

billion, four hundred seventy-seven million.)

Ten years ago, April 28, 1987, the Federal debt stood at \$2,265,888,000,000. (Two trillion, two hundred sixty-five billion, eight hundred eighty-eight million.)

Fifteen years ago, April 28, 1982, the Federal debt stood at \$1,062,161,000,000. (One trillion, sixty-two billion, one hundred sixty-one million.)

Twenty-five years ago, April 28, 1972, the Federal debt stood at \$425,304,000,000 (four hundred twenty-five billion, three hundred four million), which reflects a debt increase of nearly \$5 trillion—\$4,921,821,099,434.10 (four trillion, nine hundred twenty-one billion, eight hundred twenty-one million, ninety-nine thousand, four hundred thirty-four dollars and ten cents), during the past 25 years.

#### EXECUTIVE AND OTHER COMMUNICATIONS

The following communications were laid before the Senate, together with accompanying papers, reports, and documents, which were referred as indicated:

EC-1757. A communication from the Vice Chairman of the Federal Election Commission, transmitting, pursuant to law, proposed regulations governing recordkeeping and reporting by political committees; to the Committee on Rules and Administration.

EC-1758. A communication from the Assistant Attorney General, Office of Justice Programs, transmitting, pursuant to law, a rule entitled "Grants Program to Indian Tribes" received on April 24, 1997; to the Committee on Indian Affairs.

EC-1759. A communication from the Acting Inspector General of the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency, transmitting, pursuant to law, the annual Superfund report for fiscal year 1996; to the Committee on Environment and Public Works.

EC-1760. A communication from the Under Secretary of Defense, transmitting, pursuant to law, the report of a violation of the Antideficiency Act, case number 96-07; to the Committee on Appropriations.

EC-1761. A communication from the Director of the Office of Management and Budget, Executive Office of the President, transmitting, pursuant to law, the cumulative report on rescissions deferrals dated April 1, 1997; referred jointly, pursuant to the order of January 30, 1975, as modified by the order of April 11, 1986, to the Committee on the Budget, to the Committee on Appropriations, to the Committee on Agriculture, Nutrition, and Forestry, to the Committee on Armed Services, to the Committee on Energy and Natural Resources, to the Committee on Banking, Housing, and Urban Affairs, to the Committee on the Judiciary, and to the Committee on Governmental Affairs.

EC-1762. A communication from the Assistant Secretary of State (Legislative Affairs), transmitting, pursuant to law, the report of the certification of a proposed issuance of an export license; to the Committee on Foreign Relations.

EC-1763. A communication from the Secretary of Defense, transmitting, a draft of proposed legislation to establish a small business loan program; to the Committee on Veterans' Affairs.

EC-1764. A communication from the Director of the Office of Regulations Management, Department of Veterans' Affairs, transmit-

ting, pursuant to law, a rule entitled "Compensation for Certain Undiagnosed Illnesses" (RIN2900-A177) received on April 28, 1997; to the Committee on Veterans' Affairs.

#### INTRODUCTION OF BILLS AND JOINT RESOLUTIONS

The following bills and joint resolutions were introduced, read the first and second time by unanimous consent, and referred as indicated:

By Ms. SNOWE:

S. 662. A bill to authorize the Secretary of Transportation to issue a certificate of documentation with appropriate endorsement for employment in the coastwise trade for the vessel VORTICE; to the Committee on Commerce, Science, and Transportation.

By Mr. KERREY:

S. 663. A bill to enhance taxpayer value in auctions conducted by the Federal Communications Commission; to the Committee on Commerce, Science, and Transportation.

By Mr. KENNEDY (for himself, Mrs. MURRAY, Ms. MIKULSKI, Mr. LEVIN, Mr. CLELAND, Mr. INOUE, Mr. GLENN, Mr. DODD, Mr. WELLSTONE, Mr. KERRY, Mr. SARBANES, Mr. DASCHLE, and Mr. REID):

S. 664. A bill to establish tutoring assistance programs to help children learn to read well; to the Committee on Labor and Human Resources.

