The American Competitiveness in the Twenty-first Century Act, S. 2045, contains both.

In the short-term, a tight labor market, increasing globalization, and a burgeoning economy have combined to increase demand for skilled workers well beyond what was forecast when Congress last addressed the issue of temporary visas for highly skilled workers in 1998. Therefore, my bill, once again, increases the annual cap for the next three years.

That, Mr. President, is nothing more than a short term solution to the workforce needs in my State and across the country.

The longer term solution lies with our own children and our own workers; and in ensuring that our education and training of our current and future workforce matches the demands in our high tech 21st century global economy.

Thus, working with my colleagues, I have included in this bill strong, effective, and forward-looking provisions directing the more than $100 million in fees generated by the visas toward the education and retraining of our children and our workforce.

Those provisions are included in the substitute which I am prepared to offer today.

We are here, today, however, as this session of Congress comes to a close, with the fate of this critical legislation extremely uncertain.

Frankly, when this bill was reported by the Committee, I thought we were on track to move this rapidly through the Senate.

I offered to sit down with other Members—including my colleague from Massachusetts, Senator KENNEDY, my colleague from California, Mrs. FEINSTEIN, and my colleague from Connecticut, Senator LIEBERMAN—to work with them on provisions regarding education and training. We have done that.

And, I as I have noted, I am pleased to report that the substitute which I intend to offer to this bill, reflects the majority of their ideas and proposals.

Quite unexpectedly, however, the White House weighed in with what sounded to me like an ultimatum tying passage of this to other unrelated, costly and far reaching immigration amendments.

Mr. President, I hope we can get this done.

I know the majority leader filed cloture earlier today on a motion to proceed.

I look forward to working with my colleagues in the coming days to try and avoid a confrontational process.

Again, I hope we can get this done for American workers and children and for our continued economic expansion.

I am grateful to be able to say these words today because I want to move this bill forward. It is in the best interest of our country. It is in the best interest of of our high-tech community. We are talking about nanotechnology technology, quantum computers, all kinds of educational projects in which, literally, this Nation needs to be the leader. The only way we are going to be the leader is if we continue to accentuate the positive by having the best high-tech minds working with us.

Many of these people for whom we want to allow visas are people who have been educated in our country, given our education and given our information. Frankly, it is much to our advantage to have some of them have the privilege of working here before they go back to their own countries. This bill will help to resolve that. To have it enmeshed in politics, as the White House has tried to do, is a tremendous, incredible mistake.

I hope the President and those who are advising him will back off. Let us pass this bill and keep the United States at the forefront of the high-tech revolution.

That is my goal. As everyone knows, I have worked very hard in this area. I daresay there is probably no more important bill in this Congress, as far as the information technology industry and the high-tech community are concerned, than this particular bill. There are others that rise to its equal, but nothing rises beyond it.

Mr. President, I suggest the absence of a quorum.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will call the roll.

The assistant legislative clerk proceeded to call the roll.

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

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

Mr. CRAIG. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that I be allowed to proceed in morning business and to consume such time as I may need.

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

COMPLETING THE BUSINESS OF GOVERNMENT

Mr. CRAIG. Mr. President, I know we are at or near the close of business of today's session of the Senate. I thought it important that we end up the week with a bit of an analysis of where we are and where we have to get in the next several weeks to complete the business of Government, to fund the necessary agencies, and to be responsible to the American people as it relates to the expenditure of their tax dollars.

As most all Americans understand, we are now, fortunately, living with a balanced budget at our Federal Government level; that is, current operating budgets. Many of us in Congress for decades fought to get this budget balanced. It became balanced during a period of unprecedented economic growth in our country. I believe that a balanced budget contributed dramatically to that growth.

At the same time as we worked to continue to balance that budget, many of us had wanted to now take some of the unprecedented surpluses of tax dollars that are coming into us and return them to the American taxpayer. We tried to do that this year in two forms: In the reduction or the elimination of the marriage tax penalty, about $1,400 per married couple; and in the near elimination of the death tax; in other words, the taxing of citizens of their wealth or their estates upon the incident of death. Those are two items extremely popular with the American people.

Yet in trying to do that, we were told by this administration and by many of my colleagues on the other side that it would wipe out this surplus tax dollar amount—many statements such as that that couldn't be any further from the truth. The reality is that for those two tax packages that were passed by Congress and now vetoed by the President, we are talking of about a dime, one dime out of every surplus dollar, your surplus tax dollar, to be projected to come in to our Government over the next decade.

