20 and telling our allies that we will leave troops on the ground into 1997 is not keeping the integrity of the American word, and I think we have the right to expect that from our President who is representing our country.

This is a serious issue, and I hope the President will address it with integrity.

Thank you, Mr. President. I yield back the remainder of my time, and 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. DORGAN. 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 President, I ask unanimous consent that the order for the quorum call be rescinded.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. DORGAN. Mr. President, are we in morning business?

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Yes, until 10:30.

GAS TAX REDUCTION LEGISLATION

Mr. DORGAN. Mr. President, I have noted the last several days a number of people coming to the floor to talk about tax freedom day. I noted this morning on the television programs that the majority leader, Senator DOLE, was talking about bringing a vote to the floor of the Senate, perhaps today, he said, to repeal the 4.3-cent gas tax or reduce the gas tax by 4.3 cents.

I will make a couple of observations about those issues.

First, tax freedom day. The suggestion, I guess, by those who talk about tax freedom day and the date beyond which they now can spend money on themselves, the suggestion is, I guess, that the money that is spent by them to build their children's schools, to pay for the police force, to pay for the Defense Department to defend our country, to provide for the resources for Social Security and Medicare, which incidentally are the four largest areas of public spending—schools, health care, defense, and local policing functions—the implication is somehow that those are not investments or those are not expenditures that count.

I think a lot of people would say that the payment of money to fund a school system to be able to send your children to good schools does count and does matter. That is an investment in your family. I just observe that some taxes are levied in order to do things we must do together as a country—educate our kids, build roads, defend our country, provide for the general welfare such as Social Security, Medicare, Medicaid, and so on. Some of them, I think, deserve a more thoughtful response than the implication somehow that it is just money that goes into some dark hole. Much of that is an investment in our children, an investment in security, an investment in health care.

Having said all that, would we like to see lower taxes in our country? Yes. Would we like to find a way to reduce the tax burden? Sure. We have a circumstance in this country now where we spend more money than we take in; 2 years ago, 2½ years ago, in 1993, we passed a bill on the floor of the Senate by one vote to reduce the Federal deficit. It was not easy to do. We only passed it by one vote on a strictly partisan vote. We did not get even one vote from the other side of the aisle by accident. Normally you think somebody makes a mistake, but we did not get one vote by accident. A group of us passed this piece of legislation, and 2½ years later the deficit is reduced by half. The deficit is half of what it was nearly 3 years ago.

Now I am glad we did that. It was not popular. The popular thing was to vote ''no.'' Certainly it was not popular to vote ''yes'' to cut spending and increase some taxes, but we did it. I am glad we did it. The deficit is down as a result of it.

Now, what has happened in the last number of weeks is gasoline prices have spiked up by 20 to 25 cents a gallon. Gasoline prices spike up, and then we have people come to the floor of the Senate and say, well, our solution to that is to reduce the gas tax by 4.3 cents. There is really no connection, of course, but that is the solution. It is kind of like a person driving down the road in a vehicle and it overheats and steam starts flooding from under the hood and the driver pulls off the road, gets out, opens the trunk, and changes the tire. There is no relationship between the 20- or 25-cent-per-gallon spike in gas taxes and the 4.3-cent gas tax reduction that is being proposed. It is purely political. In fact, it is trotted out here on tax day, I guess it is called tax freedom day. It is trotted out as a purely political hood ornament. That is fine. You have the right to do it.

My point is this: When we consider the issue of the 4.3-cent-per-gallon reduction in the gas tax, I intend to offer an amendment here in the Senate that asks the question, whose pocket is this money going to go in? If you are going to relieve the oil industry of collecting 4.3 cents a gallon in gasoline taxes, who ends up getting the cash? I said the other day in this country there are a lot of pockets. There are big pockets, there are small pockets, there are high pockets, there are low pockets. The question is, who will pocket the reduction in the gasoline tax? I will offer an amendment that says, if you reduce the gasoline tax, we should make sure it goes into the right pocket, the pocket of the consumer, the driver, the taxpayer. If we do not pass an amendment like that that provides the guarantee, guess who pockets the reduction in the gas tax? The oil industry.

