

reach. Let's put this into real dollars. An average family in the State of Georgia—and this would equate pretty much across the country—makes about \$40,000. So it makes it a lot more clear what our goal is. If we were going to adopt as a principle that we need to return to the worker at least two-thirds of the fruits of their labor to manage his or her family, that means that the goal for the U.S. Congress is to return or let them keep \$8,000 more a year. That is a pretty significant undertaking. But if we set out to accomplish that, we will do enormous good.

If we can figure out how to leave another 20 percent of that paycheck in their checking account to be talked about at their kitchen table, we will see many, many positive results. We will see larger savings. We will see new companies forming because there is capital to invest in them. The job lines will be shorter. Interest payments will be less. The family will have an opportunity to make sound judgments about educating their families. They won't have as high a consumer debt on their credit cards because they will have their own cash in their accounts. The list just goes on and on.

I want to reiterate, what do all these numbers mean? They mean that for an average family in America, the Government is taking \$8,000 out of their checking account that it really can't rationally claim and that is doing severe damage to these families—severe damage. They can't prepare for the future, for education, or retirement, or a health crisis. There is nothing left. They can barely get through the ABC's of running that family. There is no margin. You can't pick up a newspaper without reading about the distress in middle America. This is what causes it. We are choking the resources necessary for them to make healthy decisions about running their families.

Madam President, I hope that more and more Members of Congress will just write a very simple goal on their ledger: Let's go to work and fight to ensure that an American worker can keep two-thirds of what he or she makes. Let's resolve that the fact that they keep less than half today is unconscionable. If we could line up our forefathers here and they could see what we have done to the fruits of labor, they would be stunned and they would admonish us all.

Now is the time, in this 105th Congress, to start turning that around and leaving those resources in the checking accounts of American families.

Madam President, I see that the hour of noon has arrived. I yield the floor and 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. WELLSTONE. Madam President, I ask unanimous consent that the order for the quorum call be rescinded.

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

THE BILLINGS MONTANA STORY: "NOT IN THIS TOWN"

Mr. BAUCUS. Madam President, I rise today to tell my colleagues about some events that took place in Billings, MT, a few years ago. It is the story of a town whose citizens decided that hatred and bigotry were not welcome in their community.

The people of Billings enjoy the high quality of life that only Montana can provide. The magic city is the largest city in Montana, but it still has the feel of a small town. Folks still say hi to each other on the street. Families go to the symphony in Pioneer Park during the summer. And neighbors still go out of their way to help someone when they need a hand.

That placid life was shattered in November 1993, when a group of skinheads threw a bottle through the glass door of a Jewish home. A few days later they put a brick through the window of another Jewish home—with a 5-year-old boy in the room. Then they smashed the windows of a Catholic high school that had a Happy Hanukkah sign on its marquee.

The events frightened and repulsed the citizens of Billings. They were shocked to find that hatred and violence had penetrated their peaceful community.

But the people of Billings did not allow this outside menace to take root. The community banded together. Thousands of people put menorahs in their homes. They showed the skinheads that they were united against hate. And that year, Billings held the largest Martin Luther King Day march ever in Montana. The skinheads left town. Billings showed that hatred can be overcome.

Madam President, the people of Billings didn't ask to be recognized. They just did what came naturally. Recently, the USA network has decided that the Billings story was worth telling to the world. With all the bad news out there these days, it is refreshing to know that someone wants to tell a positive story. The people of Billings can be a shining example to the rest of our country; Montana will not tolerate hatred in any way, shape, or form.

I commend the USA network and—most important—the people of Billings, for their efforts in making this country a more tolerant place for us all.

CONCLUSION OF MORNING BUSINESS

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Morning business is closed.

NUCLEAR WASTE POLICY ACT AMENDMENTS

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Under the previous order, the Senate will now resume consideration of S. 104, which the clerk will report.

The assistant legislative clerk read as follows:

A bill (S. 104) to amend the Nuclear Waste Policy Act of 1982.

The Senate resumed consideration of the bill.

Pending:

Murkowski amendment No. 26, in the nature of a substitute.

