

the increased government spending, even if the new CBO estimate shows we did not spend the Social Security surplus.

Already, lawmakers are talking about how to spend the rest of the non-Social Security surplus in an Supplemental emergency early this year.

Because of this propensity to spend, I believe the look-back proposal is essential to protect us now and in the future from the temptation to spend "just a little" the Social Security and Medicare surpluses.

Further, I have argued repeatedly before the Senate that economic forecasting is more of an art than a science. Many uncertainties, risks, and factors are involved. We have a budget of over \$1.8 trillion based on a variety of assumptions, estimates, forecasts and projections, with people using both Congressional Budget Office numbers and Office of Management and Budget. It is highly likely that there are errors in this budget. If the error occurs in Social Security spending, we must have a mechanism to correct it.

Another compelling reason for this legislation is that we are facing even more severe budget constraints and spending pressures this year because according to the CBO, the discretionary budget authority for fiscal year 2001 is about \$542 billion, which is \$18 billion less than the amount appropriated for 2000.

What's worse, \$23 billion out of the \$542 billion cap has already been appropriated as advance funding in the 2000 appropriations bills. President Clinton has already talked about breaking the caps which he agreed to, by the way, in 1997.

Although we may have more on-budget surplus this year, which is supposed to be returned to the taxpayers in the form of tax relief and debt reduction, there is no guarantee Congress and the administration will not touch the Social Security and Medicare surplus.

Since we all have agreed that saving Social Security should be our top priority and have committed to not spending the Social Security surplus for Government programs, we must do everything we can to prevent the Government from spending the Social Security and Medicare surpluses. We need to find a better way to keep our promise to the American people.

Senators on my side of the aisle have made a number of attempts to create a lockbox to lock in every penny of the Social Security surplus exclusively for Americans' retirement. Unfortunately, opposition by the other side has blocked the establishment of this safe lockbox. Some opposed because Medicare was not included. My proposal does protect Medicare.

The "look-back" mechanism in my legislation is our best option. It will force the Government to live up to our

pledge that not a penny of the Social Security and Medicare surpluses will be spent to fund either last year's or this year's appropriations.

If our spending plans do pass and we would again, unintentionally wind up spending Social Security, we must be able to keep our commitment to the American people, by scaling back other spending to save Social Security. Without this mechanism Congress and the President may spend some of the Social Security surplus by using inaccurate estimates.

The remedy in my bill is a simple one and it should be passed early before we face a problem, so we cannot play the blame game if a re-estimate shows spending of Social Security or Medicare surpluses.

In an era of budget surplus, extra prudence and effort is needed to keep ourselves from spending more than we can afford. On principle, we must do everything we can to ensure Washington will not touch any Social Security money.

Protecting the Social Security and Medicare surpluses from funding government operations is the last defense of fiscal discipline. I cannot emphasize how vitally important this line of defense is for both political parties because if we lose this defense, our credibility and accountability with the American people will be gone.

I strongly believe we should continue to stress our promise to the American people. We must make protection of the Social Security and Medicare surpluses our top priority and ensure that not a penny of Americans' retirement needs is used for Government spending.

Again, I believe this can be easily achieved by passing my "look-back" legislation which will allow us to enforce that commitment.

I thank the Chair and I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Nevada.

#### BANKRUPTCY REFORM

Mr. REID. Mr. President, we have worked this afternoon to try to come up with something that is fair and reasonable. I think we have done that. With this agreement, we should be able to complete the bankruptcy legislation that has been pending for some time now.

Mr. GRAMS. I thank the Senator.

