

Senate as well as the farm community that when we wrote that bill we were changing it philosophically to a farm bill that would extend a helping hand to our agriculture community in times of low yields and low prices, but when prices were good and yields were good the Federal Government was not going to be there in the way of commodity payments; that is exactly what happened.

It was projected by the CBO that we would spend for the first 3 years \$52 billion. The fact is, we have spent \$37.9 billion. The reason is, for 2 of those years, we have had good yields and we have had good prices, so payments have been down.

While I applaud the President and I applaud his administration for being fiscally responsible and coming forward with a budget that does meet his goal of cutting the deficit in half during the next 4 years, we have to be careful and make sure we do not throw the baby out with the bath water and that we make sure we approach this budget for the next 5 years in a sound and sensible manner, in a manner that makes sure our defense community is looked after and makes sure that all of America is looked after when it comes to our agriculture production and our ability to buy safe and secure products in the grocery store.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Nevada.

#### THE BUDGET

Mr. ENSIGN. Mr. President, I rise today to talk about a process that many Americans face each year. Imagine your average American family with paper and pencil in hand, gathered around the kitchen table discussing their budget for the year. Their funds are limited—and going into a deficit is not an option for them, like it is for their Government. They must choose their priorities, cut the wasteful spending, and make sure that their spending does not add up to more than their income.

Here in the U.S. Congress, we've been tasked with the same job. Those tax-paying families that toil over their own budgets expect us to put the same thoughtfulness into how we spend their hard-earned money here in Washington, DC. And for too long, we have been largely irresponsible with how we spend their money. First, we have to prioritize our spending—and that means making tough choices.

Our top priority today must be our security. That includes the security of our borders and the safety of the brave servicemen and women in Iraq, Afghanistan, and around the world who are helping secure our borders and our freedom. We must be vigilant in making sure that our military has the tools it needs to get the job done.

We also cannot afford to turn our backs on the economic growth that we have been experiencing. Economic growth continued job creation are what will help bring increased revenue into the Government coffers and ultimately help reduce our deficit even further.

Now some critics of the President's budget in the Senate might say that we should raise taxes on the American family to reduce the deficit. I don't think that takes us in the right direction.

That kind of thinking fails to recognize how the tax cuts of 2001 and 2003 have helped our economy grow. This growth has resulted in 20 straight months of increased employment. In 2004 alone, America created 2.2 million new jobs. Each of these workers is gainfully employed and taking care of their own family. They are also paying taxes.

In fact, as a result of increased employment, even with lower tax rates, individual income tax revenue will increase almost \$73 billion this year. Overall revenue is expected to increase by almost \$125 billion this year. I think this is proof that the tax cuts worked. This is one important reason we have to make sure that we don't raise taxes on American families this year and in the years to come.

After we decide what our priorities are when it comes to spending, we have to make more difficult decisions about what we will cut from our budget. As we would tell our children and as we must sometimes remind ourselves, "Money doesn't grow on trees." Our budget must reflect the understanding that there are limits to how much we can spend—as is true for the typical family creating a budget.

Although it might be easier to continue throwing money at failing programs, it is not the right thing to do. If a program is not effective, it cannot expect to cruise on the Federal dole indefinitely. We must demand accountability, and we must focus on programs that are making a difference. I applaud President Bush for taking the position that "... a taxpayer dollar must be spent wisely, or not at all." That is the leadership we need in order to make these difficult reductions.

All Americans can work together to reduce Federal spending. Every tax-paying American should demand spending reform, demand that earmarks and pork barrel spending in the appropriations bills be eliminated, and call on Congress to eliminate the ineffective programs. Rather than having lobbyists and activists calling on Congress to increase spending for every program, Congress should force these groups to identify cost savings too.

For example, if you want more spending for one of the more successful housing programs, housing activists should be forced to identify a housing program that is a failure. That way

Congress can reallocate resources to the better run programs. This goes for every federally funded program. It should no longer be acceptable in America for our elected officials not to ask that hard question before increasing spending from one year to the next. The future of America's financial house demands a changed way of thinking.

I yield the floor and 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. LAUTENBERG. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the order for the quorum call be rescinded.

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

The Senator from New Jersey.

Mr. LAUTENBERG. I thank the Chair.

(The remarks of Mr. LAUTENBERG and Mr. CORZINE pertaining to the introduction of S. 308 are located in today's RECORD under "Statements on Introduced Bills and Joint Resolutions.")

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Iowa.

Mr. HARKIN. Mr. President, may I inquire how much time remains on our side?

