

That is why many of the provisions in both bills are very similar. I think the provisions on plan information in both bills are similar and there is common ground from which we can work.

We both give Americans expanded new rights to go to an emergency room and get the care they need without worrying about having to fight with their insurer over who will pay for this care.

We both greatly expand access to specialists. Both bills allow direct access to a pediatrician for children, and for women seeking primary and preventative ob/gyn care.

So, we are close on very many of the issues that are important to most Americans. These are major issues that I believe we can come to an agreement on.

Other issues will be difficult to resolve, but I am committed to sitting down with colleagues on the other side of the aisle to discuss these issues, and will promise to negotiate in good faith.

We may not agree yet, but I am hopeful. I think Democrats and Republicans share a goal of wanting to ensure individuals have access to safe and appropriate health coverage. So I am positive about this conference.

DEATH OF KAYLA ROLLAND

Mr. ABRAHAM. Mr. President, I rise, with sadness and a heavy heart today. On Tuesday, Kayla Rolland, a 6-year-old first grader was shot and killed by a classmate at Theo J. Buell Elementary School in Mount Morris Township, MI.

As Kayla's family mourns their lost, I am certain in my heart that Kayla's spirit is in a better place.

It is my hope that in this difficult time Kayla's family will find comfort in one another, in their community, in their faith and in the knowledge that across America their fellow citizens feel their grief.

Such a violent death is a great tragedy. But for someone so young, to have her hopes and dreams cut short by gunfire—stretches the limits of our power to understand and to accept.

As the father of two daughters, also in the first grade, I can't get out of my mind the pictures of Buell Elementary School, as so many frightened young children facing a terror few of us would want to know firsthand, rushed into the arms of their parents.

I thank God each day that my kids return home safe, away from the dangers of this world and from the senseless violence that haunts our communities.

But, as our Nation tries to address the questions and issues that surrounded this tragic event, I hope that, for the next few days, we focus on Kayla's family.

A family lost a child this week, and that we must not forget.

There is a time and a place to address the circumstances surrounding Kayla's death and the public policy issues in-

volved, and I look forward to those discussions.

But, I hope that we will not allow the policy debates and the media rush to examine this tragic event cause us to forget the immediate needs of a family in mourning.

Above all, I hope that we will keep the Rolland family and Kayla in our thoughts and prayers.

In closing, Mr. President, on behalf of my wife Jane and myself, I would like to express our family's deepest sympathies to the Rolland family.

SAVE OUR SURPLUS

Mr. GRAMS. Mr. President, I rise to speak about a very important bill I introduced yesterday. My Save Our Surplus, or S.O.S. legislation would lock in every penny of the \$23 billion non-Social Security surplus which materialized in FY 2000 and return it to working Americans in the form of debt reduction, tax relief and structural Social Security and Medicare reform.

The reason for this legislation is simple: Last year the Congress adopted my amendment in the budget resolution to set up a reserve fund for any non-Social Security surplus for tax relief.

Unfortunately, this provision in the budget resolution was completely ignored in the appropriation process. As a result, we ended up spending every penny of the project \$14 billion on-budget surplus.

The Congressional Budget Office estimated early this year that, Thanks to our strong economy, we would have an even higher \$23 billion on-budget surplus in the current fiscal year despite that spending spree.

Mr. President, this \$23 billion non-Social Security surplus does not fall from the sky. It is working Americans who generated the surplus—not Congress, not the President, but Americans' hard work.

In fact, hard working Americans have created a strong economy that has turned the ink in Washington's accounting book black for the first time in 40 years. The budget surplus above and beyond Social Security will top \$1.9 trillion over the next 10 years.

Clearly, the reason we have a surplus is the result of the hard work of working men and women of this country. Washington should not be the first in the line to spend this surplus.

Mr. President, the budget surplus above and beyond the Social Security surplus is tax overpayments and should be returned to taxpayers in the form of tax relief, debt reduction and Social Security reform.

If we don't return the tax overcharges to the taxpayers in these ways, Washington will spend it all, leaving nothing for tax relief, debt reduction or the vitally important task of preserving Social Security. Last year's appropriations spending has proven my fears are well founded.

President Clinton has already proposed spending nearly all of this sur-

plus, and both Chambers of the Congress are preparing to add even more to the President's request in this year's supplemental spending bill.

This is not right. Last year's discretionary spending was already increased by over 5 percent, twice the rate of inflation. If Congress spends this additional \$23 billion surplus, discretionary spending will increase by over 9 percent. If there is a Supplemental, it should be fully offset by spending reduction.

