

of desertification. Many consumers products we now use would cost more if the problem of desertification is not dealt with successfully. A morning cup of coffee surely would be more expensive—so would the chocolates given on Valentine's Day. The prices for items ranging from cooking oils or soft drinks also would rise.

Fourth, it is much cheaper to work with African nations to implement effective land management plans than to send millions to implement disjointed anti-desertification efforts and hundreds of millions more to provide humanitarian assistance to combat the effects of droughts and other natural catastrophes caused by desertification after they occur. Individual taxpayers and corporations certainly would appreciate a more cost-effective approach to this problem.

Finally, developing nations—particularly African nations—see this Convention as their major international initiative. The Convention was developed with the assistance of the United States Government. To date, all but Australia and the United States have ratified this Convention. U.S. failure to ratify this Convention will leave the United States Government, U.S. corporations and American experts out of the anti-desertification process. Moreover, it will poison our relations with African and other developing nations who believe non-ratification is a lack of support of their efforts to both deal with their problem and join global markets.

It is critical that the U.S. business community let the U.S. Senate know the importance we place on the ratification of the Convention to Combat Desertification. Potentially billions of dollars—and more importantly, millions of lives—depend on what the Senate does about this issue in the next few weeks.

PROPOSED DELAY IN FUNDING FOR THE NATIONAL INSTITUTES OF HEALTH

Mr. SARBANES. Mr. President, I rise today to express my serious concern that House and Senate negotiators have agreed to delay for one year almost all of the proposed increase in the National Institutes of Health (NIH) budget for FY 2000. I strongly disagree with this approach to balancing the budget. Fully funding biomedical research at the NIH should be one of our highest priorities, and I intend to oppose proposals that would delay funding for the NIH or fail to provide sufficient funding to ensure continued advancement in the field of biomedical research.

The proposed delay in NIH's authority to use \$7.5 billion of its FY 2000 funding will mean that no new grants could be made until the end of the fiscal year. Thus, a one-year freeze will be put on all new biomedical research. Moreover, some on-going grants will have to be short-funded. For those suffering from life-threatening diseases, a one-year delay could be devastating. We cannot imperil continued progress in an area as important as biomedical research.

As our Nation searches for ways to improve health care for all its citizens, the need to ensure stability and vital-

ity in biomedical research programs is increasingly imperative. Biomedical research has fundamentally changed our approach to treating disease and illness and has revolutionized the practice of medicine. Through the NIH, the Federal government has been the single largest contributor to the recent advances made in biomedical research, and NIH research has played a major role in the key medical breakthroughs of our time.

Biomedical research at the NIH has also contributed significantly to the growth of this Nation's biotechnology, medical device, and pharmaceutical industries. Many of the new drugs and medical devices currently in use were developed based on biomedical research supported by the NIH. NIH research has paved the way for the development of pharmaceutical, biotechnology, and medical device industries that have created millions of high wage jobs.

The promise of continued breakthroughs in the eradication of disease and the overall improvement in public health are contingent upon our commitment to supporting our scientists and researchers with adequate tools and resources. However, today, only one of three approved research proposals can be funded.

We must maintain our commitment to achieving full funding for biomedical research by FY 2002. Last year, we provided NIH with a downpayment on the resources it will need to take full advantage of the overwhelming opportunities for scientific advancement currently available in the field of biomedical research. This year, again we started on the right track by including another fifteen percent increase in the NIH budget. However, the proposed one percent overall budget cut will have a dramatic impact on the grant-making capacity of the NIH. As a result of this cut, 500 to 550 fewer grants will be awarded by the NIH next year.

This most recent proposal to require that the NIH delay spending approximately \$2 billion of its FY 2000 funding until FY 2001, essentially revokes the entire increase for next year and goes back on our promise to substantially increase NIH funding by 2002. This additional funding cut will disrupt and delay research fundamental to saving lives and improving public health. It will also critically undermine our progress toward securing a strong and stable funding stream needed to ensure continued advances in biomedical research.

The proposed delay in NIH funding for FY 2000 is unconscionable. I will oppose it, and I urge the President to veto any conference report that includes this proposal.

THE HUNGER RELIEF ACT OF 1999

Mr. KENNEDY. Mr. President, yesterday Senators SPECTER, LEAHY, JEF-

FORDS, and I introduced The Hunger Relief Act of 1999, S. 1805. Our goals in this legislation are to promote self-sufficiency and the transition from welfare to work, and to eradicate childhood hunger by increasing the availability of food stamps to low-income working families. Republicans and Democrats share these goals, and it deserves broad bipartisan support.

I ask unanimous consent that the full text of the bill and the statement of organizations supporting the bill be printed in the RECORD.

There being no objection, the materials were ordered to be printed in the RECORD, as follows:

S. 1805

Be it enacted by the Senate and House of Representatives of the United States of America in Congress assembled,

SECTION 1. SHORT TITLE.

This Act may be cited as the "Hunger Relief Act of 1999".

SEC. 2. RESTORATION OF FOOD STAMP BENEFITS FOR ALIENS.

(a) LIMITED ELIGIBILITY OF QUALIFIED ALIENS FOR CERTAIN FEDERAL PROGRAMS.—

(1) IN GENERAL.—Section 402(a) of the Personal Responsibility and Work Opportunity Reconciliation Act of 1996 (8 U.S.C. 1612(a)) is amended—

(A) in paragraph (2)—

(i) in subparagraph (A), by striking "Federal programs" and inserting "Federal program";

(ii) in subparagraph (D)—

(I) by striking clause (ii); and

(II) in clause (i)—

(aa) by striking "(i) SSI.—" and all that follows through "paragraph (3)(A)" and inserting the following:

"(i) IN GENERAL.—With respect to the specified Federal program described in paragraph (3)";

(bb) by redesignating subclauses (II) through (IV) as clauses (ii) through (iv) and indenting appropriately;

(cc) by striking "subclause (I)" each place it appears and inserting "clause (i)"; and

(dd) in clause (iv) (as redesignated by item (bb)), by striking "this clause" and inserting "this subparagraph";

(iii) in subparagraph (E), by striking "paragraph (3)(A) (relating to the supplemental security income program)" and inserting "paragraph (3)";

(iv) in subparagraph (F);

(I) by striking "Federal programs" and inserting "Federal program";

(II) in clause (ii)(I)—

(aa) by striking "(I) in the case of the specified Federal program described in paragraph (3)(A)."; and

(bb) by striking "; and" and inserting a period; and

(III) by striking subclause (II);

(v) in subparagraph (G), by striking "Federal programs" and inserting "Federal program";

(vi) in subparagraph (H), by striking "paragraph (3)(A) (relating to the supplemental security income program)" and inserting "paragraph (3)"; and

(vii) by striking subparagraphs (I), (J), and (K); and

(B) in paragraph (3)—

(i) by striking "means any" and all that follows through "The supplemental" and inserting "means the supplemental"; and

(ii) by striking subparagraph (B).