

In 1975, 2 years after Anderson left office, the Senate adopted the rule we operate under today: It takes the vote of “three-fifths of all Senators duly chosen and sworn” to cut off debate or the threat of unlimited debate.

As the junior Senator from New Mexico, I have the honor of serving in Senator Clinton Anderson’s former seat, and I have the desire to take up his commitment to the Senate and his dedication to the principle that in each new Congress, the Senate should exercise its constitutional power to determine its own rules. Let me be very clear. I am not arguing for or against any specific changes to the rules, but I do believe each Senate has the right, according to the Constitution, to determine all of its rules by a simple majority vote.

As my distinguished colleague Senator BYRD, the longest serving Member in the history of Congress, once said:

The Constitution in article 1, section 5, says that each House shall determine the rules of its proceedings. Now we are at the beginning of Congress. This Congress is not obliged to be bound by the dead hand of the past.

It is time for reform. There are many great traditions in this body that should be kept and respected, but stubbornly clinging to ineffective and unproductive procedures should not be one of them. There is another way.

The resolution I am introducing today is simple. It would enable the 112th Congress to carry out its responsibility to determine the rules of its proceedings in accordance with the Constitution. This is not to say that between now and the beginning of the 112th Congress we cannot use our political will to find a way to avoid the gridlock of 2009. It is to say that at the beginning of the 112th Congress, the Senate can exercise its constitutional right to adopt its rules of procedure by a simple majority vote. The Senate may choose to adopt new rules or it may choose to continue with some or all of the rules of the previous Congress. The point is, it is our choice. It is our responsibility.

As Clinton Anderson said:

It is a responsibility that cannot be shifted back upon the Senate of past Congresses.

AMENDMENTS SUBMITTED AND PROPOSED

SA 3306. Mr. BAUCUS proposed an amendment to amendment SA 3299 proposed by Mr. BAUCUS (for Mr. REID) to the joint resolution H.J. Res. 45, increasing the statutory limit on the public debt.

SA 3307. Mr. SPECTER (for Mr. CRAPO) proposed an amendment to the resolution S. Res. 373, designating the month of February 2010 as “National Teen Dating Violence Awareness and Prevention Month”.

TEXT OF AMENDMENTS

SA 3306. Mr. BAUCUS proposed an amendment to amendment SA 3299 pro-

posed by Mr. BAUCUS (for Mr. REID) to the joint resolution H.J. Res. 45, increasing the statutory limit on the public debt; as follows:

At the appropriate place, insert the following:

SEC. 1. SHORT TITLE.—This Act may be cited as the “Bipartisan Task Force for Responsible Fiscal Action Act of 2009.”

SEC. 2. ESTABLISHMENT OF TASK FORCE.—Title III of the Congressional Budget Act of 1974 (2 U.S.C. 631 et seq.) is amended by adding at the end the following new section:

“ESTABLISHMENT OF TASK FORCE FOR RESPONSIBLE FISCAL ACTION

“SEC. 316. (a) DEFINITIONS.—In this section:

“(1) TASK FORCE.—The term “Task Force” means the Bipartisan Task Force for Responsible Fiscal Action established under subsection (b)(1).

“(2) TASK FORCE BILL.—The term “Task Force bill” means a bill consisting of the proposed legislative language of the Task Force recommended under subsection (b)(3)(B) and introduced under subsection (e)(1).

“(3) FISCAL IMBALANCE.—The term “fiscal imbalance” means the gap between the projected revenues and expenditures of the Federal Government.

“(b) ESTABLISHMENT OF TASK FORCE.—

“(1) ESTABLISHMENT.—There is established in the legislative branch a task force to be known as the “Bipartisan Task Force for Responsible Fiscal Action”.

“(2) PURPOSES.—

“(A) REVIEW.—The Task Force shall review the fiscal imbalance of the Federal Government, including—

“(i) analyses of projected Federal expenditures;

“(ii) analyses of projected Federal revenues; and

“(iii) analyses of the current and long-term actuarial financial condition of the Federal Government.

“(B) IDENTIFY FACTORS.—The Task Force shall identify factors that affect the long-term fiscal imbalance of the Federal Government.

