of my colleagues. I believe we can feel good about this product. It is not partisan in nature. It does not deal with one part of this problem. It is broad. It is deep reform. It has been a good moment for the Senate.

I yield the floor.

Mr. REID. Mr. President, I suggest the absence of a quorum.

THE PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will call the roll.

The assistant legislative clerk proceeded to call the roll.

Mr. BYRD. 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 President, I ask unanimous consent that the order for the quorum call be rescinded.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. BYRD. Mr. President, what is the business before the Senate?

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senate is in morning business.

Mr. BYRD. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that I may speak out of order without a limitation on time. I do not intend to speak at great length.

THE PRESIDING OFFICER. Is there objection?

Without objection, it is so ordered.

THE BUDGET RESOLUTION

Mr. BYRD. Mr. President, the Senate will debate, beginning next week, legislation that will be remembered by Americans for decades to come.

The budget resolution that the Senate will debate will set the Nation on a course that will change, that will affect, and that will impact upon people’s lives for a generation or more.

How long is a generation? One might think in terms, in speaking of a generation, 30 years. We are at a unique moment—hear me—we are at a unique moment in the history of this Nation when we must decide what is the most appropriate way to allocate a projected surplus when we know that just over the horizon we are facing the staggering costs of the retirement of the baby boom generation.

What do we mean in terms of the calendar when we speak of the baby boom generation? I started out in politics in 1946. The baby boom generation began then and is due, for the most part, in 2046. That was a good starting point.

Ten years from now, when 53 million Americans will remember whether we voted for a budget resolution that failed to address the long-term problem—they will remember whether we failed to address the long-term problem—the financing crisis that faces the Medicare program.

Forty-three million Americans will remember whether we voted for a budget resolution that failed to address the long-term financing crisis that faces the Medicare program.

Ten years from now, our elderly citizens will remember if we, in our day in time, voted for a resolution that failed to provide a fair prescription drug benefit.

Ten years from now our children—our children—will remember if we voted for a budget resolution that resulted in a nation with a failed infrastructure, collapsed bridges, polluted water, water that is not safe to drink. They will remember if we voted for a budget resolution that forced them to go to crumbling schools. What will we say, when they say: Where were you?

When God walked through the Garden of Eden—in the cool of the day, when the shadows were falling, when the rays from the Sun were dying out in the west—Adam was hiding. God said, “Adam, Adam, where art thou?”

Ten years from today, the people of America will look at today’s legislators, on both sides of the aisle—they will look at the mighty men and women who were given the awesome honor and the profound duty to serve this country in this hour—and they will say to us: Where were you? Where were you? You were there. You were there at a time when you could have acted to preserve this system, this Social Security system, Medicare, our infrastructure, our Nation’s schools and its parks.

You were there. You had the chance. You had the duty. Where were you?

This is a critical debate. I have been through lots of them. This is as critical a debate as you will ever participate in or witness or hear or see in your lifetime, this debate that is coming up on the resolution next week. And yet as we approach this critical debate, we are sent to this body, asked to do so without a detailed proposal from the President of the United States on how to address the Social Security crisis. We do not have a detailed explanation from the President on how to fix the Medicare program. We do not know the details of his proposed budget cuts that are supposed to help pay for his proposed $2 trillion tax cut. We don’t have it.

Yet we are not only being imperturbed but we are virtually being forced to take up this budget resolution next week with a beartrap restriction on time that militates against the Senate’s working its will. We are being forced into this situation, and we can’t even see through a glass darkly, as the Apostle Paul said. We are flying blind. You know the old saying: It is your money.

It is a lot of talk about bipartisanship. I think that is what the people want—bipartisanship. Let us hope we can give it to them. But they want something else, too. They want us to do our work, and they want us to do our work well. That is what they are paying us to do. That is why they gave every Senator here the votes that placed upon our shoulders the toga of senatorial honor. With that honor goes the duty.

They want us to do our work. They want us to do it well. They want us to represent their views and their interests well. Doing that—representing their views and their interests well—should be a bipartisan concern, a concern of every Member of this body regardless of party.

It is our sworn duty, especially now, when we are debating a budget that will set the course of this Nation for the next decade. And the ramifications of this budget will go far beyond the next decade. We owe our people our very best judgment.

How can we exercise that judgment, if we don’t know the details of the
President's budget? How can any of us go back to our people at home and claim that we knew what we were doing in that critical manner that will largely set our course for the next 10 years and beyond—when we only had just a little, teeny-weeny glimpse of the picture on which to base our judgments and to base our votes? Consciences should pain us very deeply, if we dare make that claim.

The Members of this Senate do not at this time—not one Senator in this body—know the details of the President's budget. Yet we are beginning to consider the budget in 2 days—Saturday, Sunday, Monday. Members have no committee report from the Budget Committee—none. Having no committee report, Members therefore have no majority views. Members have no minority views. Senator We don't have any committee report. We are denied a committee markup of a resolution.

