

Civil Rights Division, and that is an unfortunate development. It is unfortunate because, first, all he is asking is to be judged fairly. That is all he has ever asked in his life. And second, the things they are saying about him really do stretch the truth.

One of the leading conservative columnists in America, George Will, a man whom I really respect not just because he was raised and went to school in Illinois but because I think he is a pretty bright fellow, wrote a column in the middle of October and said we should turn down Bill Lee as "a payback"—his words, "a payback"—because the Senate Democrats, when they controlled the Judiciary Committee, turned down one of the civil rights appointments of a Republican President 10 years ago.

Please, let us not do that to Mr. Lee. Let us not do that to the Senate. Let us give him his chance to stand on his own feet and have an opportunity to serve this country. And so I hope those of you who think that when the Senate goes home and the House adjourns our work is done will realize there are still many men and women waiting for confirmation and one of the most important and highest is Bill Lann Lee. He would be the highest-ranking Asian American ever appointed, and I am glad that the President has named him and I hope that we can find just two, just two Republican Senators on the Judiciary Committee who will join the Democrats in supporting his nomination.

#### CONSOLIDATION OF FEDERAL FOOD INSPECTION SERVICES

Mr. DURBIN. Mr. President, yesterday I introduced with Senator TORRICELLI a bill, which I hope the Senator from Minnesota will join me in sponsoring, that would consolidate all of the food inspection services of the Federal Government in one independent agency.

Mr. President, 33 million Americans each year have some sort of a foodborne illness, and out of that number some 9,000 will die. You read about the cases, whether it is E. coli or salmonella. We have a good food inspection system but it can be much better. Our food inspection system evolved from Upton Sinclair's novel "The Jungle," when we decided the Federal Government had to step in and make sure the food, meat in particular, that came to our table was safe for our families. But now I am afraid we have gone overboard. We have 12 different Federal agencies involved in food inspection—12—6 in a major way.

I am joining with Congressman VIC FAZIO of California to consolidate these into one independent agency which will be guided by the best science in keeping food safe for Americans. I hope that this, too, will be part of our agenda next year when we return to Washington, DC. It is an important issue, not just for the industries that are affected

but for every family that wants to be certain when they buy that meat or poultry, fish or whatever product it might be, fruits and vegetables and beyond, it is safe for their family to consume.

Mr. President, I yield back the remainder of my time.

Mr. WELLSTONE addressed the Chair.

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Mr. THOMAS). The Senator from Minnesota.

Mr. WELLSTONE. Might I ask what the parliamentary situation is?

The PRESIDING OFFICER. It is the Chair's understanding we are in morning business. Senators are allowed to speak for up to 10 minutes.

Mr. WELLSTONE. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that I be able to speak for 20 minutes.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Is there objection? The Chair hears none, and it is so ordered.

Mr. WELLSTONE. Before I start, I also wanted to find out how long we will be in morning business and whether or not there will be opportunities to introduce amendments to the fast-track bill?

In other words, I understand the amendment will be laid aside, but I want to know whether there are opportunities to introduce the amendments to fast track.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. That is a parliamentary issue that will be handled by the majority leader. We are not prepared to answer that question.

Mr. WELLSTONE. I will just say in the Chamber and I will check with the leader, I do have an amendment on human rights that I would like to offer. We may or may not get to fast track, but this would be an opportunity I think to have the discussion.

#### WELFARE, HEALTH CARE, AND CAMPAIGN FINANCE REFORM

Mr. WELLSTONE. Mr. President, I wanted to take this time Sunday afternoon as we approach the end of this session to talk about some unfinished business for the Congress and I think for the Nation. I really was moved, and I do not usually use that word, by the eloquence of my colleague, Senator DURBIN, from Illinois. As I came in, I heard Senator DURBIN talk about children and talk about early years and talk about early childhood development and talk about whether or not we as a nation are going to make a commitment to affordable child care.

I want to talk about a really difficult issue for the Senate, for the Congress, and I think for the White House, and when we come back for me this will be one of the first items of business. I want us to have discussion and I would like to see whether or not we would be willing to perhaps take some important action.

I am talking about the bill that was passed which was called welfare reform. Mr. President, some of what was in that bill represented over \$50 billion

of cuts in the name of deficit reduction in the major food nutrition program in the country, food stamps—20 percent cut for families, most of them working families, most of the recipients children. And the other part was the cuts in benefits to legal immigrants, some of which has been corrected, some of which has not.

