

discretionary spending. And 54 percent goes for entitlement spending.

So how much is our interest payment in comparison to other federal spending? It is more than we spend on Medicare. It's five times more than the federal dollars we spend on education. And it's 15 times more than we spend on medical research at NIH.

If we are fortunate enough that the projections of an on-budget surplus actually occurs—I would like to see that—the best possible course of action that we could take is to use those funds and pay down the debt. With debt reduction you get lower interest rates, a continued strong economy and lower government interest costs.

Indeed, as Federal Reserve Chairman Greenspan testified before the House Ways and Means Committee "(T)he advantages that I perceive that would accrue to this economy from a significant decline in the outstanding debt to the public and its virtuous cycle on the total budget process is a value which I think far exceeds anything else we could do with the money."

Mr. President, we must avoid using Social Security to meet our financial obligations. Instead, we should greet the millennium with a promise to our citizens that we will engage in truth-in-budgeting, not use gimmicks and reorder our spending to reflect our national priorities.

Mr. President, I believe that a statement I made in my 1991 Inaugural Address as Governor of Ohio is relevant today:

Gone are the days when public officials are measured by how much they spend on a problem. The new realities dictate that public officials are now judged on whether they can work harder and smarter, and do more with less.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Alaska.

Mr. MURKOWSKI. Mr. President, I commend my good friend and colleague, Senator VOINOVICH from Ohio, who I think has brought to the attention of this body in a timely manner a very appropriate and important issue; that is, the realization that the President is going to reject any proposal for a tax cut—and bring to the attention of this body the realization that, indeed, that accumulated debt of \$5.6 trillion, which the Senator from Ohio referred to, is costing us interest.

As the Senator from Ohio is well aware, I was in the banking business for about 25 years. People do not recognize the carrying charge. I think the figure that was used was \$600 million per day.

Interest is like the old saying of having a horse that eats while you sleep. It is ongoing. It doesn't take Saturdays or Sundays off.

If one considers the significance of, I think the figure was 14 cents out of every dollar going for interest, one can

quickly comprehend what we could do if we were free of that heavy obligation.

I commend the Senator for bringing this matter to the attention of this body and assure him of my eagerness to work with him to bring about and resolve in a responsible manner a program to address the accumulated debt.

As he has pointed out, there is an awful lot of procedure around here relative to the bookkeeping method of the Federal Government, which few people understand.

Nevertheless, there is a harsh reality that we have a hard debt of \$5.6 billion. We have an opportunity now with the Social Security surplus to address that debt. I agree with the Senator and his efforts to try to bring a consensus on this issue. I commend him highly. Let me assure the Senator of my willingness to work in that regard.

(The remarks of Mr. MURKOWSKI pertaining to the introduction of S. 1591 are located in today's RECORD under "Statements on Introduced Bills and Joint Resolutions.")

MORNING BUSINESS

Mr. SHELBY. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the Senate now proceed to a period of morning business with Senators permitted to speak for up to 10 minutes each.

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

POWDER RIVER BASIN COAL INITIATIVE

Mr. DASCHLE. Mr. President, yesterday my colleagues, Senator ENZI and Senator GORTON, discussed the importance of a proposed new clean coal initiative that offers the opportunity to create a new type of cleaner-burning coal that will help to meet our nation's energy needs and the requirements of the Clean Air Act. I want to lend my strong support to this initiative, and express my hope that the Department of Energy and Congress can work together to find a way to fund this important project.

Under this initiative, the Black Hills Corporation of Rapid City, South Dakota, would work with the Department of Energy to test a new method of processing sub-bituminous coal to remove its moisture content and increase its heat-value. This new technology is much less capital intensive than any other coal enhancement technology known to exist today and has the real potential of becoming the first such process to be commercially feasible. It is my understanding that the upgraded coal which would be produced by this new process would be environmentally superior to current sub-bituminous coal and less expensive to ship, allowing coal users across the country to benefit from it.

There are extensive reserves of sub-bituminous coal in the Powder River basin, and particularly on the reservation of the Crow Indian Tribe. By expanding the market for coal from this area, we can help to promote economic development across the west. At the same time, we can provide coal users throughout the United States with cleaner-burning coal, and help to improve our air quality.

