

As we move further and further into the information age, the national government must ensure that competition is not eliminated. The Department of Justice should therefore be commended for acting to protect consumers and businesses alike. Similarly, Microsoft deserves credit for agreeing to settle the issue of bundling its operating system software with its internet browser software in what the Department of Justice believed to be a fair and equitable manner. Both made the right call.●

#### SANCTITY OF THE BALLOT

● Mr. COVERDELL. Mr. President, yesterday's Wall Street Journal lead editorial entitled "Sanctity of the Ballot" should be a wakeup call for America's citizens. Sadly, we can no longer assume public officials tasked with protecting your vote are able to do so. The fact is, passage of the Motor Voter Act has led to growing incidences of election fraud in communities large and small, and the problem is getting worse all the time.

The editorial highlights an important new national organization, the Voting Integrity Project (VIP), which was formed in 1996 in response to the growing abuses highlighted by the Journal. VIP is a non-profit, non-partisan coalition of citizens and civic groups. It organizes and trains citizens to protect the integrity of the vote in their own community. It also investigates and litigates important election fraud cases, including constitutional issues. It is the only independent, national organization performing this important work.

Mr. President, VIP has learned that it is nearly impossible to overturn elections once they have been certified and places its emphasis accordingly, in pro-active programs run by the citizens themselves. Indeed, American voters need to wake up to the harsh reality of today's election process and begin to equip themselves, through organizations such as VIP, to guard the sanctity of their communities' elections and their vote.

I ask that the text of the editorial be printed in the RECORD.

The editorial follows:

[From the Wall Street Journal, Mar. 2, 1998]  
SANCTITY OF THE BALLOT

In a rush to make it as easy as possible for citizens to exercise their right to vote, the country has created lax registration and voting procedures that could call into question a close election any number of states. The 1983 federal Motor Voter law requires states to allow people to register to vote when they get a driver's license, even though 47 states don't require proof of legal US residence much less citizenship for such a license. "We have the modern world's sloppiest electoral system," warns political scientist Walter Dean Burnham.

Media and political elites pooh-poo such concerns, but they are genuine and growing. The House of Representatives has just dismissed an election challenge by former Rep. Bob Dornan of California. But buried in the

news that Rep. Loretta Sanchez would keep her seat was the conclusion of a House task force that 748 illegal votes had been cast in an election decided by only 979 votes.

The year long investigation established 624 "documented" cases of non-citizens voting. Another 124 voters cast improper absentee ballots. An additional 196 votes may well have been illegal, but only circumstantial evidence existed. "In the end of the day," says GOP task force member Rep. Robert Ney, "Bob Dornan was right—there were illegal voters." In the Sanchez race they represented close to 1% of all votes cast. The danger is that if this is tolerated, it will only get worse.

In the wake of the Sanchez-Dornan dispute, Rep. Steve Horn, a California Republican, called for a vote on a pilot program to combat fraud in five large states. Local and state officials would be allowed, but not required, to check citizenship records with Social Security and the Immigration and Naturalization Service. If they couldn't verify citizenship, the voter would have to prove his or her status or risk being dropped from the rolls. The program included privacy protections and a requirement that it be "uniform, nondiscriminatory, and in compliance with the Voting Rights Act of 1965."

This sensible and sensitive proposal doesn't unduly trample on immigrant rights. Almost half the states already ask for all or part of the Social Security number to register to vote. But Democrats, fresh from Ms. Sanchez's triumph, practically accused Rep. Horn of reinventing the poll tax and literacy tests of the Jim Crow era. "It is a shame, it is a disgrace," said Rep. John Lewis, a veteran of the civil rights movement.

In the end, the bill won a 210-200 majority, but it failed because it was brought to the floor under a rule requiring a two-thirds majority. Rep. Horn hopes to have a vote under normal rules within a month. He points to a growing body of evidence that the potential for vote fraud is growing, noting some in the shadow of the U.S. Capitol itself.

In Washington, D.C. an astonishing one of every six registered voters can't be reached at their address of record. The city has lost 100,000 people since 1980, but registration has shot up to 86% of eligible voters from only 58%. Nationally, the average registration rate is only 66%. Felons, dead people, non-residents and fictitious registrations clog the rolls in Washington, where anyone can walk up and vote without showing I.D.

Across the Potomac River in Virginia, Robert Beers, the voter registrar of prosperous Fairfax County, says the Motor Voter law has increased the number of registered voters, but turnout has actually fallen in recent elections. "There is no question in my mind that we have registered people who aren't U.S. citizens," Mr. Beers told the Washington Times. "Nobody worries about the rolls until you get to the election that's decided by three votes. I wish they would pay attention to it before it gets to that point." He is backing a state bill to require voters to show some type of photo I.D.

Last month Mississippi's legislature passed a motor voter law, but Governor Kirk Fordice issued a veto because it lacked a voter I.D. provision. "Vote fraud is an equal opportunity election stealer," he says. His concerns about improper registrations are echoed elsewhere. The Miami Herald has found that 105 ballots in last year's disputed mayoral election were cast by felons. Last month a local grand jury concluded that "absentee ballot fraud clearly played an important part in the recent City of Miami elections." This "called into question the legitimacy of the results."