On that point, let me say, I have been told—I want to make this clear—I have been told by one of my colleagues in the Senate—it may be a Republican, it may be a Democrat; I am on good speaking terms with both sides—I was told that one of our Republican colleagues told this colleague, whom I am now quoting, that the reason the Budget Committee did not vote on a budget resolution was that Robert Byrd prevented it in some way had precluded it or prevented it.

Do you see what is going on here? There is an effort apparently to demonize Robert Byrd, along with some other Senators. But I am the demon, understand, according to that rumor, and that is all it is. Apparently, the reason we don't have a measure that has been reported out of the Budget Committee, called a markup, is that Robert Byrd prevented it.

I am waiting on any member of that Budget Committee to come to the floor and say that to me, right here and before other Senators. That is the kind of old wives' tale, the kind of rumor, that has no basis whatsoever. Yet it is being used to create fiction here in the minds of the Republicans that the reason we don't have that markup is because of Senator Byrd. It is what he did in the committee. He prevented it. He prevented it. Senator Byrd prevented it.

There isn't a scintilla of truth in that. I have seen that happen before. I have been a victim of demonizing before in the Senate.

I am the one who asked the question at the last meeting, "Is this the last meeting of the committee? If it is, why don't we have a markup?"

Well, Members have no committee report, Members have no majority views, and Members have no minority views. We are flying as blind as if we were flying in a blizzard with our eyes sewn shut. It should be of no comfort at all to the American people, who are watching through those electronic eyes above the Presiding Officer's chair, that the blindness is completely bipartisan.

Now that is truly bipartisan. The blindness is completely bipartisan. No Member of this Senate, regardless of party, has a complete picture of what is contained in this 10-year budget. Further exacerbating our common difficulties here is that there is no clear mandate for the President's budget.

I respect this President. I have an admiration for this President. I like what he said in his inaugural speech. I like the fact that he referred to the Scripture, to the Good Samaritan. I like the fact that when I sat down with him at dinner in the White House last week, at his invitation—he was kind enough to invite me, my colleague Ted, the chairman of the Appropriations Committee, and our wives to dinner at the White House. I like the fact that he said grace. He asked God's blessing upon the food. In many circles in this town and across this land, the word "God" is taboo. Don't mention God. On TV, I noticed the other day a Member of the other body swore in a witness and said, "Do you solemnly swear that the testimony you are about to give is the truth, the whole truth, and nothing but the truth?" I said to my wife, "Why did that Member not also say 'so help you God'?"

So you can use God's name all you want to in profanity. That is the "in" thing, but don't use it otherwise. But this President used God's name. He had us all bow our heads. He didn't call on me and he didn't call on Senator Stevens. He, himself, thanked God for the food.

So what I am saying is, I have a great respect for this President, but this President has no clear mandate for this budget. Look at the Senate. It is 50/50; half the people on one side, half on the other. So there is no clear mandate for this President's budget. The election was a virtual dead heat. Who would know that better than the distinguished Senator from Florida, Mr. Nelson, who is on this floor. The election was a virtual dead heat. Who would know that better than the distinguished Senator from Florida, Mr. Nelson, who is on this floor. The election was a virtual dead heat. The Senator is split 50/50. We have no clear direction from the people on what they think of this budget plan. They don't know about it.

I say to Senators, as they said in the days of the revolution, "Keep your powder dry. Don't fire until you see the whites of your eyes." I think we ought to wait to see what is in this budget before we buy into it. Let's wait and see before we have this concurrent resolution on the budget before this Senate.

We have no clear direction from the people on what they think of this budget plan because they don't know what is in it. All they know is what they heard in a campaign that maybe started up in the snows of winter in New Hampshire. Maybe that is where this idea came from, the $1.6 trillion, or whatever it is. Maybe it is where some of the other Senators think that we have no clear direction from the people today on what they think of this budget plan because they have not seen it, and neither have any of our colleagues on the right or on the left, on the Republicans or on the Democrats. We are all like the blind leading the blind, in which case we all fall into the ditch.

Such a situation underscores every Senator's responsibility to understand the details before he casts his vote in the name of the people he or she represents.

(Ms. Stabenow assumed the chair.)

Mr. Byrd. Madam President, what I am saying is nonpartisan. I am saying on behalf of my colleagues on the Republican side of the aisle, who are in the majority, in a 50/50 Senate: You have a right to know the details of the President's budget. And I say to my colleagues on the Democratic side: You have a right to know. And I say to the people out yonder in the hills, in the mountains, on the Plains, on the stormy deep: You have a right to know what is in that budget. And we won't know because, apparently, the die is cast and the concurrent resolution on the budget will be called up next week under the restrictions of the Budget Act.

So here we have it. It is the product of hearings and the product of the chairman's work—the chairman and his staff. And I have a very high respect for the chairman. He has been kind enough, upon occasion, to come to my office and talk with me about matters. There is a bond between us. It will not be broken, but what we are going to be voting on next week, the concurrent budget resolution—will be the handiwork, for the most part, at this moment, of the chairman of the Senate Budget Committee.

The House has passed a concurrent resolution on the budget. I have not seen it. It may very well be that the leader will call that up. That will be the basic measure on which we begin to work our will.

