

All Bills for raising Revenue shall originate in the House of Representatives; but the Senate may propose or concur with Amendments as on other Bills.

It is important we be factual. The House has to originate tax bills. The Senate can pass appropriations bills. I have always asserted our right. Because of tradition, the House wants to pass them first, and that is fine; that can be the tradition. But nothing should keep the Senate from passing appropriations bills first if we so desire. There is no point of order against them whatsoever.

A point that was made on the Finance Committee—and I was critical of the Senate for bringing up a prescription drug proposal without it going through the Finance Committee. I did a little homework. Since the creation of Medicare in 1965, 22 of the 23 Medicare expansions passed the Finance Committee—bipartisan, overwhelming. We had a tripartisan bill that had a chance to garner bipartisan support on which many of us were requesting a markup in the Finance Committee, before we got to the floor, so we would have a bipartisan approach when it came to the very important, critical, and expensive extension of prescription drugs to Medicare. We were denied that markup. We are going to have the most expensive expansion of Medicare since its inception, and it will be done on the floor of the Senate without input from committee, without scoring, without the CBO, without expert input.

That is a pretty crummy way to legislate. It makes one think the legislation was done more for political purposes than for substantive and legislative intent to make something happen.

My good friend from Massachusetts discussed minimum wage. Senator NICKLES is opposed. Not all Republicans are. This Republican is opposed to increasing the minimum wage from \$5.15 to \$6.65 in 14 months. That is a \$1.50 increase in 14 months. A lot of people are paying in the neighborhood of \$5.15 or \$5.50. If they have to pay an extra \$1.50 in the next year, many will say, I cannot do that, thank you very much. A small business in Delaware or Oklahoma—maybe it is a McDonald's—cannot always afford to pass the \$1.50 on and some employees will lose a job. Maybe it is pumping gas, sacking groceries, or sweeping floors.

My colleague said this is to help increase people's self-esteem and integrity, people who are sweeping the floors. I used to sweep floors. I used to have a janitor service. I used to work for minimum wage, and so did my wife. It was only about 34 years ago we did that, and the minimum wage at that time, if I remember, was a lot less than it is today. It did not hurt my self-esteem. I wanted to make more money, so I started my own business. It was rather successful.

My point is, I don't think we improve people's self-esteem alone by saying we will have the Federal Government setting higher standards, and if you can-

not make it, we would rather you be unemployed. I would rather have someone working for \$5.50 and climb the economic ladder than put that ladder up so high that they cannot get on and they stay unemployed and continue to draw welfare benefits.

I hear we want to freeze this Bush tax cut for the ultrawealthy, the tax cuts for the millionaires. When President Clinton was elected, the maximum personal income tax rate was 31 percent. He increased that rate to 39.6 percent for personal income tax. President Clinton did that retroactively in 1993. President Bush, over several years, eventually gets that 39.6-percent rate in an incremental phasing down to 35 percent. In other words, it is still several percent more than it was under President Clinton. It is 4 percentage points, but percentage-wise it is about a 13-percent rate higher than when President Clinton was elected.

President Reagan lowered the rate to 28 percent. President Bush, the 41st President, increased it, due to a lot of pressure, from 28 percent to 31 percent. President Clinton took it from 31 percent to 39.6. President Bush, the 43rd President, reduces that rate gradually from 39.6 percent to 35 percent over several years. My colleagues are objecting to that as tax cuts for the wealthy. But that is not nearly as much as the tax increase proposed by the previous administration.

It is very important we be factual. The pension bill has been on the calendar since July. Senator DASCHLE could have brought it up at any point. We have bipartisan support for the Finance Committee bill that was passed in July. The minimum wage has been on the calendar since May. If Senator DASCHLE wants to bring it up, he can. He is the majority leader. He has that right to bring up the issues. Two or three weeks before the election looks as if it is calculated more for political purposes than for trying to change the law of the land.

I yield the floor and suggest the absence of a quorum.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will call the roll.

The legislative clerk proceeded to call the roll.

Mr. REID. I ask unanimous consent that the order for the quorum call be rescinded.

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

#### CONCLUSION OF MORNING BUSINESS

Mr. REID. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that morning business be terminated.

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

Mr. REID. The two managers are here for the conference report. They originally had 2 hours for the conference report, and I ask unanimous consent that if they need 2 hours, the time be from now until 5:30.

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

#### HELP AMERICA VOTE ACT OF 2002—CONFERENCE REPORT

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Under the previous order, the Senate will now proceed to the consideration of the conference report accompanying H.R. 3295, which the clerk will report.

The legislative clerk read as follows:

The committee of conference on the disagreeing votes of the two Houses on the amendments of the Senate to the bill (H.R. 3295) to require States and localities to meet uniform and nondiscriminatory election technology and administration requirements applicable to Federal elections, to establish grant programs to provide assistance to States and localities to meet those requirements and to improve election technology and the administration of Federal elections, to establish the Election Administration Commission, and for other purposes, having met, have agreed that the House recede from its disagreement to the amendment of the Senate, and agree to the same with an amendment, signed by a majority of the conferees on the part of both Houses.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senate will proceed to the consideration of the conference report.

(The report is printed in the House proceedings of the RECORD of October 8, 2002.)

Mr. DODD. Mr. President, I am very pleased this afternoon to bring to the attention of the Senate the conference report agreement on legislation to reform our Nation's election laws. I anticipate we will not need the full time allocated. I would like to think Members are so interested they would like to come over and share their thoughts with us on this subject. But knowing there are no votes today, that is not likely to occur so we will probably use a lot less time than the 2 hours required.

I note the presence of my friend and colleague, Senator McCONNELL, the ranking member of the Rules Committee.

Before getting to the substance of my remarks, let me begin by thanking him and his staff, and the staff of Senator BOND as well, one of our conferees, and that of my own two conferees on the Democratic side, Senators DURBIN and SCHUMER, and their staffs, not to mention my own staff, Kennie Gill and others, for the tremendous work done on the Senate side of this effort.

It is somewhat ironic. I understand we are going to get this done. It is a quiet afternoon after Columbus Day. Members are still back in their States having spent the weekend with their families before returning tomorrow when we will have some additional votes as we begin to wind up this 107th Congress. It is somewhat ironic in a sense that we are in this sort of quiet stillness of this Chamber with only two of us here to talk, when you consider what gave rise to this legislation—the fact that there was one of the most tumultuous elections in the history of