It is my hope that we can move forward with this project as quickly as possible. I urge my colleagues to give it their strong support.

WEATHERIZATION ASSISTANCE PROGRAM

Mr. JEFFORDS. Mr. President, I rise to thank Senator SLADE GORTON, Chairman of the Interior Appropriations Subcommittee, for his, as well as his staff's, efforts to work with me and my staff to address concerns regarding a potential funding freeze for the Weatherization Assistance Program. I am very pleased that the Chairman was able to obtain an additional \$2 million, at my urging, for the Weatherization Assistance Program, increasing the FY 2000 funding level to \$135 million.

Weatherization is an especially critical program to the Northeast-Midwest region. It increases energy efficiency in low-income homes, reducing energy use by up to one-third. More than four and a half million households have been weatherized through this program over the past twenty years. Weatherization returns \$1.80 in energy savings for every dollar spent; and provides an additional \$0.60 in employment and environmental benefits.

This year, 31 Senators voiced support for an increase in weatherization funding. In light of recent forecasts of rising fuel costs, weatherization funding has never been more critical. By providing targeted support in anticipation of extreme weather conditions, we can ensure the health, safety, and well-being of millions of low-income families, including the especially vulnerable populations of low-income children and elderly.

COLD WATER FISH HABITAT

Mr. CRAPO. Mr. President, I thank Senators GORTON and BYRD for inclusion of an amendment to provide funding for a voluntary enrollment, cold water fish habitat conservation plan (HCP) in the States of Idaho and Montana. This project is already authorized under the Endangered Species Act (ESA). Habitat Conservation Plans (HCPs) were authorized in 1982 to allow private landowners where endangered species are found a chance to write site-specific management plans and, in some cases, allow other activity to continue on those lands. A project similar to this involving the Karner

Blue Butterfly in Wisconsin is considered an HCP success story.

In Idaho alone, of the 2,639,633 acres of State-owned endowment land, over half is bull trout habitat. Wise and productive use of state endowment land is essential to the funding of education in Idaho and this use could be jeopardized should it be called into question as a "take" under Section 9 of the ESA. The large area comprising bull trout habitat complicates not only natural resource uses of the land, but the management strategy of involved agencies in addressing habitat for the bull trout. With the huge land area involved, the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service in Idaho concurs that a cooperative effort will be necessary to effect management practices to benefit the bull trout. The States of Idaho and Montana have already been active in addressing bull trout habitat needs—last year, they spent nearly \$1 million collectively to promote bull trout recovery.

It is clear that a cooperative effort, involving the States of Idaho and Montana, the USFWS, and private forest owners will be necessary to address the challenge of providing clean, cold water for bull trout habitat. The formulation of a voluntary enrollment, state-wide HCP will provide the structure for this cooperation. HCPs have a proven record of creating tangible benefits that aid in species protection and this HCP would both protect bull trout habitat and responsible land use. For an HCP to be approved, the Secretary must find that those party to the agreement will "to the maximum extent possible, minimize and mitigate the impacts of * * * taking" of the species in question.

In recent hearings that I have held on HCPs in my subcommittee, numerous scientists have testified to the effectiveness of HCPs in furthering on the ground improvements to the habitat of threatened and endangered species. The funds provided for in this amendment will be used to fund data collection an organization for the States to come together and negotiate the HCP. The negotiated HCP would include state-owned endowment lands and private lands enrolled voluntarily by the landowner. To arrive at the specific terms of such an agreement, a concerted effort will be needed to accumulate data and facilitate discussions that can lead to a consensus-based solution supported by all interested parties.

The States of Idaho and Montana, nor the USFWS, cannot shoulder this funding burden alone. The funds provided for in this amendment are urgently needed. In addition to the overwhelming task of addressing bull trout habitat issues, the USFWS has been petitioned to list the west-slope cutthroat trout and the Yellowstone cutthroat trout. We seek, in partnership with the USFWS and the private sec-

tor, funding to develop an innovative HCP that can be a "win" for kids, for species, and for responsible land use.

