

and we expect to see you again next year.

Mr. President, we joke a little bit about this, but I think some of the most pleasant moments that I spent this year have been watching the softball team play—pleasant, because I know how hard the men and women who work for the Senate, who support all of us, do work, Republicans and Democrats alike. It is the men and women here who so make the Senate the place it is and can be. And they are the ones who make it possible for Americans to have hope in us.

There are 100 Senators. None of us would be able to do our job without people, ranging from those who guard the doors of this Chamber to those who report our proceedings, to those who handle the bills as they go through, and to all the others—those who make the electricity work, to those who help us write the legislation. I sometimes joke we are merely constitutional impediments to the staff. The truth of the matter is, we are, all of us, better—Republicans and Democrats alike—because of the selfless work of the men and women here in the Senate.

When I see them have a chance to play softball and enjoy themselves, I think how lucky we are to have them here. I have to tell all those in my office, I could not be more proud than I was watching them play in these championship games.

Mr. President, I see the distinguished Senator from Mississippi on the floor. When I started speaking there was nobody seeking recognition. He is the manager of this bill. Is he seeking recognition? If not, I have one more item to go to.

Mr. COCHRAN. No. Please proceed.

BIPARTISAN BUDGET SUMMIT NEEDED NOW

Mr. LEAHY. Mr. President, 2 weeks ago I called for a summit between Congressional leaders and the President to avoid a Government shutdown when the next fiscal year starts on October 1.

Since then, the House and Senate have passed a couple more appropriations bills and the administration has threatened more vetoes.

I was encouraged, however, by last week's meeting between congressional leaders and the President that we may yet avoid a budget train wreck which will force the Government to shutdown. The President and congressional leaders were right to get together to discuss a continuing resolution to fund the Government beyond October 1.

I hope last week's meeting signals a start to rational negotiations to solve the current budget impasse. We need to build on the positive signals sent by both sides to reach a compromise.

That is why I renew my call for a bipartisan summit now—before the budget crisis. We need to sit down now to hammer out our differences.

Resolving differences is the essence of governing. Let us get together, the

leaders of both parties, and work together to make our Government work.

I fear that few of our leaders have considered what happens if Congress and the President fail to reach an agreement and force the Government to shut down. Make no mistake about it—shutting down the Government will bring serious consequences.

First, shutting down the Government because Democrats and Republicans cannot agree on the budget will accomplish nothing except adding more scorn of our political system. This partisan fighting for just the sake of a headline is exactly what Vermonters believe is wrong with our present system. I believe this scorn will be fully justified if we do not work out our differences before forcing the Government to close.

Second, and more importantly, shutting down the Government will have serious effects on the lives of millions of Americans.

The most immediate effect of a shutdown will be the furloughing of Federal employees. The only exceptions from furloughs under a Government shutdown are Presidential appointees, uniformed military personnel, and Federal civilian employees rated "essential."

In 1990, the nonpartisan General Accounting Office estimated that 319,541 Federal Government employees out of 741,653 would be furloughed—about 43 percent of the Federal Government work force—during a Government shutdown.

Imagine the effect on those hundreds of thousands of employees and their families who are facing the prospect of an unknown period of unemployment. These are hard-working people who struggle like millions of other Americans to balance their checkbook each month.

We should not hold their households hostage to our inability to provide a workable Government budget for all Americans.

So let us keep in mind that when we contemplate a shutdown, we are talking about punishing hard-working families, not faceless bureaucrats, as some would lead us to believe.

What would be the effects if 43% of our Government workers are not allowed to go to work?

The GAO surveyed Government agencies in 1990 to find out the answer to that question. Each agency estimated that a Government shutdown would severely damage their effectiveness.

The Environmental Protection Agency, for example, estimated that "all environmental protection services would be shutdown." Do we really want to leave our environment at risk to score political points over a Government shutdown?

The Food and Drug Administration estimated under a shutdown "there would be no work on applications for new drugs and devices." Do we really want to put the benefits of new science and technology on hold to score political points over a Government shutdown?

The Social Security Administration estimated that under a shutdown "no new applications for Social Security or Medicare eligibility would be taken or inquiries answered."

Do we really want to make our senior citizens wait to score political points over a Government shutdown?

The Department of Justice estimated that a shutdown would delay trials and weaken its ability to supervise the Federal parolee caseload. Do we really want to slow down our criminal justice system to score political points over a Government shutdown?

The Department of Veterans Affairs estimated that under a shutdown "there would be approximately 37,000 unanswered telephone calls per day and approximately 5,000 cancelled interviews per day." Do our veterans really deserve this kind of treatment to score political points over a Government shutdown?

Perhaps the most lasting effect of a Government shutdown will be the wasted millions of taxpayer dollars.

At a time when the President and Congress are dedicated to eliminating unnecessary Government spending, pouring money down a Government shutdown rathole makes absolutely no sense. Shutting down the Government will make it harder to balance the budget—not easier—because lost revenue from a shutdown will simply add to our deficit.

The GAO estimated in its 1990 report that a 3-day closing would cost the Government millions of revenue dollars.

The Interior Department, for example, would lose \$30 million in revenue during a 3-day shutdown, and the Treasury Department would lose a whopping \$420 million. A longer shutdown would lose millions more. Do we really want to waste taxpayer money to score political points over a Government shutdown?

Closing the Government, even for a short time, carries serious consequences. It would rightfully heap scorn on our political system.

It would impair the effectiveness of necessary Government services, which many Americans depend on every day. And it would waste millions of taxpayer dollars.

Let us stop this fiscal insanity. Let us build on last week's bipartisan meeting and call a bipartisan budget summit.

It is time for our leaders to start acting responsibly. It is time for our leaders to start using some common sense. It is time for a bipartisan summit on the budget.

Mr. President, I yield the floor.

AGRICULTURE, RURAL DEVELOPMENT, FOOD AND DRUG ADMINISTRATION, AND RELATED AGENCIES APPROPRIATIONS ACT, 1996

The Senate continued with the consideration of the bill.