full text of two letters I referred to in my statement earlier.

There being no objection, the letters were ordered to be printed in the RECORD, as follows:

JANUARY 3, 1996.

DEAR ELECTED REPRESENTATIVE: I'm writing to speak out for furloughed federal employees and working federal employees who are not being paid. I happen to be one of those directed to work without pay. Since I came to work for the federal government in 1977 federal employees have taken the brunt of budget cuts and have been reviled by Presidents and Congress. Our salaries have fallen far behind the private sector. It is proposed that our pensions be further cut and even those of us who had careers covered under Social Security before coming to the government have had our future Social Security benefits cut in half. However, this budget battle is the final outrage against federal employees. What private company could order their employees to work, but not pay them? Ironically, the federal government would be on their doorstep immediately. I can't even file for unemployment benefits since I have been directed to work, and am doing so without pay.

Most of us live from paycheck to paycheck. We cannot survive without being paid. I am a single parent, struggling to pay rent, a car payment and keep food in the house so I haven't been able to save part of my salary.

If I am not paid on January 16, 1996, I will be evicted. My landlord isn't interested in the reason he doesn't receive his rent. He just demands it be paid on the 1st day of each month. I will also lose my car if this continues and my credit will be ruined. It may be already.

We were given a letter to send to our creditors asking for forbearance. Do you really believe that the banks, insurance companies and Corporate America care why our bills are not being paid. NO—THEY DO NOT!

Isn't this the United States of America? Isn't our government supposed to be by the people and for the people? Federal employees are also people. We pay taxes. We vote. We are part of the people referred to in the Bill of Rights and the Constitution. I would have never believed this could happen in this country. We are being deprived of our basic human rights because we happen to be federal employees. My mind almost refuses to accept that this is happening to me, but the realities of unpaid bills and basic needs not being met jerk me back into the real world that I must live in—unknown to you!

I have related my personal situation to you but please remember that it is also representative of the situation of about 700,000 citizens of this country who have given daily of themselves to serve this country.

I am frustrated, fearful, resentful and very angry over the situation I have been placed in by you. Regardless of your political allegiance or your personal position on the national budget issues, you have severely and wrongfully damaged my life forever. The harm done to this point is irreversible and the damage irreparable. Please wake up and stop this nightmare.

Sincerely,

——— ———.

JANUARY 3, 1996.

DEAR CONGRESSMAN, I am an employee of Social Security. As you may be aware, as a field office employee, I am excepted from furlough which means I am working now with no pay. The check I received yesterday was for ½ salary (through 12/15/95). My mortgage is due and this ½ does not cover the mortgage. What is worse is that I have 2 small children. I must continue to pay a baby sitter to keep them after school while I go to work with no pay.

The end result is that we do not have money for anything except utilities. My children wanted to know this morning why they had left over Christmas turkey and dressing in their lunch boxes instead of their usual chips and sandwiches. It is because these, the chips and sandwich are now ''non-essential'' items in our household and because you all can not see fit to work the budget out—they must suffer. If you have a better explanation that I can give a 5 yr. old and 8 year old—please let me know. This is beginning to HURT! My children do not understand and neither do I. Please work this out—Soon!! Before I have to explain to them why we have no heat—

Sincerely,

——— ———.

Mr. FORD. Mr. President, we hear a lot about ''all the President has to do is sign the bills.'' If you put things in the bills that are not acceptable, then you ought not to expect it to be signed. That is trying to put the President in a position where he cannot sign it. All we have to do is pass a clean CR and put Government back to work.

The Senate has done that. The Democrats in the House are ready. There is only one group, one element that is saying to my people down there: ''We do not care whether you pay the mortgage, whether you pay your utilities, whether you buy food''—things of that nature. We think we ought to get with those people and say to them, let us get on with the running of the Government. We can balance the budget.

Mr. President, I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Mr. GREGG). The Senator from Oklahoma.

ACCOMMODATIONS ON THE APPROPRIATIONS BILLS

Mr. NICKLES. Mr. President, it is with interest I listened to some of our colleagues talk about the Government shutting down, and I also note yesterday, when the President had a press conference, he said the congressional Republicans shut down the Government. At least he said Congress shut down Government. He mentioned several examples.

Several of the examples that have been mentioned, both on the floor and by the President and by other people, some of the horror stories of individuals who have lost their jobs, who are not being paid, are in agencies for which the President vetoed the appropriation bill. One agency that has received as much attention as any other is Interior, the appropriation bill that is covered by Interior, dealing with national parks and the museums.

