

this civil war. These women and children are captured as war booty, as a type of salary for the soldiers. It is repugnant that any country would permit, let alone promote the demeaning cruelties described here. Therefore I invite anyone who is touched by this account of suffering to join me in this cause to end slavery before the next millennium and stop this insane practice of man-made famines in the Sudan.

We have the capacity to do this. We need to do this. And we must do it now.

Mr. President, I yield the floor.

Mr. GRAMS addressed the Chair.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Minnesota.

Mr. GRAMS. Mr. President, I first ask unanimous consent that at the conclusion of my statements the Senator from Illinois, Senator DURBIN, be recognized to speak for up to 15 minutes as in morning business.

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

The Senator from Minnesota is recognized.

MR. GRAMS. I thank the Chair.

(The remarks of Mr. GRAMS pertaining to the introduction of S. 347, S. 351, S. 357, and S. 358 are located in today's RECORD under "Statements on Introduced Bills and Joint Resolutions.")

Mr. GRAMS. Mr. President, I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Illinois.

THE FEDERAL BUDGET

Mr. DURBIN. Mr. President, I thank you for yielding me this time in morning business to address the issue of the Federal budget. This time of year, as America starts to look forward to spring training in Florida and Arizona for the baseball season, Members of the U.S. Senate and House of Representatives get involved in their own grapefruit league, their own spring training, which starts with our speeches on the Federal budget process. And I am sure that many people who would witness this debate would scratch their heads and say, What can that possibly mean to my family in Chicago, IL, or Springfield, IL? In fact, it has a great deal of importance and not only defines who we are as a nation and what our priorities will be in the coming year, but it also affects a lot of programs and a lot of taxes that directly impact families across America. So this kind of runup to the serious debates on the budget resolution is an important part of the annual ritual in Congress. And I am happy to be part of it today.

I have listened to my Republican colleagues, as they have spoken about their view of the budget, the budget process, and where we are in America, and it is a slightly—well, no, it is a significantly different point of view than I have. Because I take a look at this Nation and I do not see it in somber and serious terms. I don't find it depressing. I am not saddened by it. I really

look at the state of government today in Washington, DC, and see so many hopeful signs that I wonder sometimes if my Republican colleagues are looking at the same picture that I am looking at.

There are certain things which I think we ought to accept as a reality. The fact that two out of three Americans today say the Clinton administration is doing a good job suggests to me that most Americans—Democrats, independents and even almost a majority of the moderate Republicans—have come to the conclusion that this country is on the right track, this administration is doing a good job. And there is ample reason for them to reach this conclusion.

Think about where we were 6 years ago when this administration began. The budget deficit stood at nearly \$300 billion a year with no relief in sight. At the time, the Congressional Budget Office was projecting that the deficit would reach \$350 billion in 1998. At that time, no one—absolutely no one—would have expected, instead of a \$350 billion deficit, we would be running a \$70 billion surplus.

The first step on our road to recovery and sanity in the budget process was the passage of President Clinton's 1993 Deficit Reduction Act. I remember that vote as if it were yesterday. That vote taken over 5 years ago is imprinted in my memory, because we were told by our Republican critics that if we voted for this Clinton deficit-reduction plan we would drive this economy into a tailspin, we would have even deeper deficits, we would have a wholesale reaction from the American people against this new policy. And as a result of it, we didn't garner a single Republican vote in support of the Clinton deficit-reduction plan. Here in the Senate, before I arrived, when the vote was cast, it was up to Vice President GORE to cast the deciding vote for this deficit-reduction plan.

It turns out the President and the Vice President were correct and the critics of the plan were wrong. Because, as you see, we have now reached the point where that deficit reduction put us on a road toward a balanced budget, which we enjoy today. Giving credit where it is due, there was a second installment on deficit reduction done on a bipartisan basis by Republicans and Democrats which completed this effort. I am glad that we were able to do that on a bipartisan basis. But history records that the first important and most painful step in this process began in 1993 with President Clinton's proposal.

A lot of my friends on the Republican side have argued that we have been able to eliminate the deficit but at the expense of raising taxes on ordinary Americans. I have heard this so often you almost start to believe it. And then you look at the facts. The facts are these: The Treasury Department shows that a median income family of four currently pays less in taxes as a

percentage of their income than at any time in the last 20 years. It is also true for families of four at one-half the median income level and a family of four at twice the median income level.

So the Republican claims that the President has balanced the budget on the backs of working people just simply are not true. Nor is it true that the administration has increased the size of government. All of these claims about big government and big taxing just do not wash when you take a look at the facts. According to the Center for Budget and Policy Priorities, spending has declined to its smallest share of our gross domestic product in 25 years. Furthermore, under the President's proposal, spending will continue to decline as a percentage of our gross domestic product to its lowest level in 33 years.

