

east Texas roots. We attended the University of Texas law school. We both held this seat in the U.S. Senate, which both of us reached through a special election in the spring after the resignation of a Senator in January. Like me, he reached this Chamber less than 2 years before the term was up, and probably felt, as I did, envy for Members of the other body, who have a full 2 years between campaigns.

Mr. President, on behalf of all the citizens of Texas, I offer to Mrs. Yarborough, his widow, the rest of the Yarborough family, and his many friends, our deepest condolences. May he rest in peace.

Mr. President, I yield the floor and suggest the absence of a quorum.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will call the roll.

The legislative clerk proceeded to call the roll.

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 President, I ask unanimous consent that the order for the quorum call be rescinded.

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

The Senator from Wyoming is recognized.

CONSISTENCY IN LEADERSHIP

Mr. THOMAS. Mr. President, from time to time, in the mail we get a letter, an observation, or a communication from a constituent that we think is particularly on target. I would like to share that a little bit this morning. It has to do with consistency in leadership and with where we are going in this country. The President has talked in the last couple of days about the consistency of his administration. Of course, I think there is great question about that. If we are to move forward to make the changes that most of us want to make, that I think most Americans want to make, we have to have some consistency in policy.

The President came to Washington based on a campaign of change, based on a promise of change, based on a promise of a new Democrat. He said more recently that the era of big government is over. The fact is that there has not been much consistency. The fact is that there was a great deal of talk about reforming of welfare which is certainly high on the agenda of most people. Most people want to continue to be able to help people who need help, but in a program that helps people back into a position to help themselves. Yet this Senate passed a bill on welfare, I think 85 positive votes, that was vetoed by the President who says he wanted to change welfare as we know it.

The balanced budget—I suspect the prime issue of this entire congressional session—it took four budgets to come up with a balanced budget, despite the President saying he was for a balanced budget when he ran, and would do it in 5 years. It took four budgets to do it in 7 years, and then, frankly, not a real budget.

Most everyone who studies the issue knows that if you are going to change the financial direction that this country has taken, if you want to be responsible for finances, that there has to be a significant change in the budget, that you cannot tinker around the edges.

The President and his staff, and Mr. Panetta, whom I worked with in the House, and I always thought was responsible—almost as if you push a button, we protect Medicaid, protect the environment, have an investment in education. The fact is that over a period of several years you cannot do that; there is no money to do that unless you do something about entitlements. That is a fact.

So to say we are going to balance the budget and we are going to protect Medicare, Medicaid, the environment, invest in education, it is impossible to do, unless, of course, you raise taxes considerably.

Mr. President, these are the things raised about consistency. I want to read the letter from Linda Russell of Rawlins, WY.

President BILL CLINTON,
White House,
Washington, DC.

DEAR MR. PRESIDENT: I sent you a wire to just get the budget balanced and quit "posturing" and playing politics.

You wrote a very nice letter back—but I am very concerned that you don't understand what the people of this USA want and need. You say we must "maintain our values—protecting Medicare, Medicaid, and the environment". Certainly no one would disagree that these are excellent GOALS—but they are NOT our base VALUES. Our base values would be fiscal responsibility, keeping a military strength sufficient to protect us, and staying out of the faces of people who are perfectly capable of handling the GOALS you mention far better than the Washington DC political establishment.

I attended the White House Conference on Small Business and heard you address the group on how you felt regulations should be reduced and the budget balanced and the tax burden lessened. WHAT HAPPENED TO YOUR SUPPORT OF THOSE IDEAS since that meeting??

May I respectfully suggest that you let the power revert to the people by going with the block grants so that we can take care of our neighbors with our tax money and not waste 90% of it paying a huge bureaucracy in "DC" to tell us how to do it. TRUST US—we are neither stupid nor insensitive. If you have any wish at all to be reelected, it would be well to give us the respect we are due—and stop taking more and more money via taxes to support some liberal agenda.

Mr. President—listen again to your own inaugural address to the nation, which I thought very impressive—and WALK YOUR TALK??

Sincerely,

LINDA RUSSELL,
Rawlins, WY.

Mr. President, I think her expression "and walk your talk" is an expression from someone who represents a good deal of the thought in my State in Wyoming. I think many of us believe that this is the direction we should take, make the changes that we came here to make—less government, less cost, less regulation, move the responsibilities to communities, to States, and frankly to individuals.

I had the opportunity last evening to meet with a group of students from Washington and Lee High School in Arlington, VA, who were inducted into the Honor Society. We talked to some of them about the concepts of freedom and about the responsibility in leadership that goes with freedom. I was really pleased at the receptiveness they had to the notion that if you are going to be free and responsible and have a Government where we participate and we govern ourselves, then you have to be responsible and take some leadership positions to do that.

Mr. President, that is sort of what it is all about and what this letter is about.

Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the President's response to Linda Russell's wire be printed in the RECORD.

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

THE WHITE HOUSE,

Washington, DC, December 6, 1995.

Ms. LINDA RUSSELL,
Rawlins, WY.

DEAR LINDA: Thank you for sharing your views. It's important for me to know how you feel about the challenges facing our nation.

I believe that we must balance the budget, but we must do it in a way that is good for our economy and that maintains our values—protecting Medicare, Medicaid, and the environment, and continuing our investment in education. And we have to do it without raising taxes on working families.

In the weeks ahead we will continue our bipartisan efforts to find common ground on balancing the budget, and I hope you will stay involved.

Sincerely,

BILL CLINTON.

Mr. THOMAS. I yield the floor. 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.

Mr. AKAKA. Mr. President, are we in morning business?

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator is correct.

Mr. AKAKA. Mr. President, I will take the floor in morning business to speak about a concern that has been global.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Hawaii is recognized.

FRANCE'S CESSATION OF NUCLEAR TESTING IN THE SOUTH PACIFIC

Mr. AKAKA. Mr. President, it is with a great sense of relief and hope that I rise today to comment on the announcement by French President Jacques Chirac that France has concluded its nuclear weapons testing program for good and will close its nuclear testing center in French Polynesia.