There are reconciliation instructions in that measure. If there were reconciliation instructions in the Senate measure that had come out of the Budget Committee, I would like, under the circumstances, to move to strike those instructions. There may not be any reconciliation instructions in the Senate Budget chairman's proposal which may be offered as a substitute for the House resolution. Then perhaps there will be an alternative by the ranking member of the Senate Budget Committee.

Who knows how this will work itself out? But let us say just for the moment...
March 30, 2001  
CONGRESSIONAL RECORD—SENATE  
5157

Prime Minister of England four times referred to the U.S. Senate as “that remarkable body, the most remarkable of all the inventions of modern political philosophy.”

Why did he do that? Because this Senate is so unique there is nothing else in the world like it. There has never been anything in the world like it. It is the forum of the States, and as a result of the Great Compromise of 1787. July 16, the States are equal in the Senate. The States are equal. Every State is equal to every other state when it comes to voting.

Here, if anywhere, the people’s representatives may debate freely and may amend at length.

From 1806 until 1917, there was no limitation on debate in this body. Since 1917, of course, debate can be limited in this body by the invocation of the so-called cloture process. This not only by the President but also by the majority leader of the party in the minority. It is a limit and one that is rather strict. It is a limit to debate, debate in this body.

Now comes the Budget and Impoundment Control Act of 1974. From that day to this we have had, by virtue of that act, a Congressional Budget Office, we have had congressional Budget Committees in the two Houses, and we have had by that act to bind our hands and to restrict ourselves in regard to debate and to amendments on concurrent budget resolutions, reconciliation bills, and conference reports.

The purpose of that act was to set up a framework of fiscal discipline which would allow us to oversee the whole budget, its revenues, its expenditures, and certain other elements of the fiscal equation, and exercise discipline and receive the deficits.

Prior to that time, we passed 13 appropriations bills. Each little subcommittee, being a little legislature of its own, adopted its appropriation bill without knowledge of what the other Appropriations Committees were doing. That is the reason why the House and the Senate never have the same fiscal picture and to exercise fiscal discipline.

It came with a price, as I say. It came with very severe restrictions on debate time and on amendments.

Now, to answer the distinguished Senator’s specific question, in the concurrent resolution on the budget we will lay out the blueprint for the year, and the impact will be for many years into the beyond. In that blueprint, there will likely be reconciliation instructions. The Concurrent Resolution on the budget, which will be coming up next week, has a time limitation of 50 hours: 2 hours on amendments in the

that when the product leaves the Senate, it leaves without reconciliation instructions. It has to go to conference, and then Senate conferences will be faced with the reconciliation instructions of the House. They will be in conference.

I know my colleague from Florida wants to speak or wants me to yield. Let me say before I yield, Senators simply do not know. It is a stacked deck. We do not know what the cards are in that deck. We do not know on what we will be voting. I say wait and see what is in yet President’s budget. I go to you make up your mind to support, for example, a massive tax cut of $1.6 trillion, which is what it will amount to certainly by the time the other matters are taken into consideration. We will only see you do not jump, do not start across that railroad crossing. The red lights are flashing. Do not start across it. Do not launch out into that unknown. Do not sign up, Do not sign up here. Let us wait and see what is in the President’s budget. I think you are in for some surprises.

A short time ago, we received an outline of the President’s budget. I have it right here—this so-called blueprint: “A Blueprint for New Beginnings.” Now that is just a little peek, a little peek; let’s see what this does; a little peek, just a little peek. We get to see just a little peek of what will be in the President’s budget. Yet, we are expected to sign on at this juncture and say: Sign me up; I am for that; I will be for that; I am for a $1.6 trillion tax cut, or whatever it may be. Sign me up.

How are you going to pay for it? Out of what discretionary programs is the cost going to come? You cannot count on those. It is really a laughing matter, to project on those projected surpluses out there.

What are some of the programs that are going to help pay for that tax cut? I am going to sign up for tax cuts; put me down; put my name down; I am going to sign up for that.

What are you prepared to give for that tax cut? Look at your children out there in those crowded classrooms. Look at the broken windows in the schools. Look at the broken plumbing in the schools. Look at our housing developments where the people live. Look at our parks and our forests. What about Medicare? What are we going to do about Medicare? What are we going to do about Social Security? What about our highways? What about our airports? What about safety in the air? What is going to happen in drinking the water in this country that comes out of the faucet? Are you willing to suffer huge cuts in those programs? What about energy? We are facing an energy crisis in this country. What are you willing to go without? And I can go on and on and on.

Why do we want to get on board something blindfolded—blindfolded? So I say wait and see, wait and see. We should have the budget before us. We are the people’s elected representatives, and the challenge is to the American people to consider the President’s blueprint, President’s budget, as we, the Democrats, are doing. Their duties are as deep, their responsibilities are as demanding as are ours.

So I am making a bipartisan, or non-partisan, speech this afternoon, and I am saying: Let us have the President’s budget. No one can tell me that, this late in the game, the executive branch cannot share with us the budget details. Why won’t they share the budget details with us? They can do it. Why don’t our friends on the Republican side do the same? The Republican administration: Share with us; we have as much a responsibility as the Democrats have to know where we are going; share with us; what is in this budget?