Be that as it may, that is a problem we face. So here we are now working to finalize the work of the Government in the next 3 weeks, and we have an inordinate amount of work to get done. One of my frustrations as a leader on this side in trying to move the process along is that, for the last 6 months, we have heard the rumor, and we have watched the actions of the minority leader and the folks on the other side, which would indicate there was a stalling tactic going on, that somehow they didn't want to get the work done in a timely fashion, that they constantly objected to unanimous consents, and they asked for votes time after time on issues we had already voted on and had been thoroughly debated on the floor of the Senate, from which the political answers had come flowing forth on the debate.

Let me give a couple of examples. I am one of those who always comes to the floor when there is a gun debate. Somehow, the other side is saying we have to have more votes on gun issues. Well, I will say this: We have already had 13 votes this session on the gun issue. I am not quite sure how many more we need, or will need, to express to the American people the intent of Republicans versus Democrats versus individual Senators as it comes to this issue.

We have had rollcall votes on amendments 403 times; Democrats have proposed 231 and Republicans have proposed 172. Many of these amendments never would make it into policy and had been refused by the authorizing committees but were here either for time taken or for political expressions being made—not for substantive policy reform because we knew it would not happen.

On the issue of ''Kennedy Care,'' or health care, we have already had eight votes; and we still are being asked to take more votes on the prescription

drug issue, a Government-run proposal on the part of some. We have had seven votes on that. How many votes does it take to express to the American people the intent of this Congress or this Senate when it comes to a given issue? A once-a-week vote? A once-a-day vote? How about one thorough debate and one vote up or down? That clearly expresses the will and the intent of individual Senators.

This last week we have had a very significant debate on the normalization of trade relations with China, known as PNTR, permanent normal trade relations. It is a very important debate and it was handled very well. Most of the amendments have been constructive. But while we have been trying to do this, recognizing our work schedule we have been trying to do a couple of other things. For example, we have been trying to offer up additional amendments, or appropriations bills, or conference reports that will finalize the work of Congress. This is what has happened. It confirms what many expected was true and that was an attempt to slow-roll us or stall us so we could not get our work done.

Here is a quote from the USA Today of Friday, September 8. It says:

> Senator Minority Leader Tom Daschle has a simple strategy for winning the final negotiations over spending bills. Of course, those are the key items that we must finish to finish the work of the Congress so we can adjourn. What is it?

He said:

> Stall until the Republicans have to cave in because they can't wait any longer to recess and get out on the campaign trail.

Of course, the logic is simple if you are an insider and you know the workings of the Senate and you know how many are up for reelection.

> That is because 18 of the 29 Senators seeking reelection are Republicans and 11 are Democrats. There are a lot of vulnerable Republican Senators. I know they want to go home badly.

So what is the tactic? Stall, object. One Senator can come to the floor and all he or she has to do is say: Mr. President, I object. That simple action in itself can either take hours or days of debate and break down the process. It can be called a filibuster, or gaining cloture on a vote; but ultimately, and without question, it is a stalling tactic—especially now in light of what the minority leader says.

Finally, TOM DASCHLE has come clean. He has openly and publicly said their tactic is to stall. What does stalling really get us? To some who believe in big government, it could probably get them tens of billions dollars more in money to spend on Government programs and, in some instances, more Government control, more Government mandates and, frankly, more Government in your back pocket.

People of my thinking would suggest that is bad policy. But the dollars we are talking about, the surplus dollars that we tried to get back to the American people in the form of tax relief, which was vetoed this year by the President, is the kind of money they now want to spend. Oh, these Republicans, if we just stall on them, they are so anxious to go home that they will buy their way out of it in the final hours of the 106th Congress.

Senator DASCHLE, Democrats, listen to me, please. We are not going to buy our way out of it. I don't want to buy our way out of it. The American taxpayers don't want us to buy our way out of it. They want good, sound policy, recognizing important programs. But they also know we are increasing Government spending at a near record rate now and, at the same time, we truly do have a surplus that ought to go home to the American taxpayer from whence it came. It is not our money; it is the taxpayers' money.

That is why Senator LOTT, the majority leader of the Senate, and Congressman DENNIS HASTERT, the Speaker of the House, in a meeting with President, said: Mr. President, let's take 90 percent of the surplus, if you are not going to let us give it back in taxes, and let's use it to pay down the debt; 90 percent of the surplus could go against the debt. That leaves 10 percent of the surplus to spend on programs.

Well, they can't even agree with that on the other side, when the American people are clearly saying: Give us tax relief. But if you can't do that, pay down the debt.

For gosh sakes, don't spend that money. Get Americans debt free. Buy down that nearly $6 trillion debt in a way that is manageable, responsible to the economy—but, most importantly, in a way that is responsible to our young people and to their futures. It is a debt they will, obviously, have to assume.

