

Means Committee has been steadfastly opposed to the creation and expansion of tax credits. Thus he fought the inclusion of several tax credit proposals, including those for AMTRAK and for school construction.

He was able to block several of them but not these two supported by the Senator from New York. And because these provisions were included, the chairman of the Ways and Means opposes this conference report.

Some Members have taken to the floor to try to create a picture that a few of us got in a room and wrote a bill entirely our way. But the fact is that some in the room lost and some outside the room won. And that is because, as a group, we had a paramount objective of constructing a balanced bill that would be signed into law.

I recall my own effort to remove the application of the nondiscrimination clause from the catch-up provision of the retirement security title. Everyone in the room agreed with my position. But the bill is not written that way. My amendment was dropped out of deference to the wishes of a Democrat, Congressman BEN CARDIN, who had worked on this legislation in the House.

We tried to write a balanced bill that would be signed into law.

In each of the past four weeks, there was some reason to believe that Congress was about to finish its work for the year. So in drafting this bill, we had to act quickly. I have given a great deal of thought to the process employed. I do not believe that if we had had bipartisan meetings with votes on the particular items, the text of the bill would be any different. What was lost in the process followed was any bipartisan appreciation of why the text is what it is. That is unfortunate.

At this stage, all I can ask is that you look at the text and decide if this is a good bill. You owe it to your constituents to do that. Do you want to provide Social Security recipients with the increased COLA they deserve? Do you want to protect American businesses from European Union retaliation against our exports? Do you want to update our tax laws to provide for greater retirement security? Do you want to provide tax incentives for impoverished communities? Do you want to provide more money for hospitals, hospices, home health, and nursing homes? Do you want to increase the minimum wage?

Or do you want to deny all the benefits of this legislation to your constituents because of the procedure by which the text was born?

This bill does not contain everything I'd like to see. It's not perfect. But it's a good bill, one that will help a great many Americans. It will help individuals and families prepare for greater security in retirement. It will help seniors receive improved Medicare cov-

erage and a higher cost-of-living adjustment in their Social Security checks.

It will help small businesses and family farmers. It will improve education and ease traffic congestion. It will improve inner cities and help our hospitals. These are good objectives. They are objectives shared on both sides of the aisle.

And I encourage my colleagues to join me in voting for this legislation.

#### DECISIONS FOR THE NEW CONGRESS

Mr. GRAMM. Mr. President, I want to comment on where we are. I am sure the American people are confused. They hear the President saying one thing, they hear Congress saying another. They see chaos, they see gridlock, they see politics as usual. I am sure they are wondering what is this all about. Let me try, in the remaining moments I have, to explain.

We are at the end of an 8-year Presidency. Americans are going to the polls next Tuesday to make a fundamental decision. But we have a President in the White House now who would like to make the decision for the future while he is still President, by forcing Congress to spend far beyond the budget we wrote and far beyond the budget he wrote. The President has, in essence, said that if we will spend 30 percent more on social programs in Health and Human Services than we spent last year, if we will then make some permanent changes in law in addition to that spending, such as giving amnesty to people who have broken the Nation's laws and come to the country illegally, he will sign this bill and let us go home.

Let me tell you why we are not going to do that and why we are going to resist. First, I do not believe the American people want Bill Clinton, or this Congress for that matter, making decisions for the new President and the new Congress. It is time to have an election. It is time to move on. What we have is a President who almost is unhappy because the focus of attention is on the two men who are now running for President. And so, he believes that by vetoing bills he has agreed to sign and by demanding more and more spending, he gets his name back in the paper and gets on television.

Let me tell you why we should say no. We should say no because the American people ought to decide. If we did what Bill Clinton is calling on us to do, before the new President ever took his hand off the Bible we would have spent between a third and a half of the budget surplus.

I think the American people think they are deciding in this election. If people want to spend this money, they can vote for AL GORE. If they want to use the money to let working people

have a tax cut and to invest it in rebuilding Social Security and Medicare, they can vote for George Bush. But however they are going to vote, Bill Clinton should not be making the decision to spend it before the American people can vote.