Even if I had to wait on the document itself, I should not be the administrator at this point in time be willing and why should not Members on both sides feel the need for, the desire for, the necessity for the details that are in that budget? They are available somewhere. Surely they are not going to fall from the skies on the first day after recess. They are around. Why can’t we have them before we vote?

I thank the distinguished Senator from Florida, Mr. NELSON. He is on the floor. He has been sitting here and listening, and he is now standing. I am prepared to yield the floor or I can yield to him, whichever he desires.

I ask unanimous consent, Madam President, that I be allowed to yield to the Senator for a statement if he wishes or for questions.

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

The Senator from Florida, Mr. NELSON of Florida. Madam President, I thought it might be instructive in the course of this debate if the distinguished Senator from West Virginia might explain the gravity of the situation contained within the budget resolution having to do with reconciliation instructions; how several months from now it will be impossible to do the whole situation contained within the budget resolution having to do with reconciliation instructions; how several months from now it will be impossible to do the appropriation bills they were reporting out. We had no control over the global fiscal situation, but the Budget Reform Act enabled us to unify the actions of all of these subcommittees and to act as one other than the overall fiscal picture and to exercise fiscal discipline.

It came with a price, as I say. It came with very severe restrictions on debate time and on amendments.

Now, to answer the distinguished Senator’s specific question, in the concurrent resolution on the budget the impact will be for many years into the beyond. In that blueprint, there will likely be reconciliation instructions. The Concurrent Resolution on the budget, which will be coming up next week, has a time limitation of 50 hours: 2 hours on amendments in the
Mr. NELSON of Florida. Thank the Senator for yielding.

He has laid out the story about one of the great Prime Ministers of England, Gladstone—four times Prime Minister—who made reference to the Senate as a great deliberative body. The scenario the distinguished Senator from West Virginia has just outlined is a description that could occur on this floor, in the greatest deliberative body in the world, that would foreclose debate, would stop amendments, would ram down the throats of Senators a piece of legislation that would have far-reaching economic and fiscal consequences for this Nation, without the opportunity for debate and amendment.

As we contemplate this prospect happening as a result of our passing this budget resolution next week, will the Senator further contemplate and reflect upon the history of the Founding Fathers in crafting this Constitution in the protection of the minority and how those rights of the minority might be trampled next week.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The distinguished Senator from West Virginia.

Mr. BYRD. Madam President, I want to yield the floor soon. There are other Senators here, including the Senator from Florida, who want to speak. I do not want to maintain the floor.

Let me answer the Senator like this. One of the reasons for the Senate’s being is for the protection of the minority. The minority can be right. With respect to the upcoming Budget Resolution, the minority is being gagged by the events that are bringing us up to the point of action on the concurrent resolution on the budget. And a part of that gagging, if I may use the word upon—a part of that gagging is that we are being forced to act on the President’s budget without seeing the President’s budget. That is a kind of gagging, as I see it. Senators are not going to be able to speak on what is truly in the President’s budget.

It is a fast-track operation that takes away the rights of the minority. In this instance, it is also going to take away the rights of the majority Senators. They won’t see the budget either.

Let me leave it at that for the moment. I hope I will have another opportunity one day to speak on this. But let me close by saying this. The Senator from Florida, the Senator from New York, Mrs. CLINTON, the Senator from Delaware here—these Senators, and the Senators on the other side of the aisle, come here wanting to work for the people, wanting to be a part of a productive process, and wanting to fulfill their commitments to the people who send them here. That is what they want to do.

They must understand, however, that they cannot do that and achieve the full potential if the minority—and in this instance it is also the majority, meaning both sides, Republican and Democrats—are forced to debate a matter which is a revolving target. We can’t see it: It is here—no. It is here—no. It is here. It is here. We can’t see it. It is a budget we shall have to read in the dark.

A Senator cannot fulfill his high ideals. He comes here with the highest, most noble purpose. “I do not want to be a part of the bickering. I want to be a part of making things happen. I want to be a part of helping people. It is time to get on with the business of the people. I don’t want to be a part of this bitter partisanship.”

But how can you do what you want to do if you have this resolution crammed down your gullet because of a time constriction here that is going to be enforced and because you don’t know what is in that budget? Believe me, if you did know what is in that budget, it might change your mind on many things in that budget, one of which could be a $1.6 trillion tax cut.

It may not change your mind. Senators shouldn’t have to vote in the dark. Senators shouldn’t have to wear blinders in making this decision. This decision isn’t just for you, or for me, or for my children today. It is not just for my grandchildren today, not just for my great-granddaughter, Caroline. It is beyond all these, because we are laying down a baseline here. We are going to be laying down a baseline. We are going to be making decisions here without knowing what we are really voting on really, and that decision is going to affect our children and their children.

We know it is going out there 10 years, but that is not the whole picture. It is a fateful decision that we are enacting upon a part of that gagging is that we are being forced to make these judgments sight unseen in many instances—a pig in a poke.

