, at a public college, versus the ability of what you can maximally achieve with a Pell grant, there is a huge gap, and that gap has continued to grow. So what we are telling our young people is, yes, education is a value, a higher education, college education degree is incredibly important for your own fulfillment, for the Nation's success in a global economy, but, sorry, we are just largely not going to help you. You are going to have to do that on your own. You are going to have to borrow and graduate under a mountain of debt. That is not a value that I think Americans share. They want to see the fulfillment of their children's potential realized.

So this does nothing to increase the maximum Pell grant, which will be frozen for the fifth year, and will decrease the actual real dollars in values as it has over the last 4 years. It does nothing to increase work-study grants, which will mean 1,000 fewer students will receive awards next year. It would take away low-cost loans in terms of the underlying budget for nearly a half million low-income students, loans that are forgiven—forgiven—for those who are serving in vital public service sectors such as teachers, nurses, law enforcement, or military officers. It will mean that more than 1.5 million low-income students would lose out on early intervention and college preparation programs that help make sure they are enrolled in and graduate from college.

That is why I am proud to be offering this amendment with my distinguished colleague and a tremendous leader on education, Senator KENNEDY. I am also glad to be joined with Senator COLLINS in this effort. This amendment provides a real opportunity to change the course of events for our Nation and to meet our competitive future.

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

Ms. COLLINS. Mr. President, the need to more widely invest in education is widely recognized by our Nation's employers. We have seen recent

studies by the National Academy of Sciences warning that our country is losing its edge in math and science education. We have seen employer groups such as the National Association of Manufacturers call for greater investment. We have the opportunity to answer those calls by approving this amendment.

Prior to my election to the Senate, I worked at a college in Maine, and I saw firsthand how vital these Federal programs were. I hope we will adopt the amendment. It will make a difference to our families, our States, and our Nation.

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

Mr. KENNEDY. How much time remains on either side?

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Massachusetts has 50 seconds remaining. The Senator from New Hampshire has 15½ minutes remaining.

Mr. GREGG. Mr. President, there is an inconsistency in the argument coming from the other side of the aisle. The Senator from New Jersey and the Senator from Massachusetts argue that we need a significant infusion of funds into higher education funding to assist students going on to college. Yet they both voted—I believe the Senator from New Jersey, in the House at the time, and the Senator from Massachusetts, in the Senate—against the deficit reduction bill which included a \$9 billion infusion into higher education. That was a big number.

The argument that Pell grants haven't been increased flies in the face of the fact that we have created a new account which actually allows up to \$8,000 of the cost for a low-income individual to go to college, to be reimbursed on the basis of the Pell structure, and as a result those funds which weren't available prior to the deficit reduction bill are available today. That is \$8,000 for low-income students who pursue certain types of disciplines that they can get.

In addition, our commitment as a Federal Government since President Bush took office has been dramatic in the area of title I. These are the numbers. They have gone up exponentially—exponentially—under President Bush. Look at what they did under President Clinton. They just crept along. They just crept along. President Bush came into office and we increased them dramatically.

What about the IDEA? IDEA funding, once again, under President Clinton, just crept along. When President Bush came into office they increased dramatically. Massive increases in funding in IDEA, massive increases of money in title I, massive increases of money going into higher education accounts to assist people wanting to go to college. Not enough. Not enough. You have to come here and propose an amendment which breaks the caps and ignores the fact that we put an extra \$1.5 billion into these education ac-

counts over what the President requested with our budget and ignore the fact that we fully funded the vocational accounts over what the President requested and say, no, we have to raise taxes by \$6.3 billion and raise the caps by \$6.3 billion. Tax and spend.

I have to say this President has had a commitment to education which has been unique in the history of this country relative to dollars, relative to philosophy, and relative to results. I take a back seat to no one on funding education in this institution, and I believe we have a record to stand by, and this budget continues that record.

I yield the remainder of our time to the Senator from Georgia.

Mr. ISAKSON. Mr. President, I thank the distinguished chairman of the Budget Committee. First of all, let me try and set up my remarks. I chaired the State Board of Education in the State of Georgia from 1996 to 1998, which is a period of time during the last administration. When I heard some of the speeches this morning about our commitment to education and about this budget, I found myself compelled to come to the floor and maybe add a perspective that might not yet have been heard on some of the comments that were made.

First of all, I commend Senator GREGG and the committee on what they have done. As the Senator said as he left a minute ago, this represents a \$1.5 billion increase over the President's budget for education. When this Education bill passes this year in the appropriations act, we will have increased Federal spending on education by 33 percent since the election of President Bush. It is unprecedented in the history of this country, our commitment to elementary and secondary education.

The Senator from Massachusetts made a comment about the Pell grants. He said: Well, you will hear us say that we are really spending more on Pell because there are more students receiving them. And his comment was—and I wrote it down: Well, there are more poor children receiving Pell money. That is why there is more money going out.

There is a phrase that was left out of that. Today, there are more poor children qualifying for higher education, and that is a good thing, not a bad thing. That is why more money has gone out while the level of Pell funding might not have been raised from the \$4,050 level.

In fact, this President's commitment to leaving no child behind, seeing to it that students can read and compute math at grade level and can go to high school ready to learn in the sciences and those other areas that are a prerequisite for a postsecondary education, no administration ever in the history of this country has made the commitment this one has.

With regard to the comments on Perkins—and I am a big Perkins person. I will tell you now, I will be on the floor

of the Senate when the appropriations bill comes through fighting for Perkins money. But the illusion was created that the President zeroes out Perkins. Perkins is a discretionary program. Perkins was not delineated in last year's budget resolution, but it was fully funded in the appropriations act. So anyone who says this budget cuts out Perkins is making the assumption that of the \$1.5 billion in increased funding that we are going to spend in this budget resolution, none of it would be appropriated by this Senate to go to Perkins.

Let me tell you how bad that is in terms of an idea. Last year, the budget read exactly the same way, and this Senate, by a vote of 99 to 0, funded Perkins. So this budget resolution gives a \$1.5 billion increase in discretionary spending so that programs such as Perkins, which are not delineated because they are not mandatory in the budget resolution, are funded in the appropriations act.

But let us get to mandatory. IDEA is kind of my special passion. Children with disabilities is something I have worked on all my life. I married a special education teacher. I married a special education teacher 10 years before Public Law 94-142 was passed, which was the Special Education Act that really put in the mandates that today are IDEA. And for years, this Congress and this Nation mandated on our local governments that they spend 40 percent more per FTE, full-time equivalent, on a special needs child than they did on an average child or a nonspecial needs child. Yet we funded none of it. For years we funded none of it.

Under this administration, we have gone from funding what was about 10 percent when the President was elected, to where now we are almost to half of that 40 percent mandate or 20 percent in total of the FTE the Federal Government is funding. In this budget resolution, as a mandatory item, there is inclusion from now through 2011 for that commitment to IDEA and to children with disabilities to increase so that we meet the Federal promise made over 30 years ago, or almost 30 years ago. So we shouldn't play word games.

I will be the first person to tell you that I will be on the floor with the appropriations bill fighting for pieces of that \$1.5 billion increase to go to enhanced programs such as Perkins. I believe in our commitment to the less fortunate, whether they be disabled or whether they be in poverty, and I was proud to be one of the coauthors of No Child Left Behind which, in and of itself, is a commitment to our title I children who are free and reduced lunch children and, in fact, our children most in need. But we should not characterize this budget as cutting short a commitment to America's children but, rather, a reaffirmation of a commitment that was made in 2001 and has continued to result in a 33-percent increase in the investment in our children.

One last point. I didn't hear this said, but I know I will hear it said before this debate is over, or certainly before the appropriations bill passes. We do two things in the Congress of the United States. We authorize and we appropriate. A lot of times because of the public misunderstanding of the difference between the two, people will say we are cutting short our commitment to this or to that or the other because we authorized X but we appropriated Y. Well, from defense to education to everything in between, we always have an authorization that is higher than the appropriation. But the appropriations for education are not in this budget resolution. It does not portend a reduction but an increase—in this case, \$1.5 billion, and in the case of education, 33 percent in the first 5 years of this President of the United States, the President who declared and this Congress affirmed that we shall leave no child behind.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Massachusetts.

Mr. KENNEDY. The Senator from Maine, Ms. COLLINS, the Senator from New Jersey, and myself understand that we are facing a worldwide challenge. That is not just what we are saying; that is what the Academy of Sciences is saying, the Academy of Engineering is saying, the Institute of Politics is saying, National Association of Manufacturers, Council of Competitors. You can't do business as usual. The rest of the world is playing for keeps. The question is whether we will or not. When we faced the challenge of Sputnik, America responded and doubled its involvement in education. We are facing a worldwide challenge now, and we believe these investments will make sure we move toward the goal of maintaining the United States as No. 1. Anything else will put us behind.

I believe my time is up.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The time of the Senator from Massachusetts has expired.

The Senator from New Hampshire.

Mr. GREGG. I appreciate the Senator's passion. I just wish he had been there when we voted on the deficit reduction bill and we put \$9 billion in student assistance and increased the Pell grant concept \$8,000 per student, students with low income to pursue academic careers which are needed in this country so we could be more competitive.

As I have mentioned before, the numbers are pretty staggering, what we put into education accounts, and this budget puts in another \$1.5 billion over what the President suggested, although again it is not binding. Nothing we do in this budget is binding in a specific account. The only binding number we have and we should keep is that top line on the issue of how much we are going to spend as a Government. I would say not only is it important to pass along good education to our children, but it is also important to pass

along a healthy economy to them and a nation which they can afford to live in. But raising their taxes as this amendment does is not going to make us more competitive or make them have a better lifestyle. It means they end up paying more taxes. Not living within your budgets is not a good idea for government, it is not a good idea certainly for students, and I think this amendment sets a bad precedent. It establishes a precedent of saying, well, we will just blow the cap off with either higher taxes or more debt. It is a very inappropriate approach and certainly unfair to those kids who want to go to college and have a country they can afford to live in and be able to make a decent living in and not have to pay too much in taxes.

This amendment, in my opinion, is excessive, inappropriate, and clearly, as a result of busting the budget, is not constructive to fiscal responsibility and to maintaining fiscal discipline here at the Federal level.

Now I would yield back the remainder of my time. I understand the next amendment will be offered by the Senator from Rhode Island.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The next amendment is to be offered by the Senator from Rhode Island.

Mr. CONRAD. Mr. President, might I ask my colleague from Rhode Island if we could allow Senator KENNEDY to pay respects to Maggie Inouye for 1 minute? We will extend the time of the Senator appropriately.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection, it is so ordered. The Senator from Massachusetts.

Mr. KENNEDY. I thank my colleagues.

(The remarks of Mr. KENNEDY are printed in today's RECORD under "Morning Business.")

AMENDMENT NO. 3014

Mr. CHAFEE. Mr. President, I call up amendment 3014 which is at the desk and ask for its immediate consideration.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will report.

The legislative clerk read as follows:

The Senator from Rhode Island [Mr. CHAFEE] proposes an amendment numbered 3014.

Mr. CHAFEE. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that further reading of the amendment be dispensed with.

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

The amendment is as follows:

(Purpose: To increase funding for part B of the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act)

On page 18, line 24, increase the amount by \$2,000,000,000.

On page 18, line 25, increase the amount by \$40,000,000.

On page 19, line 4, increase the amount by \$1,320,000,000.

On page 19, line 8, increase the amount by \$600,000,000.

On page 19, line 12, increase the amount by \$40,000,000.

On page 27, line 23, decrease the amount by \$2,000,000,000.

On page 27, line 24, decrease the amount by \$40,000,000.

On page 28, line 2, decrease the amount by \$1,320,000,000.

On page 28, line 5, decrease the amount by \$600,000,000.

On page 28, line 8, decrease the amount by \$40,000,000.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Under the order, the Senator from Rhode Island is recognized and in control of 30 minutes and the opposition controls 30 minutes.

Mr. CHAFEE. Mr. President, I further ask unanimous consent that Senators HAGEL, COLLINS, KOHL, COLEMAN, and ROBERTS be added as cosponsors if they are not already so listed.

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

Mr. CHAFEE. I rise today to offer an amendment that moves us closer to honoring the promises we made when we enacted the Education For All Handicapped Children Act of 1975 which later became the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act or IDEA. IDEA has its genesis in the Supreme Court's decision in *Brown v. Board of Education* in 1954. As we all know, this decision declared separate but equal is inherently unconstitutional. Prior to 1975, it was estimated that 2 million young people either were not receiving any public educational services or the services they were receiving were inadequate.

Based on the Supreme Court's decision in *Brown v. Board of Education*, parents of disabled children sought redress through the courts. In 1972, the District Court of the Eastern District of Pennsylvania in *PARC v. Pennsylvania* and the U.S. District Court of the District of Columbia in *Mills v. Washington, DC Board of Education* applied the principle in *Brown* to the education of disabled children. As a result, States felt compelled to provide educational services to individuals with disabilities and sought the Federal Government's help in providing those services.

On November 18, 1975, the House of Representatives passed the Education for All Handicapped Children Act by a vote of 404 to 7. The Senate followed the next day by passing the bill by a vote of 87 to 7. They were overwhelming majorities, as they should have been.

As it was enacted, IDEA mandated that States provide public education to all children, and it also must provide a free appropriate public education to special needs students. In return, the Federal Government promised to pay 40 percent of the per-pupil expenditures for students with disabilities. Unfortunately, we have failed to fulfill our promise to this program. We have made great strides since 1995 when we were contributing just 7.3 percent of the cost. I would like to say a little bit about who pays these costs. There is a lot of talk in this Chamber about income taxes and marginal rates and dividend taxes and capital gains taxes. There is not enough talk in this Chamber about property taxes and that

these special education costs are borne by the property tax payer. Now, the income tax—obviously you pay more the more you make no matter what the percentage. The more you make, the more you pay. The less you make, the less you pay. If a streak of bad luck hits and you unfortunately lose your job, you pay less income tax. The same thing with a sales tax. You don't have to buy the deluxe model, whatever it might be. You can buy the economy model and pay less sales tax. If you want to buy a Cadillac, you pay more sales tax. If you buy a Chevrolet, you pay less sales tax. That is your choice. But with property taxes, they are always there. You lose your job, that property tax is always there. And for many people, even if they have paid for that house, their castle, whatever it might be, their 2-bedroom castle, 10-bedroom castle, those property taxes are still there. And if an area gets gentrified or increases in value, sometimes those property taxes can soar. So for people on fixed incomes in particular, this is a very difficult tax, especially compared to income and sales taxes. And this IDEA is borne by the property tax payer.

In fiscal year 2005, we were providing 18.5 percent—far from the goal of 40 percent for IDEA—and last year, we actually regressed. We went down to only 17.8 percent of our promised 40 percent for IDEA—contributing only 40 percent. We are not to 40 percent of these special education costs which are borne by the property tax payer. Essentially what these percentages mean is this: For fiscal year 2006, we provided \$10.5 billion for part B grants to States, and our Federal share last year should have been \$23.8 billion—far, far away from our goal. In fiscal year 2007, the President has proposed a \$100 million increase. Our estimated full funding cost is \$25.1 billion. Under this proposal, we fall further behind, and my amendment would increase funding by \$2 billion and have the Federal Government pay at least half of what was promised or 20 percent. We are only going half of what was promised back in 1975.

Mr. President, our budget decisions have real-life consequences for our constituents. The burden of the Federal Government's failure to live up to its promises as I said is borne by these property tax payers. Full funding of IDEA is not a choice for State and local schools; it is a mandate. Schools are the largest cost to property tax payers; sometimes as much as 80 percent of the municipal cost is borne by its tax payers. It is usually above 50 percent. For any municipality all across the country, the most rapidly increasing school costs are in special education.

Listen to this. In North Providence, while general school spending has gone up \$11 million or 19 percent over the last 5 years, special education has gone up \$7.5 million or 74.9 percent in 5 years. And this is typical. That is just one town in Rhode Island, North Provi-

dence, RI. General school spending has gone up 19 percent over 5 years, special education has gone up 74 percent. And that is typical.

The Federal Government has an obligation, as we set forth in 1975, to help with these rising costs. That property tax is a tough tax to pay, as we all know. The IDEA burden on school districts is increasing because the costs are rising the more we learn about children's disabilities. We are getting better at diagnosing, but that is why these costs are increasing so much.

Mr. President, I thank the chairman for his continued leadership on this issue. I also thank Senators COLLINS, KOHL, COLEMAN, and ROBERTS for their support.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Who yields time in opposition?

Mr. CONRAD. Mr. President, let me just say—

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Is the Senator from North Dakota speaking in opposition to the amendment?

Mr. CONRAD. Mr. President, I am just going to take time off the amendment on our side, not speaking in opposition. I do want my colleagues to know what is occurring here. I entirely agree with the Senator from Rhode Island in terms of his priorities, in terms of additional funding for IDEA. I just want to rise and make the point that I made on the previous amendment that used section 920 funding.

The problem is there is no 920 money available. In fact, if we look at the budget, we see that 920 is already \$500 million in the hole. So the result of this amendment, which seeks to add \$2 billion, is really a nullity because what it is going to do in terms of what the appropriators see is on the one hand they will get \$2 billion, on the other hand \$2 billion will be taken away. So what happens, what do the appropriators do? We don't know what they will do. They could add \$2 billion to this account and take \$2 billion from other accounts. They could. They could just wind up doing nothing.

That is the reality of the budget resolution. I know it is confusing to people. But I am entirely in sympathy with the Senator from Rhode Island in what he is seeking to do in terms of adding funding. The problem we have is using 920 as the function to fund these things because there is no money there. It is an across-the-board cut, and the appropriators will see no real increase. This becomes more than anything a statement of what one wants to accomplish. But the hard reality here is there is no 920 money available. It will have to be an across-the-board cut, however the appropriators determine to make it. There is no new money here.

I yield the floor.

Mr. GREGG. Mr. President, will the Senator from Rhode Island yield?

Mr. CHAFEE. Yes.

Mr. GREGG. Mr. President, first I want to congratulate the Senator from Rhode Island. I think this is a good

amendment, and it is done the right way. He has basically come to the conclusion—and a lot of us agree—that IDEA could use some more money, that there is an unfunded mandate.

There are some issues here, of course, as to whether, like a dog chasing its tail, we can ever catch up with the level of Federal funding that should be in IDEA because some States in some ways are overcoding too many kids in the system. But that is a debate for another time.

We have already tried to address that in the most recent IDEA reauthorization. But his initiative of putting \$2 billion into this account is an appropriate one and he has done it the right way. He basically says within the budget we are going to set the priorities working with a spending cap. He is saying let us do it as an across-the-board cut and put the additional money we would have into the IDEA account. It is a legitimate way to approach this 920 act because it actually delivers the message which the Senator from Rhode Island wishes to deliver, and as it is executed the Appropriations Committee would actually get the money over there into that account with an across-the-board cut.

The argument which is made is, Well, this has no substance because the 920 account is going to be left up to the appropriators as to whether they would take the approach of the across-the-board cut, which is equally applicable in moving this budget, other than the top line cap number. The top line cap number, which is \$873 billion, is the only number in this budget that has force of law. Everything else below that—\$400-plus billion that we have allocated in this budget theoretically to defense, an extra \$1.5 billion we put into education, the money we put into health care, the money we put into environmental protection—all of those are suggestions essentially to the appropriate committee, which is the Appropriations Committee in this context, in the discretionary account. They may or may not follow it.

But I think the Senator from Rhode Island is bringing this forward in a way which is responsible, staying within the caps provision increase, and proposing an across-the-board cut to pay for it. He is giving responsible suggestions to the Appropriations Committee, which is all the budget does, anyway. It gives suggestions, and they have no binding effect other than the top line cap number, as I mentioned before. I congratulate him on the proposal. Considering the cards which we played, which were dealt relative to the budget, he is doing it in the proper way.

We all recognize that there is a certain illusoriness to all of these numbers because they do not have the force of law. But even the amendment offered by Senator KENNEDY has no impact other than to raise the cap by \$6.5 billion. It doesn't raise taxes. He claims it does. But we have no authority to raise taxes in this resolution,

and we are certainly not doing anything that would legally bind the Finance Committee to raise taxes. All he is doing is raising the caps by \$25 billion. That could be spent on defense, all of it, if the Appropriations Committee wants to do that. He is suggesting that it be spent somewhere else.

The Senator from Rhode Island is at least doing it the right way, which is living within the spending priorities which will make the Government fiscally responsible on the discretionary side of the ledger, but within those let us allocate some more money for IDEA. He has a good proposal. It is the way it should be done. I congratulate the Senator from Rhode Island.

Mr. CHAFEE. Mr. President, will the Senator yield for a question?

Mr. GREGG. Certainly.

Mr. CHAFEE. Mr. President, the State of New Hampshire doesn't have an income tax or State sales tax. All of its revenue is generated by a property tax. Am I correct?

Mr. GREGG. We do have a State corporate income tax but all of the school funding in the State essentially is generated by local property taxes—the vast majority of it. There is a sliver of it that comes from the State government but it is not a significant amount in the treasury overall.

Mr. CHAFEE. Does the Senator hear from his school committees and local councilmen about the rising costs of special education and the difficulty that places on the property tax payer?

Mr. GREGG. Mr. President, there is no question that the Senator from Rhode Island has touched on an important subject with this amendment, which is the fact that the Federal Government has never fully lived up to the commitment to special education as initially made. We have made dramatic progress under this President, especially in comparison to the prior Presidency. We are almost up to 20 percent of funding. But there was an original commitment of 40 percent. Certainly every community in New Hampshire—and I am sure Rhode Island—feels they have to pick up a Federal share from here and take it from some other part of the education which they think is important in order to pay the Federal share of special education.

Mr. KOHL. Mr. President, I rise today in support of the Chafee amendment, of which I am a cosponsor.

Prior to the enactment of IDEA, students with disabilities were too often left out of our public education system. Today, IDEA is making sure that they have the same access to a high quality education and a real chance to live successful, productive lives—as their peers. Yet year after year, school districts in Wisconsin tell me that IDEA needs more funding. This year's budget is especially worrisome. It proposes to cut the Federal share of IDEA costs from 18 percent to 17 percent. That is less than half of the 40 percent “full funding” level that Congress com-

mitted to paying when IDEA was first adopted 31 years ago.

I believe that a budget resolution serves as a statement of our Nation's values and priorities. Even though this amendment will not provide the funding increase needed for special education, it states in no uncertain terms that our Nation's priority must be to fully fund special education. I support the Chafee amendment and expect to support additional IDEA amendments that will go a step further and provide real increases for this important program. I hope my colleagues will join me in making a strong statement in support of special education as a top priority.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Does the Senator yield the remainder of his time?

Mr. CHAFEE. I yield the remainder of my time.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from North Dakota controls the time in opposition, 28 minutes. Does the Senator wish to use any of that, or does the Senator yield that time?

Mr. CONRAD. Mr. President, for a moment, let me consult with the chairman and bill manager. Let me take one moment to consult with him and see how we might proceed.

I ask if the Senator from Rhode Island would be prepared to yield back his time.

The Senator has already yielded the time. I am prepared to yield back the time on our side as well.

Let me say that it would be very helpful, if Senator BURNS and his staff are listening, if he could come and do his amendment next—I know it is not scheduled until 1 o'clock—so we are using the time efficiently here on the floor.

With that, I yield my time on the Chafee amendment.

Mr. GREGG. Mr. President, I suggest the absence of a quorum. I ask unanimous consent that the time be allocated equally to both sides.

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

The clerk will call the roll.

The assistant legislative clerk proceeded to call the roll.

Mr. CONRAD. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the quorum call be rescinded.

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

Mr. CONRAD. Mr. President, it might be useful to use this time to alert our colleagues on where we are. We will have six votes at roughly 3 o'clock. At 1 o'clock Senator BURNS will offer his amendment on veterans, and then Senator AKAKA will offer his. I urge colleagues to be alert to what is actually occurring on the floor. It may be that we will have other circumstances in which the full time is not used.

If Senators are in the queue, it would be very helpful if they can be prepared to come if all time is not used on an amendment.

The other thing I want to make certain colleagues understand is right now we have over 100 amendments pending. Let me repeat that. We have over 100 amendments pending. We know we can do three amendments an hour when we are voting. If we were to vote starting now on all of these amendments, it would take 33 hours of straight voting. And we are not done debating amendments yet.

Colleagues need to understand exactly where we are. If we play this out, if everybody insists on their amendment, we are going to be here probably until the wee hours of Saturday morning. We will be here all day today, on into the night, all day the next day, and all day the next day. We won't complete business until some time Saturday morning in the wee hours. That is where we are headed.

The chairman and I are asking Members to take shorter time agreements. We will ask the next sponsors of amendments to take half an hour, equally divided. If Members could take less than that, please do so. Remember, the alternative is to be in vote-arama where Members get a minute per side.

The only conceivable way we get done Thursday night is No. 1, Members take short time agreements; No. 2, some Members reserve their amendments and save them for another day or another vehicle.

That is where we are. Colleagues should know that. I hope very much colleagues and their staff understand the posture of the Senate. If we do not find a way to get cooperation from Members on taking short time agreements, if we do not get agreement from Members on restricting the number of amendments, we will be here until some time early Saturday morning. Do the math. It is inescapable that is the case.

With that, I hope Members will take this opportunity. If colleagues want to speak on the budget, we have time now until 1 o'clock. At 1 o'clock the next amendment will be offered. It will be Senator BURNS on veterans. There is time now. We have half an hour. I hope colleagues will use that time so it is not lost.

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

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will call the roll.

The assistant legislative clerk proceeded to call the roll.

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

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

AMENDMENT NO. 2999

Mr. BURNS. Mr. President, I rise today to offer an amendment and to speak on the budget. I congratulate my good friend from New Hampshire who has had this job, and my good friend from North Dakota.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Does the Senator intend to send an amendment to the desk?

Mr. BURNS. I ask unanimous consent the amendment now before the Senate be laid aside.

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

Mr. BURNS. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent my amendment which is at the desk be called up.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will report.

Mr. BURNS. I suggest the absence of a quorum.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will call the roll.

The assistant legislative clerk proceeded to call the roll.

Mr. BURNS. I ask unanimous consent that the order for the quorum call be rescinded.

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

The clerk will report. The assistant legislative clerk read as follows:

The Senator from Montana [Mr. BURNS], for himself and Mr. CHAFFEE, proposes an amendment numbered 2999.

Mr. BURNS. I ask unanimous consent that the reading of the amendment be dispensed with.

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

The amendment is as follows:

(Purpose: To provide increased funding for veterans health programs, and to negate the need for enrollment fees and increase in pharmacy copayments)

On page 23, line 24, increase the amount by \$823,000,000.

On page 23, line 25, increase the amount by \$733,000,000.

On page 24, line 3, increase the amount by \$854,000,000.

On page 24, line 4, increase the amount by \$845,000,000.

On page 24, line 7, increase the amount by \$888,000,000.

On page 24, line 8, increase the amount by \$880,000,000.

On page 24, line 11, increase the amount by \$923,000,000.

On page 24, line 12, increase the amount by \$914,000,000.

On page 24, line 15, increase the amount by \$958,000,000.

On page 24, line 16, increase the amount by \$949,000,000.

On page 27, line 23, decrease the amount by \$823,000,000.

On page 27, line 24, decrease the amount by \$733,000,000.

On page 28, line 1, decrease the amount by \$854,000,000.

On page 28, line 2, decrease the amount by \$845,000,000.

On page 28, line 4, decrease the amount by \$888,000,000.

On page 28, line 5, decrease the amount by \$880,000,000.

On page 28, line 7, decrease the amount by \$923,000,000.

On page 28, line 8, decrease the amount by \$914,000,000.

On page 28, line 10, decrease the amount by \$958,000,000.

On page 28, line 11, decrease the amount by \$949,000,000.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Montana is recognized for 30 minutes. Under the order, time is equally split, 30 minutes to the Senator and 30 minutes to the other side.

Mr. BURNS. Mr. President, I rise today to introduce this amendment,

but first I congratulate the managers of this bill. It is their responsibility to hammer out a budget in very difficult times. I cannot think of two managers who are more capable of doing this.

I understand the need to hold the line in discretionary spending and to make some reasonable modifications to a lot of programs. I support those goals. We need to get a handle on Government spending, but in doing so, we have to make sure we do not ask some folks to bear more than their fair share when it comes time to cutting back.

I speak in two areas today, one in agriculture and agricultural programs. Right now, it has been forecast there will be some cuts there. We want to make sure those are moderated or do not happen. We have a situation in agriculture right now where with the unprecedented amount of dollars we are spending on energy and fertilizer costs, the farm is in dire trouble. We will be talking about that later. In fact, next year when we redo the farm bill, that will be the proper time to start talking about any kind of cuts or modifications to agriculture.

The amendment I am offering today, along with Senator CHAFFEE, is designed to ensure that the U.S. Government keeps our promise to our veterans. There is nothing more important to the American people than this particular item in our budget.

The VA budget proposes \$795 million in savings by increasing fees placed on Priority 7 and 8 veterans. The suggested increases includes a \$250 annual enrollment fee and more than doubling prescription copays, from \$7 to \$15. This increased burden placed on our veterans is not acceptable.

Approximately half of these cuts come from the expected collection from fees and the other half is through forcing over a million veterans to opt out of the system. That is not right, either.

Prescription drug costs have risen steadily over the past few years. I have a chart that shows this. On the national average, \$634 was the average annual prescription drug cost for veterans in Fiscal Year 1999 compared to what we see instead now, with \$762 in prescription drug costs for veterans in the Rocky Mountain region.

Recently, we have also seen spikes in the price of gas. The inflationary pressures add a burden to our veterans and those retirees who live on fixed income.

This budget asks our veterans to pay even more just to be part of the VA health care system. These fees lead us down the road to turn the VA into another HMO, which will make it harder and harder for our veterans to be able to afford basic care.

We need to reject these fees and copays. When we do, we need to ensure that we include the additional \$795 million in the budget or we will leave the VA underfunded. This increase I am proposing will be fully offset with no additional taxes or added taxes.

These fees are not what we promised our military folks when they went off to war and when they stood ready to defend this country. For those folks who signed up to fight for this country, this was not their expectation, and it was not our promise at the time, either.

In addition, my amendment includes a \$27 million increase in budget requests in the area of medical and prosthetic research. The increase will maintain funding for critical medical research programs.

The budget proposes a decrease in funding for medical and prosthetic research, from \$412 million down to \$399 million. When inflation is factored in, these programs need to be increased to \$426 billion in order for us to maintain the critical research regarding serious injuries for our veterans returning home from Iraq and Afghanistan. Let's face it, we have a lot more research to do while we are involved with this particular conflict than any other conflict we have ever faced.

This research funding is critical for unique problems associated with our veterans who are returning from overseas with traumatic amputations, central nervous system injuries, loss of sight or hearing, and other serious injuries which prevent them from returning to a full and productive life. We have to do everything we can to make sure they have the ability to recover. I am a veteran. I know how important VA health care programs are to those who served this Nation.

We have invested a great deal in health care services for veterans. Because of these investments, the quality of care offered at VA facilities has surpassed the care at regular health care facilities. In fact, our satisfaction rate with the veterans today is much better than it was just 5 or 6 years ago.

The VA hospital and our 10 outpatient clinics in Montana are some of the best in the Nation. We must ensure that our veterans can afford the care offered in these great facilities.

We did not used to have outpatient clinics in the VA. We all had to go to the hospitals that were in each State or in each region. Those outpatient clinics have filled a void by helping to cut down on travel and to serve people instead of serving a bureaucracy.

I am committed to doing everything I can to help our Nation's veterans, and this amendment today is a first step to ensure that our veterans get the health care they deserve.

I have never felt so strongly about this as I did after visiting Iraq. Whenever you visit Bethesda Naval Hospital, whenever you visit Walter Reed, you will see our young men and women coming home with injuries we have never seen before because we are saving more lives on the battlefield—lives that would have been lost. Now we save them there, and we are able to bring them home, repair them, and get them ready for public life.

Mr. President, I see no other person on the floor.

I suggest the absence of a quorum.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will call the roll.

The assistant legislative clerk proceeded to call the roll.

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

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

Mr. AKAKA. Mr. President, I rise to respond to a statement made by my good friend, Senator BURNS.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Does the Senator speak in favor or in opposition to the amendment?

Mr. AKAKA. Mr. President, I rise to speak against the amendment offered by my friend, Senator BURNS.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator controls the time in opposition.

Mr. AKAKA. Mr. President, we must go beyond what his amendment seeks to accomplish. In a few minutes, we will begin discussion of our alternative amendment. Our amendment would provide the funds to ensure that veterans will not see their out-of-pocket costs increase. Our amendment would add resources to care for newly returning servicemembers. Our amendment would shore up the system for all veterans needing mental health care.

The Burns amendment is based on the premise that the President's budget is "good enough." The opposition urges veterans to be pleased that they are getting an increase at all in this tough budget climate. In my view, especially in this time of war with so many competing demands, we can and should do much better. Veterans should not have to "get what we give them." They ought to be provided with what they deserve. Let us not forget the sacrifices made by these men and women and the sacrifices made by their families.

What we have heard much about is that VA is already adequately funded. The administration, and my friends on the other side of the aisle, continually cite a 50-percent increase in veterans spending since the year 2001. I applaud my colleagues for their support of veterans as demand for VA's top-quality health care services has increased.

It only makes sense for spending on veterans programs to increase in accordance with the increases we have seen in the defense budget, particularly since Operations Iraqi and Enduring Freedom. Colleagues, these increased costs for veterans are a direct result of our global war on terrorism. As we so willingly fund them while they are on active duty, we must be willing to fund taking care of them after they have served our great Nation.

Let there be no mistake, it is, in fact, Congress that has done the heavy lifting. Each year, it is the veterans' leaders in the Senate and the House who go beyond what President Bush has proposed. I do not say this to laud Congress. I say it to remind my colleagues that we need to make veterans a priority. We need to make sure veterans

are taken care of. Veterans are looking to us to make a difference, and we cannot let them down.

The opposition warns that too many veterans are eligible for VA care and too many are depending upon VA for help. I take a different approach. I am thrilled that veterans are turning to VA for their care. For years, we struggled to make the VA health care system something to be proud of. And it has accomplished that. It is highly rated. It seems cruel now to tell veterans: Now that VA care is good, we are going to force you out.

We must go beyond "good enough." I urge my colleagues to support our alternative amendment.

Thank you, Mr. President.

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Mr. DEMINT). Who yields time?

The Senator from Montana.

Mr. BURNS. With regard to what my friend from Hawaii has done today, I remind my colleagues that there has already been an increase in this budget since a year ago. We are basically prioritizing our money to be spent where it is supposed to be. If you look at the total budget growth, it has grown from about \$72.6 billion to \$74.9 billion in the last 5 years, an increase of around 50 percent. The result is a 69-percent increase in veterans health care since President Bush has taken office. So we are not underspending. We are just not doing a very good job of assigning our priorities where the money should be spent.

We asked the VA to look at their costs to give us some idea of how they are being more efficient now. The reporting of the VA has become a lot better. It gives us a better handle on where we should be spending those dollars. My amendment does not short-change any veteran. We just have to do a better job in our priorities. We have asked the VA to be outcome-oriented, and the outcomes have been improved. Access to health care has increased. The quality of care has increased. Patient satisfaction is up to 83 percent. That was unheard of just 4 or 5 years ago.

By asking for increases over and above, basically we are doing nothing more than engaging in a bidding war. I can use the auction method pretty easily because that is where I cut my teeth. I don't mean to make light of the process, but we have to draw the line somewhere.

I am a veteran. I respect the effort to take care of veterans. In our State of Montana, we now have outpatient clinics that are taking care of our veterans, not just at Fort Harrison but at several other locations where veterans do not have to travel long distances either to get their drugs, be a part of their prescription drug programs or to get their health care. What we are doing with this amendment is putting the money right back into the system where it should be spent. We are paying for it with no impact on the budget and without raising taxes.

I think my good friend from Hawaii raises taxes with his amendment. I thank him for his diligence and his love for veterans. I don't have any opposition to that. What we are doing right now is talking about how we approach taking care of these fine young men and women who find themselves needing medical care that they can get nowhere else in America.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Who yields time?

Mr. ALLARD. I yield to the Senator from Idaho.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Idaho.

Mr. CRAIG. I thank the chairman for yielding. I will speak softly today because I am just recovering from laryngitis. I believed it was important, as chairman of the authorizing committee who proposed to the chairman of the Budget Committee the underlying budget proposal for the funding of the VA for this coming year, that I discuss the Burns amendment.

