

CUTS IN MEDICARE

Mr. AKAKA. Mr. President, earlier this week House and Senate Republicans unveiled their respective 7-year budget resolutions. The promise of the House resolution—a balanced budget by the year 2002 and tax cuts for wealthy Americans—is being championed by several prominent Senate Republicans. Although the Senate budget resolution contains a Boxer amendment that expresses the sense of Congress that 90 percent of the benefits of potential tax cuts go to the middle class, I have every expectation that the Republican bill will be a windfall for the wealthy. Moreover, the details on how the savings would be achieved are sketchy and are left for authorizing and appropriating committees.

The Senate Budget Committee resolution assumes a \$256 billion cut in Medicare spending over 7 years, but provides no guidelines to the Senate Finance Committee on how these savings will be achieved. This proposed cut is by far the largest Medicare cut in history, and the adverse impact on beneficiaries and providers is clear.

If Medicare cuts of this magnitude are approved, the Department of Health and Human Services estimates that senior citizens' out-of-pocket expenses will increase by \$900 a year or a total of \$3,500 over the 7 years. As 83 percent of Medicare benefits go to beneficiaries with incomes of \$25,000 or less, it is obvious who will be hurt by these cuts, yet the budget remains silent on how it will be done.

In addition, cuts to providers would have serious ramifications on overall health care costs as cuts in provider reimbursement are often passed along to other payers. Provider cuts could also have a potentially devastating impact on urban safety-net hospitals which already bear a disproportionate share of the Nation's growing burden of uncompensated care. These reductions in Medicare payments could also endanger access to care in rural areas. Nearly 10 million Medicare beneficiaries—25 percent of the total—live in rural areas. There is often only a single hospital in their county. Significant cuts in Medicare have the potential of causing rural hospitals to close or increase the number of providers that refuse to treat Medicare beneficiaries.

I was appalled to hear that during markup of the resolution, the Senate Budget Committee, on a party-line vote, rejected two proposals to restore funding to Medicare in lieu of providing tax cuts. Obviously, this massive cut in Medicare funding would be unnecessary if Republicans did not have to pay for a tax cut for wealthy citizens.

We must work to ensure that any effort to extend the solvency of the Medicare trust fund does not put Medicare beneficiaries at risk. And we must protect the program for future enrollees. I support President Clinton's view that the Medicare trust fund must be re-

solved in the context of health care reform.

Mr. President, without comprehensive health care reform, significant cuts in Medicare and Medicaid will seriously harm beneficiaries and the total health care system as costs will be shifted onto families and businesses. Only by focusing on the entire health care delivery system will be able to address issues within Medicare and preserve access for Medicare beneficiaries and underserved populations.

Let me close on this point. While we have heard Members on the other side of the aisle promise to protect Social Security, the GOP budget reaches balance by the year 2002, only by including the Social Security trust funds in the budget calculations.

While I fully recognize the critical need to ensure long-term stability in the Medicare Program and support efforts to balance our budget, I am opposed to using arbitrary cuts in the Medicare Program to finance a tax break for wealthy Americans. I look forward to working with my colleagues on addressing these important issues.

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

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will call the roll.

The legislative clerk proceeded to call the roll.

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

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

INTERSTATE TRANSPORTATION OF MUNICIPAL SOLID WASTE ACT

The Senate continued with the consideration of the bill.

THE BOTTLE BILL AMENDMENT

Mr. HATFIELD. Mr. President, as the Senate discusses the difficult issue of solid waste management, I would like to point out to my colleagues that 10 States have achieved great success by implementing some form of beverage container deposit system. My home State of Oregon, for example, has had remarkable success with its own bottle bill for over 20 years. Consequently, I am offering the National Beverage Container Reuse and Recycling Act as an amendment to the interstate waste bill.

So often, States serve as laboratories for what later emerges as successful national policies. The State of Oregon and other bottle-bill States have proven that deposit programs are an effective method to deal with beverage containers, which make up the single largest component of waste systems. According to the General Accounting Office, deposit-law States, which account for only 18 percent of the population, recycle 65 percent of all glass and 98 percent of all PET plastic nationwide. That means 82 percent of the population is recycling less than 25 percent of our Nation's beverage container waste.

The amendment I have placed before the Senate today will accomplish national objectives to meet our Nation's massive waste management difficulties. A national deposit system will reduce solid waste and litter, save natural resources and energy, and create a much needed partnership between consumers, industry, and local governments for the betterment of our communities.

As someone who grew up during the Great Depression, I am constantly reminded of the throw-away ethic that has emerged so prominently in this country. In this regard, Oregon's deposit system serves as a much greater role than merely cleaning up littered highways, saving energy and resources, or reducing the waste flowing into our teeming landfills. The bottle bill acts as a tutor. It is a constant reminder of the conservation ethic that is an essential component of any plan to see this country out of its various crises. Each time a consumer returns a can for deposit, the conservation ethic is reaffirmed, and hopefully the consumer will then reapply this ethic in other areas.