The Washington Post has run some front-page articles talking about the museums not being open, the Smithsonian shut down, national parks being shut down, not having access for individuals wanting to have their vacations and go to the parks, not being able to get in because the Government shut it down and, as the President said, Congress shut it down.

I just happen to be aware of the fact the President vetoed the Interior bill. The President is the one who shut down the parks. The President is the one who did not make it possible for the parks to be opened. If he had signed the bill, those people would have been paid. They would not have been furloughed. The parks would be open. The Smithsonian would be open. Those people would have had coverage. There would be no disruption.

I just make that point. It is interesting that everything is Congress' fault. The President vetoed the Interior bill. I think that is unfortunate.

I used to manage that bill. Now Senator GORTON is managing that bill, and I think he has done a very good job. I looked at the veto message dealing with Interior. There are different reasons why the President vetoed the bill. These are very poor excuses for vetoing a bill. I have urged others, and I hope maybe, I will tell my friends and colleagues, maybe within a very short period of time we will have another Interior bill on the floor. I hope that is the case. I hope it happens today.

Mr. WARNER. Mr. President, if the Senator will yield, the House of Representatives is going to take up a veto override today on that. I was over there earlier this morning.

Mr. NICKLES. I appreciate that. The veto override may not happen. I hope it does. That is one way we could get the employees back to work immediately.

If that does not happen, I hope we will take the original Interior bill as it passed through both Houses and maybe make some changes. I am looking at the President's veto message on Interior. Most of these changes could be made with very little dollars involved and maybe some better understanding.

We had the Presiding Officer, a moment ago, who is from Alaska—part of it was dealing with Tongass. There is a misunderstanding on what would happen in the Tongass. Some people were saying the Interior bill as passed would open up a lot of additional clear cutting. I do not think that is the case. We can clarify that, and we should clarify it.

I am looking through some of the other things that were mentioned. I ask unanimous consent to have the President's veto message printed in the RECORD.

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

(See exhibit 1.)

Mr. NICKLES. But these are minuscule problems. This is no reason to shut down the Interior Department, national parks, Forest Service and so on, and everything else that is covered by this bill, Indian Health Services—you name it.

So, let us try to accommodate. Let us make a couple of concessions. Let us work to resolve some of the problems that are raised in here. It can be done with very few dollars and open up the Interior Department, open up the national parks, open up the Smithsonian, open up the national museums. There is no reason not to. The President should not have vetoed the bill in the

first place, but the President is responsible for those parks being closed.

Yesterday, or the day before, there was an article in the Post talking about somebody having a concession service adjacent to a park and now they had to let their employees go. Those employees, incidentally, will not be covered by the bill once it passes. They will not be paid. They are not Federal employees; they are contractors. And if they are not contracting with the Federal Government, if they just happen to be doing business adjacent to the Federal Government operation, they are out of luck.

Again, I fault President Clinton in this case. I think he made a mistake in vetoing the bill. But for him to say Congress is the reason why those agencies are shut down is not the case, and that is not the case in Interior.

It is not the case in other agencies as well. A lot of us are very concerned about the Veterans' Department being closed. I agree with my colleagues from Maryland and other places saying if you have a physician or if you have a nurse or if you have somebody working in a veterans hospital, that person ought to be paid. It does not make a lot of sense not to pay them.

Why are they not being paid? The appropriation bill was not signed. We passed the appropriation bill, we funded the Veterans' Department, the President vetoed the bill.

Why did he veto the bill? I have a copy of his veto message. I ask unanimous consent to have it printed in the RECORD at the conclusion of my remarks.

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

(See exhibit 2.)

Mr. NICKLES. But we should take care of veterans and people who are working in veterans hospitals. They should be paid. They should not be furloughed. And we can solve that problem. I am hopeful before very long we will pass the VA–HUD bill, and let us look at the President's veto message and see if some accommodations can and could and should be made in that area.

But let no one misunderstand. The President vetoed the bill that funds the Veterans' Department. It was on his desk. If he would have signed that bill, those individuals would not have been furloughed. They would not have been working without pay. So we need to get past this maybe rhetorical war and who is at fault. The President vetoed several of these bills.

One of the other things that maybe concerns me where Congress is largely at fault is dealing with the agency called Labor, Health and Human Services, and Education—actually three different agencies. We have heard some people talk about how some people are impacted. This Senate has not passed that appropriations bill. It is the only appropriations bill we have not passed. You might say, ''Why hasn't it?'' We are supposed to pass that bill before the end of September. We have not passed it.