Does anybody here honestly think that if we reduce the gas tax by 4.3 cents a gallon and do not provide an ironclad guarantee that it goes back to the consumer, does anybody believe that the oil industry will not grab that money? It is cash in their pockets. They are the ones who set the price of gasoline. We can have people boast on the floor of the Senate about reducing the gas tax. It will not mean a thing to drivers and consumers unless they end up paying 4.3 cents less a gallon than they now pay.

I say to the majority leader and others, if you intend to bring a bill to the floor of the Senate to reduce the gas tax and increase the deficit, make sure you provide for the allowance for amendments, because some of us will insist on our right to offer amendments. If you develop procedures that prohibit us from offering amendments to make sure that the reduction in the gas tax goes in the right pockets, then we intend to slow this Senate down until we have an opportunity to offer amendments of that type.

I understand it is a Presidential election. It is an even-numbered year. When the Framers wrote the Constitution of America, they created a miracle. At least old Claude Pepper, the former member of this body and the House of Representatives, used to call it a miracle—a miracle that every even-numbered year the American people are able to grab the American steering wheel and make adjustments to where the country is headed. They have the right to grab the steering wheel and make the adjustments. It is an election year, an even-numbered year in America. There are lots of politics floating back and forth here and there; the only time in our country's history, I believe, where the majority leader of the Senate is running against an incumbent President. I have great respect for both people. But the floor of the Senate is not, of course, a political party convention auditorium. It is the U.S. Senate. Is there an inclination to engage in a great deal of politics here on the floor of the Senate on behalf of both sides? Yes. That has always been the case. Will there be more of an inclination now in the coming weeks to do that? I am sure. Is the gas tax reduction that is being proposed political? Obviously.

Someone wanting to know what caused a 20- or 25-cents-per-gallon runup in gas prices at the pumps might have said, well, try to investigate what happened. Ask the Justice Department to investigate the oil industry to ask what happened to the price of gas. Who did it? Why? The President asked the Justice Department to do that. Some saw it as an opportunity to say, ''Well, come to the floor of the Senate and talk about the 4.3-cent gas tax that was added in 1993 as part of the deficit reduction act.'' That is politics. That is fine. They could have said, how about the other 10-cent-per-gallon gas tax that was added, supported by the majority leader and others here in this body? There has been 10 cents supported previously, so, make it 14.3 cents, as long as it is a political issue. Do the whole thing.

My point is this: Do not do anything to it unless you guarantee American taxpayers and drivers that they will get the benefit. There is not any way that we guarantee drivers in this country they will get the benefit of lower gasoline taxes at the pump if we are not allowed to offer and if the Senate does not pass the amendment I have described. The amendment is very simple: It would require certification by the oil companies that they have passed along this reduction in the gas tax and a lower pump price, subject to criminal penalties and subject to enforcement by the appropriate people in the Federal Government. We can talk about gas taxes until we are blue in the face and you can repeal gas taxes from now until next month. But if you do not guarantee that drivers in this country get the benefit, guess who will walk off into the sunset with bulging pockets? The oil company.

When I heard this morning the majority leader say we will have a vote on that today, first of all, I do not think we will because it would require unanimous consent to have a vote on the reduction in the gas tax. But, second, I say to Members on the other side who are in charge of planning the activities of the Senate on the floor, when you decide to have a vote, we will insist that you give us the opportunity to offer an amendment that guarantees the drivers and the taxpayers in this country, not the oil industry, get the benefit of the reduction in the gas tax.

One additional point, and it is probably the most important point. We have also talked on the floor of the Senate about the minimum wage. The gas tax is about $25 or $27 a year in benefits if the consumers get the benefit, and they will not unless my amendment is passed. The minimum wage means about $1,800 a year to those folks who are out there, 40 percent of whom are working as a sole breadwinner on minimum wage, trying to make ends meet, having had their wage frozen for 5 years. We are simply saying we want an opportunity, as well, to address the minimum wage issue. We think the minimum wage should be adjusted for those folks.

We have been told that, well, there will be some point at which we will vote on that. We also ask that when the gas tax reduction is brought to the floor of the Senate, we have an opportunity to consider, as well, in those circumstances, a reasonable adjustment of the minimum wage.

So those are the issues that we are going to ask be addressed by the majority leader and other Members of the Senate in the coming couple of days as we discuss these issues.

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

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

TRIBUTE TO THE LATE WALTER S. MONTGOMERY, SR.