In San Francisco, the Voting Integrity Project has filed suit to overturn a ref-

erendum that approved a new stadium. They cite evidence of actions by city and stadium officials to tilt the results toward a pro-stadium vote. The scandal has already been marked by the registrations of the city's election supervisor and Edward DeBartolo, chairman of the San Francisco 49ers.

Everyone supports the right to vote, but an equally important right is the guarantee of elections that are fair and free of fraud. Right now a growing number of states can't guarantee the integrity of their results, and that inevitably will lead to an increasing cynicism and disenchantment with the democratic process.●

#### NATO EXPANSION AND THE EU

● Mr. MOYNIHAN. Mr. President, today the Senate Foreign Relations Committee has reported the Resolution of Ratification to NATO enlargement. It is appropriate at this time to inform my colleagues of my intention to offer a condition to the Resolution of Ratification when it comes to the Senate for debate linking NATO expansion with economic expansion. I am pleased to be joined in this effort by the senior Senator from Virginia, Senator WARNER.

The former Majority Leader, Howard Baker, Jr., our colleague Sam Nunn, Brent Scowcroft, and Alton Frye recently wrote an article for The New York Times in which they assert that "Linking NATO expansion to the expansion of the European Union would underscore the connection between Europe's security and its economy—and offer certification that entrants to NATO could afford to meet its defense obligations."

It is our contention that Poland, Hungary, and the Czech Republic face no security threats, so strengthening their economies and democratic institutions should be their first priority.

All three of the candidates are eager to join the European Union (EU), which has now decided to begin accession negotiations with them. NATO's decision at Madrid to invite these countries to negotiate for membership preceded the EU offer to negotiate accession. The EU's offer affords the Senate an opportunity to lend support to these countries' bid for EU membership, without accepting any presumption that entry into the EU guarantees admission to NATO.

A provision to link admission to NATO with admission to the EU will encourage expeditious negotiations by the EU, and will allow the three countries to concentrate their full resources on economic modernization, rather than diverting precious resources to military expenditures.

I ask that the text of the condition be printed in the RECORD.

The text of the condition follows:

At the end of section of the resolution (relating to conditions), add the following:

( ) DEFERRAL OF RATIFICATION OF NATO ENLARGEMENT UNTIL ADMISSION OF POLAND, HUNGARY, AND CZECH REPUBLIC TO THE EUROPEAN UNION.—

(A) PROHIBITION.—The President shall not deposit the United States instrument of ratification prior to the latest date by which Poland, Hungary, and the Czech Republic have

acceded to membership in the European Union and have each engaged in initial voting participation in an official action of the European Union.

(B) **RULE OF CONSTRUCTION.**—Nothing in this paragraph may be construed as an expression by the Senate of an intent to accept as a new NATO member any country other than Poland, Hungary, or the Czech Republic if that country becomes a member of the European Union after the date of adoption of this resolution.●

#### CONGRATULATIONS TO COMMUNITY HOSPITAL AND NURSING HOME OF ANACONDA

● **Mr. BURNS.** Mr. President, it is my pleasure to congratulate Community Hospital and Nursing Home of Anaconda, Montana, for being listed among the top 100 hospitals in the nation in 1997. The entire staff of Community Hospital, from CEO Sam Allen on down, should be very proud of their hard work and success in caring for the Anaconda community.

This distinction is based on an annual performance measurement including patient care, operations, and financial management conducted by HCIA and William M. Mercer, Inc. The study, 100 Top Hospitals—Benchmarks for Success, looked at 1,300 hospitals with fewer than 99 acute-care beds, and Community was one of 20 that made the Top 100 from that size category.

The performance measures of the Benchmarks for Success are objective—such as risk-adjusted mortality index and expense per adjusted discharge (case mix and wage adjusted)—which means that Community Hospital's success is documented by experts in the field. I know that Community's patients and staff knew this without the performance study, but I point this out because this isn't a typical award. Community has built itself into a national model, and for that I congratulate them.●

#### ABRAHAM SPEECH ON BUDGET SURPLUS

● **Mr. COVERDELL.** Mr. President, I rise to share with my colleagues a speech which I believe provides a number of important ideas and policy positions we should be discussing as we enter the era of budget surpluses.

Because of strong economic growth, the Office of Management and Budget reports that we will begin running a surplus in 2001, and that surplus will total \$447 billion by 2005.

In a speech before the Detroit Economic Club on February 17, Senator ABRAHAM sought to start a dialogue on how best we as a nation could approach the upcoming and unaccustomed circumstance of budget surpluses. In my view he offered excellent suggestions on how to save Social Security, provide comprehensive tax reform and invest in infrastructure and human capital, all within the confines of a limited budget surplus.

His specific proposals, limited private investment accounts within the

Social Security system, an alternative flat tax and scholarships for low income students entering hi-tech fields, all deserve our attention. It is my hope that they will help spur fruitful debate concerning how we can best approach the new century with continued economic growth, expanding opportunity and confidence in our fellow citizens.