Sound fiscal policy has translated into economic resurgence in America which still baffles even the experts. Here we are enjoying the 95th consecutive month of economic expansion, the longest peacetime expansion in our history; interest rates stable and falling; unemployment rates coming down; welfare rolls coming down; inflation at its lowest combined rate with interest rates and unemployment in a generation.

As the President announced to Congress 2 weeks ago, the state of our Nation is strong. As Vice President GORE often says, everything that we want to go down has gone down. We are talking about the unemployment rate and welfare rolls. And things we want to go up, like family income and housing starts and new businesses, continue to go up. So when I hear these funereal tones from my Republican colleagues about how sad it is that this administration just can't get it, can't get it right, I look around at our economy and I am baffled, I cannot find the evidence for their claim.

Despite these promises of surpluses in our budget as far as the eye can see, we all know that budget projections in the future are a guess, an educated guess but a guess. Four years ago, the Congressional Budget Office forecast the deficit would exceed \$300 billion this year and approach \$500 billion by the year 2005.

With \$5 trillion of Federal debt hanging over our heads, now is not the time to abandon fiscal prudence in favor of tax cuts for the wealthiest Americans, as many of my colleagues have suggested. We should take advantage of the opportunity to redirect and invest our surpluses at this moment in history where they can pay off for America in the long run. We need a responsible fiscal course to begin with. The President's budget wisely preserves 62 percent of the projected surplus for Social Security and I hope both parties can agree to this. Let me say this: If at this moment in time—this year—as we debate the budget, as we envision surpluses for years to come, if we cannot muster the will, on a bipartisan basis,

to save Social Security, we never will. It will be less painful now than any time in our future. And we have to accept the responsibility of dedicating the surplus to Social Security.

The President said it last year, and repeated it again this year: "Save Social Security first." And those who want to embark on a different course, so be it. I believe the American people agree with me and the President that this money should go to Social Security, and also to Medicare. The Medicare Program, important to millions of elderly, is a program that is in trouble. There is no doubt about it. As health care costs go up, as the elderly population increases, Medicare faces strains and pressures never envisioned.

The President has suggested taking 15 percent of the surplus and putting it into Medicare to make sure that we have an additional 10 years of a solid Medicare system for senior citizens. That, to me, is eminently sensible. That, again, is an investment of the surplus in something good for the long-term benefits of our Nation, not just for elderly—of course it benefits them directly—but for their children as well.

When senior citizens cannot pay their health care bills, many times they turn to the government but they often turn to their children. Let us relieve that generation from a burden they shouldn't carry, by investing a portion of the surplus in Medicare. Medicare and Social Security are entitlements but they are earned entitlements. Let's put the "security" back in Social Security and put quality health care into Medicare.

When we think about what to do with the surplus, it makes sense to consider the perspective of Alan Greenspan. If there is one man who is credited with leading us through this out-of-the-deficit desert and into the sunshine of surpluses, it is the Chairman of the Federal Reserve, Alan Greenspan. In testimony to the Senate Budget Committee last week, the Chairman said that the single-best use of the surplus is to pay down the national debt. This is exactly what the President is doing by dedicating the surplus to Social Security and Medicare.

There is also a proposal for tax relief. It is perfectly reasonable that once we have taken care of our obligations to save and preserve Social Security and Medicare and thereby reduce the national debt, we also help families in America who need tax relief. The President's proposal is a sensible approach which gives working families more income security, more spending power, and a greater ability to save for the future.

The President's proposal finds \$34 billion in tax relief to working families. His budget reserves 12 percent of the projected surplus to provide low- and moderate-income Americans with a tax cut to help fund personal retirement accounts. Millions of Americans and millions of Federal employees, including most of the people who work in this

building, have availed themselves of savings opportunities for their retirement, whether it is the Federal Thrift Savings Plan, individual retirement accounts, or Roth IRAs—named after Senator ROTH from Delaware. In order to make certain that low- and middle-income families have that same option, the President suggests that we create these personal retirement accounts that will help them. I think that makes sense.

The President also suggests that we provide tax relief for child care costs for 3 million working families. A couple years ago, I went across Illinois and talked to working families and in particular, working mothers, about their major concerns. Do you know what the number one concern was? It was, what will I do with my kids when I go to work? I can't afford to send them to the very best day care, and I worry myself to death when I am on the job and I am not certain that they are safe. That is a natural human reaction. It is the right reaction from a parent. What the President is saying is that we need to be sensitive to these working families by giving them some tax relief to help pay for day care and child care.

