

Security's current work incentive system has had limited success. Out of 7.5 million people who are social security disability beneficiaries, less than one percent can take advantage of these work incentives and actually are employed. The benefits offered are too expensive, time limited, and offer too few health care services for the many persons with disabilities who wish to work.

For many years I have assessed why so few disabled social security beneficiaries return to work. The primary barriers relate to their inability to obtain or keep adequate and affordable health care coverage. For example, disabled social security beneficiaries who return to work are covered through Medicare, but after 39 months they must pay full fare for their health benefits—more than \$370 every month. I seriously doubt that even a well-off person can afford to pay this rate every month over the course of their working life. In fact, out of more than 3.5 million beneficiaries, only 114 have chosen to take advantage of this Medicare coverage, preferring the alternative—staying at home and receiving it for free. I don't know whether they prefer it; that is probably not right.

Another barrier to work is the inability to get coverage for certain medical services. These services are usually unavailable in the private markets. If they are available, they are unaffordable. Necessities like personal assistance services and prescription drug coverage are offered through some state Medicaid plans, but disabled social security beneficiaries who need access to these Medicaid services must impoverish themselves to get them. Many are doing just that. These disabled social security individuals who have coverage for low-income Medicaid, called "dual eligibles," are the fastest growing entitlement population in the government.

The Work Incentives Improvement Act will provide access to appropriate health insurance for those persons with disabilities who wish to return to work. Many of these beneficiaries will be eligible for affordable Medicare. Beneficiaries will have access to limited Medicaid services through State Work Options Programs. They will be able to access critical services like Personal Assistance and prescription drugs in states that chose to offer them. Such incentives will allow people to return to work, confident in the knowledge that they will both keep their health care and get coverage for other needed services.

No one in this body can disagree with the idea that work is a central part of the American dream. This budget resolution should provide funding for these and other initiatives designed to allow people with disabilities to work. Providing cost-effective assistance for people to work is both fiscally responsible and morally right. Those who work will become fully contributing members of society by paying for their own

insurance coverage, and as taxpaying citizens of our nation, paying for these government programs as a whole.

Inaction by this body will ensure that our Government continues to deny a person's dream to get back to work to help himself, to help herself, to pay taxes, to be able to participate in our society in a meaningful way. I hope the Senate will move ahead to resolve this problem and help persons with disabilities realize their dream to work.

I wish everyone had a chance to be at the press conference we held with former leader Bob Dole and Justin Dart and other leaders in this field to see the expression on their faces and the joy that came when we announced what we would do to help those who were assembled to be able to participate in the workplace. I can assure Members that this bill—we have had CBO estimates much lower than previous estimates. It is hard to conceive why it costs money because all you are doing is allowing people benefits to work and to start paying taxes and to contribute to the cost.

It is very difficult for me to see how there is any cost whatever. I yield the floor.

EDUCATION SAVINGS ACT FOR PUBLIC AND PRIVATE SCHOOLS

Mr. COVERDELL. As everybody knows by now all too well, we have been in the midst of a filibuster going all the way back to last summer on education reform proposals. We have been battling the White House, the minority leadership and the status quo. I am pleased to announce—in fact, I am ecstatic—that the filibuster is over and that a unanimous consent has been entered into, I think a reasonable agreement, that does adhere to our view that all amendments should have been related to education and not extraneous and not broad new tax policy. We will go to our education reform on the day we return from the recess on April 20 of this year.

Now, the majority leader needs to be commended for the diligence and the attention he gave to try to end this filibuster. I also am complimentary of the minority leader and his attempt to bring this filibuster to an end. But I am especially grateful to the Members on the other side of the aisle, principally my key cosponsor, Senator TORRICELLI of New Jersey, for the attempts and effort they made—under very difficult circumstances I might add—for an extended period of time to recommend that a filibuster was not the way to handle education reform.

Because the filibuster has been ended, America's children are going to be the major beneficiaries—and their families. At the end of the day, millions of American families are going to be able to open education savings accounts to help children in public schools, private schools and home schools. Now with the suggestions from the other side of the aisle, we are going

to have an opportunity for expanded school construction and financing that aids and abets school construction across our Nation.

After all is said and done, bringing this to a favorable conclusion will lead to a very healthy and wholesome debate about reforming education and moving away from the status quo. Madam President, the winners, those who are going to gain the most from the fact that we have set this filibuster aside, are America's children. They are going to be the beneficiaries of the fact that the Senate has now, on a bipartisan basis, agreed to go to an extended and meaningful debate about reforming education in America, principally grades kindergarten through high school.