Reid (for Wellstone) amendment No. 29 amendment No. 26), to ensure that emergency response personnel in all jurisdictions on primary and alternative shipping routes have received training and have been determined to meet standards set by the Secretary before shipments of spend nuclear fuel and high-level nuclear waste.

Reid (for Wellstone) amendment No. 30 (to amendment No. 26), to express the sense of the Senate regarding Federal assistance for elderly and disabled legal immigrants.

Lott (for Domenici) amendment No. 42, (to amendment No. 26), to provide that no points of order, which require 60 votes in order to adopt a motion to waive such point of order, shall be considered to be waived during the consideration of a joint resolution under section 401 of this Act.

Lott (for Murkowski) amendment No. 43 (to amendment No. 42), to establish the level of annual fee for each civilian nuclear power reactor.

Mr. WELLSTONE. Madam President, I wonder whether I might, before I ask unanimous consent that the pending amendment be set aside and the Senate now consider amendment No. 29—I am actually waiting for my colleague Senator MURKOWSKI from Alaska, under courtesy—I wonder whether I might ask unanimous consent that I be able to speak for 3 or 4 minutes on another matter without this counting against my time.

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

Mr. WELLSTONE. I thank the Chair.

Madam President, I shall be brief and then go on with the amendment as soon as my colleague is here.

WELFARE ASSISTANCE FOR LEGAL IMMIGRANTS

Mr. WELLSTONE. Madam President, I wanted to call the attention of my colleagues and the people in the country to what I think is an important gathering here in the Nation's Capital.

It is a gathering which focuses on the elimination of assistance for legal immigrants. The sponsors of this gathering have done over the years a great deal of work with the Soviet Jewry, and I guess we can now say Russia and other republics. And, of course, they are concerned about legal immigrants—Jews that have come from Russia or the other new republics, many of whom are elderly, many of whom have meager resources, and many of whom now as a result of action taken last Congress in the welfare bill will be without supplementary security income assistance and will be without food nutrition assistance.

What is important about this gathering, this rally, that is now taking place is that the sponsors have made it very clear that they don't want to focus just on Jews who have come to our country or who have fled persecution, but really on legal immigrants across the

board from many different nations. The message of this rally, I think, is that we are a nation of proud immigrants. We are talking about many of our parents and many of our grandparents. In my case we are talking about my father who fled persecution from Russia. It really is shameful what we did, which I think was an overreach, which I hope we will rectify this Congress—I think we must—which is that we eliminated assistance to many people. As Mayor Giuliani said, by definition people who are receiving supplementary security income assistance or food nutrition assistance because they are so low income and poor really need this help. So what we are now faced with is a situation in our country where over 500,000 legal immigrants are going to be cut off supplementary security income and over 1 million are going to be cut off from any food stamp assistance. In the State of Minnesota about 35,000 legal immigrants are going to be cut off SSI and about 15,000 off food stamps.

This rally is the first of many gatherings. I think we are going to see it all across the country, and it is going to be a combination of people who are scared to death. They are elderly, they are disabled, they can't work, and really all of the assistance is going to be cut off. The question is, What happens to them? The religious community is involved. Our county organizations are involved. Mayors are involved. Many Governors are now getting involved.

I want to say to colleagues that as a matter of what is right, as a matter of elementary justice, as a matter of compassion, as a matter of considering our own tradition, our own roots, our own heritage, we have to restore this funding. It is simply unconscionable. It really is shameful what we did last Congress. I hope that we will make this a huge priority when we go forward with our budget. Otherwise, we are going to see a lot of vulnerable people who came to our country, who have worked, who have paid their taxes, who were legal immigrants, who maybe have an income total of \$525 a month, and they are going to see almost all of that assistance eliminated. The question becomes, What happens to these people? That is the question I have for my colleagues. What happens to these people? Are we willing to be so generous with the suffering of others? I don't think we can just insulate ourselves here and act as if this isn't happening around the country.

People have now received letters that have notified them that they are going to be cut off; that this assistance which has been a lifeline of assistance is going to be eliminated.

