

because that is what it is really about. But it has now been put on this bill as a result of an agreement I reached with the Senator from Nevada, the majority leader. I respected his position. I admire his leadership. I didn't want to create a situation where the lobbying bill got tied up forever over this issue, and the Senator from West Virginia said he would do that if I kept this amendment on the lobbying bill. So I agreed to put the amendment off and bring it forward at this time. So, hopefully, no one, when we get to this issue of cloture, is going to vote against cloture on the theory that it is not appropriate to this bill because, as I said earlier, I think people are stopped from making that position. It is a technical legal term that basically says, out of fairness: You can't make that case because, basically, the reason this amendment is on this bill is because I was asked to put it on this bill by the majority leader. Therefore, that is why we are going forward at this time.

So this is going to be the opportunity for Members of the Senate to vote on whether they believe a tool which will significantly improve our capacity to manage earmarks, to manage waste, is going to have a chance to be passed. It is a tool which has been offered by myself but which was actually offered by Senator Daschle and which was actually voted for by 37 members of the Democratic Party at that time, 20 of whom are still serving in the Senate. So it does seem to me that it is not unreasonable to ask that we take it up and pass it at this time and move it forward.

When we get to the cloture debate, I will have more to say on the matter, but I did want to come down and express my appreciation to the Senator from Tennessee for supporting the amendment.

Mr. ALEXANDER. Mr. President, I wonder if the Senator from New Hampshire would allow me to ask him a question or two.

Mr. GREGG. Of course.

Mr. ALEXANDER. Mr. President, the Senator from New Hampshire was Governor, as I was, and my sense of this amendment is that it understands human nature pretty well. Is it not the Senator's experience as Governor, and as a member of the Appropriations Committee for a long time, that sometimes items slip through, and that the idea here would be for the President to be able to just send it back to Congress and say: Don't you want to take a second look at this before you actually spend taxpayers' money? Is that not the general idea that is expressed by this amendment?

Mr. GREGG. I thank the Senator for his question. He is absolutely right. The essence of his question is that the power is retained with the legislative branch. This is not a line-item veto. This is not a veto. This is just the President saying to us, the legislators who have the power of the purse, take another look at this, which is why Sen-

ator BYRD supported it the last time it was on the floor of the Senate.

Mr. ALEXANDER. If the President sends a package of proposals back and asks: Do you really want to spend this money, and if a majority of the Senate decides that it did, and a majority of the House decides that it didn't, what happens then?

Mr. GREGG. Well, answering the Senator through the Chair, then the money gets spent. If either House does not agree with the rescission, then the rescission fails. So the power of the legislative branch is retained, which is its constitutional authority, to spend money as it deems appropriate, and the President has no capacity to override that under this bill. All he has is the capacity to say to the legislative branch: Do you think you want to do this? If either House says, yes, we do, then the money is spent.

Mr. ALEXANDER. One final question, Mr. President. Does the Senator from New Hampshire believe that Federal spending is one of the most difficult challenges we have here and is a matter that will need a bipartisan approach? And that we need to employ all the reasonable tools that we can to try to bring Federal spending under control? Otherwise, we are going to create a massive crisis for our children and our grandchildren, and this proposal would be one such reasonable tool.

Mr. GREGG. I thank the Senator from Tennessee for his question, which may have been rhetorical, and certainly I agree with that. To put this in context, we have to remember we are going to spend close to \$3 trillion—we probably will spend \$3 trillion this year in the appropriating accounts and in our budgets. There is no way we can manage all that efficiently, but certainly every tool that we can get that helps us manage it efficiently we should have. This is just another tool in the tool box to make sure we don't waste the taxpayers' money.

Mr. ALEXANDER. I thank the Senator.

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. The Senator from Missouri is recognized.

