

the term of the President who will be elected this fall.

So, while it does not represent a step forward on the part of the President, it also, one must confess, does not represent a step backward either. It consolidates the modest gains that were attained through five separate budget submissions on the part of the President for the current year. The overwhelmingly significant step forward, however, was the work by the National Governors Conference, which now unanimously has reached a detailed statement of principle on both Medicaid and welfare reform, one that has been agreed to by both Republican and Democrat Governors across the country, one that raises the very real possibility of breaking the budget deadlock in which we find ourselves at the present time. I cannot possibly be too laudatory of the tremendously difficult task that the Governors have undertaken and the great degree of success they have reached.

Madam President, we need a balanced budget for our children and for our grandchildren. We need reforms in Medicare and Medicaid for our seniors and for others who are less fortunate and cannot afford to pay for health care services themselves. We need welfare reform for all Americans for a more just and equitable system. And we need tax cuts for hard-working American families. All of these remain our goal. But two of the most difficult now are the beneficiaries of intervention on the part of the National Conference of Governors in such a way that the entire logjam may now possibly be broken and that, before the end of the current continuing resolution on March 15, there is the very real possibility of a wonderfully genuine move toward a budget that will lead to a very real balance by the year 2002 without gimmicks and without postponing all of the hard questions for 4 more years.

The final element in this equation was the report yesterday that the Medicare part A trust fund is going bankrupt much more rapidly than we had thought during our debate during the course of the last year. Instead of being in the black last year, it was in the red, 1 year earlier than was predicted just last April. That fact makes more urgent the reform of Medicare and the Medicare trust fund so that this trust fund will be there after the turn of the century for all of those over the age of 65 who depend on it. It causes to be even more modest in the long term the reforms in Medicare that were included in the Balanced Budget Act of 1995, regrettably vetoed by the President, and makes more urgent a set of reforms that will protect Medicare for our seniors in the future and will more equitably distribute the burden for paying for Medicare among all of our citizens—both those working and those retiring.

So, all in all, in spite of the President's refusal to recognize these new

facts in this so-called budget document, I believe that this week represents real progress toward an honest balanced budget, a budget that will be good for all Americans, that will lessen the burden of debt on future generations and increase their opportunities, their jobs, and their income.

Madam President, 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. GRASSLEY. Madam President, I ask unanimous consent that the order for the quorum call be rescinded.

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

Mr. GRASSLEY. Madam President, I ask unanimous consent to speak for 7 minutes as if in morning business.

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

(The remarks of Mr. GRASSLEY pertaining to the introduction of S. 1560 are located in today's RECORD under "Statements on Introduced Bills and Joint Resolutions.")

Mr. GRASSLEY. I yield the floor. Madam President, 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. HELMS. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the order for the quorum call be rescinded.

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Mr. GORTON). Without objection, it is so ordered.

The Senator from North Carolina is recognized.

MR. HELMS. I thank the Chair.

(The remarks of Mr. HELMS pertaining to the introduction of S. 1562 are located in today's RECORD under "Statements on Introduced Bills and Joint Resolutions.")

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

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Mrs. HUTCHISON). Without objection, it is so ordered.

AGRICULTURAL MARKET TRANSITION ACT OF 1996

The Senate continued with the consideration of the bill.

Mr. DOLE. Madam President, what I am going to do here is obtain the consent on the farm bill so that we maybe can vote on final passage tomorrow at 4:45. So let me start that consent.

Madam President, I ask unanimous consent that Senator CRAIG be recognized to modify amendment No. 3184 with permanent law provisions, and once that modification has been made,

no amendments be in order to strike the permanent law modification during the pendency of S. 1541.

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

Mr. DOLE. Madam President, I further ask unanimous consent that all amendments in order to amendment No. 3184 as modified be limited to 30 minutes, to be equally divided in the usual form, and must be relevant to the subject matter contained in amendment No. 3184 or farm related.

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

Mr. DOLE. Madam President, I further ask unanimous consent that all amendments be offered in the first degree and not be subject to second degrees and offered on an alternating basis between the parties, and that the majority side be limited to 5 amendments, the minority side limited to 10 amendments.

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

Mr. DASCHLE. Reserving the right to object on that, just for clarification, I think the leader and I would encourage, if there is not a Senator on one side, that we would just go ahead and—the idea would be to alternate. We will leave it to the managers to make that determination.

Mr. DOLE. Right. That is the understanding of the chairman of the committee, Senator LUGAR, and I think Senator LEAHY. It is going to be a rather tight timeframe in any event. So we do not want to waste any time.

Madam President, I further ask unanimous consent with respect to the Santorum amendment concerning peanuts that there be 15 minutes under the control of Senator SANTORUM and 30 minutes under the control of Senator HEFLIN.

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

Mr. DOLE. Finally, Madam President, I ask unanimous consent that final passage occur on S. 1541, as amended, no later than 4:45 p.m., Wednesday, February 7, 1996.

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

UNANIMOUS CONSENT AGREEMENT—S. 1028

Mr. DOLE. Madam President, I also ask unanimous consent that not prior to April 15, but no later than May 3, the majority leader, after consultation with the Democratic leader, turn to the consideration of Calendar No. 205, S. 1028, the Health Insurance Reform Act of 1995.

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

Mr. DOLE. Further, Madam President, I ask unanimous consent that it not be in order to offer any amendment or motion relative to health care portability or similar to the text contained in S. 1028 prior to the execution of this agreement.

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