I will tell you something. In my adult life—and this is not an exaggeration—I don't think I have ever seen people so frightened. I have never met with a group of citizens nor have I have ever met with a group of people who are more frightened. I have never seen such fear in the faces of people. I can-

not believe that we don't have enough goodness inside of us, enough compassion here to really fix this problem, change the course, and make sure that we provide some assistance to many people in our country who deserve our assistance.

NUCLEAR WASTE POLICY ACT AMENDMENTS

The Senate continued with the consideration of the bill.

Mr. WELLSTONE. I am going to for a moment, until the Senator from Alaska comes, suggest the absence of a quorum because the Senator is not here. In order to have debate, it is important that he be here, and I do not want to go forward with an amendment and not give him an opportunity to respond. So for a brief period of time, I suggest the absence of a quorum.

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Mr. HAGEL). The clerk will call the roll.

The legislative clerk proceeded to call the roll.

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

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

Mr. WELLSTONE. I thank the Chair. I welcome my colleague, Senator MURKOWSKI from Alaska.

AMENDMENT NO. 29 TO AMENDMENT NO. 26

Mr. WELLSTONE. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the pending amendment be set aside and that the Senate now consider amendment No. 29. My understanding is that we have an hour on this amendment to be equally divided.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. That is correct. Is there objection? Without objection, it is so ordered.

The clerk will report.

The legislative clerk read as follows:

The Senator from Nevada (Mr. REID) for Mr. WELLSTONE proposes an amendment numbered 29 to amendment No. 26.

Mr. WELLSTONE. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that reading of the amendment be dispensed with.

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

The amendment is as follows:

On page 22 of the substitute, line 5, after "(3)(B)" insert the Secretary has made a determination that personnel in all State, local, and tribal jurisdictions on primary and alternative shipping routes have met acceptable standards of training for emergency responses to accidents involving spent nuclear fuel and high-level nuclear waste, as established by the Secretary, and".

Mr. WELLSTONE. Mr. President, let me start out by giving some context to this amendment. I feel strongly that the Federal Government should live up to its obligation to take possession of nuclear waste. That is my framework. I am with this amendment not operating outside of that framework.

I also add that Minnesotans and other customers of nuclear power have been paying into a nuclear waste fund over the years, and the reason was and

the understanding is that the Federal Government would make this commitment and live up to this commitment. That part of this legislation, that premise, I fully support.

Mr. President, I have been concerned in the past—and still am although I don't have an amendment today that deals with this—about what happens when the Federal Government actually takes title under this bill because I do think that over the years you are going to have a huge taxpayer liability. So while I want the Federal Government to be responsible and live up to its national commitment to do something about it, I worry about the transfer of over 10,000 years all of a sudden to the taxpayers. The GAO has estimated that the taxpayers' future burden could be about \$77 billion. This is assuming a 100-year program. But we are talking about a program of nuclear waste that is over thousands of years.

Mr. President, concerns about this legislation. First of all, the legislation still attempts to skirt some of the requirements of the National Environmental Policy Act. There is a reason for that piece of legislation, and I do think, when you are talking about the transport of highly radioactive nuclear waste material, this is a time, if there ever was a time, when you want to have full environmental review, when you want to be absolutely certain that you are talking about the transportation of this kind of material taking into full account the health and safety and protection of families all across the country.

My esteemed colleagues from Nevada have discussed some of the risks and problems associated with transporting highly radioactive nuclear waste in their struggle against this bill. They also feel that Nevada has been unfairly singled out, and I respect them for that. My framework is a little different. But I do want to point out there are going to be some 16,000 shipments on our highways and our railways over the coming years. We are talking about some significant distance traveled. There are legitimate concerns that people have about the transportation of this highly radioactive nuclear waste material; people are going to be concerned about it, and in addition there is some debate about whether or not the containers themselves are safe.

We already transport hazardous materials, but I want to argue there is a significant difference when we are talking about nuclear waste material, especially highly radioactive nuclear waste. Consider it this way. If you have an accident involving nuclear waste as opposed to many hazardous wastes, you can have a dramatically different outcome. Radiation, without doubt, kills people, and it is a different scale we are talking about. God forbid—worst case scenario—we have an accident. We have to do everything we can to guard against that accident. We could be talking about something catastrophic. We cannot afford to have such an accident in our country which results in