The PRESIDING OFFICER. There is 21 minutes 9 seconds.

Mr. HARKIN. I thank the Chair.

#### BUDGET PRIORITIES

Mr. HARKIN. President John Kennedy used to say that to govern is to choose. Certainly that is what a proposed budget is all about. It is about choices and priorities and the values that underlie them.

A budget is not just numbers. There are a lot of figures in there, but ultimately a budget is about people and priorities and what kind of an America we want. It speaks about the values of our country.

On that score, President Bush's proposed budget for 2006, sent yesterday to the Congress, speaks in the starkest of terms. Gone is any pretense of compassionate conservatism. Gone is any pretense of concern for the most needy in our society. Instead, what we see in the budget released yesterday is an unvarnished message that the far right rules, that the gloves are off, and future budgets will reflect traditional hard right priorities.

Specifically, the President's position is that the tax cuts for the very rich must not be touched. In fact, they must be made permanent. Moreover, two additional tax cuts for the very wealthy—tax cuts passed in the 2001 tax bill which become effective next year—must also not be touched. Meanwhile, President Bush proposes to slash critical life-supporting programs for veterans, schoolchildren, the sick, the poor, the disabled, the most vulnerable in our American family.

This proposed budget is the antithesis of compassionate governance. Yes, President Bush still trots out the conservative rhetoric about tightening our belt and making difficult choices in next year's budget. But he has a double standard. On the one hand he says times are tough. We can't afford to properly fund education for Iowa's schoolkids, health care for our veterans, economic development for rural communities or programs to keep police officers on our streets. On the other hand, the President says, times are not too tough for yet another tax giveaway bonanza for the wealthiest Americans.

Specifically, the budget released yesterday calls for implementation next year of two new tax cuts worth billions of dollars, with more than half of the benefits going to those making more than \$1 million a year. In short, President Bush's proposed 2006 budget is easy on the rich and privileged and tough on children and the poor.

Hard-working Americans are looking at these proposals and saying: Those aren't our priorities. Those are not our values. This is not our idea of fairness or shared sacrifice. Why should a Wall Street speculator making more than \$1 million a year get yet another big tax cut while kids in rural Iowa are getting kicked off of Head Start?

I made an inquiry about the slashes in Head Start. I was told: It is only 25,000 kids. The cuts in the Head Start Program in the President's budget would only deny 25,000 kids nationally to Head Start.

Only? I thought we were not going to leave any child behind. Yet we are going to say to 25,000 of the neediest kids in America: Sorry, we don't have room for you in Head Start. Only 25,000?

These are wrong choices and misplaced priorities, and they reflect bad values, values that are offensive to the basic decency and caring and fairness of the American people.

Let's be clear about the game being played here—only it is not a game; it is a deadly serious ideologically driven plan—the objective of this plan is best expressed by Republican leader Grover Nordquist who said his goal is to “cut government in half . . . to get it down to the size where we can [drag it into the bathroom and] drown it in the bathtub.” That is their goal.

To that end, over the last 4 years President Bush has engineered a fiscal train wreck, a methodical, purposeful, deliberate train wreck. He has cut taxes by trillions of dollars, vastly increased spending on the Pentagon, spent hundreds of billions on the war in Iraq, rammed through an ill-conceived prescription drug plan costing half a trillion dollars, he has proposed borrowing more than \$4 trillion for his scheme to privatize Social Security, a scheme that does nothing to address

the long-term shortfall in Social Security, and now the President has the gall to point to this fiscal train wreck, his train wreck, and say the deficits are out of control, but since the tax cuts are untouchable, we have to cut programs for our most needy citizens: We need to cut education, cut health care, cut rural development, cut police officers, and firefighters.

In short, what the President is saying is, we have to tighten belts on members of our American family whose belts are already tightened to the last notch. But to those whose coffers are full, whose stomachs are full, he says: We will give you a bigger belt. In case you are down to the end notch, we will give you a bigger one.

Here are just a few of the most egregious cuts in the budget that was sent to us. First, there are deep cuts in education for the first time in 10 years, at a time when our schools are struggling to meet the requirements of No Child Left Behind, eliminating funding for education technology, school counselors, alcohol abuse reduction, dozens of other education initiatives.

Secondly, at a time when U.S. workers are fighting for jobs in the global economy, the President's budget cuts job training by \$330 million and eliminates vocational education funding.

Next, the budget would slash \$1.6 billion in funding for local police, while eliminating drug task forces and the successful High Intensity Drug Trafficking Areas Program which has been so helpful in fighting the meth epidemic in Iowa and other places.