When I consider the Burns amendment, I feel the same way I felt with the President's 2007 budget and the announcement for VA. On the one hand, I am pleased that the VA budget is a top priority during debate on the budget resolution. It should be. America's veterans have always been and will remain a top priority of this Senate. On the other hand, I am sobered that the President and the underlying resolution propose a 9.6-percent increase in funding for veterans medical care, with additional revenue generated on top of that through various fee proposals on higher income veterans with no service-connected injuries. The chart to my left clearly demonstrates my concerns. From 2001 to this budget, it is visible what this Congress has done to fund veterans, a 69-percent increase in a very short time.

Let me remind everyone that there is plenty of money in the President's budget request for returning Iraqi veterans and Afghan veterans. They represent only 2 percent of VA's patient population. They are and will remain our top priority, and they are funded. There is also plenty of money in the President's budget for the care of service-connected veterans and low-income veterans. I believe those are statements of fact. They should not be, nor do I believe they can be, challenged. There are significant increases for important initiatives we all support for our veterans: an additional \$345 million for mental health services, including PTSD treatment; \$64 million for homeless programs; and \$161 million for prosthetics and sensory aids.

The question before us now is the extent the Congress will fund medical care services to every veteran who shows up at the door, irrespective of their income or their need for treatment associated with a service-related disability. In other words, are our veterans hospital doors open for all?

Assuming the adoption of the Burns amendment, this resolution will assume a 12.4-percent increase in direct appropriations for VA medical care. Senator AKAKA is proposing an amendment of an increase of about 15 percent, or may. Any way you cut it, the spending proposed for the 2007 budget under either amendment will result in a 70-percent-plus increase in VA medical care from 2001 to 2007. That is the reality of the numbers being played within these amendments. Assuming a 12.4-percent rate of growth, VA medical care will double every 6 years. I never dreamed when I became chairman of the VA Committee that in my tenure I could preside over a \$100 billion-a-year VA budget.

These amendments simply advance that to a reality. With Senator AKAKA's 15 percent annual growth, the budget would double every 5 years. Is it right? Is it justifiable? Is it reasonable in today's care of America's veterans? The bottom line is this: At these rates, VA spending will soon collide with demands made on all other areas of Government. The President's budget proposal began to address the fiscal challenge we faced. I thought he was responsible in doing it. I could not deny that it was a responsible act, and I encouraged the Budget chairman to put it in the budget. I continue to believe those proposals were eminently reasonable. However, I know that the majority of my colleagues do not find these proposals reasonable. Why? In large part because every veteran service organization in the Nation doesn't want them. They have lobbied and argued that they should not happen. I understand why.

I have also spoken directly to all of those organizations and suggested if not now, when. If not now, when do we begin to face the reality of not a doubling every 6 years but a doubling every 5 years? When do we face the reality of VA colliding with Social Security and Medicare and Medicaid and the military defense budget itself? Those are the realities we face in this Congress, not in 2007. We will not face them because we are going to choose not to face them. I do not believe that is responsible.

I am left with a tough decision. Without enactment of the President's proposal, the system will need an additional \$800 million. That is what Senator BURNS recognizes. That is what he is offering. I cannot in good conscience vote to purposefully underfund VA medical care, if the President's fee proposals will not be carried forward. Therefore, I will support the Burns amendment. Is it fiscally responsible? I will leave that to the decision of fellow Senators.

What isn't fiscally responsible under today's budget system is to suggest that we will double this budget every 5 years and have it collide directly with every other program that is out there, without saying to those veterans who are capable and able that if they want

service from the finest health care delivery system in the country today—and that is our VA—and they are not service connected and they are not disabled and they are income disqualified, that they ought not pay \$21 a month to gain access to the best health care system in the country. That is less than a carton of cigarettes. No, this Senate does not have the political will to say so. Or \$15 a month for a pharmaceutical that could cost you \$300. It is the best deal in the country, folks. I am proud of it. I defend it because I support our veterans. But I am also asking every veterans service organization, starting today, working through next year, to help us find a solution to this problem other than just dumping billions more into it each year out of the general fund budget.

To suggest that these needs are not there is to deny reality, but to suggest there are alternative and responsible ways of funding them is a reality we must face. Simply throwing more and more money at the budget is shirking that responsibility, especially when doing so sets up painful choices. I have spoken to them. Those choices collide directly with Medicare, Medicaid, and Social Security. We won't face those choices yet, either.

I want to avoid the painful choices because I want to make sure the VA system is there today for America's veterans and there tomorrow for tomorrow's veterans because our history would suggest to us there will be tomorrow's veterans. We are a nation which has found it necessary from time to time to use force as an extension of our foreign policy for the purpose of securing our freedoms and maintaining our Nation. That policy approach produces a veteran. And because of that, in the words of Abraham Lincoln, for he who hath borne the battle and for his widow and for his orphan, that is our responsibility as a nation. The Burns amendment recognizes it in the broad sense. I believe it fails to recognize the reality of where we must go in the long term. The President attempted that this year. I agreed with him. The Budget chairman agreed with him.

We will see where the Senate takes us. I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Who yields time? The Senator from Hawaii.

Mr. AKAKA. Mr. President, how much time do I have remaining?

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator has 21 minutes 14 seconds remaining.

Mr. AKAKA. Mr. President, I say to my friends, the Senator from Montana and the Senator from Idaho, that we agree that veterans need quality care and services, but we differ on how much to provide for this care and who is eligible.

I believe all veterans deserve access to quality care. I also believe that we must make this a priority. I say again to my friends, VA health care should grow, and that is not a bad reality. We

spend exorbitant amounts on these men and women while they are in active service. They deserve our care when they are done serving.

The budget has gone up. Let's think about what we have purchased with that budget: hundreds of new clinics, hundreds of thousands who never had insurance and who can now come to the VA for world-class care, a leading research program, and a system where care is second to none. Let's not deny that health care costs money. We agree on that.

Indeed, there is an increase in the VA budget, but it undercounts the number of returning service members. It does not do enough for mental health, and it flat lines rehabilitation care.

As I have said, we are pleased that the President's budget is much better than last year's. This is not a bidding war; this is getting it right.

Mr. President, I yield the remainder of my time on this amendment to Senator MURRAY.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator is recognized.

Mrs. MURRAY. Mr. President, first, I thank Senator AKAKA for his tremendous leadership on this veterans issue. I couldn't agree with him more. This isn't about a bidding war; this is about getting it right.

I want to, first of all, thank Senator BURNS for his amendment because what it does is recognizes and acknowledges the serious problem we have today in making sure we have the funds available to pay for the services that our veterans not only deserve but were promised to them.

We are at a critical time in our Nation's history. We are at war. What message does it send to those we have sent overseas if we are telling veterans today that they are going to have to pay copays and increased fees once they return? What message does it send to those who are serving us overseas today that the veterans who have gone before them are waiting in long lines, they are not getting help and the promises that were given to them?

What I appreciate is that Senator BURNS' amendment acknowledges the serious challenge we have within this budget in making sure we meet the rising demand for our veterans today.

I know Senator CRAIG has said we have increased the VA budget dramatically. My colleagues all remember us last year having to come to the floor to add billions of dollars to the veterans budget because we were short-handed. But, Mr. President, to many of us, you will recall, it was not a surprise. We have hundreds of thousands of men and women who are coming home from a war in which we are currently engaged who are now needing to access veterans health care facilities. Of course, there is an increased cost. At the same time, we have an aging Vietnam veterans population who are accessing our veterans health care services. At the same time, health care across the board is increasing the costs. Everyone who is

providing health care has to pay increased costs. So of course the VA budget, as a health care system, has to increase its costs as well.

I also should remind my colleagues that because so many employers today cannot afford the cost of rising health care, they are not providing health care to their employees, and those who are veterans are turning to the VA, increasing the numbers who access it, and they have a right to do that.

On top of that, Medicare Part D, which we need to talk about, is already a problem. Our folks across the country are calling in to ask: Whom do we sign up with for Medicare Part D? And they are being asked by our own DHS: Are you a veteran? And if they say, yes, they say: Don't sign up for Medicare Part D, go to the VA. That is great. They deserve that, but it is increasing the numbers accessing our VA.

Yes, of course, the budget has gone up, but does it meet the need? That is the test this country needs to consider and that we as Senators need to consider in this budget.

Again, my colleague from Montana has acknowledged that in his amendment. Here is where we have a problem. How do you pay for it, and when you pay for it, is it a reality?

This function 920 everybody is robbing from is merely saying that we are not going to increase the budget to pay for this, we are going to pretend there is money out there. That may work very well now, but it will not work when we get to next fall, probably after the election, and we actually are sitting down and writing our appropriations bills and passing them on this floor, within the cap of those appropriations bills, and there will not be the funding to increase this.

So let's not do some imaginary proposal and all go home and get well on making sure we provide the services. We will be offering an amendment with Senator AKAKA that actually provides the increased costs, to make sure we have the funding available.

The acknowledgment is clear on this floor. Charging our veterans a fee and a copay for health care that they were promised is not the right way to balance this budget.

Should we be providing tax cuts for the wealthiest or should we be providing within our budget the means to keep the promises that were made to those men and women who served our country honorably before and are serving it honorably today and, I might add, we will be asking another generation, no doubt in the future, to serve us.

They will watch what we do on this floor. They will watch what we do and how it impacts us next fall and whether we have the actual money within our budgets to provide the health care that is promised when we ask them to sign on the dotted line and serve our country in the future.

Although I commend the Senator from Montana for the sentiments in

this amendment, I actually believe the amendment coming from Senator AKAKA and myself is the right amendment because it is not an empty promise. It actually is a promise fulfilled, and our veterans deserve that.

Mr. President, how much time remains on our side?

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator has 13½ minutes remaining.

Mrs. MURRAY. Mr. President, I retain the remainder of our time.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Who yields time? The Senator from Montana.

Mr. BURNS. Mr. President, I yield to the Senator from Texas in support of my amendment.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Texas.

Mrs. HUTCHISON. Mr. President, I rise to speak in favor of the Burns amendment and ask to be added as a cosponsor.

It is very important that we add something to this budget to accommodate the extra needs we are seeing for veterans coming back from Iraq and Afghanistan.

I think it is especially important that we not make the decision right now about the copays. I do not support what is in the President's budget regarding copays for the category 7 and category 8 veterans. I am looking for some alternatives that might bring in some income, that might give health insurance capabilities to these people who have no health insurance coverage.

We are looking at some other threshold besides \$27,000 annual income of a veteran who does not have service-related injuries. That is the definition of a category 7 and category 8 veteran. They are not veterans who have had service-related injuries, they are veterans who have had no service-related injuries who make about \$27,000 a year or more. I think that is a pretty low floor.

I would like to look at ways to increase it to a higher floor or make sure they have access to health insurance, which many of them do not. I haven't run the numbers on that, but I certainly think we should be working with the veterans groups to determine what would be reasonable and still allow us to prioritize the health care for our veterans which is what all of us want.

Senator BURNS is right, we need more research into prostheses. The good news is that they are coming back, they are not being killed in war, as we have seen in so many previous wars. But the bad news is they are losing limbs, and we need to help them have the very best prostheses they could possibly have and enhance their ability to use them.

We will be working on those items. Senator BURNS' amendment is the right approach because we do need to have that flexibility in this budget to try to come up with the right approach. It is too early to say what we are going to do with the President's

proposal, that there be a \$250 enrollment fee for these category 7 and category 8 veterans. I thank the Senator from Montana for putting this amendment forward, and I certainly hope we will adopt his amendment, which I think is a step in the right direction.

I yield the floor.

Mr. CHAFFEE. Mr. President, I am a proud original cosponsor of Senator BURNS' amendment to the budget resolution that increases VA funding by \$823 million. Properly caring for our veterans is our Nation's duty. We asked these men and women to risk their lives in service of our country, and medical care is the least our country can give in return.

The President's budget request for VA medical services assumes an added \$795 million in revenues; but it does this by more than doubling copays and instituting a \$250 enrollment fee for certain categories of veterans. The cost of \$795 million then is shifted from the Government to veterans themselves.

Not only would many veterans have to pay higher fees under the President's proposals, but those who could not afford the fees would have no choice but to abandon VA healthcare altogether.

Especially in a time of war, a policy that leads to increased denial of service to veterans is simply unacceptable. Battlefield medicine has made huge strides in the last few decades. The result has been a much higher percentage of wounded soldiers living through their initial injuries, able to return home to their families. These wonderful advances in medicine deserve and receive our praise, but they mean that the VA will be caring for more and more injured soldiers as they return home. And many of these injuries, such as burns, amputations, and blindness, are of the type that will require care for a lifetime. The United States owes these injured soldiers this care, and thus the funds to provide it should not come from other veterans.

Senator BURNS' amendment will address these problems by adding \$795 million to the VA budget in order to eliminate the higher copays and enrollment fees. Furthermore, it adds another \$28 million to compensate for cuts in VA medical R&D.

I will proudly cast my vote for this veterans healthcare funding measure, and I urge my colleagues to do the same.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Who yields time?

Mr. BURNS. Mr. President, I suggest the absence of a quorum.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will call the roll.

The legislative clerk proceeded to call the roll.

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

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

AMENDMENT NO. 3007

Mr. AKAKA. Mr. President, I rise to call up amendment No. 3007 and ask for its consideration.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. If all time on the amendment is yielded back, the clerk will report the next amendment.

The legislative clerk read as follows:

The Senator from Hawaii [Mr. AKAKA], for himself, Mrs. MURRAY, Mr. DORGAN, Mr. BILL NELSON, Mr. KERRY, Mr. SCHUMER, Mr. SALAZAR, Mrs. LINCOLN, Mr. LAUTENBERG, Mr. OBAMA, Mr. DODD, Ms. MIKULSKI, Mr. JEFFORDS, and Mr. ROCKEFELLER, proposes an amendment numbered 3007.

Mr. AKAKA. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the order for the quorum call be dispensed with.

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

The amendment is as follows:

(Purpose: To increase Veterans medical services funding by \$1.5 billion in FY 2007 to be paid for by closing corporate tax loopholes)

On page 3, line 13, increase the amount by \$1,350,000,000.

On page 3, line 15, increase the amount by \$135,000,000.

On page 3, line 17, increase the amount by \$6,000,000.

On page 3, line 19, increase the amount by \$2,000,000.

On page 4, line 1, increase the amount by \$1,350,000,000.

On page 4, line 2, increase the amount by \$135,000,000.

On page 4, line 3, increase the amount by \$6,000,000.

On page 4, line 4, increase the amount by \$2,000,000.

On page 4, line 13, increase the amount by \$1,500,000,000.

On page 5, line 4, increase the amount by \$1,350,000,000.

On page 5, line 6, increase the amount by \$135,000,000.

On page 5, line 8, increase the amount by \$6,000,000.

On page 5, line 10, increase the amount by \$2,000,000.

On page 23, line 24, increase the amount by \$1,500,000,000.

On page 23, line 25, increase the amount by \$1,350,000,000.

On page 24, line 4, increase the amount by \$135,000,000.

On page 24, line 8, increase the amount by \$6,000,000.

On page 24, line 12, increase the amount by \$2,000,000.

On page 53, line 1, increase the amount by \$1,500,000,000.

On page 53, line 2, increase the amount by \$1,350,000,000.

Mr. AKAKA. Mr. President, I yield myself 10 minutes.

Mr. ALLARD. Mr. President, will the Senator from Hawaii restate that unanimous consent request? He just yielded himself 10 minutes? I have no objection.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection, the Senator has 10 minutes.

Mr. AKAKA. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent to add Senators ROCKEFELLER, CLINTON, DURBIN, FEINGOLD, DODD, BINGAMAN, and LAUTENBERG as cosponsors to amendment No. 3007.

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

Mr. AKAKA. Mr. President, I am pleased to stand here with my colleagues who join me in offering this veterans health care amendment which

adds \$1.5 billion for health care. What we have before us are two different approaches, similar to what we had last year.

I want to take my colleagues back a year when we offered a similar amendment to the budget resolution at that time. We argued that more attention must be given to mental health, prosthetics, and to keeping veterans from being homeless.

The opposition questioned our number, as there was the belief that the VA could continue providing quality care with fewer resources. And that belief prevailed. Our amendment was rejected at that time, virtually along party lines. The prevailing votes were misled to believe that the budget year was too tight and that a much smaller amount of funding was needed.

Unfortunately, this turned out to be the wrong course. Four months and two supplemental requests later we finally ended up with more funding, nearly the exact amount we advocated for earlier in the year. We must not repeat this mistake and we must get it right the first time.

I want to say at the outset that the President's budget is much more robust than his budget last year. The veterans called last year's budget "tight-fisted" and "miserly." I view this budget as a much better starting point.

What is again missing—in dollars and in deed—is this administration still does not count caring for veterans as part of the cost of war. Defense spending for our servicemembers while in combat has necessarily gone up; accordingly, so must our commitment to caring for our veterans once they return home.

We are all too familiar with the scenario last year. You remember the VA wildly underestimated the number of younger vets returning from Iraq and Afghanistan. And this year, the administration thinks even fewer vets will come for care. This is a terrific gamble, as this miscalculation was one of the primary causes of last year's shortfall.

While I largely agree with the President on the overall amount needed for VA health care this year, I take issue with how he chooses to fund the system.

Let's make this crystal clear: The administration's approach and the resolution that is before us asks veterans to pay more for their care through increased copayments for medications and a new user fee for middle-income veterans. Our approach instead asks for appropriated dollars.

Middle-income veterans will see their prescription drug bills doubled, and it forces veterans to pay a \$250 fee for simply choosing VA as their health care provider. With these substantial new out-of-pocket costs, the administration is banking on 200,000 veterans being unable to afford VA care.

Many have argued that a user fee imposed upon middle-income veterans is only fair. They say it equates to a modest sum each month. If my friend, Lou

Green, a veteran from the Korean war, living in New Jersey on a fixed income, could stand here, he would ask which of his monthly expenses would we have him forgo. If these proposals were enacted, his five prescriptions would add \$35 per month, and the new fee would add \$21 per month. This would bring his new expenses to \$670 a year. He would have to choose which bills to pay. Would it be his medications? Would it be his gas bills for his car? Would it be the cost of heating his home?

What we have heard much about is that the VA is already adequately funded. The administration, and my friends on the other side of the aisle, are claiming a 50-percent increase in veteran spending since the year 2001.

Let there be no mistake: It is in fact Congress that has done the heavy lifting. Each year, it is the veterans' leaders in the Senate and House who go beyond what President Bush has proposed. The simple fact is that the administration has requested less than half of the new funding made available to veterans during its tenure. Congress, by approving amendments to increase VA funding, has added another 39 percent of funding. Even with large increases since fiscal year 2001 this is an average increase of less than 10 percent to accommodate high medical care inflation and a high annual growth in patients. The growth in the number of patients is almost twice the amount in resources. These facts underscore the need to support my amendment.

Our amendment would add \$1.5 billion to the resolution in real money by closing tax loopholes. The Burns amendment is merely a budget gimmick which fails to raise the top line for VA funding. I would like to elaborate on how our \$1.5 billion number was arrived at, and you can see it on this chart.

We add \$825 million to reject the policy proposals—the copay increase and enrollment fee. In addition, there is a seldom-talked-about proposal to discontinue the practice of using insurance moneys to offset out-of-pocket costs for veterans. Each of these proposals must be rejected. It seems shortsighted and cruel to enact proposals which will drive veterans out of the VA health care system.

The VA also requires funding to absorb new patient workload from new veterans returning home from both Operations Iraqi and Enduring Freedom and from older veterans who are just now turning to the VA. In the first quarter of this year, the VA saw a 21-percent increase in OIF/OEF veterans seeking VA care. They are now seeing 144,424 OIF/OEF veterans total. This is 32 percent more than they project for fiscal year 2007.

Our amendment adds \$231 million, taking into account that new veterans are eligible for 2 years of VA care immediately upon their return and separation from service.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator has used 10 minutes.

Mr. AKAKA. Mr. President, I ask for additional time to complete my statement.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator has that right.

Mr. AKAKA. Mr. President, the other amendment accepts the administration's estimate, which already looks wrong.

Funding is added for vet centers and rehabilitative care—two accounts which did not fare well under the proposed budget. Both programs are critically important. Vet centers are the first place returning servicemembers go for care. Yet vet centers have continually been underfunded. Again, the alternative amendment provides not one penny more than the administration.

The amendment also provides funds to allow for a substantial increase in mental health care. Experts predict that as many as 30 percent of those returning servicemembers may need some kind of mental health care treatment, from basic readjustment counseling to care for debilitating PTSD.

A recent study published in the Journal of the American Medical Association reported that 35 percent of Iraq veterans received mental health care during their first year home. Our amendment adds \$321 million for mental health care. Again, the opposing amendment chooses to rely on the administration's estimate, despite these recent findings.

Each year the Congress debates its priorities and concerns for our Nation through the budgetary process. This is one of the few times the citizens of this country can cut through the rhetoric and the complicated legislative maneuvers to see what each of us truly stands for. This budget is a good starting point for our veterans, but we certainly can and should do more.

At this time I yield to the Senator from Washington, my good friend, Senator MURRAY.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Colorado.

Mr. ALLARD. Mr. President, I wonder if I might take a few moments to speak in opposition, if it is all right with the Senator from Washington, and then also there are a couple of other housekeeping issues I would like to deal with.

No. 1, I ask unanimous consent that the remaining time on the Burns amendment on both sides be yielded back. I have checked with the other side, and they agreed.

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

Mr. ALLARD. Second, I ask unanimous consent that Senator MIKULSKI be added as a cosponsor to the Burns amendment.

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

Mr. ALLARD. Mr. President, I rise in opposition to the Akaka amendment. The reason I do is I am supporting the Burns amendment primarily because it negates the need for the fee proposals

in the President's budget and increases funding for research. The President already provides an 11-percent increase from the fiscal year 2006 level, and over the years from 2001 it is a 69-percent increase. There may be some increased needs as we move through the next budget year for veterans. If that happens, then I see no problem with us going ahead, and the Senate historically has always been more willing to put that money in an emergency supplemental.

The concern I have with the Akaka amendment is that it increases taxes. There were a number of amendments that were offered—and I assume they will be offered on the floor—in the Budget Committee that raise taxes to take care of this program or that program. The point I would make is that the tax reductions we did a number of years back have served this economy well, and when you allow the economy to grow, then all these programs are going to benefit indirectly because you increase revenues to the Federal Government. I would like to elaborate on that just a little bit before the Senator from Washington makes her statement.

If I might just talk a little bit about some of the comments made by the other side, in particular Senator CONRAD, as to what happens when we cut those taxes, reduced those taxes known as the President's economic growth package. It was predicted that when we would do that we would reduce employment. Senator CONRAD noted for the record that the President has "put us on a fiscal course that means lower employment." In reality, employment went up as reflected in this chart. He predicted that there would be "a raise in interest rates," that the Republican budget would "raise equilibrium real interest rates." That is Senator CONRAD, again, in the CONGRESSIONAL RECORD.

In reality, interest rates have stayed down. The statement was made that "the economic growth package will crowd out private sector investment." Again, the comments were proven wrong by what happened to our economy. We see here that the private business investment surges.

Then, the "determining the economic growth" comment that was made by Senator CONRAD, again in the CONGRESSIONAL RECORD, that "the budget will undermine potential gross domestic product and hurt economic growth," we see right here that we sustained economic growth.

So the bottom line is that when we cut taxes, we help the economy. So I think it is bad to try to increase taxes at a time when our economy is doing so well. That is the objection I have to the Akaka amendment.

I sympathize with him in making sure that we have enough money to take care of our veterans, particularly at a time when we are in conflicts. But I also need to make sure we have some accountability as far as taxpayer dollars are concerned, how they are spent.

I think the President has been very generous with the 11-percent increase he is advocating from 2006 to 2007. He does that without increasing taxes. He has found a source of funding which negates the fees that were proposed in the President's budget a lot of us would just as soon not be there.

So I find myself supporting the Burns amendment and opposing the Akaka amendment pretty much based on tax issues that are in those two amendments. I just think this would be the wrong time to increase taxes, when it would have just the opposite effect of the tax cut we implemented a few years back.

So I just wanted to make that point. I think on this side you are going to find that we all support veterans. I can't recall a year when we haven't given substantial increases to veterans. But we also need to have some accountability in this process, and I think we restore that through the Burns amendment.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Washington.

Mrs. MURRAY. Mr. President, how much time is left on our side?

The PRESIDING OFFICER. There is just under 17 minutes.

Mrs. MURRAY. I thank the Chair.

Mr. President, I rise to support Senator AKAKA and the amendment he has offered today that will truly and in reality help make sure we keep the promises we made to the men and women who serve this country overseas and who fought for us in the past and are fighting for us today and will be asked to fight for us in the future. These are people who have served our country. They have kept us safe. They have sacrificed for each and every one of us, and now they need our help. They need the support and the health care that was promised to them when they joined the service, and they need the health care and support in coming home and making sure that we have the services available to them.

Unfortunately, the budget that is now before us is going to leave many of those veterans who have served this country so honorably without health care, without job assistance, and without the support they need to rebuild their lives on the homefront.

Any of my colleagues who have gone out to their State and talked to these men and women, particularly the ones coming home today, you know they are having a hard time with getting jobs, dealing with health care issues, dealing with posttraumatic stress syndrome, facing lines at our veterans facilities, and not being adequately served, much less those veterans who are facing the same long lines and who are being ultimately denied care. Our veterans deserve better. That is why Senator AKAKA and I are here today offering this amendment to provide \$1.5 billion to keep that promise to America's veterans.

There are two amendments in the Chamber, one offered by Senator BURNS

and one offered by Senator AKAKA. Our colleagues need to understand that the amendment that has been offered by Senator BURNS is window dressing. How do I know that? Because we were offered the same amendment last year by, I believe it was Senator ENSIGN. And what happened? As we warned our colleagues time and time again from the beginning of last year until June, we are billions of dollars short in health care. Finally, in June, the VA Secretary came to us and he said: You know what, you are right; we were \$3 billion short. If we sit here in the Chamber and do an empty-promise amendment again, we are going to find ourselves back in the same position.

The Akaka amendment adds real dollars. It puts real, actual money into the budget, so next fall, when we are writing our appropriations bills, we have the capacity within the veterans subcommittee to make sure we can provide the real services our veterans were promised.

I believe our veterans deserve better, and I believe America can do better, and I believe the Senate ought to stand up right now when we are at war and tell those who are serving us that we are going to be there for them and support the Akaka amendment which provides real dollars.

One of the real concerns I have with the budget that is in the Chamber today, that Senator AKAKA is trying to amend, is it balances the VA health care dollars by assuming fees and copayments, new fees and new copayments to our veterans. I will tell you, I have talked to many people who have served our country. Not one of them signed a form saying, I will join the service and fight for my country with an asterisk on it, without the promise that we will provide the health care for them when they come home. It is a disservice to those veterans now for us to have a budget in the Chamber of the Senate that says, never mind, now that you have served, now that you are home, now that you need health care, we are going to charge you a fee, we are going to charge you copayments which will dissuade you from getting the health care that you need. That is really the wrong message to send. There is no fine print when someone signs up to serve our country saying "exclusions apply." For us to impose those fees is wrong, and I hope this Senate goes on record today supporting the Akaka amendment that will make sure that next fall when our budget is tight, there is money there to make sure we are not having to come forward with proposals to do that.

That is why it is so important that we support the Akaka amendment. It is the real amendment in the Chamber. It is not an empty promise. It is not just a be-happy amendment, everything is great, we-supported-veterans amendment. It has real dollars in it, and it is absolutely critical.

Senator AKAKA has done an excellent job of defining what is in this amend-

ment. It is really critical that we help our Iraq war veterans who are making the transition back home with the \$231 million for transition assistance. Any one of us out talking to our veterans knows they are having trouble coming home and getting a job and getting health care. This is critical outreach money, increasing support for PTSD and mental health care.

Senator DURBIN is on the floor. He has been a strong advocate for making sure we adequately fund PTSD for veterans out in rural communities who do not have access.

I talked to a woman the other day who was talking about the fact that 80 percent of our Guard and Reserve are coming home and getting a divorce. Divorce should not be a result of serving your country. We ought to make sure we have the funds to help those in need, to make sure they transition back into our communities.

This amendment includes support for our veterans clinics, \$81 million. Any one who has been out there knows we do not have enough clinics available, especially in our rural communities, to make sure those folks who have served us get the services they need. Importantly, this amendment and this amendment alone eliminates the fees and copayments that are a tax on our veterans, that this Senator says they should not have to pay. I heard my colleagues from the other side say this amendment raises taxes. What this amendment does is pay for this. Senator says they should not have to pay with real dollars by closing corporate tax loopholes.

I would ask any one of us to go home and ask a corporation or ask a millionaire: Are you willing to pay a little bit more to make sure that those who served us are taken care of when they return home? I doubt any one of us will get a letter from any one of them saying: I am not willing to pay.

The Akaka amendment is the real amendment. It provides real dollars, assures that when we are here next fall doing the VA budget that we actually have the dollars to make sure we are supporting our veterans. This amendment is supported by the independent budget.

I would ask unanimous consent to have printed in the RECORD the letter from AMVETS, Disabled American Veterans, Paralyzed Veterans of America, and the Veterans of Foreign Wars in support of the Akaka amendment.

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

THE INDEPENDENT BUDGET,
March 14, 2006.

Hon. DANIEL K. AKAKA,
U.S. Senate,
Washington, DC.

DEAR SENATOR AKAKA: On behalf of the authors of The Independent Budget, AMVETS, Disabled American Veterans, Paralyzed Veterans of America, and Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States, we are writing in support for the Akaka-Murray VA Health Care Amendment, which would add \$1.5 bil-

lion for the Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) medical care account in fiscal year (FY) 2007.

We firmly believe that asking veterans to pay for part of the benefits a grateful nation provides for them is fundamentally contrary to the spirit and principles underlying the provision of benefits to veterans. No requirement that veterans be burdened with co-payments is justified, especially in a time of war.

To ensure that VA would have the necessary resources, your amendment would mitigate additional burden otherwise intended to be placed on sick and disabled veterans through the expansion of VA's collection authority, increased co-payments, and new enrollment fees. Moreover, this amendment would provide additional funds for VA to treat Operations Iraqi and Enduring Freedom veterans. Over 144,000 have already sought care from the VA for such services as mental health, readjustment counseling, and rehabilitative care, which is well over the projected number of 109,191 for FY2007.

Thank you for your efforts on behalf of our nation's sick and disabled veterans.

Sincerely,

DAVID G. GREINER,
Deputy National Legislative Director,
AMVETS

RICHARD B. FULLER,
National Legislative Director, Paralyzed Veterans of America

JOSEPH A. VIOLANTE,
National Legislative Director, Disabled American Veterans

DENNIS CULLINAN,
National Legislative Director, Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States.

Mrs. MURRAY. I commend Senator AKAKA, and I tell my colleagues, when we vote in a few minutes, you can vote for the Burns amendment if you want to say: I support veterans. But if you want to make sure we are there for our veterans when they come home with real dollars, you will vote for the Akaka amendment.

I thank the Chair. I yield the floor.

Mr. AKAKA. I thank the Senator from Washington for her eloquent statement. I know we have other Members who want to speak on this amendment. I yield 5 minutes to Senator DURBIN from Illinois.

Mr. DURBIN. I thank the Senator from Hawaii for his leadership on this issue.

How many of us in this Senate have been visiting with the families of veterans, welcoming the veterans home, being there when the soldiers are sent off to battle, standing and saying: We will not forget you—trust us, we will not forget you? Now we have a chance to vote. And the American people can judge whether we are going to remember these soldiers and these veterans.

Senator AKAKA and Senator MURRAY have come forward with an honest way of paying for the help veterans need. They have said it is not free. They acknowledge that it is going to cost us, but they acknowledge that it is a promise we made. Did we not say to these young men and women: If you will risk your life for America, if you

will put your life on the line for our country, we will not forget you, we will stand by you? And they come home, some of them wounded, some of them broken in spirit, and need our help. As Senator AKAKA has said, now is the moment to stand up and say that we will be there.

There is an amendment to be offered on the other side without money. Senator AKAKA does the responsible thing for our veterans.

We are going to say to the wealthiest among us and to the most profitable corporations: You have to give back a little bit. Is that such a hard ask? Is that difficult for us to do at a time when we are asking hundreds of thousands of our sons and daughters, brothers and sisters, the husbands and wives of America, to give up parts of their lives in service of our country? Is it too much to ask that a wealthy corporation give back a little bit so that these veterans will be taken care of?

I have been out to Walter Reed. Senators on both sides of the aisle have visited veterans. We meet these young men and women. Some of them have lost a leg, an arm, sometimes two legs, some suffered head injuries. They are fighting to come back through rehabilitation, and once they have made it through the critical phase and they are back home, we want the veterans hospitals to be there to help them, and that is what the Akaka amendment is all about, so that we keep that commitment.

We know as well many of these veterans come back without any visible scars, but because of what they have seen, the stress they have lived under, things they have been asked to do, they are haunted by that experience. They don't want to lose their marriage. They don't want to turn to alcohol and drugs. They want the helping hand of counseling.

I went out to the Heinz VA Hospital outside Chicago and sat in on one of these sessions with these returning bright, strong, healthy looking soldiers who were torn inside because of demons in their minds from what they had seen, and they sit there in counseling sessions and try to come to grips with the struggles that they have in their lives. Should we not be sitting there with them? Should we not give them the very best counseling? That is what Senator AKAKA proposes. The Senator challenges this Senate not just to wave the flags in the parade but to stand up for the soldiers and the veterans who march behind those flags every single day for America.

I am proud to support the Akaka and Murray amendment. I do not stand alone. Virtually every major veterans group in America knows that this is the real deal, the Akaka-Murray amendment is the real amendment. That is why it has the support of so many organizations—the Paralyzed Veterans of America, Disabled American Veterans, Retired Enlistment Association, the American Legion. These

are men and women we counted on for America's safety and America's future. Now they count on us. I urge my colleagues to join in supporting the Akaka-Murray amendment. It is the real amendment to help our veterans.

Mr. President, I reserve the remainder of our time.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Who yields time?

The Senator from Colorado.

Mr. ALLARD. Mr. President, Senator VITTER has asked to be added as a cosponsor to the Burns amendment.

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

Mr. ALLARD. Mr. President, I do not have any further speakers on this side of the aisle. I don't know whether Senator AKAKA has any further speakers on his side or whether he is willing to yield back some time.

Mr. AKAKA. Mr. President, how much time do I have remaining?

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator has 4 minutes 47 seconds.

Mr. AKAKA. Mr. President, I had another Member who had wanted to speak. I would at this time reserve my time.

Mr. ALLARD. I suggest the absence of a quorum, Mr. President.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will call the roll.

The legislative clerk proceeded to call the roll.

Mr. SALAZAR. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the order for the quorum call be dispensed with.

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

Who yields time?

Mr. AKAKA. Mr. President, I yield as much time as he needs to Senator SALAZAR of Colorado.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Hawaii controls 3 minutes.

The Senator from Colorado.

Mr. SALAZAR. Mr. President, I would like to speak in support of Senator AKAKA's amendment to provide an additional \$1.5 billion in funding for veterans' healthcare.

As our Nation struggles with a growing healthcare crisis, we can all agree that the VA healthcare system serves as an example for how healthcare should be provided. In addition, through its medical research programs, the VA is frequently responsible for great strides in medical science that contribute significantly to the quality of healthcare services across the country.

We owe it to our service members, our veterans, and our Nation to be honest about our needs, and to provide funding adequate to meet those needs.

While this budget represents an improvement in terms of VA healthcare over last year's budget, it continues to propose revenue-generating policies that would increase costs for our Nation's veterans and serve to drive many of those veterans out of the system.

For example, the administration has once again proposed to raise premiums

and co-pays for Priority 7 and 8 veterans. But we all know the impact these policies will have on veterans in our States—over 27,000 veterans in my State of Colorado alone would be forced out of the system.

This amendment, which I am proud to cosponsor, would add \$1.5 billion in funding for VA medical services, and would offset that increase by closing corporate tax loopholes. It would ensure adequate funding for VA healthcare without increasing costs for Priority 7 and 8 veterans, and would provide needed resources for the specific areas of mental health, readjustment counseling, and rehabilitative care.

At a time when some of our veterans are returning home from Iraq and Afghanistan, it is important that we stand up as a Senate in full support of our veterans.

Our veterans deserve better. They deserve our support of Senator AKAKA's amendment. I urge my colleagues to support this important amendment.

I yield the floor.

Mr. OBAMA. Mr. President, I rise to discuss an issue on which I hope we can find common ground—veterans care.

At this moment, we are debating two different amendments; one is very good, the other is significantly better. I remind my colleagues that we were in the same position almost exactly 1 year ago.