Mr. Daschle's answer is to stall. How do you stall? This is how you do it. When the leader comes to the floor and asks unanimous consent that H.R. 3615, the Rural Local Broadcast Signal Act—simple but important, and it is called the rural satellite bill—is ready to go, somebody from the other side stands up and says, ''I object.'' Senator LEAHY did that for Senator DASCHLE.

Stalling tactic? You bet. I call that stall No. 1. Here is stall No. 2: H.R. 1776, the national manufactured housing construction bill. It has 32 cosponsors, including Democrats such as Senators BRYAN, CLELAND, and HOLLINGS. The Leader requested, on September 8, to go to a conference to solve our problems. This is for safety requirements for manufactured housing. Senator LEAHY, for Senator DASCHLE, said, ''I object.'' Stall No. 2.

Stall No. 3, H.R. 1259, Social Security and Medicare Safety Deposit Act, the lockbox: Democrats and the President are trying to take credit for that right now. They fought us for a year on it. Senator ASHCROFT of Missouri was the one who came up with the idea. News stories are replete about Republicans talking about that idea for the last year and a half. And now, of course, because some folks on the other side of the aisle want credit when we proposed bringing that up to debate it, to have it, and to truly protect Social Security revenues, oops, stall No. 3.

This time Senator DASCHLE himself came out and objected to reaffirm what he said to USA Today on September 8. They won't even let that go.

Here is stall tactic No. 4, four district judges: We have been criticized all year because we won't confirm the judges the President has sent up. Majority Leader TRENT LOTT brings the judge bill to the floor, judges the Democrats want, judges the Republicans want, but, most importantly, judges that this President sent up. He brought the judges to the floor. Let's see. He brought a judge for Senator DURBIN; he brought a judge for Arizona, and everybody agreed on these judges; DASCHLE himself objected, stall tactic No. 4.

These are just functionary, important kinds of necessarily ''get done if you can'' kinds of things. We have time to do it. It doesn't require lots of debate. But it clearly appears to me that no action goes forth. And if we can stop that action, surely those Republicans in time will cave.

Here is stall tactic No. 5, intelligence authorization: A request to go to the conference with Democrat amendments submitted to DASCHLE through a staff channel on September 7—no response from DASCHLE or others—with an indication that Democrats are preparing additional amendments, stall tactic No. 5.

My goodness, aren't we going to get these authorizations done? They are very important.

Here are four nominations to the U.S. Institute for Peace. I am not going to stand here and suggest the Democrats aren't for peace. We are all for peace. But at least they objected to moving nominations on the Institute for Peace; stall No. 6.

A document that made stall No. 7 happen on the 13th of this month was a major report coming out of our Federal Government saying that violence in the media, violence in video games, violence on television, and violence in the movies is truly producing a culture of violence that could and appears to be translating into violent youth of America with young people witnessing over 100,000 acts of violence, actually watching on television, although acted and cast—8,000 murders during their young lifetime. Somehow that is important. We have been talking about it for years as being darned important.

Senator JOE LIEBERMAN, now Vice-Presidential candidate, proposed what is known as the ''Media Violence Labeling and Advertising Act of 2000.'' Senator JOHN MCCAIN supported him. It is bipartisan with Democrats and Republicans, and now a national issue made true by studies and analyses of our Federal Government as to the impact on young people. We brought it to the floor. That is S. 2497, bipartisan

legislation, and there was objection to the unanimous consent to move it forward.

For the week, that is stall tactic No. 7.

What will next week hold? We are going to conclude PNTR on a vote on Tuesday, I believe. We have numerous appropriations bills that ought to be dealt with. Hopefully, we can and will deal with them and in doing so pick up the pace around here and get our work done so that we can adjourn—so that we can send a very clear message to the American people of the intent of this Congress to balance the budget; to hold sacred the Social Security surplus; to make sure that we deal with health care in a responsible way for our citizens; hopefully that we could give back a few of these surplus tax dollars, but if we can't do that, at least dedicate a large portion of it to debt buydown so that young people in their lifetime won't have to finance the debt structure of the generation before them.

Those are responsible and right things to do, and I hope we can do them. But I will be back next week to talk probably about stall tactic No. 8, No. 9, No. 10, and No. 11. At least I am going to until the minority leader comes to the floor and he recants and says that he didn't say this or that this isn't a strategy because if it is a strategy, it is bad politics, and it is darned bad government to simply say, no, we are not going to work until we get the right to spend billions and billions of dollars of more money. That is not bipartisan. Most importantly, that is bad policy.

Mr. President, I suggest the absence of a quorum.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will call the roll.

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

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

MORNING BUSINESS

Mr. CRAIG. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that there now be a period for the transaction of routine morning business with Senators permitted to speak for up to 10 minutes each.

