

get back to the Nation's business and get back to it soon. Americans are entitled to it, and we have waited too long to be able to do 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. DURBIN. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the order for the quorum call be rescinded.

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

GRAMMY WINNER BARACK OBAMA

Mr. DURBIN. Mr. President, my colleague in the Senate, Senator BARACK OBAMA of Illinois, is carrying on a grand Illinois tradition. In the history of the United States of America, only two U.S. Senators have ever won a Grammy award. The first was Senator Everett McKinley Dirksen from Pekin, IL for his album "Gallant Men," which many of us can still recall, his deep baritone voice intoning those great patriotic verses that inspired so many.

Now another Senator from Illinois became the second Senator in history to win a Grammy award in the best spoken word category at Wednesday's Grammy Awards ceremony. Senator OBAMA won his Grammy for recording his autobiographical book "Dreams for My Father." The book was first published in 1995. It is an inspirational book, telling the story of not only BARACK's life but also of his quest to understand his heritage, returning to Kenya to the tribe where his father was raised, to meet the people, to learn the stories about his origins and his family's roots. It is a wonderful book. It has become a best seller. I was given a copy by BARACK long before he announced his candidacy to the Senate and value it as a great story about a great American with whom I am honored to serve.

There was stiff competition in that category for the spoken word. BARACK OBAMA prevailed. But others in the finals included Garrison Keillor, Al Franken, Sean Penn, and George Clooney. Who came out on top? The junior Senator from Illinois, BARACK OBAMA.

I understand that Senator HILLARY CLINTON won a Grammy when she was First Lady. Now, of course, she is a distinguished Senator from New York. But she won one for recording "It Takes a Village." Her husband, former President Bill Clinton, won a Grammy for the reading of his autobiography "My Life."

So far it is a clean sweep for Illinois Senators at the Grammys. With this distinguished record, many people will want to continue to follow the career of my junior colleague, Senator BARACK OBAMA.

SOCIAL SECURITY

Mr. DURBIN. Mr. President, I rise to speak to an issue important to every

American, certainly important to more than 40 million who are on Social Security. Buried deep in the President's 2,349-page budget are three proposals relating to Social Security. Some of them come as a surprise.

First, President Bush recommends spending more than \$700 billion to create Social Security private accounts. If we thought this was an issue that had gone away, obviously the White House does not want to abandon it. They are talking about \$700 billion to push for Social Security privatization. Second, the President wants to reduce benefits to future Social Security beneficiaries. And third, he calls for eliminating the \$255 death benefit awarded to families of people who passed away.

The American people have made it clear to the President they are not interested in this privatization scheme. The more the President traveled across America, the more he spoke about it, fewer people supported it. It is an indication that people have genuine concerns about it and for good reason. First, they know this privatization scheme is going to make Social Security's long-term funding problems worse, not better. Second, the President's proposal will force deep cuts in guaranteed Social Security benefits for future retirees, even if they don't choose a private account. Third, partially privatizing Social Security adds trillions of dollars to our national debt by taking money out of the Social Security trust fund. And that debt, under President Bush, has reached historic levels. Finally, partially privatizing Social Security would tie America's retirement security to the uncertainty of financial markets. As there are winners and losers in the stock market every day, there would be winners and losers among retirees in America. Those who guess wrong in their investments could easily end up in a predicament where they don't have the resources they need for a safe and comfortable retirement.

The President says he is for the ownership society. We know what that means. It means we are all in this alone. We know better. When we stand together as an American family with our seniors and our most vulnerable Americans, we are stronger, stronger because we are appealing to the values that make this Nation great. Social Security privatization is not consistent with those values.

Allowing people to divert 4 percent of their Social Security taxes into private accounts sounds harmless, but it is a pay-as-you-go system. Money that is diverted is money that isn't there to pay benefits. By the President's estimation, his plan will create a \$700 billion hole in the Social Security trust fund. That is what it says in the President's budget. Who is going to make up the difference? Unfortunately, some will suggest the way to make up the difference is to borrow it. Who will lend us the money? We know who our creditors are: Japan, China, Saudi Arabia,

the OPEC nations. Many countries around the world will loan us money now, but then, of course, they are our creditors. They are our mortgageholders. We are beholden to them, creating an even greater debt for future generation, and greater vulnerability.

The benefit cuts the President has called for as well are not going to fly. He calls these benefit cuts progressive price indexing. It sounds good, cutting benefits for lower income workers less than for higher income workers, but the practical impact of the President's budget on Social Security benefits would mean that a worker 25 years old today, who retires at age 65 with career earnings equivalent to \$59,000 annually, would see a 24-percent benefit cut by the President's proposal. A similar worker, born 5 years from now, retiring at age 65, average career earnings of \$36,000, would face a 28-percent benefit cut. As people see their pension plans crumbling because of corporate mergers, bankruptcies, and sleight of hand, the President is calling for cutting basic Social Security benefits to people who are certainly not wealthy, if their average income is \$36,000 a year. These workers would be better off if the President didn't touch Social Security.

A worker born 5 years from now who retires at age 65 and has career earnings that average \$59,000 would suffer a 42-percent benefit cut.

This goes too far. I hope the Congress will not seriously consider these proposals by the President when it comes to Social Security.

It is interesting that this President is calling for cuts in Social Security at the same time he wants to cut the taxes paid by the wealthiest people in America. The cost of the President's tax cuts in 2001 and 2003, if made permanent, will be \$11.1 trillion over the next 75 years. It is the height of irresponsibility to give tax cuts to the most comfortable and wealthiest people in America and to cut the basic social safety net on which we count.

Finally, the President's budget proposes to cut the \$255 death benefit awarded to widows, widowers, and children left behind by the death of a member of their family who was covered by Social Security. The President would cut the \$255 death payment to widows and surviving children to pay for funeral expenses and then turn around and give a tax cut to people making over \$1 million a year. How can he possibly resolve the injustice that is part of that proposal?

If we are supposed to be a caring and compassionate people—and we are—wouldn't we care more for a widow who would get a check for \$255 to pay for funeral expenses than someone making \$1 million a year who would receive a \$35,000 tax cut under the President's proposal? That is why the President's priorities are upside down.

As Members start looking through this budget more closely, as we have, they are going to be startled by the