What worries me—and I have traveled the country and spent quite a bit of time in low-income communities. I haven't just focused on welfare, but I have been to the delta in Mississippi with Congressman BENNIE THOMPSON; I have been to eastern Kentucky, to Letcher County, Whitesburg, KY; I have been to Chicago in housing projects, and, of course, I have been in Minnesota, both urban and rural, and I have been to L.A., East L.A., and Watts. One of the things that worries me is that I see in many articles and too much of the media coverage and certainly too much of what I hear from both Democrats and Republicans in Washington that welfare reform has been a success as defined by reduction of caseload. Any Democrat, any Republican, or any fool can knock people off the welfare rolls. That has nothing to do with reform. The only way reform can be defined is not by reduction of caseload but by reduction of poverty. Are these families, in the main headed by women and children, better off?

I heard my colleague from Illinois talk about child care, and if my colleague was here I would tell him about some just very emotional experiences that I have had, meeting with some of the women who have now been told they are to work, and they work. But their concern is about what happens to their children. You know, just because they are poor, just because they are welfare mothers, doesn't make them, or doesn't make their children, any less worthy, any less important.

In Los Angeles, for example, in L.A., one city, they have a waiting list of 30,000 families for affordable child care. That is before the welfare bill. The question I ask colleagues is, where are these children? Fine, the mothers are now working. Do we know where the children are? Where are they? Who is taking care of them? Is it developmental child care? Is it just custodial? Or are they even in harm's way? We don't know. But we should know. We passed the legislation.

I met a woman, and this story of this one mother unfortunately is the story of other mothers. She said to me, "I want to work." By the way, almost all the people I meet want to work. That's a big thing to people in our country, to be able to work and make a decent wage and support your family. And also to be able to give your children the care you know they need and deserve. But I am meeting some of these mothers. We told them we would sort of delegate this to the States and they would work.

Here is what they say to me, what this one mother in L.A. said. I then visited actually where she lived, public

housing in east L.A. She said to me: "I want to work but I am so frightened because my first grader goes home alone every day. I worry about what happens to her from the time she leaves school to when she gets back to the apartment"—public housing. "There are gangs, there is violence. I tell her to go into the apartment, lock the door, and don't take any phone calls."

I would like to ask Senators, how many of you would like for your first graders, whether they are your children or your grandchildren, to go home alone? Actually, to go home to wherever you live, much less in the neighborhoods and communities that are so dangerous. In the debate that we had on welfare reform, did anybody ever talk about these children? I never heard a word.

We talk a lot about early childhood development, which is very important. We talk a lot about after-school programs for teenagers, which is critically important. But what about these first and second graders? I think there are too many children in our country right now, because of what is happening around the country, who are in danger. And I think it is our responsibility to know what is going on. Speeches do not suffice.

When I was in Letcher County, KY, I spent quite a bit of time with Carroll Smith, who is the county executive, Republican—county Judge, which is like the county executive; just a great, great guy. It was interesting, though. He and others were saying to me, did anyone ever mention the word "rural" when you all passed that bill? Because in the absence of access to capital and our seeing economic development in our community, we don't know where the jobs are going to be.

The Wall Street Journal had—I haven't even had a chance to read the article from cover to cover—a very long, extensive piece about Delta, MS, where lots of people can't find jobs, or have to drive 60, 70 miles. Again, you have two things going on here. No. 1, there are not the jobs where people live in rural America. No. 2, the jobs that quite often these women are getting maybe pay \$6 an hour. They are going to be worse off than they were before, because there will not be health care after a while, and they don't know what to do by way of child care.

It seems to me that one of the things that we need to do is at least call on the States to provide us with an evaluation, maybe every 6 months or every year, on how families are doing toward attaining the goal of economic self-sufficiency. Because if we don't do that, 4 years from now all these families are off all assistance. Don't you think, before we have some tragedy, we ought to at least know what is going on? I am going to have an amendment, a piece of legislation which I will bring to the floor of the Senate and we will have that vote.

Mr. President, I go to the communities. It has been very moving. I hope

to get a chance to write a long piece about what I have learned from people. But I don't find that the issues that people in low-income communities are talking about are really different than issues that other working families are talking about. The first question is: Where are the jobs that pay a decent wage? This is still one of the most important challenges for most families in our country. It is an important challenge in poor communities: Where are the jobs? And we are going to have to have an urban jobs program if we are serious about reducing poverty and making sure that families have a chance. Also, we are going to have to do a lot better by way of making sure that, if people work 40 hours a week, 52 weeks a year, they are not poor. If people play by the rules of the game and they work hard, they ought not to be poor. That is where child care fits in. That is where health care fits in. And not just for low-income families, but for the vast majority of families in our country.

I heard my colleague from Illinois speak. I was so pleased to hear what he said. But I would like to challenge both Republicans and Democrats, because I think that what is going on here is we have a debate that, in a way, may take us nowhere, or at least certainly not connect very well with a lot of people in our country.