As many of my colleagues know, I have a 20-year history on this issue and have been greatly enthused by developments in recent years in promoting the establishment of a national bottle bill. The amendment I filed today is identical to the legislation I introduced last Congress. Although this bill has historically been referred to the Senate Commerce Committee, in recent years significant actions on this measure have come in the Senate Environment and Public Works Committee and the Energy and Natural Resources Committee.

Senator JEFFORDS offered the bill as an amendment to the Resource Conservation and Recovery Act [RCRA] in the Environment and Public Works Committee during the 102d Congress. Even though this attempt failed by a vote of 6 to 10 it was a monumental step forward. Additionally, during that same Congress a hearing was held in the Senate Energy and Natural Resources Committee on the energy conservation implications of beverage container recycling as outlined in that session's bottle bill, S. 2335.

I regret that I continually have come to the Senate floor to force the Senate to take action on this matter, but that seems to be the only effective procedure for moving forward on this bill. For example, during the 1992 Presidential campaign, candidate Bill Clinton declared his support for a national bottle bill. However, once he took office he and a Democratic-controlled Congress were surprisingly silent on the issue in the 103d Congress. Consequently, here I am again offering the Beverage Container Reuse and Recycling Act as an amendment on the Senate floor.

Mr. President, this is an active approach to dealing with solid waste before it becomes waste. It is widely acknowledged that recycling is the wave of the future and this amendment will facilitate the recycling of beverage containers. I firmly believe the time has come for Congress to follow the wise lead of these States and encourage deposit systems on a national level. I strongly urge my colleagues to fully examine the benefits of a national beverage container deposit system and to adopt this amendment.

BOTTLE BILL

Mr. JEFFORDS. Mr. President, a national deposit law is a commonsense, proven method to increase recycling, to save energy, to create jobs, and to decrease waste generation. The experience of 10 States, including Oregon and Vermont, attest to the success of a deposit law or a bottle bill as it is commonly called.

Bottle bills work. These laws have been successful in every State that has one. Recycling rates of over 70 percent have been achieved for beverage containers in the bottle bill States. The rate is over 90 percent in Vermont. Furthermore, jobs have been created by this legislation, not lost, and a majority of Americans support a national deposit law.

There is a misconception in some people's minds that deposit legislation is not compatible with curbside recycling programs. Nothing could be further from the truth. Nine of the 10 States with deposit laws have vibrant curbside recycling programs.

Mr. President, both Senator HATFIELD and I have been working on this issue for more than 20 years. In both of our States, curbside recycling programs are working in tandem with beverage container deposit systems. In today's world, we must make every effort to conserve precious natural resources and reduce our use of energy. I ask my colleagues to support this measure and thank the managers for considering our amendment.

Mr. HATFIELD. Mr. President, I have an amendment at the desk I would like to make a few remarks about. For over two decades, my State of Oregon, and about the same period of time the State of Vermont, have had on the books and in practice what we call the bottle bill. When you buy soft drinks and beer in my State, whether they are in the can or the bottle, you pay a deposit. That deposit becomes an incentive for people to return those bottles and cans rather than dumping them in the garbage and adding to the problem of trash and refuse in this country.

We have found it to be highly successful. At first there was a great deal of concern expressed by merchants about the additional costs of administering this program. There was a great deal of discussion about the possibility of labor being impacted. We have demonstrated, along with a modification or variation on a theme in a

few other States, an effective measure to reduce litter and to recycle the glass from the bottles and the metal from the cans.

I have offered this at a national level for over 20 years and it is very interesting that the beer industry opposes it very strongly. My good friend, the former Senator from Wisconsin, Gaylord Nelson, was the founder of Earth Day. However, every time I introduced the bottle bill, this great environmentalist would be the first to stand and oppose it because it was the beer industry that opposed it in his State. We had the same thing from the soft drink industry; they opposed it.

Now we find there is no longer solid opposition. Joe Coors, of the Coors Breweries, has swung around. I think Hamm's beer—of course Blitz-Weinhard, in our State—is supportive of the proposal. Now one of the largest growing beer producers in the State of Oregon are microbreweries. There is no longer the solid phalanx of opposition.

I have asked, I suppose 100 times, for a hearing. And I have not been able to get a hearing on this bill.

We had a sponsor at one time many years ago, not the Senator from Massachusetts but a Congressman from Massachusetts, and he was urged and persuaded to get off the bill because of the opposition of organized labor in his State. That has been true across this country. There is a lot of misunderstanding on the part of organized labor and others, that this is somehow going to add to their costs or, that it is a beautification issue, not a recycling, refuse, or trash issue. It is all of them.

