

CONCLUSION OF MORNING  
BUSINESS

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The time for morning business has expired. Morning business is now closed.

BALANCED BUDGET AMENDMENT  
TO THE CONSTITUTION

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Under the previous order, the Senate will now resume consideration of House Joint Resolution 1, which the clerk will report.

The assistant legislative clerk read as follows:

A joint resolution (H.J. Res. 1) proposing a balanced budget amendment to the Constitution of the United States.

The Senate resumed consideration of the joint resolution.

Mr. HATCH addressed the Chair.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Utah is recognized.

Mr. HATCH. Mr. President, we are now on our third day on the balanced budget constitutional amendment. I think the debate has been interesting. There have been a lot of points made on both sides of the floor, and I can see there are people anguishing over which way to go on this amendment.

I suggest that the American people are about fed up with the profligacy of Congress. They see us just spending this country right into bankruptcy. They see no real curtailment. They have seen a series of legislative approaches that were supposed to solve this problem, all of which bite the dust the minute 51 percent of the Senate and the House vote otherwise.

It is clear that for all the good intentions that we have had through the Harry Byrd amendment, the Gramm-Rudman-Hollings legislation, and the current approach toward budgeting, nothing has worked because there is no mechanism in the Constitution that requires us to make priority choices among competing programs.

It is really difficult because I see all over Capitol Hill today people from all over the country, from every State, arguing for their own special interest. That is the way the system should work, because the people ought to have a right to come see their elected representatives and argue for their own special interests.

But some mechanism must be supplied to enable us to say to some of them: "Your interest is worthy, but we don't have the money." And it is not as worthy as a whole raft of other interests that we have to take care of, among which would be Social Security, Medicaid, Medicare, veterans pensions, and the whole variety of entitlement programs that we think are so worthy that they automatically escalate every year, regardless of what we in Congress do.

I think anybody sitting here ought to stop and think why this balanced budget amendment is a wise and good thing. And the number one reason I would say

that it is is because it would force us to have to look at all programs, it would force us to be able to choose and make priority choices among programs on order of merit. It would not force us to go to a balanced budget, but it certainly gears us toward going to a balanced budget and provides different incentives that will lead us to a balanced budget.

I have had a number of senior citizens come to me in my home State of Utah and as I have traveled all over the country, and they say: "Senator HATCH, we hope you'll protect Social Security." And they always start that way and they know that I will. And I assure them that virtually every Member of Congress will. But invariably, these seniors will say:

"But we know that in order for us to have protection of our ability to live, we have to consider our youth of today, we have to consider our budget problems, we have to consider what is right for America, we have to consider how we live within our means in our country or what we get will not be worth very much, and we will not be able to live on Social Security no matter how much it is.

"So, Senator, please as you try to protect Social Security, also give us protection against the Federal Government spending us into bankruptcy, spending beyond our means to pay for things we cannot afford."

Senior citizens are not dumb. They know what is going on. Most of them have lived through this life, most of them have had to pay their bills all their lives. Most of them understand what it is like, and most of them are worried that sooner or later there is going to come a reckoning unless we get our fiscal house in order.

On the other side of that coin, I have had a lot of young people come to me, young college students, young people who are starting to think about what their futures are.

Invariably, they say, "Will our future be as good as yours was when you were in college, Senator HATCH?" And for the first time in the history of this country a lot of parents are starting to become depressed because they realize we can no longer say that their children will have as much opportunity to progress and have better lives than they had, like our parents were able to say to us.

These young people are not stupid. They know, taking Social Security, when it came into existence back in the forties, that there were about 46 workers for every person on Social Security. They are not stupid. They know that is now down to just a little more than three workers for every person on Social Security, and that our senior citizens are living longer and growing in number. They know that we are going to that ratio reduced to probably two persons working for everybody on Social Security.

Yet, what kind of a nation would we be if we did not take care of those who

have worked so hard to build the Nation and who now cannot work, who are senior and who need to be cared for and helped, and who deserve to be helped because of their paying into the system all their lives?

It does not escape these young people that their future is going to be very limited because the cost of Social Security, of course, with COLA's, keeps going up, and the work base keeps going down. They also know that complicating it all is a profligate Federal Government, a profligate Congress. Year after year, Congress after Congress, has no real incentives to get spending under control.

I know Members of this body who are liberal, with whom I have served for the whole 19 years I have been here, who in that whole 19 years have never asked the question: Where are the revenues going to come from to pay for these programs? They never once, never once have considered that an important question. They continue to ignore that unless we have a balanced budget amendment, which would help us to put our fiscal house in order, help to solidify the value of the dollar, and help the future of our children and our young men and women, we are going to have to face our fiscal irresponsibility.

I know some here who have never once said, "Where are we going to get the funds?" Would it not be better to support this amendment, rather than their favorite program, which is not as important, rather than to go into bankruptcy or to go toward a system where we ultimately monetize the debt, where the dollar becomes worthless, where inflation gallops, and where our senior citizens really are left high and dry, as well as our youth and their future?

This last election was about these issues. I may not have articulated them very well, but I have tried to show that our senior citizens are not stupid. They understand that we have to, sooner or later, live within our means or their Social Security and their retirements will not be worth very much.

Our young people are not dumb either. They know there is a diminishing work force and the whole burden of taking care of our senior citizens is going to be on their shoulders, and they want to do it. But will they want to in the year 2014 and 2020 if we do not get spending under control, and we keep loading them up with all kinds of other loads like we do?

Why, the committee I used to chair, the Labor and Human Resources Committee, has over 2,000 Federal programs, some of them very duplicative. There are 154 job training programs that this wonderful series of Congresses has enacted over the years to show that they are really empathetic and considerate of those who need job training. Many of those programs are duplicative, many of them overlap. We ought to have one major program for job training, and it ought to work.