President Clinton also proposes to "correct the gimmicks" in the FY 2000 Appropriations bills by shifting payment dates from FY 2001 back to FY 2000, lifting restrictions on obligations, and reversing advance funding.

Mr. President, I was the one that spoke repeatedly on the Senate floor last year in strong opposition to budget gimmickry. However, changing the gimmicks now would have the effect of increasing discretionary and mandatory spending in FY 2000 by \$10 billion while also allowing for spending to increase in FY 2001 by a corresponding amount.

Mr. President, two wrongs don't make a right. Let's leave FY 2000 spending the way it is and pledge to stop the gimmicks this year.

The last thing we should do is to spend tax overpayments to enlarge the government. If we cannot give working Americans a tax refund this year due to President Clinton's veto of our tax relief bill, we at least should dedicate this on-budget surplus to reduction of the national debt.

It is true that our short-term fiscal situation has improved greatly due to the continued growth of our economy. However, our long-term financial imbalance still poses a major threat to the health of our future economic security.

We must also recall that Americans have long been overtaxed, and millions of middle-class families cannot even make ends meet due to the growing tax burden. They still call for major relief. That's why we passed nearly \$800 billion in tax relief for them. But President Clinton denied them the tax refund they deserve.

FY 2000's spending is the worst example of fiscal irresponsibility. Washington spent far more than it should have. But what concerns me is that if we continue this dangerous trend by spending this \$23 billion additional surplus for FY 2000, we will push the spending baseline even higher, leaving an even smaller on-budget surplus for our 5-year or 10-years tax relief or for debt reduction.

I understand that we do have emergency spending needs each year. I support true emergency spending, such as disaster relief or agricultural crisis relief. But I believe we should, and can, meet these challenges by prioritizing and streamlining government programs to offset this new spending while maintaining fiscal discipline.

Again, my point is, Mr. President, that this non-Social Security surplus is

nothing but tax over-payments. It is the American taxpayers' money and it should be returned in the form of debt reduction, tax relief or Social Security reform.

If we don't give the non-Social Security surplus back to the taxpayers in these ways, Washington will soon spend it all. Such spending will only expand the government, making it even more expensive to support in the future, creating an even higher tax burden than working Americans bear today and a higher federal budget.

I join Chairman Alan Greenspan who has been advocating using surplus for debt reduction and tax relief rather than increasing government spending.

My S.O.S. legislation would achieve this goal by creating a new point of order against any legislation reducing the FY 2000 non-Social Security surplus if it is not used for debt reduction, tax relief or structural Social Security and Medicare reform.

The S.O.S. legislation is a fiscally responsible bill. I urge my colleagues to support it.

THE VERY BAD DEBT BOXSCORE

Mr. HELMS. Mr. President, at the close of business yesterday, Wednesday, March 1, 2000, the Federal debt stood at \$5,725,649,856,797.45 (Five trillion, seven hundred twenty-five billion, six hundred forty-nine million, eight hundred fifty-six thousand, seven hundred ninety-seven dollars and forty-five cents).

One year ago, March 1, 1999, the Federal debt stood at \$5,643,046,000,000 (Five trillion, six hundred forty-three billion, forty-six million).

Five years ago, March 1, 1995, the Federal debt stood at \$4,848,389,000,000 (Four trillion, eight hundred forty-eight billion, three hundred eighty-nine million).

Ten years ago, March 1, 1990, the Federal debt stood at \$3,026,322,000,000 (Three trillion, twenty-six billion, three hundred twenty-two million).

Fifteen years ago, March 1, 1985, the Federal debt stood at \$1,712,490,000,000 (One trillion, seven hundred twelve billion, four hundred ninety million) which reflects a debt increase of more than \$4 trillion—\$4,013,159,856,797.45 (Four trillion, thirteen billion, one hundred fifty-nine million, eight hundred fifty-six thousand, seven hundred ninety-seven dollars and forty-five cents) during the past 15 years.

ADDITIONAL STATEMENTS

TEXAS INDEPENDENCE DAY

• Mrs. HUTCHISON. Mr. President, I rise today to talk about an important point in our history and that is to commemorate this day 164 years ago, Texas Independence Day.

Each year, I look forward to March 2d. This is a special day for Texans, a day that fills our hearts with pride. On

this day 164 years ago, a solemn convention of 54 men, including my great, great grandfather Charles S. Taylor, met in the small settlement of Washington-on-the-Brazos. There they signed the Texas Declaration of Independence. The declaration stated:

We, therefore . . . do hereby resolve and declare . . . that the people of Texas do now constitute a free, sovereign and independent republic.