STATE OF THE UNION ADDRESS

Mr. BOND. Mr. President, today I rise to talk about a portion of the President's address last night that I think is extremely important. I have heard from many of my colleagues in this body and on the talk shows that there are serious concerns about the war in Iraq. Primarily, they are saying we need to change our strategy; we shouldn't be involved in a civil war. We should be involving the Iraqis themselves in taking care of the civil war. We ought to be providing more—we ought to ensure the Iraqi Government cuts the Sunnis in on the oil revenues and makes them full economic partners. We need to bring in the friendly neighbors in the region, those countries that want to see a peaceful and

stable Iraq, and we ought to be following the Baker-Hamilton report.

As I listened to the President's speech last night, that is precisely what he did. This is a new strategy we have in Iraq. We have heard in our open Intelligence Committee hearings that now, for the first time, we believe Prime Minister al-Maliki and his Sunni and Kurdish fellow elected leaders believe they can take over and restore order in that country, and they are willing to crack down on the Shia death squads, such as Muqtada al-Sadr. We have seen reports of that in the media. They report that the neighboring countries are willing now to come in and help with reconstruction, provide job opportunities for young unemployed men to keep them from becoming insurgents or terrorists, and this, they say, is our best chance.

Frankly, for Prime Minister al-Maliki and his government, this is probably their last chance. This is an opportunity where al-Maliki said: If you will provide some additional support as we go in, get our troops up to speed and clear and hold Baghdad, we will take over the country.

That is what we need to do to bring a successful conclusion to this war and to draw out our military. We are probably going to have our military in the region for a long time because, as the President said, this is a generational war against radical Islam and the terror they bring.

I wanted to just briefly note a comment. Last night we heard that the military is against the war. Well, there may be some in the military who are against the war, but I can tell my colleagues, I have spent a lot of time listening to Missouri soldiers and marines, people who have been on the ground. I have gotten reports from them continually. I have seen newspaper reports about the people who have come back, the soldiers who have come back.

For example, one woman has written a book. She served with the Army's 101st Airborne. She lost her husband in the war. She says:

It is hard to stay positive about Iraq because of what you see on the news. But I was able to be there and I know what a difference we are making there.

Others, such as 1SG Stephanie Leonard, was moved to tears, saying that they are heroes for helping the Iraqi people. She said:

It is not a 24-hour war. We want things to be in a hurry. As soon as the Iraqi police are able to secure their own country, that is when the window begins to open.

These are just some of the many comments I have seen in print in Missouri and heard people express. They want to see us win. They know they are doing the job. They believe the liberal national media has painted a very unflattering and untrue picture, and that is why our troops think they are not getting a fair shake.

But in that context, in the context of what the President did, let's talk about

the resolutions which are being discussed. If the President is on the track to respond to all of the ideas about how we ought to change our direction in Iraq—and I believe he is—what will the resolutions do?

Well, proponents of the resolutions say they want to support the troops, but the resolutions don't do that. Clearly, I believe there is an agreement now that we are not going to try to use the congressional power of the purse to cut off funding and force an immediate withdrawal from Iraq because that would be madness. The Director of National Intelligence told our committee:

Precipitous withdrawal could lead to a collapse of the government of that country and a collapse of their security forces because we simply don't think they are ready to take over, to assume full control of their fiscal responsibilities.

To simply withdraw now would have catastrophic effects, and that is a quite widely held view inside of Iraq itself. If we were to cut off funds, the CIA Director said it would lead, No. 1, to increased killing of Iraqi civilians.

No. 2, the establishment by al-Zawahiri and Osama bin Laden of the base of operations for their war to establish a worldwide caliphate beginning in the Middle East, taking over the areas of Iraq which would be out of control and would bring people in from other countries in a possible civil war.

If we remember, that is what happened in Vietnam. When Congress cut off the purse, we saw our allies slaughtered in Vietnam, and some 2 to 2.5 million people in Cambodia, Laos, and Vietnam were killed. A possible slaughter of people in the Middle East who have supported us would ensue.

General Maples, the Director of the Defense Intelligence Agency, told our committee 2 weeks ago:

... A failure in Iraq would empower the jihadist movement. It would give that base of operations from which the jihadist movement would extend. And it's consistent with the goals of Al Qaida in Iraq to establish that Islamic state, and then to expand it into the caliphate. I also think that there, of course, will be very significant regional impacts both in terms of stability to other countries—

I ask unanimous consent to speak an additional 4 minutes.