“(C) ANALYZE POTENTIAL COURSES OF ACTION.—The Task Force shall analyze potential courses of action to address factors that affect the long-term fiscal imbalance of the Federal Government.

“(D) PROVIDE RECOMMENDATIONS AND LEGISLATIVE LANGUAGE.—The Task Force shall provide recommendations and legislative language that will significantly improve the long-term fiscal imbalance of the Federal Government, including recommendations addressing—

“(i) Federal expenditures;

“(ii) Federal revenues; and

“(iii) the current and long-term actuarial financial condition of the Federal Government.

“(E) PRIORITY TO ELIMINATING WASTE.—The Task Force shall give priority to reducing or eliminating waste, fraud, abuse, and the non-payment of taxes already owed.

“(3) DUTIES.—

“(A) IN GENERAL.—The Task Force shall address the Nation’s long-term fiscal imbalances, consistent with the purposes described in paragraph (2), and shall submit the report and recommendations required under subparagraph (B).

“(B) REPORT, RECOMMENDATIONS, AND LEGISLATIVE LANGUAGE.—

“(i) IN GENERAL.—Not earlier than November 3, 2010, and not later than November 9, 2010, the Task Force shall vote on a report that contains—

“(I) a detailed statement of the findings, conclusions, and recommendations of the Task Force;

“(II) the assumptions, scenarios, and alternatives considered in reaching such findings, conclusions, and recommendations; and

“(III) proposed legislative language to carry out such recommendations as described in paragraph (2)(D).

“(ii) APPROVAL OF REPORT.—The report of the Task Force submitted under clause (i) shall require the approval of not fewer than 14 of the 18 members of the Task Force.

“(iii) ADDITIONAL VIEWS.—A member of the Task Force who gives notice of an intention to file supplemental, minority, or additional views at the time of final Task Force approval of the report under clause (ii), shall be entitled to not less than 3 calendar days in which to file such views in writing with the staff director of the Task Force. Such views shall then be included in the Task Force report and printed in the same volume, or part thereof, and their inclusion shall be noted on the cover of the report. In the absence of timely notice, the Task Force report may be printed and transmitted immediately without such views.

“(iv) TRANSMISSION OF REPORT.—No later than November 15, 2010, the Task Force shall submit the Task Force bill and final report to the President, the Vice President, the Speaker of the House, and the majority and minority leaders of both Houses.

(v) REPORT TO BE MADE PUBLIC.—Upon the approval or disapproval of the Task Force report pursuant to clause (ii), the Task Force shall promptly make the full report, and a record of the vote, available to the public.

“(4) MEMBERSHIP.—

“(A) IN GENERAL.—The Task Force shall be composed of 18 members designated pursuant to subparagraph (B).

“(B) DESIGNATION.—Members of the Task Force shall be designated as follows:

“(i) The President shall designate 2 members, one of whom shall be the Secretary of the Treasury, and the other of whom shall be an officer of the executive branch.

“(ii) The majority leader of the Senate shall designate 4 members from among Members of the Senate.

“(iii) The minority leader of the Senate shall designate 4 members from among Members of the Senate.

“(iv) The Speaker of the House of Representatives shall designate 4 members from among Members of the House of Representatives.

“(v) The minority leader of the House of Representatives shall designate 4 members from among Members of the House of Representatives.

“(C) CO-CHAIRS.—

“(i) IN GENERAL.—There shall be 2 Co-Chairs of the Task Force. The President, majority leader of the Senate, and Speaker of the House shall designate one Co-Chair among the members of the Task Force. The minority leader of the Senate and minority leader of the House shall designate the second Co-Chair among the members of the Task Force. The Co-Chairs shall be appointed not later than 14 days after the date of enactment of this section.

“(ii) STAFF DIRECTOR.—The Co-Chairs, acting jointly, shall hire the staff director of the Task Force.

“(D) DATE.—Members of the Task Force shall be designated by not later than 14 days after the date of enactment of this section.

“(E) PERIOD OF DESIGNATION.—Members shall be designated for the life of the Task Force. Any vacancy in the Task Force shall