I thank all who have been involved on both sides of the aisle. I think it will prove most beneficial to America and her children.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from North Dakota.

Mr. DORGAN. Madam President, I will take just a moment. I did want to respond ever so briefly to the remarks of Senator COVERDELL.

I did not object to the unanimous consent request by which we will consider the Coverdell proposal. Amendments have now been made in order and the proposal will be considered on the floor of the Senate in a way that limits the amendments and limits the time for each amendment.

I say the Senator from Georgia puts his own construct on exactly what has happened. There is another construct, and that is that this was not a filibuster but a lockout—circumstances where we were told that a bill was to come to the floor of the Senate, a bill dealing with tax credits for education, and the only circumstance under which it could come to the floor of the Senate is if those on the minority side would be willing to restrict their amendments both as to type of amendments and as to time.

It is a very unusual Senate procedure. It is not a procedure that has been followed by the majority side, I might say. As one Member of the Senate who will not want to see this habit-forming, I simply say to the Senator from Georgia that I am happy he will get his day on this piece of legislation. The amendments have indeed been limited. I think he would not want to be in a similar circumstance on the next issue on which someone on this side would, if in the majority, say we would like to bring our bill to the floor, and by the way, we will only do that in ways that restrict your opportunity to offer amendments, and only do that in ways that restrict the time of the amendments that you do offer.

For example, among the ideas that exist here are not just an idea to provide tax credits for people who send their children to nonpublic schools—all schools, but especially nonpublic schools; among the ideas that exist

here are, for example, a proposal to provide some assistance to repair some of the crumbling schools in this country, not so that the Federal Government will be involved in rebuilding local schools—that is the job of local school districts, State and local governments—but an incentive in a way that says we can at least pay some of the interest on the bonds that provide the right incentive to invest in our schools because so many of them are now 30, 50, 70 years old and more, and some of them are in desperate condition and need help.

On that amendment, for example, under this agreement there will be, I believe, 1 hour of debate. A significant amendment of significant importance, but the Senate will only devote 1 hour to that subject because to devote more would somehow abridge the interests of those who want to contain the debate on education here in the Senate.

I use that as an example. There are others. I say to the Senator from Georgia, I did not, since the first day of this discussion, feel the problem was a filibuster. I felt and still do feel very strongly the problem is that the majority leader said this is our bill, this is our agenda, it is what we feel is important, and we will bring it to the floor, but you must comply with what we expect of you. Don't you be offering amendments we don't want. Don't you be demanding time for your amendment to talk for 3 hours on school construction, for example—and that was what was happening to us over all of these weeks and what resulted in a number of cloture votes.

So I see it differently than does the Senator from Georgia. But as I indicated, he will have his day on his amendment, and I have indicated previously I have great respect for him, but this ought not be habit-forming. This is not the way the Senate works with respect to the current rules of the Senate. It is not the way your side of the aisle dealt with issues when you were in the minority, and I don't think you would expect us to deal with these issues in that manner on a routine basis.

As I said, I did not object to the unanimous consent request after this had been worked out by the majority leader and the minority leader. Education is critically important. In my judgment, there aren't many more important issues than education here in the U.S. Senate. This ought to be job one for the Senate to deal with the critical education issues. We have now a list of them, albeit limited in time and scope with respect to the amendments, but when we get to this issue we will have, I think, a good and thoughtful and constructive debate.

I stand today to say do not make it habit-forming to say it is our agenda and we will demand every other Senator in this place who is not part of the majority conform to our description of how we want to debate these amendments, because that is not the way the Senate should work.

I yield the floor.

CONGRESSIONAL BUDGET FOR THE UNITED STATES GOVERNMENT FOR FISCAL YEAR 1999, 2000, 2001, 2002, AND 2003

The Senate continued with the consideration of the bill.

Mr. CONRAD addressed the Chair.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from North Dakota.

Mr. CONRAD. Madam President, I ask unanimous consent that the pending amendments be laid aside so I may offer 4 amendments on behalf of Democratic Senators and that these amendments be sequenced between the Republican amendments when we vote.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Is there objection to the unanimous-consent request?

Without objection, it is so ordered.

Mr. CONRAD. I thank the Chair. The first amendment is on behalf of Senator DODD of Connecticut. It is an amendment to establish a deficit-neutral reserve fund for child care improvements.