By Mr. KERREY:

S. 665. A bill to monitor the progress of the Telecommunications Act of 1996; to the Committee on Commerce, Science, and Transportation.

By Mr. LAUTENBERG:

S. 666. A bill to amend title 18, United States Code, with respect to States that do not give full faith and credit to the protective orders of other States; to the Committee on the Judiciary.

#### STATEMENTS ON INTRODUCED BILLS AND JOINT RESOLUTIONS

By Mr. KERREY:

S. 663. A bill to enhance taxpayer value in auctions conducted by the Federal Communications Commission; to the Committee on Commerce, Science, and Transportation.

##### THE RESERVE PRICE ACT

Mr. KERREY. Mr. President, for most Americans a buck doesn't go very far. A dollar will not buy a cup of coffee at Starbucks, it will not buy a comic book at the 7-11, it will not buy a package of batteries at the True Value store, or even a gallon of gas at the Amoco station. But, at the FCC, a buck will buy a radio license to serve the city of St. Louis.

On Friday, the FCC completed an auction of radio spectrum which should cause every American taxpayer to be concerned. This action yielded less than 1 percent of the amount anticipated. Rather than raising \$1.8 billion as the Congress had expected, the FCC brought in only \$13.6 million.

Perhaps worse of all, several licenses were awarded to bidders for the incredible sum of \$1. That's well below the bargain basement. Mike Mills of the Washington Post aptly observed that a sign should be put in front of the FCC auction headquarters advertising "everything for a buck." One bidder won

four licenses at a dollar a piece. Those licenses combined would allow services to reach 15 million people. Another bidder won the right to serve St. Louis, one of the largest cities in America for \$1. It is as if we had returned to the days of license lotteries. That's one heck of a way to stretch a dollar.

Radio spectrum is a national asset. It must be prudently managed. The taxpayers count on the Federal Communications Commission to allocate spectrum among and between various uses to assure that the public interest is served and to assure that those uses do not interfere with each other.

In 1993, the Congress enacted legislation which revolutionized the way radio frequencies are allocated. After years of debate, the Congress took the step to authorize the Federal Communications Commission to use auctions to allocate licenses for radio spectrum. It was built on the premise that investors would pay for the right to offer new wireless communications services.

Prior to 1993, licenses were awarded by lottery or by a comparative application process. In both cases, license winners would often sell their licenses soon after acquiring them to others for substantial sums.

To cut out the middle man and give taxpayers a return from the valuable rights they were awarding, the Congress ordered the FCC to conduct auctions to award radio spectrum licenses.

In general, this approach has worked very well. It has proven to be an efficient means of allocating scarce resources and it has reaped billions of dollars of deficit reduction for the American taxpayer.

Unfortunately, something went wrong in this last auction. One problem was that the auction rules did not establish a minimum bid or a reserve price. That's how some lucky bidders won valuable licenses for a buck.

Mr. President, I offer legislation today which will help ensure that taxpayers are protected in future FCC auctions. The importance of this legislation is heightened by the increasing congressional reliance on spectrum auctions in telecommunications and budget policy. The President's budget alone relies on \$36 billion of revenues from spectrum auctions.

The Reserve Price Act requires the FCC to set a minimum price for each unit auctioned. If no one bids the minimum, then what is not sold will be re-evaluated and placed in the next scheduled auction. With a reserve price system, taxpayers will be guaranteed that national assets are not sold for a song.

The Chairman of the FCC reportedly said that the reason for the disappointing return from Friday's auction was the "the Congress got to greedy" with spectrum revenues. Perhaps, this auction was rushed. But with reserve prices, even a rushed auction would not have to be a disastrous auction.

I urge my colleagues to review and support the Reserve Price Act. The American taxpayer deserves as much.