In March of last year, we stood here and debated competing veterans amendments. The Senate voted down an amendment by Senator AKAKA 47 to 53. It instead embraced a smaller amendment by Senator ENSIGN. Just a few months later, we learned the VA would face a billion-dollar budget shortfall. This shortfall was avoidable, regrettable, and threatened care for our veterans.

I know that none of us wants to relive the experience of last summer. We don't want to have to explain to our veterans why we didn't support them, why we didn't demand a budget that matched their sacrifice, why we yet again took the President's word on how much funding our veterans needed.

Senator BURNS' amendment is a good step forward. It eliminates, for the fourth year in a row, the President's proposal to establish a new enrollment fee and double prescription drug copayments for Priority 7 and 8 veterans. That proposal would have balanced the budget on the backs of moderate-income veterans. It sends the wrong message to our troops in Iraq. I urge my colleagues to vote for Senator BURNS' amendment.

But like last year, Senator AKAKA's bill offers a better option, grounded in real estimates of the VA's need. In addition to blocking the new fees, Senator AKAKA's amendment would add \$231 million for treating Iraq and Afghanistan veterans. The underestimation of this workload was one of the major contributors to the shortfall crisis last year.

It also would add \$321 million for mental health initiatives. A recent Army report indicates that more than one-third of soldiers and marines who served in Iraq have subsequently sought mental health care. This is a rate that is higher than in other recent conflicts. The report may even understate the issue because two-thirds of Iraq veterans who screened positive for PTSD and other psychiatric disorders are not receiving treatment, according to *The Washington Post*.

It would add \$122 million for readjustment counseling at vet centers, and rehabilitative care. These are areas that desperately need additional resources.

Today, we have thousands of brave men and women risking their lives for us halfway around the world. At home, we have millions more who were equally courageous in defending our freedom in previous wars and conflicts. When it comes to honoring these soldiers and these veterans, we can and must do more.

Today, the state of care for America's veterans is not worthy of their service to this country. The VA, for example, continues to insist on banning new Priority 8 enrollments. Through this ban, the VA has denied health care to 260,000 vets who assumed upon enlistment that a working class salary of \$25,000 wouldn't prevent them from receiving the health care they were promised. In Illinois, 8,944 Illinois veterans were denied health care through the ban just in the last year.

When it comes to America's veterans, it is not only our patriotic duty to care, it is also our moral duty. When our troops return from battle, we should welcome them with the promise of opportunity, not the threat of poverty.

Senator BURNS' amendment is an improvement over the President's original budget. But given this President's record of underestimating veterans' budgets in the past, we must do more.

It is time to reassess our priorities. A budget is more than a series of numbers on a page; it is the embodiment of our values. I urge my colleagues to support the Akaka amendment.

Mr. JEFFORDS. Mr. President, the proposed budget, while far more realistic than previous years, falls short of our commitment to America's veterans. The amendment would provide an additional \$1.5 billion for VA health care in fiscal year 2007, improving funding for mental health, vet centers, and rehabilitative care, among others. The increase would be offset by closing corporate tax loopholes, rather than by increasing overall taxes. I am pleased to cosponsor this amendment, and I urge my colleagues to support it.

We have a moral responsibility to provide this care to all veterans, regardless of income. This amendment removes both the \$250 enrollment fee for Priority 7 and 8 veterans, and the copay increase from \$8 to \$15. While these amounts may seem inconsequen-

tial to some, many of these veterans make as little as \$26,902 a year. At this income level, such added expense forces difficult choices between essential needs. All veterans have served our country without reservation. Our commitment to them should not be contingent on income level.

The VA faces a growing challenge as soldiers return to their homes and families from Iraq and Afghanistan. Their return will impose new demands for care directly related to injuries and experiences in Iraq and Afghanistan and for routine health care. Growing demand, coupled with the rising costs of health care nationally, increases pressure on the VA budget. We must ensure that the VA has adequate funding to meet these growing costs.

This amendment provides support for an essential program and has a fiscally responsible source of funding. I urge my colleagues to vote in favor of this amendment. Our moral responsibility to America's veterans must not be limited.

Mrs. LINCOLN. Mr. President, today, I rise in support of an amendment to the budget resolution that would provide an additional \$1.5 billion for our veterans. I am a cosponsor of this amendment because this budget's modest increase in veterans funding is only a small step toward addressing the needs of veterans in Arkansas and across the country. It does not go far enough.

I continue to hear from Arkansas veterans who have been subject to increasingly long waiting lists for VA hospital appointments and who have experienced unnecessary hardships because the VA does not have the resources to process their benefits applications in a timely manner. This situation is unacceptable and our veterans deserve better.

As we look to the VA to provide for our growing veterans population and to meet the evolving health care needs of our returning brave men and women in uniform, we must ensure that the VA is provided with the resources it desperately needs to meet these challenges.

This amendment, which I am proud to support and cosponsor, would enable the VA to better absorb the new veterans being added to the system and would provide much-needed funding for the growing mental health care needs of our veterans. Additionally, this amendment rejects the budget provisions proposed by the President that would impose a \$250 enrollment fee and a doubling of the cost of prescription drug copayments from \$8 to \$15. These provisions would force thousands of middle-income veterans to pay substantially more for their care.

As the daughter of a Korean war veteran, I was taught from an early age about the sacrifices our troops have to make to keep our Nation free, and have been grateful for the service of so many of our brave men and women from the State of Arkansas. On behalf of them

and their families, I will continue to fight to ensure they are provided with the benefits, pay, and health care that they have earned. It is the least we can do for those whom we owe so much and to reassure future generations that a grateful Nation will not forget them when their military service is complete. I urge my colleagues to support this amendment because it is our moral responsibility to do so. It is the right thing to do and it should be a priority for each and every one of us.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Who yields time?

Mr. AKAKA. Mr. President, I thank the Senator for that excellent statement.

I yield the remainder of my time.

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

Who yields time in opposition?

Mr. GREGG. Mr. President, what is the time remaining?

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Twenty-one minutes in opposition.

Mr. GREGG. Mr. President, I suggest the absence of a quorum.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will call the roll.

The legislative clerk proceeded to call the roll.

Mr. GREGG. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the order for the quorum call be dispensed with.

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

Mr. GREGG. Mr. President, we yield back the remainder of our time on the Akaka amendment.

I believe the next amendment in order will be the Talent-Cantwell amendment.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Missouri.

AMENDMENT NO. 3019

Mr. TALENT. Mr. President, I send an amendment to the desk.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will report.

The legislative clerk read as follows:

The Senator from Missouri [Mr. TALENT], for himself and Mrs. FEINSTEIN, Ms. CANTWELL, Mrs. LINCOLN, Mr. SMITH, Mr. BIDEN, Mr. KOHL, Mr. HARKIN, Mr. BAYH, Mr. WYDEN, Mr. JOHNSON, Mrs. DOLE, and Mr. COLEMAN, proposes an amendment numbered 3019.

Mr. TALENT. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that reading of the amendment be dispensed with.

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

The amendment is as follows:

(Purpose: To provide \$99,000,000 in COPS Hot Spots funding as authorized in the Combat Meth Act)

On page 24, line 24, increase the amount by \$99,000,000.

On page 24, line 25, increase the amount by \$99,000,000.

On page 27, line 23, decrease the amount by \$99,000,000.

On page 27, line 24, decrease the amount by \$99,000,000.

Mr. TALENT. Mr. President, I rise today to offer an amendment with my colleague from California, Senator FEINSTEIN, to provide additional funding for the COPS Hot Spots Program.

I am grateful, also, for Senator CANTWELL's work in this area and her commitment to provide additional funding to help our law enforcement officers in fighting methamphetamine. As my colleagues know, last week President Bush signed into law the most comprehensive antimethamphetamine legislation ever offered in the Congress, much less passed. I am pleased we were able to pass an initiative that is going to reduce the number of methamphetamine labs around the country and therefore the number of methamphetamine addicts and kids who are raised in settings where there are toxic meth labs. That legislation is going to reduce the number of fires related to methamphetamines but this is not a fight that is ever over.

Methamphetamine is the most deadly, fiercely addictive, and rapidly spreading drug America has ever known. The drug is not only sold and consumed in our neighborhoods—that would be bad enough—it is made there as well using a toxic process that combines cold medications with harmful chemicals such as iodine, ammonia, starter fluid, drain cleaner, and rubbing alcohol. The hazardous byproducts of meth production threaten the health and life of those making the drug, but also their families, the communities around them, as well as law enforcement officers who respond when somebody spots the meth lab.

These makeshift chemistry laboratories are found in homes, in hotels, even the trunks of cars. In addition to the risks of those around the labs, these kinds of laboratories create a huge amount of environmental waste. Cleaning up even one of the laboratories can cost \$10,000 or more. That cost alone is devastating to the budgets of State and local governments around the country.

That is one of the reasons the National Association of Counties lists methamphetamine as the No. 1 problem counties are confronting.

Among the many provisions in the Combat Meth Act that was passed as part of the PATRIOT Act reauthorization last week is a provision that authorizes an additional \$99 million per year for the next 5 years under the COPS Meth Hot Spots Program, which is a program designed to train State and local law enforcement to investigate and lock up meth offenders, and also to expand the funding available for personnel and equipment for enforcement, prosecution, and environmental cleanup. This additional \$99 million is meant to supplement the \$63 million that is already authorized under the Hot Spots Program.

I cosponsored an amendment with my colleague from Arkansas, Mrs. LINCOLN, to restore full funding to that account. This assistance to State and local agencies has a national impact in importance.

I know many of my colleagues have seen firsthand the immense need for and benefit of this funding. State and

local law enforcement personnel are fighting on the front lines in the struggle to stop drug trafficking. They need our help.

I urge the Senate to vote in favor of the amendment.

I ask unanimous consent that the following Senators be added as cosponsors: Senators LINCOLN, SMITH, BIDEN, CANTWELL, KOHL, HARKIN, BAYH, WYDEN, JOHNSON, DOLE, and COLEMAN.

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

Mr. TALENT. Mr. President, as the Senate can see, methamphetamine is not a partisan issue. There is strong support on both sides of the aisle for fighting this drug and for this amendment.

I urge the Senate to support it.

Senator FEINSTEIN has done great work in this area. I know she would like to be here to speak. I do not know if she will be able to get down to speak on it. I congratulate her again on her leadership in this field.

Mr. CONRAD. Mr. President, let me indicate that on our side Senator CANTWELL had this very same amendment funded in a somewhat different way. Nonetheless, it is the identical amendment. The two Senators have agreed to make this the Talent-Cantwell amendment because that eliminates, then, one amendment that we would otherwise have voted on. I thank Senator CANTWELL for her leadership. I very much thank her for her willingness to work together with Senator TALENT to achieve this bipartisan amendment.

I also want to say how critically important dealing with this methamphetamine threat is. I just held a Budget Committee hearing in North Dakota with the attorney general of North Dakota, the U.S. attorney from North Dakota, the State's attorney in the affected county, and with the heads of law enforcement. Without exception they told me the meth threat is the worst thing they have ever faced in terms of a drug; that it is destroying people's lives.

I was recently at a meeting. The man next to me was clearly terribly upset—somebody I have known for a long time, a prominent member of our community in North Dakota. Finally, he told me his son had that day been diagnosed as a methamphetamine addict. He told me it was destroying his family, that he was on the brink of bankruptcy as a result of a long meth addiction by his son, a meth addiction that was proving extremely difficult to treat.

We need more money for prosecutors. We need more money for law enforcement. We need more money for treatment.

This meth epidemic, which may have started in rural areas—I know some of our colleagues in urban areas have acted as though they are not aware of this, that this is not on their agenda. Let me assure Members, it will be on their agenda because we have never seen anything worse. Nothing has af-

fected rural communities in a more adverse way than this meth epidemic.

I again thank the Senator from Washington for her leadership and for her willingness to work across the aisle to come up with a bipartisan amendment.

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Mr. AL-LARD). The Senator from Washington.

Ms. CANTWELL. I rise in support of this amendment offered by my colleague from Missouri who has played a leadership role in trying to tackle a very difficult problem that is impacting various parts of our country. It is unfortunate the parts of our country that have seen this problem have to come to the Senate and wage this battle to convince people who have not had this problem occurring in their communities how important it is.

I say that because if we do not fight meth and combat it on a nationwide basis, we will see the meth problem continue to grow across the country. That is why this particular amendment is so important.

Two weeks ago we took an important step in combating this crisis by passing legislation to actually authorize a comprehensive program to combat meth across the country and in the Hot Spots Program. In Washington State, we have seen methamphetamine grow, first being the second State in the Union with the number of meth drug labs. Only with a comprehensive approach by law enforcement, prevention, and a variety of people in the community were we able to lower that ranking from second in the country down to fifth in the country. While we have made some progress, unfortunately, we pushed the problem to our neighboring State to the south and Oregon became the No. 1 spot in the country for meth labs.

As we have lowered the number of meth labs being discovered in Washington State, we also saw a different effect taking place, an actual increase in the number of deaths related to methamphetamine. We saw the superlabs coming in, in bigger and stronger positions, trying to continue to move this deadly product through our communities.

What the Combat Meth Act does is provide resources to State and local Governments, law enforcement and investigative teams in shutting down labs, investigating the violent crimes, educating the public, and helping children impacted by this terrible product. In one county alone—the Presiding Officer will understand because it is a neighboring county to his State—in the city of Spokane, 90 percent of identity theft and 70 percent of burglaries are related to methamphetamine. During the bust of meth houses in Spokane County, police find children at least 50 percent of the time. This is a problem that is much more comprehensive in the impact it is having on communities than people realize.

When we have a meth house in a community, it not only impacts that

particular neighborhood and community, but it impacts law enforcement who also have to come in and investigate and clean up the drug labs. We know of law enforcement officers injured from trying to fight this problem by not having the proper equipment when going into these locations.

This is a problem that is not small or isolated or one that is going to be fought and won in 1 year's battle. That is why we need to support this amendment today and continue our efforts, not just authorizing but actually appropriating the resources to fight this problem.

We must continue to be true to what we have said, that we believe this battle is worth fighting and that we are going to provide the resources to do so.

I applaud my colleague from Missouri for his leadership on this issue. I am sure the people of Missouri, as in Washington State and other places throughout the country who have this problem, know how important it is to battle this issue.

It is important we realize a comprehensive approach is showing success. In Washington, we have seen a comprehensive approach has actually educated more people and the public to understand how one use of methamphetamine can be so addicting and lead to such a devastating result, for individuals, families, communities, and to everyone impacted in its path.

I applaud my colleague from Missouri for his leadership. I am glad to join him in this bipartisan effort. I also congratulate Senator FEINSTEIN who has made this a priority, and to our budget leader for his help in this issue.

I yield the floor.

Mr. CONRAD. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent to be added as a cosponsor to the Talent-Cantwell amendment.

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

Mr. CONRAD. I ask unanimous consent that Senator FEINSTEIN be added to the Conrad-Feingold amendment on pay-go.

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

Mr. CONRAD. Mr. President, Senator BINGAMAN is available.

How much time remains on the Talent-Cantwell amendment?

The PRESIDING OFFICER. There is 56 minutes remaining in favor of the amendment and 52 minutes on the other side.

Mr. CONRAD. I don't think that is correct. We only had an hour available on that amendment.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The previous order did not cover this amendment.

Mr. GREGG. If the Senator will allow me, I suggest we go to the amendment of Senator BINGAMAN.

Mr. CONRAD. Senator BINGAMAN wishes to speak on the Cantwell amendment for 2 minutes and then to his amendment.

Mr. GREGG. I agree.

Mr. CONRAD. That will take us to 3 o'clock, at which time we will be voting.

I yield to Senator BINGAMAN 2 minutes.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from New Mexico.

Mr. BINGAMAN. Mr. President, I thank my colleague. I congratulate Senator TALENT and Senator CANTWELL for their leadership on this amendment related to methamphetamine use and the epidemic of that use in my State and in many parts of the country.

I have had a series of meetings with law enforcement and local officials throughout New Mexico over the last year. During that time, one thing rings loudly and clearly: That is that the chief law enforcement problem facing many of our communities in New Mexico is methamphetamine use; not just the use itself but all of the resulting crime that occurs by virtue of people using this terrible drug.

The addiction is very difficult to shake once you become addicted. We have done way too little to alert young people in our country, as well as adults, about the dangers involved. We see catastrophic, tragic results in many of our communities.

This funding will help. It will allow the Federal Government to assist local law enforcement to some extent in coming to grips with this. I compliment the Senators on this amendment.

Mr. REID. Mr. President, I rise today to express my support for the COPS Hot Spots amendment to S. Con. Res. 83, the budget resolution, which increases funding for the Meth Hot Spots program to \$99 million. Last week, the Combat Meth Act was signed into law as part of the larger USA PATRIOT Act reauthorization measure. The Combat Meth Act is designed to stop the production, sale, and use of methamphetamines. It authorizes funding for the Meth Hot Spots program, which trains local and State law enforcement officials to combat this destructive and addictive drug.

Illegal drugs are a devastating problem in communities across the country. The production and abuse of methamphetamine, more commonly known as "meth," has become rampant in recent years, especially in rural areas—including many counties in Nevada.

In 2005, 50 meth labs were busted in Nevada alone. This drug affects the health of those who consume it, destroys families, and harms the future of our communities. This drug is especially dangerous because it is extremely addictive, inexpensive to manufacture, and created from common household products.

There is no doubt meth is sweeping the Nation, and we must work together to stop it. Despite the fact that many of our Nation's communities, especially those in rural areas, are fighting valiantly against the devastating effects of this drug, the President's fiscal year 2007 budget provides only \$40 mil-

lion for the Meth Hot Spots program, nearly a 24 percent decrease from fiscal year 2006.

Meth is insidious; it literally robs its victims of their lives. We must aid local enforcement, as well as fund treatment and prevention efforts, if we are to emerge victorious.

I applaud the Senate for accepting this amendment in light of the President's decision to try to slash funding for this important program. I urge my colleagues to maintain this funding in the final version of the budget resolution.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The question is on agreeing to the Talent amendment.

The amendment (No. 3019) was agreed to.

Mr. GREGG. I move to reconsider the vote.

Mr. CONRAD. I move to lay that motion on the table.

The motion to lay on the table was agreed to.

Mr. CONRAD. Mr. President, I thank again both Senator CANTWELL and Senator TALENT for the work on that amendment, first, for working together to come up with an amendment that is bipartisan; second, for the good manners to the rest of the Members of the Senate for agreeing to take a voice vote. That is an excellent example for others. We deeply appreciate Senators accommodating the work of the Senate on this matter.

I ask unanimous consent Senator COLLINS be added as a cosponsor of my pay-go amendment numbered 3013.

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

AMENDMENT NO. 3039

Mr. BINGAMAN. Mr. President, I send an amendment to the desk and ask for its immediate consideration.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will report.

The assistant legislative clerk read as follows:

The Senator from New Mexico [Mr. BINGAMAN], for himself, Ms. CANTWELL, Mr. SALAZAR, Mr. KERRY, Mr. MENENDEZ, Mr. LIEBERMAN, Mrs. CLINTON, Ms. MIKULSKI, and Mr. HARKIN, proposes an amendment numbered 3039.

Mr. BINGAMAN. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent the reading of the amendment be dispensed with.

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

The amendment is as follows:

(Purpose: To make energy more affordable and sustainable, to increase our national security through foreign oil replacement biofuels and alternative fuels and advanced/hybrid vehicle use, to accelerate production and market penetration of clean and renewable energy technologies and generation, and to more fully utilize energy efficiency and conservation technologies and practices)

On page 3, line 13, increase the amount by \$1,689,000,000.

On page 3, line 15, increase the amount by \$1,654,000,000.

On page 3, line 17, increase the amount by \$1,454,000,000.

On page 3, line 19, increase the amount by \$1,152,000,000.
 On page 3, line 21, increase the amount by \$1,264,000,000.
 On page 4, line 1, increase the amount by \$1,689,000,000.
 On page 4, line 2, increase the amount by \$1,654,000,000.
 On page 4, line 3, increase the amount by \$1,454,000,000.
 On page 4, line 4, increase the amount by \$1,152,000,000.
 On page 4, line 6, increase the amount by \$1,264,000,000.
 On page 4, line 13, increase the amount by \$4,049,000,000.
 On page 5, line 4, increase the amount by \$1,972,000,000.
 On page 5, line 6, increase the amount by \$1,535,000,000.
 On page 5, line 8, increase the amount by \$365,000,000.
 On page 5, line 10, increase the amount by \$177,000,000.
 On page 5, line 19, decrease the amount by \$283,000,000.
 On page 5, line 21, increase the amount by \$119,000,000.
 On page 5, line 23, increase the amount by \$1,089,000,000.
 On page 5, line 25, increase the amount by \$975,000,000.
 On page 6, line 2, increase the amount by \$1,264,000,000.
 On page 6, line 8, increase the amount by \$283,000,000.
 On page 6, line 10, increase the amount by \$164,000,000.
 On page 6, line 12, decrease the amount by \$925,000,000.
 On page 6, line 14, decrease the amount by \$1,900,000,000.
 On page 6, line 16, decrease the amount by \$3,164,000,000.
 On page 6, line 22, increase the amount by \$283,000,000.
 On page 6, line 24, increase the amount by \$164,000,000.
 On page 7, line 2, decrease the amount by \$925,000,000.
 On page 7, line 4, decrease the amount by \$1,900,000,000.
 On page 7, line 6, decrease the amount by \$3,164,000,000.
 On page 12, line 21, increase the amount by \$3,549,000,000.
 On page 12, line 22, increase the amount by \$1,597,000,000.
 On page 13, line 1, increase the amount by \$1,420,000,000.
 On page 13, line 5, increase the amount by \$355,000,000.
 On page 13, line 9, increase the amount by \$177,000,000.
 On page 21, line 24, increase the amount by \$500,000,000.
 On page 21, line 25, increase the amount by \$375,000,000.
 On page 22, line 4, increase the amount by \$115,000,000.
 On page 22, line 8, increase the amount by \$10,000,000.
 On page 53, line 1, increase the amount by \$4,049,000,000.
 On page 53, line 2, increase the amount by \$1,972,000,000.

Mr. BINGAMAN. Mr. President, the amendment I have sent to the desk on behalf of myself and many of my colleagues does three things. First, it fulfills the commitment to secure affordable and clean energy that we made in the Energy bill we passed through the Congress last year, which is a commitment that has been essentially not honored by the administration in the

budget they have sent to us and not honored in this budget resolution.

The second thing the amendment does is enable us to take the major step forward to clean and affordable electricity beyond what was contained in the Energy bill by extending for 4 years the renewable energy production tax credit.

Third, the amendment accomplishes these goals in a budget-neutral fashion. In fact, the amendment overall reduces the deficit by \$3.2 billion over 5 years because it raises more funds than it would spend by assuming the reinstatement of the superfund tax.

Every Senator knows that America faces huge energy challenges. Energy prices and energy security are among the top concerns we hear about as we go around our State. Americans want their energy to be more secure, they want it to be more affordable, and they want it to be cleaner. Every one of us has devoted a lot of our time in the last three Congresses to developing legislation that delivers secure, affordable, and clean energy. Last year, we were successful in passing the first comprehensive energy bill in 13 years, the Energy Policy Act of 2005. We did so after repeated requests from the White House to send the President a comprehensive energy bill. It was a substantial bipartisan accomplishment.

The President, of course, spoke very glowingly about this legislation when he signed the bill last August in my home State of New Mexico. If we finally have a new energy strategy for the 21st century, as the President said we do now, then where is the funding to implement that strategy when it comes to energy? Where is the beef in this budget resolution? If we look at the budget that was sent to the Congress in early February by the President and at this budget resolution, you would have a hard time finding that beef.

Let's begin with the President's budget request. Instead of making a strong push forward on programs to deliver new forms of secure and affordable energy, the administration budget request basically treads water. The bottom line proposed for the Department of Energy in the new budget is almost exactly the same funding level as the current fiscal year. Some individual programs are up, other programs that are equally important to our energy security and to affordable energy are cut.

When you look at this budget resolution, you also see an energy policy that is dead in the water. The budget resolution has a specific function that is devoted to energy. That is function 270. In the tables that have been distributed by the chairman of the Committee on the Budget describing the mark he has presented to the Senate, discretionary spending in the energy function, function 270, falls from \$3.84 billion in the current fiscal year to \$3.83 billion next year. In fact, the projected spending on energy in 4 out of the next

5 fiscal years in this budget resolution is less than we are spending this year on energy. I don't think it is acceptable to have an energy policy over the next 5 years that is basically a policy of less of the same. That is not what we voted for. That is not what we supported last year when we passed the Energy bill.

Let me describe in detail the areas in which this Amendment will enable us to meet the challenges of energy security and affordability.

The first area is the area of energy efficiency. Nothing lowers your energy bill more than saving energy. Nothing makes us less dependent on foreign oil than using less of it. Maximizing the usefulness of every barrel of oil we consume and every watt of electricity we generate enjoys broad bipartisan support because it is almost a no-brainer. For that it was very disappointing to see major cuts to energy efficiency being proposed by the administration and being carried forward in this budget resolution.

The disconnect on saving energy dollars and being more secure through efficiency is even more striking, because energy efficiency is one of the areas of the energy bill that the President singled out for praise when he signed it.

Here are his words:

The bill makes an unprecedented commitment to energy conservation and efficiency—an unprecedented commitment. The bill sets higher efficiency standards for federal buildings and for household products. It directs the Department of Transportation to study the potential for sensible improvements in fuel-efficiency standards for cars and trucks and SUVs. It authorizes new funding for research into cutting-edge technologies that will help us do more with less energy.

Yet in this first budget that we are getting after the enactment of the bill, those authorizations for cutting-edge energy efficiency technologies are being cut, as is funding for energy efficiency in many other programs.

I think that this budget resolution needs to keep the commitment to energy efficiency in the Energy Policy Act that the President praised, and then his administration ignored.

In the area of transportation vehicles, we have identified \$629 million of funding, over what the President proposed, that would be required to meet the levels we all authorized when we voted for the Energy Policy Act of 2006, including:

This amendment would allow full funding for the advanced vehicle deployment programs at the Department of Energy.

It would accelerate new hybrid vehicle technologies into the market.

It would encourage the development of engines that would run biodiesel.

It would give a strong push to fuel cells in school buses and transit buses, and would make the Federal government a leading-edge customer for fuel cells.

This amendment would bolster other technology programs for vehicle efficiency, and provide full funding for the

hydrogen research and development programs contained in the Energy Policy Act. There was a lot of enthusiasm in the Senate last year for the long-term promise of hydrogen-fueled vehicles. But the current budget proposal short-changes these hydrogen programs, compared to what we authorized, by \$268 million. If we want to see a technological revolution in the long term that takes us toward hydrogen-powered cars, then we need to step up the funding at the Department of Energy beyond what this budget resolution will allow.

Another key area in keeping energy affordable relates to the efficiency with which we heat and cool buildings, and the energy we use when operating appliances in our homes and commercial equipment in the workplace. This winter, consumers have been paying unprecedented prices for heating oil and natural gas. And we have been lucky—the exceptionally mild winter prevented us from seeing sharp price spikes and spot shortages resulting from the loss of natural gas and oil production from the hurricanes of last year. But consumers are still paying too much for energy, and improved energy efficiency can make a real difference to families struggling to pay the bill from one month to the next.

In this area, the administration's budget request makes some completely wrongheaded choices. For example, there has long been a Federal program to help States implement weatherization programs to reduce energy waste and save consumers money. By all accounts, it is an effective way to help cut monthly energy bills for working families. In the Energy Policy Act, we slated that program for a substantial increase. In the administration's budget request, though, that program is going to be cut by 32 percent. That makes no sense, so my amendment to this resolution provides for the full funding of weatherization programs, as well as other State energy programs to help consumers, at the levels we all agreed to in the Energy Policy Act last year.

In the area of energy efficiency for affordability, then, this amendment would add \$1.17 billion. That's the amount that we have authorized for these programs last year that the administration left out of its budget request. This funding would fully support key new programs to help keep energy costs down for consumers.

It would fund rebate programs for energy-efficient appliances.

It would help utilities with new programs to encourage their customers to save energy.

It would help States improve their building codes for energy efficiency.

It would accelerate Federal energy conservation standards.

It would capitalize on opportunities to save energy in low-income communities, where some of the most energy-inefficient buildings and equipment can be found.

Finally, this amendment provides full funding for the energy efficiency research and development authorized last year by the Energy Policy Act. The administration's budget request was \$462 million short of what we agreed made sense for these programs in the Energy Policy Act and we provide this additional funding, that will make American industries—like our steel, aluminum, and forest industries—more competitive by lowering their energy requirements. This funding will also allow us to make a stronger push towards the next generation of lighting, in which the old incandescent bulb, which wastes most of the energy you put in it as heat, is replaced, by semiconductor lighting that is incredibly long-lived and energy efficient.

Saving energy through conservation is one way in which we can make energy more affordable. But conservation is just part of the answer. We also need to develop new supplies of clean energy to meet our future needs.

All of us are concerned about the security implications of our dependence on foreign oil. Improved transportation efficiency is one key part of the solution, but so is greater reliance on domestic sources of energy for transportation. One area that captured a great deal of attention and support in the Energy Policy Act is making ethanol out of cellulosic plant materials. This would expand the resource base for ethanol beyond cornstarch, which is the current feedstock for making ethanol. It would allow ethanol to be made in a wider geographic area than the Midwest. This is important, because ethanol is difficult to transport in pipelines and needs to be trucked to fuel terminals in order to be mixed into gasoline. The energy bill authorized a half billion dollars in production incentives and conversion assistance for making ethanol from cellulosic biomass. The administration's budget request did not include any funding for this purpose. The budget amendment I have offered would allow for full funding for important initiatives in the production of ethanol from cellulose.

This amendment also allows for full funding of the renewable energy research and development programs in the energy Policy Act. In the Budget request, the administration proposed to terminate research and development programs in geothermal energy and in hydropower. These are important resources that we can't ignore as part of the energy mix. If my amendment were adopted, they could be fully funded, instead of being terminated.

Finally the area of renewable energy production, this amendment takes the first big step beyond the Energy Policy Act. The Energy Policy Act expanded the renewable production tax credit, and created a companion Clean Renewable Energy Bond program for public power. Both the tax credit and the bonds aimed at stimulating the construction of new capacity for generating electricity from solar, wind, bio-

mass, geothermal, and other renewable energy sources. These fiscal incentives, though, expire on December 31, 2007. To qualify, generating facilities have to be placed in service by that date, which is less than 2 years away. That means that these incentives are not going to be stimulating much activity over the next year, because unless your project is already well along, you will not be completed in time to benefit from the tax credit or the bond.

My amendment allows for a 4-year extension of both the renewable energy production tax credit, and the comparable Clean Renewable Energy Bonds. We need to get these fiscal incentives on a time scale that actually matches the requirements of putting electric generation construction projects together. I believe that there is tremendous interest in building new renewable electricity capacity in this country. If we could give the market the certainty of knowing that this tax credit would remain in place until 2011, at this juncture, I believe that we would see an explosion of new construction. That would help us in two important ways. First, the new renewable generation would tend to back out power generated by natural gas, which would take pressure off of natural gas prices. All consumers would benefit from that. Second, the additional construction would provide employment both in States with renewable resources and States where renewable energy generation equipment is manufactured.

Right now, the extension of these fiscal incentives for energy production is not in the budget resolution or in the plans of the Finance Committee for this year. If this amendment were to pass, though, we would have the resources to act on extending this tax credit in this Congress, when it can do the most good.

This amendment also adds funding for a variety of other secure, affordable, and clean energy generation technologies that were left out of the administration's budget request.

It fully funds the Clean Coal Technology program, which received almost no funding in the administration's proposals. This program is essential to helping coal find a place in the generation mix of the future, which will place a premium on controlling emissions and capturing carbon. This amendment also makes a major commitment on distributed electric generation technology, which is likely to have greater overall system efficiencies.

This amendment also allows us to fix one of the most glaring errors in the administration's energy budget request—its recommendation that we terminate all domestic oil and gas research and development programs. For a country facing \$60-per-barrel oil and high natural gas prices, the idea that we will cut off R&D spending for domestic production is a little bizarre.

When you realize that most of the Department of Energy program being terminated is focused on helping independent oil and gas producers, and not the major oil companies, it is even harder to understand. There are a lot of small oil and gas producers in my State of New Mexico, and they certainly are benefiting from current high prices. But none of them are in the position to start up R&D departments. And oil and gas is a boom-and-bust business, while R&D is something that you need to have a long-term commitment to, in order to achieve results.

The administration's proposed termination of domestic oil and gas research and development flies in the face of its own statements.

For example, when the President signed the Energy Policy Act last August, he favorably singled out some of the oil and gas programs it authorized. Here are his words:

The bill authorizes research into the prospects of unlocking vast amounts of now—energy now trapped in shale and tar sands.

Last October, the Secretary of Energy announced funding for 13 R&D projects aimed at tapping unconventional sources of natural gas. That funding, like most of DOE's funding for oil and gas R&D, went to universities, National Laboratories, and independent oil and gas producers. In announcing these projects, he stated, "The projects we are funding today are an investment in our Nation's energy security and economic security, and will help us obtain the maximum benefit of our domestic energy resources in an environmentally sensitive way." But 3 months later, the administration proposed to zero out those same programs in the Budget request, at a time when our need for new domestic sources of natural gas and oil are quite clear.

Finally, just earlier this month, the Department of Energy made another announcement. It released a set of reports stating that state-of-the-art enhanced oil recovery techniques could significantly increase recoverable oil resources of the United States in the future. According to the Department's reports, 89 billion barrels or more of oil could eventually be added to the current U.S. proven reserves of 21.4 billion barrels. That would be a huge improvement to our energy security—an amount of oil that is 9 times greater than even the most optimistic projection of the resources of the Arctic Refuge. And this oil would mostly be produced from existing drilling sites in the United States, with little additional environmental impact. So here is the irony—both the program that produced the reports and the program conducting the research on enhanced oil recovery is the same program that the administration is terminating.

Our need for new domestic sources of oil and gas is quite clear, as is the need to use advanced technology to find and produce those resources. There is no argument about the promise of such re-

search—even the administration agrees. I believe that the Senate should be more willing to match its rhetoric with funding than the administration has been. Therefore, my amendment restores the existing oil and gas research and development programs to the levels appropriated for the current fiscal year. In my view, that is the bare minimum that we should do.

Our amendment would add \$500 million to Function 600 to increase discretionary spending for the Low Income Home Energy Assistance Program. The pending Budget Resolution assumes that appropriations for LIHEAP will be \$1.8 billion in fiscal year 2007—the same as the President's budget request. We know from recent experience that this simply is not enough money. Due to very high oil, gas and electricity prices, the fiscal year 2006 funding of about \$2 billion has been totally inadequate, despite a winter that was milder than normal many states.

Applications for assistance this winter increased an average of 11.4 percent across the country. In New Mexico, the number of fiscal year 2006 applications is projected to be 20 percent higher than last year. New Hampshire—30 percent more applications. Texas—63 percent more. Wyoming—47 percent more. Several states have completely run out of funds. Because of this dire situation, the Senate recently passed Senator SNOWE's bill adding an additional \$1 billion for LIHEAP grants in fiscal year 2006 by a vote of 68 to 31.

Experts predict that energy costs are going to remain high this year and next winter. Contracts for natural gas to be delivered in January 2007 are currently selling for over \$10 per MMBtu. Our amendment provides for a needed increase in LIHEAP funds for next winter.

Good energy policy is not something that happens by default. You need to set out with a clear, comprehensive vision and then—most importantly—stick with it when it comes to implementation. If we don't keep our focus on a comprehensive, balanced approach to both energy efficiency and energy supply, we will not achieve the goals of energy security and energy affordability that we want. I think that the administration's budget suffers from that loss of focus. Somewhere between the signing ceremony and the submission of the next budget, the energy security of our country was not given a high enough priority. I believe that this budget resolution before us now perpetuates that loss of focus. Under its terms, we will actually spend less on our energy security in four out of the five next fiscal years than we did before we passed comprehensive energy legislation. Something is wrong with that picture.

I don't think it's appropriate to set up some zero-sum game on the DOE budget, where we have to rob Peter to pay Paul down in the Appropriations Committee this summer. The provisions of the Energy Policy Act of 2005

are important enough to the country that we should be working together to increase the bottom line for all energy programs in the energy function of the budget.

A lot of hard work went into crafting the Energy Policy Act of 2005 on the part of all of us in the Senate. Important priorities for Senators—both Republican and Democratic—in areas such as energy efficiency, oil, natural gas, clean coal, and others have not been requested at levels that will allow the Act to be properly implemented.