That is not right. That is wrong. That is not just. That is an injustice to our people. Madam President, I am going to yield the floor. I thank the Senators who are here on this nice afternoon. We have finished our voting for the day but these Senators are still working.

I yield the floor.

Mr. NELSON of Florida. Madam President, I ask unanimous consent that I may proceed for such time as I may consume.

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

Mr. NELSON of Florida. Madam President, I want to add to the comments of the very distinguished Senator who has taught us freshmen Senators so much in the few short days that we have been here.

If I may dare to expound upon the lesson that he has already taught us today by just underscoring the fact of this wonderful experiment we sometimes call a democracy is really a republic. The rights of the minority were
one of the most cherished rights to be protected under the Constitution. That is why this tax bill has been so long in coming. It has undergone a careful study and scrutiny in the Senate, of a nation, that should rely on the knowledge and experience of the distinguished Senator from West Virginia. He has provided us with extraordinary commitment to this institution, which is really unprecedented in history and is such a blessing for not only the institution and those who have been privileged to serve with him but for our country. And I heed his words seriously because he has taken the long view about what is in the best interests of a deliberative body, of this Senate, of a nation, that should rely upon the careful, thoughtful analysis of the issues that come before us and the people we represent.

I am personally grateful to him for the time he has taken as my good friend, the distinguished Senator from Florida, referred to, to help mentor us freshmen Senators, to give us the guidance we need to be able to do the best possible job for the people who sent us here. And it is such an honor to stand on the floor of this Senate, a place I have long revered, on behalf of New Yorkers.

But I come today with somewhat of a heavy heart because I believe in the principles and values this Senate represents. I want to see them fulfilled. I

Thank you, Madam President. I yield the floor.

Mr. KYL. Madam President, reserving the right to object, and I will not object if the Senator chooses to speak for 20 minutes, but I would like to get in the queue, if I might. Since the distinguished Senator from West Virginia has been speaking now or has had the floor at least for over an hour, I would like, after the Senator from New York has concluded—for however long she takes—to have the right to speak or be yielded time for up to 1 hour.

Mrs. CLINTON. Madam President, I ask unanimous consent that the distinguished Senator from New York speak out of order and that she may speak for up to 20 minutes.

Mrs. CLINTON. Thank you.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Is there objection?

Mr. KYL. Madam President, reserving the right to object, and I will not object if the Senator chooses to speak for 20 minutes, but I would like to get in the queue, if I might. Since the distinguished Senator from New York has been speaking now or has had the floor at least for over an hour, I would like, after the Senator from New York has concluded—for however long she takes—to have the right to speak or be yielded time for up to 1 hour.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Is there objection?

Without objection, it is so ordered.

Mrs. CLINTON. Madam President, I come to the floor today to speak out and join the distinguished Senator from West Virginia and the distinguished Senator from Florida to express our concerns about the upcoming budget debate.

First, I thank Senator BYRD for his extraordinary commitment to this institution, which is really unprecedented in history and is such a blessing for not only the institution and those who have been privileged to serve with him but for our country. And I heed his words seriously because he has taken the long view about what is in the best interests of a deliberative body, of this Senate, of a nation, that should rely upon the careful, thoughtful analysis of the issues that come before us and the people we represent.

I am personally grateful to him for the time he has taken as my good friend, the distinguished Senator from Florida, referred to, to help mentor us freshmen Senators, to give us the guidance we need to be able to do the best possible job for the people who sent us here. And it is such an honor to stand on the floor of this Senate, a place I have long revered, on behalf of New Yorkers.

But I come today with somewhat of a heavy heart because I believe in the principles and values this Senate represents. I want to see them fulfilled. I
want to be a part of perpetuating them into our future.

I find myself, as a new Member, struck by how difficult it will be to discharge my responsibilities in the upcoming week without having seen the budget, without having the opportunity to debate its priorities, and even more than its priorities, the values which it seeks to implement. I do not know that the people I represent, or the people any of us represent, will get the benefit of our best judgment, that the decisions we make will be grounded in our careful, thoughtful analysis.

There will certainly be differences among us. That is what makes this a great deliberative body and makes our country so great. We come with different experiences. We come with different viewpoints. I come as the daughter of our Federal budget—it is certainly one of the most important debates for our country, and everyone who is following it, to understand what is at stake.

This debate will set our priorities as a nation for the foreseeable future and could determine whether or not we have surpluses, whether or not we will be prepared for the impending retirement of the baby boomers that starts in just 11 years. It is a debate that will certainly be about numbers, deficit projections, surplus projections, and spending.

But I think underlying it is a debate about who we are as a people. It is not only about our prosperity, not only about our Federal budget—it is certainly about that—it is about who we are as Americans.

I come to this body determined to represent the people of my State and our country, as all of us do. But will we be able to do that? We are going to be deciding, in the votes we cast—starting with procedural votes—whether or not our seniors will have prescription drug benefits. We are going to be deciding whether or not we have the sewer systems and the clean drinking water that every American deserves and should be able to count on. We are going to be deciding whether or not we do have the resources to maintain America's status in the world, whether we will combat terrorism, whether we will stand firm with our allies. We are going to be determining whether we make the investments in research and development that will make us a stronger, richer, smarter nation in the decades ahead.