AMENDMENT NO. 2173

(Purpose: To establish a deficit-neutral reserve fund for child care improvements)

Mr. CONRAD. Madam President, I send an amendment to the desk and ask for its immediate consideration.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will report.

The legislative clerk read as follows:

The Senator from North Dakota [Mr. CONRAD], for Mr. DODD, proposes an amendment numbered 2173.

Mr. CONRAD. Madam President, I ask unanimous consent that reading of the amendment be dispensed with.

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

The amendment is as follows:

At the appropriate place, insert the following:

SEC. . DEFICIT-NEUTRAL RESERVE FUND FOR CHILD CARE IMPROVEMENTS.

(a) IN GENERAL.—In the Senate, revenue and spending aggregates and other appropriate budgetary levels and limits may be adjusted and allocations may be revised for legislation to improve the affordability, availability, and quality of child care and to support families' choices in caring for their children, provided that, to the extent that this concurrent resolution on the budget does not include the costs of that legislation, the enactment of that legislation will not increase (by virtue of either contemporaneous or previously-passed deficit reduction) the deficit in this resolution for—

- (1) fiscal year 1999;
- (2) the period of fiscal years 1999 through 2003; or
- (3) the period of fiscal years 2004 through 2009.

(b) REVISED ALLOCATIONS.—

(1) ADJUSTMENTS FOR LEGISLATION.—Upon the consideration of legislation pursuant to subsection (a), the Chairman of the Committee on the Budget of the Senate may file with the Senate appropriately-revised allocations under section 302(a) of the Congressional Budget Act of 1974 and revised functional levels and aggregates to carry out this section. These revised allocations, functional levels, and aggregates shall be considered for

the purposes of the Congressional Budget Act of 1974 as allocations, functional levels, and aggregates contained in this resolution.

(2) ADJUSTMENTS FOR AMENDMENTS.—If the Chairman of the Committee on the Budget of the Senate submits an adjustment under this section for legislation in furtherance of the purpose described in subsection (a), upon the offering of an amendment to that legislation that would necessitate such submission, the Chairman shall submit to the Senate appropriately-revised allocations under section 302(a) of the Congressional Budget Act of 1974 and revised functional levels and aggregates to carry out this section. These revised allocations, functional levels, and aggregates shall be considered for the purposes of the Congressional Budget Act of 1974 as allocations, functional levels, and aggregates contained in this resolution.

(c) REPORTING REVISED ALLOCATIONS.—The appropriate committees shall report appropriately-revised allocations pursuant to section 302(b) of the Congressional Budget Act of 1974 to carry out this section.

(d) APPLICATION OF SECTION 202 OF H. CON. RES. 67.—Section 202 of H. Con. Res. 67 (104th Congress) shall not apply for purposes of this section.

Mr. CONRAD. Madam President, the second amendment is on behalf of myself, Senator LAUTENBERG, Senator BINGAMAN and Senator REED. This is to ensure that the tobacco reserve fund in the resolution protects public health.

AMENDMENT NO. 2174

(Purpose: To ensure that the tobacco reserve fund in the resolution protects public health)

Mr. CONRAD. Madam President, I send an amendment to the desk and ask for its immediate consideration.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will report.

The legislative clerk read as follows:

The Senator from North Dakota [Mr. CONRAD], for himself, Mr. LAUTENBERG, Mr. BINGAMAN, and Mr. REED, proposes an amendment numbered 2174.

Mr. CONRAD. Madam President, I ask unanimous consent that reading of the amendment be dispensed with.

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

The amendment is as follows:

On page 28, strike line 2 through line 17 and insert the following:

(a) IN GENERAL.—In the Senate, revenue and spending aggregates may be adjusted and allocations may be adjusted for legislation that reserves the Federal share of receipts from tobacco legislation for—

(1) (A) public health efforts to reduce the use of tobacco products by children, including youth tobacco control education and prevention programs, counter-advertising, research, and smoking cessation;

(B) transition assistance programs for tobacco farmers;

(C) increased funding for the Food and Drug Administration to protect children from the hazards of tobacco products; or

(D) increased funding for health research; and

(2) savings for the Medicare Hospital Insurance Trust Fund.

(b) REVISED ALLOCATIONS AND ALLOCATIONS.—Upon the consideration of legislation pursuant to subsection (a), the Chairman of the Committee on the Budget of the Senate may file with the Senate appropriately-revised allocations under section 302(a) of the Congressional Budget Act of 1974 and revised functional levels and aggregates to carry out this section. These revised allocations, functional levels, and aggregates shall be considered for the purposes of the Congressional