

any other sector of our workforce, would benefit from flexible work schedules. So the Family Friendly Workplace Act of 1997 is meant to give our hourly blue-collar workers the same opportunities that salaried workers and all Federal employees now have.

So what we are trying to do, Mr. President, is to end the inequity in labor laws in this country that artificially place barriers around hourly employees and deny them the freedom to sit down with their employers and work out a flexible schedule that best meets their personal, family, and community needs, in order to relieve some of the stress in their lives caused by time pressures.

Here is what the bill does. Where an employer requires an employee to work overtime, the bill would give that employee the option of choosing paid time and a half off in lieu of time-and-a-half pay. Now, if the employee says "No, I want the time-and-a-half pay," they are absolutely entitled to the time-and-a-half pay. But if they know that they are going to want some time off in the future, they would be able to say, "No, I would like an hour and a half of overtime that I can put in a bank to use when I need it to take my child to the doctor." So this is going to give them the option to earn paid time off for their overtime work.

The second thing the bill does is provide an additional option for those employees who do not typically work overtime, which includes over 90 percent of the hourly wage women who work in this country. These employees would be allowed to voluntarily work more than 40 hours in one week in order to take the same amount of paid time off later on. This will give hourly workers, including working mothers and fathers in our country a better chance to plan for the future and to get the option to go to their employer and say, "You know, I am working 40-hour weeks here but what I really need is flextime. What I need is the ability to start putting hours aside that would allow me to take time off later for a child's school event or some other purpose." For example, the employee could work 9-hour days and take every other Friday off, with pay, as many Federal employees now do. This is called flextime.

Finally, the bill will give employees and employers the option of establishing regular 2-week schedules to allow an employee to work additional hours in week one in order to work fewer hours in week two. Again, this time is paid, and could be taken for any reason the employee wishes.

Mr. President, according to the Bureau of Labor Statistics, both the mother and father work out of the home in two-thirds of the homes in our country. So, Mr. President, we know that mothers and fathers are stressed in two-thirds of the families in our country where both the mother and the father work outside the home.

This has come about because many women would like to work outside the

home. That is their choice. It has come about because many women need to work outside the home in order to help pay the bills. In many instances the mother is working just to pay taxes. Now, we are trying to do something about that. We are trying to lower the tax burden on the American family because we think working people should keep more of what they work so hard to earn. Until we are able to do that, to give mothers the choices they want—whether it is to work outside the home or not—we want to give the working mothers of this country every possibility to spend the time with their children that they need.

A key element of our approach is that the time off employees would receive is paid time off. This is in contrast to other proposals, including an expansion of the Family and Medical Leave Act that the President and some others have advocated. They want to give American workers time off, but unpaid time off. Comptime and flex-time are paid, because they have been earned by the workers themselves, not handed down from Washington as another unfunded mandate on employers and employees. We want people to be able to have flexible work schedules, without busting their budget.

So, Mr. President, we are trying to expand the options of the hourly workers in our country. That is the key point of this bill. We are not trying to let employers in any way tell an employee or pressure an employee to take comptime instead of comp pay. In fact, there are very stiff penalties if the employer tries to do this. We want the employee to have the option, in cooperation with the employer. We want the employee to be able to say, "It is the stress in my life that I need relief from, without busting my budget." That is what we want the employee to be able to say to the employer—"I am stressed. I want to be able to take 2 hours or 20 hours off next week, in exchange for working a little later this week, so that I can spend more time with my children."

All the polls show, Mr. President, if an employee feels comfortable that he or she has the time with his or her children, that employee is a happier, more productive employee, and it is a win-win situation for both employer and employee. In fact, upward of 75 percent of Federal employees say that they like comptime and flextime, and that it has improved their morale and performance as employees.

Mr. President, Congress cannot make more hours in the day. There are just 24, and there will always be just 24. But we can make those hours more productive and we can make lives less stressful if we give the hourly employees in our country the same opportunities that salaried workers have, that Federal employees have, that they say means a lot to them.

So we want these options to be available to the hourly workers as well. This is our goal. The Family Friendly

Workplace Act that is sponsored by Senator ASHCROFT and myself is for the families of our country, it is for the blue-collar workers, the hourly employees that are working so hard, that need the stress relief more than any of us, that do not now have it, and we think they should. That is what we are working for.