I am deeply concerned that we enter this debate without the benefit of the administration's budget.

I am privileged to serve on the Budget Committee under the extraordinary leadership of the Senator from North Dakota and my colleagues, the Senators from West Virginia and Florida. We sat through fascinating hearings. We listened as our defense priorities grew up in a safe environment; social priorities were discussed, as our health care priorities were discussed. We listened to experts from all across the spectrum of economic opinion and analysis. I found it an extraordinarily enlightening experience. We were going to get a chance to debate with our colleagues what it is we as a committee should be deciding to recommend to this body with respect to the budget we will be debating. So we are flying blind. We are looking through a glass darkly.

Will this budget have the investments we need to protect child care and child abuse programs? The early information is it will not; that we will be turning our backs on working parents, cutting tens of millions of dollars from child care. Will we protect our most vulnerable children, those who are abused? The information we have, without a budget but kind of leaking out of the administration, suggests that we are asked to cut child abuse prevention programs.

We also are being told that we are going to be asked in this budget to cut training programs for the pediatricians who take care of the sickest of our children in our children's hospitals. These are very difficult issues in any circumstance, but not to have the chance to be able to analyze what is being proposed is troubling to me. Will this budget ensure our children will grow up in a safe environment, with clean water and clean air, with access to quality, affordable health care? Will it adequately protect our food supply? Every day we see a new article in the paper about what is happening with our food supply in Europe, in the United States, around the world. Will we be able to protect ourselves so we have the kind of reliable food supply that Americans deserve?

What are we doing in this time of surpluses, how do we pay for the COPS Program, where so many brave men and women put on the uniform and go out to the families who are suffering these terrible tragedies in school shootings.

I will do whatever I can on all fronts to try to deal with that problem. But I understand from the President's budget that they are shifting funds from the very successful COPS Program that has really helped us drive down the crime rate in order to pay for the security guards at the schools. We are robber barons to pay for another school shooting in another school in another part of our country. That is an issue we must address. If security guards would help, I will support that. But I am troubled and my heart goes out to the families who are suffering these terrible tragedies in school shootings.

I want—has access to those prescription drugs.

I don’t want to choose between some of our very best hospitals and others in New York; those who may be just a penny over the limit that they, therefore, won’t get the prescription drugs they need. I want to make sure that everyone on Medicare—and that is what most Americans want—has access to those prescription drugs.

To pay for the tax cut, the administration includes the Medicare surpluses. Those are resources that should be ensuring the solvency of Medicare for all Americans, totally in a reserve that is set off, never to be used for any other obligations. I believe other obligations that we should be paid for in the context of a balanced budget and not put Medicare at risk.

The administration has correctly committed to doubling the number of people served through community health centers. I support that. It is a worthy goal. But on the other hand, I understand they are doing it by completely eliminating the community access program that ensures that community health providers work together to create an infrastructure for care so no patient fails through the cracks. New York is filled with wonderful religiously based hospitals, privately based hospitals that are part of this infrastructure of care that would be left out completely. We also have the finest teaching hospitals in the world, who are no resources that will continue to make sure that they are the finest in the world. New York trains 50 percent of all the doctors in America. What are the plans for making sure that continues and that our teaching hospitals are given the resources they need?

We are also hearing that the administration’s budget will provide more security guards for our Nation’s schools. That, too, is a worthy goal. In fact, I was broken to hear today of yet another school shooting in another school in another part of our country. That is an issue we must address. If security guards would help, I will support that. But I am troubled and my heart goes out to the families who are suffering these terrible tragedies in school shootings.

I will do whatever I can on all fronts to try to deal with that problem. But I understand from the President’s budget that they are shifting funds from the very successful COPS Program that has really helped us drive down the crime rate in order to pay for the security guards at the schools. We are robber barons to pay for another school shooting in another school in another part of our country. That is an issue we must address. If security guards would help, I will support that. But I am troubled and my heart goes out to the families who are suffering these terrible tragedies in school shootings.

I will do whatever I can on all fronts to try to deal with that problem. But I understand from the President’s budget that they are shifting funds from the very successful COPS Program that has really helped us drive down the crime rate in order to pay for the security guards at the schools. We are robber barons to pay for another school shooting in another school in another part of our country. That is an issue we must address. If security guards would help, I will support that. But I am troubled and my heart goes out to the families who are suffering these terrible tragedies in school shootings.

I will do whatever I can on all fronts to try to deal with that problem. But I understand from the President’s budget that they are shifting funds from the very successful COPS Program that has really helped us drive down the crime rate in order to pay for the security guards at the schools. We are robber barons to pay for another school shooting in another school in another part of our country. That is an issue we must address. If security guards would help, I will support that. But I am troubled and my heart goes out to the families who are suffering these terrible tragedies in school shootings.
Are we being confronted with such a Hobson’s choice because of a genuine shortage of resources or are we making these decisions for the wrong reasons? The cuts and investment decisions we are making now are not the result of nearly a decade of cutting necessary investments simply to allow for an enormously expensive tax cut that leaves millions of Americans out, leaves millions of America’s working families behind where they need to be in order to make the decisions that are best for their families because we are favoring others?