OEHS WEEK

Mr. ENZI. Mr. President, the first Occupational and Environmental Health and Safety, OEHS Week, August 30 through September 3, 1999, is a reminder that while workers are safer than they used to be, injury, illness—even death—in the workplace is still an unfortunate reality.

The American Industrial Hygiene Association, a not-for-profit society of professionals in the field of occupational and environmental health and safety, sponsors OEHS Week and plans for it to become an annual event. The goal is to bring a greater awareness of workplace and community health issues to the public. The theme, "Protecting Your Future . . . Today," highlights the far-reaching nature of occupational and environmental safety's impact on the public.

"We chose Labor Day weekend as the perfect time to remind workers, management and the community at large that workplace safety affects everyone. Even one fatality on the job is one fatality too much," says AIHA President James R. Thornton.

"But beyond that, we are concerned with overall safety. We want all employees to consider their workplace environment, even in offices that otherwise may seem extremely safe. For instance, is your workstation ergonomically sound? Is your chair comfortable? Do you take occasional breaks to stretch? Is your computer monitor at the proper angle? All of these things can add up to the difference between working safely and a work-related injury or illness.

"We've made great strides in the last few years," he said, "but there's still room for improvement."

As Thornton noted, if you've been working in the United States for the last decade, chances are that you're feeling safer on the job today than you did 10 years ago. That's because overall rates of worker illnesses and injuries have fallen dramatically since 1993, according to the Bureau of Labor Statistics. In fact, in 1997 (the most recent year tallied by the BLS), the case rate dropped to 7.1 percent of all workers, despite a total of 3 percent more hours worked by the nation's employees. This translates to nearly 50,000 fewer reported injuries or illnesses compared to the previous year, despite the larger number of staff-hours—the continuation of a trend that began in 1993. Still, even with fewer reported illnesses, injuries and fatalities on the job, workers suffered 2.9 million injuries that resulted in lost workdays, restricted duties or both.

Mr. President, I yield to the Senator from Massachusetts.

Mr. KENNEDY. I thank the Senator.

Mr. President, the construction trades in particular are quite dangerous. Secretary of Labor Alexis Herman reported recently that "injuries and illnesses for construction laborers, carpenters, and welders and cutters increased by a total of 8,000 cases." Truck drivers, too, suffer more than their share of injuries, incurring approximately 145,000 work-related injuries or illnesses each year.

For the average worker, backs take the brunt of the injuries. About 4 out of 10 injuries involve strains and sprains, most of them back-related. Women are more susceptible than men to repetitive motion illnesses from jobs such as keyboarding, data entry, cashier work and scanning. These musculoskeletal disorders, known as MSDs, include carpal-tunnel syndrome and tendinitis. Many are caused by faulty ergonomic conditions in the workplace, such as poorly placed furniture and improper counter heights, say industrial hygiene, IH, professionals, experts in occupational and environmental health and safety.

I thank the Senator for yielding.

Mr. ENZI. Mr. President, although workplace injury is a primary focus for IH professionals, they like to point out that safety issues don't disappear in the company parking lot. This awareness gives OEHS Week its second important emphasis—safety in the community and home.

Thornton noted that in addition to its focus on workplace safety, OEHS Week is designed to heighten awareness about several vital community health concerns, including carbon monoxide poisoning, indoor air quality and noise exposure.

"Just as in the workplace, paying attention to seemingly small things can reduce injuries in the home. There are lots of things the average person can do," said Thornton. "Reducing noise pollution and hearing loss by lowering the volume on stereos or wearing earplugs when mowing the lawn, for instance.

"We also recommend installing a couple of inexpensive carbon monoxide detectors in your home. They could save your life—and your family's lives as well."

NGAWANG CHOEPHEL

Mr. LEAHY. Mr. President, it was 4 years ago that Nagwang Choephel, a Tibetan who studied ethnomusicology at Middlebury College in Vermont on a Fulbright Scholarship, was arrested in Tibet in 1995.

After imprisoning him incommunicado for 15 months, on December 26, 1996, Chinese officials sentenced Mr. Choephel to 18 years in prison on charges of espionage.

Four years have passed and despite high level discussions about this case