Unfortunately, there has been a filibuster on even a motion to proceed to that bill. I have been around here a long time. I cannot remember an appropriations bill where Members filibustered the motion to proceed. We usually have fought out our differences—win, lose, or draw—on all appropriations bills. Somebody said it has riders on it. All appropriations have riders on how are we going to spend money. This bill is no different than any other bill. It had some riders. It says the administration will not spend money on a variety of different things. That is part of Congress' legislative responsibility. But we have not even been able to vote on the Labor-HHS bill. That is unfortunate.

I hear today and read in the paper about scare tactics—that it is terrible; we are not able to take care of the Bureau of Labor Statistics or Meals on Wheels. It is because, unfortunately, many Democrats will not allow us to bring that bill up and vote on it. I hope maybe we can get that resolved because that bill needs to pass. We need to vote. We need to find out where the votes are. Some people are objecting to us even considering the bill.

Looking at several of the bills the President has vetoed, Interior, which I alluded to before. If you add Interior, 76,000 employees are impacted. The Forest Service is funded at 38,000 under that bill. Indian Health is at 15,000, for a total of 133,800 employees who are impacted because the President vetoed the Interior bill. That was not Congress' veto. It was the President's veto.

Again, I reiterate my statement about my offer to work with people. I think we ought to make some changes—minor changes—and pass the Interior bill.

Mr. SARBANES. Mr. President, will the Senator yield on that point?

Mr. NICKLES. I am happy to yield.

Mr. SARBANES. I welcome this attitude that we need to try to work out the differences. That is how I think you legislate.

The fact is, though, that when President Reagan and President Bush vetoed appropriations bills, until we worked out the differences we passed the continuing resolutions to allow the Government to continue to function. We then considered seriously the basis upon which the President had vetoed the legislation and tried to work out an accommodation so that an appropriations bill could be passed by the Congress to which the President could give his consent.

So the veto by the President of legislation because it contains provisions with which he disagrees is a standard practice.

What has happened in the past is either we could work that out, or we have provided a continuing resolution in the meantime while we tried to work it out. That has not been done in this instance. I do say to the Senator that I think that his suggestion that we ought to look at the basis of the veto message and see what accommodations can be made between the two branches in terms of passing another bill, my understanding is the other side simply wants to send the same bill back which I would not regard as a constructive action.

I assume from the Senator's comments that he would not regard it as a positive or constructive action in the circumstance either.

Mr. NICKLES. Mr. President, to respond to my colleague, I really see no reason that the President vetoed the Interior bill and put people out of work. My point is that for the President to say, ''Well, this is Congress' fault these people are not working,'' I just disagree. I think he bears direct responsibility in vetoing the Interior bill which is impacting the lives of 133,000 employees, and also for his actions in vetoing Commerce, State, Justice, as well as VA–HUD.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator's time has expired.

Mr. NICKLES. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent for an additional 3 minutes.

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

Mr. NICKLES. In looking at VA–HUD, and if we are not able to break this impasse soon, I tell my colleague from Maryland that it is my hope that we will take up—maybe we cannot pass—the HUD bill. Maybe there is a dispute. But we ought to be able to pass the veterans bill. My guess is we could pass that very quickly and maybe some additional things.

I worked with the Senator MIKULSKI. I was on that Appropriations Committee. I cannot help but think we could fund most areas in that bill. I have a copy of that veto message. I think we should be able to fund people working for the Veterans' Department, and hopefully we will be able to break that logjam. We should do it today, or certainly before the end of this week.

In looking at Commerce, State, Justice, the Justice portion of it I have heard some people allude to the fact, well, we are going to have problems with prisons; we are going to have problems with clerks; and so on. Hopefully we will pass the Justice portion of it. I notice there is a dispute in Commerce. Maybe we could leave that one set aside, or other areas.

My point is that the President vetoed that bill. That bill has impacted 194,000 employees. We passed that bill. The President could have signed the bill and then said, well, he sends a rescission, or he could have requested a supplemental appropriations. That has happened as well. The President did not do that.

I think the President's pollster was whispering in his ear saying, ''This is looking good if you stand up to Congress and veto some bills. We will reenact Harry Truman, and say the heck with Congress.'' Unfortunately, that

has put thousands of people into a furlough situation, or thousands of people into working without pay.