#### UNANIMOUS CONSENT AGREEMENT—S. 625

Mr. GRAMS. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the cloture vote with respect to S. 625 be vitiated and, further, that order No. 109 be modified by the following:

I ask unanimous consent that when the Senate resumes consideration of S. 625, the following be the only amend-

ments in order and they be considered under the limitations as stated, with any debate times equally divided in the usual form, and the ability to withdraw any of the amendments be in order for the author of the amendment without further consent:

Wellstone amendment No. 2537, life-line accounts; Wellstone amendment No. 2538, debt collection; Craig amendment No. 2651, pawnshops, 15 minutes; Levin amendment No. 2658, gun manufacturers, 120 minutes; Feingold amendment No. 2747, arbitration, 60 minutes; Feingold amendment No. 2748, evictions, be modified to reflect the text of 2779, and there be 30 minutes for debate on amendment number 2748; Feingold amendment No. 2667, East Timor, as modified to reflect the sense of the Senate, 60 minutes; Reed-Sessions correction of amendment No. 2650, 10 minutes; Schumer amendment No. 2762, safe harbor, 15 minutes; Schumer amendment No. 2763, clinic violence, 40 minutes; an amendment by the majority leader or his designee regarding debts incurred by violence, 40 minutes; Harkin amendment No. 2770, household liens, 20 minutes; Sarbanes amendment No. 2517, as modified, consumer credit disclosure; and one amendment to be agreed to by both managers.

I also ask consent that any other pending amendment not mentioned above be withdrawn, and further that no motions to commit or recommit be in order.

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

Mr. GRAMS. Finally, I ask consent that following the disposition of the above amendments, the bill be read a third time, the Senate then proceed to the House companion measure, H.R. 833, all after the enacting clause be stricken, and the text of S. 625 be inserted in lieu thereof, the bill be read a third time, and the Senate proceed to a vote on passage of H.R. 833, as amended. I further ask consent that following the vote the Senate insist on its amendment, request a conference with the House, and the bill, S. 625, be placed back on the calendar.

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

#### NOMINATIONS RETURNED TO THE PRESIDENT

Mr. GRAMS. Mr. President, as in executive session, I ask unanimous consent that the following nominations be returned to the President. I now send that list of nominations to the desk.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The list of nominations is received.

Without objection, it is so ordered.

The list is as follows:

Air National Guard Colonel James V. Dugar  
Air National Guard Colonel Van P. Williams

Air Force Reserve Colonel Jerry D. Willoughby  
 Army Major General Charles Mahan  
 Army Reserve Brigadier General Bruce B. Bingham  
 Navy Lieutenant Junior Grade Craig Leaphart  
 Navy Lieutenant Commander Bradley S. Russell

#### APPOINTMENTS

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Chair announces the following appointment made by the President pro tempore during the sine die adjournment:

Pursuant to provisions of Public Law 106-79, on behalf of the President pro tempore, after consultation with the majority and minority leaders, the appointment of the following Senators to the Dwight D. Eisenhower Memorial Commission: the Senator from Alaska (Mr. STEVENS), and the Senator from Kansas (Mr. ROBERTS).

The Chair announces the following appointment made by the Democratic leader, the Senator from South Dakota (Mr. DASCHLE), during the sine die adjournment:

Pursuant to provisions of Public Law 105-277, on behalf of the Democratic leader, who consulted with the minority leader of the House, the appointment of the following individual to serve as a member of the International Financial Institution Advisory Commission: C. Fred Bergsten, of Virginia, vice Paul A. Volcker, of New York, resigned.

#### MEASURE READ THE FIRST TIME—H.J. RES. 84

Mr. GRAMS. Mr. President, there is a joint resolution at the desk which was received earlier from the House of Representatives. I ask for its first reading.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will report the resolution by title.

The assistant legislative clerk read as follows:

A joint resolution (H.J. Res. 84) making further continuing appropriations for the fiscal year 2000, and for other purposes.

Mr. GRAMS. I now ask for its second reading and object to my own request.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Under the rule, the bill will be read on the next legislative day.

#### UNANIMOUS CONSENT AGREEMENT—S. 376

Mr. GRAMS. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the Senate withdraw its request of November 19, 1999, for a conference on S. 376, and agree to the conference, with the same conferees previously appointed by the Senate, requested by the House of Representatives on November 10, 1999, which message was transmitted to the Senate on January 24, 2000.

