

made and there are certain steps being taken within the VA to operate more soundly. But I was shocked when I saw the President's proposal for Veterans' Administration spending for the next 6 years.

The President now says he wants to balance the budget. But how does he do it? Well, Mr. President, he takes it out of the vitally important medical care and health care services for the veterans. I joined with Chairman PETE DOMENICI to beat back efforts by our Democratic colleagues in the subcommittee to substitute the President's budget, which he claims gets us to balance. I thought it was so serious that I wanted to speak on the floor. I spoke this weekend back home in Missouri, talking about the tremendous decline that the Clinton budget proposes for Veterans' Administration spending over the next 6 years, which is almost 23 percent.

Mr. President, the Veterans' Administration cannot live with that kind of cut. That is the kind of cut that the President proposes the VA will have to follow to get to a balanced budget for the entire Government in the year 2002. At least the President agrees that we need to get to a balanced budget. But does he really mean this budget?

Well, Mr. President, it was very interesting to me to read in the newspaper on Saturday morning—in the St. Louis newspaper—a report by political correspondent, Jo Mannies, who called the White House after I presented this information and she says: "A White House aide replied that Bond was misrepresenting the facts."

Misrepresenting the facts? Mr. President, here are the facts. Under the Clinton budget, the Veterans' Administration have a budget authority that goes from \$17.3 billion in 1997, to \$15.9 billion in 1998, to \$14.5 billion, to \$13.0 billion, to \$13.29 billion, to \$13.8 billion. That comes out to be a \$12.979 billion cut in Veterans' Administration funding in that 6-year period.

Can the VA live with that? No. Secretary Jesse Brown said, when I asked him before the Appropriations Committee, "Are you planning to live with this budget?" He said, "I am not planning to live with it. I am not planning to live with your budget to green line"—which at that time was a flat line—"nor am I planning to live with the President's line." Secretary Brown went on to say, "I think his budget means something to me because he has given his word that he is going to negotiate with the veterans' community."

Really? Does the President not mean what he said when he presented the balanced budget that shows these cuts? The interesting part of the story, the White House aide Jo Mannies referred to was Lawrence Haas of the White House Office of Management and Budget. He said the Republicans were misrepresenting their plans and the President when it comes to spending for veterans.

President Clinton's 1997 budget plan contains an outline for reaching a bal-

anced budget by 2002. "The outline cites across-the-board spending cuts of equal percentages for most discretionary programs, including the VA," he said. "The outline is not a hard and fast proposal for any of the programs," he said, "because the President and the Congress review discretionary programs each year." He said that he expected changes for many of the specific programs. He said, "If past practices continue, the VA would be treated well and wouldn't experience much, if any, of a cut."

Mr. President, we have the President presenting a budget showing that he gets to balance by making a 23-percent cut in the Veterans Administration. Oh, incidentally, it is not an across-the-board cut because the President, at the same time, proposes a 28-percent increase in the spending on AmeriCorps, our national service.

Mr. President, we are left with the amazing proposition that the White House official spokesperson said that it is the official policy of the Clinton administration that you should not believe the official policy of the Clinton administration. The Clinton administration sent up a budget that shows a 23-percent cut, a \$12.9 billion cut over 6 years.

Mr. President, that is how they get there—a budget that I think has misplaced priorities. It does not make the cuts needed in Medicaid and in welfare spending, so they have to slash things like Veterans' Administration. Either they mean this and they are going to get to a balanced budget and the veterans are going to be unhappy, but they have an Office of Management and Budget saying they do not mean it. They have told the Secretary of Veterans Affairs they do not mean it.

So, Mr. President, we are left with this real question: Which numbers are lying—the numbers they presented in the budget, or the numbers they are telling the Veterans' Administration they are going to get?

I intend to work with my colleagues to make sure that the Veterans' Administration is adequately funded.

Mr. President, I yield the floor.

TRIBUTE TO DR. W. JAMES RIVERS

Mr. THURMOND. Mr. President, it is no secret that a career dedicated to the service of others is a calling that garners minimal financial reward and often little recognition. Individuals will labor their whole lives working to make the world a slightly better place, only to receive few, if any, accolades or commendations. Today, I want to take this opportunity to recognize one person who has dedicated his life to God and his fellow man, Dr. W. James Rivers, and whose commitment to both has made South Carolina a better place to live.

Dr. Rivers' calling to the ministry did not come until he was in his thirties, but he knew early on that he

wanted to dedicate his life to serving others. Upon his graduation from the University of South Carolina, he earned a commission in the United States Air Force and found himself on the Korean Peninsula, where the United States and the United Nations were waging a war against the expansionist Communists of North Korea and China. The fighting in this conflict was brutal and it was not long before the young officer was in the thick of it, and during his time in Korea, he flew 50 combat missions against our enemies. When a cease-fire agreement was finally reached, and the shooting finally stopped, James Rivers decided to remain in the Air Force and climbed to the rank of captain; however, in 1958, he heard the Lord's call, resigned his commission, and began the process of becoming a minister.

After returning to school, Dr. Rivers began his second career of service, this time to God, which began with a 4-year stint ministering at Dutch Fork Baptist Church. In 1967, Dr. Rivers moved from Columbia, SC, to my hometown of Aiken, where he became the pastor of Millbrook Baptist Church. For the past 29 years, he has ministered to the needs of his flock with great compassion, and has proven to be an effective leader for his church, performing more than 1,400 baptisms, and more than 1,000 marriages. Additionally, under his direction, Millbrook Baptist Church has more than trebled in size, added both a Christian Activities Center and educational building, and has established three mission churches in other States. It takes a man of great spirit, ability, and energy to accomplish such impressive tasks.

Mr. President, Dr. W. James Rivers will be retiring from his career as a minister on May 19, and in recognition of his many years of selfless service, the mayor of Aiken has set aside that Sunday as Jim Rivers Day. I am pleased to join my fellow Aikenites and South Carolinians in recognizing and thanking Dr. W. James Rivers for all his contributions to our State. We are grateful for all his hard work and proud to claim him as a leader of our community.

CONCLUSION OF MORNING BUSINESS

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Morning business is now closed.

WHITE HOUSE TRAVEL OFFICE LEGISLATION

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Under the previous order, the Senate will now resume consideration of H.R. 2937, which the clerk will report.

The legislative clerk read as follows:

A bill (H.R. 2937) for the reimbursement of attorney fees and costs incurred by former employees of the White House Travel Office with respect to the termination of their employment in that office on May 19, 1993.

The Senate resumed consideration of the bill.