I believe that we should use this Budget Resolution to get to better energy outcomes for the nation. At a minimum, we need to fund the programs we authorized to bring us better energy security and make energy more affordable in the future. It is not a mystery as to what those programs are. We extensively debated them at the Committee level, here on the Senate floor, and in conference during the passage of the Energy Policy Act of 2005. Seventy-four Senators voted to set up those programs when they voted for the Energy Policy Act of 2005. There may be those who say we should go beyond those authorizations and do even more for our energy future, and I would not disagree. But if the good work we have done to date on energy bill is not to be wasted, then we need to vote on this budget resolution to at least fund the programs that we established. That is what this amendment does, and I hope that I will have the support of a broad majority of my colleagues to pass it.

Mr. President, I yield the floor and reserve the remainder of my time.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Who seeks recognition?

The Senator from New Mexico.

Mr. DOMENICI. Mr. President, parliamentary inquiry: How much time do I have in opposition to the amendment?

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Up to an hour.

Mr. DOMENICI. Fine. I yield the floor and suggest the absence of a quorum, and let it be charged to me.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will call the roll.

The assistant legislative clerk proceeded to call the roll.

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

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

Mr. GREGG. Mr. President, I believe there was a unanimous consent agreement that the Bingaman amendment would run until 3 o'clock, and then we would start voting. I believe the time was to be equally divided between the proponents and the opponents. So my understanding would be the Senator from New Mexico would have about half of that time. I think it started at about 2:25, so the Senator from New Mexico would have half of 35 minutes.

Was that not the understanding that was reached? I thought it was the understanding reached.

Mr. CONRAD. I agree.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. There was no such order requested.

Mr. CONRAD. Maybe we could at this moment then put that in place.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from New Hampshire.

Mr. GREGG. Mr. President, I would ask that the time between now and 3 o'clock be divided so that the senior Senator from New Mexico, Mr. DOMENICI, would have 15 minutes, the junior Senator from New Mexico, Mr. BINGAMAN, would have 5 minutes, and at 3 o'clock the voting will proceed, and that all time on this amendment will have expired, and that it will be included in the votes which we will proceed with. I will ask for unanimous consent. In fact, I ask unanimous consent right now. I ask unanimous consent that—

Mr. DURBIN. Reserving the right to object, I wish to ask the chairman if he would withhold for a moment, as I make a personal request.

I suggest the absence of a quorum.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Is there objection?

Hearing no objection, it is so ordered.

The clerk will call the roll.

The assistant legislative clerk proceeded to call the roll.

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

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

Mr. GREGG. Mr. President, I am going to ask unanimous consent, and then I am going to modify it.

Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the votes for 3 p.m. today occur in the following order, with 2 minutes equally divided between the votes, and all votes after the first be limited to 10 minutes in length: The first would be Conrad and Feingold, No. 3013; second, Talent, No. 3011; Kennedy, No. 3028; Chafee, No. 3014; Burns, No. 2999; and Akaka, No. 3007. I further ask consent that immediately following the votes, the Senate proceed to a vote in relation to the Bingham amendment No. 3039, with the same 2 minutes of debate time, and no second degrees in order to the amendment prior to that vote. I further ask consent that the votes now start at 3:05, and that the time between now and 3:05 be divided as follows: 5 minutes to Senator BINGAMAN, 15 minutes to Senator DOMENICI, and then, at 3 o'clock, 5 minutes to the Senator from Illinois, Mr. DURBIN.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Is there objection?

Hearing no objection, it is so ordered.

The Senator from New Mexico.

Mr. DOMENICI. Mr. President, I will start my 15 minutes. I ask I be notified when I have used 10 minutes, please.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Chair will be glad to notify the Senator from New Mexico.

Mr. DOMENICI. I thank the Chair.

First, might I say to my friend Senator BINGAMAN, it is not to my liking

we are here opposing each other. We produced the Energy bill, which we are discussing or debating today, together. Today we have an argument about how to implement it, how fast to implement it. I am on the side of the President in terms of implementing it, and the Senator wants to implement it faster. That does not mean we are at odds with reference to what we tried to do. It is just how fast we will do it.

I wish to suggest to the Senate that when you have a budget, you have to make choices. The President made some very significant choices in this area of how much of the Energy Policy Act should be implemented. In his State of the Union Address, he spoke rather eloquently about our addiction to oil. It is interesting, when he spoke about that, he then turned to issues and matters within the Energy Policy Act, which was passed by 74 Senators—bipartisan—when he said: Let us move ahead to substitute in the tanks of our automobiles—instead of gasoline, let us substitute ethanol and a related product that eventually will come from cellulose that will be produced, that grows. And we are about to the point where we know exactly how to convert that to something that can be used in the tanks of our cars. The President asked for that. That is a very large item. That is funded. Senator BINGAMAN has no argument with that. Obviously, he is for that.

In addition, the President said: We should move ahead with a technology toward batteries so a hybrid automobile will come onboard more quickly. That is another \$31 million add-on. I am sure the proponent, my friend, my colleague, supports that also.

He asked for \$289 million for hydrogen fuel cells and \$281 million for the development of clean coal technology, including \$54 million for the FUTGEN Initiative, one of the most important projects in the country. In addition, the President asked for \$250 million for the Global Nuclear Energy Partnership—the name for that is GNEP; we have all heard about it; \$148 million for the new Solar America Initiative, a very important initiative—again, I am sure that is wholeheartedly supported by the proponent of the amendment, and which I oppose; and then there is \$44 million for wind research to try to make the technology for wind energy, which is good. It is already producing, and we are generating great quantities in the State of Colorado, the State of New Mexico, and many others.

But the distinguished Senator, my colleague, asked for much more than that. He asked that we add \$3.5 billion to this function called function 207. That just means it is the function that contains energy. I wish it were increasing funding for all the items the amendment seeks. I wish the President asked for them. I wish it were possible. I believe we can go much further for the cause of energy efficiency and renewable energy as well as conventional forms, but we can't do it all right now.

We have to be realistic about using the funds currently available.

For that reason, although many of the proposals are very good and I believe we will do them in due course, I can say to the Senate and those who are interested in the issues and ideas raised by my colleague, I believe they are going to be implemented, just not by this budget. How do you pay for them? Because you see, Senator BINGAMAN would not want to say we broke the budget. So he says: Let's pay for them. The way he suggests we pay for them is dubious. He suggests that we pay for them by reauthorizing Superfund taxes. That is an assumption made in this amendment, that we will find the money, the \$3.5 billion, by reauthorizing the Superfund, which has been controversial. It has not been reauthorized in a long time. I don't believe there is a way to do it. So we are increasing taxes that should not even be used for these programs. We are assuming that will happen in order to make this amendment look as if it is a budget-neutral amendment, and then we are asking for these good things to be paid for in that manner. I believe the Senate should reject it.

Again, many, if not all, of the items are good for the country and should eventually be done. To the extent that we work together to get them in an energy act, I think we will ultimately work together to get them funded one way or another. I hope we don't do it today because I don't think that will add to the budget and to the requirement that we as an institution produce a budget. That is our primary requirement, to produce the outline. I think this amendment will not help do that.

I yield the floor and reserve the remainder of my time.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. (Mr. BURR). The Senator from New Mexico.

Mr. BINGAMAN. I yield 5 minutes to my colleague, Senator SALAZAR of Colorado.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Colorado.

Mr. SALAZAR. Mr. President, let me say to my friends and colleagues from New Mexico, Senators BINGAMAN and DOMENICI, I very much appreciate the bipartisan leadership they are exercising in moving us forward in grappling with the imperative of national energy independence. I believe the National Energy Policy Act of 2005 was a first step in the right direction, and we must take additional steps.

It is because I believe we must take additional steps that I rise today in support of this amendment for energy independence and energy security. Our amendment will add about \$3.5 billion to energy efficiency and renewable energy programs authorized in the bipartisan energy bill of last year; \$500 million for the LIHEAP program to help low-income families heat their homes; it importantly extends the production tax credit and clean energy bonds for renewable energy. This is a fiscally responsible way of fulfilling our mandate

to lead America to energy independence.

In his State of the Union Address, we heard the President commit to replace 70 percent of our oil imports from the Middle East by the year 2025. This is actually a modest goal. I am a member of a bipartisan group of Senators—six Republicans and six Democrats—that supports S. 2025, the Vehicle and Fuel Choices for American Security Act. That legislation would lead our country on a path to save 2.5 million barrels of oil per day by the year 2016, 7 million per day by 2026, and 10 million barrels per day by the year 2031. We can reach these goals and the President's goals, but we can only do it if we invest adequate resources in renewable and energy efficiency programs for the Nation.

The importance of making these investments now could not be more clear. Today we import almost 60 percent of our oil, accounting for one-quarter of the U.S. trade deficit. At our current rate of consumption, we will be importing 70 percent by 2020. We are currently held hostage by our dependence on foreign oil, jeopardizing our national security and our Nation's economic stability.

This amendment takes concrete steps toward the goal of energy independence. It builds on proposals we have been working on in the Energy and Natural Resources Committee, ideas we have laid out in S. 2025 and ideas that I have discussed with the President in his recent trip to the National Renewable Energy Lab in Golden, CO.

Our amendment would speed up development of renewable energy technologies, incentivize alternative fuels production, and improve energy efficiency in our cars and homes. Currently, transportation accounts for two-thirds of domestic oil consumption. That is why this amendment is so important, because it will provide full funding for the Energy Policy Act advanced vehicle deployment programs. We want to accelerate the development of hybrid vehicle technology, create fuel cells for school buses and transit buses, and improve the technology in biodiesel engines. Our amendment makes smart investments in renewable energy to make it affordable and accessible to all Americans.

It will fund research and development for renewable energies to the levels we authorized last year as a Senate in the Energy Policy Act of 2005. This amendment will double the funding for renewable energy development at DOE's top renewable energy lab, the National Renewable Energy Lab in Golden, CO. By supporting the technological advances occurring at places such as the National Renewable Energy Lab, we will usher in a new era in solar production, wind power, and biofuels.

It extends existing production tax credits for electric power and liquid fuels produced from renewable resources until 2011. This will provide greater predictability for manufactur-

ers and purchasers that want to make renewables a viable alternative.

Our amendment will also place an additional \$296 million into clean coal R&D. We are on the brink of breakthroughs in coal gasification and clean coal technology that will allow us to take full advantage of America's unparalleled coal resources. We must support these technologies and get them to the market as soon as possible. This energy independence amendment will also provide funding for the production incentives for cellulosic ethanol that we authorized in last year's Energy bill. Cellulosic ethanol is an untapped and potentially massive energy source. I appreciate the President's expression of support for its development. Current methods of producing ethanol have an energy return of about 35 percent. We can do much better.

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Mr. COLEMAN). The time of the Senator has expired.

Mr. SALAZAR. I ask unanimous consent for an additional 20 seconds to finish my statement.

Mr. CONRAD. Mr. President, I yield the Senator off the resolution an additional minute.

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

Mr. SALAZAR. Mr. President, the investments we make as a nation in wind energy, solar power, and cellulosic ethanol are important for the energy independence of America. As I have often said, the bipartisan leadership of the Senate Energy Committee can get us to energy independence if we make sure that what we do is take care of the cornerstones of energy independence, which include renewable energy, conservation, new technologies, and balanced development of our natural resources.

I yield the floor and thank Senator CONRAD.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from New Mexico.

Mr. BINGAMAN. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that Senator REID of Nevada be added as a cosponsor of the amendment.

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

Under the previous order, the distinguished Senator from New Mexico has 8 minutes remaining. Does the senior Senator wish to yield back his time?

Mr. DOMENICI. Are we there now?

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The senior Senator has 7 minutes remaining.

Mr. DOMENICI. If I yield back, do we go to votes? Are we finished?

Mr. CONRAD. No, we would not.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Under the previous order, the Senator from Illinois is to be recognized.

Mr. CONRAD. Senator DURBIN has a disaster in his hometown.

Mr. DOMENICI. I yield back.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator yields back his time.

Under the previous order, the Senator from Illinois, Mr. DURBIN, is recognized for 5 minutes.

Mr. CONRAD. Mr. President, as the Senator from Illinois is coming to speak about a natural disaster that has hit his hometown, let me alert colleagues to once again please cooperate with the chairman and myself on trying to work out the timing of amendments. We have a series of amendments we are trying to get lined up to be debated tonight which we would then vote on tomorrow morning. We are running into a little bit of difficulty because of Senators' schedules. We urge people to try to work with us to resolve those matters as expeditiously as possible.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from New Hampshire.

Mr. GREGG. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that after the first vote in the seven votes that are coming at 3:05, that all further votes would be 10-minute votes.

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

The assistant Democratic leader.

SPRINGFIELD TORNADOS

Mr. DURBIN. Mr. President, I thank the chairman of the committee, Senator GREGG, as well as Senator CONRAD, for yielding this time.

For the last 2 days, I have been asked by many of my colleagues in the Senate and I have received calls and e-mails from across the country about my hometown of Springfield, IL, which was hit by two tornados on Sunday evening. I wanted to take a few minutes to tell the Senate where things stand.

On behalf of the people of Springfield, IL, our State capital, Mr. Lincoln's hometown, we are grateful for the outpouring of support from all across the State and all across the region. We will get through this disaster together, and we will rebuild Mr. Lincoln's hometown. A series of photographs which I have here show homes and businesses blown apart by the tornados. Imagine this image multiplied by hundreds of times, and you have an idea what Springfield looks like.

This morning, I was on the phone early with Mayor Tim Davlin, who had gone through the area, visited some of the neighborhoods, and was speechless to describe what has happened to the homes of so many fine families in Springfield, IL. These two tornados were part of a violent storm system that claimed at least nine lives across the Nation and wreaked havoc along a 350-mile corridor from Lawrence, KS, through Illinois. They were the worst tornados people can remember in Illinois. We are somewhat proud of the distinction of being Tornado Alley, so we have seen some bad ones. They tore through Springfield at 120 miles an hour, followed by fierce rain and hail. The first tornado touched down around 8:20 Sunday evening. It was on the ground for almost 6 minutes and left a path of destruction 5.5 miles long and a half mile wide. The second tornado touched down at 8:25. It was on the ground for 5 minutes and left damage 4

miles long, 300 yards wide. The winds ripped off the roof of our Springfield Wal-Mart, peeled the siding off buildings, and blew the windows out of countless buildings, including our State capitol building. Many homes and businesses were completely leveled by this tornado.

Trees were pulled up by their roots, utility polls were snapped in half, traffic signs and signals were toppled, forcing the closure of major roads into the city of Springfield.

Twenty-four people in central Illinois were injured in the storms, including 19 in my hometown of Springfield. We are very grateful no one died. That is due partly to luck but also to the excellent storm warning system operated by the city of Springfield and Sangamon County. I salute the Sangamon County government, as well as the city of Springfield, Andy Van Meter, chairman of the board, and Mayor Tim Davlin for their great cooperation during this disaster.

The early warning gave people a chance to save their lives. Governor Blagojevich has already declared a State disaster in Sangamon County and in six neighboring counties—Ford, Greene, Logan, Morgan, Randolph, and Scott.

The worst damage by far is in Springfield. Nearly 1,000 homes have been damaged or destroyed, 10,000 people without electricity, schools remain closed, and many roads are still not passable.

The worst disasters tend to bring out the best in Americans. That is true in Springfield today. There has been an amazing outpouring of courage and generosity. The Red Cross, God bless them, are already seeking temporary housing for 50 families who have no place to turn. All the other people whose homes were damaged or destroyed have been taken in by friends and family.

I commend Governor Blagojevich, Springfield Mayor Tim Davlin, Chairman Andy Van Meter, and their staffs, and so many community leaders who have been working around the clock to get help to the victims.

I commend the mayors of two neighboring towns that were also hit. Mayor Harry Stirmell of the village of Jerome, which is just a few blocks from where I live, and Mayor Joe Rusciollelli of the village of Riverton, which were hit hard, are also working with State and local officials and with FEMA.

The Governor's office and the mayors' offices are scheduled to meet with FEMA officials tomorrow. It is my understanding that the FEMA officials are on their way to Springfield to assess the damage and map out a recovery plan.

I know I speak for Senator OBAMA, my colleague, when I say we stand ready to help. We are going to bring together a bipartisan delegation that represents this area, including Congressman LAHOOD, Congressman SHIMKUS, and Congressman EVANS. We will work

together in concert on a bipartisan basis to make sure help is on the way.

Based on what we already know, we expect Springfield and other central Illinois communities hit by these tornadoes will qualify for Federal emergency disaster assistance. We are going to do our best to make sure that comes quickly.

I close with a real-life story. A story in today's Springfield Journal Register quotes a man named Tim Williams. Before the tornado, Mr. Williams' garage in Springfield was filled with antiques, including a 1955 Buick Roadmaster Riviera that he had just finished restoring and had driven only 87 miles. Today the car is damaged, but Mr. Williams' antiques are scattered across the neighborhood.

Like everybody else, he considers himself really lucky. He and his family made it through this tornado of 2006 alive. Like many in our town, he is feeling a renewed empathy for the victims of Hurricane Katrina. As Mr. Williams told a reporter:

You don't realize until it happens to you.

I want to say to my fellow residents of Springfield and to others who suffered severe losses in these storms: You are not alone. We are part of an American family. We stand together when times get tough. I didn't know that today I would be asking for help from across the Nation for my hometown, but tomorrow it can be the hometown of any Senator on the floor of the Senate.

I know my colleagues on both sides of the aisle, government at every level, will do everything they can to put Mr. Lincoln's hometown back together again. That is the American spirit. That is the American family. We are 50 States, but we are one American family.

I am looking forward to working with my colleagues to make sure we deliver and that the people of Springfield, Sangamon County, and all the affected counties from this tornado are made whole as quickly as possible.

Mr. President, I yield the floor.

AMENDMENT NO. 3013

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Under the previous order, the question is on agreeing to the Conrad-Feingold amendment No. 3013.

Mr. GREGG. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that we deem the yeas and nays to have been ordered on all seven amendments.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Is there objection to requesting the yeas and nays on all the amendments?

The Senator from North Dakota.

Mr. CONRAD. Mr. President, let's make clear, when we say "all the amendments," what we are intending is that all the amendments that are in order to be voted on at this point.

Mr. GREGG. Correct, the seven amendments we are about to vote on.

Mr. CONRAD. There is no objection to that.

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

Is there a sufficient second?

Mr. GREGG. To all of them.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. There appears to be a sufficient second.

The yeas and nays were ordered.

Mr. CONRAD. Mr. President, is it not correct that under the previous understanding, there will be 2 minutes before each vote for a wrapup? That has been our usual practice. That was the unanimous consent agreement previously entered.

Mr. GREGG. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that we vitiate this rollcall so we can do the 2 minutes and go back to the rollcall as would be the proper order. It has not started.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The rollcall has not started. The Senator from North Dakota.

Mr. CONRAD. Mr. President, this is the pay-go amendment. In some ways, I think this is the most important amendment we face. It is an attempt to reestablish the budget disciplines that have worked in the past. Here is where we are headed: Debt up, up, and away.

Pay-go simply says: If you want new mandatory spending, you have to pay for it. If you want more tax cuts, you have to pay for them. I know the chairman says that means a tax increase. Not at all. You can pay for increased tax reductions or increased spending by offsetting other spending reductions. It is critically important we do this.

I want to emphasize, here is what has happened: We weakened the pay-go rule after we got back into surplus, and it has been red ink all the way down. This is our opportunity to reenact the budget discipline of pay-go. I urge my colleagues to vote aye.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator's time has expired. The Senator from New Hampshire.

Mr. GREGG. Mr. President, the practical effect of this is to raise taxes. That is the only effect it has. If you take the pay-go language and put it on top of the 5-year budget we offer today, the only thing it will impact is the fact that taxes will have to be increased to pay for extending the rate cuts, for extending the repeal of the death tax, and capital gains and dividends. It is not pay-go, it is tax-go.

For all practical matters, this is a vote on whether you want to raise taxes.

I yield back the remainder of my time.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The question is on agreeing to amendment No. 3013. The yeas and nays have been ordered. The clerk will call the roll.

The bill clerk called the roll.

The result was announced—yeas 50, nays 50, as follows:

[Rollcall Vote No. 38 Leg.]

YEAS—50

Akaka	Cantwell	Dodd
Baucus	Carper	Dorgan
Bayh	Chafee	Durbin
Biden	Clinton	Feingold
Bingaman	Collins	Feinstein
Boxer	Conrad	Harkin
Byrd	Dayton	Inouye

Jeffords	Lincoln	Reid
Johnson	McCain	Rockefeller
Kennedy	Menendez	Salazar
Kerry	Mikulski	Sarbanes
Kohl	Murray	Schumer
Landrieu	Nelson (FL)	Snowe
Lautenberg	Nelson (NE)	Stabenow
Leahy	Obama	Voinovich
Levin	Pryor	Wyden
Lieberman	Reed	

NAYS—50

Alexander	DeWine	Martinez
Allard	Dole	McConnell
Allen	Domenici	Murkowski
Bennett	Ensign	Roberts
Bond	Enzi	Santorum
Brownback	Frist	Sessions
Bunning	Graham	Shelby
Burns	Grassley	Smith
Burr	Gregg	Specter
Chambliss	Hagel	Stevens
Coburn	Hatch	Sununu
Cochran	Hutchison	Talent
Coleman	Inhofe	Thomas
Cornyn	Isakson	Thune
Craig	Kyl	Vitter
Crapo	Lott	Warner
DeMint	Lugar	

The amendment (No. 3013) was rejected.

Mr. FRIST. Mr. President, I move to reconsider the vote.

Mr. GREGG. I move to lay that motion on the table.

The motion to lay on the table was agreed to.

Mr. CONRAD. Mr. President, could the Chair inform the body what is next in order?

The PRESIDING OFFICER. There are now 2 minutes of debate equally divided on the Talent amendment.

AMENDMENT NO. 3011

Mr. TALENT. Mr. President, this is the amendment which I offered on behalf of myself, Senator LIEBERMAN, and Senator WARNER.

This amendment raises the top line for Defense in the number which the President requested to an approximately \$3 billion increase. It is paid for. In time of war, the minimum we ought to do is have the Defense top line at the number which the President requests.

It is a bipartisan amendment. I ask the Senate for its support.

Mr. GREGG. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the yeas and nays on this amendment be vitiated and Senators agree to take it by voice vote.

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

The question is on agreeing to the amendment.

The amendment (No. 3011) was agreed to.

AMENDMENT NO. 3028

The PRESIDING OFFICER. There are now 2 minutes of debate equally divided on the Kennedy amendment.

The Senator from Massachusetts.

Mr. KENNEDY. Mr. President, I offer this amendment along with the Senator from Maine, Ms. COLLINS, and the Senator from New Jersey, Mr. MENENDEZ.

As we confront the global economy, America is facing a massive new challenge. It affects our jobs, our way of life, and even our national security.

Education is the key to meeting that challenge.

This last year, we had many important reports ranging from the National Association of Manufacturers to the National Academy of Sciences and Engineering and the Institute of Medicine. All of them say we have to invest in education to meet the global challenge.

When we faced the challenge of Sputnik, we doubled our investment in education overnight. We need that kind of commitment again so that we can compete with China and India and maintain our position as No. 1 economically and militarily.

The amendment that Senators COLLINS and MENENDEZ and I offered increases Pell Grants, student aid, and job training. It pays for these new investments by closing egregious tax loopholes that the Senate has approved before.

The amendment is supported by 100 organizations, and I ask unanimous consent to include in the RECORD a sample of the letters of support we have received.

This amendment is a downpayment on our future. I urge the Senate to accept it.

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

STUDENT AID ALLIANCE,
Washington, DC, March 14, 2006.

DEAR SENATOR: On behalf of the Student Aid Alliance, a coalition of 60 associations representing college students, parents, college and university presidents, faculty, administrators, and others, we urge you to support the amendment to the FY 2007 Budget Resolution being offered by Sens. Kennedy, Collins and Menendez. This amendment will help millions of students fulfill their dream of a college education.

The administration's budget will put college out of reach for far too many American children. It calls for the elimination of seven higher education programs: the Perkins Loan Program, the Leveraging Educational Assistance Partnerships Program (state grants), the Thurgood Marshall Legal Educational Opportunity Program, GEAR UP, and three of the highly successful TRIO programs: Upward Bound, Upward Bound Math/Science, and Talent Search. It also freezes funding for the Supplemental Educational Opportunity Grant, the Federal Work-Study Program, and freezes the maximum award for the Pell Grant—the anchor of the federal commitment to ensuring equal educational opportunity—at \$4,050 for the fourth year in a row.

The Kennedy-Collins-Menendez Amendment puts a halt to this backward momentum, and sends a clear message that as a nation, we can ill afford to fall behind nations like China, India, South Korea, and much of the European Union in producing the intellectual capital needed to boost economic growth and challenge the United States in the decades ahead. Given the high stakes involved, this is not the time to cut federal student financial aid.

We urge you to adopt the Kennedy-Collins-Menendez Amendment.

Sincerely,

DAVID WARD,
Co-Chair.

DAVID WARREN,
Co-Chair.

THE WORKFORCE ALLIANCE,
Washington, DC, March 13, 2006.

Re Menendez-Kennedy-Collins Amendment to FY07 Budget Resolution

Hon. EDWARD M. KENNEDY,
Russell Senate Office Building, U.S. Senate,
Washington, DC.

DEAR SENATOR KENNEDY: The Workforce Alliance wholeheartedly supports the budget amendment offered by yourself, Senator Menendez and Senator Collins to increase our nation's investment in higher education, job training and vocational education programs that are so vital to economic future of this country, as well as to the economic prosperity of America's working families.

Your amendment would bring an additional \$6.3 billion into the FY07 budget in order to expand these critical education and training programs at a time when our country desperately needs to increase the skill levels of its workforce in order to compete in a 21st Century global economy. Your amendment would finally stop the several-year slide in combined federal funding for these programs.

The Workforce Alliance (TWA) is a national coalition of local leaders from the field of workforce development—including community-based organizations, community colleges, labor unions, business and trade associations, and state and local public agencies—who want to improve our nation's investments in the skills of all its workers, so that more of America's workers will have the skills they need to advance, and so that more American businesses will have the skilled workers they need to compete in today's economy. Your amendment takes an important step in that direction.

We appreciate your attention to this important matter and look forward to working with you to ensure that our nation's budget reflects the right priorities for American workers and businesses.

Sincerely,

ANDY VAN KLEUNEN,
Executive Director.

ASSOCIATION OF JESUIT
COLLEGES & UNIVERSITIES,
Washington, DC, March 13, 2006.

Hon. EDWARD KENNEDY,
Ranking Minority, HELP Committee, U.S. Senate,
Washington, DC.

Hon. ROBERT MENENDEZ,
Member, Budget Committee U.S. Senate, Washington, DC.

DEAR SENATORS KENNEDY AND MENENDEZ: On the behalf of the Association of Jesuit Colleges and Universities and the twenty-eight Jesuit higher education institutions, I write in strong support of the Kennedy-Menendez Student Aid and Job Vocation Amendment to the Senate Budget Resolution for FY07. This amendment totals \$6.3 billion and critically addresses the increases needed in all student aid programs.

For over four years, the Pell grant maximum award has been frozen at \$4,050. Last year, we finally retired the Pell Grant shortfall and we had hoped for some increase on Pell grant maximum award for FY06, but that did not occur. Even though there were remaining Pell grant surplus funds from FY06, the administration did not use that additional \$273 million for an increase on the FY07 Pell grant maximum award. This amendment will increase the Pell grant maximum award and would address the declining value of the Pell grant program resulting from four years of level funding.

Your amendment also restores critical higher education access programs such as TRIO programs and GEARUP, in addition to restoring LEAP and the Perkins Loan Program which were called for elimination in

the President's budget. We greatly appreciate the restoration of the Perkins loan program, an integral part of student aid on Jesuit campuses across the country.

Ironically, the White House and Members of Congress talk about America being globally competitive, but we cannot continue to do so unless the investment to federal student aid programs increases, remains consistent, and involves students from low incomes. Otherwise, those global competitive goals are only rhetoric.

Thank you for your efforts in offering this amendment. AJCU stands ready to assist your efforts throughout the budget process and the year.

Sincerely,

CYNDY LITTLEFIELD,
Director of Federal Relations.

NATIONAL ALLIANCE FOR
PARTNERSHIPS IN EQUITY,
Cochranville, PA, March 13, 2006.

Senator EDWARD M. KENNEDY,
Committee on Health, Education, Labor and
Pensions, Hart Senate Office Building,
Washington, DC.

DEAR SENATOR KENNEDY: When the President released his FY 2007 Budget we were all in a state of dismay. Considering the increasingly competitive global economy and the importance of maintaining our competitive edge, the budget cuts to education and job training were short sighted. Critical programs that open the doors of opportunity for students, workers and families will be closed if the administrations budget proposal is not corrected.

The National Alliance for Partnerships in Equity applauds your effort to rally your colleagues by developing the Menendez-Kennedy Student Aid/Job Training Budget Amendment and wholeheartedly support its introduction and eventual passage. We are particularly concerned about the elimination of the Perkins Vocational Education program and are pleased to note that your proposal will restore full funding to these very important programs.

The National Alliance for Partnerships in Equity is a consortium of state agencies and affiliates who have joined forces to work collaboratively to promote equity in education and workforce development, including career and technical education. NAPE's membership is committed to the creation of equitable classrooms and workplaces where there are no barriers to opportunities. Budgets, such as the one proposed by the administration, will only eliminate opportunities for students.

Thank you for your vision and support for education programs and the students who benefit from them.

Sincerely,

MIMI LUFKIN,
Executive Director.

THE STATE PIRGS' HIGHER EDU-
CATION PROJECT; UNITED STATES
STUDENT ASSOCIATION,

March 13, 2006.

Hon. EDWARD KENNEDY,
Russell Senate Office Building,
U.S. Senate, Washington, DC.

DEAR SENATOR KENNEDY: On behalf of students across the country we would like to thank you for introducing an amendment to restore cuts to, and provide critical increases for, education funding in the FY07 Senate budget.

Students and families face one of the most difficult years in to attempt to finance a college education, as increased tuition costs and severe state budget cuts are creating enormous barriers for students pursuing higher education degrees. Already, too many students take on substantial loan debt and

work long hours in order to cover the costs of a college education. Nearly two-thirds of all students graduate with federal education loan debt, and the average student loan debt has nearly doubled over the past eight years to almost \$17,000. In addition, nearly half of all full-time students who were employed while in school during this time worked 25 hours or more every week.

Without change, the FY07 Senate budget threatens to leave millions of students and families in a deep financial hole. The original budget proposal called for the elimination of several vital student aid programs that make college more affordable, including LEAP funding, Perkins Loans, the Thurgood Marshall fellowship, and the TRIO and GEAR UP programs. We support the effort to restore funding for these programs.

In addition your amendment provides increases to critical grant programs such as the Pell Grant. The maximum Pell Grant has been frozen at \$4,050 for the past four years. As college costs continue to rise, students experience these increases as a cut to funding.

We thank you for standing up for students and introducing this amendment. We look forward to working with you to build support for increase funding for our nation's students.

Sincerely,

LUKE SWARTHOUT,
State PIRGS' Higher Education Associate.
JASMINE HARRIS,
Legislative Director, United States Student
Association.

COALITION OF HIGHER EDUCATION
ASSISTANCE ORGANIZATIONS,
Washington, DC, March 13, 2006.

DEAR SENATORS: I am writing to urge your support for amendments that would permit an increase in federal funding for education that may be offered during Senate consideration of the Congressional Budget Resolution for fiscal year 2007. I understand that Senators Specter and Harkin and Senators Kennedy, Menendez and Collins plan to offer such amendments. We strongly urge all senators to vote yes on these amendments, which would permit extremely important investments in our nation's future. Without additional spending authority for education provided for in the Budget Resolution, it will be impossible for the Appropriations Committee to adequately complete its work this year.

The Coalition of Higher Education Assistance Organizations (COHEAO) is a coalition of colleges, universities and commercial organizations that work to foster improved access to postsecondary education, particularly through the Perkins Loan Program. The Perkins program plays a critical role in our nation's financial aid system, especially for the lowest-income students. It is the original student loan program created by the National Defense Education Act of 1958 in response to the Sputnik launch by the Soviet Union. National Defense Student Loans were needed then, and, renamed, they are needed today as our country continues to face challenges that require a highly educated workforce to respond. In order for this program to remain healthy and to avoid cutting students off from the financing they need, annual appropriations are needed of a modest capital contribution and to reimburse schools for loans cancelled when borrowers go into public service jobs. Schools partly match the capital contribution and when Perkins Loans are repaid, the funds are lent to other students who need to borrow, making this a highly efficient way to finance students' higher education.

America's students need your support. Please vote for the Specter-Harkin and Ken-

nedy-Menendez Amendments to expand funding for education as part of the Congressional Budget Resolution.

Sincerely,

ALISA ABADINSKY,
President.

Mr. GREGG. Mr. President, this budget commits a tremendous amount of resources to education, as has this President. A few weeks ago, we voted for an additional \$9 billion for student assistance for students who are going to college. This budget adds in an extra \$1.5 billion. In addition, it sets up a reserve fund with \$6 billion for the American competitiveness proposal. It fully funds vocational technical education.

So the commitment is strong in this budget, as it has been for many years under the leadership of this President, with dramatic increases in education.

This amendment would significantly raise the caps by \$6.3 billion and in turn would raise taxes by \$6.3 billion. It is a classic tax-and-spend amendment.

I hope Members will vote against it. The PRESIDING OFFICER. The question is on agreeing to the amendment. The yeas and nays have been ordered. The clerk will call the roll.

The legislative clerk called the roll.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Are there any other Senators in the Chamber desiring to vote?

The result was announced—yeas 50, nays 50, as follows:

[Rollcall Vote No. 39 Leg.]

YEAS—50

Akaka	Dorgan	Menendez
Baucus	Durbin	Mikulski
Bayh	Feingold	Murray
Biden	Feinstein	Nelson (FL)
Bingaman	Harkin	Nelson (NE)
Boxer	Inouye	Obama
Byrd	Jeffords	Pryor
Cantwell	Johnson	Reed
Carper	Kennedy	Reid
Chafee	Kerry	Rockefeller
Clinton	Kohl	Salazar
Coleman	Landrieu	Sarbanes
Collins	Lautenberg	Schumer
Conrad	Leahy	Snowe
Dayton	Levin	Stabenow
DeWine	Lieberman	Wyden
Dodd	Lincoln	

NAYS—50

Alexander	Domenici	McConnell
Allard	Ensign	Murkowski
Allen	Enzi	Roberts
Bennett	Frist	Santorum
Bond	Graham	Sessions
Brownback	Grassley	Shelby
Bunning	Gregg	Smith
Burns	Hagel	Specter
Burr	Hatch	Stevens
Chambliss	Hutchison	Sununu
Coburn	Inhofe	Talent
Cochran	Isakson	Thomas
Cornyn	Kyl	Thune
Craig	Lott	Vitter
Crapo	Lugar	Voinovich
DeMint	Martinez	Warner
Dole	McCain	

The amendment (No. 3028) was rejected.

Mr. McCONNELL. I move to reconsider the vote.

Mr. FRIST. I move to lay that motion on the table.

The motion to lay on the table was agreed to.

AMENDMENT NO. 3014

The PRESIDING OFFICER. There are 2 minutes equally divided prior to the vote on the Chafee amendment.

The Senator from North Dakota.

Mr. GREGG. I ask that the yeas and nays be vitiated on this amendment and we do a voice vote.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Is there an objection?

Mr. KENNEDY. Reserving the right to object, does that mean the outcome is determined? Do we have to accept the voice vote? Do we still preserve our own Senate rules so we can ask for yeas and nays after a voice vote if we are not satisfied?

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Nothing would preclude the Senator from asking for the yeas and nays after the voice vote but before the result is announced.

Mr. KENNEDY. I thank the Chair.

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

The Senator from Rhode Island.

Mr. CHAFEE. Mr. President, I call this amendment the Property Tax Relief Amendment of 2006. This amendment moves funding of IDEA to 20 percent of the cost of a municipality, only 20 percent of the promised 40-percent goal set in 1975.

Schools account for the majority of property taxes and special education costs are rising much faster than inflation. If we fund this to 20 percent, it will go right down to the property tax payer. We all know the property tax is one of the most difficult taxes of all we pay.

I urge passage of this amendment.

Mr. CONRAD. Mr. President, I agree with the Senator's intention to plus up IDEA. The problem is the pay-for here is section 920. There is no money in 920. What will happen is other domestic accounts will be cut. There is no new money here. The appropriators will get \$873 billion without this amendment; they will get \$873 billion with this amendment. There is no new money here, just so my colleagues understand that before the vote.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from New Hampshire.

