

Republican politics. They go beyond the fights that we may have on the floor of the Senate as late as this afternoon. Those beliefs, those strong feelings about the directions this country should take, are every bit as enduring as the hard South Dakota granite. And, like that granite, they will endure long after we are gone.

PRIORITIES AND DEFICIT REDUCTION

Mr. DASCHLE. Mr. President, relating to the debate that we began this morning, let me say that I hope we can renew our debate about priorities as we approach the last week of this particular session before the Easter recess.

It was a debate about priorities and a debate about the need for deficit reduction and a debate about how we get there.

An amendment that I offered today achieves exactly the same level of deficit reduction as the level proposed in the committee-reported rescissions bill, but it does so without damaging our children's educational and health care needs.

What the amendment was designed to do, without adding one penny to the deficit, in a way that was completely paid for, was to create a better balance between the requirements laid out in the original rescissions package and the objectives that we all have with regard to distributing the burden of deficit reduction fairly. On the list of priorities we say we all share, education is high. But certainly that was not reflected to the degree that it should be if, indeed, our priorities are as we say they are.

We all had hoped we could have a good debate this afternoon with regard to those priorities, with regard to our Nation's values, the values of families, but we were not given that opportunity, and for that I am very deeply disappointed.

The majority leader, as is his right, offered a second-degree amendment that really does not address this issue of education and the needs of working families. Obviously, there are many ways in which to continue to work at meaningful deficit reduction, but that really was not the sole purpose of the amendment on our side.

What we were attempting to say is that you can have good and constructive debate about how we ought to reduce the deficit, and that part of that debate ought to be about the values and the tremendous priorities that we have invested in in the past, with regard to education and children.

We wanted to call upon the Senate to reconsider how we treat working families with children. The response, unfortunately, that we received was a proposal to gut our amendment and have the bill pulled entirely.

I do not know what the other side may be afraid of here, but it seems to me that support for our amendment is very loud and very clear. The support,

again announced on the west side of the Capitol this morning in very clear terms, was that we ought to recognize that we have priorities that stand not as mutually exclusive but clearly in tandem—meaningful deficit reduction at the same time we have meaningful investments in the priorities that this country ought to insist upon.

Since we stood up for working families of 1 million children, telephones have been ringing off the hook in the Senate offices across the Capitol. Our amendment is building support because it addresses the need to reduce the deficit at the same time it restores funds that are needed for working families.

If this amendment is not adopted, America's children will pay the price in terms of their education, their housing, their health care, and their child care. We need to invest in our future, and our amendment says going after children's programs first is wrong.

We also need to ensure that we properly fund the Federal Emergency Management Administration so that we meet emergency needs caused by recent natural disasters. Our amendment does that. It is also completely paid for. It restores the \$1.3 billion simply by taking what is viewed as excessive funding for FEMA in the years beyond 1996 and dedicating that money, as it should be dedicated, to the investment in children.

The total rescission under this substitute is identical to the level in the pending Senate bill—\$15.1 billion, including the money allocated to the Shelby amendment.

The substitute provides FEMA with exactly the same level of funding as the House bill—\$5.36 billion.

If our colleagues dispute the level of funding in our amendment, they are also disputing the Republican leadership in the other body, because the figure is identical on both sides of the Capitol.

One million children should not be left out or ignored as we continue the duel on priorities that we have here—priorities that recognize their interests, future needs, and their interest in inheriting a country that is not as deficit-laden as it is today.

So we can do both. I hope that as we work through this rescissions bill, and certainly through the budget priorities we will be debating as we consider a budget resolution later on, we can recognize the need to do both in a meaningful and bipartisan way. That is what this amendment attempts to do. That is what I hope the Senate will do. That is what I hope we have the opportunity to do next week.

WAS CONGRESS IRRESPONSIBLE? THE VOTERS HAVE SAID YES

Mr. HELMS. Mr. President, as of the close of business yesterday, Thursday, March 30, the Federal debt stood at \$4,852,914,736,954.80. On a per capita basis, every man, woman, and child in America owes \$18,421.75 as his or her share of that debt.

MESSAGES FROM THE PRESIDENT

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

EXECUTIVE MESSAGES REFERRED

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

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

PETITIONS AND MEMORIALS

The following petitions and memorials were laid before the Senate and were referred or ordered to lie on the table as indicated:

POM-73. A joint resolution adopted by the Legislature of the State of Idaho; to the Committee on Finance.

“HOUSE JOINT MEMORIAL NO. 1

“Whereas, the 1967 United States Supreme Court decision in the case of ‘National Bellas Hess, Inc. v. Dept. of Revenue,’ (386 U.S. 753 (1967)) denies states the authority to require the collection of sales and use taxes by out-of-state mail order firms that have no physical presence in the taxing state, even though they solicit and obtain significant sales there through the mail and common carriers; and

“Whereas, in its 1992 decision in ‘Quill Corp. v. North Dakota,’ (U.S.S.C. Doc. No. 91-194), the United States Supreme Court clearly indicated that the Congress of the United States can, consistent with the U.S. Constitution, enact legislation authorizing direct marketers to collect state and local use taxes; and

“Whereas, the inability of states like Idaho to require certain direct marketers and other businesses not physically present, but selling to their residents, to collect sales and use tax places many community businesses that support state and local governments at a substantial competitive disadvantage; and

“Whereas, restrictions on collecting such taxes result in a loss of billions of dollars nationally and millions of dollars in Idaho of legally due sales and use tax revenue; and

“Whereas, according to a recent report released by the Advisory Commission on Intergovernmental Relations, the revenue potential to all states from untaxed interstate mail order sales is projected to be \$4.57 billion in 1994 and that the loss of tax revenue to the State of Idaho in the same report is estimated to be \$13.4 million; and

“Whereas, organizations representing local retailers, state and local officials and public service recipient groups are working to achieve enactment of federal legislation that would authorize states to require direct marketers to collect state sales and use taxes; and

“Whereas, in the two decades since the ‘National Bellas Hess’ decision, improvements in communications technology and transportation distribution systems have changed the nature and extent of interstate sales and the recent and projected rapid