the term of the President who will be elected this fall.

So, while it does not represent a step forward on the part of the President, it also, one must confess, does not represent a step backward either. It consolidates the modest gains that were attained through five separate budget submissions on the part of the President for the current year. The overwhelmingly significant step forward, however, was the work by the National Governors Conference, which now unanimously has reached a detailed statement of principle on both Medicaid and welfare reform, one that has been agreed to by both Republican and Democrat Governors across the country, one that raises the very real possibility of breaking the budget deadlock in which we find ourselves at the present time. I cannot possibly be too laudatory of the tremendously difficult task that the Governors have undertaken and the great degree of success they have reached.

Madam President, we need a balanced budget for our children and for our grandchildren. We need reforms in Medicare and Medicaid for our seniors and for others who are less fortunate and cannot afford to pay for health care services themselves. We need welfare reform for all Americans for a more just and equitable system. And we need tax cuts for hard-working American families. All of these remain our goal. But two of the most difficult now are the beneficiaries of intervention on the part of the National Conference of Governors in such a way that the entire logjam may now possibly be broken and that, before the end of the current continuing resolution on March 15, there is the very real possibility of a wonderfully genuine move toward a budget that will lead to a very real balance by the year 2002 without gimmicks and without postponing all of the hard questions for 4 more years.

The final element in this equation was the report yesterday that the Medicare part A trust fund is going bankrupt much more rapidly than we had thought during our debate during the course of the last year. Instead of being in the black last year, it was in the red, 1 year earlier than was predicted just last April. That fact makes more urgent the reform of Medicare and the Medicare trust fund so that this trust fund will be there after the turn of the century for all of those over the age of 65 who depend on it. It causes to be even more modest in the long term the reforms in Medicare that were included in the Balanced Budget Act of 1995, regrettably vetoed by the President, and makes more urgent a set of reforms that will protect Medicare for our seniors in the future and will more equitably distribute the burden for paying for Medicare among all of our citizens—both those working and those retiring.

So, all in all, in spite of the President's refusal to recognize these new facts in this so-called budget document, I believe that this week represents real progress toward an honest balanced budget, a budget that will be good for all Americans, that will lessen the burden of debt on future generations and increase their opportunities, their jobs, and their income.

Madam President, I suggest the absence of a quorum.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will call the roll.

The assistant legislative clerk proceeded to call the roll.

Mr. GRASSLEY. Madam President, I ask unanimous consent that the order for the quorum call be rescinded.

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

Mr. GRASSLEY. Madam President, I ask unanimous consent to speak for 7 minutes as if in morning business.

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

(The remarks of Mr. GRASSLEY pertaining to the introduction of S. 1560 are located in today's RECORD under ''Statements on Introduced Bills and Joint Resolutions.'')

Mr. GRASSLEY. I yield the floor. Madam President, I suggest the absence of a quorum.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will call the roll.

The assistant legislative clerk proceeded to call the roll.

Mr. HELMS. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the order for the quorum call be rescinded.

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Mr. GORTON). Without objection, it is so ordered.

The Senator from North Carolina is recognized.

MR. HELMS. I thank the Chair.

(The remarks of Mr. HELMS pertaining to the introduction of S. 1562 are located in today's RECORD under ''Statements on Introduced Bills and Joint Resolutions.'')

Mr. HELMS. Mr. President, I suggest the absence of a quorum.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will call the roll.

The legislative clerk proceeded to call the roll.

Mr. DOLE. Madam President, I ask unanimous consent that the order for the quorum call be rescinded.

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Mrs. HUTCHISON. Without objection, it is so ordered.

AGRICULTURAL MARKET TRANSITION ACT OF 1996

The Senate continued with the consideration of the bill.

Mr. DOLE. Madam President, what I am going to do here is obtain the consent on the farm bill so that we maybe can vote on final passage tomorrow at 4:45. So let me start that consent.

Madam President, I ask unanimous consent that Senator CRAIG be recognized to modify amendment No. 3184 with permanent law provisions, and once that modification has been made, no amendments be in order to strike the permanent law modification during the pendency of S. 1541.

