

question that this technology is not just within our reach but is actually in our grasp now.

I congratulate the Defense Department for the extraordinary technical accomplishments it has achieved so far, and urge it to continue to work to improve this important program.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from New Jersey.

#### PAYING DOWN THE DEBT

Mr. LAUTENBERG. Mr. President, before I start my principal subject, I will take a couple minutes to commend the Democratic leader for his earlier comments.

We are all ready to go to work, and tomorrow we start with the Budget Committee. We are to hear from Chairman Greenspan from the Federal Reserve, and we are going to be talking about where we go from here in terms of the economy.

Based on what I hear in the various Presidential campaigns, it looks as though we are going to be discussing paying down the debt to some degree. The question is, to what degree? Where is it that we ought to be focusing the use of the significant balances, the surpluses we are going to see? I hope, consistent with Senator DASCHLE's comments, we will not be looking at tax cuts as a principal direction. To paraphrase Will Rogers, I never met anyone who didn't want to pay less taxes. But the fact is, our economy is moving at the pace it is for very specific reasons—encouraging investment, curbing our spending, and in many cases curbing it where it hurts but is necessary to get through this transitory period where we went from a debit balance to a credit balance. Looking at our surpluses and wondering about the debates, I contemplate where we are going to be spending these surpluses. I think the way to continue this prosperity, the way to make sure that America goes into this new century with as much energy as it can have, is to be looking at paying down the debt, paying it down as fully as we can, taking care of the essential programs that we know are needed by our constituents across the country.

The last thing I think people want to see is random tax cuts that benefit the wealthy to an unusually high degree, while those struggling to make a living are concerned about interest costs for mortgages, their schooling, and various other things that are an important part of basic life.

#### EXPRESSING SYMPATHY FOR THE VICTIMS OF THE TRAGIC FIRE AT SETON HALL UNIVERSITY

Mr. LAUTENBERG. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the Senate proceed to the immediate consideration of Senate Resolution 244, which I

introduced earlier today with Senator TORRICELLI.

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

The legislative clerk read as follows:

A resolution (S. Res. 244) expressing sympathy for the victims of the tragic fire at Seton Hall University in South Orange, New Jersey, on January 19, 2000.

There being no objection, the Senate proceeded to consider the resolution.

Mr. LAUTENBERG. Mr. President, tragedy struck in New Jersey last week. It was obviously of enough significant interest that it was portrayed across the country. Three students who were 18 years old lost their lives in a dormitory fire, and several others were seriously injured. We are still waiting, with hope and prayer, to hear that they are going to be able to recover. This is virtually in my neighborhood back home. I know Seton Hall University well. I know the president and the archbishop of the diocese; we are very good friends.

Everybody wanted to reach out and do something. The first of the three funerals was held today. It is a sad day. It raises a question about what we should expect in a dormitory. Hind-sight won't do us much good in this instance. The building they were in was built a long time ago. The tragic fire took place last Wednesday. The fire started inside a six-story residence hall. It took the lives of 3 students and injured 62 others, including at least 58 students, 2 police officers, and 2 firefighters.

Mr. President, we don't have to tell anybody that nothing is as painful as a senseless accident—which perhaps we can avoid seeing in the future—that takes the lives of young people. Anyone who is a parent or relative of an 18-year-old would be seriously grieved by what happened.

I know I speak for all of us in the Senate in extending our sympathies to the families of the three students who died in the fire. They are Frank Caltabilota of West Long Branch, NJ; John Giunta of Vineland, NJ; and Aaron Karol of Green Brook, NJ, whose funeral was the first one this morning.

We also extend our support and prayers to the families of the students and the others who were injured. We are tremendously grateful to the firefighters and the other people who worked so hard to prevent the loss of more lives.

It is still too early to know what caused this fire, but we must make sure, once the cause is known, that Federal, State, and local jurisdictions take whatever steps are necessary to prevent this from happening again. Students have a fundamental right to pursue an education in a safe, secure environment. Parents have a right to know their children are protected from harm while on school property.

Seton Hall University is holding a memorial service tomorrow for the victims of the fire. The enormity of this tragedy, however, extends far beyond the confines of Seton Hall University's campus. At the very least, the investigation of this catastrophe should sharpen our focus on fire prevention at campuses across the country and should mark this fire, Lord willing, as the last one of its kind.

I have introduced this resolution, which should pass the Senate today, expressing the sympathy of the entire Senate to the families of the victims and the Seton Hall community.

Mr. President, I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The question is on agreeing to the resolution.

The resolution (S. Res. 244) was agreed to.

The preamble was agreed to.

The resolution, with its preamble, reads as follows:

#### S. RES. 244

Whereas at approximately 4:30 a.m. on January 19, 2000, a fire broke out in the common area on the third floor of Boland Hall, a six story residence hall housing 600 students at Seton Hall University, and this fire took the lives of three students—Frank S. Caltabilota of West Long Branch, New Jersey, John N. Giunta of Vineland, New Jersey and Aaron C. Karol of Green Brook, New Jersey, and, in addition, 58 persons were injured, including 54 students, two South Orange firefighters and two South Orange police officers;

Whereas numerous Seton Hall students risked their own lives as the fire broke out to save the lives of their fellow dormitory residents;

Whereas firefighters, paramedics, police officers and other emergency personnel from the surrounding communities worked bravely into the early morning darkness to reduce casualties and extinguish the fire;

Whereas the entire Seton Hall University community has banded together in grief to remember the fallen students, and numerous people outside the university recognize the enormity of this tragedy and the need to do everything possible to keep it from happening again since every student should be able to pursue an education in a safe, secure environment;

Now, therefore be it

*Resolved*, That the Senate—

(1) expresses its sympathy to the families and friends of Frank S. Caltabilota, John N. Giunta and Aaron C. Karol on the occasion of the funeral service on January 25, 2000;

(2) expresses its hope for a speedy recovery to those students, firefighters and police officers injured in the fire;

(3) expresses its support for all of the students, faculty and staff at Seton Hall University as they heal from this tragedy;

(4) expresses its support and thanks to the brave firefighters, paramedics, police and other emergency workers who saved numerous lives;

(5) pledges to ensure that Federal, State and local government entities work together to prevent a tragedy like this from occurring again, so that our nation's college students can live, work and study in the safest possible environment.

Mr. LAUTENBERG. Mr. President, I move to reconsider the vote and to lay that motion on the table.