I had intended to raise the bottle bill as an amendment to this bill from the floor. I rarely raise amendments that have not had hearings. I am a traditionalist, and believe that issues of this kind should go through a hearing process through the committees of jurisdiction. However, I have had private conversation with the chairman of this committee, Senator CHAFEE. I wanted to say to Senator CHAFEE I am not trying to hold up this bill. I support it and I would like to see it enacted into law. Nevertheless, I feel just as strongly about trying to get some kind of a hearing to move the bottle bill through the Congress at some point during my lifetime.

So I would yield to the chairman of the committee at this moment, if he would like to make any comment or give me some assurance of a hearing?

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Chair recognizes the Senator from Rhode Island.

Mr. CHAFEE. Mr. President, I want to pay tribute to the senior Senator from Oregon. He has been persistent in this measure. I do not recall that we ever had a hearing in the committee. But I do recall we had a vote in the committee. As I recall, Senator JEFFORDS, then a member of the committee, raised it so we did have a vote in the committee on it.

Mr. HATFIELD. Right.

Mr. CHAFEE. The vote failed. However, the Senator has been very gracious in his handling of this subject. I would be glad to arrange a hearing for his legislation in our committee.

I just say this, if he could give us a little time? We are chock-a-block in that committee right now. But in due course I certainly will work in a hearing.

Mr. HATFIELD. I appreciate the Senator's commitment and that satisfies my request.

Mr. CHAFEE. Let me say briefly, this. In my State I have always been a supporter of the bottle bill.

But then it turns out that in our recycling efforts, the thing that makes the recycling effort go is the fact that the recycling center is able to earn money from the aluminum cans. It is the big money earner for the recycling center and helps carry everything else.

So in our State, we will not want a bottle bill where you would make a deposit and bring it back to the central place and get your refund because that would deprive our recycling centers of this constant flow of very valuable income. But that may be a unique situation.

Mr. HATFIELD. Mr. President, if the Senator will yield, this was a valid issue, as the Senator described it in his State. However, concerns expressed by other States that there is competition between deposits and other recycling programs have been shown to be overstated. We have had studies, and I will be very happy to produce the records of those studies, indicating that this is not a valid concern, and that instead of being a possible deterrent to the ongoing efforts of recycling, it has become an incentive.

So there should not be this sense of competition between a bill of this kind, in which an individual can return a beverage container to the grocery store and get a refund, or other programs where container are returned to recycling centers. We have recycling centers in our State, as well as this deposit law. I would be happy to refer to those studies in more detail at a hearing.

Mr. President, with that assurance, I see the Senator from Massachusetts. I do not know if he wants to get the floor on this issue. If not, Mr. President, I will not call up my amendment on the desk. I thank the Senator for his assurance and look forward to a hearing on this subject.

Mr. CHAFEE. I thank the Senator very much.

Mr. KERRY. Mr. President, unless somebody is about to propose an amendment or wants to proceed, I would like to proceed as if in morning business for a few minutes.

Mr. CHAFEE. Mr. President, I wonder if the Senator will withhold. We have a couple of amendments we can accept. We can dispose of them. They will take very little time.

AMENDMENT NO. 1070

(Purpose: To include in the definition of "out-of-State municipal waste" waste that is generated outside the United States)

Mr. CHAFEE. Mr. President, on behalf of Senator LEVIN and Senator ABRAHAM, I send an amendment to the desk and ask for its immediate consideration.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will report.

The legislative clerk read as follows:

The Senator from Rhode Island [Mr. CHAFEE], for Mr. LEVIN, for himself, and Mr. ABRAHAM, proposes an amendment numbered 1070.

Mr. CHAFEE. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that reading of the amendment be dispensed with.

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

The amendment is as follows:

On page 49, strike lines 1 through 8 and insert:

(3) The term "out-of-State municipal solid waste" means, with respect to any State, municipal solid waste generated outside of the State. Unless the President determines it is inconsistent with the North American Free Trade Agreement and the General Agreement on Tariffs and Trade, the term shall include municipal solid waste generated outside of the United States. Notwithstanding any other provision of law, generators of municipal solid waste outside the United States shall possess no greater right of access to disposal facilities in a State than United States generators of municipal solid waste outside of that State.

Mr. BAUCUS. Mr. President, our side has reviewed this amendment and we find it acceptable.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Is there further debate on the amendment? If not, the question is on agreeing to the amendment.

The amendment (No. 1070) was agreed to.

Mr. CHAFEE. Mr. President, I move to reconsider the vote by which the amendment was agreed to.

