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—up 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 incarcerated 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.

The impetus for this legislation was the realization that the Chemical Weapons Convention being promoted by the administration, though noble in aim, would have little practical effect, especially in the United States; and that there were important steps we could take to fill gaps in existing law regardless of what happens with the CWC.

That is why Senate Republicans have introduced the Chemical and Biological Weapons Threat Reduction Act, setting forth a comprehensive package of domestic and international steps to address chemical and biological threats. Importantly, the legislation reiterates our firm commitment to destroying the entire U.S. chemical weapons stockpile whether or not the CWC is ratified—a pledge no other chemical weapons state has matched.

Some may be skeptical of this bill because they see it is as an alternative to the CWC. To the contrary, S. 495 provides a sensible and effective action plan that CWC critics and proponents alike should support. By enacting the Chemical and Biological Weapons Threat Reduction Act, the United States will lead by example, and will underscore its commitment to bringing together like-minded friends and allies to make unthinkable the resort to chemical or biological weapons. This is not going it alone, this is leadership.

Mr. COVERDELL addressed the Chair.

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Mr. ENZI). The Senator from Georgia is recognized.

Mr. COVERDELL. Mr. President, 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. COVERDELL. 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. COVERDELL. Mr. President, it is my understanding that the next hour, 1 o'clock to 2, is under my control either for my own purposes or those that I might designate?

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator is correct.

ABUSE OF EXECUTIVE ORDERS AND REGULATIONS

Mr. COVERDELL. Mr. President, a news flash to President Clinton: In America, you do not get to rule by Presidential decree.

President Clinton is prepared to provide the ultimate payoff to labor bosses, an Executive order that essentially mandates that Government contractors toe the union line. Too bad about the millions of American workers who choose not to belong to a union. Now they are to be second-class citizens.

The policy substance of the President's gambit is sufficiently bad, but we suggest there is an even larger issue, one that goes to the very heart of our constitutional form of government.

One of the great strengths of our Republic is a Constitution that reflects, and nicely balances, the tension between democratic representation in the legislative branch and the executive power of the President. The Founders established Congress in article I as the source of all legitimate authority, all legislative powers; that is, the authority granted by the people. The executive branch, at least in terms of domestic policy, is constrained by the requirement that the President take care that the laws be faithfully executed.

Fairly elementary stuff. But in reality, of course, there has been a continuous struggle among the branches over where the legislative power begins and ends. Normally, these tensions erupt at times of great crisis: Lincoln during the Civil War, Truman and the steel mills. Typically they are bound up in questions of war and peace and the President's foreign policy role.

What we face during the twilight of the Clinton era is something very different and much more worrisome. What we see now is a calculated strategy by the White House to ignore the unhappy reality that the President was reelected with less than a majority vote while the Republicans were reelected to a majority in Congress. Now, it appears his goal is to encourage gridlock in the Congress while issuing Executive orders and regulations that exceed his legal power to act.

There is perhaps no area of Federal policy more contentious than labor issues. This has been true in fact for most of this century. It is also clear that labor bosses and leaders faced continued loss of power and declining membership. They have been stymied time and again in their efforts to expand their powers over unwilling American workers.

So what has the President done here? He is issuing an Executive order that deprives nonunion employees of their right to choose whom they support in the political process. He attempted to bar, through an Executive order, any company that exercises its right to hire replacement workers during a strike, though the courts properly struck this down. He is now about to issue an Executive order that would allow agencies to bar—prohibit—Federal contractors if they do not use unionized labor.

Most recently, he is playing with a change in procurement regulations that would bar companies from Federal contracts unless they had satisfactory labor relations. Determined by whom? The President. Unions could have a field day with that. All they would have to do is initiate a lawsuit under the National Labor Relations Act and, presto, you have a company that has unsatisfactory labor relations. This would be laughable if the impact were not so grave. Hundreds of billions of dollars and hundreds of thousands of jobs are at stake.

In short, President Clinton's actions twist beyond recognition the role of the Presidency in the legislative process. The Framers were careful to ensure that the President's voice was a negative one by granting him the veto. They did not grant him the equal and opposite power—he did not get the power of decree. A negative power like a veto is more easily used to avert harm. The decree smacks of autocracy.

But give the White House their due. The White House has carefully established precedents based on issues that are difficult to confront. Ironically, some of the most contentious issues are going to be the most difficult for the Congress to resolve. In some cases, perhaps a majority of Congress would agree, in others they will not. But we believe those are precisely the types of issues that are intended for legislative consideration and a majority vote. This is known as representative democracy. It might be messy. It might take longer than the pundits like. The results may not please everybody. But it is a process that is founded on the consent of our citizenry.

This is a time when there are many questions on whether various individuals in the White House have been engaged in unlawful activity. Only time will tell how that plays out. What we do know right now is that even more than all these financial and campaign issues, the President's abuse of Executive orders and regulations is a direct threat to the rule of law in America.

Mr. President, I now yield to my good colleague from New Hampshire 5 minutes of my time.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from New Hampshire.

Mr. GREGG. I thank the Senator from Georgia for his excellent statement, which sets the premise for this hour of discussion that has been reserved relative to the proposal by the administration and the President and the Vice President to unilaterally take control over what is clearly a legislative prerogative and determine, unilaterally, that 89 percent—89 percent—of the work force in this country which would participate in Federal jobs will no longer be able to participate in those jobs. That is the practical effect of this proposal which is being put forward by the President and which was announced by the Vice President, was announced by the Vice President at a convention of a building trades union.

One could be cynical and say, ''Well, the building trades unions in the last campaigns spent $35 million reported''—we suspect maybe it may be closer to twice that unreported—''spent $35 million reported for the purposes of electing this President and that therefore this decision by the President to exceed his authority, as announced by the Vice President, is a return of that favor.'' One could be cynical and one would be accurate, I suspect, in making that statement.