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

Mr. DOLE. Madam President, I further ask unanimous consent that all amendments in order to amendment No. 3184 as modified be limited to 30 minutes, to be equally divided in the usual form, and must be relevant to the subject matter contained in amendment No. 3184 or farm related.

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

Mr. DOLE. Madam President, I further ask unanimous consent that all amendments be offered in the first degree and not be subject to second degrees and offered on an alternating basis between the parties, and that the majority side be limited to 5 amendments, the minority side limited to 10 amendments.

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

Mr. DASCHLE. Reserving the right to object on that, just for clarification, I think the leader and I would encourage, if there is not a Senator on one side, that we would just go ahead and—the idea would be to alternate. We will leave it to the managers to make that determination.

Mr. DOLE. Right. That is the understanding of the chairman of the committee, Senator LUGAR, and I think Senator LEAHY. It is going to be a rather tight timeframe in any event. So we do not want to waste any time.

Madam President, I further ask unanimous consent with respect to the Santorum amendment concerning peanuts that there be 15 minutes under the control of Senator SANTORUM and 30 minutes under the control of Senator HEFLIN.

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

Mr. DOLE. Finally, Madam President, I ask unanimous consent that final passage occur on S. 1541, as amended, no later than 4:45 p.m., Wednesday, February 7, 1996.

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

UNANIMOUS CONSENT AGREEMENT—S. 1028

Mr. DOLE. Madam President, I also ask unanimous consent that not prior to April 15, but no later than May 3, the majority leader, after consultation with the Democratic leader, turn to the consideration of Calendar No. 205, S. 1028, the Health Insurance Reform Act of 1995.

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

Mr. DOLE. Further, Madam President, I ask unanimous consent that it not be in order to offer any amendment or motion relative to health care portability or similar to the text contained in S. 1028 prior to the execution of this agreement.

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

Mr. FAIRCLOTH. Madam President, I did not object to the unanimous-consent request. I have no problem with the Senate considering health care reform prior to the Memorial Day recess.

I do have concerns that this bill will raise the cost of health insurance for citizens of my state, particularly for individual health care insurance policies.

Additionally, I am skeptical that we can reform health care and lower costs in this country until we tackle medical malpractice reform, provide medical savings accounts for individuals, increase tax exemptions for the self employed, and provide other market oriented reforms that will increase competition and health carer lower costs. This bill has none of these provisions.

I look forward to working with the majority leader to address these concern when the Senate considers S. 1028.

MEASURE READ FOR THE FIRST TIME—S. 1561

Mr. DOLE. Madam President, I understand that S. 1561, introduced today by Senator HATCH, is at the desk. I ask for its first reading.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will read the bill for the first time.

The legislative clerk read as follows:

A bill (S. 1561) for the relief of the individuals whose employment at the White House Travel Office was terminated.

Mr. DOLE. Madam President, I now ask for its second reading and object to my own request on behalf of Senators on the other side of the aisle.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Objection is heard. The bill will be read on the next legislative day.

Mr. HATCH. Madam President, today I introduced a bill to address a grave miscarriage of justice—the wrongful investigation prosecution of Mr. Billy Dale and the other former White House Travel Office employees. Mr. Dale served his country at the pleasure of eight Presidents as the Director of the White House Travel Office. During his 32 years of service, Mr. Dale took on the thankless and often grueling task of ensuring that the national and international media were in a position to cover the movements of the President and thus report to the American and worldwide public.

As thanks for his numerous years of dedicated service, Mr. Dale was summarily discharged from his post on May 19, 1993, and was thereafter indicted and prosecuted for embezzlement. On December 1, 1995, after 2½ years of being investigated and haunted on a daily basis, Mr. Dale was tried before a jury of his peers and, in less than 2 hours, found not guilty of all charges.

The travesty in this situation is that Mr. Dale simply got caught in the political crossfire of a new administration. He had served eight Presidents, both Democratic and Republican, but found himself in a job that, apparently, was an impediment to the ambitious money-making schemes of the new President's friends. President Clinton certainly could have dismissed Mr. Dale without cause, but I believe the Clinton administration may have felt the need to justify its actions in firing Mr. Dale and the other White House Travel Office employees given the tremendous media interest in this dismissal. The reputations of Mr. Dale and his colleagues were discredited and ruined in the process.