Mr. GREGG. Mr. President, what is the parliamentary situation?

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Mr. TESTER). The time for morning business has expired.

Mr. GREGG. The Senator from Missouri is asking for 4 additional minutes?

Mr. BOND. I ask for 4 additional minutes.

Mr. GREGG. I have no objection to the Senator proceeding.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection, it is so ordered. It will be charged against the minority side.

Mr. BOND. General Maples also told the Senate Intelligence Committee that a withdrawal from Iraq could leave Iraq's vast oil reserves in the hands of jihadists. We can imagine what trouble that would lead to.

If we are not using our power to cut off the funds and force a hasty withdrawal, what are we doing? Are we telling the 21,000 brave men and women who are going to Iraq we are uncomfortable with the dangerous mission they are about to undertake but not offering any alternative? I am sure they will find that very encouraging. They will be delighted to know we don't like what they are doing but they will have to do it anyhow.

If the goal of the resolution is to let the American people know we are uncomfortable with the situation in Iraq, I guess that makes for good politics. But, personally, I think it is wrong and irresponsible. It is irresponsible because if we approve this resolution, the whole world will be listening, including the worst actors in Iraq. We will be telling the Sunni terror cells and the Shia militias that America's political will is wavering.

If the members of al-Qaida in Iraq are finding themselves discouraged by the United States military's relentless pursuit, I am sure they will take comfort from these political gestures. If the Iraqis who support and encourage the Shia death squads are feeling the heat of United States-led and supported operations and are contemplating a compromise that might bring sectarian killing to an end, I am sure they will take comfort from the political gesture to hold on a little longer.

One of the keys to a successful counterinsurgency campaign is to wear down the enemy's resolve. This resolution will do the opposite. It will encourage Sunni terrorists and Shia death squads, letting them know if they hang on longer, the United States will not have the political will to outlast them.

One of the ironies of the resolution is that it condemns a recommendation that comes from a group the Senate requested in legislation. The Iraq Study Group's report recommended that the Iraqi government:

... accelerate assuming responsibility for Iraqi security by increasing the number and quality of Iraqi Army brigades. While this process is underway, and to facilitate it, the United States should significantly increase the number of U.S. military personnel, including combat troops, imbedded in and supporting Iraqi Army units. As these actions proceed, U.S. combat forces could begin to move out of Iraq.

So let me make sure I have this right. The Senate demanded the legislation. The Iraq Study Group put together recommendations. The study group came forward and made recommendations and the President had the temerity to accept some of them, and now we are going to vote out a resolution condemning them for accepting those recommendations?

General Petraeus said this week to the Committee on Armed Services that he needs the 21,000 troops to get the job done. Are we telling him we don't think we should have those troops?

I have to confess, even as a Senator, I can't tell you exactly what we are

trying to say in these resolutions. Are we expressing concern and discomfort with the situation in Iraq? I can't imagine how that would help. But more importantly, I can imagine lots of ways in which it will not help.

Look at the confusion within our Government in 1993 when the military had concerns about congressional intentions over our involvement in Somalia and how they prevented a request for armor that could have saved the lives of American soldiers. It is not a perfect analogy, of course, but I think it offers an important warning of the danger of mixed message like the one we will send with this resolution.

Our commander on the ground in Somalia in 1993, General Montgomery, requested a small unit of tanks and armored vehicles, as a quick reaction force in case our troops got bogged down or surrounded in the dense urban sprawl of Mogadishu, as they eventually did.

Les Aspin, the Secretary of Defense at the time, denied the commander's request. He told the Senate Armed Services Committee that "Congressional concerns about U.S. military involvement in Somalia were a factor in his decision to deny General Montgomery's request for armor."

General Montgomery also told the Armed Services Committee that he would have used that armor in October 1993 "Blackhawk Down" incident to rescue our troops who were bogged down in urban combat with Somali militia men. General Montgomery said that if he had that armor, "we would have gotten there faster. We would have taken fewer casualties."