Mr. GREGG. Does the Senator from Rhode Island still have time?

The PRESIDING OFFICER. He has 23 seconds.

The Senator from Rhode Island.

Mr. CHAFEE. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent to add Senator WARNER and Senator SANTORUM as cosponsors of the amendment.

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

Mr. CHAFEE. I also add that of all the talk about tax relief in this Chamber, we do not get enough talk about property tax relief.

I urge your support for this amendment.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Is there further debate on the amendment?

If not, the question is on agreeing to the amendment.

The amendment (No. 3014) was agreed to.

Mr. GREGG. I move to reconsider the vote.

Mr. CONRAD. I move to lay that motion on the table.

The motion to lay on the table was agreed to.

AMENDMENT NO. 2999

Mr. GREGG. Mr. President, we now turn to Senator BURNS, I believe.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. We now have 2 minutes equally divided on the amendment.

The Senator from Montana.

Mr. BURNS. Mr. President, I assume this is my amendment. Everybody is looking toward me, so I will make that assumption.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. It is the Burns amendment.

Mr. BURNS. Mr. President, this amendment is a responsible method of addressing the essential needs of veterans health care. The amendment is cosponsored by Senators CHAFEE, HUTCHISON, and VITTER. Also, Senator HAGEL and Senator SESSIONS are on this amendment.

It proposes, we cannot live with a copay and then the additional cost as far as prescription drugs. I realize there is a litmus test that is trying to be imposed into our VA care. I would say that anybody who qualifies for veterans health care has already passed his litmus test; they served. So we should not ask of them who have given so much for this Nation to offer up a copay or any other fees that might come with VA.

I urge your support of this amendment. It is fully paid for.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Who yields time?

The Senator from North Dakota.

Mr. CONRAD. Mr. President, let me indicate, once again, this funding, which is absolutely meritorious, is paid for out of section 920. There is no money in 920. In fact, 920 is \$500 million underwater already. What this will result in is an across-the-board cut in all discretionary accounts. So in voting for this amendment, you are voting to reduce homeland security, you are voting to reduce defense, you are voting to reduce law enforcement, you are voting to reduce all of the other domestic accounts, because there is no money in 920.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Montana.

Mr. BURNS. Mr. President, I have a letter in support of my amendment from the Veterans of Foreign Wars. I ask unanimous consent that the letter in support of this amendment be printed in the RECORD.

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

VETERANS OF FOREIGN WARS OF THE UNITED STATES, Washington, DC, March 14, 2006.

Hon. CONRAD BURNS,
U.S. Senate,
Washington, DC.

DEAR SENATOR BURNS: On behalf of the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States, we are writing in support of your amendment which would eliminate the need to raise co-payments and charge enrollment fees by providing increased funding for Veterans Administration (VA) health care programs.

We firmly believe that asking veterans to pay for part of the benefits a grateful nation provides for them is fundamentally contrary to the spirit and principles underlying the provision of benefits to veterans. No requirement that veterans be burdened with co-payments is justified, especially in a time of war.

Thank you for your efforts on behalf of our nation's sick and disabled veterans.

Sincerely,

DENNIS CULLINAN,
Director, National Legislative Service.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Hawaii.

Mr. AKAKA. Mr. President, I want my colleagues to know that this amendment fails to raise the top line of VA funding and would not fully fund mental health. I will tell you, we are going to have an opportunity, in a moment, to do better with our Akaka-Murray amendment.

I yield back my time.

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

The question is on agreeing to the amendment. The yeas and nays have been ordered. The clerk will call the roll.

The bill clerk called the roll.

The result was announced—yeas 100, nays 0, as follows:

[Rollcall Vote No. 40 Leg.]

YEAS—100

Akaka	Domenici	McConnell
Alexander	Dorgan	Menendez
Allard	Durbin	Mikulski
Allen	Ensign	Murkowski
Baucus	Enzi	Murray
Bayh	Feingold	Nelson (FL)
Bennett	Feinstein	Nelson (NE)
Biden	Frist	Obama
Bingaman	Graham	Pryor
Bond	Grassley	Reed
Boxer	Gregg	Reid
Brownback	Hagel	Roberts
Bunning	Harkin	Rockefeller
Burns	Hatch	Salazar
Burr	Hutchison	Santorum
Byrd	Inhofe	Sarbanes
Cantwell	Inouye	Schumer
Carper	Isakson	Sessions
Chafee	Jeffords	Shelby
Chambliss	Johnson	Smith
Clinton	Kennedy	Snowe
Coburn	Kerry	Specter
Cochran	Kohl	Stabenow
Coleman	Kyl	Stevens
Collins	Landrieu	Sununu
Conrad	Lautenberg	Talent
Cornyn	Leahy	Thomas
Craig	Levin	Thune
Crapo	Lieberman	Vitter
Dayton	Lincoln	Voinovich
DeMint	Lott	Warner
DeWine	Lugar	Wyden
Dodd	Martinez	
Dole	McCain	

The amendment (No. 2999) was agreed to.

Mr. STEVENS. I move to reconsider the vote and to lay that motion on the table.

The motion to lay on the table was agreed to.

AMENDMENT NO. 3007

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. There is now 2 minutes equally divided prior to a vote on the Akaka amendment. Who yields time?

Mr. AKAKA. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent to add Senators BAUCUS, BYRD, LIEBERMAN, and LANDRIEU as cosponsors to my amendment No. 3007.

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

Mr. AKAKA. Mr. President, our amendment would add \$1.5 billion, real money, by closing tax loopholes. We said last year that more attention should be given to mental health and prosthetics. The opposition prevailed. It took months and two budgets to get to the right number. We must reject the administration's new fees, and we must shore up the system for returning veterans who will need all kinds of health care. VA's estimates for returning service members who will come for care are already off by 35,000 at least. I urge support for the Akaka-Murray amendment.

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. Who yields time?

The Senator from Idaho.

Mr. CRAIG. Mr. President, we have just passed the Burns amendment. The Burns amendment is a 12.2-percent increase for veterans, the largest increase in the history of this Government for veterans. All incoming veterans from Iraq and Afghanistan are paid for. All veterans of current service needs, both disability and service related, are paid for. This is a doubling of the veterans budget every 5 years on the amendment we just voted for.

There is a fundamental question to be asked: How much is enough? This Congress, this Senate just now was generous, and appropriately so, to America's veterans. I urge a "no" vote on the Akaka amendment.

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. The question is on agreeing to amendment No. 3007. The yeas and nays have been ordered.

The clerk will call the roll.

The legislative clerk called the roll.

The result was announced—yeas 46, nays 54, as follows:

[Rollcall Vote No. 41 Leg.]

YEAS—46

Akaka	Feingold	Mikulski
Baucus	Feinstein	Murray
Bayh	Harkin	Nelson (FL)
Biden	Inouye	Nelson (NE)
Bingaman	Jeffords	Obama
Boxer	Johnson	Pryor
Byrd	Kennedy	Reed
Cantwell	Kerry	Reid
Carper	Kohl	Rockefeller
Chafee	Landrieu	Salazar
Clinton	Lautenberg	Sarbanes
Conrad	Leahy	Schumer
Dayton	Levin	Stabenow
Dodd	Lieberman	Wyden
Dorgan	Lincoln	
Durbin	Menendez	

NAYS—54

Alexander	Crapo	Kyl
Allard	DeMint	Lott
Allen	DeWine	Lugar
Bennett	Dole	Martinez
Bond	Domenici	McCain
Brownback	Ensign	McConnell
Bunning	Enzi	Murkowski
Burns	Frist	Roberts
Burr	Graham	Santorum
Chambliss	Grassley	Sessions
Coburn	Gregg	Shelby
Cochran	Hagel	Smith
Coleman	Hatch	Snowe
Collins	Hutchison	Specter
Cornyn	Inhofe	Stevens
Craig	Isakson	Sununu

Talent	Thune	Voinovich
Thomas	Vitter	Warner

The amendment (No. 3007) was rejected.

Mr. GREGG. I move to reconsider the vote.

Mr. CRAIG. I move to lay that motion on the table.

The motion to lay on the table was agreed to.

AMENDMENT NO. 3039

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. There is now 2 minutes equally divided for debate before a vote on the Bingaman amendment.

Mr. GREGG. Mr. President, this will be the last vote, I suspect, tonight.

Mr. CONRAD. Mr. President, could we ask Members, we are getting a feedback through the system of somebody's BlackBerry. If Members can make sure to check their electronics before they come on the floor.

Will the Chair inform us what the order is?

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. There is 2 minutes equally divided prior to voting on the Bingaman amendment.

Mr. CONRAD. I thank the Chair.

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. The Senator from New Mexico is recognized.

Mr. BINGAMAN. Mr. President, first, I ask unanimous consent that Senator DURBIN of Illinois be added as a cosponsor of the amendment.

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

Mr. BINGAMAN. Mr. President, last year 74 of us voted to pass the Energy Policy Act of 2005. The amendment I have offered is to provide the funds to implement that act. If Members want to be able to tell their constituents that they actually were serious about those provisions and wish to see them implemented before 2012, they need to support this amendment.

The budget resolution before us through 2011 does not provide the funding that was called for in that legislation either for clean energy production or for energy conservation and energy efficiency. If my colleagues want to be able to say that we are taking serious action in Washington to provide secure and affordable and clean energy for this country in the future, support this amendment. This amendment provides the actual funds. This is the beef, if you are interested in where the beef is in this energy debate.

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. The Senator's time has expired.

Who yields time? The Senator from New Mexico.

Mr. DOMENICI. Mr. President, I think my colleague knows it is with reluctance that I must stand and oppose his amendment. We wrote the bill he is talking about. The President chose to fund provisions in the Energy Policy Act amounting to \$1.2 billion. He didn't fund everything. My colleague intends to add items that were not funded.

We will have an opportunity in the appropriations process to move the

money around and do some of what he seeks rather than some of those the President seeks. But the issue here is that to do what he wants, we have to add more than \$3.5 billion. We add that to the bottom line which we have to pay for. The Senator pays for it by assuming that we will reauthorize the Superfund tax. That is how he pays for it. That has not been reauthorized for years. If it was, it shouldn't be used for this purpose.

So essentially, we should not adopt this amendment because it breaks the budget.

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. The Senator's time has expired.

Mr. GREGG. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent to proceed for 1 minute to propound a unanimous consent request.

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

Mr. GREGG. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that after we conclude the vote on the Bingaman amendment, the next amendment in order will be the Specter-Harkin amendment for half an hour, followed by the Stabenow amendment for half an hour. We are working on a unanimous consent request to line up a whole series of amendments, which unanimous consent request we hopefully will be able to offer at the end of this amendment.

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

The question is on agreeing to the Bingaman amendment No. 3039. The yeas and nays were previously ordered. The clerk will call the roll.

The assistant legislative clerk called the roll.

The result was announced—yeas 46, nays 54, as follows:

[Rollcall Vote No. 42 Leg.]

YEAS—46

Akaka	Durbin	Mikulski
Baucus	Feingold	Murray
Bayh	Feinstein	Nelson (FL)
Biden	Harkin	Obama
Bingaman	Inouye	Pryor
Boxer	Jeffords	Reed
Byrd	Johnson	Reid
Cantwell	Kennedy	Rockefeller
Carper	Kerry	Salazar
Chafee	Kohl	Sarbanes
Clinton	Lautenberg	Schumer
Collins	Leahy	Snowe
Conrad	Levin	Stabenow
Dayton	Lieberman	Wyden
Dodd	Lincoln	
Dorgan	Menendez	

NAYS—54

Alexander	DeMint	Landrieu
Allard	DeWine	Lott
Allen	Dole	Lugar
Bennett	Domenici	Martinez
Bond	Ensign	McCain
Brownback	Enzi	McConnell
Bunning	Frist	Murkowski
Burns	Graham	Nelson (NE)
Burr	Grassley	Roberts
Chambliss	Gregg	Santorum
Coburn	Hagel	Sessions
Cochran	Hatch	Shelby
Coleman	Hutchison	Smith
Cornyn	Inhofe	Specter
Craig	Isakson	Stevens
Crapo	Kyl	Sununu

Talent
Thomas

Thune
Vitter

Voinovich
Warner

The amendment (No. 3039) was rejected.

Mr. GREGG. Mr. President, I move to reconsider the vote, and I move to lay that motion on the table.

The motion to lay on the table was agreed to.

Mr. GREGG. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent to add Senator KYL as a cosponsor to Senator BURNS' amendment No. 2999.

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

Mr. GREGG. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that we now proceed to the consideration of the following amendments in the order listed and the times for debate equally divided for today and into the evening:

Senator SPECTER relative to Labor-HHS, 30 minutes; Senator STABENOW relative to interoperable, 30 minutes; Senator FRIST, or his designee, relative to Menendez subject matter, ½ hour; Senator MENENDEZ relative to port security, ½ hour; Senator BYRD on mining, ½ hour; Senator CHAMBLISS and Senator DAYTON, Byrne grants, 30 minutes; and Senator MURRAY on CDBG, 30 minutes.

Beginning on Wednesday at 9 a.m., the following will be considered: Senator KYL on immigration, 15 minutes; Senator GRASSLEY on Medicare, 30 minutes; Senator NELSON on Medicare, 30 minutes; and Senator SANTORUM on CDBG, 30 minutes.

I further ask unanimous consent that following the debate or yielding back of time on these amendments the Senate proceed to a vote in relationship to the amendments with no second degrees in order to amendments prior to the vote; further, that the time used during the votes count equally against the resolution. I further ask unanimous consent that the votes occur in the order listed above with the exception of the Santorum vote which will occur immediately following the Murray amendment; provided that prior to each vote there will be 2 minutes equally divided for debate, and that in each stacked series all votes after the first be limited to 10 minutes each.

For clarification, tomorrow morning after the debate on the Santorum amendment, we will begin a series of votes. We have some scheduling issues and, therefore, we will pause that sequence at some point and resume around 1 p.m. We have a joint meeting beginning at 2 p.m., and therefore we will then begin the next series of votes at 3 or 3:15.

I further ask unanimous consent that no other amendments or motions be in order other than those listed during the pendency of this request.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Is there objection?

Mr. SPECTER. Mr. President, reserving the right to object, could the chairman of the committee clarify when he intends to bring the so-called Specter-Harkin amendment to a vote?

Mr. GREGG. That will be the first amendment voted on, beginning probably around 11, maybe a little earlier, tomorrow morning.

Mr. SPECTER. Mr. President, I am advised there will be two Senators absent at that time who are in favor of this amendment. If I may have the indulgence of the chairman for one moment to find out when they will be here, may I inquire of the chairman when the last vote is scheduled in his unanimous consent request.

Mr. GREGG. We presume it would occur at some time around 3:35 or 4 o'clock.

Mr. SPECTER. Mr. President, may I inquire of the chairman if the vote on the Specter-Harkin amendment could be scheduled at the end of the sequence.

Mr. GREGG. I will amend the unanimous consent request so that the amendment on Specter-Harkin will be the last amendment to be voted on in the series.

Mr. SPECTER. Mr. President, I thank the distinguished chairman.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Is there objection?

Without objection, it is so ordered.

Mr. CONRAD. Mr. President, let me say that Senator HARKIN is telling us they do not know yet whether they will be back at that hour. So maybe we can leave that, have the debate tonight, and schedule that vote tomorrow as we know better the information that is of interest to the two Senators.

Mr. SPECTER. Mr. President, I think that is an excellent idea. I thought we would be in the safe range, but if there is some possibility that 3:30 will not be a time when those two Senators will be present, I ask that the suggestion by the Senator from North Dakota be agreed to.

Mr. GREGG. Why don't we amend the unanimous consent request to say that the Specter-Harkin amendment will be voted on when the managers of the bill reach an agreement as to a time certain.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Is there objection?

Mr. SPECTER. Mr. President, may I add that with the concurrence of Senator HARKIN and myself.

Mr. GREGG. That is asking for a lot, it seems to me. But I guess it will be all right.

Mr. SPECTER. It is not asking for a lot in my short tenure.

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

Mr. CONRAD. Mr. President, I want to again say to our colleagues that I thank all of our colleagues who have worked very hard to put these agreements together today and ask for additional cooperation through the evening as we work to put a list together for tomorrow. If we want to get the Senate's business completed, including dealing with the debt limit, it is going to take very serious cooperation from Members.

I repeat that we have 100 amendments pending. We could be voting

right through Friday. We could be voting into Saturday if Members don't cooperate. The vast majority have. We have a number of colleagues who have been somewhat reluctant to make commitments to us about time agreements, and about the staging of their amendments. That makes it extremely difficult to reach a conclusion.

I hope some people have an epiphany here overnight and realize that if we don't find a way to cooperate and work together, we will be here until Saturday.

Mr. GREGG. Mr. President, I have one more unanimous consent request which is that during the time we are in joint session with the House and hear the message from the President of Liberia, for which I guess we would be in recess, that time be counted against the bill equally divided.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Is there objection?

Mr. CONRAD. Mr. President, there is no objection to that.

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

The Senator from Pennsylvania.

AMENDMENT NO. 3048

Mr. SPECTER. Mr. President, I am sending an amendment to the desk on behalf of Senators HARKIN, SMITH, KENNEDY, LAUTENBERG, MURRAY, LINCOLN, LIEBERMAN, KERRY, CLINTON, BINGAMAN, AKAKA, OBAMA, CANTWELL, KOHL, DODD, MIKULSKI, DAYTON, DURBIN, COLLINS, LANDRIEU and myself, and ask for its consideration in terms of the unanimous consent agreement already reached.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will report.

The legislative clerk read as follows:

The Senator from Pennsylvania [Mr. SPECTER], for himself and Mr. HARKIN, Mr. SMITH, Mr. KENNEDY, Mr. LAUTENBERG, Mrs. MURRAY, Mrs. LINCOLN, Mr. LIEBERMAN, Mr. KERRY, Mrs. CLINTON, Mr. BINGAMAN, Mr. AKAKA, Mr. OBAMA, Ms. CANTWELL, Mr. KOHL, Mr. DODD, Ms. MIKULSKI, Mr. DAYTON, Mr. DURBIN, Ms. COLLINS and Ms. LANDRIEU, proposes an amendment numbered 3048.

Mr. SPECTER. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that reading of the amendment be dispensed with.

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

The amendment is as follows:

(Purpose: To increase the advance appropriations allowance in order to fund health, education and training, and low-income programs)

On page 44, line 13, strike "\$23,158,000,000" and insert "\$30,158,000,000".

Mr. SPECTER. Mr. President, before proceeding into the details of this amendment, let me state that it is an amendment which seeks to offer \$7 billion to increase the cap on advanced appropriations under section 401 of this resolution. The budget resolution has increased the President's mark by some \$3 billion so that if accepted this amendment for \$7 billion will constitute an increase over the President's mark of some \$10 billion.

Let me say at the outset that notwithstanding the sizable figure involved here, the funding for the subcommittee, which I chair and where Senator HARKIN is the ranking member, we will still be more than \$5 billion short of where we would have been had the budget for fiscal year 2006 been frozen with an inflation increase, and then the budget for 2007 again frozen accommodating an inflation increase. That has come about. The figures are complicated and technical, but I think it is important to understand where we are coming from on this amendment.

For fiscal year 2005 the budget enacted was \$143.4 billion. The budget enacted was \$141.5 billion for fiscal year 2006, almost \$2 billion less. The inflation factor was \$4.8 billion. If we take the \$1.9 billion reduction and the \$4.8 billion, our budget for the fiscal year 2006 was \$6.7 billion under a freeze.

The budget for fiscal year 2007 has come in at \$137.5 billion. What we have is a President's budget which is \$5 billion under the enacted budget for fiscal year 2006. If we add an inflation factor of \$5 billion, the budget for fiscal year 2007 should be \$153.2 billion, which means that under the current figures we are \$15.7 billion short.

Now, that is on a freeze. There has been a lot of rhetoric about maintaining fiscal responsibility, which I subscribe to. That is something we should be doing. We should be, as a nation, living within our budget. It is unfortunate we did not pass a constitutional amendment for a balanced budget, which would have compelled us to live within our means, as every citizen must do so and the States and the cities and other governmental units, but we did not pass that.

But what I call fiscal restraint is if you have a freeze; that is, you do not increase the spending. But when you have had this sequence where the budget has been cut, plus the failure to have an allowance for an inflation factor, we have done more than cut out the fat, we have done more than cut through the muscle, we have done more than cut through the bone; we have cut into the marrow. It is that serious as to what has happened.

In the Subcommittee on Labor, Health, Human Services and Education, we are dealing with our two major capital assets—health and education. Without health, individuals obviously cannot function. And without education, individuals cannot reach their potential. And the Department of Labor—workforce, job training, worker safety—again, very vital functions.

In an earlier vote today, I voted against the amendment offered by Senator KENNEDY for \$6.3 billion which would have increased Pell grants by \$1.8 billion, would have increased funding for other higher education programs by \$2.4 billion, would have increased funding for Perkins vocational education by \$1.3 billion and other revenues by \$750 million. Much as I would have liked to have voted for the Ken-

nedy amendment, I voted against it because it seemed to me an impossibility for Senator KENNEDY's amendment to be agreed to and to have the Specter-Harkin amendment agreed to.

I tried to persuade my distinguished colleague, Senator HARKIN, to vote against the Kennedy amendment and join me on that. He told me about some of the practical facts of life on his side of the aisle. I relented, notwithstanding our general partnership agreement, and released him from his obligations. So Senator HARKIN voted for the Kennedy amendment, which I would have liked to have done, and I voted against it, although it was a very painful vote.

Now we come to the addition of \$7 billion. Let me explain briefly, before yielding to Senator HARKIN, what this amendment does. In the Department of Labor, the fiscal year 2007 budget proposes to eliminate \$49 million for reintegration of youthful offenders. This will be reinstated, but this is what the resolution calls for. Would reinstate the \$7 billion as added, \$49 million for the reintegration of youthful offenders, obviously, a very important program. The budget eliminates \$79 million for training migrant and seasonal farmworkers and dislocated worker assistance by \$232 million, cut adult training by \$152 million, and cut the Job Corps by \$62 million. This amendment will restore those indispensable items.

This amendment restores \$637 million for the Community Service Block Grant Program. This amendment also provides funding for low-income energy assistance. This amendment restores funding for the National Institutes of Health. The current budget resolution recommends \$29.350 billion, which is \$1 billion over the fiscal year 2006 appropriation and the President's request. This amendment provides NIH with a \$2 billion increase over the President's budget. Even with this increase, the amount is below what has been provided in the 2005 budget, adjusted for inflation.

Just a word or two about the National Institutes of Health. The subcommittee has taken the lead in the past several years of more than doubling funding for the National Institutes of Health from \$12 billion to more than \$29 billion. What has happened in the last 2 years, has eventuated in a reduction in the number of grants which may be offered. In this field, there is panic among the applicants for NIH funding.

Dr. John Glick, noted oncologist, Philadelphian—happens to be my oncologist; I am unfortunate to need one, but he is a superb oncologist—has confirmed what I have heard reported around the country about how the National Institutes of Health are not able to perform their function. They are dealing with rock-bed American health. They are dealing with the potential cures for heart disease, cancer, Alzheimer's, Parkinson's, diabetes. When we have the hearing in a few

weeks, we will be bringing in 21 experts of these various disciplines to testify what the impact has been.

The Department of Education has had the President's budget proposal to reduce it by more than \$2.1 billion. This budget resolution assumes an increase of \$1.5 billion over the President's budget request but would still result in cuts below the fiscal year 2006 level. We detail what we are doing for education. We will be providing the kind of funding, in large measure, which the Kennedy amendment was looking for which, as I say, I had voted against.

The managers of this budget resolution have done an outstanding job of dealing with a very difficult situation. What we are doing is simply not looking at reality on discretionary spending. There is a great deal of spending which is being undertaken by the Federal Government at the present time. Entitlements are precisely what they say. They are established. We have tremendous expenses with the hurricanes. We have tremendous expenses with Afghanistan. We have tremendous expenses with Iraq.

I am not going to direct any comments on any of those directions as to whether we are doing the right thing in what we are spending. I do know, when it comes to health, education, worker training, worker safety, we cannot move below a freeze on fiscal year 2005 and have anything but chaos. I have detailed why we are now \$15.7 billion below what we should have been in 2005 had there been a freeze without the cuts and allowing for inflation.

When you talk about fiscal responsibility, I do not think anyone, including our so-called base, would expect us to do more than freeze—not to cut education, not to cut health care, not to cut job training, not to cut worker safety but to hold the line, tighten our belts, and have a freeze. So when we end up with \$3 billion added by the committee and \$7 billion if this amendment passes, we are still far short of where we need to be.

As I have advised the leadership, I have grave doubts about supporting the budget resolution, even with the adoption of this amendment. The budget resolution does not end the day. There has to be a conference. There have to be allocations in the Committee on Appropriations. I put the Republican leadership and the Democratic leadership and the House and the White House and the Presiding Officer, everyone on notice that I will want to see some real assurances that we are dealing with hard money, not with confederate dollars, not with something on a printout but something which will eventuate in having an appropriation for our subcommittee which will enable us to do a decent job—not an adequate job, not the proper job but at least a decent minimal job on these important functions.

I ask unanimous consent that my full statement be printed in the RECORD.

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

STATEMENT OF SENATOR ARLEN SPECTER

Mr. President, I have sought recognition today to offer a \$7 billion amendment to increase the cap on advance appropriations under section 401 of this resolution. By increasing allowable advance funding, this amendment would add to the amounts already included in the resolution for the National Institutes of Health, the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention and other public health service activities; education and job training; and anti-poverty programs, including Low-Income Home Energy Assistance. By increasing advance funding, this amendment does not raise the overall discretionary spending limit.

The Harkin/Specter amendment adds \$7 billion to the \$3 billion increase over the President's request assumed in the resolution reported by the Budget Committee and thereby allowing a \$10 billion to partially restore funding for programs within the jurisdiction of the Labor-HHS-Education Appropriations Subcommittee. This is a modest amendment when you take into account inflationary costs and that fact that last year's appropriation was reduced by \$1.9 billion below the previous year's funding level.

The amendment restores the President's proposed cuts in workforce investment programs, including dislocated worker assistance and the Job Corps. It will also prevent the termination of 6 Labor Department programs the Administration has proposed to eliminate, including Reintegration of Youthful Offenders, and Migrant and Seasonal Farmworkers. With the shortage of skilled workers in many fields, including health care occupations such as nursing, we should not be cutting back on training programs for the unemployed. This amendment will restore 124,000 training opportunities for youth and adults. It will also provide services to an additional 1.2 million workers through job placement at our nation's One Stop Career Centers.

My amendment would restore the \$637 million for the Community Services Block Grant Program that the budget proposed to eliminate. This block grant program provides services and activities to reduce poverty. The strength of the program is in its ability to tailor itself to best enhance local community programs and address their individual needs. Dollars are used for food programs, administration of LIHEAP services, employment issues, or for a variety of other issues that are vital to healthy communities. These funds leverage \$20 for every \$1 provided through state, local and private contributions.

LIHEAP helps states assist low-income households to meet the cost of home heating and cooling. This winter, we saw drastic increases in home heating fuel costs. To respond to the need for immediate relief, the Senate has passed legislation shifting \$1 billion appropriated for fiscal year 2007 for use in 2006; the House Appropriations Committee has taken similar action. Once completed, this shift will require at least a \$1 billion restoration of fiscal year 2007 funds.

DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION

My amendment also intends to ensure that discretionary funding for the Department of Education is not cut below the amount provided by Congress last year. The resolution currently assumes a cut of \$600 million below the FY'06 appropriation. My amendment would provide additional resources to help schools raise achievement levels for all of their students and to ensure that they are prepared for postsecondary education and work.

Many members have pointed out that the budget for the Department of Education has been increased significantly over the past several years. In fact, discretionary funding has been raised from \$24.7 billion in FY'95 to \$56 billion in FY'05, an increase of 129%. My subcommittee has taken the lead in raising funding for Title I grants for Disadvantaged Students, Special Education and Pell Grants. The spending limit established in the FY'06 budget resolution forced my subcommittee to reduce investments in education for the first time in a decade. The FY'06 Labor-HHS-Education bill, including the 1 percent across the board reduction, provided \$624 million less for the Department of Education than the agency had in FY'05. The progress that was achieved over the past decade in specific areas was halted, and in some cases, reversed. For example, the federal contribution for special education has increased from 7.3 percent in FY'96 to 18.5 percent in FY'05, almost halfway to the 40 percent goal. However, under the President's budget request the federal contribution will drop to 17 percent.

In the area of Title I—grants for disadvantaged students, the foundation of federal support for elementary and secondary education, significant increases have been made since the No Child Left Behind Act was passed in 2000. However, with more than 9,000 schools nationwide identified as in need of improvement, this is the time to ensure that struggling students get the extra help they need to demonstrate that they have the knowledge and skills to proceed to the next grade.

In the area of postsecondary education, the President's budget proposes a \$4,050 maximum grant under the Pell program, which, if adopted, would mean the fifth straight year that the maximum award was at that level. The budget also proposes to eliminate LEAP and the Perkins Loans program. More than 1 million additional students are receiving Pell Grants than they were five years ago. However, last year, the average tuition and fees increased by more than 7 percent, decreasing the purchasing power for low- and middle-income Pell grant recipients.

The budget also proposes to eliminate the \$303 million GEAR UP program, which the Administration itself has acknowledged is performing adequately and successfully prepare students for college enrollment. The \$1.1 billion Perkins Vocational and Technical Education programs, which the Senate voted 99-0 to reauthorize last year is also proposed for elimination. Additional resources provided by this amendment will ensure that these investments can be made without reductions to other education initiatives.

NATIONAL INSTITUTES OF HEALTH

The budget resolution currently recommends \$29,350,000,000 for the NIH in FY'07, which is \$1 billion over the FY'06 appropriation and the President's request. This amendment would provide NIH with a \$2 billion increase over the President's budget. Even with this increase, the amount is below the amount provided in FY'05 when adjusted for inflation.

As Chairman of the Appropriations Subcommittee for Labor, Health and Human Services, Education and Related Agencies, I have said many times that the National Institutes of Health is the crown jewel of the Federal Government—perhaps the only jewel of the Federal Government. When I came to the Senate in 1981, NIH spending totaled \$3.6 billion. The FY 2003 omnibus appropriations bill contained \$27.2 billion for the NIH which completed the doubling begun in FY 1998. The successes realized by this investment in NIH have spawned revolutionary advances in

our knowledge and treatment for diseases such as cancer, HIV-AIDS, Alzheimer's disease, Parkinson's disease, mental illnesses, diabetes, osteoporosis, heart disease, ALS and many others. It is clear that Congress' commitment to the NIH is paying off. Now it is crucial that increased funding be continued in order to translate these advances into additional treatments and cures. Our investment has resulted in new generations of AIDS drugs which are reducing the presence of the AIDS virus in HIV infected persons to nearly undetectable levels. Death rates from cancer have begun a steady decline. With the sequencing of the human genome, we will begin, over the next few years, to reap the benefits in many fields of research. And if scientists are correct, stem cell research could result in a veritable fountain of youth by replacing diseased or damaged cells. I anxiously await the results of all of these avenues of remarkable research. This is the time to seize the scientific opportunities that lie before us.

On May 21, 1997, the Senate passed a Sense of the Senate resolution stating that funding for the NIH should be doubled over five years. Regrettably, even though the resolution was passed by an overwhelming vote of 98 to nothing, the Budget Resolution contained a \$100 million reduction for health programs. That prompted Senators Harkin and myself to offer an amendment to the budget resolution to add \$1.1 billion to carry out the expressed sense of the Senate to increase NIH funding. Unfortunately, our amendment was tabled by a vote of 63-37. We were extremely disappointed that, while the Senate had expressed its druthers on a resolution, it was simply unwilling to put up actual dollars to accomplish this vital goal.

The following year, Senator Harkin and I again introduced an amendment to the Budget Resolution which called for a \$2 billion increase for the NIH. While we gained more support on this vote than in the previous year, our amendment was again tabled by a vote of 57-41. Not to be deterred, Senator Harkin and I again went to work with our Subcommittee and we were able to add an additional \$2 billion to the NIH account for fiscal year 1999.

In fiscal year 2000, Senator Harkin and I offered another amendment to the Budget Resolution to add \$1.4 billion to the health accounts, over and above the \$600 million increase which had already been provided by the Budget Committee. Despite this amendment's defeat by a vote of 47-52, we were able to provide a \$2.3 billion increase for NIH in the fiscal year 2000 appropriations bill.

In fiscal year 2001, Senator Harkin and I again offered an amendment to the Budget Resolution to increase funding for health programs by \$1.6 billion. This amendment passed by a vote of 55-45. This victory brought the NIH increase to \$2.7 billion for fiscal year 2001. However, after late night conference negotiations with the House, the funding for NIH was cut by \$200 million below that amount.

In fiscal year 2002, the budget resolution once again fell short of the amount necessary to achieve the NIH doubling. Senator Harkin and I, along with nine other Senators offered an amendment to add an additional \$700 million to the resolution to achieve our goal. The vote was 96-4. The Senate Labor-HHS Subcommittee reported a bill recommending \$23.7 billion, an increase of \$3.4 billion over the previous year's funding. But during conference negotiations with the House, we once again fell short by \$410 million. That meant that in order to stay on a path to double NIH, we would need to provide an increase of \$3.7 billion in the fiscal year 2003. The fiscal year 2003 omnibus appropriations bill contained the additional

\$3.7 billion, which achieved the doubling effort. In FY'04, I and Senator Harkin offered an amendment to add an additional \$2.8 billion to the budget resolution to ensure that the momentum achieved by the doubling could be maintained and translated into cures. The vote was 96-1. Unfortunately, the amendment was dropped in conference. We worked hard to find enough funding for a \$1 billion increase in FY'04. We fought long and hard to make the doubling of funding a reality, but until treatments and cures are found for the many maladies that continue to plague our society, we must continue our fight.

In FY'05, once again, Senators Harkin, Collins and I offered an amendment to add \$2 billion to discretionary health spending, including NIH. The amendment passed 72-24. However, the Subcommittee's allocation did not reflect this increase. The final conference agreement contained an increase of \$800 million over the FY'04 funding level.

In FY'06, the Senate voted 63-37 to accept my budget resolution amendment to add \$1.5 billion for NIH and \$500 million for education, but again, the funding was dropped in conference with the House. With overall funding for the Labor-HHS-Education Subcommittee cut \$1.9 billion below the FY'05 enacted level, NIH did not receive an increase for the current fiscal year.

I, like millions of Americans, have benefited tremendously from the investment we have made in the National Institutes of Health and the amendment that we offer today will continue to carry forward the important research work of the world's premier medical research facility.

In summary, this amendment permits greater use of advance funding for existing health, education and job training programs, in order to free up resources to restore proposed cutbacks and increase high-priority activities. Currently, the cap on advance funding is \$23.1 billion, which this amendment would raise to \$30.1 billion. The portion of advances in the Labor-HHS-Education Subcommittee would increase from \$18.8 billion to \$25.8 billion. The \$7 billion freed up in fiscal year 2007 budget authority would be used as I have described.

Mr. President, I urge adoption of this amendment.

Mr. SPECTER. Mr. President, I am delighted to yield to my distinguished colleague from Iowa for some forceful rhetoric on this important subject.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator is recognized for up to 1 minute.

Mr. HARKIN. Parliamentary inquiry.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator will state his inquiry.

Mr. HARKIN. How much time do I have?

The PRESIDING OFFICER. You have 45 seconds.

Mr. HARKIN. I don't seem to understand why this situation has developed where the Senator from Iowa has 45 seconds.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. There is 30 minutes on the amendment equally divided.

Mr. SPECTER. How long did I speak?

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Fourteen minutes.

Mr. SPECTER. We have 30 minutes.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Thirty minutes equally divided.

Mr. GREGG. How much time does the Senator need?

Mr. HARKIN. Less than 10—7 minutes.

Mr. SPECTER. Did we not have 1 hour?

The PRESIDING OFFICER. We had 30 minutes equally divided between the opponent and proponents.

Mr. SPECTER. I express my regrets to the Senator from Iowa, I thought it was an hour.

Mr. HARKIN. So did this Senator.

Mr. SPECTER. I took one half of what I expected our allocation to be.

Mr. GREGG. I can help this situation. I am claiming the time in opposition and I will yield to the Senator from Iowa 8 minutes off of my 15 minutes.

Mr. HARKIN. I appreciate that.

Mr. GREGG. So there are 8 minutes and 45 seconds.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Iowa.

Mr. HARKIN. Mr. President, the Specter-Harkin amendment would add back \$7 billion to the President's proposed budget, allowing us to fund the 2007 Labor, HHS appropriations bill at the level of 2005.