I have a great deal of respect for the First Lady. But, on April 6, 1994, in response to questions about the White House Travel Office situation, Mrs. Clinton stated that she ''had no role in the decision to terminate the employees.'' (Responses of Hillary Rodham Clinton to the General Accounting Office, Apr. 6, 1994) Moreover, she ''did not direct any action be taken by anyone with regard to the Travel Office, other than expressing an interest in receiving information * * *''(Id.)

Unfortunately, these statements do not coincide with the evidence we have come to discover in recent months. In fact, it appears as though the First Lady was actively involved in the decision to fire the White House Travel Office employees. According to notes taken by David Watkins—the former Assistant to the President for Management and Administration who oversaw the workings of the Travel Office—during his conversation with the First Lady on May 14, 1993, 5 days before the Travel Office employees were dismissed, Mrs. Clinton articulated that ''Harry [Thomason] says his people can run things better, save money, etc. And besides we need those people out—we need our people in—we need the slots.'' (GAO report, The White House Travel Office, at 53–54)

Moreover, according to a recently released memorandum written by Mr. Watkins, ''[t]he First Family was anxious to have that situation [the White House Travel Office] immediately resolved, and the First Lady in particular was extremely upset with the delayed action in that case.'' (Draft memorandum from David Watkins, re: ''Response to Internal White House Travel Office Management Review,'' (undated) at 2.) Mr. Watkins also notes ''that there would be hell to pay if, * * * we failed to take swift and decisive action in conformity with the First Lady's wishes.'' (Id. at 1–2.) This memorandum was not released by the White House for more than 2 years despite subpoenas from Congress and Whitewater Independent Counsel Kenneth Starr.

In May 1993, the Travel Office employees were fired and told to vacate the premises. Needing to justify its actions before the employees were terminated, the White House met with and urged the FBI to investigate the White House Travel Office using allegations concocted by Catherine Cornelius, President Clinton's cousin who desperately wanted to replace Mr. Dale in running the White House Travel Office. Indeed, the FBI helped craft the White House's press release about the firings. Peat Marwick was hired to do an audit of the Office, but its own report did not substantiate the allegations asserted by the White House. Modest financial irregularities are not the same as embezzlement.

This story would be tragic enough if it ended here, but it does not. The Department of Justice indicted Mr. Dale, seemingly without concern for their lack of evidence. This is best demonstrated by the fact that the citizens sitting on the jury, who heard the evidence, exonerated Mr. Dale in less than 2 hours. This inappropriate use of the Federal criminal justice system created a situation for Mr. Dale where he had to expend $500,000 and even considered taking a plea when he had committed no crime.

After the jury summarily dismissed the allegations, someone leaked the existence of the plea negotiations to the public in an attempt to further discredit Mr. Dale's reputation. Not only are plea negotiations a necessary part of our judicial system, they are intended to remain confidential and are not to be used against a criminal defendant.

I cannot, in good conscience, sit quietly when I believe an arrogant abuse of power has occurred. The power of the White House was wielded to make victims of the inculpable. The targeting of dedicated public servants apparently because they held positions coveted by political profiteers demands an appropriate response. Although their muddied personal reputation may never be fully restored, it is only just that the Congress do what it can to rectify this wrong. Accordingly, I introduce this bill to make Mr. Dale and the other former White House Travel Office employees whole, at least financially, by providing for their attorneys fees and expenses.

MESSAGES FROM THE PRESIDENT

Messages from the President of the United States were communicated to the Senate by Mr. Thomas, one of his secretaries.

EXECUTIVE MESSAGES REFERRED

As in executive session the Presiding Officer laid before the Senate messages from the President of the United States submitting sundry nominations which were referred to the appropriate committees.

(The nominations received today are printed at the end of the Senate proceedings.)

REPORT CONCERNING WAIVER OF RESTRICTIONS RELATIVE TO THE CHINASAT PROJECT—MESSAGE FROM THE PRESIDENT—PM 114

The PRESIDING OFFICER laid before the Senate the following message