My fear is that, in addition to the message this resolution will send to our enemies about our lack of resolve, it will also send a wrong and confusing message to our military commanders.

Just like we did in Somalia in 1993, we are pretty much saying that while the President should not pull our military out of Iraq, they shouldn't bother asking for what they need to get the job done and protect themselves while they are there.

General Petraeus raised this very same issue in his testimony this week in front of the Senate Armed Services Committee. He said that he worried about what message this resolution would send to his soldiers and himself.

If we are going to leave our troops in Iraq, as we should, we should also give them everything they need to protect themselves and get their job done. Just as importantly, we should not leave them with the mistaken impression that they shouldn't bother to ask for what they need.

Congress cannot, and should not micromanage the war in Iraq—the troops in the field like to call that the 8,000 mile screwdriver. If any Senator wants to propose legislation to compel a withdrawal from Iraq, so be it, and let's vote on the matter.

If not, let's stop trying to micromanage by resolution, suggestion and

gesture, put away the 8,000 mile screwdriver, and give the President's plan a chance to succeed.

The Deputy Director of National Intelligence, Tom Fingar, told the Senate Intelligence Committee this week that gains in stability in Iraq could open a window for gains in sectarian reconciliation. I agree, and we have to give the President's plan a chance to succeed if we want to open that window.

Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent to have two pertinent articles printed in the RECORD.

There being no objection, the material was ordered to be printed in the RECORD, as follows:

[From the St. Louis Post-Dispatch, July 12, 2005]

BRONZE STAR WINNER SEES FRUIT OF HER EFFORTS

(By Mary Delach Leonard)

Last January, Sgt. 1st Class Stephanie Leonard was moved to tears as she watched news reports of the national elections in Iraq.

"When I saw people running around with their ink-colored fingers, I cried. I knew it was worth it. And I realized something important: Without soldiers and without people who support their soldiers, that day would have never come," she said.

"People overuse the word hero, but I felt like a hero that day."

Leonard, 43, of Normandy, served in Iraq two years ago, shortly after the start of the war. She was assigned to the 135th Military History Detachment of the Missouri National Guard, and her job was to gather stories of war. Her three-soldier unit crisscrossed the Sunni Triangle from April to August 2003 interviewing and photographing members of the Third Corps Support Command.

The information they gathered will eventually be stored at the Center for Military History in Washington.

"Believe it or not, the military really does like to learn from its successes and failures, and this is one way we can do that," Leonard says.

She performed her duty so well, she was awarded the Bronze Star for meritorious service; she was the first female soldier of the Missouri Guard to earn the honor.

Leonard says people are always curious about the medal and are often surprised to discover that the Bronze Star is awarded not only for valor but, as in her case, for doing an outstanding job.

"It was all about the mission," she said.

WOMEN ARE IN COMBAT

Leonard is manager of information technology at Aramark in St. Louis—she calls herself a computer geek—and says that her life is pretty well back to normal. But she is concerned for her friends in Guard units currently serving in Iraq. She is aware that Americans are growing impatient and that some politicians have called for a timetable to begin withdrawing U.S. troops.

"It's not a 24-hour war, and, as Americans, we want things in a hurry," she said. "We have to be patient. As soon as the Iraqi police are able to secure their own country, then that's when the window begins to open."

On the day Leonard was interviewed for this story, the news was grim: Six American troops had been killed and 13 injured during a suicide attack on a convoy in Fallujah. The headlines focused on the fact that four of the dead were female Marines, and that 11

of the injured were also women. Some political commentators questioned the assignments of women in Iraq.

Although Pentagon policy excludes women from ground combat units, they are allowed to serve in support units, such as transportation, engineers and military police.

"If women are in support roles everywhere in Iraq, then women are in combat," Leonard said.

Some people are bothered by the thought of women kicking in doors or assuming the role of the aggressor, she said.

"But we have female firefighters and women police officers, and they are trained to kick in doors."

Loss of life is tragic, whether male or female, Leonard said.

"Bullets don't differentiate."