The President vetoed those bills. He could have signed those bills and then worked out a budget agreement. He could have signed those bills and then requested a supplemental appropriation, if he did not think we were spending enough money in some areas. If he thought we were spending too much money in other areas, he could have sent a rescissions package. But instead he was in a veto mood, and he vetoed these bills having an impact on hundreds of thousands of people, all of which he is trying to give Congress full credit for.

Mr. FORD. Mr. President, will the Senator yield for a question?

Mr. NICKLES. No. I am almost out of time.

So the President is directly responsible for putting hundreds of thousands of people—I will submit this for the RECORD as well—who were impacted because he vetoed the bills. That was his right to do so. But for him to come back and say that was all Congress' fault I think was incorrect.

Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent to have printed in the RECORD this chart.

There being no objection, the material was ordered to the printed in the RECORD, as follows:

THE BALL'S IN THE PRESIDENT'S COURT

The following bills have been vetoed by the President. These three vetoes have adversely affected more than 620,000 employees, as follows:

Commerce, Justice, State, Judiciary:	
Justice	102,000
Commerce	25,000
Judiciary	28,000
State	25,000
SBA	5,800
USIA	8,000
Total	194,000
Interior:	
Interior	76,000
Indian Health	15,500
Forest	38,000
Energy	2,300
Miscellaneous	2,000
Total	133,800
VA–HUD:	
NASA	20,000
National Science Foundation	2,000
Veterans	240,000
HUD	11,000
EPA/miscellaneous	20,000
Total	293,000
Overall total	620,900

Source: House Appropriations Committee.

EXHIBIT 1

To the House of Representatives:

I am returning herewith without my approval H.R. 1977, the ''Department of the Interior and Related Agencies Appropriations Act, 1996.''

This bill is unacceptable because it would unduly restrict our ability to protect America's natural resources and cultural heritage, promote the technology we need for long-term energy conservation and economic growth, and provide adequate health, educational, and other services to Native Americans.

First, the bill makes wrong-headed choices with regard to the management and preservation of some of our most precious assets. In the Tongass National Forest in Alaska, it would allow harmful clear-cutting, require the sale of timber at unsustainable levels, and dictate the use of an outdated forest plan for the next 2 fiscal years.

In the Columbia River basin in the Pacific Northwest, the bill would impede implementation of our comprehensive plan for managing public lands—the Columbia River Basin Ecosystem Management Project. It would do this by prohibiting publication of a final Environmental Impact Statement or Record of Decision and requiring the exclusion of information on fisheries and watersheds. The result: a potential return to legal gridlock on timber harvesting, grazing, mining, and other economically important activities.

And in the California desert, the bill undermines our designation of the Mojave National Preserve by cutting funding for the Preserve and shifting responsibility for its management from the National Park Service to the Bureau of Land Management. The Mojave is our newest national park and part of the 1994 California Desert Protection Act—the largest addition to our park system in the lower 48 States. It deserves our support.

Moreover, the bill would impose a misguided moratorium on future listings and critical habitat designations under the Endangered Species Act. And in the case of one endangered species, the marbled murrelet, it would eliminate the normal flexibility for both the Departments of the Interior and Agriculture to use new scientific information in managing our forests.

Second, the bill slashes funding for the Department of Energy's energy conservation programs. This is short-sighted and unwise. Investment in the technology of energy conservation is important for our Nation's long-term economic strength and environmental health. We should be doing all we can to maintain and sharpen our competitive edge, not back off.

Third, this bill fails to honor our historic obligations toward Native Americans. It provides inadequate funding for the Indian Health Service and our Indian Education programs. And the cuts targeted at key programs in the Bureau of Indian Affairs are crippling—including programs that support child welfare; adult vocational training; law enforcement and detention services; community fire protection; and general assistance to low-income Indian individuals and families.

Moreover, the bill would unfairly single our certain self-governance tribes in Washington State for punitive treatment. Specifically, it would penalize these tribes financially for using legal remedies in disputes with non-tribal owners of land within reservations.

Finally, the bill represents a dramatic departure from our commitment to support for the arts and the humanities. It cuts funding of the National Endowments for the Arts and Humanities so deeply as to jeopardize their capacity to keep providing the cultural, educational, and artistic programs that enrich America's communities large and small.

For these reasons and others my Administration has conveyed to the Congress in earlier communications, I cannot accept this bill. It does not reflect my priorities or the values of the American people. I urge the Congress to send me a bill that truly serves the interests of our Nation and our citizens.

