

down, he will jump off the Capitol dome. And they will jump if it doesn't.

"They claim we are paying down the debt, but that's terribly misleading," Hollings complains. "We are not really paying down the debt, we're shifting it from one account to another. Actually, we're looting the trust funds so we can say the government's got a big surplus. It's just not true."

Hollings' argument takes us still deeper into the mysteries of federal accounting, but he has uncovered an important and widely believed myth about the new surpluses. His essential point is confirmed in the president's own midyear budget review. Its ten-year projections show the federal government steadily reducing its publicly held debts: the Treasury bonds, notes and bills used to borrow money in financial markets. Yet meanwhile, the federal government's total debt obligations will continue to escalate over the decade—an \$485 billion increase by 2009.

So what happened to the \$3 trillion surplus? It is something of an accounting mirage—like borrowing from the rent money to pay off your credit cards. Sooner or later, you still have to come up with the rent.

In fact, aside from Social Security, the government's vast borrowing from its other trust accounts—highways, military and civil-service retirement, Medicare—provides the underpinning for the supposed \$1 trillion surplus in its regular operating budget. Without those trust-fund loans, CBO acknowledges, its forecast of a ten-year surplus of \$996 billion shrinks to only \$250 billion. Someday someone has to come up with that money too—or else stiff those lenders.

Social Security surpluses are not new at all: They have been piling up since 1983, when the payroll tax was substantially increased to prevent insolvency. This money belongs to future retirees, not Congress or the White House, but it was not locked away for them. Instead, it was spent every year to cover the swollen deficits generated by the rest of the government—and IOUs were given to the trust fund. The government still owes all that money to the Social Security trust fund, and it intends to borrow lots more.

All that is really new is the promise, now that budget deficits are vanishing, that the government will stop using Social Security money to pay its yearly operating costs and instead use it only to pay back the public borrowings in financial markets. That's admirable, but it doesn't pay off the actual debt obligations of the government to Social Security retirees. The Treasury is still giving more IOUs to the trust fund—money it will have to pay back one day hence.

Some will insist that because the government is essentially borrowing from itself, none of this matters. But it does. The suggestion that any of Social Security's long-term financial problems are somehow being remedied by these transactions is utter fiction. A nasty day of reckoning remains ahead for American taxpayers—when Social Security recipients expect to get their money back and someone gets stuck with the burden.

The choices for a future president and Congress will be stark: They can go back to the financial markets and borrow trillions again. They can raise income taxes. Or they can cut Social Security benefits and screw the retirees.

Such duplicitous evasions have prompted an angry Hollings to denounce his colleagues. "This a shameful sideshow out here," he thundered in debate. "There is no dignity left in the Senate. No responsibility."

Indeed, none of his colleagues has taken up Hollings' proffered bet, though doubtless some of them would love to see him jump off the Capitol dome.

THE VERY BAD DEBT BOXSCORE

Mr. HELMS. Mr. President, at the close of business yesterday, Thursday, September 9, 1999, the Federal debt stood at \$5,654,163,509,903.96 (Five trillion, six hundred fifty-four billion, one hundred sixty-three million, five hundred and nine thousand, nine hundred and three dollars and ninety-six cents).

One year ago, September 9, 1998, the Federal debt stood at \$5,548,477,000,000 (Five trillion, five hundred forty-eight billion, four hundred seventy-seven million).

Five years ago, September 9, 1994, the Federal debt stood at \$4,679,665,000,000 (Four trillion, six hundred seventy-nine billion, six hundred sixty-five million).

Twenty-five years ago, September 9, 1974, the Federal debt stood at \$479,367,000,000 (Four hundred seventy-nine billion, three hundred sixty-seven million) which reflects a debt increase of more than \$5 trillion—\$5,174,796,509,938 (Five trillion, one hundred seventy-four billion, seven hundred ninety-six million, five hundred and nine thousand, nine hundred thirty-eight dollars) during the past 25 years.

EXECUTIVE AND OTHER COMMUNICATIONS

The following communications were laid before the Senate, together with accompanying papers, reports, and documents, which were referred as indicated:

EC-5083. A communication from the Secretary of Health and Human Services, transmitting, pursuant to law, a report entitled "Community Services Block Grant Statistical Report" for fiscal year 1996; to the Committee on Health, Education, Labor, and Pensions.

