

We are not talking tax cuts at all. We are not talking about reducing the revenues Washington needs to run this Government and its programs. What we are talking about is the surplus. We owe it to them to make the best use of it. That will be in rebating, returning those dollars to you so you can then decide what is best for your family. Is it braces for one of your children, or dancing lessons? Is it to begin an educational fund for your child? He is 5 years old, and you want to prepare for his college. You will make that decision, and you will not have to worry or wait for a Government program and then stand there with a hand out asking: Do I qualify, and can I get some of my tax dollars back?

You will have to wait for somebody in Washington to say yes or no. That is not what should be happening. You should have control over your dollars. We all need to pay taxes. We know that. There are a lot of good things the Federal Government does. We know that. But Washington should not have the control of determining how to spend the additional dollars, the surplus.

I strongly urge the President to sign our two tax bills that we want to send him: the death tax repeal and the marriage tax penalty. I hope the President will consider them and, as he said in the last line of his speech—again I will read it—we owe it to them to make the best use of it for all of them. And my opinion is to give it in tax relief.

I thank the Chair.

EXTENSION OF MORNING BUSINESS

Mr. GRAMS. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the period for morning business be extended until 12:30 p.m., with the time equally divided in the usual form.

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

Mr. GRAMS. I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Nevada.

THE PAST AND THE FUTURE

Mr. REID. Mr. President, in 1993, one of the most interesting times in my legislative career was when we in this Chamber voted on President Clinton's deficit reduction plan. It was a historic vote.

As the Presiding Officer will remember, the bill passed the House of Representatives by a single vote without a single Republican voting for the President's plan. It came to the Senate and ended up in a tie vote, and the Vice President of the United States, AL GORE, broke the tie. It was a very difficult vote for everyone. In the Senate, as in the House, not a single Republican voted for the budget plan.

There were people on the other side of the aisle who told of all the calamities that would take place in the coun-

try if that passed. Seven years ago, this is what we heard from the other side of the aisle, Senate Republicans, from then-Representative WAYNE ALLARD:

In summary, the plan has a fatal flaw—it does not reduce the deficit.

Of course, it has reduced the deficit from some \$300 billion a year to where we now have a surplus.

Senator CONRAD BURNS:

So we are still going to pile up some more debt, but most of all, we are going to cost jobs in this country.

What the Senator from Montana said, in truth and in fact, was wrong. In fact, over 20 million new jobs have been created; over 60 percent of those jobs are high-wage jobs. Contrary to what the Senator from Montana said, we didn't pile up more debt. We have reduced the debt. We have not only cut down the annual yearly deficit, we have actually paid down the debt—not enough, in my estimation, but we have begun to pay down the debt.

Senator HATCH of Utah said:

Make no mistake, these higher rates will cost jobs.

Again, not true.

Senator PHIL GRAMM of Texas on August 5, 1993, on the Senate floor:

I want to predict here tonight that if we adopt this bill the American economy is going to get weaker and not stronger, the deficit four years from today will be higher than it is today and not lower. . . . When all is said and done, people will pay more taxes, the economy will create fewer jobs, Government will spend more money, and the American people will be worse off.

Everything he predicted is the direct opposite. The economy didn't get weaker; it got stronger. The deficit isn't higher; it is lower. Americans aren't paying more taxes; they are paying less taxes. He said, "The economy will create fewer jobs." Of course, as I have indicated, it created more jobs. "Government will spend more money." The fact is, the Federal Government today has 300,000 fewer Federal employees than it had when this statement was made by Senator GRAMM. We have a Federal Government today that is smaller than when President Kennedy was President.

He went on to say in September of 1993:

. . . [T]his program is going to make the economy weaker. . . . Hundreds of thousands of people are going to lose their jobs as a result of this program.

Wrong, absolutely wrong; not even close. The program the President asked us to vote for, and we did, made the economy stronger. We have had the lowest inflation, the lowest unemployment in more than 40 years. There had been economic growth as high in the past but never any higher than we have had. We hold the record for the longest period of economic growth in the history of this country.

PHIL GRAMM went on to state, on another occasion on the Senate floor:

I believe that hundreds of thousands of people are going to lose their jobs as a result

of this program. I believe that Bill Clinton will be one of those people.

