

of the Ambulatory Care Center at the Heinz VAMC and the Behavioral Health Pavilion at the University Drive VAMC.

It is our understanding that the VA Pittsburgh Healthcare System is currently progressing on schedule and within its budget. Since the Highland Drive VAMC cannot close until the construction on the other facilities is complete, we ask for your clarification on the VA's future plans for construction project funding for the VA Pittsburgh Healthcare System.

Thank you for your attention to this inquiry.

Sincerely,

RICK SANTORUM,
ARLEN SPECTER,
U.S. Senate.

SENATOR TED STEVENS OF ALASKA

Mr. DOMENICI. Mr. President, on April 13, 2007, my dear friend and colleague Senator TED STEVENS became the longest serving Republican Senator in the history of this body. Today, I would like to pay tribute to my friend and his more than 38 years of service to our Nation and the people of Alaska.

I have known and worked with TED for over 34 years. We have served together on the Appropriations, Budget, and Homeland Security and Government Affairs Committees and many others. TED and I have been in the Senate together for so long some of the committees on which we served no longer exist. We have collaborated on more pieces of legislation than I can remember and worked to resolve many issues. Most recently, I was thankful for his hard work in the effort to open the Arctic National Wildlife Refuge and increase the strategic security of the country.

I am happy to say TED has made the trip to New Mexico and I to Alaska so we could appreciate the needs of each other's home States. I have also had the pleasure of taking several trips with TED abroad, some more enjoyable than others. One that stands out in my mind is the fact-finding trip we took to North Korea several years ago to better understand the threat that nation poses to the world. I don't believe many people can say they have traveled there, even fewer can say they did it with TED STEVENS. I am very thankful I can.

I think it is safe to say TED has had a remarkable life and career, born in Indianapolis, he has lived in California, Oregon, and Montana—finally settling in his beloved Alaska. During the Second World War, TED left college to join the Army Air Corps and became a decorated pilot. After the war TED attended Harvard Law School, became a U.S. Attorney, worked in the Department of the Interior, started his own law firm, and was elected to the Alaska House of Representatives. For most individuals these accomplishments, all before he came to the Senate, would have marked a full and successful life. However, for TED it was just the beginning and I believe this Nation is lucky it was.

After serving with TED for so many years I know of no one who cares more about the people of Alaska and this Nation or serves either with more dedication and distinction. I would like to personally thank TED for his friendship and hope to have the honor of serving alongside him for many years to come.

CONGRESSMAN JIM JONTZ

Mr. HARKIN. Mr. President, it is with great sadness that I note the loss of former Congressman Jim Jontz, who died last month after a 2-year battle against colon cancer. All of us, and especially our Nation's political discourse, are much the poorer for the loss of Jim's energetic voice for progressive politics and his use of grassroots organizing to connect people not only to elective politics, but even more important, to the politics of governing—to the art of making our government institutions respond and work for the people they serve.

Jim's indefatigable, tireless approach to politics put him in the Indiana House of Representatives at age 22. He won that race, against the sitting House majority leader, by two votes, which he claimed to have picked up in a laundromat late in the night just hours before the election. He served in the Indiana House for 10 years, then in the Indiana Senate for 2 years.

Jim was elected to Congress in 1986 and served in the House of Representatives from 1987 to 1993. A big part of his successful congressional campaign was his call for more effective Federal action responding to the worst economic crisis in American agriculture since the Great Depression. It was typical of Jim that he saw the pervasive ramifications of the farm crisis as striking at the heart and character of rural America. And he fought to turn that situation around.

During his time in Congress, Jim emphasized environmental issues, as he had in the Indiana Legislature, including pushing for protection of forests in the Pacific Northwest. As a member of the House Agriculture Committee during debate on the 1990 farm bill, he was out front, in truth ahead of his time, in calling for a greater emphasis on promoting and supporting more effective agricultural conservation and environmental practices.

As could be expected, some who were beholden to the conventional wisdom sought to portray Jim as attacking the very underpinnings of U.S. agriculture. There was the politics of division, of contriving threats and sowing fear, but his approach, as usual, was not to deepen divisions but rather to find common ground.

In Jim's proposals, stronger Federal policies to help agricultural producers practice better conservation and stewardship would also improve their prospects for making a living and remaining in agriculture, while enhancing the environment and quality of life for their families and others living in rural communities.