EC-5084. A communication from the Director, Regulations Policy and Management Staff, Food and Drug Administration, Department of Health and Human Services, transmitting, pursuant to law, the report of a rule entitled "Indirect Food Additives: Adjuncts, Production Aids, and Sanitizers" (Docket No. 99F-0994), received September 7, 1999; to the Committee on Health, Education, Labor, and Pensions.

EC-5085. A communication from the Director, Regulations Policy and Management Staff, Food and Drug Administration, Department of Health and Human Services, transmitting, pursuant to law, the report of a rule entitled "Indirect Food Additives: Polymers" (Docket No. 89F-0338), received September 7, 1999; to the Committee on Health, Education, Labor, and Pensions.

EC-5086. A communication from the Director, Regulations Policy and Management Staff, Food and Drug Administration, Department of Health and Human Services, transmitting, pursuant to law, the report of a rule entitled "Indirect Food Additives: Adjuncts, Production Aids, Sanitizers" (Docket No. 99F-0459), received September 7, 1999; to the Committee on Health, Education, Labor, and Pensions.

EC-5087. A communication from the Acting Director, Office of Standards, Regulations and Variances, Mine Safety and Health Administration, Department of Labor, transmitting, pursuant to law, the report of a rule entitled "Health Standards for Occupational

Noise Exposure" (RIN1219-AA53), received September 8, 1999; to the Committee on Health, Education, Labor, and Pensions.

EC-5088. A communication from the Deputy Executive Secretary, Center for Health Plans and Providers, Health Care Financing Administration, Department of Health and Human Services, transmitting, pursuant to law, the report of a rule entitled "Medicare Program; Graduate Medical Education (GME): Incentive Payments Under Plans for Voluntary Reduction in the Number of Residents" (RIN0938-AI27), received September 7, 1999; to the Committee on Finance.

EC-5089. A communication from the Chief, Regulations Unit, Internal Revenue Service, Department of the Treasury, transmitting, pursuant to law, the report of a rule entitled "Section 7702 Closing Agreements" (Notice 99-47), received September 7, 1999; to the Committee on Finance.

EC-5090. A communication from the Chief, Regulations Unit, Internal Revenue Service, Department of the Treasury, transmitting, pursuant to law, the report of a rule entitled "July-September 1999 Bond Factor Amounts" (Revenue Ruling 99-38), received September 7, 1999; to the Committee on Finance.

EC-5091. A communication from the Chief, Regulations Unit, Internal Revenue Service, Department of the Treasury, transmitting, pursuant to law, the report of a rule entitled "Hospital Corporation of America and Subsidiaries v. Commissioner" (109 T.C. 21 (1997)), received September 7, 1999; to the Committee on Finance.

EC-5092. A communication from the Chief, Regulations Unit, Internal Revenue Service, Department of the Treasury, transmitting, pursuant to law, the report of a rule entitled "Boyd Gaming Corporation v. Commissioner" (F3d__ (9th Cir. 1999), rev'g T.C. Memo 1997-445), received September 7, 1999; to the Committee on Finance.

EC-5093. A communication from the Chief, Regulations Unit, Internal Revenue Service, Department of the Treasury, transmitting, pursuant to law, the report of a rule entitled "Revision of the Tax Refund Offset Program" (RIN1545-AV50) (TD 8837), received September 7, 1999; to the Committee on Finance.

EC-5094. A communication from the Chief, Regulations Unit, Internal Revenue Service, Department of the Treasury, transmitting, pursuant to law, the report of a rule entitled "Estate of Mellinger v. Commissioner" (112 T.C. 4 (1999)), received September 7, 1999; to the Committee on Finance.

EC-5095. A communication from the Chief, Regulations Unit, Internal Revenue Service, Department of the Treasury, transmitting, pursuant to law, the report of a rule entitled "Inflation-Indexed Debt Instruments" (RIN1545-AU45) (TD8838), received September 7, 1999; to the Committee on Finance.