I am proud to join my friend and colleague from Pennsylvania in offering this amendment. I thank Senator SPECTER for his great leadership in all the areas of health, education, human services, medical research. He has been a tireless leader in all these areas. Once again, he has stepped to the forefront to basically say that we are not going to keep cutting back to the bone and the marrow, which he said earlier today.

This is not a radical proposal. In fact, it is almost an embarrassingly modest proposal. But it is important. It is an important first step. At least we are saying it is enough, no more; it is time to reorder our priorities. Year after year we have been cutting the programs that support working families, people with disabilities, students struggling to afford college, elderly trying to heat their homes, put food on the table, people with cancer and other diseases desperate for a cure.

As my friend, Senator SPECTER, said this morning we are beyond cutting the fat and beyond cutting bone. We are now into the marrow. I add, when you start cutting into the marrow, you are endangering the very lifeblood of an organism—in this case, our American society.

Something is seriously wrong in terms of our priorities and our values when we are presented with a budget that slashes funding for the National Cancer Institute, jeopardizing critical lifesaving research.

That is just one of the many critical program areas threatened by the proposed budget. President Bush, in his budget, proposed to slash the Labor-Health-Education budget by \$4.2 billion for this year. Meanwhile, in Iraq, he is spending nearly \$5 billion a month. These are not the priorities of the American people.

I believe this amendment is the single most important amendment that we will consider on this budget resolu-

tion. I want to emphasize to my colleagues, this is very likely our last, best chance to restore funding for critical health, education, and social services programs.

Last year, we saw what happens when Congress passes a bad budget resolution. The reason why we had a bad Labor-HHS bill last year and could not get it done is because we were boxed in by the budget resolution. Exactly the same thing will happen this year. It will be worse. It will be worse since it is an election year, unless we pass the Specter amendment, which he just offered, putting back this \$7 billion.

So I say to my colleagues, this is the decisive vote. This is sort of the show-down. This is our best, maybe last real opportunity to change our budget priorities. If we fail to act, then we will indeed be cutting into the bone and marrow of our most important programs.

Let me be somewhat specific.

This budget would cut funding for the Centers for Disease Control, despite the fact we are facing the twin threats of bioterrorism and a possible avian flu pandemic.

This budget would cut funding for 18 of the 19 institutes at NIH. It would cut the Social Services block grant by \$500 million, completely eliminate the Community Services block grant—two of the biggest discretionary programs for the poor.

The number of children served by Head Start would be reduced. Even Meals on Wheels would be cut.

At the Labor Department, the Disability Employment Office would be cut by 26 percent, on top of a 41-percent cut last year. Funding for the Workforce Investment Act would be cut. Even the program we have had for several years now to combat child labor and child slavery would be cut.

In education, the President's budget proposes the largest cut to Federal education funding in the 26-year history of the Department of Education.

And I speak to the occupant of the Chair, who is a distinguished former Secretary of Education, and who has a deep and abiding interest and support for education.

The No Child Left Behind Act would be underfunded by a whopping \$15.4 billion from what we were planning to spend when we passed it.

Title I would be frozen. Twenty-nine States would get less title I funding next year. How are we ever going to expect poor kids to meet the demands of No Child Left Behind if we are cutting title I funding, which President Bush himself said was the cornerstone of No Child Left Behind?

In special education—this is something the chairman of the Budget Committee has talked about and has been supportive of for a long time—we are going backwards. We promised years ago—30 years ago—that the Federal Government would pick up 40 percent of the additional costs of funding for special education.

Two years ago, which was a high watermark, we were at 19 percent. Last year, we went to 18 percent. This budget will take us to 17 percent. We are supposed to be at 40 percent. So we are going in the wrong direction. What that translates into is more property taxes for our beleaguered property tax owners in our school districts.

And need I talk about Pell grants? They are frozen at \$4,050 for the fifth year in a row. I asked Secretary Spellings, when she was before our committee, name me one college in the country where tuition is the same today as it was 5 years ago. Meanwhile, the Perkins Loan Program would be completely eliminated. And the two TRIO programs—Upward Bound and Educational Talent Search—were eliminated in the President's budget.

So again, I think these are misplaced priorities. That is why we are offering this amendment. That is why Senator SPECTER and I have worked together to try to get us at least back on the road. As I said, this is a modest proposal. It only takes us back to 2005.

The amendment offered, I repeat, by the Senator from Pennsylvania simply takes us back to where we were before all of the cuts and the across-the-board cut of 2006. It puts us right back where we were in 2005. I do not think that is radical. I think it is very modest.

Again, I say to my friends, fellow Senators, I believe this is the decisive vote on priorities on this budget, and I urge my colleagues to support Senator SPECTER's amendment.

Mr. President, I thank the Senator from New Hampshire for giving me the time.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from New Hampshire.

Mr. GREGG. Mr. President, I rise in opposition to the amendment, although I yielded time off my time in support of the amendment to Senator HARKIN. I was happy to do that, obviously.

First, on the substance, Senator HARKIN was speaking to the President's budget, not to this budget. I can understand, he probably has a lot of things going on and maybe has not had the time to take a look at this budget. But we actually—assuming we had any force of law in allocation, which I pointed out a number of times is not the case—took \$3 billion and moved it from Defense over to the Labor-HHS bill—\$3 billion; \$1.5 billion for education, \$1.5 billion for health care.

In fact, we address some of the concerns specifically. We upped NIH by \$1 billion. We put enough money in so the GEAR UP and TRIO and voc ed was fully funded. We increased funding for bioterrorism. So we adjusted.

Furthermore, we put in a reserve fund of \$6 billion to address the American Competitiveness Initiative, which is the initiative of the Senator and the Presiding Officer. And that is a big number.

We have made a strong commitment toward education, and we have basically relieved the pressure that was put

there by the President's budget—which would have actually cut, by going to levels slightly above a freeze—with our budget. So I think a lot of what the Senator from Iowa said may have been directed to the President's budget, but it is not accurately directed at this budget.

Secondly, I have a problem with the way this is paid for. This is an advance appropriation. What is an advance appropriation? Well, basically, it is borrowing from next year to fund things this year, which creates a hole in the next year, which then has to be filled.

So as a practical matter, what you are doing is adding to debt, but, more importantly, you are adding to the base and you are basically creating a problem for the next budget, as well as creating significant increases in spending in this budget.

This advanced appropriation in this amendment is, I think, about \$8 billion, or something in that range. The practical effect of it would be that advanced appropriations—which have grown over the years, unfortunately, and are now up to about \$23 billion—would jump to about \$30 billion—\$30.1 billion, \$30.2 billion. That is a big number because that number gets carried forward every year. It is not good budgeting to do that type of action, where you borrow from a future year to fund this year and represent that you are basically doing sound budgeting. That is not sound budgeting.

Advanced appropriations are a thin ice of budgeting to step on. We should not be moving in that direction. We should not be expanding the advanced appropriations. We have carried the \$23 billion advanced appropriation number in this bill. That has, over the years, been built up. But I do not want to have to, next year, have a \$30 billion advanced appropriation, which is what this amendment would create if we were to approve it.

So I must, regrettably, oppose this amendment. I understand the position the chairman and the ranking member of the subcommittee for Labor-HHS find themselves in. But I think there are other ways to solve this problem. I hope we would not do it in this manner. Plus, I do think we did make a genuine attempt within this budget to try to address these concerns by moving \$3 billion into these accounts.

With that said, I believe we are on to the amendment by the Senator from Michigan.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Michigan.

Ms. STABENOW. Mr. President, I actually have two amendments.

AMENDMENT NO. 3055

Mr. President, the first one I will send to the desk. I want to indicate what this is, and I appreciate the fact that I understand my leadership on the Budget Committee is willing to accept the amendment.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will report the amendment.

The assistant legislative clerk read as follows:

The Senator from Michigan [Ms. STABENOW], for herself, Ms. SNOWE, Mr. LIEBERMAN, Mr. KOHL, Mr. DEWINE, Mr. REED, and Mr. GRAHAM, proposes an amendment numbered 3055.

Mr. GREGG. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that reading of the amendment be dispensed with.

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

The amendment is as follows:

(Purpose: To ensure appropriate funding for the Manufacturing Extension Partnership Program of the Department of Commerce.)

On page 15, line 21, increase the number by \$60,000,000.

On page 15, line 22, increase the number by \$10,000,000.

On page 16, line 1, increase the number by \$29,000,000.

On page 16, line 5, increase the number by \$14,000,000.

On page 16, line 9, increase the number by \$6,000,000.

On page 16, line 13, increase the number by \$1,000,000.

On page 27, line 23, decrease the number by \$60,000,000.

On page 27, line 24, decrease the number by \$10,000,000.

On page 28, line 2, decrease the number by \$29,000,000.

On page 28, line 5, decrease the number by \$14,000,000.

On page 28, line 8, decrease the number by \$6,000,000.

On page 28, line 11, decrease the number by \$1,000,000.

Mr. GREGG. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the amendment be agreed to.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Is there objection?

Without objection, it is so ordered.

The amendment (No. 3055) was agreed to.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Michigan.

Ms. STABENOW. Mr. President, I want to indicate that this amendment is a bipartisan amendment that is co-sponsored by Senators SNOWE, REED, LIEBERMAN, KOHL, DEWINE, and GRAHAM. It is an amendment that restores the critical funding for the Manufacturing Extension Partnership Program, which has helped over 150,000 small- and medium-sized manufacturers in this country.

It is based on the cooperative extension model with Agriculture in that it is set up to provide best management practices, efficiencies, and support for our manufacturers as they compete in a global economy. It has helped them to maintain and increase jobs and be able to increase sales by—

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator will suspend, please.

Who yields time?

Ms. STABENOW. Mr. President, I was simply explaining the amendment that was adopted.

Mr. GREGG. Mr. President, there is 30 minutes on her amendment, equally divided.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Would the Senator send her amendment to the desk.

Ms. STABENOW. Actually, Mr. President, I think the confusion is that I am

speaking for a moment about what was just accepted and wanted to say thank you to the chairman and the ranking member for accepting our restoration of the Manufacturing Extension Partnership Program funding. There was a 60-percent cut proposed by the President. This, in fact, restored it. And I want to say thank you, and then also indicate that the chairman of the committee, while there are not always amendments or policies or approaches we agree on, has been extraordinary as a leader of the Budget Committee. I want to say thank you to him and to our ranking member, Senator CONRAD, who have worked so well together.

AMENDMENT NO. 3056

With that, Mr. President, I send another amendment to the desk.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection, that time will be taken from the resolution.

Ms. STABENOW. Thank you.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will report the amendment.

The assistant legislative clerk read as follows:

The Senator from Michigan [Ms. STABENOW] proposes an amendment numbered 3056.

Ms. STABENOW. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that reading of the amendment be dispensed with.

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

The amendment is as follows:

(Purpose: To provide \$5 billion for our emergency responders so that they can field effective and reliable interoperable communications equipment to respond to natural disasters, terrorist attacks and the public safety needs of America's communities and fully offset this by closing tax loopholes and collecting more from the tax gap)

On page 3, line 13, increase the amount by \$1,000,000,000.

On page 3, line 15, increase the amount by \$3,700,000,000.

On page 3, line 17, increase the amount by \$3,100,000,000.

On page 3, line 19, increase the amount by \$2,200,000,000.

On page 4, line 1, increase the amount by \$1,000,000,000.

On page 4, line 2, increase the amount by \$3,700,000,000.

On page 4, line 3, increase the amount by \$3,100,000,000.

On page 4, line 4, increase the amount by \$2,200,000,000.

On page 4, line 13 increase the amount by \$5,000,000,000.

On page 5, line 4, increase the amount by \$500,000,000.

On page 5, line 6, increase the amount by \$1,850,000,000.

On page 5, line 8, increase the amount by \$1,550,000,000.

On page 5, line 10, increase the amount by \$1,100,000,000.

On page 5, line 19, increase the amount by \$500,000,000.

On page 5, line 21, increase the amount by \$1,850,000,000.

On page 5, line 23, increase the amount by \$1,550,000,000.

On page 5, line 25, increase the amount by \$1,100,000,000.

On page 6, line 8, decrease the amount by \$500,000,000.

On page 6, line 10, decrease the amount by \$2,350,000,000.

On page 6, line 12, decrease the amount by \$3,900,000,000.

On page 6, line 14, decrease the amount by \$5,000,000,000.

On page 6, line 16, decrease the amount by \$5,000,000,000.

On page 6, line 22, decrease the amount by \$500,000,000.

On page 6, line 24, decrease the amount by \$2,350,000,000.

On page 7, line 2, decrease the amount by \$3,900,000,000.

On page 7, line 4, decrease the amount by \$5,000,000,000.

On page 7, line 6, decrease the amount by \$5,000,000,000.

On page 17, line 22, increase the amount by \$5,000,000,000.

On page 17, line 23, increase the amount by \$500,000,000.

On page 18, line 3, increase the amount by \$1,850,000,000.

On page 18, line 7, increase the amount by \$1,550,000,000.

On page 18, line 11, increase the amount by \$1,100,000,000.

On page 53, line 1, increase the amount by \$5,000,000,000.

On page 53, line 2, increase the amount by \$500,000,000.

Ms. STABENOW. Mr. President, I rise today to offer an amendment to this budget resolution that would provide \$5 billion for our first responders so they can effectively and reliably communicate with each other with equipment that can speak to each other: interoperable communications equipment.

I regret to say this administration has been dangerously incompetent in providing homeland security funding, and particularly when we talk about what is happening for our first responders in their ability to communicate, whether it is a terrorist attack, whether it is in the gulf and what has happened with our natural disasters, or any other kind of emergency in our communities.

We have seen a dangerously incompetent situation that has put our families and our communities at risk. We have known for a long time that too many of our police and fire and emergency medical workers and transportation officials cannot communicate with each other or they are not able to link up with State or Federal agencies.

The September 11 attacks highlighted this problem, when New York police and fire personnel were on different radio systems, couldn't communicate, people running into buildings when they should have been running out. The 9/11 Commission found that the inability to communicate was a critical element at the World Trade Center, at the Pentagon, and in Somerset County, PA, where multiple agencies and multiple jurisdictions responded.

Last December, the 9/11 Commission gave Congress a failing grade—an F—because it had not set a date for the transfer of analog spectrum to first responders for their interoperable communications needs.

A June 2004 U.S. Conference of Mayors survey found that 98 percent of cities do not have interoperable commu-

nications. In other words, the police department can't talk to the fire department or can't talk to emergency medical personnel, or they can't talk to folks at the county or the city or the township or the State. And 60 percent of the cities do not have the ability to talk with their State emergency operations centers. This is not acceptable. I believe this shows a dangerously incompetent situation. Almost half of the cities that responded to the survey said that a lack of interoperable communications had made a response to an incident within the last year difficult.

The most startling finding was that 80 percent of the cities don't have interoperable communications with the Department of Homeland Security or the Department of Justice—80 percent of our cities not wired to be able to talk to Homeland Security or the Justice Department. This is a dangerously incompetent situation. Despite these warnings, the Federal Government still has not taken decisive action to solve the problem, and we saw the devastating cost of this with Hurricanes Katrina and Rita. In New Orleans, the police departments and three nearby parishes were on different radio systems. Police officers were calling Senator LANDRIEU's office here in DC because they couldn't reach the commanders on the ground in New Orleans. That is unacceptable. We can do better than this, and we must.

During my visit to the region with the Senate leadership, I had the opportunity to speak to many men and women who were working very hard in those initial days. Sitting in front of the New Orleans Convention Center talking to someone from the Michigan Army National Guard and the Michigan Coast Guard, which were both there working very hard, I asked them if they had radios, and they said yes. I asked if the radios could talk to each other, and they said no.

I said: What happens when you are out in a boat? What happens when you are trying to communicate?

One gentleman said: We use hand signals.

In the United States of America, in 2006, that is a dangerously incompetent situation.

We know this is an ongoing problem, not only because police and firefighters tell us that it is, but high-ranking Government officials concede this is a problem. In November of 2003, the White House Office of Management and Budget testified before a House committee that there was insufficient funding in place to solve the Nation's communications interoperability problem. It would cost over \$15 billion to begin to fix the problem. Yet again we have been dangerously incompetent in addressing this critical threat.

The Federal Government must make a substantial financial commitment to solve this problem. At this time, our State and local governments are stretched too thin and have too many urgent and competing priorities to effectively and completely solve this on

their own. In fact, we have an obligation. As we talk about security, as we talk about making sure we are safe, how in the world can we do that if we in 2006 have not figured out how to have the radios connected to each other so folks can talk to each other in an emergency? The Federal Government has not made the necessary commitment. My amendment begins to do that. It takes a major step in the right direction.

According to the Department of Homeland Security, from 9/11 through 2005, the Federal Government has spent only \$280 million directly on interoperable communications. But none of those funds has been provided to help State and local emergency responders purchase equipment they need to talk to each other. I know our esteemed leader on the Budget Committee will argue that Congress has provided Homeland Security grants to our State and local emergency responders and that interoperable communications are an eligible expense. Saying that radio equipment is an eligible expense for funding and actually providing the funding are two different things.

The problem is, these Homeland Security grants have also been subjected to repeated cuts, including in this year's budget. Our first responders are being given less overall support in funding to try to meet a growing list of homeland security needs that includes radio communications. That is not a real solution. We can do better, and we must.

We need direct funding to solve this problem. That is what my amendment does. God forbid there is another terrorist attack or a natural disaster. Are we going to tell the American people that we didn't provide direct funding to fix a failed communications system because it was eligible under another underfunded grant program? This is a dangerously incompetent response to a critical threat to our families' safety.

I understand fixing our first responders' interoperability crisis is not only a funding problem but also a problem of allocating necessary spectrum. I know this is a difficult issue to solve. I believe we need to eliminate these barriers as quickly as possible.

I also agree that nationwide standards must be set to ensure that any money spent is spent wisely. I am a co-sponsor of legislation introduced by Senator LIEBERMAN and approved by the Senate Committee on Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs. The Assure Emergency and Interoperable Communications for First Responders Act not only begins to provide the resources necessary to solve this problem but ensures that the Federal Government takes a strong role in leading our State, local, and Federal assets toward true communications interoperability.

I have offered several amendments since 9/11 to provide our first responders with the equipment they need to keep our communities safe. Last year,

I offered this same amendment to the Department of Homeland Security appropriations bill and the Science-State-Justice-Commerce appropriations bill. While I have not yet been successful, I assure you, I will continue to fight until the men and women in Michigan and all across our country and their families, the people on the front lines of our homeland security, have the equipment they need and the ability to communicate effectively and reliably when we have an emergency. This is one of the most fundamental issues for us in making sure our families are safe. I am hopeful that my colleagues will support this amendment.

May I ask how much time remains on the amendment?

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator has 4 minutes 20 seconds remaining.

Ms. STABENOW. Mr. President, is that the time on my side or the time in total?

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The time on the side of the sponsor.

Ms. STABENOW. I will take the remaining 4 minutes and then turn it over to the chairman.

This evening, there will be an amendment offered by Senators DAYTON, CHAMBLISS, and myself to address what is another important part of homeland security or law enforcement funding that the Federal Government provides, and that is through the Byrne/JAG grant program. This was proposed for complete elimination in the administration's budget. It provides critical support as it relates to addressing drug crimes, helping with juvenile delinquency, addressing community policing, other important items that help keep our communities safe. I am very pleased to be a sponsor. It is a bipartisan amendment. I am hopeful that it will pass.

In my State, we have 1,543 fewer police officers on the street since 9/11/01. Those are shocking numbers. The Byrne program is critically important in supporting our law enforcement officials. For example, in 2004 alone, Michigan drug task forces rescued 423 children from drug houses and arrested 659 major drug traffickers. They have been able to deal with the meth problem and assist victims of domestic violence. The list goes on and on. The Byrne program is an incredibly important part of supporting law enforcement. My colleagues and I will be offering this later this evening. I am hopeful we will receive support for it.

We are seeing too many cases where law enforcement is losing the resources they need to be effective. I am hopeful that the Byrne grant program will be reinstated and that we will join in a bold, effective approach for interoperability communications so that we know, whether it is natural disasters, a terrorist attack, or just keeping us safe in our communities, that, in fact, our local responders will be connected, not only to each other but to State and Federal agencies. It is critical that we get this done.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from New Hampshire.

Mr. GREGG. Mr. President, I greatly respect the Senator from Michigan. I especially respect and appreciate her dedication to trying to make sure we straighten out this issue of interoperability because she clearly has identified it as a critical issue in the area of first responders. And we know it is. We know it has to be addressed. I don't, however, agree with the approach she is taking, which is essentially to put significantly more dollars into the pipeline. Why? Basically for this reason: In the last budget process, the Commerce-State-Justice committee put \$2 billion of additional money into the interoperability pipeline. Then in the deficit reduction bill, which no Democrats voted for, but this was not the big item that caused that to happen—actually, I am sorry, I think two Democrats voted for it—we put an additional billion dollars into interoperability. And really a large part of that was in response to some of the points that have been made by the Senator from Michigan. So she has done a pretty good job of energizing money flowing into these accounts—in fact, so much so that when you tie that in with the first responder funds which are already in the pipeline, \$5 billion of which have not been drawn down yet, which funds will go disproportionately, I suspect, toward interoperability issues, easily being a plurality the way the funds will be spent, if not a majority of the way the funds will be spent, you literally have a huge amount of money in the pipeline headed out to the States, to communities for the purposes of addressing the issue of interoperability.

The problem isn't dollars right now. The problem is the technical ability of different agencies to agree on an interoperable standard. Every State sees it. You certainly see it across State lines where State police organizations have trouble communicating with local police organizations and fire departments have a different system than the other police in the community. And then the Federal agencies on top of that—Customs, Immigration, FBI, ATF—have problems communicating with the State people. The county people have problems communicating with the State people. They have all, over the years, bought different systems. There is already in place a massive amount of communications equipment out there, and you can't just replace it all. We could never afford to do that. You have to create an atmosphere where, as they either upgrade or they change or they basically agree to try to work together, there is a system to accomplish that.

The problem we have today is that those systems are not in place. Most of the State plans we have received that involve interoperability as an element—every State plan has interoperability as one of its priorities—have not been executed because of the fact

that they can't figure out how to do interoperability. Literally, they have been negotiating now for 5 or 6 years on a regime, an understanding, a protocol for general interoperability, and they can't reach agreement.

What is happening is—and the Senator from Michigan makes this point, too. I don't know if she did in her statement; I regrettably had to leave the Chamber—there is a lot of inventiveness out there. We have turned loose the creative juices of America on this because there is a lot of money in the pipeline, and a lot of people want to participate in it. There are a lot of good ideas coming up quickly as to how to do interoperability without having to do massive hardware changes, and how you can get different systems built by different contractors to communicate with each other. They are not in place yet, but the dollars are there to buy them. A lot of money is there to buy them. We do not need this money at this time.

At some point in the future, we are going to need the money—when the house starts to get in order and there is a sugaring off of what the proper technology is and maybe there is an agreement on a national standard or something, then we will need some more money. We will put more money in at that time. To put more money in at this time is unnecessary, to be very honest. I am afraid we will simply overwhelm the system with dollars and end up with a lot of blue lights and cruisers being purchased and not a lot of good, standardized, interoperable communications systems. That is one reason I oppose it.

The other reason I oppose the amendment is it would raise the caps. I don't think we should be raising the caps in this budget. I made that case about 15 times in the last 2 days, so I won't state that case. It is a pretty valid case. We are opposed to this amendment. I appreciate the energy of the Senator from Michigan on this issue. I think she has had an impact already, and I believe it is reflected in the fact that there is so much money presently in the pipeline. But it has not been spent. Until there is a better plan to spend it, I don't think we need additional funds.

I yield back our time on this amendment. I think the Senator's time has expired; is that correct?

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator has 1 minute 24 seconds.

Mr. GREGG. I yield back our time.

Ms. STABENOW. I yield back our time.

Mr. GREGG. Mr. President, we are ready to go to the next amendment. I suggest the absence of a quorum.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will call the roll.

The assistant legislative clerk proceeded to call the roll.

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

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

AMENDMENT NO. 3054

Mr. MENENDEZ. Mr. President, I call up amendment No. 3054 and ask for its immediate consideration.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will report.

The assistant legislative clerk read as follows:

The Senator from New Jersey [Mr. MENENDEZ], for himself, Mrs. CLINTON, Mr. DURBIN, Mrs. BOXER, Mr. NELSON of Florida, Mr. LIEBERMAN, Mr. INOUE, Mr. REED, and Mr. SCHUMER, proposes an amendment numbered 3054.

Mr. MENENDEZ. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the reading of the amendment be dispensed with.

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

The amendment is as follows:

(Purpose: To provide an additional \$965 million to make our ports more secure by increasing port security grants, increasing inspections, improving existing programs, and increasing research and development, and to fully offset this additional funding by closing tax loopholes)

On page 3, line 13, increase the amount by \$704,000,000.

On page 3, line 15, increase the amount by \$517,000,000.

On page 3, line 17, increase the amount by \$445,000,000.

On page 3, line 19, increase the amount by \$264,000,000.

On page 4, line 1, increase the amount by \$704,000,000.

On page 4, line 2, increase the amount by \$517,000,000.

On page 4, line 3, increase the amount by \$445,000,000.

On page 4, line 4, increase the amount by \$264,000,000.

On page 4, line 13, increase the amount by \$965,000,000.

On page 5, line 4, increase the amount by \$352,000,000.

On page 5, line 6, increase the amount by \$259,000,000.

On page 5, line 8, increase the amount by \$223,000,000.

On page 5, line 10, increase the amount by \$132,000,000.

On page 5, line 19, increase the amount by \$352,000,000.

On page 5, line 21, increase the amount by \$258,000,000.

On page 5, line 23, increase the amount by \$222,000,000.

On page 5, line 25, increase the amount by \$132,000,000.

On page 6, line 8, decrease the amount by \$352,000,000.

On page 6, line 10, decrease the amount by \$610,000,000.

On page 6, line 12, decrease the amount by \$832,000,000.

On page 6, line 14, decrease the amount by \$964,000,000.

On page 6, line 16, decrease the amount by \$964,000,000.

On page 6, line 22, decrease the amount by \$352,000,000.

On page 6, line 24, decrease the amount by \$610,000,000.

On page 7, line 2, decrease the amount by \$832,000,000.

On page 7, line 4, decrease the amount by \$964,000,000.

On page 7, line 6, decrease the amount by \$964,000,000.

On page 17, line 22, increase the amount by \$600,000,000.

On page 17, line 23, increase the amount by \$60,000,000.

On page 18, line 3, increase the amount by \$222,000,000.

On page 18, line 7, increase the amount by \$186,000,000.

On page 18, line 11, increase the amount by \$132,000,000.

On page 24, line 24, increase the amount by \$365,000,000.

On page 24, line 25, increase the amount by \$292,000,000.

On page 25, line 4, increase the amount by \$37,000,000.

On page 25, line 8, increase the amount by \$37,000,000.

On page 53, line 1, increase the amount by \$965,000,000.

On page 53, line 2, increase the amount by \$352,000,000.

Mr. MENENDEZ. Mr. President, I offer this amendment on behalf of not only myself but Senators CLINTON, DURBIN, LAUTENBERG, BOXER, NELSON of Florida, and LIEBERMAN. I also ask unanimous consent to add Senator REED of Rhode Island and Senator SCHUMER as cosponsors.

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

Mr. MENENDEZ. Mr. President, the 9/11 Commission told us that to prevent a terrorist attack, we had to think outside the box. If an ordinary envelope could be turned into a biological weapon and a passenger plane into a weapon of mass destruction, then it takes little imagination to see how a container could be used to transport a nuclear weapon to the port of New York and New Jersey, or any other seaport, causing tens of thousands of casualties.

The 9/11 Commission told us to think outside the box, but when it comes to port security, I believe we must think inside the container. The bottom line is, we don't know what is inside the vast majority of containers entering this country because despite repeated warnings from security experts from both within and without our Government, only 1 of every 20 containers that passes through our ports is inspected—inspected. That is very important. Not screened but inspected. Ninety-five percent of the cargo received no inspection other than a cursory glance at the cargo manifest.

Now, let me point out what the Government Accounting Office said when it stated that the manifest information, the listing of what goes into these containers "may be unreliable and incomplete. There is no method to routinely verify whether the manifest data accurately reflects the contents within the cargo container."

That is why I am offering this amendment with our colleagues, which will put us on the road to 100 percent container scanning.

As port security experts Stephen Flynn and James Loy point out—James Loy was the former Deputy Secretary of Homeland Security and the Commandant of the Coast Guard, and Stephen Flynn is well known in this field. They said:

To ensure port security, we must construct a comprehensive global container inspection system that scans the contents of every single container destined for America's waterfront before it leaves a port.

We need to take advantage of existing technologies that can scan the inside of a container and create a downloadable image of what is inside. That image can be viewed in real time back here in the United States so we know what exactly is in these containers. When this technology is combined with scans for radioactive materials, we can find dangerous materials before it is too late.

That is why our amendment provides \$105 million for this dual technology in the United States. It provides \$50 million to help developing countries which may not have the funds to buy this new technology. In fact, these ports could be the weakest link in our international port security chain. We must be sure they do not become easy targets for terrorists looking for lax security practices. And it provides \$10 million to make sure the United States can integrate these new technologies into our existing scanning and inspection system.

While we are waiting for this new international scanning system to become fully operational, we must make sure we increase inspections through our existing programs and improve on-the-ground security at our ports. That is why this amendment provides \$100 million for at least 400 additional inspectors, both here and abroad. I would note the funding in my amendment is specifically for staff at ports, both here and abroad. I believe we need to make this increase in port security and staffing explicit in our budget.

I would also note that the Government Accounting Office—in a report on the container security initiative, which is supposedly this administration's focus on how we do the best we can as it relates to port security, and which is designed to target and inspect high-risk cargo before it leaves the ports, pointed out that staffing problems—the GAO specifically noted that:

Staffing imbalances are one of the factors which limit the Custom and Border Patrol's ability to successfully target containers to determine if they are high-risk.

The Government Accounting Office went on to say:

As a result of staffing shortages abroad, 35 percent of U.S.-bound shipments from these CSI ports were not targeted and were not subject to inspection overseas . . .

The essence, the key goal of the CSI program, they said it wasn't accomplished.

In the Customs-Trade Partnership Against Terrorism, the C-TPAT Program, staffing was also a problem. Specifically, the GAO report points out that the Customs and Border Patrol is not able to validate the self-reported information of C-TPAT members because of "staffing constraints." This means companies which receive less scrutiny and inspection under the C-TPAT Program receive these benefits before "they undergo the validation process, which is the Custom and Border Patrol's method to verify that members' characterization of their se-

curity measures are accurate and that the security measures have been implemented."

We also provide \$600 million for the Port Security Grant Program, more than tripling last year's budget. As this budget reflects no changes over the President's request, we can only assume there is no specific money going to port security grants. The American Association of Port Authorities notes that their recommendation to double the funds is only "a modest investment." In fact, they point out that doubling these funds would represent "36 percent of the Coast Guard's projected cost of the facility improvements." I believe that falls short of the mark.

Security experts tell us that we could more than triple the funding for these grants, and we still wouldn't meet the requirements to implement security measures at our Nation's ports.

Finally, we must make sure that we have cutting edge technology to safeguard our ports. This amendment provides \$100 million for research and development. Up to now, we have not focused enough on creating second generation technologies for nonintrusive inspections, which the private sector is unlikely to develop. It is time for that to change.

Strengthening security at our ports will not be cheap, and given the budgetary challenges our Nation faces, every dollar is hard to come by. But the status quo is unacceptable. An attack on one of our ports would not just cause a tremendous loss of life that has no monetary equivalent, but would also shut down a port and all of the economic activity it generates at a cost of billions of dollars to our economy.

If we could roll back the clock 10 years and spend a few billion dollars to raise the levees in New Orleans to be able to withstand a category 5 hurricane, we could have saved hundreds of lives, as well as the billions of dollars it will take to rebuild the city. I don't want this country to look back in hindsight a few years from now with the realization that had we spent the necessary dollars to improve the security at our ports now, we could have prevented a major terrorist attack.

Who among us would be satisfied in the aftermath of an attack that we did not take the steps that could have prevented it because we were unwilling to dedicate the necessary resources? That is the choice the Congress faces, and for the security of our country it is essential that we make the right one.

This amendment is also fully paid for by closing corporate tax loopholes that this body has supported before. I urge all of our colleagues to join me in supporting this amendment. I reserve the remainder of my time.

Mr. GREGG. Mr. President, this amendment, as the Senator from New Jersey mentioned at the end, raises taxes. It raises the cap, so it spends a lot more money. And in the context of

overall port security, although it makes a statement, it is not necessarily going to do a whole lot more than what we are doing already.

There is, of course, because of the Dubai Ports World situation, a human cry for more port security. We have attempted over the last few years to try to address port security, and there is still a lot more to do. But there has been a very large commitment to port security, and there has been a lot done. Over \$10 billion has been committed to port security since 9/11. By next year, 2007, 85 percent of all cargo coming into the United States will be screened. We have in place at the 42 largest shipping ports that ship to the United States significant infrastructure which actually checks the cargo that is going on those ships.

What has happened here is that there has been a decision made, and it is the right decision, that the best way to protect ourselves is not to wait for the cargo, the container to end up on a shipping dock in Newark or a shipping dock in Long Beach, but to have that container checked before it gets on the boat that is going to bring it across the ocean to Long Beach or to Newark.

So a huge amount of infrastructure commitment, people and personnel and technology, is being put into that goal. Of course, it doesn't get scored as port grants, which is what this amendment is offering up, a port grant. Rather, it actually does what the port grant money can't do: it gives us offshore protection of cargo coming into the United States.

As I said, by 2007, as a result of this initiative, 85 percent of all cargo will be screened. In addition, the Coast Guard has been tooled up so that it can actually physically go out and stop a container vessel or a tanker on the open ocean if it is concerned that the vessel is coming from a port that doesn't have adequate security relative to the loading of the ship, or if it has some other concern, such as information that the ship might have some threatening cargo. We have put in place an outer curtain, which the Coast Guard is pursuing. So a lot has been done.

Not only has a lot been done, but we are still doing more. In the last budget from Homeland Security, we dramatically increased port security funding for this type of a grant program that the Senator from New Jersey has proposed. In this budget, we propose \$2 billion of new spending for border security, which can be used for port security in the underlying budget over what the President asked for, and then we proposed another \$2 billion of border security which can be used for port issues in the supplemental budget, which runs parallel to this basic budget.

So that is \$4 billion of new funds which are going to flow into border security, of which a fair amount will go into the ports. So the commitment has been significant and continues to be

significant, and it is hard to claim that we aren't actually starting to get results from what we are buying.

A lot of this port grant money, on the other hand, which goes to the port that is in place, that goes to the facility on American soil, is ending up, unfortunately—maybe not so much going to—it is going to security needs, but it is going to security needs which traditionally would have been paid for by the managers of these ports. Basically what they are doing is they are taking the Federal grant money, and instead of building a fence, which they should have built anyway and they needed anyway, or instead of building major lighting which they needed and should have put in place anyway out of their own funds, they are replacing those funds with Federal dollars and using Federal dollars to do what they should have done anyway. So there is an issue there as to whether we are getting the most bang for the buck through the Port Security Grant Program.

But, in any event, independent of that, to represent that this has not been a very robust effort in the area of port security is wrong. Is there a way to go? Of course there is a way to go.

The Senator from New Jersey is suggesting that we should physically inspect every cargo container coming into the United States. We don't physically inspect every car that comes across our border. We don't physically inspect every individual who comes across our border, or every piece of luggage that comes across our border. And there is a reason for that. It is called: You can't do it and still have an economy that is going to function.

What we do, however, is set up a very aggressive regime at these various ports around the world that are shipping to us, especially the major ports where we check for what we think is the most threatening potential cargo, which we all know what it is. And we are expanding that regime out beyond those shipping ports to the actual place where the containers are filled and putting in place certification programs which are reviewed and which have on-the-ground inspection capability.

Is there more to do? Yes, there is more to do, no question about it. But the point is, this budget assumes there is more to do and puts the money in it to do more, significantly more. However, this is the cause du jour—I recognize that—and the relevance of what is actually being done isn't considered. The relevance of the money that is in the pipeline isn't considered. It simply becomes an issue of throw more money at it and therefore claim that we are resolving the problem faster.

As a practical matter, the \$4 billion that we have allocated towards border security in this bill is a huge increase, and it significantly increases accounts. The \$10 billion that we have already put into this effort is showing results, and we are on the path to a very organized approach toward how we deal with our ports. We intend to do more,

and we believe we have funded that adequately in this bill.

