

Senate. It provides that the President shall be able to rescind, or send back for review, any single line in an appropriations bill and send it back to the Congress and, by a majority vote of the House and Senate, both of which are required to vote, the House and Senate will make a determination upon the President's rescission or veto.

Second, I think that we would make a mistake if we pass a line-item veto and deal only with expenditures. Most of us understand that there are a couple of ways that Congress deals with spending and taxing and deficits. One is to determine the amount of money spent and the second is to determine what kind of a tax system is imposed to collect the revenues.

I believe very strongly that we also ought to include tax provisions in the line-item veto. The fact is, some come to the floor and propose tax expenditures, some propose direct expenditures, others propose tax concessions that result in effectively reducing the tax base and spending tax revenues we otherwise would have had. I think that also ought to be subject to a line-item veto.

A line-item veto bill that includes only spending but does not include tax concessions is, I think, a weak bill, one that says, let us do something, but let us not do enough; let us move part of the way, but let us not move all the way to exhibit some control and some responsibility.

So I really think that it will be a mistake if this Senate turns next to the line-item veto and decides the only vetoes by Presidents of lines in legislation that we are going to respond to will be appropriations and not tax provisions. I believe that line-item veto legislation should allow Presidents to single out individual lines in appropriations bills and individual provisions in tax legislation and force the Congress to own up to those expenditures and those tax concessions.

When we do that, if we do that, if we provide, in combination, in a line-item veto bill that covers both expenditures and tax expenditures, I think we will have served a useful purpose for the American people. I think we will have contributed to more responsible legislation, both in expenditures and also in our Tax Code.

Some would say, "Well, we would like a line-item veto that deals only with spending in appropriations bills and would require a two-thirds vote in both the House and the Senate to essentially overcome the Presidential veto."

I think, frankly, a majority vote in the House or the Senate is more appropriate. But I think it is even more important to pass legislation that includes, as I said, tax concessions or tax expenditures along with regular expenditures in the appropriations bill, as well.

We will have that debate, I think, at the end of the day. The American people will find that the Congress, both the House and the Senate, will support

a line-item veto. I expect a line-item veto bill to go to the President for signature this year, and I think it will advance the national interest by leading to more responsible legislation.

I do not think it will do very much about the Federal deficit. I wish it would. I wish I could oversell it like some do. But it will not. The only way we will get a handle on the Federal deficit, and we must, is if all Members, in a serious, honest way, decide to embark on the same journey together.

I was on the floor of the Senate yesterday expressing some surprise that those in the Senate who were the loudest about wanting to amend the Constitution to require a balanced budget were back, and they came back with their charts showing what the pollsters had recently told them.

The pollsters said—no surprise to me—that tax cuts are now popular. Poll the American people and say, "Would you like a tax cut?" They say, "Oh, yes; I would like a tax cut." That elicits a pretty predictable answer. We had charts all over the back of the Chamber showing the results of the latest polls. The American people support tax cuts.

Well, that is not a revelation to me. But it is interesting to me that those same people who said that we have a responsibility to balance the budget, and they wanted to change the Constitution to require it be done, are now saying that the next step they want to take is to cut the Federal Government's revenue.

I think our next step is an obvious one to everybody, conservatives and liberals alike: We must cut Federal spending, and we must use the money to cut the Federal deficit. When we have done that job, and only then, when we have completed that work, then we can talk about tax cuts.

But to suggest when we have the kind of Federal deficit we have and an accumulated \$4.7 trillion Federal debt, that our next step is to do the popular thing, to be human weather vanes, to find out what people think and rush off to start cutting taxes might be popular, but frankly it is not right.

Everybody here in this Chamber who is serious about reducing this crippling budget deficit and putting this country back on the right course toward expansion, economic hope, and opportunity once again ought to join hands and say, "Our job now is to cut spending, use the savings to cut the deficit, and resolve this crippling deficit and debt issue for this country. When we have completed that job, then our task, in unison, in a bipartisan way, is to find out how we can relieve the tax burden on middle-income families." But let Members not put the cart before the horse, even if it may be popular to do so.