Well, hundreds of thousands of people didn't lose their jobs; tens of millions of people got new jobs. And President Clinton was reelected. Again, my friend from Texas was wrong.

The Senator from Iowa, Mr. GRASSLEY:

I really do not think it takes a rocket scientist to know this bill will cost jobs.

Well, my friend from Iowa was wrong, too. It didn't take a rocket scientist. It took people with courage to follow a leader who said: Do this and the economy is going to turn around. We did that. We are not rocket scientists, but common sense dictated if we did the things that were in that budget, it would make the economy better. It would set a new course in the United States for economic viability. We followed that lead, and here is where we now are.

My friend CONNIE MACK, with whom I came to Congress in 1982, said in 1993:

This bill will cost America jobs, no doubt about it.

Senator WILLIAM ROTH, chairman of the Finance Committee now, said back then:

It will flatten the economy.

Not true. Quite the contrary. My friend from Delaware went on to say:

I am concerned about what this plan will do to our economy. I am concerned about what it will do to jobs. I am concerned about what it will do to our families, our communities, and to our children's future.

Well, he should not have been concerned. Or if he was concerned, I am sure he feels much better today because everything about which he was concerned has been to the good of the country. The economy is better. It has been better for families and communities and the future of our children.

Senator RICK SANTORUM of Pennsylvania:

People know it's bad policy. . . . Let's do something . . . that creates jobs, that really will solve the deficit, not just feed this monster of government with more and more money for it to go out and spend more and more.

He was reading a different set of blueprints than everyone else because he was wrong.

Senator STROM THURMOND, longest serving Senator in this body, said in 1993:

It contains no real spending cuts to reduce the deficit or improve the Nation's outlook.

Representative DICK ARMEY, majority leader in the House:

The impact on job creation is going to be devastating.

DAN BURTON, Representative from Indiana of longstanding, said:

The Democratic plan means higher deficits, a higher national debt, deficits running \$350 billion a year.

He was only about \$450 billion wrong about the deficit. In fact, it has turned around. We have a \$100 billion surplus or more.

JOHN KASICH, with whom I came to Congress in 1982, a Representative from Ohio, said:

This plan will not work. If it was to work, then I'd have to become a Democrat . . .

That is a direct quote. KASICH is retiring from the House this year. Maybe he is doing it so he can reregister. It is quite clear that if he is a man of his word, he should become a Democrat because he was wrong in his prediction.

It is good once in a while to revisit history, to talk about what people said will happen, to go back and see what the record is.

Let's look at the record not in 1993, and what has transpired that has turned this economy on fire, but let's talk about the future. We in the minority believe in the future. We don't believe in the past, even though once in a while it is important that you look at history. We believe in the future. We believe the future in this country has been hampered, hindered, slowed down by the majority in the Congress, the Republican House, the Republican Senate.

We believe we should be able to have up-or-down votes and have a full debate without any restrictions. I know we have people who come and say: Sure, you can debate the Elementary and Secondary Education Act, but we are going to limit debate. We want you to have five amendments, and we will have five amendments.

Let's do it the way we have always done it in the Senate. Let's bring out the elementary and secondary education bill, complete it, vote on it, and go on to something else.

One of the actions we should take when we finish the debate on the Elementary and Secondary Education Act is to provide money for modernizing our schools. We need new schools some places. We need to renovate schools in other places. This is important for our children.

We need to do something about the health care delivery system in this country. Forty-five million Americans have no health care. The greatest power in the history of the world, and we have 45 million people who can't go to the doctor when they are sick. That is an embarrassment. How can President Clinton go to the G-8 when we have 45 million people who have no health insurance? I, as a Member of the Senate, am not proud of that fact. That number is going up 1.5 million every year. Next year, it will be almost 47 million. We don't even talk about that anymore. We don't talk about the uninsured.

We are now talking about a small number of people who are insured. We are talking about the Patients' Bill of Rights. I am glad we are doing that. But we are ignoring the 45 million people. We need to pass a Patients' Bill of Rights so we have doctors again taking charge of patients, not a clerk in Baltimore determining whether or not someone can have an appendectomy or an MRI.

