

CONRAD. We are going to do our very best to work out a program where we will make it so that we have the opportunity to offer our amendments and hopefully not have the marathon that we normally have at the end of a bill.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Is there objection? Without objection, it is so ordered.

Mr. NICKLES. Mr. President, I thank my friend and colleague. This week will be a challenging week, to say the least. I look forward to working with him, and I would very much like to have an orderly consideration of the budget, the resolution, and the amendments in the process and avoid the so-called vote-arama that in years past we have found ourselves in with a lot of very important votes, with very little time for consideration. I do not think it makes the Senate look very good.

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#### PROGRAM

Mr. NICKLES. Mr. President, for the information of Senators, tomorrow the Senate will resume consideration of S. Con. Res. 23, the budget resolution. At 12, the Senate will proceed to a cloture vote on the Estrada nomination. Following that vote, the Senate will return to consideration of the budget resolution. Members should expect amendments to be offered during tomorrow's session, which will require votes throughout the day. The majority leader encourages all Members who intend to offer amendments to work with the resolution managers in order to ensure an orderly process for debate. It is the intention of the majority leader to finish the budget resolution this week. Therefore, Members should expect late nights and rollcall votes throughout the week.

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#### ORDER FOR ADJOURNMENT

Mr. NICKLES. Mr. President, if there is no further business to come before the Senate, I ask unanimous consent that the Senate stand in adjournment under the previous order following the remarks of Senator ALLARD.

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

The Senator from Colorado.

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#### THE BUDGET

Mr. ALLARD. Mr. President, before I begin my remarks, I thank the budget chairman for his consideration. He is doing a great job. This is the first year he has assumed responsibility as chairman of the Budget Committee. In that position, he has expressed a willingness to work with all members of the Budget Committee and work with Members of the Senate to get a budget out of the Senate. I commend him for that effort.

I think it was extremely disappointing not only to me but to the American people that last year we did not get a budget passed. That is the first thing that has to happen. If we

want to see this process move forward in an orderly manner, we need to pass a budget.

I rise today to make a few comments relating to the budget resolution that is before us. This resolution, in my view, is one of the most important, only next to the legislation committing and supporting our Armed Forces, which is perhaps the most important the Congress will consider.

As my colleagues know, the budget resolution establishes the framework by which Congress will appropriate funds over the next year and it sets a model for the future. Further, this resolution will establish a series of important mechanisms for the enforcement of budget policy and outline important policy priorities to be ultimately determined by other Senate committees.

I serve on the Senate Budget Committee, and I will take this opportunity to comment on the pending resolution, as well as a number of important choices facing this body as we proceed with this debate.

I will make a few comments on the current climate. I have stated numerous times in recent years that continual increases in discretionary spending threaten the long-term fiscal stability of the Government and doom the taxpayer to greater long-term obligations. The slim window of historic surpluses we experienced in Washington from 1998 through 2001 sparked a rapid spending spree, unlike virtually any this Nation has ever experienced.

From the year 2000 to 2003, the Federal Government will have spent more than in any other 4-year period in the last 60 years, excluding the war years of World War II. When compared to the previous 4 years, 1996 to 1999, the Government has increased spending by a startling \$782 billion. The 4-year cost per household of the Federal Government reaching \$73,000. This reckless spending represents irresponsibility in the short term and far worse in the long term.

Today our Nation stands in the midst of a war on terror and on the brink of a costly engagement with the savage totalitarian Government of Iraq. These are conflicts that this country did not ask for but obligations we must meet. Today's international landscape demands nothing less than total commitment to our Armed Forces. I am pleased this budget resolution meets that commitment. I would go one step further and state clearly the defense of the homeland and the protection of American interests is the paramount responsibility of the Federal Government in this Republic.

By abandoning fiscal restraint and discretionary spending over the last 4 years, we have not only continued to bleed current and future taxpayers but created enormous fiscal obstacles to the prosecution of this Nation's defense.

I will speak briefly on defense and the war on terror. The budget resolution reported by the committee pro-

vides for \$400 billion for defense in fiscal year 2004. That is meeting the President's request for the continued aggressive prosecution of our war against terror around the world. The full amount of the President's request for Homeland Security is also included, the new Department of Homeland Security, growing from \$21.3 billion in 2003 to \$27.1 billion in 2004. These dollars will go to the securing of our borders, the training and supply of first responders, bioterrorism preparedness, and increased interagency coordination. I can think of no greater priority in these troubled times.

In talking about the growth package and the tax cuts, perhaps the area of the budget which will face the greatest scrutiny this week will be the reconciliation instruction for the President's proposed growth package. This resolution provided for \$698 billion from 2003 through 2013 for growth, job creation, and tax relief. I support the President's approach to this growth proposal: Mixing tax relief targeted to working families, encouraging investment by the small business sector—which, I might add, is the backbone of this economy in this country—and eliminating the double taxation of dividends.

A number of colleagues made clear they do not believe this package will stimulate the economy and insist the most stimulative effect would be through increased spending. This is not only an argument I fail to embrace, it is one I find dangerous in light of the incredible recent increases in spending that have proven ineffective in changing the economy.

Today, Federal revenues are down for the second consecutive year. That is an unprecedented decrease. The Nasdaq stands at one-quarter of its value just 3 years ago. To those who claim that the Federal Government can spend its way out of such conditions, stimulating growth by absorbing more of America's paycheck, I ask where the evidence is that this, indeed, works.

As I stated earlier, Congress has added \$782 billion in spending over the last 4 years. In light of the sum of this regrettable spending spree, the President proposes a rather humble growth package over the course of the next 10 years. The amount provided in this resolution accommodates the acceleration of several key tax cuts already implemented into law such as the marriage penalty tax and the cut in marginal income tax rates. Further, there is room in this package to increase the child tax credit and increase small business expensing limits. These are very real ways to allow working Americans to keep more of their money, and to do so starting today. I trust they will know best what to do with these savings and can see only beneficial stimulus.

With regard to the dividend proposal, the resolution also accommodates the President's desire to cut one of the Tax Code's most egregious examples of double taxation, that tax placed on corporate dividends. It is unfortunate that