EC-5096. A communication from the Chief, Regulations Unit, Internal Revenue Service, Department of the Treasury, transmitting, pursuant to law, the report of a rule entitled "Vulcan Materials Company and Subsidiaries v. Commissioner" (96 T.C. 410 (1991), aff'd per curiam 959 F.2d 973 (11th Cir. 1992)), received September 7, 1999; to the Committee on Finance.

EC-5097. A communication from the Chief, Regulations Unit, Internal Revenue Service, Department of the Treasury, transmitting, pursuant to law, the report of a rule entitled "St. Jude Medical, Inc. v. Commissioner" (33 F. 3d 1394 (8th Cir. 1994) rev'g in part 97 T.C. 457 (1991)), received September 7, 1999; to the Committee on Finance.

EC-5098. A communication from the Chief, Regulations Unit, Internal Revenue Service, Department of the Treasury, transmitting, pursuant to law, the report of a rule entitled

"Internal Revenue Service v. Waldschmidt (in re Bradley)" (M.d. Tenn. 1999), aff'g 222 B.R. 313 (Bankr. M.d. Tenn. 1998), received September 7, 1999; to the Committee on Finance.

EC-5099. A communication from the Secretary of Transportation transmitting a draft of proposed legislation relative to the St. Lawrence Seaway; to the Committee on Commerce, Science, and Transportation.

EC-5100. A communication from the Secretary of the Interior, transmitting, pursuant to law, a report entitled "Operations of the Glen Canyon Dam Pursuant to the Grand Canyon Protection Act of 1992"; to the Committee on Energy and Natural Resources.

EC-5101. A communication from the Assistant Legal Adviser for Treaty Affairs, Department of State, transmitting, pursuant to law, the report of the texts and background statements of international agreements, other than treaties; to the Committee on Foreign Relations.

EC-5102. A communication from the Executive Director, Committee for Purchase from People who are Blind or Severely Disabled, transmitting, pursuant to law, the report of a rule relative to additions to and deletions from the Procurement List, received September 7, 1999; to the Committee on Governmental Affairs.

EC-5103. A communication from the Director, Bureau of Justice Assistance, Department of Justice, transmitting, pursuant to law, the report of a rule entitled "Public Safety Officers' Educational Assistance Program" (RIN1121-AA51), received September 7, 1999; to the Committee on the Judiciary.

EC-5104. A communication from the Under Secretary of Defense for Acquisition and Technology, transmitting, pursuant to law, a report entitled "DoD Demonstration Program to Improve the Quality of Personal Property Shipments of Members of the Armed Forces"; to the Committee on Armed Services.

EC-5105. A communication from the Director, Defense Procurement, Department of Defense, transmitting, pursuant to law, the report of a rule entitled "Acquisitions for Foreign Military Sales" (DFARS Case 99-D020), received September 9, 1999; to the Committee on Armed Services.

EC-5106. A communication from the Director, Defense Procurement, Department of Defense, transmitting, pursuant to law, the report of a rule entitled "Officials Not to Benefit Clause" (DFARS Case 99-D018), received September 9, 1999; to the Committee on Armed Services.

EC-5107. A communication from the Deputy Chief, Programs and Legislation Division, Office of Legislative Liaison, Office of the Secretary, Department of the Air Force, transmitting a report relative to a multi-function cost comparison of the Base Operating Support functions at Beale Air Force Base, California; to the Committee on Armed Services.

EC-5108. A communication from the Assistant Secretary, Legislative Affairs, Department of State, transmitting, pursuant to law, the report of a rule entitled "VISAS: Regulations Regarding Public Charge Requirements under the Immigration and Nationality Act, as Amended" (RIN1400-AA79), received September 3, 1999; to the Committee on Foreign Relations.

EC-5109. A communication from the Assistant Secretary, Legislative Affairs, Department of State, transmitting, pursuant to law, a Memorandum of Justification relative to the United Nations Assistance Mission to East Timor; to the Committee on Foreign Relations.

EC-5110. A communication from the Assistant Secretary, Legislative Affairs, Department of State, transmitting, pursuant to

law, the Report on Religious Freedom; to the Committee on Foreign Relations.

REPORTS OF COMMITTEES

The following reports of committees were submitted:

By Mr. ROTH, from the Committee on Finance:

Report to accompany the bill (S. 1254) to establish a comprehensive strategy for the elimination of market-distorting practices affecting the global steel industry, and for other purposes (Rept. No. 106-155).