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

PRESCRIPTION DRUGS AND PREVENTIVE CARE: THE KEY TO TRUE MEDICARE REFORM

Mr. GRAHAM. Mr. President, yesterday I started the first of what will be five or more brief statements on issues related to the subject of the Federal Government providing a prescription medication benefit to Medicare recipients.

Yesterday, I opened this series with a discussion of what I consider to be the most important reform required in the Medicare system; and that is reforming a 35-year-old health care system which was established to provide acute care; that is, care after an illness had matured into a major condition, or after an accident had caused a person to require specific medical attention largely in a hospital setting.

What was not included as part of the 1965 Medicare program was an emphasis on what seniors want today; and that is, they want a system that will not just treat them after they are seriously ill but to have treatment that will avoid or reduce the impact of those illnesses through effective preventive strategies.

Those preventive strategies have many components, including regular screenings for those conditions that can be detected at an early time; and then the management, through a variety of sources, of those chronic conditions so that they do not mature into serious health concerns, in some cases even death.

To me, the conversion of Medicare from a sickness program to a wellness program is the fundamental reform that this Congress must achieve.

If we are going to have this new orientation on wellness, prescription drugs will play a critical role. Prescription drugs are a part of almost every methodology of managing a medical condition which, if not appropriately managed, could mature into serious complications. Prescription drugs are a key to providing true quality preventive care for our senior citizens.

My point is illustrated by an example.

Mrs. Jones is a Medicare beneficiary. She has, like an increasingly large number of Medicare beneficiaries, no drug coverage. Unfortunately, Mrs. Jones also has diabetes, hypertension, and high cholesterol. These are three conditions which in the past would have been debilitating, even fatal. Today, thanks to the miracle of modern medicine, Mrs. Jones can treat these conditions and continue to live a healthy life.

Mrs. Jones is likely to be treated with Glucopahge, Procardia XL, and Lipitor.

The annual cost of Glucophage will be $708. The annual cost for Procardia XL will be approximately $500 to $900, depending on whether 30 or 60 milligram tablets are prescribed. The annual cost of Lipitor is approximately $700. The total annual spending for these three drugs alone for Mrs. Jones will range between $1,900 and $2,300. These costs, for most seniors—I would argue, for most Americans—are likely to cause significant economic hardship. But if Mrs. Jones does not take these drugs, she will find her conditions raging out of control and will surely be a candidate for expensive hospital stays and surgery.

Those last two comments underscore the fact that this is a medical issue in terms of will we make available and affordable to our older citizens those drugs which are available to manage conditions and avoid those conditions maturing into the need for expensive hospitalization, surgery, or even conditions that are beyond the ability of those heroic measures to stop the unending pace towards death. It is also an economic issue.

For most seniors, there are many years of preparation for retirement, preparation which is particularly oriented to assure that there will be an economic foundation under their retirement years. There are many challenges and risks to that economic foundation. Today the most prominent of those risks, the one which is most feared by millions of older Americans, is the fact that they will, in fact, be diagnosed as having some condition which, the good news is, is treatable and controllable. The bad news is, it will wreck their economic foundation to pay the cost of those drugs. We are dealing not only with an issue of medical humanity but also of economic security. We owe it to our Nation's seniors that they have the chance to live a full, healthy, and economically secure life in retirement. Prescription medications are a key to allowing them to do so.

When Medicare was established in 1965, Mrs. Jones may have benefited most by a system that provided effective hospital care, that did not have a particular focus on preventive benefits, where outpatient prescription drug coverage was not a particularly significant factor. But in the 35 years since that time, medical science and our set of values of what we want from our health care system have changed dramatically.

Today pharmaceuticals, not surgery, are the first line of defense against illnesses. The number of prescriptions for American seniors grew from 648 million as recently as 1992 to more than 1 billion in the year 2000. One example of this transition from surgery to pharmaceuticals is the treatment of ulcers. It used to be that the standard treatment was surgery. Today surgery for ulcers is a very rare event. What has happened is the substitution of effective pharmaceuticals to treat, remedy, and reverse ulcerous conditions.

A senior is better because he or she has avoided the necessity of intrusive surgery. Our taxpayers are better because they have avoided the cost of that surgery, and the senior is able to resume a normal quality of life.

We should think of preventive medication today as the anesthesiology of the last century. I have suggested that if Medicare had been created, not in 1965 but at the end of the Civil War in 1865, there would have been the same debate that we are having today over whether we should include anesthesiology. As we know from our study of Civil War history, it was not uncommon for very serious surgical procedures to be conducted without anesthesiology. Today we would think it to be