However, I know there are going to be additional amendments. I think the leader has an amendment on this point which is at least paid for directly. The biggest problem with this amendment is it is not only a large number, especially in the context of the \$4 billion that is already there on top of that, but it is a number that is paid for with a tax increase. I do not believe increasing taxes is the right way to go, nor do I believe breaking the cap is the right way to go.

Mr. President, how much time is remaining on this amendment?

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The sponsor has 5 minutes 45 seconds, and the manager has 6 minutes 30 seconds.

Mr. GREGG. I reserve the remainder of my time.

Mr. MENENDEZ. Mr. President, I yield 3 minutes to the distinguished Democratic whip.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Illinois.

Mr. DURBIN. Mr. President, this is an interesting amendment. I am happy to cosponsor it with Senator MENENDEZ, Senator SCHUMER, and Senator CLINTON.

Consider this: When you went to the airport this week and you wanted to get on an airplane, they asked you to take your shoes off, right? That is what we do every week around here. That is what we do in America to make sure we are safe on an airplane.

Now comes the Senator from New Jersey with a request and a suggestion that, in the scheme of things, is much more valuable to our security. Millions of containers come into the United States every year. The General Accounting Office took a look at the containers we inspect and found that fully one out of three of the most risky containers are not even being looked at. We are not inspecting them. So the next time you take your shoes off at the airport, you might ask yourself: Is this keeping America safe? Or would it be keeping America safe to have our containers inspected, as Senator MENENDEZ is suggesting with his amendment?

The Senator from New Hampshire says it is a lot of money. It is a lot of money. It is \$900 million for new technology, for new inspectors, for better approaches to looking at these containers. But when you talk about the security of America and the expense we are going through and the lives that are at risk across this Nation and overseas in keeping America safe, can we do anything less? I think the Senator from New Jersey has an excellent suggestion to make America safer.

Improving port security is an important part of homeland security because the U.S. maritime system includes more than 300 sea and river ports. The system also has more than 3,700 cargo and passenger terminals and more than 1,000 harbor channels spread along thousands of miles of coastline.

Port security is a multi-layered system of defenses that includes monitoring the people, cargo and vessels entering our ports from the time they leave a foreign port to the time they arrive in the United States. Additional port security funding is needed to improve dockside and perimeter security, provide important security upgrades such as surveillance equipment, access controls to restricted areas, communications equipment, and the construction of new command and control facilities.

This funding is crucial because our Nation's ports were identified by GAO as the remaining "vulnerability" in our transportation system and that efforts to secure our Nation's ports "lacked clear goals and measures that track progress." GAO has also stated that, as a result of staffing imbalances, 35 percent of high-risk containers were not inspected.

In addition, GAO reported that the security checks performed by Customs and the Border Patrol are not rigorous enough and that staffing problems have kept Customs from validating participant's security information.

In Illinois, the Chicago Port is the 36th largest port in the Nation and the largest on the Great Lakes. Chicago is also the largest inland general cargo port in America, and the city as a whole is the commercial transportation crossroads of the Nation. Illinois and the Port of Chicago link waterborne commerce, foreign and domestic, via our vast rail and highway systems for distribution throughout all of North America, Canada, Mexico, and the world. Global cargo movement through the Chicago area in containers, barges, vessels, trucks, airplanes, and railcars totals hundreds of millions of tons annually. Chicago ranks seventh in the Nation among the United States Census Bureau 2004 statistics of the "Top Twenty-Five Customs Districts. Chicago's total dollar value of goods imported and exported is about \$94 billion.

The City of Chicago and the Chicago police department provide local security and the Coast Guard patrols the waterways but additional funding is needed for patrol vessels, security enhancements and cameras, and inspection equipment.

The Coast Guard estimates that over \$7 billion is needed through 2012 for ports to comply with Federal security standards and to date, only 13 percent of that amount has been provided.

In 2006, \$175 million was provided for port security which is not nearly enough to secure all of the Nation's ports.

In 2006, \$138 million was provided for the Container Security Initiative—CSI—which is not enough to examine high-risk containers at every foreign port with vessels destined for the U.S.

I am concerned that 6 percent of the 9 million containers arriving at U.S. ports are scanned or inspected each year due to a billion dollar funding

shortage for critical port security needs. Until the administration is willing to work with Congress to fund, equip and hire the needed personnel to protect our ports from being used by terrorists, it will not matter if a U.S. or a foreign company is in charge of our ports. In that regard, our Nation's ports and infrastructure are so important to the security of our homeland that the approval process for foreign companies that want to manage U.S. infrastructure should include greater Congressional oversight and involvement.

The President's budget folds port security in with all other transportation and critical infrastructure needs, eliminating the port security grant program in favor of a Targeted Infrastructure Protection Grant.

The budget also forces ports to compete for limited resources with mass transit, rail, and other critical infrastructure sectors.

The President's budget requests \$139 million for CSI whereby containers deemed to be high risk are opened and inspected. The President's budget also requests \$76 million for the Customs Trade Partnership Against Terrorism—C-TPAT—program which screens shipping companies and the companies that provide them with any services. More money is needed than is provided in the President's budget for the CSI and C-TPAT programs to inspect containers at foreign ports and validate security information.

The Menendez-Clinton-Durbin Port Security Amendment moves the U. S. toward the goal of 100 percent scanning of containers. Currently, Customs screens all cargo coming into the U.S. using a combination of intelligence information and data provided on shipping manifests. The amendment provides an additional \$600 million for port security grants, \$100 million for at least 400 new staff to increase inspections and identify high-risk containers as part of CSI and C-TPAT, and \$105 million for radiation portal monitors and gamma/x-ray imaging technology.

Specifically, the amendment triples the current amount of funding for the Port Security Grant Program to \$600 million. These funds are highly sought by local port authorities such as the Port of Chicago.

The amendment provides \$100 million to increase the number of inspectors at foreign ports and improve the process for validating security information.

The amendment also provides \$100 million in funding for more finely tuned technologies that can locate contraband material in shipping containers.

The amendment provides \$105 million for U.S. ports to install cargo imaging and radiation portal monitors to detect radiation and identify high density shielding used to block radiation emissions.

In addition, the amendment provides \$10 million for U.S. ports to update technology so that officials can receive

and integrate downloadable images of containers at foreign ports into our existing scanning and inspection system.

Finally, the amendment provides \$50 million to help developing countries purchase equipment to scan and inspect containers.

I ask all my colleagues to stop and reflect for a moment. This is about more than Dubai and who is going to manage our ports. It is about the safety of America. God forbid something happens, let's be on the right side of history. Let's support the Menendez amendment and make sure these containers are inspected.

I reserve the remainder of my time.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from New Hampshire.

Mr. GREGG. It is my understanding the Senator from New York and the Senator from New Jersey wish to speak, and the junior Senator from New Jersey only has 2 minutes remaining or something like that?

The PRESIDING OFFICER. There is 3 minutes 39 seconds remaining to the Senator from New Jersey.

Mr. GREGG. My understanding was the Senator from New York wanted 2 minutes and the Senator from New Jersey wanted 2 minutes. Does the junior Senator from New Jersey desire more time?

Mr. MENENDEZ. One minute.

Mr. GREGG. I will yield 2 minutes off my time, even though I disagree vociferously with their position, but out of the kindness of my heart, I yield a minute to the Senator from New York, the senior Senator from New York, so they can make their case, which is only worth about 2 minutes, anyway.

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

Mr. SCHUMER. Mr. President, first I thank my colleague from New Hampshire. He is a tough old New Englander, but he has a heart of gold, even when he is wrong on the merits.

Mr. President, I salute my colleague from New Jersey for offering this amendment. It says one thing loudly and clearly. Even though, as we hope and believe, the Dubai Ports World deal is now scuttled as far as American ports, we have miles and miles to go on port security. This is not new to this Chamber. I have introduced amendment after amendment. I know my colleague from Washington, PATTY MURRAY, and the Senator from Maine, SUSAN COLLINS, and others have all tried to do more for port security. This amendment does much of the job. We have to inspect more than 5 percent of the containers. We need a crash research project so we can develop devices that can scan for nuclear or biological or chemical weapons. We need our ports to have employees who cannot forge documents and get a job for bad purposes.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator has consumed the 1 minute given to him by the Senator from New Hampshire.

Mr. MENENDEZ. Mr. President, I yield the Senator 1 additional minute.

Mr. SCHUMER. Mr. President, we need to make sure, for those who operate the ports, when they are checked for security that it is a real check and they can't forge documents or sneak in.

There are so many things to do on port security. Even if every port were owned by an American company that had the best of intentions, we would not be doing close to enough.

So I urge my colleagues to support the amendment of my colleague from New Jersey because we have such a long way to go on port security. It is a neglected stepchild of our homeland security project, and you cannot do it, you cannot do it without the dollars the Senator from New Jersey has suggested.

I urge my colleagues to support this amendment to make sure more cargo is scanned, to have better screening equipment, tighter security among employees, and the other many good things this amendment does.

I yield my remaining time back to my colleague from New Jersey.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Who yields time?

Mr. MENENDEZ. Mr. President, can you tell me how much time there is on both sides?

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from New Jersey has 2 minutes 25 seconds. The Senator from New Hampshire has 4 minutes 3 seconds.

Mr. MENENDEZ. Mr. President, I yield 2 minutes to the senior Senator from New Jersey.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from New Jersey.

Mr. LAUTENBERG. Mr. President, when you look over at this section of the Chamber, you see three Senators who were front and close to what results from an act of terrorism. We saw it in the World Trade Center. We lost over 700 people from the State of New Jersey, and the combination was almost 3,000 people. We know what you have to do to prevent anything like that from ever happening.

We are going to spend up to \$500 billion before this year is over on our security interests in Iraq and Afghanistan, and we have an obligation to do as much as we can for people we serve in an area that has been subjected to terrorism and is classified as the worst 2 miles in the country for terrorist attack. Much of that will come as a result of the activity in our harbors and our ports.

I salute my colleague, new to this body but leaderly in his actions that we have seen thus far, and particularly with this, stepping up, as we say in the vernacular, to the plate to say: OK, Mr. President, you want to protect our people? The leadership here in the Senate certainly says they want to protect our people. Then, by golly, spend the money. We are looking for \$900 million for the additional port security funds. Let's do it.

We survey 5 percent of the cargo that comes in, in containers, to the country.

That is nothing, on a relative basis. We ought to spend the money and say to the people in those neighborhoods, the people across the country who would be affected by a terrorist attack: We are going to do what we can to protect you. We say it all the time. Now we have to put up or, as they say, be quiet.

I yield my time.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The time of the sponsor has expired.

Mr. GREGG. Mr. President, I yield a minute to the junior Senator from New Jersey.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from New Jersey is recognized for 1 minute.

Mr. MENENDEZ. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent to include Senator MURRAY as a cosponsor.

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

Mr. MENENDEZ. Mr. President, let me make three quick points.

No. 1, we don't raise taxes here. We fully pay for it by closing corporate tax loopholes that the Senate has voted on before. That is much more important to be done, closing those loopholes in favor of security, than keeping them open.

Second, this is not about physically going into each container, but it is about scanning each container so we can see its contents, because only 5 percent get screened. Screened is not an inspection, physical or otherwise. That means 95 percent of the cargo that comes into the United States is really untouched.

Last, we cannot have it both ways. Either that \$4 billion that the distinguished Senator from New Hampshire talks about is about the northern and southern border and border patrol and inspection and the Iraq contingency funding, or it is about port security. But it cannot be about both. If you want to protect the ports of the United States, if you want to make sure the economic consequences of an attack do not take place, if you want to make sure that we save lives, the only way to do that is to adopt the Menendez amendment.

I urge our colleagues to do so. We believe in doing so we will have come a significant way on securing the ports of the Nation and, most importantly, securing the citizens of this country.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Kentucky.

AMENDMENT NO. 3061

Mr. McCONNELL. I send an amendment to the desk on behalf of myself and Senator HUTCHISON and Senator FRIST.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will report.

The legislative clerk read as follows:

The Senator from Kentucky [Mr. McCONNELL], for himself, Mrs. HUTCHISON, and Mr. FRIST, proposes an amendment numbered 3061.

Mr. McCONNELL. I ask unanimous consent that the reading of the amendment be dispensed with.

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

The amendment is as follows:

(Purpose: To provide funding for maritime security, including the Container Security Initiative, improved data for targeted cargo searches, and full background checks and security threat assessments of personnel at our nation's seaports)

On page 16, line 21, increase the amount by \$978,000,000.

On page 16, line 22, increase the amount by \$782,400,000.

On page 17, line 1, increase the amount by \$195,600,000.

On page 27, line 23, decrease the amount by \$978,000,000.

On page 27, line 24, decrease the amount by \$782,400,000.

On page 28, line 2, decrease the amount by \$195,600,000.

Mr. McCONNELL. Mr. President, this amendment will provide funding for maritime security, including the container security initiative, improved data for targeted cargo searches, and, most important for purposes of this amendment, full background checks and security threat assessments of personnel at our Nation's seaports. It makes no sense to be obsessed with what is in the containers and ignore those in our own ports who will handle the containers.

In the past few weeks, there has been a new focus on national security concerns surrounding our seaports. We have had a lot of discussion about that issue. Many have called for greater limitations on foreign ownership as well as increased oversight and inspection of cargo ships and loading facilities. This amendment says: Yes, fund port and maritime security. But if this is truly a national security issue, we should ensure that we have background checks and security threat assessments of the personnel at our seaports.

So I repeat, unless we are certain of the individuals who are handling this cargo at our own seaports here in the United States, we clearly have not done the job. This amendment provides \$978 million to initiate an enhanced maritime security. Of that amount, \$728 million is provided as recommended by the Commerce Committee for maritime security in S. 1052, the Transportation Security Act, and another \$250 million is provided to fund these background checks that I was just talking about of the people in our ports who are handling the cargo, the security of which and the contents of which we have all indicated we are so concerned about. The cost of this amendment is offset within the budget's overall discretionary allocation.

So if we really believe, as I know we all do, that our Nation's seaports are a national security issue, we ought to enhance port security, of course, but all that is completely meaningless unless we are certain of the qualifications, the integrity of the individuals in our ports here in the United States handling this cargo when it comes in. When it comes to port security, you can check all the containers you want, but it does no good unless you have also checked those who handle the containers. We

have seen numerous reports of false ID's, criminal activity, and organized crime right here in our own country at our seaports. We can't place Americans at risk because we turn a blind eye to this risk.

Let me just sum it up before yielding the floor. What this is about is making sure that these individuals at our ports here in America who are handling this cargo we have all indicated we have enormous concern about, coming from overseas into the United States, into our ports—that the people handling this cargo in our ports meet the highest standards of integrity because it does not make any difference in the world if we have made sure that the container at its original port of embarkation is OK, it doesn't make any difference if we have made sure it is OK on the ship on the way over here. If we have the wrong people handling the cargo here in the United States, America is at risk.

The amendment I have offered on behalf of Senator HUTCHISON and Senator FRIST would secure the funding for these background checks and assessments of employees here in our own country handling the cargo in our ports.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Who yields time in opposition?

Mr. BYRD. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the pending amendment be set aside so I may offer an amendment.

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

AMENDMENT NO. 3062

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will report.

The legislative clerk read as follows:

The Senator from West Virginia [Mr. BYRD], for himself, Mr. ROCKEFELLER, and Mr. KENNEDY, proposes an amendment numbered 3062.

Mr. BYRD. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that reading of the amendment be dispensed with.

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

The amendment is as follows:

(Purpose: To provide \$184 million over five years for the Mine Safety and Health Administration to hire additional mine safety inspectors, paid for by closing corporate tax loopholes)

On page 3, line 13, increase the amount by \$32,000,000.

On page 3, line 15, increase the amount by \$35,000,000.

On page 3, line 17, increase the amount by \$36,000,000.

On page 3, line 19, increase the amount by \$36,000,000.

On page 3, line 21, increase the amount by \$37,000,000.

On page 4, line 1, increase the amount by \$32,000,000.

On page 4, line 2, increase the amount by \$35,000,000.

On page 4, line 3, increase the amount by \$36,000,000.

On page 4, line 4, increase the amount by \$36,000,000.

On page 4, line 6, increase the amount by \$37,000,000.

On page 4, line 13, increase the amount by \$36,000,000.

On page 4, line 15, increase the amount by \$36,000,000.

On page 4, line 17, increase the amount by \$37,000,000.

On page 4, line 19, increase the amount by \$37,000,000.

On page 4, line 21, increase the amount by \$38,000,000.

On page 5, line 4, increase the amount by \$32,000,000.

On page 5, line 6, increase the amount by \$35,000,000.

On page 5, line 8, increase the amount by \$36,000,000.

On page 5, line 10, increase the amount by \$36,000,000.

On page 5, line 12, increase the amount by \$37,000,000.

On page 19, line 24, increase the amount by \$36,000,000.

On page 19, line 25, increase the amount by \$32,000,000.

On page 20, line 3, increase the amount by \$36,000,000.

On page 20, line 4, increase the amount by \$35,000,000.

On page 20, line 7, increase the amount by \$37,000,000.

On page 20, line 8, increase the amount by \$36,000,000.

On page 20, line 11, increase the amount by \$37,000,000.

On page 20, line 12, increase the amount by \$36,000,000.

On page 20, line 15, increase the amount by \$38,000,000.

On page 20, line 16, increase the amount by \$37,000,000.

On page 53, line 1, increase the amount by \$36,000,000.

On page 53, line 2, increase the amount by \$32,000,000.

On page 53, line 4, increase the amount by \$36,000,000.

On page 53, line 7, increase the amount by \$37,000,000.

Mr. BYRD. Mr. President, historian and author Henry Adams wrote that “practical politics consists in ignoring facts.”

Here is a fact.

Without offsets, we cannot afford to continue to cram hundreds of billions of dollars of new tax cuts into the federal budget. To create the illusion of affordability, this budget already excludes the costs of the war in Iraq beyond next year. It excludes the costs of protecting middle-income taxpayers from the alternative minimum tax beyond next year. It excludes the costs of putting Social Security and Medicare on sounder footings. It excludes a host of critical domestic investments—everything from education funding to highway maintenance—and continue to postpone them year after year. Even while it excludes or hides all of these inevitable costs, this budget still projects that our national debt will continue to rise to stratospheric levels.

Here is another fact.

Relying primarily on domestic discretionary funding cuts will never, never seriously reduce the annual spending-spree deficits of this administration. The part of the federal budget known as domestic discretionary spending comprises only one-sixth of the total federal budget. The squeeze on domestic discretionary spending

these past few years has already produced funding shortfalls that are not only impractical, but also wholly irresponsible and damaging to our country's future.

These cuts have real-world consequences. They are not just accounting exercises. Look at what happened to FEMA's ability to respond to natural disasters. Look at the shortfalls in the LIHEAP program affecting so many needs of our citizens in our States. Look at the costly reduction of federal mine safety inspectors, and at the spike in mine fatalities this year.

Look at the paltry amount included in the budget to prepare and respond to a possible Avian Flu Pandemic—one of the most dangerous health threats confronting the United States today. Medical experts warn that a global, cataclysmic pandemic is not a question of “if,” but “when.” Like any natural disaster, it could strike at anytime. Avian flu could take the lives of tens of millions of people, and deliver a devastating \$675 billion blow to the U.S. economy. Yet, we are failing to adequately safeguard the American people because of political convenience and lust for cuts in domestic spending.

Look, for instance, at the shortfalls in veterans funding, with the administration trying to backfill by raising copayments and fees for veterans health care services, not to mention the submission of a supplemental budget amendment last year to avoid emergency cuts in VA medical care and services.

Witness the gaping holes in our border security, marked by federal agents releasing or not even bothering to pursue illegal aliens because of lack of detention space and personnel. We can only hope and pray that those determined folks who daily circumvent our border security are not al-Qaida operatives.

Congested roads, overcrowded schools, deteriorating rail and transit systems, corroding and structurally deficient bridges, functionally obsolete locks and dams, overflowing sewers and wastewater mismanagement, energy bottlenecks causing higher prices and electricity failures and power outages—these are the festering signs of a nation's infrastructure being slowly starved. Meanwhile, our once strong and proud manufacturing sector is buckling from intense foreign competition by companies heavily subsidized by their governments. Health care and education expenses are both rising to prohibitive levels for families and their employers, and the United States of America is becoming more and more addicted to foreign capital and immigrant labor to power our economy.

For years we have been determinedly squeezing the wrong pieces of the federal budget in order to fund other pieces, and believe me the chickens are coming home to roost.

This week, the Congress will vote to raise the debt ceiling to \$9 trillion—the fourth nasty increase in 5 years. Presi-

dent Reagan said a \$1 trillion debt “can only be compared to the universe because it, too, is incomprehensible in its dimensions.” One way to put that number in perspective is to imagine counting \$1 trillion at the rate of \$1 per second. At that rate, it would take 32,000 years to count \$1 trillion. Imagine, 32,000 years to count \$1 trillion, and then, when finished, counting it eight more times to reach the total debt of this country. Such massive debt, and what have we to show for it?

An editorial in The Washington Post last year described the situation: “[We] have let the nation's plumbing rust, its wiring fray, its floor joists warp and its walkways crumble . . . Sooner or later, though, we're going to have to pony up . . . If you continue to ignore that drip, drip, drip in the upstairs bedroom, pretty soon you're going to be pricing a new roof.” And don't forget, we will have to borrow to pay for that roof.

This editorial appeared only weeks before Hurricane Katrina. The investments we delayed and postponed for years in New Orleans are now costing tens of billions of dollars in repairs and new building. It is a painful lesson, and the government of this country does not seem to learn very fast. We are foolishly ignoring the drip, drip, drip in the upstairs bedroom, while the plaster weakens and costs for repairs mount.

I sympathize with the plight of the chairman of the Budget Committee. Chairman GREGG didn't craft the budget submitted by the administration, but he has made the loyal decision to adopt and defend the president's discretionary spending limits. I say to my colleagues that the Congress cannot fund this great country's essential needs within those limits. Too much of that money is eaten by fighting wars without allied assistance, and by waste in the defense discretionary budget for contracts that rip off the taxpayer and skimp on essential services for our troops.

Within a few days, I will offer two amendments to accommodate the critical investments that we must not continue to postpone. I will propose amendments for mine safety, and Amtrak.

Today, I offer the first of those two amendments, which would add \$184 million to the budget for mine safety inspectors and rescue technology.

West Virginia has lost 16 miners this year. Their emergency communications and breathing equipment proved insufficient, and the federal mine regulator, known as the Mine Safety and Health Administration, MSHA, of the U.S. Department of Labor, is operating on an insufficient budget.

There is no question that the federal coal enforcement budget has been squeezed in recent years, and that the attrition of federal mine safety inspectors has been ignored as part of an effort to carve out more room in the budget for non-essential tax cuts. Those budget cuts have resulted in gross deficiencies at the Department of Labor.

The miners trapped underground at the Sago and Alma mines had only a one-hour oxygen supply to last through a 40-hour rescue. The miners trapped underground could not communicate with the rescue effort on the surface, and the rescue effort on the surface could not locate the miners trapped underground. Meanwhile, the number of safety inspectors charged with enforcing the Mine Act has dwindled since 2001, with 217 fewer inspectors today to ensure the safety of miners, and the vigorous enforcement of the Mine Act.

These budget cuts have had real and deadly consequences for coal miners. Ask the families about how that feels.

This amendment, which I offer with Senators ROCKEFELLER and KENNEDY, would be sufficient to replace the 217 safety inspectors that have been lost since 2001, and to help get emergency communications and breathing equipment into the mines rapidly.

In the wake of 21 coal mining deaths this year, and the closure of mines for emergency safety inspections, it is essential that the Congress provide the Department of Labor with the funds it needs to keep our nation's coal mines operating safely.

I am also hopeful that we will soon see legislation from the Health, Education, Labor, and Pensions, HELP, Committee to address the other mine safety initiatives that still have not been implemented by the Department of Labor—emergency communications and tracking requirements, increased and minimum penalties for habitual violators, a suspension of belt-air ventilation for the working areas of mines. These components are addressed by the West Virginia Delegation mine safety authorization bill that still awaits action by the HELP Committee and the Senate. I, and the miners and mining widows of my state, continue to urge the HELP Committee to act quickly on this essential legislation. We could have more deaths in the mines any day.

In the meantime, we have an opportunity today to address the mine safety budget. It is a critical piece of our infrastructure that we dare not continue to ignore. The fact is that cuts in domestic discretionary spending are weakening mine safety efforts. Decency demands that we not wait until more miners die before we do something about it.

I urge Senators to support this amendment.

I yield the floor.

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

The Senator from New Hampshire.

Mr. GREGG. Mr. President, I appreciate the amendment of the Senator from West Virginia. I understand the personal involvement and concern he has for the mine safety in his State and the extraordinary tragedies they have experienced. I hope there is a way we can work this amendment out. In its present form it does raise taxes to pay for it, which I will not be able to sup-

port, but I am hopeful we can work something out.

I yield back the balance of our time in opposition to this amendment.

Mr. KENNEDY. Mr. President, I support the amendment offered by the senior Senator from West Virginia and am pleased to cosponsor this amendment. This amendment would add \$184 million to the budget for mine safety inspectors.

The need for this type of investment is clear. Twenty-four miners have already died this year, 21 of them in coal mines, just one of the total number of coal mine deaths for all of last year.

We know that coal plays a vital role in meeting the Nation's need for energy. Over half of Americans get their electricity from coal. It is essential for mines to remain productive. But safety can't yield to production goals.

Protecting our miners is a moral obligation and a national priority. We must do everything in our power to minimize the risk of injuries and deaths.

This January, I joined Senator ISAKSON, Senator ENZI, and Senator ROCKEFELLER on a trip to the Sago Mine. We met with the families of the fallen miners, and they shared their thoughts and memories in a way that deeply touched us all, and made action by Congress all the more essential.

We need strong mine safety enforcement and inspections. The Bush administration has jeopardized the safety of our Nation's miners by continuing to cut the number of positions from coal mine safety enforcement. The administration's fiscal year 2007 budget continues this trend by proposing a cut of 27 more positions, for a total of an 18 percent reduction in staff since fiscal year 2001. And there are now 217 fewer mine safety inspectors than we had in 2001.

NIOSH warns that our Nation's mine safety inspectors are aging. Approximately 44 percent of the MSHA's underground coal mine inspectors employed in 2003 will be eligible for retirement by 2008. MSHA has not adequately prepared for their departure from the workforce.

This amendment will help us restore the critical funding needed to provide more mine safety inspectors and ensure that our Nation's miners are safe now and in the future, and I urge my colleagues to join me in supporting it.

Mr. GREGG. The next amendment in order, I believe, is the amendment of the Senator from Georgia.

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Mr. THUNE). The Senator from Georgia.

AMENDMENT NO. 3018

Mr. CHAMBLISS. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent 3018 be called up at this time.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will report.

The legislative clerk read as follows: The Senator from Georgia [Mr. CHAMBLISS], for Mr. DAYTON, for himself and Mr. CHAMBLISS, Ms. STABENOW, Mr. TALENT, Mr. OBAMA, Mr. HAGEL, Mr. NELSON of Ne-

braska, Ms. SNOWE, Mr. LEVIN, Mr. KERRY, Mr. SALAZAR, Mr. KOHL, Mr. BINGAMAN, Ms. MIKULSKI, Mr. BAUCUS, Mr. HARKIN, Mr. NELSON of Florida, Mr. BIDEN, and Mr. DURBIN, propose an amendment numbered 3018.

Mr. CHAMBLISS. I ask unanimous consent the reading of the amendment be dispensed with.

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

The amendment is as follows:

(Purpose: To restore funding for the Byrne/JAG grant program to the FY 2003 level of \$900 million, offset with an across the board cut to administrative expenses, travel, and consulting services)

On page 24, line 24, increase the amount by \$900,000,000.

On page 24, line 25, increase the amount by \$198,000,000.

On page 25, line 4, increase the amount by \$270,000,000.

On page 25, line 8, increase the amount by \$180,000,000.

On page 25, line 12, increase the amount by \$135,000,000.

On page 25, line 16, increase the amount by \$117,000,000.

On page 27, line 23, decrease the amount by \$900,000,000.

On page 27, line 24, decrease the amount by \$198,000,000.

On page 28, line 2, decrease the amount by \$270,000,000.

On page 28, line 5, decrease the amount by \$180,000,000.

On page 28, line 8, decrease the amount by \$135,000,000.

On page 28, line 11, decrease the amount by \$117,000,000.

Mr. CHAMBLISS. Mr. President, this amendment is offered by Senator DAYTON and myself, along with Senators TALENT, HAGEL, BEN NELSON, STABENOW, OBAMA, SNOWE, MIKULSKI, LEVIN, KOHL, KERRY, BINGAMAN, SALAZAR and BAUCUS. It restores funding to Fiscal year 2003 funding levels for the Byrne-JAG law-enforcement grant program. I have worked closely with Senator DAYTON on this issue for some time. Last year we succeeded in amending the CJS Appropriations bill in the Senate to restore funding to the 2003 level, only to see the funds thereafter again removed from the final appropriations bill.

The increasingly sophisticated techniques employed by drug traffickers requires a coordinated response by State, local and Federal law-enforcement. Multijurisdictional cooperation is an essential component of any national response.

The Byrne Justice Assistance Grants, have been an important part of this essential coordinated response. Programs funded by Byrne/JAG grants have shown dramatic results in reducing crime, particularly drug and firearm trafficking, gangs, pharmaceutical diversion, and organized crime. According to data compiled by the National Criminal Justice Association from self-reported metrics submitted by individual State Administering Agencies for the 2004 grant year, task forces funded in part by Byrne-JAG were responsible for: 54,050 weapons seize, 5,646 methamphetamine labs seize, \$250,000,000 in seized cash and personal

property, and massive quantities of narcotics removed from America's streets, including: 2.7 million grams of amphetamines/methamphetamine, 1.8 million grams of powder cocaine, 278,200 grams of crack, 73,300 grams of heroin, 75 million cultivated and non-cultivated marijuana plants, and 27 million kilograms of marijuana.

These are real results which have made America safer and contributed greatly to a 30 year reduction in violent crime in America.

Our amendment restores funding to fiscal year 2003 levels, and provides an offset from administrative expenditures. It is money well spent to protect Americans from criminal activities.

I appreciate greatly the cooperation of the Senator from Minnesota and his working together with me on this issue. He has been tireless in his efforts to make sure this amendment has been passed in the budget process and that we have it included in the appropriations process. While we were successful last year in the budget and in appropriations, in the end it lost this year. We will work harder together to make sure the full spending for the Byrne/JAG grants is included.

I yield to the Senator from Minnesota for such time as he may consume of the time remaining.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Minnesota.

Mr. DAYTON. Mr. President, I thank my distinguished colleague and friend, the distinguished Senator from Georgia, for his leadership on this amendment. It has been a privilege to work with him during the last couple of years. I appreciate his deep commitment to this program. It means a great deal because it demonstrates very clearly to our colleagues that this is a bipartisan commitment, as demonstrated by the cosponsors for our amendment.

I ask unanimous consent to add Senators HARKIN, ROCKEFELLER, NELSON of Florida, BIDEN, and DURBIN as cosponsors of this amendment.

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

Mr. DAYTON. Mr. President, I am astonished that there is any disagreement about the need for increased funding for the Byrne grants. This is one of the critical programs we fund through the Congress. I am amazed, as my colleague from Georgia said, that last year the amendment we passed together, which the Senate passed unanimously, was then basically gutted entirely in the conference committee at the insistence of the House and the administration. And, in fact, the funding for the Byrne grant program for this year is cut by one-fourth from what it was the previous year.

I have heard suggestions from people that this money is not well spent or that it is not needed in particular States. To them, I say, please, please, send your money back. Send it to Minnesota, send it to Georgia. I can assure Members the money in Minnesota is

extremely well used. It is absolutely necessary.

Let me quote, as evidence of that, Mr. Robert Bushman, president of the Minnesota Police and Peace Officers:

Without the support of the Byrne Justice Assistance Program funding, these drug task forces face reductions that will decrease their abilities and effectiveness. Should this occur, Minnesota's ability to fight the war on drugs would undoubtedly be diminished, with potentially dangerous consequences.

We talk of the need to protect this country from terrorists. I support that as strongly as anyone. We have terrorists operating on the streets of Minnesota and I suspect through this country every day. They are drug-dealing terrorists.

The methamphetamine epidemic which is plaguing my State—small communities, large cities, rural, urban, everywhere, drugs that I am told are coming in from Mexico in increased numbers, concentrations, and potency—is destroying the lives of children as young as 10 years old and senior citizens who are in their eighties. It is an equal opportunity destroyer.

These drug-dealing terrorists are operating with impunity because our local law enforcement officers do not have the resources, do not have the funds, do not have the numbers, do not have all the resources necessary to combat it and defeat it. That is shameful. This is a matter of priorities.

Again, I thank the Senator from Georgia. I commend the distinguished chairman of the Senate Committee on the Budget and the ranking member for their support. I hope we can have this pass as a voice vote, one that will demonstrate clearly to the House overwhelming support. I ask they do their utmost to preserve our position in conference so we can get this funding back up from its devastating cut last year to where it needs to be.

I yield the floor.

Mr. OBAMA. Mr. President, I know I speak for the entire Senate when I say we fully understand the importance of supporting our Nation's law enforcement officers and that we all want to do everything possible to make the safety of our communities one of our top budgetary priorities. This is why I rise today to support the amendment offered by my colleagues, Senators DAYTON and CHAMBLISS, to restore funding for the Byrne Justice Assistance grants program.

Unfortunately, once again, the President's budget request for fiscal year 2007 does not recognize this priority. In fact, it cuts the entire program for the second year in a row.

During Senate debate on the fiscal year 2006 Department of Commerce, Justice, Science and State Appropriations Act, I cosponsored a Byrne grant amendment with Senators DAYTON and CHAMBLISS that would have increased the funding for the JAG program to \$900 million. That amendment passed the Senate, but was stripped in conference.

I am disappointed that the President's fiscal year 2007 budget request once again cuts this important law enforcement program, a program that has suffered significant cuts in the last few years, despite providing real results and benefits around the country. For fiscal year 2005, the Byrne/JAG program was appropriated \$634 million, an overall cut of 12 percent for both programs from fiscal year 2004, and a 30 percent cut from the fiscal year 2003 funding.

As for fiscal year 2006, the President's budget request proposed the elimination of the Byrne/JAG program, but Congress refused. However, the Byrne/JAG program still received a \$218 million cut from fiscal year 2005 level.

This year, the President's budget request once again eliminates the Byrne/JAG program from the \$416 million—a 34 percent cut from fiscal year 2005 funding level—passed by Congress last year.

In Illinois, these cuts will have an immediate and direct effect on the ability of law enforcement to use Byrne grant funds to fight one of the gravest drug threats facing the nation today—methamphetamine.

In downstate Illinois, as in other rural communities around the country, there has been a tremendous surge in the manufacture, trafficking, and use of meth. Illinois State Police encountered 971 meth labs in Illinois in 2003, more than double the number uncovered in 2000. According to the Illinois Criminal Justice Information Authority, the quantity of meth seized by the Illinois State Police increased nearly tenfold between 1997 and 2003. This surge is placing enormous burdens on smalltown police forces which are suddenly being confronted with a large drug trade and the ancillary crimes that accompany that trade.

These police departments rely on Byrne grant funding to participate in meth task forces, such as the Metropolitan Enforcement Group or the Southern Illinois Enforcement Group. These task forces allow police in different communities to combine forces to battle a regional problem. There are a total of seven meth taskforce zones in Illinois, and these task forces have seen real results with Byrne grant funding.

In 2004, the Southern Illinois Enforcement Group accounted for more than 27 percent of the State's reported meth lab seizures, and in that same year alone, Byrne/JAG grants helped Illinois cops make over 1,200 meth-related arrests and seize nearly 350,000 grams of meth.

In towns like Granite City and Alton, cuts in Byrne grant funding will force them to make difficult choices about how to allocate already scarce police resources. Indeed, the chief of police in Granite City told my staff last year that cuts in Byrne/JAG grant funding would threaten the fundamental viability of his meth task force.

While meth use continues to grow, it is inconceivable to me that the President would propose another cut to the resources needed by law enforcement to fight crime and clean up the streets. To me, this is yet another example of the misplaced priorities of this administration.

We all know that we are facing a real budget crisis in this Nation. The deficit is growing, and we must enforce some fiscal discipline. But I don't believe we should be balancing the budget on the backs of our Nation's law enforcement officers who keep our families and communities safe every day.

I am disappointed by the President's fiscal year 2007 budget request and hope that the Senate will support my colleagues' amendment and find the necessary funding that local law enforcement needs.