Report to accompany the bill (H.R. 1833) to authorize appropriations for fiscal years 2000 and 2001 for the United States Customs Service for drug interdiction and other operations, for the Office of the United States Trade Representative, for the United States International Trade Commission, and for other purposes (Rept. No. 106-156).

INTRODUCTION OF BILLS AND JOINT RESOLUTIONS

The following bills and joint resolutions were introduced, read the first and second time by unanimous consent, and referred as indicated:

By Mr. CONRAD (for himself, Mr. FEINGOLD, and Mr. CHAFEE):

S. 1574. A bill to amend title XVIII of the Social Security Act to improve the interim payment system for home health services, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Finance.

By Mr. FRIST:

S. 1575. A bill to change the competition requirements with respect to the purchase of the products of the Federal Prison Industries by the Secretary of Defense; to the Committee on the Judiciary.

By Ms. COLLINS:

S. 1576. A bill to establish a commission to study the impact of deregulation of the airline industry on small town America; to the Committee on Commerce, Science, and Transportation.

SUBMISSION OF CONCURRENT AND SENATE RESOLUTIONS

The following concurrent resolutions and Senate resolutions were read, and referred (or acted upon), as indicated:

By Mr. HARKIN (for himself, Mr. LEAHY, Mr. FEINGOLD, Mr. CHAFEE, and Mr. WELLSTONE):

S. Res. 181. A resolution expressing the sense of the Senate regarding the situation in East Timor; to the Committee on Foreign Relations.

STATEMENTS ON INTRODUCED BILLS AND JOINT RESOLUTIONS

By Mr. CONRAD (for himself, Mr. FEINGOLD, and Mr. CHAFEE):

S. 1574. A bill to amend title XVIII of the Social Security Act to improve the interim payment system for home health services, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Finance.

THE FAIRNESS IN MEDICARE HOME HEALTH ACCESS ACT OF 1999

Mr. CONRAD. Mr. President, today I am pleased to be joined by Senators FEINGOLD and CHAFEE in introducing the Fairness in Medicare Home Health Access Act of 1999. I am proud to say

that the Governing Board of the North Dakota Home Care Association, as well as the Visiting Nurse Association of America, have endorsed this legislation as a crucial step toward ensuring beneficiaries retain access to vital home care services.

As you know, home health care has proven to be an important component of the Medicare package because it allows beneficiaries with acute needs to receive care in their home rather than in other settings, such as a hospital or nursing home. In my state of North Dakota, home health care has been particularly important because it has allowed seniors living in remote, frontier areas to receive consistent, quality health care without having to travel long distances to the nearest health care facility.

Over the last three decades, we have witnessed significant increases in home health utilization as medical practices have shifted care from an inpatient to outpatient setting. To help address rising health care spending, the Congress included targeted measures in the Balanced Budget Act of 1997 (BBA) to reduce costs and give providers incentives to become more efficient. In particular, the BBA directed the Health Care Financing Administration to implement an interim payment system for home health care until which time a prospective payment system could be instituted. While the interim payment system has allowed agencies to become more cost-effective, there are also concerns that it may be having some unintended consequences on agencies' ability to deliver quality, appropriate home care services to Medicare beneficiaries.

Mr. President, this legislation takes definitive steps to address various unintended consequences of the interim payment system and of the BBA in general.

Home health providers serving rural beneficiaries have been particularly affected by the interim payment system. As you know, home health care delivery is unique because unlike most other services, the health care provider must travel to the patient. Compared to urban agencies, rural home care providers must travel longer distances to serve beneficiaries and they often face poor weather and road conditions. Due to these constraints, agencies serving rural beneficiaries must visit patients less frequently; but during an isolated visit aides tend to spend more time with beneficiaries to ensure that they are receiving appropriate levels of care. Unfortunately, the per visit limits included in the interim payment system do not adequately account for the unique challenges of serving rural beneficiaries. This legislation revises the per visit cost limit to ensure agencies have the resources to deliver care to beneficiaries living in rural and underserved areas.

It also appears that the interim payment system does not adequately account for the needs of medically-complex beneficiaries. Various reports have