I hope we will be able to take this bill to the floor very quickly. It has passed through the committee. It is a good bill. I think we can work together in a bipartisan way if the other side will work with us.

Until we in Congress can get around to giving American families the tax and regulatory relief they deserve, the least we can do is allow them a little more flexibility in their work week. America's hourly workers want and deserve to choose the hours they work so they can take their children to the doctor, to the soccer game, to the Little League baseball game, or to the camping trip, or whatever they would like to do with their own time. We think it should be their choice.

Thank you, and I urge my colleagues to join Senator ASHCROFT and myself in supporting this most important legislation.

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

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Mr. ROBERTS). Without objection, it is so ordered. The Senator from North Dakota is recognized.

(The remarks of Mr. CONRAD pertaining to the introduction of S. 605 are located in today's RECORD under "Statements on Introduced Bills and Joint Resolutions.")

Mr. CONRAD. I thank the Chair and yield the floor. I suggest the absence of a quorum.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will call the roll.

The bill clerk proceeded to call the roll.

Mr. SPECTER. 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. SPECTER. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that I may proceed in morning business for a period up to 7 minutes.

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

Mr. SPECTER. I thank the Chair.

(The remarks of Mr. SPECTER pertaining to the introduction of S. 603 and S. 604 are located in today's RECORD under "Statements on Introduced Bills and Joint Resolutions.")

THE DRUG-FREE COMMUNITIES ACT OF 1997

Mr. DASCHLE. Mr. President, last week I introduced the Drug-Free Communities Act of 1997. This bill, which is

strongly supported by Members from both sides of the aisle, rechannels existing Federal drug control resources into community, antidrug efforts that are already reducing teenage drug abuse in our towns.

We must act now on this issue, because teenage drug abuse is one of the worst problems in America today. Drug abuse encourages crime and gang violence, as well as higher rates of teenage pregnancy, and other social problems. Many of our schools are under siege from the onslaught of drugs.

What's more, teenage drug abuse is getting worse. After more than a decade of substantial progress in combating the problem, the trends have reversed since 1991. Marijuana use alone has tripled among 8th graders and more than doubled among 10th and 12th graders. Daily use has increased so dramatically during this period that one in 20 of today's high school seniors uses marijuana daily. And, the marijuana of today—because of the chemical THC content—can be 15 times stronger than the marijuana of the 1970's. Cocaine, crack cocaine, amphetamine stimulants, barbiturates, and heroin are increasingly popular among teenagers. The use of LSD has never been higher.

These nationwide statistics are extremely troubling. But, the problems of teenage drug abuse are experienced most vividly in each of our towns and communities. Our sons and daughters face this threat every day in school and on the playground. We need to target our drug reduction efforts to help these teenagers in their own communities. That is why we are introducing the Drug-Free Communities Act of 1997.

With little or no Federal funds, many local anti-drug coalitions are already helping some teenagers in their communities. This legislation targets assistance to these coalitions, so that they can reach out to and help more teenagers. In order to receive Federal support, a community must first demonstrate a comprehensive, long-term commitment to addressing teenage drug abuse. This commitment must include a focused mission, the implementation of strategies to reduce drug abuse, and the involvement of all parts of the community—including parents, youth, businesses, media, schools, law enforcement, religious leaders, and others. Moreover, a community must demonstrate that its antidrug effort is an on-going concern that has local support and is self-sustaining.

I also support the Drug-Free Communities Act because it is fiscally responsible. It does not increase Federal spending or the deficit. Instead, it simply rechannels existing funds from the \$16 billion Federal drug control budget. Even more importantly, the bill requires a financial commitment from the communities involved. Under the bill, the Federal Government will not simply grant money to local communities that meet the criteria that I just mentioned. The qualifying communities must match the Government's

funds with resources of their own—to a cap of \$100,000. These matching grants will force the communities to demonstrate an even greater commitment to fighting drug abuse before receiving Federal funds.

Finally, the legislation creates an Advisory Commission to oversee the antidrug program. This commission will consist of local community leaders and national and State experts on substance abuse. This composition ensures that the program draws upon national expertise in fighting drug abuse, while remaining responsive to local needs.