Although her unit traveled in unsecured combat zones in Iraq, Leonard said she never felt as though male soldiers treated her differently or tried to protect her.

"I think I was more protective of them," she said. "They knew I could take care of myself."

MAKING CHOICES

Since returning from Iraq, Leonard has been invited to speak about her experiences before various civic groups. Recently, she addressed Junior ROTC students at Beaumont High School. She told them that life is all about options, choices and decisions.

"As you get older, choices don't get easier; they get harder," she said.

Leonard points to her own life as an example. She joined the National Guard 16 years ago after graduating from St. Louis University because she wanted a challenge. She found one in Iraq.

She said she embraced the U.S. mission in Iraq because, as she traveled the countryside, she discovered how bad conditions were for the people.

Leonard said she has thought about returning to Iraq—she thinks she could make a contribution—but she would do so reluctantly because of her family. She is particularly concerned about her mother who took it hard when her youngest child went to war.

Recently, Leonard has been thinking a lot about her time in Iraq because she has been answering a detailed questionnaire from the National Guard about her service.

"It's a real shock to the system," she said. "It can bring up all sorts of memories."

[From the St. Louis Post-Dispatch, Apr. 2, 2006]

**THE HEART OF A SOLDIER
MISSOURI VETERAN OF IRAQ WAR REFLECTS ON
LIFE, LOVE AND GRIEF IN HER NEW BOOK
(By Mary Delach Leonard)**

Kate Blaise is back home in northeastern Missouri, an hour's drive from just about anywhere and a lifetime away from the desert of northern Iraq, where she served for a year with the Army's 101st Airborne Division.

These days, her life is an open book, told in candid detail in her recently published autobiography "The Heart of a Soldier: A True Story of Love, War and Sacrifice." But the residents of Macon, her hometown of 5,500, already knew the basic plot line:

How the former Kate Decker, who grew up wanting to join the Army, completed ROTC training in college and then rose to the rank of captain.

How, as a logistics officer, she convoyed across Iraq during the opening days of the war.

How she married her high school sweetheart, Mike Blaise, who would become a chief warrant officer with the 101st He was a pilot who loved flying Kiowa helicopters and who saw his share of combat.

How they served together in Iraq and how she made it home safely—but he did not.

"Some people tell me that they know how it ends, and yet they hope for a different ending," Blaise says.

An ending where a Kiowa won't crash in the desert on a dark, windy January night in 2004, the eve of her unit's departure for home.

Others have told her that although they didn't know her husband, they feel like they do after reading her story.

"That's why I wrote the book," she says simply.

A STORY TO TELL

Since the book's publication in January, Blaise, who just turned 30, has gracefully accepted her new role as author, along with all of the trimmings—public appearances and media interviews.

On this spring morning, she was in neighboring Atlanta, a town of about 500 people, to speak at Atlanta C-3, a well-used brick complex that houses all of the district's 220 students, from kindergarten through high school.

Mike Blaise attended this school through eighth grade, until his family moved to Macon.

"Your teachers asked me to come today to speak about attitude. I had the attitude that nobody was going to tell me that I couldn't do what I wanted to accomplish," Blaise told the students who lined the wooden bleachers of the gymnasium—third-graders to her left, high schoolers to her right.

"Life takes a lot of turns you don't expect. Bad stuff happens. I've lived the life I've somewhat planned. I did join the Army. I also wrote a book. And I certainly never thought I would write a book."

Dressed in khakis and an olive green Harley-Davidson shirt, Blaise stood before the microphone looking at ease, although she admitted to being nervous about speaking in public. So she made herself more comfortable, perching on a table where she would later sign copies of her book.

The students listened respectfully, their hands waving in the air when she asked if they had questions. The third-graders wanted to know what it was like in Iraq. So she talked about the gritty sand, camel spiders and heat that can reach beyond 120 degrees.

The high schoolers wanted to know whether she still believes in the war. And, on this issue, she stands as solid as a storm cellar during a tornado.

"It's hard to stay positive about Iraq because of what you see on the news, but I was able to be there, and I know what a difference we are making there," she says firmly. "The main thing is that we gave the Iraqi people the power to make their own decisions."