Mr. THURMOND. Mr. President, if the Palmetto State is famous for textiles, then Mr. Walter S. Montgomery, Sr., is one of a handful of South Carolinians whose name is synonymous with that industry. Without question, he is a man who has left his mark on our State and Nation, and it is with great sadness that I rise today to note his recent passing.

''Mr. Walter,'' as he was affectionately known by his friends and employees, died late last month, ending what was a lifelong commitment to service and industry. From the time he took over his family's textile mill to the day he died, Walter Montgomery worked hard to advance textile manufacturing, to strengthen the South Carolina economy, and to improve the quality of life for the South Carolina Upstate, especially his beloved hometown of Spartanburg.

Known as a benevolent boss, Mr. Walter would stroll the floors of his factories in his shirtsleeves, supervising operations and talking with his employees. His interest in those who worked for him extended beyond the plant walls, and he was known to spend afternoons on the front porches of the homes of Spartan Mills workers, passing the time and getting to know those in his employ. Additionally, Walter Montgomery worked hard to create a job place that was modern, clean, and safe, a far cry from the old style mills of the 19th and early 20th centuries.

Walter Montgomery joined the family run Spartan Mills shortly after his graduation from the Virginia Military Institute and eventually became its president and chairman of the board. Through his hard work, determination, and business acumen, Spartan Mills grew from 1 plant to 10, and became the largest employer in Spartanburg County. A young and dynamic executive, Mr. Montgomery became a force in the national textile industry and held leadership positions with the South Carolina Textile Manufacturers Association, the J.E. Sirrine Foundation, the Institute of Textile Technology, and the American Textile Manufacturers Association. His professional accomplishments earned him recognitions from the South Carolina Chamber of Commerce, which named him Businessman of the Year; and from the ATMI, their organization's prestigious and coveted Samuel Slater Award.

Equally important to the contributions Mr. Montgomery made to business was the role he filled as a civic leader. Spartanburg and the Upstate Region benefited handsomely from the efforts of Mr. Montgomery who helped to establish the University of South Carolina at Spartanburg; served as a trustee of the Spartanburg Music Foundation and the Spartanburg Historical Society; and, organized the Spartanburg County Foundation. He also served for 55 years on the board of trustees at Converse College, was a booster for educational causes, and was an active leader in the United Way. For these undertakings, and many others, Mr. Montgomery was awarded the Order of the Palmetto; inducted into the South Carolina Business Hall of Fame; was awarded three honorary degrees; and, was recognized with almost countless citations from various business and community groups.

Mr. President, Walter Montgomery was the type of person that any community or State would be fortunate to have as one of its citizens. I can think of no more fitting tribute to Walter than the fact that he was so well thought of, that hundreds of people came to pay their last respects to this man. As a matter of fact, on the day of his funeral, the Episcopal Church of the Advent was packed to capacity and loudspeakers had to be placed outside the church in order for mourners to be able to hear the service. While we will all miss Walter, I hope that others will honor his legacy by trying to match the example he set for service to business and community. I join a long list of people who express their sympathy and condolences to the family of Mr. Walter Montgomery, including his sisters, Kate Montgomery Ward and Lucile Montgomery Cart; his son, Mr. Walter Montgomery, Jr.; his daughter, Rose M. Johnston; and his many grandchildren, and great-grandchildren. These people are kin to a man who was one of a kind.

OMNIBUS PARKS BILL

Mr. HATCH. Mr. President, last Wednesday, the Senate passed H.R. 1296, the omnibus parks bill, by unanimous consent. I recognize that this legislation had indeed gone through the mill. However, I am pleased that we reached this agreement and passed this important bill with strong bipartisan support.

In particular, I want to express my strong support for one title of this bill, the Snowbasin Land Exchange Act, which was included within the bill.

This measure contains provisions that will enable the U.S. Forest Service and the Sun Valley Co. to prepare the Snowbasin Ski Resort, which is located 40 miles north of Salt Lake City, for the major alpine skiing events of the 2002 Winter Olympic Games to be held in Utah. It also concludes a land exchange process that began more than 11 years ago.

I want to acknowledge the efforts of Senators DOLE and MURKOWSKI, who have worked diligently to forge this package so that this particular measure could pass the Senate and move forward in the legislative process.

As my colleagues know, the International Olympic Committee selected Salt Lake City to host the 2002 Winter