Mr. KOHL. Mr. President, I rise in support of the Dayton amendment that increases funding for the Byrne grant program by \$900 million. This is a straightforward amendment worthy of unanimous support.

As most of us know, the Byrne grant program is a law enforcement funding program run by the Department of Justice. For 20 years, Byrne grants have funded State and local drug task forces, community crime prevention programs, substance abuse treatment programs, prosecution initiatives, and many other local crime control programs. Unfortunately, all of this funding is eliminated in the Senate budget resolution which follows the administration's budget proposal.

This marks the second year in a row in which President Bush has tried to kill the Byrne grant program. Given the Bush administration's attack on law enforcement funding, this proposed cut should come as no surprise. That said, the Byrne Justice Assistance Grant Program was appropriated a little more than \$416 million last year in formula funds—despite the administration's desire to eliminate it. But this amount is less than half of what the program received just a few short years ago.

Quite simply, funding for local law enforcement has taken a nosedive under this administration, and it is our local police chiefs and sheriffs who are feeling the pain of these cuts. Consider this: since President Bush has taken office, funding for local law enforcement in Wisconsin via the Byrne grant program has been cut by more than two-thirds. As recently as 2001, Wisconsin received more than \$9.2 million from the Byrne grant program. Thanks to this administration, Byrne grant funding has been steadily declining ever since, with Wisconsin receiving just a little under \$3 million last year. Nonetheless, President Bush wants to go even further and eliminate this funding entirely. Of course, this would leave Wisconsin law enforcement nothing from the Byrne program.

What do these cuts mean? It means law enforcement personnel are getting

laid off, and that translates to fewer cops patrolling the beat, fewer assistant district attorneys prosecuting cases, and fewer detectives working drug cases, to cite just a few examples. Talk to any police chief, sheriff, or prosecutor back in your home State and they will tell you that the Byrne program is the backbone of Federal Aid for local law enforcement. Do we really want to walk away from a program with twenty years of success supporting our local police chiefs, sheriffs, and district attorneys? We can and must block the elimination of the Byrne grant program. The Dayton amendment would achieve this by boosting Byrne grant funds back to the fiscal year 2003 level of \$900 million. I urge my colleagues to vote in favor of this amendment which supports our local law enforcement agencies.

Mr. GREGG. How much time remains on the measure?

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The sponsor has 8 minutes 20 seconds and the opposition has 15 minutes.

Mr. GREGG. I don't believe there is opposition. The Senator from Missouri is ready to go and then we go to the Senator from Washington for her amendment.

Mr. TALENT. I have no objection to the Senator from Washington going ahead because she was here.

Mr. GREGG. I don't think she is speaking on this amendment.

Mrs. MURRAY. I am ready to go with my amendment which follows this.

Mr. GREGG. Complete your statement on this topic.

Mr. TALENT. Mr. President, I rise to speak in support of the amendment offered by Senator CHAMBLISS and Senator DAYTON, to congratulate them on their efforts in this important area to restore funding for the justice assistance grants, which we have known in the past as the Byrne grants, and the local law enforcement program to the fiscal year 2003 level of \$900 million. I am pleased to be a cosponsor of the important amendment.

The amendment is almost identical to what was offered on the relevant appropriations bill last fall. That amendment passed unanimously. It raised the funding amount at that time to \$900 million. Unfortunately, as Senators have noted, the final appropriations more than stripped the amendment. It cut Byrne/JAG grants by 34 percent from fiscal year 2005 which resulted in only \$416 million for the program. It is even more unacceptable that the administration has zero funded the program in its 2007 budget request.

Justice assistance grants fund a number of local drug education and drug law enforcement programs. These include the crucial multijurisdictional task forces which are especially important in combating the rising rates of methamphetamine production and distribution in communities across the country. Over the past 5 years, funding for Byrne grants and the local law enforcement block grants, which again

are JAG predecessors, have been cut significantly despite the fact that State and local law enforcement have not only been saddled with the additional burden of homeland security but also with fighting the methamphetamine scourge that has grown in rural and urban communities across the Nation.

These grants are an essential component of statewide efforts to address violent crime and drugs in my State of Missouri. They funded vital projects in the State, including a multijurisdictional task force program that worked to integrate Federal, State, and local law enforcement agencies and prosecutors for the purpose of enhancing interagency coordination and intelligence.

To cut this funding would severely damage law enforcement's ability to address the methamphetamine crisis in Missouri and would place communities at risk across the country. That is why major law enforcement organizations, including the National Sheriffs Association, the National Police and Peace Officers, and the National Narcotics Coalition have all endorsed the amendment.

In short, the funding is crucial in fighting the Nation's war against methamphetamine and other drugs and necessary for keeping America's neighborhoods safe. So I congratulate Senator DAYTON and Senator CHAMBLISS for offering this amendment and urge the Senate to approve it.

With that, Mr. President, I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Is all time yielded back?

Mr. GREGG. Mr. President, I will claim the time in opposition and yield it back.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. All time is yielded back.

Mr. GREGG. Mr. President, I think Senator MURRAY is next to be recognized.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Washington.

AMENDMENT NO. 3063

Mrs. MURRAY. Mr. President, I send an amendment to the desk on behalf of myself, Senator SARBANES, and Senator LEAHY, and ask for its immediate consideration.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will report.

The legislative clerk read as follows: The Senator from Washington [Mrs. MURRAY], for herself, Mr. SARBANES, and Mr. LEAHY, proposes an amendment numbered 3063.

Mrs. MURRAY. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that reading of the amendment be dispensed with.

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

The amendment is as follows:

(Purpose: To restore funding for the Community Development Block Grant Program to the fiscal 2004 level by closing tax loopholes previously slated for elimination in Senate-passed legislation)

On page 3, line 13, increase the amount by \$26,000,000.

On page 3, line 15, increase the amount by \$416,000,000.

On page 3, line 17, increase the amount by \$546,000,000.

On page 3, line 19, increase the amount by \$182,000,000.

On page 3, line 21, increase the amount by \$65,000,000.

On page 4, line 1, increase the amount by \$26,000,000.

On page 4, line 2, increase the amount by \$416,000,000.

On page 4, line 3, increase the amount by \$546,000,000.

On page 4, line 4, increase the amount by \$182,000,000.

On page 4, line 6, increase the amount by \$65,000,000.

On page 4, line 13, increase the amount by \$1,300,000,000.

On page 5, line 4, increase the amount by \$26,000,000.

On page 5, line 6, increase the amount by \$416,000,000.

On page 5, line 8, increase the amount by \$546,000,000.

On page 5, line 10, increase the amount by \$182,000,000.

On page 5, line 12, increase the amount by \$65,000,000.

On page 17, line 22, increase the amount by \$1,300,000,000.

On page 17, line 23, increase the amount by \$26,000,000.

On page 18, line 3, increase the amount by \$416,000,000.

On page 18, line 7, increase the amount by \$546,000,000.

On page 18, line 11, increase the amount by \$182,000,000.

On page 18, line 15, increase the amount by \$65,000,000.

On page 53, line 1, increase the amount by \$1,300,000,000.

On page 53, line 2, increase the amount by \$26,000,000.

Mrs. MURRAY. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent to add as cosponsors to the amendment Senators REED, KENNEDY, LAUTENBERG, STABENOW, SCHUMER, MIKULSKI, DURBIN, ROCKEFELLER, and AKAKA.

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

Mrs. MURRAY. Mr. President, the amendment I have sent to the desk tonight, that we will vote on tomorrow, restores the \$1 billion cut in funding for Community Development Block Grant Programs that are assumed in the budget resolution that is before the Senate this week.

For more than 30 years, the Community Development Block Grant Program, known as the CDBG, has served as a tremendous catalyst for change in communities across the Nation. It has brought hope and opportunity to families and to residents and to communities everywhere we look in this country. For both cities that are urban and rural, CDBG has supported efforts to expand affordable housing. It invests in neighborhoods, and it supports local economic development projects that have literally revitalized communities.

But tonight, as we look at this budget resolution, that future, that hope is really being diminished. The actual opportunity that so many families have seen is threatened by the work that will not be done if this budget resolution passes in its current form.

The budget resolution we are now considering assumes the President's proposed cap on domestic discretionary spending. And that includes a \$1 billion cut to the Community Development Block Grant Program. By the way, that is on top of a \$500 million cut that this program received last year.

Now, every one of my colleagues knows how successful this CDBG Program is. You can see its impact in every community back home. Over the past 4 months, I have had the opportunity to talk with mayors and housing authority officials and other local leaders to see how they are using CDBG, and there are some great examples I want to share with the Senate tonight.

The city of Spokane, WA, used \$220,000 in CDBG funds and helped remodel and expand the Native Health Clinic and Community Center. This is a clinic in Spokane that provides medical care, substance abuse treatment, mental health and counseling services to economically disadvantaged children, youth, and adults. This money made a difference.

In Vancouver, WA, in the other corner of my State, the Vancouver Housing Authority used CDBG funds to help fund the Esther Short Commons. This is a mixed-use, mixed-income building with 160 units of affordable workforce housing. It is home to businesses in the Vancouver Farmers Market. That building is a very important part of downtown Vancouver's redevelopment. Those funds made a critical difference.

In Bremerton, in Kitsap County, Kitsap Community Resources is using \$950,000 in CDBG funding to help build a new facility that will serve the needs of low-income people in Bremerton and Kitsap County. That facility houses a WIC clinic and employment and education programs and is a great addition to the city's efforts to revitalize its downtown. It is a great investment of Federal dollars.

And in Seattle, the Delridge Neighborhoods Development Association received \$850,000 in CDBG and home funds from the city of Seattle and developed the Croft Place Townhomes. That is a development that is now providing good housing for 21 families at or below the 30- and 50-percent of median income, including families who were previously homeless.

These are just a few examples of how these Federal dollars leverage a difference in our home States. I know every one of my Senate colleagues has heard from their mayors and their communities about the importance of the flexibility of this money and the critical difference it makes in the lives of so many.

As I have said on this floor many times, if we want to be strong abroad, we have to be strong at home. And investing in our infrastructure, bringing new economic revitalization, making sure that affordable housing is available for families, is an absolutely essential part of making sure our country is strong at home.

Any one of us can tell you that if a family does not have a place to call home, then they are not going to be strong, and they are not going to feel their family has opportunity in the future. If you are a young woman trying to raise a family alone, you know you need to have a place to live or those kids are not going to do well in school and your opportunity to send them to college is minimized.

Every one of us knows that a senior citizen who does not have a place to call home that is convenient to services they need—whether it is their doctor or physical activities—is not going to be able to have the dignity they deserve at the end of their life.

And every one of us knows that for families who cannot afford housing in many communities across our States—my State and across the Nation—if they do not have a place to call home that is close to a job, they are not going to be economically self-sufficient.

These CDBG funds have made an incredible difference in people having the security of housing, a place to call home, and financial stability. At the same time, they are bringing economic development, new jobs, new businesses, new economic revitalization, to many of our communities.

Cutting these programs by \$1 billion is a disservice to those families, but it is a tragedy for this Nation because we cannot be strong if our families are feeling insecure at home because of the lack of housing. These dollars, we all know, make an incredible difference. This program has changed lives and changed communities.

Now, tomorrow our colleagues on the other side are going to offer an amendment they say will do the same thing. First of all, I thank them for recognizing the budget resolution is not sufficient and does not do the job when it comes to CDBG. But I will call them on how they are going to fund it. Once again, we will see them funded with funny money, saying: We are going to take it from section 920.

Well, already today, this Senate has gone on record taking \$6.5 billion from the so-called 920 fund. And it is not there. Why do I know this? Because last year, at this same exact time, Senators on the other side offered an amendment to restore funding for CDBG, and come October, November, and December, when we were doing appropriations bills, this Senate cut half a billion dollars from CDBG. Why? Because the money offered in the amendment on their side was not real.

The same thing is going to happen tomorrow. Senators will have an opportunity to pass a phony amendment and to go home and say to their constituents: Oh, I voted for CDBG. But the bill will come due in the fall, when we do an appropriations bill and that money is not available, and we will see CDBG cut dramatically.

As ranking member on the TTHUD Subcommittee that has the funding on

this, I know where this is going to go. I urge my colleagues, and I will tell this country, if you vote for the Murray amendment, you are asking for real dollars. You are telling your communities you are going to be there to help families with affordable housing and communities with redevelopment. If you vote for the amendment from the other side offered by Senator SANTORUM, you are going to get a nice vote for the day. All Senators will support it. But all it does is say, politically: Yes, I think CDBG is good. It will not provide one single additional dollar when we come to actually appropriating these funds.

So this is extremely critical. Everywhere I go in neighborhoods across my State, I see the insecurity of so many families. They are worried about their jobs. They are worried about whether their kids can go to college. They are worried about whether their pension is going to be there. They worry about whether transportation infrastructure is going to be capable of getting them to their job or back home again. Part of that insecurity, and the most basic part of that insecurity, is housing.

That is what these CDBG funds do. Every Senator on this floor knows it. When you invest in our infrastructure, whether it is housing or transportation, especially through funds such as this, you are creating new jobs, new economic development, and revitalizing communities in ways that I have seen no other dollars do.

Mr. President, tomorrow, again, we will have an opportunity to do a political move if we vote for the Santorum amendment and say we are going to take money from this 920 fund that does not exist, or we can raise the cap, and then, when we are here next fall, actually fund CDBG at a promised level that this Senate will go on record on. It is a critical amendment. I urge its adoption by my colleagues tomorrow.

Mr. President, how much time do I have remaining?

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Washington has 5 minutes 20 seconds.

AMENDMENT NO. 3054

Mrs. MURRAY. Mr. President, I will take one additional minute and then yield back my time. But I did want to say, while I had the floor, that I added myself as a cosponsor to the Menendez port security amendment. This is a critical amendment. It is an issue I have been working on since September 11. I have joined with Senator COLLINS to introduce the GreenLane Maritime Cargo Security Act.

I think what we have all learned over the past week is that our ports and our cargo containers are a huge hole in our Nation's security. We cannot fix it with more rhetoric from this floor. We can fix it if we fund it adequately. This Senate will have an opportunity to vote on that tomorrow. I urge my colleagues to support that amendment when it comes to the floor.

Thank you, Mr. President. I will yield back my time in order to move to the next amendment.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from New Hampshire.

AMENDMENT NO. 3063

Mr. GREGG. Mr. President, in a second we are going to go to the Senator from Ohio, who is going to speak relative to the resolution. But I want to quickly respond.

The Senator from Washington has proposed an amendment which raises the cap, and it raises taxes. There is a better way to do it. The better way is Senator SANTORUM's amendment, which will come tomorrow, which says we identify CDBG as a priority, and within the caps we find the money for CDBG recognizing we may have to do an across-the-board cut of other accounts. That is the right way to do this. It sets priorities.

The Senator from Washington is the ranking member on the appropriating committee which will have responsibility for this. Historically that committee has always funded this account. They have always found this to be a priority, and they have always found the money to do it. I do not think that history is going to change this year.

I do think Senator SANTORUM has the right way to do this. We should not be passing a tax-and-spend amendment, which is what this amounts to.

At this point, I will yield back the remainder of the time in opposition to the Murray amendment and yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Ohio.

Mr. VOINOVICH. Mr. President, I rise today to speak not only on the fiscal year 2007 budget resolution that has been placed before this body but also on the environment in which Chairman GREGG has had to write the resolution.

First of all, I thank our chairman for his yeoman effort to bring this budget to the floor. Chairman GREGG has produced a very strong effort under difficult circumstances.

For once, I am excited to see the chairman's limitation on the use of "emergency" designations for the fiscal year 2007 budget. While utilizing "emergency" spending may be necessary, Senator GREGG has put in place a process to force us to reflect on what should be deemed as an "emergency" and consequently sidestep the regular budgetary process versus what should be moved as part of the regular appropriations process. In other words, all of us feel that in terms of our emergency spending, much of it should be actually in the regular budget resolution rather than considered as emergency spending.

I also applaud the chairman's inclusion of a new point of order against direct spending that would apply once it was determined that the general fund would contribute more than 45 percent of total Medicare outlays. This new point of order serves to highlight what all of us know is decimating future

budgets—the impending costs of Medicare and other entitlements.

While I respect the efforts required in producing this budget, and the effort to try to comply with the cap that the President issued, it is the view of this Senator that the budget falls short of meeting the current pressing needs of our country, and those sentiments are reflected in some of the amendments that have and will later be offered to the budget.

Each of us must be able to justify our actions on behalf of our constituents. During my first biennial budget, as Governor of Ohio, I had to go back to the budget four separate times to find additional areas to cut. But after cutting program after program, I could not justifiably say I provided for the public good by slashing more. Indeed, I made the difficult choice to ask the legislature to increase taxes at the margins. After keeping spending to its lowest growth in 30 years, we were able to reduce taxes my last 3 years in office. But we did take care of the needs of the people of the State of Ohio.

I am not calling for raising revenues at this time. However, I am calling attention to what I view as a lackadaisical attitude toward what I believe is a freight train bearing down on our fiscal house. I voted for tax cuts in 2001, 2002, and 2003. In 2001, we were projecting surpluses beyond the horizon, I think a \$5.4 trillion surplus in 10 years. We believed those surplus funds were better utilized in what I called the three-legged stool of fiscal responsibility—pay down the debt, spending restraint, and returning excess funds to households so as not to be unwisely spent.

In 2002, I supported additional tax cuts to stimulate our economy in the aftermath of September 11. And in 2003, our country was still reeling from September 11, the war against terror, and corporate accounting scandals. We needed additional stimulative medicine. I fought to ensure that the amount we passed was the right amount. I said that \$350 billion in tax cuts would be enough to get the economy moving, and I believe that it worked.

However, the world does not stand still, and we now face different challenges. Since that time, the economy has grown. The Nation's GDP grew by 4 percent in both 2003 and 2004 and 3.5 percent in 2005. Unemployment has dropped since we enacted the tax cuts from 6.6 percent to the current 4.8 percent. I wish it were as good in the State of Ohio as that, but overall that is what it is. While the tax cut stimulation worked, making these tax cuts permanent should be subject to pay-go. I am sorry today that we didn't have the votes to do that.

While the economy has been renewed, our Nation has had to pay for the extraordinary expenses of Iraq and Afghanistan, as well as responding to our concern for homeland security for

which, since 2001, we have tripled governmentwide spending related to non-defense homeland security, and on top of that add in the expenses of Hurricane Katrina. What I am saying is that with the 22 agencies we brought together after 2001, 180,000 people, we have tripled the budget of those agencies since 2001. While we are dealing with all these expenses, we are ignoring the 800-pound gorilla in the room: the impending tidal wave of entitlements coming due. In his State of the Union Address, President Bush acknowledged that:

The retirement of the baby boom generation will put unprecedented strains on the federal government. By 2030, spending for Social Security, Medicare, and Medicaid will be almost 60 percent of the entire federal budget. And that will present future Congresses with impossible choices—staggering tax increases, immense deficits, or deep cuts in every category of spending.

I am pleased that the President decided to focus on what some have called the demographic tsunami coming our way and the necessity to reform entitlement programs before it hits. The 77 million baby boomers coming into Social Security and Medicare Programs will put the Federal budget under unprecedented pressure. Chairman GREGG took the courageous step to take on entitlement spending through the Deficit Reduction Act of 2005, and I supported those efforts. However, this was just the tip of the iceberg. I would support greater efforts to continue to debate on entitlement reform so that we may make wise decisions and not decisions stemming from unneeded dawdling and delay.

No matter which way you look at it, if we leave reform of entitlement programs to future Congresses to handle as well as a mountain of national debt to pay off, it will have devastating consequences on the economy and our children.

We owe it to the American people to let them know the true condition of our Federal budget. Currently, governmental expenditures absorb about 20 percent of the GDP, while our tax receipts are only 17.5 percent of GDP. The debt has grown from about \$5.5 trillion when I first came into office in 1999 to a staggering \$8.1 trillion today. That is a 47-percent increase. The debt service alone threatens to gobble up revenues in the near future.

According to the CBO, in fiscal year 2005, interest on the public debt grew more rapidly than any other major spending category, rising 14 percent above the fiscal year 2004 level. Without major spending cuts, tax increases, or both, the national debt will grow more than \$3 trillion through 2010 to \$11.2 trillion according to GAO—nearly \$38,000 for every man, woman, and child in the United States. The interest alone will cost \$561 billion in 2010, the same as today's budget for the Pentagon. Think of that.

However, we all know that the real problem is our long-term debt. I might mention in terms of our interest costs,

if the central banks of foreign countries that are investing in our debt decide to redo their portfolios, we are really going to be in trouble because we will see our interest costs spike dramatically.

By the General Accounting Office's own estimates, about 35 years from now, when my grandchildren have their own children to care for, balancing the budget will require actions as large as cutting total Federal spending by 60 percent or raising taxes to 2½ times today's levels. Think about that. And if we are going to be honest with the American people about the shape of our fiscal house, we should be honest on budgeting. Accrual accounting is what we require private businesses to use in presenting their finances to give an honest snapshot. On an accrual basis, our Federal deficit for fiscal year 2005 was \$760 billion, representing an increase of \$144 billion or 23 percent over the previous year's deficit of \$616 billion. That is a stark difference from the \$319 billion deficit that was reported. That is what we told the American people: It is \$319 billion. Under this convenient Government accounting, it made it look as if we had a decrease in the deficit of \$93 billion from the previous year's deficit of \$412 billion.

Frankly, if the Treasury Department already has the numbers, why don't we use the accrual method of accounting for our budget? I want to remind the American people again, as well as my colleagues in the Senate, that the true deficit in 2005 was \$760 billion—an increase of \$144 billion or 23 percent over the previous year's deficit.

I have also introduced a bill called the Truth in Budgeting Act, cosponsored by Senator CONRAD, which stops the Federal Government from using surplus trust fund revenues to hide the true size of the Government's deficit and highlighting the true size of the Federal debt by forcing the Government to increase borrowing from the public to cover general fund expenses. It is important to have an honest accounting of where we are and where we are headed from a fiscal perspective. We need to change the current Federal accounting and reporting model and budgeting systems to better reflect the Government's true financial condition. This will bring about greater transparency and accountability in Government operations and really let the American people know what is happening here in Congress.

Additionally, if we are to be honest about the budget, we should make reasonable assumptions. The administration's budget assumes enactment of more than a dozen user fees totaling \$3.2 billion in 2007 to offset discretionary spending increases. The user fee proposals in the budget include an increase in airline passenger security fees, changing some veterans' enrollment fees for medical care—which, by the way, was rejected by the Senate today 100 to 0—increased TRICARE en-

rollment fees and deductibles for military retirees under 65, regulatory fees for explosives, and Food Safety and Inspection Service user fees. These proposals have been rejected by Congress in the past and are unlikely to materialize. What they will do is, because that money is not going to come in, it is just going to squeeze other priorities.

Additionally, we are not being honest about the Medicare physician fee schedules. Physicians are reimbursed for treatment of Medicare patients through that fee schedule. Right now, physicians are facing another 5 percent decrease in their Medicare payment on January 1, 2007. Reducing physician payments will have a direct negative impact on seniors' access to quality health care. Last year, we responsibly offset funding to avoid a scheduled 4-percent reduction. We included a freeze in their payment rates in the deficit reduction bill. It has become evident that we must face this annually, but never truly budget for it. In other words, we know that we can't cut the reimbursement for doctors in this country for Medicare patients, but we just assume that we are going to do it, at least the administration does, knowing full well that Congress is going to have to come in with that additional money—in this case, \$1.5 billion—and that means that there is just going to be less money for other priorities that we have on our domestic side of the budget.

The administration's budget also accounts for an extension of AMT relief in 2006 but not for 2007 or the rest of the 5-year budget window. The administration says that a permanent solution to the AMT issue should be enacted as part of tax reform. However, the likelihood of Congress passing tax reform this year, as much as I would like to see it since I offered the legislation calling for the blue ribbon panel on tax reform, is slim to none. I feel bad that the administration has backed away from tax reform as a priority since simplifying the Code to make it more simple, fair, and honest could, by some estimates, save taxpayers \$260 billion in costs associated with preparing their taxes. That is across the country. Saving that cost would be a real tax reduction and not cause the Treasury to lose one dime of lost revenue.

The question we must ask ourselves is, if we don't have enough revenue to pay our current bills, how in the world are we going to prepare to cover much larger future promises? The simple fact is that we can't have it all. We need to set priorities. We need to make choices; otherwise, our children will end up paying for it.

Our forefathers recognized the inequity of passing on debt to future generations. George Washington in his farewell address stated:

[likewise avoid] the accumulation of debt, not only by shunning occasions of expense, but by vigorous exertion in time of peace to discharge the debts which unavoidable wars

may have occasioned, not ungenerously throwing upon posterity the burden which we ourselves ought to bear.

In other words, throwing the cost of a war on to the next generation. Frankly, if we are willing to be honest with ourselves and make the hard decisions, the last thing we should be doing is talking about making tax cuts permanent. If we are to be honest and forthright with the American people, we should be asking them to pay for the extraordinary cost of the war and improving our homeland security. Because if we are not willing to do so, it will not be Members of this body who are going to be paying the tab. We will be gone. Instead, repayment of the debt will land squarely in the lap of our children and grandchildren. I don't know any parents or grandparents who would think it was a good idea to run up huge personal debts that their children and grandchildren would have to pay at the time of their death, but that is exactly what we are doing with our Federal budget—passing it on to our children and grandchildren. The major reason I sought reelection to this venerable body was to make sure that was not going to be our legacy or the legacy I left my three children and seven grandchildren and my fellow Americans.

According to the administration's fiscal year 2000 budget, mandatory spending will take up 54 percent of the \$2.8 trillion budget; net interest we will have to pay on the debt will eat up 9 percent; 18 percent would be allocated for the defense discretionary budget, leaving 19 percent for all the discretionary programs or about one-fifth of the budget. And what we have been doing the last couple of years is flat-funding discretionary spending, the real increases in this budget. People say: You are spending money. The money is being spent on the war and on homeland security. And in terms of discretionary nondefense spending, we basically have flat-funded that.

As I quoted, by the administration's conservative estimate, the programs on auto-pilot, such as Social Security, Medicare, and Medicaid, will account for over 60 percent of the budget by 2030. That does not leave much for all other governmental obligations we have. We are putting the squeeze on just one-fifth of the budget while the rest sees large increases.

We must make entitlement reform a priority, but in the meantime, we should not pretend that by flat funding or cutting nondefense, nonhomeland security needs or programs that work and serve a critical governmental purpose will get the job done. Some of these programs actually save the Government money by benefiting the economy or avoiding further costs down the road.

The point is that in this global economy, we are confronted with the most competitive environment our Nation has ever faced, at least in my lifetime. Anyone who has read Tom Friedman's

book "The World is Flat" or read the National Academy of Sciences report "Rising Above the Gathering Storm" gets it. They get it.

In the big picture of where the United States stands, it is clear to me that the economic framework of our Nation needs to be refurbished. There are certain investments and responsibilities that this Senator believes we can no longer ignore and must address. We should be rebuilding an infrastructure of competitiveness so that future generations can compete in that global marketplace and have at least the same opportunity to enjoy our standard of living and quality of life.

We cannot remain competitive without a workforce full of educated and motivated young Americans. As a nation, we have to invest in our children and enable them to fully develop their God-given talents in order to compete in a knowledge-based global economy. This means we have to place more emphasis on careers in science, engineering, and math. And right now we are not getting the job done.

Globally, the United States ranks 17th in proportion to college aid population earning science and engineering degrees, down from third place several decades ago. In fact, the percentage of 24-year-olds with science or engineering degrees is now higher in many industrialized nations, including England, South Korea, Germany, Australia, Singapore, Japan, and Canada. All produce a higher percentage of science and engineering graduates than the United States.

The National Academy of Sciences released a report this fall that recommends action that the Federal Government should take to enhance our ability to compete in our global economy. The recommendations range from those that will improve our Nation's math and science coursework and establish a workforce of qualified teachers who will prepare our students for futures in highly innovative careers, to the crucial need for energy independence, and an investment in research.

I am encouraged the President recognized that America needs to wake up and build a new infrastructure for competitiveness, and I applaud his American competitiveness agenda.

Also, I have joined a number of my colleagues as an original cosponsor of the Protecting America's Competitive Edge Act of 2006, PACE. This legislation is aimed at improving our Nation's competitiveness through advancements in and emphasis on math and science education. Like the President's initiative, this legislation is comprehensive in its aim to increase our Nation's research capacity, emphasize strong science and math education, but it will require a national commitment to reengage our Nation's youth in science and math, similar to our response in the late 1950s to Russia's launch of Sputnik and the ensuing space race.

In order to implement PACE, it is going to take \$10 billion a year for the

next 10 years, including making the research and development tax credit permanent. That money is not in this budget. That money is not in this budget.

Funding for nuclear engineering programs truly showcases the disconnect between our stated priorities and the budget. The administration and numerous Members in this body are supportive of the recommendations in the National Academy's report, which also highlighted the importance of moving toward greater energy independence. However, the administration's budget zeroes out funding for the Department of Energy's University Nuclear Reactor Infrastructure and Education Assistance Program from \$27 million in fiscal year 2006—it is a relatively innocuous amount within the context of a \$2.6 trillion budget. But with our renewed focus on our Nation's competitiveness and the need to address our education and energy policies, it doesn't make sense to eliminate this program. That is what we see all the way through this budget.

Additionally, beyond our human capital infrastructure needs, our physical infrastructure needs are facing a real dilemma as well. In other words, we have to build that infrastructure of competitiveness. We are not getting it done. We desperately need to provide increased funding for the Army Corps of Engineers, including funding for levees and additional civil engineers. This Nation has an aging national water resources infrastructure. If we continue to ignore the upkeep, the deterioration of locks, dams, flood control projects, and navigation channels, we risk disruptions in waterborne commerce, decreased protection against floods, as we saw in Katrina, and other environmental damage.

I have been concerned about the backlog of unfunded Corps projects since I was chairman of the Subcommittee on Transportation and Infrastructure in 1999 and 2000 on the Environment and Public Works Committee. When I arrived in the Senate in 1999, the operation and maintenance deficit was about \$250 million. Today it is \$1.2 billion. In 2001, there was \$38 billion in active resources projects waiting to be funded. Today there is \$41 billion in active construction general projects that need to be funded. This budget is only going to increase this backlog.

This budget proposes a 33-percent cut in the Corps construction budget and a 42-percent cut in the Corps investigations budget. Currently, the Corps is able to function only at 50-percent capacity at the rate of funding proposed by this budget. Listen to this: Currently the Corps is able to function only at 50-percent capacity at the rate of funding proposed by this budget.

Can you believe this, after the lesson we learned from Hurricane Katrina? We had people testify before the Environment and Public Works Committee who were a part of the American Civil

Engineers Society saying that if we had properly funded the levees in New Orleans, they would have survived Katrina.

Let's talk about our highways. According to the Federal Highway Administration 2002 Conditions and Performance Report, \$106.9 billion through 2020 is needed to maintain and improve our highways and bridges. We are just not getting the job done.

Community development block grants, which was spoken to by Senator MURRAY earlier, is another example. These grants support State and local government-directed neighborhood revitalization, housing rehabilitation, and economic development activities. I know in my time being mayor of the city of Cleveland how important CDBG is in terms of providing funds to local government officials so they can do housing rehabilitation, neighborhood revitalization, and economic development. I refer to it as the yeast that raises the dough. It is probably the best leveraged Federal program we have for our cities in the United States of America.

By the way, it is a program that was put in place by Richard Nixon when he was President of the United States.

When we fail to recognize our country's needs, it is at the expense of our seed corn programs that are essential to the future of our country. We must not be pennywise and pound foolish while we consider this budget. While cuts and reforms need to be made, it should not be made at the expense of programs that our country relies on, such as these.

It is too bad that we don't have to balance our budget. That would be beautiful. The thing that drives me crazy about this place, after being mayor for 10 years and doing 10 budgets, and being Governor and having to do four budgets when we had to balance our budget, is that we are irresponsible when it comes to budgeting.

I recall as Governor, as I mentioned earlier, we had to raise taxes at the margin to balance the budget and respond to critical needs of Ohio. It was through cuts in spending and making very difficult choices that we balanced the budget and accumulated over \$1 billion in our rainy day fund. It was through these efforts—in other words, we tried to do everything, and at the end, through what I call the strong-management, good-economy bonus, we reduced our State income tax 3 years in a row, including almost 10 percent in 1998.

It is difficult for this Senator to believe that we have the ability to fund the war on terror, respond to homeland security needs, pay for emergencies such as Hurricane Katrina, deal with explosions in entitlement costs, guarantee our country will have the infrastructure of competitiveness to battle the global marketplace, balance budgets, pay down the debt by focusing our attention solely on the discretionary, nondefense, nonhomeland security part

of the budget—it doesn't make sense, and it is not fair. It is not fair, and I think the American people understand what I am talking about.

The problem is that Congress has not told the truth about what we can and cannot afford. We want to have it all but don't want to pay for it. America's families don't live like that, nor should we. I learned this difficult lesson while serving as mayor of Cleveland for 10 years and Governor of Ohio for 8 years. It is time that we in Congress learned that lesson as well.

Yesterday, I sat in the Presiding Officer's chair listening to Chairman GREGG and Senator CONRAD debate. I was heartened to hear these two budgeteers agree that we have to take on the debt on a bipartisan basis, and sooner rather than later. I wish to be associated with those sentiments, and I hope both sides of the aisle will promptly realize the dilemma and heed the words of Senators GREGG and CONRAD. We can get the job done. We can be responsible, but we have to do it on a bipartisan basis.

When I had my problems when I was Governor of Ohio, I had the strongest leader we ever had, a Democrat, in the House of Representatives. He had been there for 24 years. We named a building after him while he was alive. In fact, I had to genuflect to his statue every day when I went to my office at the State House. He was a very powerful guy. We had problems. I went to him and said: Vern, we have to do something about this. He said: Partner, OK, but you have to give a little, we will have to give a little. We spent 3 weeks and came up with a program to get the job done.

The President recognized this. One of the things I felt very bad about last year is we spent all this time on dealing with Social Security when I knew right from the beginning if it wasn't going to be on a bipartisan basis, it would go nowhere, and it went nowhere. The President wasted a lot of time—I give him credit for pointing out the fact that we had a problem with Social Security, but it had to start out on a bipartisan basis.

I was so delighted, I got up and clapped when the President said: We have to put together a commission of the best and brightest to tackle the problem of entitlements so we can move toward fiscal sanity.

We have to do that. The American people are looking at what we are doing here and they are saying: Put aside your partisan differences; come together for the benefit of our country, for our children, for our grandchildren.

I am concerned about this budget, but I am more concerned about the direction we are going. Our problem is that we are unwilling to pay for things or do without them. Unless we wake up to that fact, we are in very deep trouble.

MORNING BUSINESS

Mr. VOINOVICH. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that 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.

MAGGIE INOUE

Mr. KENNEDY. Mr. President, we join our dear friend and colleague, Senator INOUE, in remembering his wonderful wife and life-long companion, Margaret Inouye.

She faced her cancer as she lived her life—with dignity, grace, a ready smile, and a firm resolve.

I read DAN INOUE's own words about her passing. He said,

It was a most special blessing to have had Maggie in my life for 58 years. She was my inspiration, and all that I have accomplished could not have been done without her at my side. We were a team.

Senator INOUE and Maggie came to the Senate just months after I did. It has been one of my greatest pleasures to serve with DAN over these many years. He is our rock, our steady hand, our wise counselor. And we know that in no small measure, Maggie made that possible.

Our thoughts and our prayers are with DAN and his son Kenny as they face this great loss. DAN, we love you, we care for you, and we look forward to your return as you continue to serve the people of the State you love.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Rhode Island.

Mr. CHAFEE. I thank the Chair. I share Senator KENNEDY's thoughts of prayer and peace for Senator INOUE. My thoughts are with the Inouye family.

Mr. CARPER. Mr. President, I came to the floor today to talk about our budget deficit and a couple things we ought to be doing to turn it around to begin reducing it. Before I do that, I want to extend my sympathy and the sympathy of the people of Delaware to Senator INOUE and his family on the death of Maggie Inouye yesterday.

For those who have lost loved ones recently, those who have lost parents, those who have lost spouses, they may have just the beginning of a feeling for the tough time that our colleague is going through. To those of us who were privileged to know his wife, she was a wonderful, vibrant, and valiant woman and a great partner for him right to the end.

So to DAN INOUE, our deepest sympathy. It was a privilege to know your wife.

LOCAL LAW ENFORCEMENT ENHANCEMENT ACT OF 2005

Mr. SMITH. Mr. President, I rise today to speak about the need for hate crimes legislation. Each Congress, Senator KENNEDY and I introduce hate