Mr. President, having spoken a bit about the constitutional amendment to balance the budget and the line-item veto and some thoughts about the most recent popular proposals in tax cuts, I do want to say that what we have had,

is a troubling series of years in American politics recently in which we have fractured the spirit of cooperation. When I say "we," I think everybody in this country has been involved in that in one way or the other.

The fact is, our country is involved in tough-spirited international economic competition, the winners of which will see economies with expansion and opportunities, and the losers of which will suffer the British disease for a century—low economic growth, less opportunities, less expansion.

I think the American people expect of Members, and I think will demand of all Members of all political persuasions, that we understand that we play on the same team; we represent the same interests and ought to fight for the same goals.

No one in this Chamber can believe that our current fiscal policy helps this country. Our current fiscal policy of spending more money than we have, consistently, is one that weakens our country. We must join together, whether it be through a line-item veto approach or through budget initiatives that should come by the middle of the next month, to begin correcting this country's fiscal policy problems in a serious and honest way.

I pledge, as one Member of this side of the aisle, to be as constructive as I can in marching toward those solutions, hopefully, in a bipartisan way.

Mr. President, I yield the floor.

I suggest the absence of a quorum.

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Mr. ASHCROFT). The clerk will call the roll.

The assistant legislative clerk proceeded to call the roll.

Mr. BINGAMAN. 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. BINGAMAN. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that I be allowed to speak as if in morning business for up to 15 minutes.

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

ABOLISHING THE DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION

Mr. BINGAMAN. Mr. President, in recent days three of the announced candidates for President on the Republican side have announced their intention and commitment to eliminate the Federal Department of Education if they are elected. In my view, Mr. President, that is a sad commentary on the priorities that some of those in leadership positions have in this country today.

I remember when President Reagan ran in 1980, part of his platform was to eliminate the Federal Department of Education. I thought the suggestion was misguided at that time. I strongly believe that it is even more misguided here in 1995. This is the last decade of

the 20th century, the information age, and yet there are those who are falling over themselves trying to take education off the national agenda.

This retreat from leadership in perhaps the most critical area of our national interest—education—is clearly wrongheaded. Overwhelmingly, Americans tell pollsters that education is one of their major concerns. Over 80 percent of Americans say they support a Federal Department of Education. And it is not surprising that they do. Americans recognize that education is central to the strength of our Nation, especially as information becomes the most valuable currency in the world.

When "A Nation At Risk," the report issued by former Secretary of Education under President Reagan, Terrel Bell, appeared in 1983 it commented on the poor state of American education by observing, "If an unfriendly foreign power had imposed our schools upon us, we would have regarded it as an act of war."

The analogy to national security was appropriate then, and I believe it is still appropriate. Our security, whether you define it in economic terms or in military terms, is absolutely dependent upon the quality of the education that we provide to our children and to our citizens.

How can we have a national interest in agriculture but not in our children? How can we talk about our industrial strength and not talk about the education of our work force? We do not question the Department of Defense, but what about the know-how that our people need to staff that Department?

Still, as we approach this new century, there are those who say that education is purely a State and local matter; let us get the Federal Government out of it; let us eliminate the Secretary of Education, get that person out of the President's Cabinet.

Mr. President, I have seen in the last few years the proposed elevation of the EPA to Cabinet status, which I have supported. The Department of Veterans Affairs we now have in the Cabinet; clearly, I support that. That is an important priority for the country.

I now read in the paper that we are going to have the CIA in the President's Cabinet. That also may be an appropriate thing to do. But to suggest that we should have each of those individuals in the Cabinet next to our President to set national policy but not have a Secretary of Education there to speak up for the future of our children is, I think, misguided.