The same thing is true for many of the working families who have elderly parents or parents who are sick or disabled who need help with long-term care. Here again, the President's proposal offers tax relief to millions of Americans who want to provide for loved ones that are in their golden years.

You will also hear a cry for tax cuts from our colleagues on the other side of the aisle. But it is almost as predictable as night following day that when you go beyond the surface appeal of tax cuts proposed by the Republicans, you find the same story year in and year out. Let me give you some graphic examples of what I am talking about.

This chart which we had prepared looks at the proposed 10-percent tax rate cut that the Republicans have brought forward. Of course, we had to analyze it to see what it would mean to most families. This is no surprise if you have followed Republican tax breaks in years gone by. The bottom sixty percent of America's families, based on income, would see an average of a tax break of just \$99 a year, roughly \$8 and a few cents each month. Then you get to the top 1 percent of incomes, people making over \$300,000 a year, and look what their average tax break is under the Republican plan—\$20,697. I just can't understand this. I can't understand why low- and middle-income families making below \$38,000 a year should get an average annual tax break of a little over \$8 a month while we turn around and give \$1,600 or \$1,700 a month to the wealthiest among us.

If there is to be a tax break, if we are to use the surplus to help American families, should we not dedicate that surplus first and foremost to the low- and middle-income families who absolutely need it the most?

When I take a look at where money can be spent in this Federal budget, I am sometimes troubled that my friends on the Republican side of the aisle suggest that spending on domestic priorities is creating wasteful, new programs. In one particular area I take exception; that is in the area of education and training.

It was only last year that we had the major corporations in Silicon Valley and across the country lobbying Congress to change the immigration laws in America so that these companies could bring in skilled and trained personnel, immigrants from overseas, to fill gaps in their employment. That is a sad commentary on America's educational system. And it really troubles me that we have reached the point these companies cannot find within America the skills that they need to make a profit.

Then we hear from the U.S. Navy that it is suggesting it needs a change in policy. The Navy, an All-Volunteer Navy, relies on those who come forward and those they can recruit, and they have fallen short of their goals. Some 22,000 seaman are needed and not available, particularly 18,000 for service on ships at sea. So the Navy has come to Congress and said we think the answer to this is for Congress to allow us to increase the number of recruits who don't have high school diplomas from 5 percent of the total to 10 percent. Now, that is a troubling admission to say that we have so many young people without a high school education that we need to turn to the Armed Forces to give these young people a basic education.

When the President comes before Congress and says we can do a better job in our schools, I think most American families agree. And money invested there, I think, is money well invested. We have a skills gap in our country which needs to be addressed. We need a commitment to education that includes afterschool and summer school programs. We need 100,000 new teachers. We need to improve teacher skills and hold them accountable to make certain that when they come into the classroom, they are prepared to teach. The vast majority of teachers will meet this threshold requirement without breaking a sweat. But you know as well as I that there are people standing in classrooms across America reading from textbooks on subjects they know little or nothing about.

In my old home town of East St. Louis, last year or so I talked to some of the people on the school board and they say they will literally give a job to anyone who tells us they are prepared to try and teach science and math—"prepared to try and teach." They don't require any degrees, they can't, because they can't attract the people to do the job. We need to increase teacher skills and training to do so.

In addition, I think we need to put more money into school construction,

not just because the school-age enrollment is going to mushroom dramatically over the next several decades, but because our current school buildings in America for the most part are not prepared to accept the new technology necessary to educate our children. When President Clinton suggests \$25 billion in tax credits for that school construction and renovation, I think he is talking about an issue that most Americans and most families can certainly understand.

This is a time to invest in America, not a time to provide a windfall tax break for the wealthiest people in our country. The President maintains strong fiscal discipline, targets his tax relief to Americans who need it, and makes certain that our highest priority of preserving Social Security and Medicare and reducing national debt is met.

There is also a suggestion that we increase defense spending. As a member of the Defense Appropriations Subcommittee, I am going to watch this carefully. I understand, as most people do, that national defense is one of our highest priorities. I want to make certain that we dedicate our resources, first and foremost, to the men and women in uniform to make certain that they are compensated well and have a fair retirement plan.

It is a personal embarrassment to me, and it should be to every Member of Congress, to learn that so many members of the U.S. military today qualify for food stamps. That shouldn't be the case. We ought to make certain that the amount of money paid to our military personnel is adequate not only to maintain their families, but to attract and retain the very best in uniform across America. We owe our freedom to these men and women. We should compensate them accordingly. Of course, technology is part of that, but let's make sure the technology demands are consistent with the post-cold war world, that it is a technology demand that really envisions America's future role in the world in realistic terms.