Looking back from today's vantage point, much of what Jim was proposing for the conservation of our Nation's resources is now widely accepted as a fundamental part of our Nation's agricultural policy—although we still have a long way to go to fulfill the vision Jim did so much to instill.

For a second-term Congressman working on his first farm bill, Jim played an unusually significant and effective role in the 1990 farm bill. Many of his amendments promoting agricultural conservation and sustainable agriculture were adopted in the House bill and ultimately in the conference report enacted as the Food, Agriculture, Conservation and Trade Act of 1990. He also successfully pushed for initiatives involving packer concentration, grain quality, food aid, agricultural research and farm income assistance.

After leaving Congress, Jim served for several years as the president of Americans for Democratic Action, and in recent years served as ADA's president emeritus. In that capacity, he led ADA's Working Families Win project which focused on heightening the profile of fair trade and environmental issues among presidential and Congressional candidates. True to his grassroots organizing origins, Jim employed the Working Families Win project to activate and motivate local efforts on outsourcing, minimum wage and health care issues.

Jim's untimely death at age 55 leaves a big hole in the leadership of America's progressive politics. We should all take inspiration and instruction from this master in the art of deploying grassroots organizing and high-minded politics toward the highest ideals and aspirations for our great Nation.

Along with my colleagues, I extend my deepest sympathy and condolences to Jim's mother, stepfather, sister and three nieces, and to the many friends and people he touched in his abundant but too short life.

FISCAL YEAR 2008 BUDGET RESOLUTION

Mr. DOMENICI. Mr. President, I believe that my service in the Senate has been highlighted by my interest in the budget process.

As this year's budget negotiations continue, I would like to draw the attention of other Senators to a recent editorial in the Wall Street Journal concerning the single largest day of tax collection in U.S. history. The editorial is entitled "April Revenue Shower."

I think this editorial raises some very interesting points that are particularly relevant as Congress debates the fiscal year 2008 budget resolution. The Wall Street Journal points out that in April alone the U.S. Government collected \$70 billion in tax receipts above the same month last year and for the current fiscal year tax receipts are up 11.3 percent or \$153 billion from last year. I am not sure if most

people are aware of the fact that on April 24, 2007, the United States collected a record setting \$48.7 billion in tax receipts. I think these numbers are certainly worth our attention.

What I find so interesting about these record-breaking tax revenues is the fact they were achieved without raising taxes and without a Federal budget in place. Rather, the American economy is the driving force behind these windfalls. I would pose the question that maybe; just maybe, we should maintain the status quo instead of entering into the budget resolution that is being proposed.

I think Congress should think long and hard about these numbers before we consider making any change to current budget policy. Because of these record tax revenues the budget deficit could be slashed in more than half from this same time last year. The deficit could be reduced by \$150 billion this year, which equates to approximately 1 percent of gross domestic product. I believe our current budget policy is paying off and in the next 18 to 24 months the deficit could completely disappear, if we here in Congress do not veer off course.

I am not surprised that we are collecting nearly 30 percent more from nonwithheld income. Moreover, I also do not find it surprising that individual income tax receipts are up by almost 17.5 percent. I believe that the tax relief that we instituted in 2001 and 2003 is paying large dividends and our economy is benefiting.

I hope my colleagues in the Senate will consider these facts and not attempt to fix something that is not broken. I am simply saying that maybe we should not be rushed into action.

Additionally, I ask unanimous consent that this editorial from the Wall Street Journal be printed in the RECORD.

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

APRIL REVENUE SHOWER

Here's the "surge" you aren't reading about: the continuing flood of tax revenue into the federal Treasury. Tax receipts for April were \$70 billion above the same month in 2006, and April 24 marked the single biggest day of tax collections in U.S. history, at \$48.7 billion, according to the latest Treasury report.

The April comparison is slightly askew because the IRS processed more returns than usual this year. But there's no denying that Americans are sending more money than ever to Washington; revenues for the first seven months of fiscal 2007 are up 11.3%, or \$153 billion. This Beltway bonanza has helped to slash the projected federal budget deficit by more than half from the same point last year. Across the past three Aprils, federal red ink has sunk by nearly \$300 billion. The deficit this year could tumble to \$150 billion, or an economically trivial 1% of GDP.

This revenue boom certainly casts doubt on the political walls about tax loopholes for the rich. So far this year, the taxes paid on so-called nonwithheld income, which are dollars that don't come from normal wages and salaries, have climbed by nearly 30%. This is income largely derived from capital gains,

dividends and other investment sources—i.e., the tax rates that President Bush cut in 2003. Individual income taxes are also up by 17.5%—a handsome fiscal dividend from rising wages and low unemployment.

