

explain briefly why I voted for this bill during the Senate's debate in March.

I have long believed that giving the President line-item veto authority will be helpful in imposing budget discipline. I think it will be helpful in preventing unworkable spending projects from being added to spending bills without public notice, debate, or hearings. I have voted for the line-item veto three times in the past three Congresses. So I am delighted that the Senate finally had a chance to vote on the conference report.

LINE-ITEM VETO SEES THE LIGHT OF DAY

I was especially pleased, Mr. President, because I had been in some suspense as to whether the line-item veto bill would emerge at all from the Senate's conference with the House. It was on March 23, 1995 that the Senate passed our line-item veto bill. The House took so long that I had to offer an amendment to urge the Speaker to agree to the Senate's invitation to a conference. When the House passed its bill, the budget debates slowed down the conference. There were weeks when I questioned whether we would be able to send the line-item veto to the President at all.

Once the line-item veto did emerge from conference, a full year after the Senate passed its version, I could not help wondering whether the timing was an attempt by the majority to avoid giving President Clinton the line-item veto this year. The veto law will take effect only in January 1997, long after this Congress should complete its budget work. Since I voted to give Presidents Reagan and Bush the line-item veto, I regret that President Clinton will gain the line-item veto power only after this year's heavy legislative lifting is done.

Having gotten my disappointment about the bill's timing off my chest, Mr. President, let me go on to discuss my views on the conference report.

LINE-ITEM VETO A SENSIBLE REFORM

Let there be no mistake about the line-item veto. It is a historic budget reform. It would enable the President to veto spending projects. That power is important because Congress has a bad habit of spending money on projects that we have not reviewed in committee hearings or permitted in authorization bills.

The line-item veto law would also enable vetoes of new entitlement spending and targeted tax benefits. This is crucial because entitlements are the fastest-growing portion of the Federal budget. Lastly, the bill also contains a provision requiring that savings achieved by the line-item veto be devoted solely to deficit reduction. Presidents will use the line-item veto only to save money.

So, Mr. President, I am pleased that we have achieved this bipartisan budget reform. Fully 43 Governors have the line-item veto, which suggests to me that it is a power that the President can safely wield.

The bill will help the President control spending abuses, especially unau-

thorized projects in appropriations bills. The line-item veto seemed to me to be a sensible reform. That is why I voted for it, and why I am pleased it is now the law of the land.●

NATIONAL ASSOCIATION OF RETIRED FEDERAL EMPLOYEES WEEK

● Mr. THOMPSON. Mr. President, on February 1 of this year, the Governor of Tennessee, the Honorable Don Sundquist, signed a proclamation stating that this past week, April 17-22, 1995, would be known in Tennessee as National Association of Retired Federal Employees Week.

Last week, on April 19, also marked the first anniversary of the bombing of the Federal building in Oklahoma City. A number of members from the Tennessee chapter to the National Association of Retired Federal Employees faithfully volunteered their time and energy to help the victims and the community in Oklahoma following this tragic event. This spirit of contribution continues to distinguish civil servants, retired and employed.

It gives me great pleasure at this time to request the unanimous consent of my colleagues to have printed in the RECORD a proclamation by the Governor of my State of Tennessee, the Honorable Don Sundquist.

A PROCLAMATION BY THE GOVERNOR OF THE STATE OF TENNESSEE

Whereas, the United States Civil Service Act of 1883 was signed into law by then President Chester A. Arthur, thereby creating the United States Civil Service System; and

Whereas, the United States Civil Service Retirement System was created in 1920 and signed into law by then President Woodrow Wilson; and

Whereas, virtually every state, county, and municipal civil service system has developed from the Civil Service Act; and

Whereas, untold thousands of United States Civil Service employees have worked diligently, patriotically, silently, and with little notice to uphold the highest traditions and ideas of our country; and

Whereas, thousands of Federal employees are retired in Tennessee and continue to devote inestimable time and effort toward the betterment of our communities and state;

Now therefore, I, Don Sundquist, Governor of the State of Tennessee, do hereby proclaim the week of April 14-20, 1996, as National Association of Federal Employees Week in Tennessee and do urge all our citizens to join in this worthy observance.●

RETIREMENT OF DR. ROBERT A. ALOST

● Mr. JOHNSTON. Mr. President, I rise today to pay tribute to an outstanding Louisianian, my good friend, Dr. Robert A. Alost, who has announced his retirement as president of Northwestern State University after a long and distinguished career of service to NSU, the city of Natchitoches, and the State of Louisiana.

During his 10-year presidency at NSU, Northwestern has been transformed from a regional university to

an institution of statewide prominence. Dr. Alost's tireless efforts to widen and enrich the educational experience of his school have strengthened every aspect of the institution. Student enrollment has increased by over 71 percent and the average ACT score is up, the school's academic curriculum has expanded by leaps and bounds, and its financial status has never been stronger.

While this progress merits commendation, Dr. Alost is even more deserving of recognition because he considers his accomplishments as simply part of his service to his alma mater, to a school he loves, and to a faculty and student body he considers his family. There are three words which come to mind when describing Robert Alost: service, leadership, and innovation. I know that countless other Louisianians would agree with this assessment, for his personal and professional history truly exemplify each of these qualities.

Dr. Alost's dedication to Northwestern State University is rooted in his own experience as a student at NSU, where he received his undergraduate degree in 1957 and a masters degree in 1958. After receiving a doctoral degree from Louisiana State University in 1963, Dr. Alost had a wide range of aspirations, and of all the opportunities available to him, he decided to dedicate his career to the advancement of Northwestern State University. He has risen from a young faculty member to its president, and has left a lasting legacy which will be appreciated for generations.

Under Dr. Alost's watch, the expansion of NSU's research and academic programs have placed it at the forefront of several innovative programs in higher education. Northwestern became America's first university selected to participate in the Joint Venture [JOVE] Program with the NASA Marshall Space Flight Center. The results of this project, involving the analysis of data collected in space exploration, will have unlimited applications. Young people from across the United States will benefit from this cutting-edge program, and NSU's new space science curriculum and summer camp program will help support America's future scientists. Dr. Alost oversaw the development of the Louisiana Scholars College, which was designated by the State Board of Regents as the State's selective-admission college of the liberal arts and has elevated NSU's reputation to statewide prominence.

Dr. Alost has overseen many other noteworthy additions to NSU. Northwestern began a program in intercollegiate debate which won the 1994 Cross Examination Debate Association National Championship and has been the top program in the country over the past 5 years. Dr. Alost supervised the establishment of a doctoral program in educational technology to instruct educators on the most effective methods of using technology in the classroom. Northwestern is working with