

world, where they can produce cheap and sell here. What has that meant? It has meant a choking trade deficit for America, and lower wages for American workers. We ought not put up with it.

We fought for 50 years on the question of what is a livable wage. We have minimum wages in this country. We have worker safety standards. We have laws against child labor. You cannot hire 12-year-olds and pay 12 cents an hour and work them 12 hours a day. Those are successes in this country, that we have prohibited those kinds of things. Yet, all too often, we are choking on a trade deficit caused by producers who produce in circumstances where they could not produce in this country, and then ship their product here.

What it is doing is drying up economic opportunities for American citizens, and it ought to stop. We ought to say to every one of those countries, China especially—we have a \$30 billion trade deficit with China—it is unthinkable we allow that to continue. We have a \$65 billion trade deficit with Japan. We cannot get American products into Japan in any significant quantity, but we are a sponge for Japanese products. We buy all this material from China and when they want to buy wheat, they are off price shopping in Canada someplace.

The fact is, this country ought to start standing up for its own economic interests and start doing it soon. This trade policy is completely out of whack. It is hurting American families.

I am not suggesting isolationism or building walls around our country. But I am saying that America ought to stop getting kicked around with unfair trade practices. If our market is open to other countries' products, then their markets ought to be open to ours. If we will not allow the employment of 12-year-old kids at 12 cents an hour, we ought not to allow products from countries that do, to come to the American marketplace to undercut American jobs.

It is that simple. I have been on the floor almost weekly since the first of this year, and yearly in my time in Congress, to talk about this. One day, one way, we will change these policies and start standing up for the economic interests of this country—not just corporate profits, but also wages for American families.

THE LINE-ITEM VETO

Mr. DORGAN. Mr. President, let me turn to another subject. I talked about the fiscal policy, the budget deficit, when I began. It is a serious problem. I have voted for many ways to try to address the budget deficit.

I headed a task force in the House on Government waste. I have worked on a waste task force here in the Senate. I have cast dozens of votes to cut spending. I just voted for a rescissions bill to try to cut Federal spending.

I did not cast a vote for the proposal that eventually went down by one vote here in the U.S. Senate on a constitutional amendment to balance the budget. I did vote for a constitutional amendment to balance the budget. We had two of them. One was the right one and one of them was the wrong one. The one that was the main proposal would have taken \$1.3 trillion in Social Security trust funds over many, many years and used it to balance the budget. I happen to think that is thievery. I happen to think that is taking things under dishonest pretenses, because it is taking money that comes from a paycheck and is promised to go into a Social Security trust fund to be saved for the future. Then they say, "I know we say that, but we want to use that money instead to balance the budget." That is dishonest budgeting, and I would not vote for that.

But one element of dealing with the Federal budget deficit is an issue called the line-item veto. It, by itself, will not solve the deficit problem, but it will help with respect to those spending proposals that have never been the subject of hearings are stuck in bills that come through here. So I support a line-item veto and I have, for a dozen or 15 votes over the years, voted for a line-item veto.

One of the things I think is interesting about the line-item veto issue is this. The House of Representatives passed a line-item veto in February. We in the Senate passed a line-item veto in March. It is now the end of July and we have no line-item veto. Why? Because there has been no conference committee appointed to resolve the differences between the House and the Senate versions.

Why has there not been a conference appointed? The Contract With America included the line-item veto as one of their major elements. I supported it. I have always supported it. I think it makes sense.

But it is interesting to me that the Speaker of the House of Representatives has recently said that he does not think they are going to get around to the line-item veto this year. He wanted to talk about a line-item veto, he wanted to push a line-item veto, so he had a vote on a line-item veto in February. But he did not want a line-item veto to pass because he did not want a Democratic President to have a line-item veto.

I supported line-item vetoes when a Republican was in the White House because I do not think it matters who is President. A Republican President should have had a line-item veto when the Congress was Democratic and a Democratic President ought to have a line-item veto when the Congress is controlled by Republicans.

The other day I held up a little report from a newspaper that said, "Gingrich Gets \$200 Million in New Pork," just as an example. The question is, are the people who talked about a line-item veto more interested

in producing pork or are they more interested in producing a line-item veto? I think the evidence is starting to suggest the former.

It is very simple for us to move on the line-item veto. If the Speaker of the House is unable, at this point, to understand how one gets to a conference, I have some step-by-step instructions.

First, think of the names of some U.S. House Members. Probably some of your friends.

Second, pick a few. That is not rocket science. Think of some names of your friends; pick a few.

Third, send the list to the House floor for action.

Let us have a conference and bring a line-item veto back to the floor of the House and the Senate and get it voted on, get it to the President, so before these appropriations bills come down to the President this year and before the reconciliation bill is sent to the President this year, this President has a line-item veto. If we are serious about the Federal deficit, let us deal with the issue called the line-item veto.

It is one thing to talk about it. It is another thing to do something about it. I see that the Speaker has indicated that maybe he will not be able to get to the line-item veto this year. The chairman of the House Appropriations Committee said yesterday it looks like they are not real anxious to move on that. It seems to me it is now time for us to ask the question: If you are serious about a line-item veto, this is the time to bring a line-item veto to conference, to the Senate and the House, and make it law, give it to this President, and let us use that to seriously reduce the Federal deficit.

Both Republicans and Democrats have a stake in fiscal policy that advances the economic interests of this country. That means reducing the Federal deficit and no longer including projects that have not previously been authorized in appropriations bills.

I support a line-item veto because it is the tool that is best equipped to stop that sort of practice, to save money, and reduce the Federal budget deficit.

I do hope in the coming days that we will discover that those who were so interested in the line-item veto early in this year continue to retain an interest in giving this President the line-item veto this year, the sooner the better.

Mr. President, how much time remains?

The PRESIDING OFFICER. About 4 minutes remains.

MEDICARE

Mr. DORGAN. Mr. President, we are nearing, now, the 30th anniversary of Medicare, in another week or so. Recently we have been discussing on the floor of the Senate, at great length, a range of Government policies that have been failures, and there are plenty. We have done a lot wrong and we need to