

residents on fixed incomes, who need milk at affordable prices.

At a time when many low-income families are being hurt by severe cuts in food stamp benefits, the compact's milk price increases are especially distressing. The purchase power for food stamp recipients decreased by more than a half-million dollars in the first three months after the compact's decision. Over the coming year, the compact will cost the state's poorest residents more than \$1 million in lost purchasing power.

Government programs that provide food benefits for children are also particularly vulnerable. National statistics show that children are the biggest milk consumers. In fact, while children constitute only 29 percent of the U.S. population, they drink 49 percent of all milk sold. In Massachusetts, over the first three months alone, the increased expense for school lunch programs, which provide many children with the one nutritious meal they have each day, was \$400,000. By September 1998, the compact will cost school lunch programs statewide almost \$2 million.

Massachusetts Commissioner of Agriculture Jay Healy, a member of the Compact Commission, recently proposed an amendment to exempt school lunch programs from the milk tax, but that attempt was rejected by other commission members.

I recognize that the compact's goal is to help subsidize New England dairy farmers, but penalizing the low-income, elderly, and children is not the best method. Increased training and tax relief programs are among the options we should consider. Alternatives to the compact are necessary and could involve initiating lending programs with banks for preferential interest rates to small farmers, or creating tax-relief initiatives on land transfers, so families are not penalized when farms are transferred from one generation to the next.

It is now in the hands of the five Massachusetts members of the Northeast Dairy Compact Commission. At the December compact meeting, the Massachusetts delegation should offer a motion to rescind their previous vote in favor of the milk tax. Low-income families, children, and senior citizens cannot afford to bear this burden.

Mr. GRAMS. Opposition to the Compact is growing among state legislators from the New England area. One state may even be attempting to pull out of the Compact. Those regions with the most to lose are densely populated and have fewer dairy farmers relative to other regions. The result is an effective subsidization by urban consumers.

A milk tax that burdens financially stressed working families—especially those of lower-income, who rely on reasonable and affordable milk—is wrong. It is high time we put an end to partisan, regional politics which block real, long-term, assistance for dairy farmers.

I intend to continue my efforts to oppose the Northeast Dairy Compact. This will include fighting to obtain a comprehensive, informative study on its effects and consequences.

Mr. CLELAND addressed the Chair.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Georgia [Mr. CLELAND] is recognized.

Mr. CLELAND. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent to speak for 12 minutes.

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

(The remarks of Mr. CLELAND pertaining to the introduction of S. 1664 are located in today's RECORD under "Statements on Introduced Bills and Joint Resolutions.")

THE VERY BAD DEBT BOXSCORE

Mr. HELMS. Mr. President, at the close of business Friday, February 20, 1998, the Federal debt stood at \$5,518,340,599,802.18 (Five trillion, five hundred eighteen billion, three hundred forty million, five hundred ninety-nine thousand, eight hundred two dollars and eighteen cents).

One year ago, February 20, 1997, the Federal debt stood at \$5,340,668,000,000 (Five trillion, three hundred forty billion, six hundred sixty-eight million).

Twenty-five years ago, February 20, 1973, the Federal debt stood at \$452,362,000,000 (Four hundred fifty-two billion, three hundred sixty-two million) which reflects a debt increase of more than \$5 trillion—\$5,065,978,599,802.18 (Five trillion, sixty-five billion, nine hundred seventy-eight million, five hundred ninety-nine thousand, eight hundred two dollars and eighteen cents) during the past 25 years.

MEDICAL AID TO ETHIOPIA

Mr. ASHCROFT. Mr. President, I rise today to acknowledge and honor the achievement of Assist International, World Serv, the Hewlett Packard Foundation, and the Erie Area Chamber of Commerce in delivering medical aid to the people of Ethiopia. This group of organizations has worked to provide medical equipment to Ethiopia that can save hundreds of lives. This generous gift, valued at over one million dollars, will bring hope and health to many in Ethiopia.

These organizations and the concerned Americans associated with them have demonstrated the true spirit of charity. The group cooperatively has donated a state-of-the-art cardiac heart monitoring unit to the Black Lion Hospital—Ethiopia's leading teaching medical facility. In addition to the cardiac unit, beds, mattresses, and other system support equipment will be provided.

World Serv and Assist International have a strong history of providing humanitarian aid to relieve human suffering in needy countries. Assist International donated medical equipment to a site in Mongolia which was then approved by the World Health Organization to perform open heart surgery. The Hewlett Packard Foundation donated the medical equipment in the Black Lion Project in its goal to ease human suffering internationally. Finally, the Chamber of Commerce of Erie, Pennsylvania, has joined together with the other organizations and has raised the funding for transportation, installation, and training costs of this project. Specifically, I commend the Erie Area Chamber of Commerce for

this cooperative effort and for holding the third annual "Aid to Africa" banquet to raise funds for humanitarian projects.

The Black Lion project is an example of the compassion and generosity that other countries appreciate and admire in the United States. It gives me great pleasure as the chairman of the Senate Foreign Relations Africa Subcommittee to know that Americans are finding ways within the private sector to aid other countries in Africa. It is my pleasure to ask the members of the Senate to join me in recognizing and honoring the work of the members and staff of Assist International, World Serv, the Hewlett Packard Foundation, and the Erie Area Chamber of Commerce.

JOSEPH CHESHIRE WEBB (1915-1998)

Mr. HELMS. Mr. President, as I speak, the countless friends of Joe Webb have been sadly saying farewell to him at services today in Raleigh and at Saint Matthews Church cemetery in Hillsborough, Joe's final resting place.

Joseph Cheshire Webb, 83, died this past Friday afternoon after a distinguished career as trust officer for Wachovia Bank and Trust Company in Raleigh—which he had served for decades as head of that bank's trust department.

But it was not merely Joe's able service as a highly respected banker that earned for him the wide circle of friends who were saddened by the news of his passing.

Joe was thoughtful and caring without fail—and his sense of humor made him welcome everywhere he went.

In other words, he was a genuinely good guy, a sincere and honorable friend. His service in the Navy during World War II, his participation in the civic and business life of Raleigh and the State of North Carolina, and the sincerity of his friendly personality earned for him the respect and affection of all who knew him.

To all of us who knew Joe Webb well, he was what the late Senator Dick Russell of Georgia so often referred to as "one of Nature's Noblemen."

I am proud to have been his friend, Mr. President, and to have him as mine. I shall miss him.

ROGER STEVENS—A GIANT FOR THE PERFORMING ARTS

Mr. KENNEDY. Mr. President, with the death of Roger Stevens earlier this month, the nation lost one of its greatest leaders in the arts. Roger Stevens was the Founding Chairman and unstoppable visionary for the John F. Kennedy Center for the Performing Arts. Just inside the entrance of the Center is a bust of Roger Stevens with those words inscribed to him.

Roger Stevens was a real estate magnate who loved the excitement, energy and creativity of American theater. During his lifetime, he produced hundreds of plays and musicals, including