At the time, Texas was a remote territory of Mexico. It was hospitable only to the bravest and most determined of settlers. After declaring our independence, the founding delegates quickly wrote a constitution and organized an interim government for the newborn republic.

As was the case when the American Declaration of Independence was signed in 1776, our declaration only pointed the way toward a goal. It would exact a price of enormous effort and great sacrifice. My great, great grandfather was there, signing the declaration of independence. As most of the delegates did, he went on eventually to fight the Battle of San Jacinto. He didn't know it at the time, but all four of his children who had been left back at home in Nacogdoches died trying to escape from the Indians and the Mexicans who they feared were coming after them.

Fortunately, he and his wife, my great, great grandmother, had nine more children. But it is just an example of the sacrifices that were made by people who were willing to fight for something they believed in. That, of course, was freedom.

While the convention sat in Washington-on-the-Brazos, 6,000 Mexican troops held the Alamo under siege, challenging this newly created republic.

Several days earlier, from the Alamo, Col. William Barrett Travis sent his immortal letter to the people of Texas and to all Americans. He knew the Mexican Army was approaching and he knew that he had only a very few men to help defend the San Antonio fortress. Colonel Travis wrote:

Fellow Citizens and Compatriots: I am besieged with a thousand or more of the Mexicans under Santa Anna. I have sustained a continual Bombardment and cannonade for 24 hours and have not lost a man. The enemy has demanded surrender at discretion, otherwise, the garrison is to be put to the sword, if the fort is taken. I have answered the demand with a cannon shot, and our flag still waves proudly over the wall. I shall never surrender or retreat. Then I call on you in the name of Liberty, of patriotism, of everything dear to the American character, to come to our aid with all dispatch. The enemy is receiving reinforcements daily and will no doubt increase to three or four thousand in four or five days. If this call is neglected I am determined to sustain myself as long as possible and die like a soldier who never forgets what is due his honor and that of his country—Victory or Death.—William Barrett Travis, Lt. Col. Commander.

What American, Texan or otherwise, can fail to be stirred by Col. Travis' resolve? In fact, Colonel Travis' dire pre-

dition came true—4,000 to 5,000 Mexican troops laid siege to the Alamo. In the battle that followed, 184 brave men died in a heroic but vain attempt to fend off Santa Anna's overwhelming army. But the Alamo, as we all in Texas know, was crucial to Texas' independence. Because those heroes at the Alamo held out for so long, Santa Anna's forces were battered and diminished.

Gen. Sam Houston gained the time he needed to devise a strategy to defeat Santa Anna at the Battle of San Jacinto, just a month or so later, on April 21, 1836. The Lone Star was visible on the horizon at last.

Each year, on March 2, there is a ceremony at Washington-on-the-Brazos State Park where there is a replica of the modest cabin where the 54 patriots pledged their lives, honor, and treasure for freedom.

On this day, I read Colonel Travis' letter to my colleagues in the Senate, a tradition started by my friend, the late Senator John Tower. This is a reminder to them and to all of us of the pride Texans share in our history and in being the only State that came into the Union as a republic.

Mr. President, I am pleased to continue the tradition that was started by Senator Tower, because we do have a unique heritage in Texas where we fought for our freedom. Having grown up in the family and hearing the stories of my great great grandfather, it was something that was ingrained in us—fighting for your freedom was something you did.

I think it is very important that we remember the people who sacrificed, the 184 men who died at the Alamo, the men who died at Goliad later that same month. Their deaths gave birth to Texas Independence and we became a nation, a status we enjoyed for 10 years before we entered the Union as a State.

I might add, we entered the Union by a margin of one vote, both in the House and in the Senate. In fact, we originally were going to come into the Union through a treaty, but the two-thirds vote could not be received and, therefore, President Tyler said, "No, then we will pass a law to invite Texas to become a part of our Union," and the law passed by one vote in the House and one vote in the Senate.

I am very pleased to, once again, commemorate our great heritage and history.●

U.S. ASSISTANCE TO MOZAMBIQUE

• Mr. FEINGOLD. Mr. President, I rise today in support of the Administration's decision to send urgently needed assistance to southern Africa, where heavy rains have caused devastating floods, particularly in the Republic of Mozambique.

Last night President Clinton approved the deployment of a Joint Task Force to the region, including C-130 aircraft to deliver desperately needed supplies, and six heavy lift helicopters