In other good news, the pace of federal spending, which was pedal-to-the-metal in Mr. Bush's first term, has finally decelerated. So far this year federal outlays have climbed by 3%, and, save for Medicare and Medicaid, federal expenditures are nearly flat from 2006. Spending will climb again once the Iraq supplemental passes, and revenues can't keep rising at a double digit pace forever.

Still, you'd think this dramatic fiscal turnaround would cheer up Capitol Hill. Instead, Congressional Democrats seem to live in a parallel universe—one that they claim is starved for revenues, with a runaway deficit, and is dominated by the rich who pay no taxes at all. The reality is that the wealthy are financing Democratic spending ambitions, and the deficit could easily vanish within a year or two if Congress has the good sense to leave current tax policy in place.

NATIONAL POLICE WEEK

Mr. KOHL. Mr. President, I wish today, on National Police Week, to honor this Nation's law enforcement officers. Our law enforcement officers are some of the bravest men and women we will ever come across. They selflessly dedicate their lives to keeping our communities safe and taking dangerous individuals off our streets.

Tragically, some of those officers lose their lives while on duty. The National Law Enforcement Officers Memorial currently bears the names of more than 17,500 officers who have been killed or died while on duty. This week, 382 additional names will be added. Two of those fallen officers are from my home State of Wisconsin.

Jackie Ryden dedicated his life to law enforcement, spending 33 years with the Ellsworth Police Department, the Pierce County Sheriff's Department, and the Prescott Police Department. He was a well-liked and well-respected member of the police force, as well as his community.

On September 2, 2006, Jackie responded to a natural gas explosion and the resulting fire. He helped to evacuate a number of local citizens from their homes. Shortly after Officer Ryden returned to his patrol car to help direct traffic, he suffered a heart attack and died. According to those who knew him best, he passed away doing what he loved best—serving and protecting his community. Jackie Ryden is survived by his wife, two children, and three grandchildren.

The second officer whom I seek to honor today is Stephen Hahn. Stephen was a special deputy with the Eau Claire County Sheriff's Office, serving approximately 40 years in law enforcement. Mr. Hahn was killed in a traffic accident while transporting an inmate. A vehicle heading in the opposite direction lost control and struck the van being driven by Deputy Hahn. He is survived by his wife and two children.

We mourn the loss of these two great, brave men and attempt to honor them

by recognizing the sacrifices they made for the benefit of others. Both of their communities, and the State of Wisconsin as a whole, are worse off because of the loss of these two public safety officers. I am pleased, however, that their names are being added to the National Law Enforcement Officers Memorial, so they can forever be remembered for their hard work and dedication to improving the lives of those around them.

VOTE EXPLANATIONS

Mr. BROWBACK. Mr. President, I regret that on May 15 I was unable to vote on certain provisions of H.R. 1495, the Water Resources Development Act of 2007. I wish to address these votes, so that the people of the great State of Kansas, who elected me to serve them as U.S. Senator, may know my position.

Regarding vote No. 163, on amendment No. 1090, I would not have voted in favor of this amendment. My vote would not have altered the final result of this vote.

Regarding vote No. 164, on amendment No. 1089, I would not have voted in favor of this amendment. My vote would not have altered the final result of this vote.

Regarding vote No. 165, on amendment No. 1086, I would have voted in favor of this amendment. My vote would not have altered the final result of this vote.

Regarding vote No. 166, on amendment No. 1094, I would not have voted in favor of this amendment. My vote would not have altered the final result of this vote.

Mr. BROWN. Mr. President, I missed today's votes on Iraq because I was attending the college graduation of my daughter, Elizabeth.

But I want to express my unqualified support for the amendment offered by my colleagues, Senator FEINGOLD and Senator REID.

This amendment says that our entanglement in another country's civil war has gone on long enough.

This amendment says that Congress must stop playing the role of spectator and start standing up for our overtaxed and inadequately protected troops.

This amendment says we must stand up for their families.

This amendment says that we have an obligation to support our men and women in uniform, not only by funding them, but by bringing them home.

The funding for our troops is assured, whether they are deployed in Iraq or redeployed from Iraq.

This amendment calls for their redeployment.

Those who claim this amendment would cut off funding for our troops are actually saying that the President, if required to redeploy our troops, would instead cut off their funding.

I may not see eye to eye with our President, but I don't believe him capable of that.