Though much of this was serious talk, she kept the mood light, particularly when the questions had to do with her writing.

"I don't have to worry about my dad finding out about anything I've done—I've written a book," she said with a smile.

Getting published was the result of a series of right-place-at-the-right-time moments, starting when a women's golfing magazine asked her to write about a makeshift course at her Army base in Iraq.

"I am blessed," she says. "I didn't have to work nearly as hard as most authors have to work."

But the material for her story—the living of it—was hard-earned and paid for in full.

A TIME TO HEAL

After leaving the Army, Blaise came home to heal.

She grew up on Crestview Street in a newer section of Macon, the seat of Macon County, about 150 miles from St. Louis. Not

far from her old neighborhood, Blaise found her perfect house, though it needed some fixing, too.

Her father, Steve Decker, a former civil engineer for the state, lives nearby on a 250-acre farm that has been in the Decker family for generations.

Blaise has slowly remodeled the house, painting the rooms in deep, rich colors, and the kitchen a cheery 1950s red and white. Walls hold framed photos with military themes—she is an avid student of military history—and photos of Mike Blaise. His Air Cavalry hat is in the living room, resting atop the triangular case that holds his medals and the American flag that draped his casket.

It was in this home that Blaise came to terms with her loss. For the better part of a year, she spent hours in her office, writing chapters and e-mailing them to Dana White, a writer-editor in New York, who co-authored her book.

She says the toughest part wasn't writing about the night in Iraq when she was told of her husband's helicopter accident.

"It's easy to be sad about the sad things," she says. "It was the happy parts that were the hardest. They made me miss him more."

The Mike Blaise she loved was a big guy who took her deer hunting and made her laugh and liked to sing country songs in karaoke bars.

The book is, in fact, full of happy times, a tribute to growing up in small-town America.

She tells tales on her younger brother and three older sisters—in particular her sister Lindsey, who served in Iraq with the Missouri National Guard.

Blaise writes that her mother's injury in a car accident was the day that changed everything for her. Marie Decker survived but now lives in a long-term care facility.

The book is also a tribute to the tenacity of women who have found homes and carved out careers in the predominantly male world of the military. Blaise has little patience with recent political skirmishes that would have limited the roles of servicewomen in Iraq and Afghanistan.

"This genie is out of the bottle, and no amount of coaxing will get her back in," she says in her book.

But mostly, the book is a tribute to the life and love of a devoted couple who struggled to maintain their marriage through long separations and their share of disappointments. She says her late husband would have insisted on such honesty.

"Mike would have been uncomfortable being glorified," she says.

She still has Scout, the dog the Blaises adopted while serving in Korea. He is a prize, with his baby-seal face and Yodalike ears, a black and white softie who warily eyes strangers and barks at the Amish buggies that pass by their house on U.S. Highway 36.

Though writing the book was an emotional ordeal, it also helped her come to grips with her sadness, she says.

"The day I finished writing, I felt an overwhelming sense of peace," she says.

THE NEXT CHAPTER

Blaise jokes that some people in Macon feared she was writing a tell-all. And, in effect, that's what she did—she told it all, as it related to her life.

"I think her experience growing up was all of our experiences. Nothing could shock us," said Sharon Pennington, who teaches business and computer classes at Atlanta and remembers Mike Blaise as a shy youngster, two years younger than she is.

Kathy Baker, the school superintendent's secretary, was first in line to have Blaise autograph her book.

"I haven't read it. I can't," said Baker, her eyes growing moist. "It's too close."

Baker knows many of Blaise's relatives, including Mike's grandfather, Virgil, whom everyone called Grampy. He died while the Blaises were still in Iraq, and Mike Blaise is buried next to him in Shelby Memorial Cemetery.

Blaise says she's not really sure what she will do with the rest of her life. She says she would consider writing another book, perhaps about grief, which she knows a lot about. Though people gave her books on grief, she found them less than helpful with their flowery sentiments. Her book would be more real.

"It's hard to grieve," she says. "It sucks, and it's going to suck for a long time."

