

country are being excluded from competition, with the full support of federal regulations and the seeming approval of Congress. It is far past the time to curtail this "company" known as Federal Prison Industries and require them to be competitive for the benefit of all taxpayers.

What will it take to convince you that this is an issue which deserves your attention and your support? Perhaps a visit to my manufacturing facility in Colorado Springs would help. Meet the people who pay their taxes only to have them misused by overspending as per government regulations. I'm sure they will feel their tax dollars could be more wisely used. Meet the people who could also fail to prosper if my company is rendered unable to do business with the federal government because of uncompetitive procurement practices. This is the tip of the iceberg in my industry and I have no wish to go down like the Titanic.

Sincerely,

SHARON KRELL,
Manager/Owner.

Mr. LEVIN. 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. BROWNBACK. 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 President, I ask unanimous consent that the order for the quorum call be rescinded.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. BROWNBACK. Mr. President, I want to make a couple of notes about an upcoming event and something that took place today, and then I have business to conduct before the Senate.

A STRONG ECONOMY AND CULTURAL DECLINE

Mr. BROWNBACK. Mr. President, today there is some excellent news regarding the economy. The deficit, because of such a strong economy and taxes being paid, may be as low as \$45 billion. I am hopeful that we can continue to keep that economy going strong by some of the tax cuts that are being proposed and are currently being negotiated. I think the real story here of what is taking place on balancing this budget is the fact that the economy is growing. Growth works, and it works well, and it is working well for us here.

I think it would be a mistake if we did not step forward and do whatever we can to continue this economy and this economic expansion that has been one of the longest running expansions we have had in history to date. That is why some of the tax cuts, particularly the progrowth and profamily tax cuts, the capital gains tax cut and the \$500 per child tax credit are very, very important for us to continue, not only to balance the budget and not only to do it before the year 2002, or do it by the year 2000, but to start to pay off the debt. I think it is important we do it.

I also note that while the economy is doing well and we are getting the deficit under control—and those are important things—we certainly need some help in our culture overall. We

continue to have terribly high rates of crime taking place in this society. We had in Washington, DC three people in a coffee shop murdered. We continue to have story after story, it seems like, on a daily basis of cultural problems that we are having just throughout society. Whether it is the number of children born out of wedlock, teenage suicide, cultural decline in total, violent crime rates or disintegration of the family, we really have to step it up in these areas.

CHARACTER COUNTS WEEK

Mr. BROWNBACK. Mr. President, one thing I want to draw people's attention to is that in the third week of October, there is going to be a "Character Counts" week taking place. That may be a while off and is not necessary for us to focus on now, but I think it is time that while we look at economic activity being strong and culturally we are having all these problems, let's focus on these things.

The Senator from New Mexico, Senator DOMENICI, has been a major champion of character counts, and that is where people step up and say, "We need to look at ourselves and our own character." Good character doesn't come about by accident, it is a practice of virtue. It is one thing that each and every one of us as Americans can step forward with.

I would like to, as we close today, give one example of a person who stepped up on character, and it is a gentleman in Wichita, KS, in my home State, by the name of Leo Mendoza. Leo is a man who knows that character counts, because he hasn't always had it.

Leo is a survivor of sexual abuse, alcohol abuse, drug abuse and crime. For 17 years, he was in and out of jail, on and off drugs and in and out of marriages.

But today, after years of soul-searching and counseling, he is, once again, a solid citizen. He is an elder at his church, and he and his wife are trying to adopt a child.

What changed Leo? Was it Government rehabilitation programs? Was it a Government social program? Or was it actually something deeper, something that the Government could neither teach nor instill?

Leo actually never relied on a Government assistance program, partly out of pride, partly out of independence. He never even sought help from others. It was his friends who sought him.

In 1987, a friend of his introduced him to Alcoholics Anonymous and a local church.

Slowly, he began to form the rudiments of character, promising himself that he would confront the daily struggles of life with the firmness that a life of true character is built not on one heroic act, but rather is the consequence of a thousand little struggles. Leo, together with his family, friends, and

church, began to rehabilitate. He had the courage to say no, the patience to endure the temptations and the humility to ask God for help when weakness was about to overcome him.

By struggling with his past, Leo learned virtue, and by learning virtue, he built character.

Those struggles teach us about our own character and about what true character is made of.

I give that little vignette as we close today because in attacking the cultural decline and difficulties in this society, this is not something you legislate with massive Government programs or is not something we can sit in a conference room to decide what we are going to do and impose that will upon the country. But rather it is the little individual struggles that each and every one of us has everyday. It is each and every struggle that 250 million-plus Americans deal with. That is how you make a great Nation, people struggling to build character, by building that virtue and struggling to build it one at a time.

NATIONAL DEFENSE AUTHORIZATION ACT FOR FISCAL YEAR 1998

The Senate continued with the consideration of the bill.

Mr. BROWNBACK. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that at 9:30 a.m. on Thursday, the Senate resume consideration of the Grams amendment No. 422; that there be 90 minutes remaining for debate to be equally divided between Senator COCHRAN and Senator GRAMS; and that following the conclusion or yielding back of time, the Senate proceed to vote on, or in relation to, the Grams amendment, to be followed by a vote on, or in relation to, the Cochran amendment No. 420.

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

Mr. BROWNBACK. I further ask unanimous consent that no other amendments be in order to the above-listed amendments.

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

MORNING BUSINESS

Mr. BROWNBACK. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that there be a period for the transaction of morning business, with Senators permitted to speak therein for up to 10 minutes each.

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

COMBATING THE FLOW OF NARCOTICS—SENATE JOINT RESOLUTION 34

Mr. MCCAIN. Mr. President, I joined my colleague and friend, Senator DODD, in introducing a joint resolution calling on the President to take concrete steps to increase the level of international cooperation in combating the