The kinds of priorities I speak of today, for which I have fought for so many years, going back to the days when we tried to bring fiscal responsibility to our budget, when we tried to lower the crime rate, when we tried to improve health care and education and protect the environment, are bipartisan priorities. These are genuinely American. Every generation needs to see healthy children, abuse prevention, police on our streets, we don’t stop and ask: Are you for it or against it based on party? We say: Isn’t this something we should do together in America?

Madam President, I hope we will come together once again, Republicans and Democrats, Americans, to fashion a budget that pays down the debt, which is still the best tax cut we can give the vast majority of Americans. That is what puts money in your pocket when you have to have a mortgage, when you do have a credit card, when you do have a car payment. Let’s keep those interest rates down.

We have learned from the last 8 years that the best way to do that is to be fiscally responsible and pay down our debt.

We need to provide sensible tax relief. Everybody in this Chamber is for tax reform, for a tax system that is fair. How do you pay a mortgage, how do you pay interest rates down. When you do have a credit card, when you have to have a mortgage, the best way to do that is to be fiscally responsible and pay down our debt.

We have learned from the last 8 years that the best way to do that is to be fiscally responsible and pay down our debt. That means we cannot turn our backs on the demands of Social Security and Medicare.

I am a member of the so-called baby boomer generation, I do not want to be part of a generation that is not responsible. The World War II generation is often rightly called the greatest generation. I am proud of the service of my father. I am proud of the service of all who came before. But they also understood the investment that needed to be made. It was in those years after that war when we started investing in our Nation’s schools, started building the Interstate Highway System, started making the investment that we, frankly, have been living on for the last 50 years in this country. How on Earth can we keep faith with those who came before us, let alone our children, our grandchildren, our great grandchildren, if we don’t have the same level of responsibility?

I think we have a rendezvous with responsibility, and it is now. If we turn our backs on that responsibility, we are going to lose, we are going to lose revenue. Maybe the bill won’t become due until 5 years, 10 years, maybe 15 or 25 years. But like my colleagues who have spoken, I want to be able to say to the young children I meet that we tried to be responsible, we tried to do the right thing that will make us a stronger, richer, smarter nation.

The American people—and I certainly know that people in New York who sent me—send us here to Washington to work together across party lines, to make the tough choices necessary to move our country forward.

That is exactly what I want to do. It is not necessarily going to mean that Democrats will support all Republican proposals, or vice versa. But what it does mean is that we can reason together and work together to do what is right for our Nation. I hope when that process begins next week we will have a chance to really sit down and look at the President’s budget, have a good, honest, open debate, as we just had these last few weeks about another very important matter before this body, and that we will honestly say what the priorities are we are setting, the values we stand for, the vision we have for America.

I believe there won’t be a more important issue that I will face. I want to make my decisions in a deliberative, thoughtful manner. I want to look for ways I can work with my friends across the aisle, as well as my colleagues on this side, because I want to be sure that at the end of the day we have done the right thing for the children of America. If we are not going to leave any child behind, then let’s make sure we are voting on that will affect every child.

If we can make that determination to work together, I am confident we can come up with a bipartisan, sensible policy that leads to a budget we can support. In the absence of that, it will be very difficult to do so, and I hope that comes to the Senate of New York and America understand we are trying to stand firmly in favor of a process that may sound arcane and difficult from time to time to understand but which goes back, as Senator BYRD so rightly points out, to people who were very thoughtful about how to design a process that protected the rights of everybody. It is not just about that, as important as that is; it is fundamentally about the choices we will make for the children and families of America.

I know that people of good faith will find a way to come to a resolution about how we proceed next week. I am looking forward to that. But I do have to say that, in the absence of such an answer, we need to find a way to come together across party lines, to make the tough choices necessary to move our country forward.

And, at the end of the day, will we have made decisions that will protect America’s long-term interests at home and abroad?

Madam President, I hope I will be able to answer affirmatively every one of those questions.

I yield back the remainder of my time.

Mrs. CLINTON. Madam President, will the distinguished Senator from Arizona yield me just a couple of minutes?

Mr. KYL. Certainly.

Mr. BYRD. Without the time being charged to the Senator from Arizona.

Madam President, I merely want to take this moment to thank both of the Senators on my side of the aisle who have spoken this afternoon—the Senator from Florida, Mr. NELSON, and the distinguished Senator from New York, Mrs. CLINTON—in support of the need for having the President’s budget in the Senate before the Senate debates and amends the concurrent resolution on the budget.

They have spoken from their hearts. I have listened to every word, and I am personally grateful for the insights they brought here, their dedication, their perception of the necessity for our having the President’s budget, or at least knowing what is in the budget before the Senate proceeds to it.