The Drug-Free Communities Act has attracted the support of more than 150 State and local law enforcement groups, churches, and other organizations. On the national level, it has been endorsed by groups as diverse as Mothers Against Drunk Drivers and William Bennett's Empower America. This bill represents a wonderful opportunity to provide meaningful help to community coalitions in South Dakota and nationwide, without expending additional Federal funds.

I strongly encourage my colleagues to support this important legislation.

NO CASH TO CONVICTS ACT

Mr. ABRAHAM. Mr. President, I rise today to cosponsor Senate bill 438, a bill that will help close a costly loophole in the current administration of Social Security benefits. I commend my colleague, Senator GRASSLEY, for introducing this important bill, the No Cash to Convicts Act. The bill will help the Federal Government identify incarcerated prisoners who are receiving Social Security disability benefits to which they are not entitled, and will provide that prisoners who are incarcerated for even short periods of time are not eligible for those cash benefits when they are in prison.

In the landmark welfare reform legislation enacted last Congress, Congress set up a voluntary program between local law enforcement and the Federal Government to assist in the identification of prisoners who are receiving supplemental security income or SSI benefits. While earlier versions of that legislation covered prisoners' receipt of Social Security disability benefits as well, the Social Security provisions had to be dropped from the final conference report because of Senate rules preventing changes to Social Security benefits in a reconciliation bill. We should finish the job this Congress and ensure that prisoners do not get those cash disability benefits, which would be better spent on our law-abiding elderly and disabled.

By precluding any defendant who is convicted of a criminal offense and who is incarcerated from receiving Social Security disability benefits, this bill removes an arbitrary and illogical requirement under current law that a defendant have been sentenced to at least a year in prison to be ineligible for benefits. There is no reason that an incar-

cerated prisoner should receive benefit checks intended to provide for necessities like food, shelter, and clothing when the prisoner is already receiving those at the expense of the Government.

The bill also creates financial incentives for State and local law enforcement authorities to provide timely information concerning prisoners to the Social Security Administration. This will permit the Federal Government to check the benefit rolls to see whether prisoners are receiving benefits. If the Federal Government identifies any instances in which inmates are illegally receiving Social Security disability checks, the local authority that provided the information will receive a cash payment.

I am glad that this provision is structured to provide an incentive system rather than an unfunded mandate, and am pleased to join my distinguished colleague from Iowa in sponsoring this much-needed bill.

THE VERY BAD DEBT BOXSCORE

Mr. HELMS. Mr. President, at the close of business yesterday, Wednesday, April 16, 1997, the Federal debt stood at \$5,386,017,997,799.85. (Five trillion, three hundred eighty-six billion, seventeen million, nine hundred ninety-seven thousand, seven hundred ninety-nine dollars and eighty-five cents)

One year ago, April 16, 1996, the Federal debt stood at \$5,142,251,000,000. (Five trillion, one hundred forty-two billion, two hundred fifty-one million)

Five years ago, April 16, 1992, the Federal debt stood at \$3,882,706,000,000. (Three trillion, eight hundred eighty-two billion, seven hundred six million)

Ten years ago, April 16, 1987, the Federal debt stood at \$2,269,312,000,000. (Two trillion, two hundred sixty-nine billion, three hundred twelve million)

Fifteen years ago, April 16, 1982, the Federal debt stood at \$1,064,889,000,000 (One trillion, sixty-four billion, eight hundred eighty-nine million) which reflects a debt increase of more than \$4 trillion—\$4,321,128,997,799.85 (Four trillion, three hundred twenty-one billion, one hundred twenty-eight million, nine hundred ninety-seven thousand, seven hundred ninety-nine dollars and eighty-five cents) during the past 15 years.

LEADING THE WAY AGAINST CHEMICAL AND BIOLOGICAL WEAPONS

Mr. KYL. Mr. President, today the Senate will vote on the Chemical and Biological Weapons Threat Reduction Act which will, for the first time in U.S. history, provide criminal and civil penalties against those who produce, stockpile, or transfer chemical weapons in the United States. It will also legislate other practical and realistic reforms to reduce the spread of both chemical and biological weapons and improve the American military's defenses against them.