William J. Clinton.

THE WHITE HOUSE, *December 18, 1995.*

EXHIBIT 2

To the House of Representatives

I am returning herewith without my approval H.R. 2099, the ''Departments of Veterans Affairs and Housing and Urban Development, and Independent Agencies Appropriations Act, 1996.''

H.R. 2099 would threaten public health and the environment, end programs that are helping communities help themselves, close the door on college for thousands of young people, and leave veterans seeking medical care with fewer treatment options.

The bill includes no funds for the highly successful National Service program. If such funding were eliminated, the bill would cost nearly 50,000 young Americans the opportunity to help their community, through AmeriCorps, to address vital local needs such as health care, crime prevention, and education while earning a monetary award to help them pursue additional education or training. I will not sign any version of this appropriations bill that does not restore funds for this vital program.

This bill includes a 22 percent cut in requested funding for the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA), including a 25 percent cut in enforcement that would cripple EPA efforts to enforce laws against polluters. Particularly objectionable are the bill's 25 percent cut in Superfund, which would continue to expose hundreds of thousands of citizens to dangerous chemicals and cuts, which would hamper efforts to train workers in hazardous waste cleanup.

In addition to serve funding cuts for EPA, the bill also includes legislative riders that were tacked onto the bill without any hearings or adequate public input, including one that would prevent EPA from exercising its authority under the Clean Water Act to prevent wetlands losses.

I am concerned about the bill's $762 million reduction to my request for funds that would go directly to States and needy cities for clean water and drinking water needs, such as assistance to clean up Boston Harbor. I also object to cuts the Congress has made in environmental technology, the climate change action plan, and other environmental programs.

The bill would reduce funding for the Council for Environmental Quality by more than half. Such a reduction would severely hamper the Council's ability to provide me with advice on environmental policy and carry out its responsibilities under the National Environmental Policy Act.

The bill provides no new funding for the Community Development Financial Institutions program, an important initiative for bringing credit and growth to communities long left behind.

While the bill provides spending authority for several important initiatives of the Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD), including Community Development Block Grants, homeless assistance and the sale of HUD-owned properties, it lacks funding for others. For example, the bill provides no funds to support economic development initiatives; it has insufficient funds for incremental rental vouchers; and it cuts nearly in half my request for tearing down the most severely distressed housing projects. Also, the bill contains harmful riders that would transfer HUD's Fair Housing activities to the Justice Department and eliminate Federal preferences in the section 8, tenant-based program.

The bill provides less than I requested for the medical care of this Nation's veterans. It includes significant restrictions on funding for the Secretary of Veterans Affairs that

appear designed to impede him from carrying out his duties as an advocate for veterans. Further, the bill does not provide necessary funding for VA hospital construction.

For these reasons and others my Administration has conveyed to the Congress in earlier communications, I cannot accept this bill. This bill does not reflect the values that Americans hold dear. I urge the Congress to send me an appropriations bill for these important priorities that truly serves the American people.

WILLIAM J. CLINTON.

THE WHITE HOUSE, *December 18, 1995.*

Mr. KENNEDY addressed the Chair.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Massachusetts.

THE GOVERNMENT SHUTDOWN CRISIS

Mr. KENNEDY. Mr. President, first of all I want to identify with what I think has been a very compelling case made by a variety of my colleagues here on the floor of the Senate, by the Senator from New Mexico, the Senator from Maryland, and the Senator from Kentucky, in describing in very human terms what is happening with real families impacted by the Government shutdown. And that same situation is happening in spades in my own State of Massachusetts. There are heartrending stories of families that in so many circumstances really are being devastated. The adverse impact on children continues. And it is very real. The prospects are of serious consequence, indeed. And that is a very important issue for the American people to dwell on, to be concerned about and also to bring their best judgment on the levels of power to try to remedy it.

The Government shutdown was remedied here in the U.S. Senate by the actions that were taken by Senator DOLE, and I think all of us want to take note of his leadership and understanding—that this charade of closing down the Government is nothing but a charade.

If our good friends, our Republican friends, the majority in the House and Senate, had met their responsibilities, these various appropriations bills would have been passed as has been done in other years. If they had been vetoed, these matters would have been worked out in the same way they have been historically—as has been described by the Senator from Maryland.

It is not a shutdown because even our Republican friends say they are going to pay all of these individuals eventually. So it is really not a shutdown. The taxpayers are going to pay these people.