On the one hand my friend Jeff Faux has written a very interesting piece where he argues this. I will take a piece of what Jeff says. On the one hand, for example, we have the majority party, the Republican Party, which argues—at the risk of getting the Chair angry at me—which argues, when it comes to some of these most pressing issues, for example affordable child care, there is nothing the Government can or should do. My argument is that is a great philosophy if you own your own large corporation and you are wealthy, but it doesn't work for most of the people in the country. On the other hand, you have the Democratic Party that says we are all for the children, we are all for education, we are all for job training. But, do you know what? Politically there is not anything we can do either. We just have to cut taxes because politically that is the only way we can make it. In which case neither party has a whole lot to say to the very families we are talking about, at least if you get beyond speeches and conferences.

We have had enough speeches. We have had enough conferences. The question is whether or not we are going to go beyond the speeches and the conferences and dig into our pockets and make the kind of investment that we need to make as a nation. I think the question for all of us is how can we renew our national vow of equal opportunity for every child in America? That is the goodness of our country. That ought to be the central goal of public policy here in the Congress. I make a commitment, as a Senator

from Minnesota, to bring that kind of legislation out on the floor, working with others, with the financing, with the investment, so this isn't empty rhetoric. We ought not to separate the budgets we introduce from the words that we speak.

Finally, let me make one other point. My training is as a political scientist—I was a college teacher before I became a U.S. Senator—not as a political economist, although I am interested in political economy. There is something very interesting and very important going on in our country, which is now we have reports about record low levels of unemployment. The GDP looking great. Productivity is up. But real wages of most families are down. The economy of American families is not measured by GDP, it is not measured by all these official statistics. It is measured by real family income. It is measured by whether or not people can purchase the things that make life richer in possibilities. It is measured by opportunities. It is measured by security or insecurity. And it is measured by our expectations for our children and our grandchildren. And by that criterion, a whole lot of families could be doing better and we could be doing better as a nation.

One of the issues that I think is a living-room issue in America, a kitchen-table issue, that we are going to have to have the courage to take on, is health care. We can have patient protection—I am all for that. We can have provider protection—I am all for that. We can try to control some of these large insurance companies that own and control most of the managed care plans—I am all for that. But the fact of the matter is, we have now moved from 40 to 44 million people or thereabouts without any health insurance since we first started talking about this 3 years ago; more than twice that number of underinsured, and the vast majority of people in the country, not just low-income—either people are not old enough for Medicare, and Medicare doesn't cover prescription drug costs, it doesn't cover catastrophic expenses, or people aren't poor enough for medical assistance and they are not lucky enough to be able to work for an employer who provides them with good health care coverage.

We ought to have humane, dignified, affordable health care for every man, woman, and child in our Nation. For me, next session, that will be my priority—with the financing, clear with people in the country how you pay for it. But I am telling you, large insurance companies don't like it. And there are a whole bunch of other powerful interests that don't like it. But the majority of people in this country know that this system is in big-time crisis. It is time we get back to this issue as a Congress.

I really do think that, as we think about what we have done and what we have not done—I will just talk a little bit about what we haven't done in the

few minutes I have left. I think these standard of living issues are the critical issues. I think, unfortunately, Jeff Faux is right, neither party is telling the story that gives people any confidence that much is going to happen that is good for them. And I think we could do better, all of us.

And in addition, the one other issue that we did not get the job done on, and it is critically important, is campaign finance reform. When I go into cafes in Minnesota, this is one thing I don't gloat about. I am not even pleased to say it, but it is true. Because it is aimed at me. It is aimed at all of us. The vast majority of people I talk to in cafes believe both parties now—they just sort of view the Government as being controlled by wealthy financial interests. They just feel locked out. They feel like it is for big players and heavy hitters. And, you know what, all of us have to raise money. That's what we have to do. That's not the point. I did. We all do. That's the system right now.

We should change this. We didn't, not this time. We come back to it next year. But this is a real important issue and it is not that people don't care about it. They care about it deeply and desperately. And I think they want to believe in the political process. They want to believe in Government. But we are going to continue to see a tremendous amount of cynicism and apathy and disengagement and disillusionment unless we get as much of this money out of politics as possible. We know what the criterion is. We have talked about it enough. It is time to really move forward. It can't just be like a piece of legislation where we maybe do one thing but then all the money shifts somewhere else. Then people will just be even more disillusioned. I think this is a core issue.

There are a lot of good things all of us could do here. A lot of good things get trumped by big money in politics.

Mr. President, I will conclude—how much time do I have left?

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator has 1 minute and 41 seconds.