Next, the budget calls for some 2 million veterans to pay a new \$250 annual fee to receive health care, and it doubles the cost of their prescription drugs. Welcome home, Iraqi veterans, welcome home.

Rural America is singled out for deep cuts, cuts in programs to help family farmers and rural small businesses to survive, cuts in agricultural conservation programs, cuts in clean drinking water for our small towns and communities. The budget slashes funding for rural health programs by 80 percent. It cuts health profession training by 64 percent. It zeros out the block grants for preventive health care, the one thing we need to do to move from a sick care system to a health care system and have preventative health care block grants. It zeros them out.

Last, the budget calls for giving States more “flexibility” under Medicaid. But this is nothing more than a code word for cuts, cuts of billions of dollars in health care for the poorest, for the mentally ill, those with disabilities.

These are the wrong choices, the wrong priorities, and the wrong values. Why in the world are the President's tax cuts for the rich untouchable? We are no longer in a recession. The President says the economy is strong and

creating jobs. During the Clinton years, we created 100 times more jobs per month, and we did it not by cutting taxes but by balancing budgets. That is what a budget is. It is to impose some self-discipline. But the budget President Bush sent up yesterday refuses to impose self-discipline except on the poorest and the neediest.

For 2006, the President is demanding a \$2.6 trillion Government, but he is refusing to raise any revenue to pay for it. In order to preserve the tax cuts, the President is saying: We are going to have to borrow at least \$390 billion, an amount equal to the entire Pentagon budget, and pass it on to our children and grandchildren.

This does not reflect the values of working Americans who sacrifice every day to balance their own budgets. I intend to challenge the President's priorities. I do not accept his idea that tax cuts for the very rich are untouchable while essential programs for our most vulnerable citizens are fair game for cuts or zeroing out. It is wrong to put virtually the entire burden of deficit reduction on the backs of our poorest citizens, yet this is what is being done with this budget.

I know many of my colleagues on both sides of the aisle share these concerns. The President's budget is deeply disappointing and disturbing. But the President's job is to propose a budget. We now know what President Bush's values are. We know how he wants America to look. That is what he is proposing. It is our job in Congress to write and pass a budget and to reflect the values and the choices that Americans want for their future. I appeal to my colleagues, let us join to write a budget that is fair, a budget that reflects the essential American values of fairness and shared sacrifice and compassion toward the most vulnerable in our American family.

In closing, I noticed last week an article in the newspaper that said “Bush prays for poor.” It said:

President Bush followed his State of the Union address with a prayer Thursday morning, saying that praying reminds the faithful to hear “the cry of the poor and the less fortunate.”

Well, I believe in the power of prayer. I always have. But maybe the President's prayer is a little misplaced. Maybe who we ought to be praying for is the rich. Maybe we ought to be praying that those who have a lot in our society, those who have the biggest homes and the nicest cars, who have the biggest and the fattest bank accounts, those who are able to pass on wealth to their children, maybe we ought to be praying for them in this way: That in their hearts they will understand and know that what we are doing here is wrong; what we are doing to our American family is not in the best interests of fairness and decency and compassion.

Let us pray for those who have the most in our society, that they will get to this President and say: Mr. President, we have enough. We don't need any more. We need to pay our fair share. We don't need these two new tax cuts that are coming down next year. Take those off the table. Let's have shared sacrifice for all in our society.

And maybe those who the President listens to the most, the rich and the powerful, maybe if they could get to him with a change of heart, then maybe we can change our priorities. Maybe rather than praying for the poor, we ought to be praying for the rich to have that change of heart, to talk to this President, to talk to the leaders in Congress about fairness and equity and justice for the least in our society.

That is what a budget is about. It is not numbers. It is about who gets and who doesn't. It is about what kind of a structure our country will have. It is about hope. It is about giving hope to those who have the least—that they, too, can have a brighter future; that they, too, are members of our family; that they, too, are valuable. And while these poor kids in Head Start don't have a rich parent to get them into a private school, to get them tutoring, who do they rely on for their kids to get that Head Start? They rely upon us—the Government—because they don't have a rich parent or a rich uncle. So, yes, this Government can give hope to people—not just the wealthiest but to those on the bottom. That is what this budget is about and that is why I intend to challenge the President on this budget, to make sure we have our priorities right.

