

to set our system on a sound footing for long-term growth and development. Congress could continue the ingrained habit of treating taxpayers' funds as the key to the candy store. We could wait until the year 2015 to address our problems like the national debt. In 2015, at the rate of current spending, the Government would only be able to spend on four entitlement programs and interest on the national debt—that would take the entirety of the budget.

Then there would be no money for defense for the country, no law enforcement, no food safety, no highways. It would all be just for the entitlements and interest. We cannot do that. We must act now. We must protect the children. We must protect their opportunities.

We live in a global economy where productivity and competitiveness are the hallmarks. We will succeed, we will sink or swim based on whether or not we are productive and competitive. We cannot swim with a debt load on the back of each citizen in the next century so great that they cannot compete in the world marketplace.

Some people say, "Well, instead of controlling spending, we could always raise taxes." The largest tax increase in history was pushed through in 1993. Now the President says he raised taxes too much. I think we all felt that he raised taxes too much.

I know we could find a lot of things that we want to do instead of balance the budget—people did not send us here for that. They sent us here to balance the budget, and it is time that we do it, because the Government sets a standard.

Over the last 30 years, tragically, we have been setting a standard of irresponsibility, a standard of undisciplined spending. We are like the parents who never set a standard for their children. The children are witnessing this Government spend, spend, and spend without accountability. It is time that we meet the challenge of bringing responsibility and accountability back to Government. It is time we stopped saying an incessant "yes." It is time we have the tough character to say "no" to protect the children—to take a responsible path.

During the 104th Congress we passed a budget resolution to balance the budget in 7 years. We voted to phase out or consolidate numerous outdated programs, commissions, agencies, initiatives. We voted to reform the failed welfare system by giving the people the power to eliminate poverty and hopelessness in their own backyards.

Mr. President, rather than trying to gain short-term political advantage by shamelessly frightening elderly Americans with empty rhetoric and misinformation, we instead are moving to protect, preserve, and strengthen Medicare for the long haul. We are working to bring efficiencies, normally only found in the marketplace of late, into the Medicare system to give people a

sense of choice and, in doing so, yes, to restrain some of the growth—but still make it possible for people to have good health care.

We all know that in the next 7 years of reform, the amount spent per capita in the Medicare system under these reform plans goes from \$4,800 per year to \$6,700 per year, and that kind of an increase per capita is a substantial one. It will allow us to attend to the current health needs, without continuing to jeopardize the future of the fund.

Mr. President, we want to let the American people keep more of what they earn. American families deserve it. American families have seen their tax burden grow from as little as 2 percent in 1950 to nearly 50 percent today. We want to give families the opportunity and responsibility of spending their own money so they can help themselves rather than have the Government always taking their resources and deploying it in a governmental scheme which seldom meets the need and frequently undermines and erodes the values for which families stand.

It is important for families to decide what is in their best interest, rather than having a governmental bureaucracy always deciding what is in their best interest.

When the families of American people express their belief that Government is out of control, as they did in last November's election, they are correct. For too long this body has assembled to satisfy the appetites of narrow interests at the public's expense. The American people are fed up with a Congress that spends the yet unearned wages of the next generation.

The resounding mandate from the electorate is to dramatically reduce Government spending, to shrink the size of the Federal Government, to stop the Government from interfering with the ability of individuals to make decisions for themselves, for their families, their property, and their lives.

That means that the attitude of "Washington knows best" must come to an end. It means that the Congress must exercise the same kind of fiscal responsibility and restraint in making its difficult decisions that every family in this country has exercised when budgeting around their kitchen tables. We say that we will not buy the things that we cannot afford. We do not spend the money we do not have, and that is a virtue that ought to be imposed upon the Government.

In conclusion, over the next couple of weeks, all Senators, both Democrats and Republicans, will have the opportunity during the debate on the budget reconciliation bill, and other measures, to send a message to the American people. Let us make it a message of responsibility and integrity and accountability. Let us say that we have heard them; that they have sent us here to do a job, not necessarily an easy job, it is not a job that requires no courage, or a job that requires no judgment. They have sent us here to do a tough job, but

it is a job, the toughness of which they face on a daily basis in their own lives and businesses.

Let us do that job. We have a duty to America and the next generation to tackle the tough decisions and not to hide our heads in the political sands. So let us come together to a point of reconciliation. Let us come to a point of decision on a bill that will set us on a steady path, a responsible path of accountability, of integrity and responsibility, a path of a balanced budget. It is within our grasp in the next 2 days. Let us make sure we take advantage of this opportunity.

Mr. President, I yield the floor.

Mr. ROCKEFELLER addressed the Chair.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from West Virginia.

Mr. ROCKEFELLER. Mr. President, I ask unanimous-consent to speak—I had not realized that there was a 10-minute limit. When I created the speech, which is talking about something which has not been talked about before on the floor, I did it for the purpose of trying to enlighten the membership. So if I go over just a couple of minutes, will that put me in severe jeopardy with the Presiding Officer?

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Another Presiding Officer will be here by that point.

Mr. ROCKEFELLER. That is true.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. So the Senator from West Virginia might want to seek a unanimous consent agreement first.

Mr. ROCKEFELLER. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that I, with discipline and with good intent, have the time which I might require for my remarks.

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

#### PROMISES MADE SHOULD BE PROMISES KEPT

Mr. ROCKEFELLER. Mr. President, I rise to report to the entire U.S. Senate and, in fact, I am talking to my colleagues—hopefully, everybody is listening, probably not—about just how low, frankly, some are willing to stoop.

As we all know, we will soon see a gigantic budget bill with the impossible name of "reconciliation" on the floor. Under the special rules, the Senate will have very little time to discuss, let alone try to alter, this mammoth Government bill. That is why I stand here today. I want to take the time to shine a piercing light on one of the darkest, most hidden and most underhanded parts of the mammoth budget bill about to land on everybody's desk.

Using that familiar label of tax relief, the provision is an attempt to line the pockets of a select group of companies, some of which I shall name in a few moments, at the expense of something as critical as health benefits for the most vulnerable, the oldest, the weakest, and the most deserving group