

the policy decisions of the state of Washington be respected by this Congress more than the policy decisions of Wisconsin—or Pennsylvania, or Arizona, or New York, or the majority of states.

The one-sided tilt of this bill is very troubling. Punitive damages caps of any kind are bad ideas I believe. Remember that in every state punitive damages can be awarded only in cases of intentional or outrageous misconduct. So the protection offered by these caps goes to the very worst Y2K offenders—those who have acted intentionally or maliciously to avoid fixing their Y2K problems. Where is the justice and balance in that?

Mr. President, because I think it's important for the Senate to take every aspect of legislation into account in our debate here on the floor, I have a few more facts I'd like to add—facts about how much money has been donated to the political parties and to candidates by a couple of powerful groups that have a huge stake in this bill.

Now the dollar figures I'm about to cite, keep in mind, are only for the last election cycle, 1997 to 1998. First there's the computer and electronics industry, which gave close to \$6 million in PAC and soft money during the last election cycle—\$5,772,146 to be exact. And there's also the Association of Trial Lawyers of America, which gave \$2,836,350 in PAC and soft money contributions to parties and candidates in 1997 and 1998.

As I said, I cite these figures so that as my colleagues weigh the pros and cons of this bill, they, and the public, are aware of the financial interests that have been brought to bear on the legislation. The lobbying efforts, as we know, have been significant, and so have the campaign contributions. And the public can be excused if it wonders if those contributions have distorted the process by which this bill was crafted.

Mr. President, I am pleased that the Administration has indicated it will veto this bill in its current form. I will support that veto as well as voting against the bill. We need to encourage problem solving and remediation to avoid a disaster on January 1 in the Year 2000. But we don't need to enact this bill. Indeed, while trying to address a supposed litigation explosion, we may well have created an explosion of unfairness to people and businesses who are injured by the negligent or reckless behavior of those who sell non-Y2K compliant products.

MORNING BUSINESS

Mr. GORTON. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent the Senate now go to a period for morning business with Senators being allowed to speak therein for up to 10 minutes.

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

ASSISTANCE TO THE KOSOVAR ALBANIAN REFUGEES

Mr. CLELAND. Mr. President, I rise today both to pay tribute to and to thank the Government of the Republic of China on Taiwan (ROC) for their recent announcement to provide economic assistance to the Kosovar Albanian refugees. These funds, some \$300 million, represent a very generous gift and will prove invaluable to the displaced people of Kosovo by helping them receive the food, shelter and clothing they need to survive in the refugee camps and later, when they return to their homes in Kosovo. Furthermore, the aid from Taiwan will provide emergency medical assistance to the refugees, educational materials for the displaced children and job training for those that need it. The government of the ROC is even making it possible for some refugees to receive short term accommodations and job training in Taiwan while they await the rebuilding of their homes, businesses, schools, and hospitals.

The generosity of the government of the ROC is a tribute to the thoughtfulness and caring of the Taiwanese people and serves as a wonderful example for the entire international community. The current president of Taiwan, Lee Teng-hui, typifies this compassion and I would like to personally thank him and his foreign minister, Jason Hu, who is a good friend of mine, for all they have done not only for the people of Taiwan but not for the people of Kosovo. Only through such generosity and compassion can the people of the Balkans begin to move past the horrors they have experienced over the past few months and build a better future for themselves and their communities.

THE VERY BAD DEBT BOXSCORE

Mr. HELMS. Mr. President, at the close of business yesterday, Wednesday, June 10, 1999, the federal debt stood at \$5,604,848,624,148.74 (Five trillion, six hundred four billion, eight hundred forty-eight million, six hundred twenty-four thousand, one hundred forty-eight dollars and seventy-four cents).

One year ago, June 10, 1998, the federal debt stood at \$5,493,570,000,000 (Five trillion, four hundred ninety-three billion, five hundred seventy million).

Five years ago, June 10, 1994, the federal debt stood at \$4,601,856,000,000 (Four trillion, six hundred one billion, eight hundred fifty-six million).

Ten years ago, June 10, 1989, the federal debt stood at \$2,783,892,000,000 (Two trillion, seven hundred eighty-three billion, eight hundred ninety-two million) which reflects a doubling of the

debt—an increase of almost \$3 trillion—\$2,820,956,624,148.74 (Two trillion, eight hundred twenty billion, nine hundred fifty-six million, six hundred twenty-four thousand, one hundred forty-eight dollars and seventy-four cents) during the past 10 years.

MESSAGES FROM THE PRESIDENT

Messages from the President of the United States were communicated to the Senate by Mr. Williams, one of his secretaries.

EXECUTIVE MESSAGES REFERRED

As in executive session the Presiding Officer laid before the Senate messages from the President of the United States submitting sundry nominations which were referred to the appropriate committees.

(The nominations received today are printed at the end of the Senate proceedings.)

MESSAGES FROM THE HOUSE

At 5:15 p.m., a message from the House of Representatives, delivered by Mr. Hanrahan, one of its reading clerks, announced that it has agreed to the following concurrent resolution, in which it requests the concurrence of the Senate:

H. Con. Res. 127. Concurrent resolution permitting the use of the rotunda of the Capitol for a ceremony to present a gold medal on behalf of Congress to Rosa Parks.

MEASURE PLACED ON THE CALENDAR

The following bill was read twice and ordered placed on the calendar:

H.R. 1259. An act to amend the Congressional Budget Act of 1974 to protect Social Security surpluses through strengthened budgetary enforcement mechanisms.

EXECUTIVE AND OTHER COMMUNICATIONS

The following communications were laid before the Senate, together with accompanying papers, reports, and documents, which were referred as indicated:

EC-3601. A communication from the Secretary of Health and Human Services, transmitting, pursuant to law, the annual report of the Maternal and Child Health Program for fiscal year 1996; to the Committee on Finance.

EC-3602. A communication from the Fiscal Assistant Secretary, Department of the Treasury, transmitting, pursuant to law, the March 1999 issue of the "Treasury Bulletin" which contains various annual reports; to the Committee on Finance.

EC-3603. A communication from the Secretary of Health and Human Services, transmitting, pursuant to law, the annual report for 1998 relative to extra billing in the Medicare program; to the Committee on Finance.

EC-3604. A communication from the Administrator, Department of Health and