Clearly, there is a priority here which we should not dissipate among various and sundry departments and agencies around the Federal Government. We need a central focus for leadership in education in this country. The Secretary of Education fulfills that role.

What is that role? Ask the 7 million students who attend colleges and universities thanks to loans and grants provided through Department of Education programs. The Department sup-

plies 75 percent of all post-secondary student aid, continuing a national commitment dating back to the GI bill.

Or ask the 6 million disadvantaged students who each year receive help through Federal programs to meet higher academic standards. Ask their parents. Ask their teachers. Scores on the National Assessment of Educational Progress, the national test administered by the States and the Department of Education, show that the gap between the achievement scores of white and black students has decreased by about 40 percent since 1975. The narrowing of that gap coincides with the very significant Federal investment in K-12 education for the disadvantaged.

The combination of the Federal investment in these students plus leadership from the department which has sought for several years, from Secretary Bell through our current Secretary, Secretary Riley, to encourage high standards for all students in our schools—that combination is bringing about more equality of educational results and improved results for all of our students.

Ask the teachers and the administrators in the States about the value of Department of Education's work. Its research and dissemination of the results of that research are immensely helpful to local schools and districts. Now that schools are coming on line and becoming technologically more sophisticated, teachers can access information about the newest techniques, materials, and research, straight from their own desks or their own faculty rooms and obtain that information to a large extent through the Department of Education.

Ask American business whether they want national leadership to improve education in this country. I have heard business leaders in my State say over and over again that there is an unbreakable link between our Nation's economic competitiveness and the quality of our educational system. Our global competitors are doing a better job in many cases of preparing their young people for this new technologically rich and information-laden future than we are. We obviously need national leadership to help States provide their students with what it takes to compete in this new world.

As we go into the next century we face numerous challenges. We will have a growing population of young people as we hit the echo from the baby boom. We will continue to have many young immigrants. Many of the children I am speaking about will be born into poverty. They will speak languages other than English. Technology will continue to change the way that people work and the way people learn. The increased demands of a global economy will make it imperative that we provide high standards to our children and assessments to measure their progress toward meeting those standards.

States want and deserve Federal help and Federal leadership to meet these challenges.

I am especially aware of the need for strong Federal leadership in the area of technology for education. Only through leadership at the national level can we have a coordinated effort to bring the benefits of telecommunication and the computer revolution to all our schools and all our students.

States are struggling with these issues. They welcome the help and expertise the Department of Education has been able to bring.

I just went through a campaign this fall. I traveled all over my State of New Mexico. I talked to many thousands of people. I heard lots of complaints about the Congress, complaints about the Federal Government, and about State government, and about local government, and many other things people found objectionable. But I did not hear the voters saying they wanted less attention to education, less funding for education, less of a Federal role or less priority given to that important area. I heard quite the opposite. The American public sees education as having been neglected at all levels of government.

As I have traveled around New Mexico during the last several years—not just in the last campaign—I have asked folks at town hall meetings to express their opinions as to how much of our Federal budget they believe is committed to improving education. Usually people in the audience guess somewhere in the 10 to 15 percent range. Mr. President, they would guess that 10 to 15 percent of our Federal budget is probably committed to education. When I tell them that less than 2 percent of our Federal resources each year goes to support education at the national level, it is something of a surprise and a disappointment to a lot of the people in my State.

If some want to walk away from the Federal responsibility for education they certainly have that option, but I believe taking education off our national agenda and taking the Secretary of Education out of the President's Cabinet, will be sending exactly the wrong signal not only to the people of this country but throughout the world. That is the wrong message.

Our future lies with our young people. I know that is a cliché but it is the truth. A Federal Department of Education can help us prepare our young people for that future. It is the right priority for this country as we approach this new century. I hope very much we will retain the Department of Education for a very long time.

Mr. President, I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Arizona.

THE LINE-ITEM VETO

Mr. McCAIN. Mr. President, I want to make a couple of brief comments about the line-item veto, and what the