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

#### TRIBUTE TO PATRICK E. SCHEUERMANN

Mr. LOTT. Mr. President, I am reminded each time I look to the sky of the reach Americans have made to the heavens. I am extremely proud that every manned spaceflight since the Apollo program has been powered by engines tested at a facility in my home State of Mississippi, the John C. Stennis Space Center. There, a dedicated group of professionals labors largely unheralded to ensure the performance and safety of the engines that propel our astronauts into space. Although I have known many of these outstanding Mississippians in my years in Congress, I only recently had the opportunity to work closely with one of these professionals. The leadership at NASA decided to offer a legislative fellowship to Congress to one of NASA Stennis' rising stars, Mr. Patrick Scheuermann.

Patrick arrived on Capitol Hill in January, 1999, at the beginning of a very busy opening session of the 106th Congress. Although many thought other proceedings that opened the 106th would supercede a legislative agenda, the Senate professional and personal staffs ensured that, in the background, the business of Congress stayed in motion. Patrick cut his teeth in the difficult staff preparations for the legislative cycle that would take place around the issues that dominated the Senate floor. An effort was underway at NASA to reinvigorate manned space flight and to reduce the cost of getting to space. Patrick was assigned to research and report on these initiatives and to keep my legislative staff briefed on their status through the Authorization and Appropriations process.

Patrick approached his assignment with the interest of someone who not only enjoys what he does, but with the infectious enthusiasm that brings others onboard as well. My staff quickly became knowledgeable of the many NASA programs that together form our Nation's efforts to reach space. I found more and more space related meetings on the calendar. As the Session progressed, the Senate led the charge to complete the first NASA Authorization Bill in many years. One hundred million dollars was added to the NASA budget to develop third generation reusable launch vehicle technology, a program known as Spaceliner 100. Patrick's ability to explain the facets of NASA's programs to legislative staffers and his vigilance as changes developed ensured the ultimate success of these endeavors. His detailed understanding of Stennis Space Center's capabilities and assets also proved to be of great value in assessing the facility's potential for commercial activities.

Patrick has a long history with the Space Program. After earning his Bachelor of Science in Mechanical Engineering from the University of New Orleans, he made his first foray into the world of Rocket Science as a contract test engineer, testing Space Shuttle Main Engines at the Stennis Space Center. This brought him across the "Great Divide" that is the Pearl River and firmly onto Mississippi soil where the NASA hierarchy recognized and recruited the talented young engineer. Although our neighbors across the Pearl claim Patrick as a native son, Mississippians have adopted him for his hard work and strength of character. He also made the grade through his success in attracting one of Greater Picayune's finest, Miss Sarah Melissa Lee to be his bride. Together they have added to Mississippi's fame through their beautiful children, Chandler and Christina. Although I am sorry to lose the talent and expertise that Patrick brought to my staff, I am pleased that his return to the Stennis Space Center foretells many more years of innovation and success at this vital national treasure.

#### TRIBUTE TO LIEUTENANT COMMANDER JOHN DIMENTO, U.S. NAVY

Mr. LOTT. Mr. President, I take this opportunity to recognize and say farewell to an outstanding Naval Officer, Lieutenant Commander John Di Mento, upon his departure from my staff. Lieutenant Commander Di Mento was selected as a Navy Fellow to work in my office because of his professional reputation and his knowledge of the Navy Oceanography program and the military presence in my home state. Not a Mississippian by birth, he earned the respect of Mississippians during his long service in the state from 1990 through 1996, and through his impressive display of good judgement when he married the former Chenaey Bourgeois of Bay Saint Louis. Together they have added to Mississippi's fame through their beautiful daughter, Colby.

Lieutenant Commander Di Mento entered the United States Naval Academy in 1983 and was commissioned as an Ensign upon graduation in 1987. He earned a Master's Degree in Oceanography and began his career as a Naval Oceanographer as the Executive Officer of Oceanographic Unit Three, surveying over 100,000 miles of the ocean floor in a year deployed. He returned from sea and reported to the Naval Oceanographic Office in Bay Saint Louis, Mississippi. He worked extensively in ocean modeling and remote sensing, and flew aerial oceanographic surveys with Oceanographic Development Squadron Eight, in the process earning his Naval Aviation Observer wings. Later assigned as Oceanographer on USS *Kearsarge*, Lieutenant