In the meantime, Blaise has joined the Missouri National Guard's 175th Military Police, based in Columbia, because being in the military remains important to her.

"It's the one thing that I do that's for the greater good," she says.

When the unit was sent to New Orleans after Hurricane Katrina, she found the deployment satisfying in a new way.

"I had never done anything that helped Americans," Blaise said.

Blaise recently got engaged to a helicopter pilot who knew her late husband in flight school. Ironically, it was Mike Blaise's affection for his Harley-Davidson motorcycle that brought this new love into her life. They met while riding their Harleys to the Sturgis Motorcycle Rally in South Dakota, fulfilling a wish that Mike had made to attend the event after the war.

Blaise says she wasn't looking for romance, and neither was her fiancé. It was an unexpected gift, another of those life's blessings she often talks about.

"Knowing that Mike knew him somehow eases the guilt," she says. "God doesn't always agree with what you set for yourself."

CONCLUSION OF MORNING BUSINESS

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Morning business is closed.

FAIR MINIMUM WAGE ACT OF 2007

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Under the previous order, the Senate will resume consideration of H.R. 2, which the clerk will report.

The bill clerk read as follows:

A bill (H.R. 2) to amend the Fair Labor Standards Act of 1938 to provide for an increase in the Federal minimum wage.

Pending:

Reid (for Baucus) amendment No. 100, in the nature of a substitute.

McConnell (for Gregg) amendment No. 101 (to amendment No. 100), to provide Congress a second look at wasteful spending by establishing enhanced rescission authority under fast-track procedures.

Sununu amendment No. 112 (to amendment No. 100), to prevent the closure and defunding of certain women's business centers.

Kyl amendment No. 115 (to amendment No. 100), to extend through December 31, 2008, the depreciation treatment of leasehold, restaurant, and retail space improvements.

Bunning amendment No. 119 (to amendment No. 100), to amend the Internal Revenue Code of 1986 to repeal the 1993 income tax increase on Social Security benefits.

Enzi (for Ensign/Inhofe) amendment No. 152 (to amendment No. 100), to reduce document fraud, prevent identity theft, and pre-

serve the integrity of the Social Security system.

Enzi (for Ensign) amendment No. 153 (to amendment No. 100), to preserve and protect Social Security benefits of American workers, including those making minimum wage, and to help ensure greater congressional oversight of the Social Security system by requiring that both Houses of Congress approve a totalization agreement before the agreement, giving foreign workers Social Security benefits, can go into effect.

Enzi (for Ensign) amendment No. 154 (to amendment No. 100), to improve access to affordable health care.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Under the previous order, the hour of 10:37 having arrived, there will be 1 hour of debate in relation to amendment No. 101.

The Senator from New Hampshire.

Mr. GREGG. I ask unanimous consent that during quorum calls in this hour, the time be equally divided on both sides.

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

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

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will call the roll.

The bill clerk proceeded to call the roll.

Mr. KENNEDY. 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. KENNEDY. How much time is left and how is it divided?

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The majority controls 26 minutes, half of which belongs to the Senator from Massachusetts. The other half belongs to the Senator from North Dakota.

Mr. GREGG. Mr. President, could you tell us the entire allotted time?

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Republicans control 21 minutes.

Mr. KENNEDY. Mr. President, I yield myself 5 minutes.

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

Mr. KENNEDY. Mr. President, we are going to be voting on the minimum wage this morning. Hopefully, the Senate will vote for what I consider to be a clean bill—a clean bill being legislation that will increase the minimum wage to \$7.25 over a 2-year period.

There will be another measure that will be voted on that Senator GREGG and Senator CONRAD will address, which is a line-item veto. But the fundamental issue we have before the Senate is the issue of an increase in the minimum wage—an increase in the minimum wage which has not taken place over the period of the last 10 years, and which I am very hopeful we will get strong bipartisan support for.

If you look over the history of the minimum wage, the nine different times we have raised the minimum wage, we have had bipartisan support for that increase. It has only been in the very recent years that Republican leadership has led the fight against it. We now have new leadership in the