I conclude by saying that I think that the President's budget has areas where I might disagree and probably will. It has areas that Congress will certainly address in a different way, but it is a budget based on the right principles, a budget to keep America on a track for prosperity and economic improvement. When we look at the growth in our domestic product each and every quarter, the encouragement it gives us, I think it suggests that we ought to think long and hard before we abandon this course we have been on—a successful course, with 95 consecutive months of economic expansion. Those who want to experiment with another approach, perhaps they can make that case to the American people; but, today, two-thirds of the American people say: Stay on this course, keep us moving forward in the right way, helping working families and preserving

the programs that mean so much to America.

I yield the remainder of my time.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Chair, in his capacity as a Senator from New Hampshire, suggests the absence of a quorum.

The clerk will call the roll.

The assistant legislative clerk proceeded to call the roll.

Mr. GREGG. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the order for the quorum call be rescinded.

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Mr. CRAPO). Without objection, it is so ordered.

CHILDREN'S SCHOLARSHIP WORKSHOP

Mr. LOTT. Mr. President, I want to take a few moments to turn our attention to an exciting and worthwhile project for America's young people: the Children's Scholarship Fund.

Last June, two great Americans, concerned about the state of education in America, particularly about the way in which children of low-income families are often without educational options, founded the Children's Scholarship Fund with their own substantial private investments. I speak of Ted Forstmann of Forstmann-Little and Company and Gulfstream Aerospace and of John Walton of Wal-Mart Stores. Based on their firm belief that a child should not be denied educational opportunity because of his or her family's financial situation, these two citizens are improving the education of young Americans, and thereby improving the lives of all Americans.

When Mr. Forstmann and Mr. Walton announced the creation of the Children's Scholarship Fund in June 1998, they began with programs in five cities. The demand and enthusiasm with which they were greeted was so overwhelming that scarcely three months later they joined with donors around the country to make scholarships available in forty three cities and three entire states. Now, only eight months after the launch of the Children's Scholarship Fund, low-income children throughout the entire United States are eligible for scholarships. As of today, the Children's Scholarship Fund is nationwide, and will provide approximately 40,000 scholarships worth nearly \$170 million. All low-income families throughout this country with children entering kindergarten through eight grade next fall may now be eligible to receive scholarships.

On April 22nd, the names of the Children's Scholarship Fund scholarship recipients will be selected in a random drawing. Families must have submitted their completed applications no later than March 31st to be eligible. I urge my colleagues to make a note of these important dates.

In the meantime, I commend Ted Forstmann and John Walton and everyone associated with the Children's

Scholarship Fund for the invaluable contributions they are making to improve the lives of so many of our young people. They set an example for all of us. The enormous public response to the Children's Scholarship Fund serves as an important reminder to those of us in Congress of the need to creatively expand educational opportunities for all of our citizens.

RETIREMENT OF TREVA TURNER

Mr. THURMOND. Mr. President, I rise to today to recognize the diligent service of Ms. Treva Turner, who is retiring from the Congressional Research Service after 33-years of providing invaluable assistance to Senators, Representatives, and members of their staffs.

It is probably safe to say that the images that most people associate with the United States Congress are those of the Capitol Building or the 535 men and women who serve in the Senate and House Chambers. After all, millions of Americans see us cast votes as they watch C-SPAN and C-SPAN2, or recognize the Capitol from a trip to Washington, DC, or from seeing it used as a backdrop for television news reports or in movies. What most Americans do not realize is that the Congress extends far beyond the Capitol Building, and those that work in these two chambers are not limited to those of us who hold office.

As each of us knows, we rely on what is literally a small army of men and women to provide us with advice, support, and analysis. Among those organizations which support our work, perhaps the greatest treasure is the Congressional Research Service, commonly known as "CRS". For more than the past three decades, Treva Turner has been a loyal, diligent, and selfless employee of CRS, and her efforts have been of immeasurable help to many of us as we have debated any number of matters before the Senate.

Treva's speciality was education issues, and as each of us places a great priority on providing for the future of America's children, she was kept busy with any number of projects and research requests. Despite her heavy workload, Treva was always pleasant, outgoing, and ready to share her wry sense of humor with her many friends. Furthermore, she was always ready to lend assistance to people, whether they were co-workers in the Congressional Research Service, or staffers who wandered into the Senate Reference Center. Treva's professionalism and expertise assured that she provided prompt and impartial information and analysis to all Members of Congress and their staffs.

As with any professional, Treva's dedication to her job did not end with her assigned duties. Her work as a founding member of the Library of Congress Professional Association, along with her service on the Reference Forum, help to assure that CRS met