Maybe they get some satisfaction, the Senator from Oklahoma and others, from the fact that the Americans are not going to be working now. They are not going to work, and, yet, our Republican friends say eventually they are going to be paid. And in the meantime, we have these human conditions and human tragedies that are taking place. The American people understand it. I think all of us are very hopeful that our Republican friends in the House are going to follow the leadership that has been provided in the Senate by Republicans and permit the opportunity for the services to be continued which are in so many instances essential for the well-being of our fellow citizens. And, I am hopeful that whatever differences exist can be worked out as has been part of the proud tradition of this country.

Mr. President, I wish to address an issue which is related to these negotiations which are taking place between the leadership, Republican and Democrat, and the President. It is one aspect of these negotiations which I think bears close attention by our colleagues here in the Congress and the Senate but most of all by our senior citizens and by working families in this country, because it is a matter that will have a very significant and important adverse impact on them if it is included in the budget proposal.

Like others, I have stated that we are for the balanced budget, but we do believe it has to meet the basic criteria of being fair and just to the American people. That means if there is going to be belt-tightening, it ought to be across the board and not be particularly burdensome to the neediest and most vulnerable, the children, disabled, the neediest families in our society. That means we ought to make sure whatever the final outcome is going to be, it will be fair and just for all Americans. It is on that issue that I address the Senate for these few remaining moments this morning.

LEGISLATING A CHANGE IN THE CPI

Mr. KENNEDY. As the President and the congressional leaders discuss ways to achieve a balanced budget, one idea should be rejected out of hand—legislating a change in the Consumer Price Index.

That kind of arbitrary action by Congress would break faith with the elderly and make a mockery of the commitment of both parties not to cut Social Security.

It would raise taxes on low-income working families qualifying for the earned income tax credit—and other working families as well.

It would lead to lower wage increases for millions of workers throughout the country at a time when one of the most serious challenges our society faces is the decline in the living standard for all but the wealthiest families.

Such a change would be harshly regressive in its impact. It would be unprecedented political meddling in what has always been an impartial, factual determination of the CPI.

Reducing the CPI would reduce cost of living adjustments for millions of Americans receiving Social Security benefits, military pensions, veterans' pensions, and civil service retirement. It would reduce the amount of Supplemental security income payments to the needy. Because of indexing of tax brackets, it would raise income taxes for most taxpayers—and reduce the earned income tax credit.

According to the Congressional Budget Office, a 1-percent decrease in the change in the CPI would reduce Government spending and increase Government revenues over the next 7 years, for a total deficit reduction of $281 billion. Some may see this large sum as a magic bullet to balance the budget and avoid other painful choices. But it is a bullet aimed at millions of Americans who need help the most, and who don't deserve this added pain. It makes no sense to fight hard to save Medicare—and then attack Social Security.

Legislating an arbitrary reduction in the CPI would clearly break the compact of Social Security. That compact says, ''work hard, play by the rules, contribute to the system, and, in return, you will be guaranteed retirement security when you are old.'' An essential part of that compact is a fair Social Security COLA, so that senior citizens can be sure that their hard-earned Social Security benefits will not be eaten away by inflation.

Overall, more than three-fourths of the lower spending under the change would come from cuts in Social Security alone. Nearly all the rest would come from other Federal retirement programs. It is the elderly who will pay heavily if Congress adopts this change.

Over the next 10 years, a 1-percent cut in the COLA would reduce the real value of the median income beneficiary's Social Security checks by $5,300. By the 10th year, the real purchasing value of that check would be 9 percent lower—making it even harder than it is today for senior citizens to stretch their limited incomes to pay the bills for housing, food, medical care, and other necessities.

Reducing the Social Security COLA is a direct attack on the retirement benefits that senior citizens have earned. If Congress is to respect family values, it has to value families, especially the millions of elderly families all across America.

Changing the CPI also affects the deficit by increasing taxes, because income tax brackets and the earned income tax credit are indexed to inflation. If tax brackets are not adjusted for inflation, taxes go up and the earned income tax credit goes down.

Failing to adjust tax brackets hits middle income families the hardest. For the wealthy, the change in the CPI would have a minimal impact. A family earning $100,000 would see its taxes rise by one-third of 1 percent of its income. But for families at lower income levels, the differences are far more significant. A family earning $36,000 would face a tax increase that, as a percent of income, would be more than four times as large. The hardest hit of all would be low-income working families who depend on the earned income tax credit. Twelve percent of the total tax increase—$13 billion—would be paid by these low-income hard-working families.