CONGRESSIONAL RECORD—SENATE

June 14, 2000

REPEAL OF THE TELEPHONE EXCISE TAX

Mr. BURNS. Mr. President, I rise today to express my support for a bill which I have co-sponsored. The bill, S. 2330, will repeal federal excise taxes on telephone services.

This tax was first introduced as a temporary luxury tax in 1898 to fund the Spanish American War. However, over 100 years later this tax remain in effect. The definition of temporary should not span an entire century.

This tax is imposed on telephone and other services at a rate of 3 percent. Furthermore, these taxes are not applied to a specific purpose that enhances telephone service in our nation—rather these taxes are directed in the general revenue account. In other words, there is no reason we shouldn’t repeal this tax. It means only one thing—Montanans end up paying one hundred sixty-eight million, five hundred fifty-one billion, three hundred eighty-four million dollars and four cents) during the past 25 years.

Further, this tax is regressive in nature. It disproportionately hurts the poor, particularly those households on either fixed or limited incomes. Even the U.S. Treasury Department has concluded in a 1987 study that the tax “causes economic distortions and inequities among households” and “there is no policy rationale for retaining the communications excise tax.”

Mr. President, this is a tax on talking—a tax on communicating—a tax on our nation’s economy—I encourage my colleagues to join me in support of this bill to repeal this unnecessary and burdensome general revenue tax.

SEQUENTIAL REFERRAL

Mr. WARNER. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent to have printed in the RECORD my letter to Senator LOTT dated May 8, 2000.

There being no objection, the letter was ordered to be printed in the RECORD, as follows:

U.S. SENATE,
COMMITTEE ON ARMED SERVICES,

Hon. Trent Lott,
Majority Leader,
U.S. Senate, Washington, DC.

DEAR MR. LEADER: Pursuant to section 3(b) of S. Res. 400 of the 94th Congress, I request that S. 2507, the Intelligence Authorization Act for Fiscal Year 2001, which was reported out on May 4 by the Select Committee on Intelligence, be sequentially referred to the Committee on Armed Services for a period not to exceed thirty days.

With kind regards, I am Sincerely,

JOHN WARNER
Chairman.

THE VERY BAD DEBT BOXSCORE

Mr. HELMS. Mr. President, at the close of business yesterday, Tuesday, June 13, 2000, the Federal debt stood at $5,651,368,584,663.04 (Five trillion, six hundred fifty-one billion, three hundred sixty-eight million, five hundred eighty-four thousand, six hundred sixty-three dollars and four cents).

Five years ago, June 13, 1995, the Federal debt stood at $4,903,284,000,000 (Four trillion, nine hundred thirty-four billion, two hundred forty million).

Ten years ago, June 13, 1990, the Federal debt stood at $3,120,867,000,000 (Three trillion, one hundred twenty billion, eight hundred sixty-seven million).

Fifteen years ago, June 13, 1985, the Federal debt stood at $1,766,874,000,000 (One trillion, seven hundred sixty-six billion, eight hundred seventy-four million).

Twenty-five years ago, June 13, 1975, the Federal debt stood at $528,036,000,000 (Five hundred twenty-eight billion, thirty-six million) which reflects a debt increase of more than $5 trillion—$12,333,584,663.04 (Five trillion, one hundred twenty-three billion, three hundred thirty-two million, five hundred eight-four thousand, six hundred sixty-three dollars and four cents) during the past 25 years.

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ADDITIONAL STATEMENTS

TRIBUTE TO CAPTAIN VILHELM HANSEN (1917–2000)

• Mr. LIEBERMAN. Mr. President, I submit for the RECORD the following, written by Marshall H. Cohen, photojournalist, and honorary life-member of the Association of Tall Ship, the Danmark, June, 2000.

Captain Vilhelm Hansen passed away at age 82 on May 3, 2000. Captain Hansen was master of the training ship the Danmark for twenty-two years from 1964 until his retirement in 1986. He was not only a legendary captain and educator, training thousands of Danish men and women in careers, but also a familiar, and well-liked ambassador of good will to the United States with his ready wit, his unparalleled knowledge of seamanship, and his unbending strong character. Whenever the Danmark anchored in various East Coast ports, thousands of Americans, including members of the U.S. Congress, have been welcomed on board this beautiful full-rigged ship.

Captain Hansen received many honors and awards here in the United States. He has been presented with the keys to many U.S. cities, among them, Baltimore. He received the Danish-American Society’s “Man of the Year” award in New York City in 1987, and this year (June 8, 2000) Captain Hansen posthumously received the National Maritime Historical Society Walter Cronkite Award for Excellence in Maritime Education in a ceremony in Miami, Florida.

The Danmark has played a significant role in the maritime history of the United States. In 1939, the Danmark was on a routine training mission to the United States when the Second World War began. The Captain at that time, Knud Hansen, was informed that Germany had invaded Denmark, and consequently, the Danmark remained in the United States for the duration of the war. The Danmark was based in New London, Connecticut, and served as a training ship for U.S. sailors.

The First Officer of the Danmark during the war was Knud Langevd, and he was in
Mr. President, I ask that the text of the article following:

'June 14, 2000

HOMETOWN HERO BLount TO BE HONORED AT URI GRADUATION
(From the Providence Journal)

BY DAVID HENLEY

KINGSTON—A favorite son will be returning soon.

A decorated hero of two wars, a former star athlete who set the still-standing high school basketball record for points scored in a game over half a century ago and a man who helped end the Army-McCarthy hearings of the 1950s, Rhode Islanders were happy to welcome him home.

The Providence Journal ran this article.

''Hometown Hero Blount to be Honored at URI Graduation,'' about him.

Mr. President, I ask that the text of the article be inserted in the RECORD.

The article follows:

''I'm 50 years away from Kingston, but this is a special sense of kinship between the Providence Journal and Danmark. It was Captain Hansen's final voyage as master of the Danmark prior to his retirement that year. Captain Wilhelm Hansen, in his white uniform and gold braided cap, steered his 263 foot ship into the South Street Seaport, New York City, for the last time. He barked his final commands to the officers, switched off the auxiliary engine, and ended 50 years of sea travel during this memorable event in American history.

TRIBUTE TO LIEUTENANT GENERAL BLount

Mr. L. CHAFEE. Mr. President, I would like to take a moment to pay tribute to a Rhode Island hero.

Mr. President, Lieutenant General John Bruce Blount was just given an Honorary Doctorate Degree from his alma mater, the University of Rhode Island. A former star athlete, a decorated war hero of two wars, Korea and Vietnam, and a man who helped end the Army-McCarthy hearings of the 1950s, Rhode Islanders were happy to welcome him home.

The Providence Journal ran this article.

''Hometown Hero Blount to be Honored at URI Graduation'' about him.

Mr. President, I ask that the text of the article be inserted in the RECORD.

The article follows:

''Bruce Blount's brother," he said. "And to me, instead of talking to him what I was doing.''

''I could get around better than anybody without a car," he said."

That brilliant basketball career could have led Blount away from Kingston but didn't. Despite being recruited by schools like Brown and Harvard, Blount knew he wanted to attend URI, so he moved to Rhode Island State.

"There was never any question," he said. "I was absolutely enthralled with the idea of playing for Rhode Island. My mother knew she wanted her children to go to college, so she moved us out of New York State.

''There was never any question,' he said. "I always followed Bruce, did whatever he did, only not as well," said little brother Frank.

''Of course it only lasted about a month because everybody figured out there were two Lieutenants Blount on base, but we would begin to laugh our heads off whenever I told him what I was doing."