Mr. BAUCUS. I move to lay that motion on the table.

The motion to lay on the table was agreed to.

AMENDMENT NO. 1071

Mr. CHAFEE. Mr. President, I send an amendment to the desk and ask for its immediate consideration.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will report.

The legislative clerk read as follows:

The Senator from Rhode Island [Mr. CHAFEE], for Mr. WARNER, proposes an amendment numbered 1071.

Mr. CHAFEE. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that reading of the amendment be dispensed with.

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

The amendment is as follows:

On page 65, line 6, insert "or related landfill reclamation" after "services."

Mr. BAUCUS. Mr. President, we have reviewed this amendment, as well, and also urge its adoption.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Is there further debate on the amendment? If not, the question is on agreeing to the amendment.

The amendment (No. 1071) was agreed to.

Mr. CHAFEE. Mr. President, I move to reconsider the vote by which the amendment was agreed to.

Mr. BAUCUS. I move to lay that motion on the table.

The motion to lay on the table was agreed to.

Mr. CHAFEE. I thank the Senator from Massachusetts. If he wants to proceed, this is a good time to do it.

ORDER OF PROCEDURE

Mr. KERRY. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent to proceed as if in morning business.

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Mr. CRAIG). Without objection, it is so ordered.

THE BUDGET RESOLUTION

Mr. KERRY. Mr. President, last night the Budget Committee, in the wee hours, passed the budget resolution for the U.S. Senate on which we will shortly go to work. There are many, many questionable choices within that resolution. There will be a time, a very fixed time obviously, a minimum number of hours that we have to debate it here on the floor, with a finality for that debate, and it is predetermined. But I would like to just talk for a moment, if I can, about a couple of aspects of that budget as we frame the debate about where we are going in this country.

First, I would like to call the attention of my colleagues to one provision that is in this budget that this Senator finds profoundly disturbing, and that I hope other colleagues will think hard about before we ratify it in the course of the budget process.

A lot of things are being proposed in America today under the banner of deficit reduction. I think there is a unanimity here that we obviously have to reduce the deficit. We are going to be bankrupt if we do not. We cannot continue down the road that we are going on. But there also ought to be an application of common sense to the choices that we make as we do that. Reducing the deficit does not predicate that we simply come in with a machete or a pickax and chop away at things that make sense, while simultaneously leaving out there the things that do not make sense.

One of the items that has fallen under the budget committee's ideological approach to this issue is the Presidential campaign fund. For whatever reasons—I can give you the descriptions that are given, but I think the agenda is considerably different—the committee has chosen to eliminate the mechanism by which Americans for the years since Watergate have funded Presidential elections. That method is to have a checkoff on your tax form with which you decide to give money to the Presidential election fund. It is a voluntary mechanism in America.

But it has been a most important mechanism by which we have freed Presidential politics from the demeaning process of requiring our candidates to raise hundreds of millions of dollars from special interests all across this country.

It has worked, Mr. President. The system has worked. President Ronald Reagan used it. President George Bush used it. I believe President Bush in the course of his career as a Vice President and as a President, used something in the order of \$200 million in order to run for the highest Federal office in this land.

The majority leader, ROBERT DOLE, has used it in the past. Other Presidential candidates in this Senate have used it, Republican and Democrat alike. No one has suggested that system is wrong, corrupt, not working, or not freeing the Presidential process from the rather terrifying money chase that we in the U.S. Senate have to go through. Yet, this Budget Committee, in an effort to try to whack away at the deficit, is going to do away with this campaign financing mechanism.

Mr. President, for the life of me I don't understand why—but I understand the argument that will be made. The argument will be the soft, easy, political sloganeering arguments that, "Gee, politicians should not be getting welfare." It sounds really catchy. And the American taxpayer should not necessarily be paying. That is the argument you are going to hear. But I will bet you that four members of the Republican caucus who are running for President are prepared, in a matter of weeks, to ask for that money and will take it and will use it.

Now, it seems to me, Mr. President, if we cannot remember the lessons of Watergate and remember the degree to which this country felt a revulsion at what happened during that period of time, when stacks of cash and enormous sums of money were changing hands in an effort to try to curry favor and votes in America, if we do not remember that lesson, then we have not learned much about what was wrong with American politics in the course of the last years.

So I hope that before we just accept what the Budget Committee has done, Members will think hard about what is really good for this country in the context of political campaign finance reform. This Senate has twice passed campaign finance reform in the last years. We passed it in 1992, and the House passed it, but President Bush vetoed it. We then passed it again in 1994, but it died mostly because the House of Representatives did not want to take it up.

The bottom line, I think all colleagues will agree, is that we saw a period of scandal in America that brought reform, and it would be irrational now in the face of the extraordinary impact of money in American