Let me convert it down to a simple number. For every day that we simply fund at this year's level the remaining parts of Government that are not yet appropriated for, we save between \$88 and \$133 million a day. By just continuing to fund at this year's level and waiting for the next President to arrive, over a 12-month period we would spend \$32 billion less by not creating all these new programs, by not hiring all these new Government employees, by not making the President the president of every school board in America.

Nobody knows what \$32 billion is so let me convert it into something you know. As you know, you can buy a very nice pickup truck for \$20,000. You can buy basically a loaded Chevrolet or Ford pickup, full-size pickup, for \$20,000. By simply saying no to Bill Clinton for 6 more days and simply leaving spending at its current level, for the rest of the year we could buy 1.6 million pickup trucks. I think the American people understand what 1.6 million pickup trucks are.

I know there are some people who hope, even at this last minute, to cut a deal with Bill Clinton and bring to the floor of the Senate a bill that will spend \$32 billion more on social programs. Let me tell you, today is Wednesday. We are going to have an election on Tuesday. They have never put an election off in American history. I just want to say to people, a deal is not going to happen. If a deal is cut today, spending \$32 billion, basically taking 1.6 million pickup trucks right off people's driveways and out of their garages, I am going to object. We are not going to vote to spend that money before the people of America can vote in this election.

They are going to decide, depending on how they vote. They may tell us to spend it and a lot more, or they may say give some of it back. We may create a wealth base for Social Security but that is going to be decided by voters. But what is not going to be decided by this President and what is not going to be decided by this Congress before the election is that we are going to go on a massive spending spree. That is not going to happen.

How do I know it is not going to happen? Because today is Wednesday. Under the rules of the Senate, if a few people say no, it can't be done, it will not be done.

I think what we ought to do on a bipartisan basis is to pass a resolution funding the Government through the election, let the American people speak, and let them say what they want to happen with this money. Not

Bill Clinton because he is on the way out. Let them say through this election and whom they elect what they want done.

It is not the time to be listening to the voices of the past. It is time to be looking to the future. Let's pass this CR through the election, keep spending where it is right now, and let the American people speak on Tuesday. Then we can come back here, we will have heard the message from back home, and we can respond to it.

I think that is the rational thing to do, and that is what I am going to support. I also believe that is what is going to happen.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Texas.

#### TRIBUTE TO TEXAS SAILORS LOST ABOARD THE U.S.S. "COLE"

Mrs. HUTCHISON. Mr. President, I rise today to talk about a very sad time. It has been a sad time for America. I want to focus on the sadness in Texas.

Mr. President, last week Texas laid to rest three of her sons, killed in the terrorist attack on the U.S.S. *Cole*. Seaman Timothy Gauna of Rice, Petty Officer Ronchester Santiago of Kingsville, and Fireman Gary Swenchonis of Rockport, were killed in the October 12 disaster.

Since then, I have visited with the families of these three sailors. I met with some of them at the *Cole* memorial service in Norfolk, VA. Fine, loving individuals, they are trying, as we all are, to make sense of the senseless.

These young men had their lives ahead of them. They wanted to go to college, to travel, to raise their own families. They volunteered for the Navy because they loved their country and wanted to give something back, and now they are gone.

It may not be possible for us to understand the magnitude of this loss to the families involved.

Can we know the anguish of Mr. Swenchonis, whose son Gary was laid to rest in the same cemetery as Gary's grandfather? A son with just 2 months left on his enlistment?

Will we ever understand the loss of Rogelio Santiago, a Navy veteran himself, who was planning a trip with his son Ron to his native Philippines in December?

Have we ever experienced the bewilderment of Sarah Gauna, who said she would never hang up the phone with her boy until she had made him laugh, as she waited days to learn the awful truth about Timothy?

We cannot feel the depth of sorrow of these families, but we are all diminished by their loss because U.S.S. *Cole* was a small patch of American soil and on that patch we lost our own.

Today, as we come and go in our ordinary routine, life is anything but routine for those they left behind.

Today, the U.S.S. *Cole*, crippled but proud, has begun the long journey home. She is under tow for a rendezvous with another larger vessel that will literally carry her home to America.