Let me also thank them for their desire to work with other Senators on both sides of the aisle, their desire for
bipartisanship, their desire to work with our Republican leadership and our Republican Senators. Both of these Senators who have spoken have manifestly stated very clearly, stated it clearly, and it comes from their heart because they came here to do the work of the people, and they know that the work of the people and of the Nation and our children cries out for bipartisanship, cries out for us working together to meet the needs of this country.

That is what they are here for. That is what they are here to do. I thank them for such a clear enunciation of the need to serve our people and, in so serving, the need to have before us all of the facts and details that we can so we can exercise judgment on both sides of the aisle. I thank them from the bottom of my heart.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Under the previous order, the Senator from Arizona is recognized.

THE BUDGET

Mr. KYL. Madam President, while the distinguished Senator from West Virginia is still here, let me thank him for the remarks he has just made. I, too, listened very carefully to his remarks, as well as to the Senator from Florida and the Senator from New York.

But I must say that I find this rather bemusing—if I am using that term correctly. People around the country might wonder why there is such an emphasis on, or such a concern for, taking up the budget. After all, isn’t it time to take up the budget? Indeed, in the normal course of events in the Senate, we would not be taking up the budget about now. So why is there all this expression about concern about taking up the budget? I suggest it has to do with the old phrase, “You follow the money.”

While I came here to speak about another subject, I want to speak for a few minutes about this subject because I think people across this country deserve to know what is really behind all of this talk about taking up the budget. You see, the truth is, until we take up the budget and pass a budget, we can’t take up tax relief. Until we take up and pass tax relief, the money that is available here in Washington to be spent by the politicians will be spent by the politicians. So you follow the money. If we never take up the budget, then we can’t pass the tax relief. Until we take up and pass tax relief, the money that is available is here in Washington to be spent by the politicians. So you follow the money. I think people across this country deserve to know what is really behind all of this talk about taking up the budget.

People who like to spend other people’s money don’t want to see tax relief. They can’t stand in the way of tax relief, which is too popular. It is going to pass. But they might be able to stop the budget from being considered, based upon some parliamentary procedures. That is what the President, is what I think this is all about.

Let me take the four points that have been raised by my friends across the aisle in order:

First of all, that we can’t possibly take up the budget yet because we don’t have the details of the President’s budget. I have in my hand a copy of something called “A Vision of Change For America.” The Senator from West Virginia will remember this. It is dated February 17, 1993.

This is what the Democratically controlled Senate had before it when it considered the budget resolution in that year. We did not have the Clinton budget. There was no Clinton budget.

Like the first year of President Bush, that was the first year of President Clinton. It takes a new President’s team a little while to put together the budget, but that has never stopped the Congress from passing a budget in the ordinary timeframe that is the first thing we have to do. We are pretty well stricken in all of the other things we have to do in terms of reconciliation, in terms of appropriations, until we have adopted the budget.

What is this “Vision for Change for America”? Clinton’s budget. It was not a budget, as he acknowledged here; it was a blueprint, a vision, as he called it, pretty similar to the document the Senator from West Virginia has been referring to that President Bush sent up to Capitol Hill.

It is a blueprint. It is a vision for what he would like to do. There is a lot of information in it. It is not as detailed as the usual budget, to be sure, but there is plenty of information about the general direction he would like to take.

What happened to this “Vision for Change for America”? Did Republicans say: We cannot possibly take this budget resolution up; we have to wait for a detailed budget by President Clinton? Actually, I think some Republicans did say that, but the Democratic leadership said: Forget it; we are going to take up the budget resolution, and this body passed a budget resolution in a number of days, close to 2 weeks, before the real Clinton budget was sent up here. The Senate acted upon its budget resolution before it ever had the Clinton budget. There was no Clinton budget.

That tax cut was proposed during the campaign when the estimated budget surplus was far less. That budget surplus has grown virtually every quarter since then. It is now up to $5.6 trillion, $5.8 trillion.

Given the fact that these are conservative estimates, given the fact that we all have to make decisions on imperfect information, it certainly seems to me we ought to at least proceed to take up the budget. My goodness, we will be here all year waiting for exactitude, and nobody, of course, expects that.

The third point I have heard is there is not going to be room for debt relief if we are not careful. That, of course, is not true. I was in a hearing yesterday of the Finance Committee in which we had experts talk about how much debt we could pay down and over what period of time.

Everybody agrees that the debt can be paid down within the 10-year period as far as we can possibly pay it. The only difference is, can we pay it down to about $500 billion or down to $1 trillion, somewhere in between there? The experts are in disagreement as to where exactly we can pay it down. It is virtually impossible to pay off more debt than that because it is held by people in long-term obligations and obligations that would cost too much to buy back.

We are going to pay down the debt all we can, and there is just over $1 trillion left, after we have done the tax cut and after we have paid off the debt, and after we have paid for everything on which the Government has to spend money, plus a 4-percent rate of growth, more than the rate of inflation. And that is on top of record huge historical increases in spending over the last 2 years, all of which are built into the baseline.

We have the historic spending, greater even than—well, literally any other