When I was a young man, my first elected job was to the board of trustees. I was elected to the board, and

later I became chairman. I was a young man. This was for the largest hospital district in Nevada. It was called the Southern Nevada Memorial Hospital. When I came there, over 40 percent of the seniors who came into our hospital had no health insurance. In those days, when you came to the hospital, you had your mother, brother, neighbor, or somebody else who had to sign and be responsible for that bill. If they didn't pay the bill, just as all hospitals in America would do, we would go after you with a vengeance. We would go after your wages, your car, your house. We had a very aggressive collection agency that would go after bills of seniors who did not pay.

When I was on the board of trustees, Medicare came to be. Bob Dole voted against that, and he was proud of that. Dick Arney said it was a bad idea. Medicare is not a perfect program—far from it—but it has given dignity to senior citizens because they don't have to beg for health care. When it came into being, prescription drugs weren't a big deal. Prescriptions did not keep people alive. They did not make people live more comfortable lives. Today, the average senior citizen gets 18 prescriptions filled every year. We can't have a program for senior citizens in health care that doesn't include prescription drugs. That is part of the future in the Democratic vision. We want prescription drug benefits in Medicare. We want prescription drugs to be more affordable for everybody.

There is a stereotype out there that someone who gets minimum wage is a teenager flipping hamburgers at McDonald's. Over 60 percent of the people who draw minimum wage are women, and for over 40 percent of those women, that is the only money they get for their families—nothing else. Minimum wage is not just for people flipping hamburgers at McDonald's; it is for people earning a living, keeping people off welfare. I think it would be nice if we increased the minimum wage. I believe people need dignity with work. The minimum wage is one of those things that does just that.

I come from the West. I remember with fondness that on my 12th birthday my parents ordered me a 12-gauge shotgun out of the Sears and Roebuck catalog. I was 12 years old, and I had a 12-gauge shotgun. They paid \$28 for it. I loved that gun. I still have it. I got the stock reworked. It was bolt action. I have been a police officer and I carried a gun. I have a lot of guns—a rifle, a shotgun, pistols. So I understand guns. But I still think it is not a bad idea if we have a law so that crazy people and felons can't buy guns.

What have we as Democrats been trying to do? We have been trying to close loopholes, saying that at pawnshops and gun shows where there are loopholes, where criminals and crazies buy these guns, we want to close those loopholes. We can't even vote on that. They keep stopping us. We don't have the opportunity to do that. As my

friend from North Dakota, Senator DORGAN, has said—he uses these one-liners—I don't believe you need an assault weapon to go deer hunting. If you do, you should find another hobby. Some of these comments on the gun safety issues reflect, I think, what the American people really think.

I could talk more, but I think it is too bad that we are here in morning business, not able to address some of these very important issues.

One of the issues that tears into my heart every time I mention this is that we need to do a better job of helping kids to stay in school. I say to my friend from Minnesota, who was a college professor before he came here, at one of the very fine institutions of higher learning in America, Carleton College—and we have lots of them—I know the Senator from Minnesota got the best students. But there are a lot of the best students who didn't have the opportunity to come to his institution. A lot of them dropped out of school.

We have 3,000 children who drop out of high school every day in America and 500,000 a year. Every time a kid drops out of school, he or she is less than they could be. I have tried on the Senate floor, with my friend from New Mexico, Senator JEFF BINGAMAN, to pass legislation that would set up in the Department of Education a branch whose sole function in life would be to work on the dropout problems we have. The House passed it. Last year, it was defeated on a straight party line vote in this body.

I think we need to do something about that. I think we have the luxury of doing so. I think we should do something. I know my friend from Minnesota is an expert in this field. I talk about people having no health insurance and people who have health insurance treated poorly. What about the problems we have with mental health in this country? It is an ignored segment of our society. The Federal Government, I believe, has a role and obligation to do something about the many problems facing Americans today, not the least of which is 31,000 people who kill themselves every year. We have to better understand that. I wish we were debating some of these issues today.

I didn't want the day to go by, when we have time on the floor, without talking about some tough votes we have taken and how important it was that the 1993 Clinton Budget Deficit Reduction Act passed, how important it is to the history of this country, and how well we are doing as a result of that, and how much better we could do if we could vote on some of these issues I have outlined today.

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Mr. ENZI). The Senator from Minnesota is recognized.

LET'S DO THE SENATE'S BUSINESS

Mr. WELLSTONE. Mr. President, I thank my colleague, Senator REID