The ship is cold. It is dark and quiet. But the spirit of the fallen Texans and the 14 others who lost their lives carries on in the valiant efforts of their 300 shipmates. They saved the ship and they mean to rebuild it to fight another day.

In the words of her Commanding Officer, "We're going to get this ship back home [and] put back together so that she can again sail and defend American freedom throughout the world."

That is exactly what is going on today in so many other distant places across the globe. Today we remember the *Cole*, but she was just one representative of a proud service that is still on watch.

Today as most Americans get up for work, have breakfast with their families, perhaps attend a son or daughter's school play or athletic event, we may not think much about the tens of thousands who left their families alone on a pier months ago to sail into harm's way, expecting, but not really knowing for sure, if they would come home.

Just today—November 1—on, over, or under the seven seas, more than 41,000 sailors and marines are standing watch on the bridge of a warship, landing aircraft onto the deck of a carrier, manning nuclear power plants leagues beneath the surface, training to land ashore from the sea.

These thousands do not count a much greater number ashore who repair the ships, maintain the aircraft, and perform a host of other activities that mark an ordinary day in the life of a superpower.

Those young men and women are out there serving under our flag in places where they are not always welcome but whose presence is reassuring.

Every once in a while, we hear from them. Not when they are landing their fighter onto the rolling deck in pitch blackness, scared but exhilarated all the same. We do not read about it when they bring their ship alongside an oiler, two 10,000-ton machines just 90 feet apart at 15 knots for 3 hours replenishing their stores at sea to extend the reach of freedom.

There are no cameras there for the 19 year-old Marine guard at the gate of the overseas naval installation at 3 o'clock in the morning who must decide in an instant whether the vehicle approaching him is loaded with explosives or is just a shipmate coming back from liberty.

They do not seek our recognition, but at times, that is demanded of us. Unfortunately, now is one of those times. At a time such as this, we cannot believe what we see but we marvel at the courage and dedication of these young people.

I received an e-mail message that has been circulated around the world, shared with me by Knox and Kay Nunnally, whose son attends the Naval Academy. A helicopter pilot from the U.S.S. *Hawes* recorded what he saw when he was assigned the task of taking airborne photos of the stricken *Cole* pierside in Yemen, just days after the tragedy. His words bring home to us just what it is we ask of our sailors and marines:

I will tell you that right now there are 250-plus sailors just a few miles away living in hell on earth. You can't even imagine the conditions they're living in, and yet they are still fighting 24 hours a day to save their ship and free the bodies of those still trapped and send them home.

As bad as it is, they're doing an incredible job. The very fact that these people are still functioning is beyond my comprehension. Whatever you imagine as the worst, multiply it by ten and you might get there.

I wish I had the power to relay to you what I have seen, but words just won't do it. I do want to tell you the first thing that jumped out at me—the Stars and Strips flying. I can't tell you how that made me feel . . . even in this God forsaken hell-hole our flag was more beautiful than words can describe.

The U.S.S. *Cole* and her crew is sending a message: even acts of cowardice and hate can do nothing to the spirit and pride of the United States. I have never been so proud of what I do, or of the men and women that I serve with as I was today.

Mr. President, it has been said that young fighting men and women don't endure the risks they do for such lofty goals as patriotism, freedom, democracy, or all the other reasons why older generations send young generations into war.

Rather, these young men and women fight for the buddy next to them in the foxhole; in the next bunk over; in the back of the cockpit.

If that is so, then there can be no greater honor for Timothy Gauna, Ron Santiago, and Gary Swenchonis than that their sad and painful deaths force us to remember, through them, their shipmates and all the other thousands of American fighting men and women who are out there doing the extraordinary everyday, just so that we can live our everyday lives.

As we remember the words of the Navy Hymn, we honor the memory of these three Texans by calling to mind those they left behind:

O hear us when we cry to thee, for those in peril on the sea.

Mr. President, I yield the floor and suggest the absence of a quorum.

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Mr. GREGG). The clerk will call the roll.

The assistant legislative clerk proceeded to call the roll.

Mr. BIDEN. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the order for the quorum call be rescinded.

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

Mr. BIDEN. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent to proceed in morning business for 10 minutes.