I ask that Senator ABRAHAM's speech be printed in the RECORD immediately following my remarks.

The speech follows.

#### SURPLUS POLITICS: WHAT CONGRESS SHOULD DO

By Senator Spencer Abraham

Before I begin today, I would like to say a few words about the situation in Iraq. When I last spoke here a year ago, it was under very different circumstances. Today we face an imminent crisis in the Middle East. As you know, it is entirely possible that our troops, including a member of my own staff, may soon find themselves in a combat situation. I know I speak for everyone in this room when I say how proud we are of the young people defending our country, and how much we appreciate all that they have sacrificed already. I also know that I speak for everyone here when I say that I hope and pray that we can settle this crisis through diplomatic means, without putting our troops in harm's way. But if we can't, I know we will all support them in every way possible.

#### THE ECONOMY

But I came here to talk about a more pleasant subject: our economy. And I think this is a pleasant subject for the simple reason that the news continues to be good. Gross Domestic Product is up 3.7 percent over last year, in real terms, that's up 16.3 percent since 1994. Inflation is down to 1.7 percent, down 27 percent since 1994. Unemployment last year averaged just 4.9 percent, down from 6.1 percent in 1994. Interest Rates are at 30 year lows, and down 20 percent from 1994. Industrial production is up 5.9 percent over last year and 14 percent since 1994. And we finally have managed to pass a balanced budget—one that includes tax cuts for working Americans.

The issue we face today, in my view, is "how can we keep this economic growth going strong into the next century?" And I think we can see the outlines of a workable program right here in Michigan. If we look back to 1990, we can see the progress we have made here in Michigan, as well as how we have made it.

In 1990, Michigan had the highest unemployment rate of any industrial state and a \$1.8 billion deficit, on a budget of only \$8 billion. Now our state is a thriving, fiscally responsible beacon for free enterprise. Since 1990 Michigan has created well over half a million new jobs, brought unemployment down to well under 4 percent, and produced balanced budgets and even a budget surplus.

How did we get here from there? John Engler became governor, and he cut taxes over 20 times, instituted a program of regulatory reforms lessening the burden of a state government on our job creators, brought spending under control and balanced the state budget.

But Governor Engler knows that you can never simply rest on your laurels, particularly when the goal is continued prosperity. That is why, if the Governor gets his way, we'll cut taxes and regulations further and expand our pro-growth policies into the next century.

On the national level we can't rest on our laurels either. The question is, how can we

best build on our recent progress? Because of strong economic growth, for the first time in recent memory we face the prospect of budget surpluses. According to the Office of Management and Budget, we will begin running a surplus in 2001, and that surplus will total \$447 billion by 2005.

#### SURPLUS OPTIONS

Assuming we can maintain the budgetary discipline and economic growth necessary to fully realize it, the question is, what are we going to do with this surplus? Now, just about everyone in Washington, DC has their own answer to this question. They fall into four camps. Some say that we should use it to cut taxes. Others respond that we should use it to pay down the national debt. Still others have called on us to use it to "save Social Security." Finally, a number of people have said that we should use the surplus to invest in social programs, human capital and infrastructure.

Of course, all of these answers sound good—but how we handle the specifics is very crucial.

First let's look at those who say simply "cut taxes." That sounds good. I for one believe that one of the reasons Republicans were put on this Earth was to cut taxes. But how? Do we just continue the recent approach of more targeted tax cuts, as the President suggests? Cut a tax here, create a deduction there?

Last year's tax cut was needed and welcome. But the legislation putting it into effect added or amended over 800 sections in an already complicated tax code. I question whether we should just continue down that path.

Paying down the national debt sounds appealing too. But what does it really mean? Remember, even if we use the entire projected surplus, we would only pay down less than 10 percent of the debt. And don't forget, a significant portion of the debt is held by foreign investors. Does it really make sense to use American taxpayers' dollars to make early debt payments, to foreign investors like the central banks of China, Japan and Germany?

Saving Social Security as the President suggests is a good idea too. But how we might employ a short range surplus to do it is the issue. For example, if we simply dump the budget surplus into the Social Security Trust Fund, it would only extend the life of Social Security for less than 2 years.

Which brings us to the fourth and final option: investing the surplus in social human capital and infrastructure. Again, the question is, what does this mean? Based on the President's speech and the comments of other such advocates in Washington, it means rebuilding the Great Society, restoring many of the welfare programs we reformed and launching new programs which will be impossible to end or reduce at a later date.

As my colleague Chuck Grassley says, it appears that "the era of saying that the era of big government is over, is over."

As I have said, in Washington the debate over these choices has begun. And for the most part the attitude is that they are mutually exclusive. Moreover, because too much of the early thinking takes a "business as usual" approach as described above, rather than a creative and innovative one, we aren't likely to make much progress on any front. To have impact we must think in terms of new ideas and approaches. And, a set of strong pro-growth policies must underlie any strategy for using the surplus.

If we are creative in this sense, I believe it is possible for us to attack the burdensome tax code, the looming Social Security crisis, the human capital and infrastructure challenges we confront, and our gargantuan debt, and make great progress on all fronts.