Mr. WELLSTONE. Let me just conclude by thanking all the conferees on the Labor, Health and Human Services appropriations bill, especially for all the women and men in the Parkinson's community who worked so hard to make sure that we have some clear directive to NIH about making sure that there will now be some real investment of resources in research to find the cure to Parkinson's disease. It has been one of the greatest lobbying efforts I have ever seen here. It was citizen lobbyists, people who struggle with this disease, who once upon a time were kind of embarrassed to be public and be out and about. People have been there.

All of you in the Parkinson's community, you have set a really good model for the Nation. Because if we had more people like you coming to Washington, DC, it would be a better Congress.

We need to get a lot more ordinary citizens coming to Washington or

meeting with us back in our States. I just hope more and more people will be like that. It was a really fine victory.

Mr. President, I presume then there will not be an opportunity—my colleagues are on the floor as well—we are not going back to fast track, is that correct?

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Correct.

Mr. WELLSTONE. And there is not an opportunity to offer amendments? I ask the majority party as to when I might have an opportunity to offer an amendment to fast track? I will do it later—I see my colleagues on the floor—but will there be an opportunity?

The PRESIDING OFFICER. As was indicated to the Senator, the Chair does not think that has been arranged, and it will depend upon the instructions from the leader.

Mr. WELLSTONE. I yield the floor.

#### EXTENSION OF MORNING BUSINESS

Mr. ROTH. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that morning business be extended until 3:30 p.m.

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Mr. KYL). Is there objection? Without objection, it is so ordered.

Mr. KERREY addressed the Chair.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Nebraska.

#### UNANIMOUS-CONSENT REQUEST— H.R. 2676

Mr. KERREY. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the Senate proceed immediately to H.R. 2676, the IRS Restructuring Act of 1997 by discharging this legislation from the Senate Finance Committee to which it was referred on Thursday; that the bill be read a third time and passed and the motion to reconsider be laid upon the table.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Is there objection?

Mr. ROTH. Mr. President, I rise to object to the unanimous-consent request made by my distinguished colleague, Senator BOB KERREY. The process of his seeking a UC agreement and my objecting is into its fourth day now. I do want to say publicly that I appreciate the civil and courteous manner in which the process has unfolded.

It is my opinion that what unites Senator KERREY and me is more significant than what divides us. His successful commission has done essential work in uncovering weaknesses and shortcomings within the IRS. The 3 days of hearings we held in the Finance Committee disclosed others. Both of us are well aware of the changes that must be made within the agency.

Senator KERREY is right when he says the vast majority of our colleagues would vote to pass the legislation which passed the House by a vote of 426 to 4. Indeed, when one looks at the abuses and inefficiency of the IRS,

it is hard to resist the argument that any reform is better than no reform at all. Senator KERREY is correct in saying that the legislation he proposes would make important reforms to the IRS, but he is also right in saying that the legislation is not complete. It has weaknesses, and I must emphasize very, very serious weaknesses.

Mr. President, the simple truth is that I am not willing to compromise on real reform. I am not willing to rush into legislation that does not go far enough to address the changes that must take place within the agency, especially when rushing in will adversely impact the potential of passing real reform later. The fact is, this reform falls short of what we need to accomplish.

The New York Times reports that "tax experts across the country say the practical benefits of the [legislation advocated by Senator KERREY] will be minor." According to Stuart E. Seigel, a former chief counsel of the IRS, "Most of the bill's provisions are very limited and will not have a significant impact on most taxpayers."

Senator KERREY suggests that each day the Senate delays in passing what the New York Times calls minor changes, some 150,000 people will be affected as they continue to receive notices from the IRS. Yet, another report in the Times makes it clear that "the provisions in [this 'watered down'] bill are [so] narrowly drawn [that it] would affect relatively few people."

Senator KERREY himself has made it clear that "this [bill] doesn't go far enough." The Wall Street Journal of November 3, 1997. And Newsweek reports that the strong measures aimed at reform have been eviscerated.

The question all of this begs is simple: Why compromise? If Senator KERREY suggests this bill doesn't go far enough, if we have a growing consensus among tax practitioners, taxpayers, and the media that the bill is deficient, and if we have the conviction in Congress and the sentiment at home that something significant must be done, why are we willing to compromise?

The bottom line, Mr. President, is that I am not willing to compromise. Some would suggest that half a loaf is better than none; that we can come back and stiffen up this legislation later.

Well, we know where that will lead. If we pass this reform legislation, then those who are not anxious to pass further reforms will resist a new bill. The truth is that we will get only one real chance to reform the IRS, and we had better do it right.

There are several significant issues we need to address. We should begin by giving the oversight board called for in this legislation, and if we adopt such a board, the authority to look at audit and collection activities. More than 70 percent of Americans think poor treatment in audits occurs fairly regularly, yet this legislation expressly prohibits the oversight board from having jurisdiction over audits and enforcement.