#### TURNING UP THE HEAT

Mr. HARKIN. Mr. President, I noticed a plethora of articles recently about the Republican National Committee turning up the heat on Minority Leader HARRY REID. I notice here that there is some other stuff coming out from the Republican National Committee saying they are going to "Daschleize" REID, making HARRY REID, our minority leader, the obstructionist.

Again, this is not what working together means. Look, we Democrats are in the minority. I believe we are the loyal opposition. We need to provide a different view for the American people. This last election was very close. There is no mandate for one side or the other to run roughshod over the other. This is a mandate for us to try to get together and work things out. It is not a mandate for the Republican National Committee to trash, demonize, and drag down the good name of Senator HARRY REID of Nevada. But that is what is happening. It has no part here. I was hoping maybe we would be beyond that. I would think we are beyond that.

I have known our minority leader for the last 30 years. He is a good, decent, kind human being. He is tough, but we expect him to be tough in making sure our rights are protected, and making sure the debate flows in the Senate, so we are able to come together and work things out, with having the President of the United States say this is the way it is going to be and you have to follow suit. That is not the way our country works; it is not the way the Senate works.

I am hopeful the RNC will look into their own hearts and see that this is not the right way to do things. It is going to make it tougher to get things done around here. It is going to make it much tougher if the Republican National Committee continues to try to drag down Senator HARRY REID, demonize him, call him an obstructionist, and to "Daschleize" him—whatever that means. I guess it means to make Senator REID the object of scorn for the Republican National Committee. I hope the Republicans in this body will tell the RNC to back off. This is not the way we do things around here.

Mr. President, I yield the floor and 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. SPECTER. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the order for the quorum call be rescinded.

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

#### RETAINING CHAIRMANSHIP OF THE LABOR, HHS, AND EDUCATION SUBCOMMITTEE

Mr. SPECTER. Mr. President, in a few moments we are going to be moving to the class action bill. Senator DURBIN is due to arrive to offer an amendment. In the intervening time, I would like to take a few minutes to discuss my decision to retain the chairmanship of the Appropriations Subcommittee on Labor, Health and Human Services, and Education. The Appropriations Committee has been considering the formation of a new subcommittee on intelligence. Under my seniority position, I would have been in a position to take that subcommittee assignment. I have had a very keen interest in intelligence, chairing the Senate Intelligence Committee in the 104th Congress, being coauthor of the homeland security bill, and the fight against terrorism is obviously our No. 1 priority. So, I have been very strongly tempted to take on that chairmanship.

It now appears that the status of that subcommittee is in doubt because the decision has been made to not make a disclosure of the total funding for the intelligence community. With the announcement of the President's budget,

which is austere, we are facing major problems with the deficit and the President has come in with a very restricted budget, which impacts very heavily on the subcommittee that I have chaired now for many years.

The Department of Labor, for example, has cut some \$400 million; the Department of Health and Human Services has been cut by \$1.8 billion; the Department of Education cut by some \$500 million. So that the total impact on the subcommittee has been a reduction of \$2.4 billion, which is very difficult when you are talking about education and health and capital investments. Those are not expenditures, they are capital investments—as are programs related to worker safety.

The President has proposed some programs that are excellent. There is \$45 million for a new gang youth initiative, which has been sponsored and spoken about by First Lady Laura Bush. There is \$125 million for health care information technology, which is an increase of \$25 million. This is funding the subcommittee had started some time ago to enhance technology and information. We have had an increase in community health centers of about \$304 million. There is a new program for high school risk initiatives, for high school students who are at risk.

At the same time, there have been major eliminations. For example, the so-called GEAR UP program, which provides for the transition from the seventh grade on through high school, has been cut by more than \$306 million. The vocational and technical education programs have been cut by \$1.3 billion. Educational Technology State Grants have been cut by \$496 million, and correctional educational programs have been cut by \$26.8 million. There have also been major decreases in training; some \$333 million is cut from employment and training programs; \$29 million is cut from the Job Corps; \$35 million from a program for ex-offenders has been eliminated.

There has been a decrease in Healthy Start. The Centers for Disease Control has been cut by \$555 million, which is a little hard to understand at a time when we are calling on the CDC to undertake so many new actions. The program for low-income home energy assistance—a very vital program, especially for seniors who have to make decisions on limited compensation as to whether they will heat or eat—has been cut by some \$182 million. Graduate medical education has had a decrease of \$101 million. Perhaps of greatest concern—and it is hard to prioritize these cuts—has been the budget proposed by the administration for the National Institutes of Health, which has an increase of one-half of 1 percent, which will not maintain the research program of NIH.

I am joined on the floor by my distinguished colleague from Iowa, Senator