The most egregious example of that was what happened with the sugar program. Let us first understand what the sugar program is in this country. It is basically a ripoff of the consumers of America to the tune of $1.4 billion every year. It is the last vestiges of a Marxist economic system in, probably, the world. Well, maybe they still have it in Cuba, a Marxist economic system. But the last real strong vestiges of it is right here in the United States in our sugar program.

What does the sugar program do? It basically, arbitrarily, without any relationship to the market forces of the economy, fixes the price of sugar at a price which is 50 percent higher—30 to 50 percent higher than what sugar should cost Americans. In the open market today you can buy sugar at 10 cents. Under our system of farm subsidy and price control, we pay 22 cents, 23 cents. This is an outrage, but it is a cartel in this country that has a grip on the economics of the issue of sugar and, unfortunately, on this Congress, because it uses vehicles like the reconciliation bill to abuse the process.

So, in this reconciliation bill there was not a 1-year, not 2-year, but a 7-year extension of this outrage, of this program which is the ultimate example of the former East European market approach to economics. It was extended because these folks were able to slip this in. And the irony of it, of course, is that it was put in by people who on most days are the greatest supporters of capitalism, and some of the strongest supporters of conservative thought on this floor. They slipped it in here, for whatever reasons I cannot imagine, because they could not justify it, I am sure, under any intellectual basis. But it got slipped in here for the purposes of raiding the pocketbooks of Americans, for the purposes of benefiting a very small group of people.

The GAO did a study of this and 17 farms—17 cane farmers in this country get 58 percent of the benefit, 58 percent of the benefit. That is a huge amount of dollars on a $1.4 billion subsidy. That is a huge amount of dollars to one small group of individuals in this country who happen to have the capacity to have put their idea into this reconciliation.

Now, there are many of us on our side—on both sides of the aisle, this is a bipartisan outrage at this—who find this to be an inexcusable event, who think the idea that an attempt to balance the budget should have in it a plan which essentially affronts the sensibilities of everything that Adam Smith ever stood for, and that the market economy ever stood for, that capitalism ever stood for, that our country's basic economic structure stands for—that that program should be in this bill is not only ironic, it is an outrage. However, due to the rules of this Senate, we were not able to remove it from this bill. But we all understand this bill, unfortunately, because it has a huge amount of good in it, unfortunately it will end up vetoed. It will come back to us.

I want to put folks on notice. When it comes back, in whatever form it comes back, this sugar debate is not going to be allowed to be shoved into the back corner. This sugar debate is going to be out there, it is going to be on the front burner. Because the American people can no longer be subject to this outrage of having $1.4 billion transferred out of their pockets into the pockets of a few cane growers and a few processors, simply because somebody used the parliamentary rules around here to protect a program that is absolutely indefensible under any other circumstances.

So, this issue shall be revisited when this bill is revisited and it shall be revisited with much more intensity than the last go-around. Because of the fact it was necessary, because of the overriding strength of this bill in the area of getting under control entitlement spending generally, on such things as Medicare, Medicaid, and welfare, and the overriding desire to address that, we had to unfortunately—we ended up, unfortunately, being gamed on the issue of sugar.

But in the next go-around, I simply put people on notice that game will be joined with much more intensity because the consumers of this country do not deserve to have to pay $1.4 billion simply because a bunch of cane growers want to make money.

I yield the floor.

Mr. EXON addressed the Chair.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Nebraska.

THE BUDGET CRISIS

Mr. EXON. Mr. President, we are having a rather unusual Saturday session today for the very obvious and specific reason that, indeed, the Government of the United States and the United States is in a crisis situation today because of the failure of the legislative and executive branches—regardless of their political affiliations and political attitudes—meaning simply that we have to come to some kind of an agreement, some kind of an understanding, some kind of a lowering of the testing of wills with regard to a compromise that can be reached at this time to at least establish the basis or the framework to get on with the more important and more difficult task down the road, and coming to an agreement to balance the budget as quickly as we can. But I think we should keep this all in perspective.

I would simply say, Mr. President, that heated rhetoric, charges, and countercharges of what this Senator will do or what that Senator will do, the pretense of standing up for what is right above everything else, of what I think is right regardless of what my colleagues on this side of the aisle and my colleagues on the other side of the aisle think might be a workable solution, a solution to the crisis that faces the United States today and toning down our rhetoric, toning down our demands, toning down our individual wills, is the only mixture that is going to provide a measure of success in the future that none of us individually might be totally satisfied with, but one that gets this Government moving and allows democracy to function as it has successfully functioned for many, many years.

THE SUGAR PROGRAM

Mr. EXON. Mr. President, I was absolutely astonished at the remarks made by my colleague from New Hampshire a few moments ago, when, if I heard him correctly, he said that the sugar program of the United States was Marxist in nature. I will with some restraint tone down my rhetoric on that, except to say that the Senator from New Hampshire is wrong.

Coming on the floor of the U.S. Senate at a time when very delicate negotiations are going on and assailing one part of the agricultural bill—in this instance, the sugar program—I think is not helpful. It is not constructive. It is not good Government, especially in that it would further impair the delicate negotiations that are now ongoing.

Let me speak a little bit about the sugar program. If we would follow the recommendations, as I understand it, that were just made on the Senate floor by the Senator from New Hampshire, we would in effect be eliminating the production of sugar in the United States of America for all time to come. The sugar program does not cost the taxpayers anything. It is true that it does prop up prices to a very reasonable level so that we can continue to have such a fundamental ingredient as sugar as a part of the American production system.

If we would follow the recommendations, as I understand them, from the Senator from New Hampshire, we would, in effect, eliminate the sugar program in the United States of America. All of our industries that rely on sugar as a key ingredient of our diet would go down the tube, and the United States of America would be totally reliant on imported sugar for as far as we can see into the future.

I would simply say to my colleague from New Hampshire that maybe we should follow that same program with regard to milk production. I do not know how much sugar production there is in New Hampshire, but there is a great deal of milk production. There is both sugar and milk production in my State of Nebraska. I would simply say that, if we are going to destroy the sugar program, it would only follow that we would destroy the milk program. If we are to logically follow the recommendations by the Senator from New Hampshire, I do not know what the milk producers in New Hampshire