

back to their districts to carry on the campaigns, but we squandered an opportunity here, an opportunity to lead, an opportunity to show that we truly care about families across America.

I yield the floor.

Several Senators addressed the Chair.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Missouri.

Mr. NICKLES. Mr. President, will the Senator yield to me for 30 seconds?

Mr. ASHCROFT. Without losing the floor, I would be happy to yield to the majority whip.

CHANGE OF VOTE

Mr. NICKLES. Mr. President, on roll-call No. 295, I voted yea. It was my intention to vote nay. Therefore, I ask unanimous consent that I be permitted to change my vote. This will in no way change the outcome of the vote.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Is there objection? The Chair hears none, and it is so ordered.

Mr. NICKLES. I thank my colleague from Missouri.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Missouri is recognized.

Mr. ASHCROFT. Mr. President, I thank the Chair.

THE WORST OF ALL OUTCOMES: CLINTON SPENDS THE SOCIAL SECURITY SURPLUS

Mr. ASHCROFT. Mr. President, I believe these are times in which anyone, anywhere would wish to live—times of boundless opportunity when distant horizons are brought near. Since the second year of Ronald Reagan's first term, America has seen her GDP climb every year but one. Our unemployment rate stands at a historic low. Poverty has dropped by more than ten percent. And our budget is in surplus for the first time in a generation.

For the first time since 1969, the federal government will run a surplus estimated to be \$70 billion. It is a surplus that could allow us to do so much for so many. We could free American families from a debilitating tax burden or help the forgotten middle class keep more of what they earn with tax relief.

Beyond meaningful tax relief, the surplus offers another great potential—ensuring the long-term solvency of the Social Security Trust Fund.

The surplus is an opportunity for us to honor our commitment to the men who scaled the cliffs at Normandy and the mothers who sent their son to defend America's freedom halfway around the world. It is, Mr. President, a once in a lifetime chance for us to make the paper IOUs in the Social Security Trust Fund real—to pay our debts and keep our word. We can use the surplus to do this.

Unfortunately, the President and his apologists on Capitol Hill have a different plan. It is an attack given to platitudes rather than principle, an approach long on meaningless rhetoric

and short on meaningful reform. It is a plan that calls for a return to the profligate spending of yesterday at the cost of a brighter tomorrow.

As I suggested last Monday on the Senate floor, since late September the President has submitted a series of requests to fund new "emergency" spending initiatives. And, because current law subjects discretionary spending to annual caps through FY 2002, this so-called "emergency" spending would increase the discretionary spending caps, decrease the budget surplus, and take money from the Social Security Trust Fund.

And what are the President's "emergency" spending requests? What are the eleventh hour developments that have made Social Security's solvency a low priority instead of a high one? The President is proposing that the equivalent of at least 24% of this year's surplus—\$14.4 billion to date—be spent on a Bosnia deployment that is now four years old, government computer repairs, increased embassy security and a variety of other initiatives.

Now, I will be the first to concede that many of the President's requests constitute real and important funding issues. But emergencies? Mr. President, the lives of our elderly are too important for half-truths and doublespeak.

Social Security should not be betrayed by emergencies that are conjured up and have been anticipated for quite some time. The definition of an emergency is not something that we have known about for 4 years or 2 years or something that we are really trying to get money to spend in the last fiscal year and not in this one.

In his January 1998 State of the Union address, President Clinton made the following statement: "What should we do with this projected surplus? I have a simple four word answer: Save Social Security first. . . . I propose that we reserve 100 percent of the surplus—that's every penny of any surplus—for Social Security."

And just 10 days ago, the President repeated his demand again (October 2, 1998). "I made it clear and I want to make it clear again. . . . We simply have to set aside every penny of it [the budget surplus], . . . to save Social Security first."

Unfortunately, Mr. President, you can't have it both ways. We can't hide from the truth. More to the point, you can't save Social Security by wasting the surplus on mislabeled emergencies or more big spending. Even as I speak here, the President and his aides are working to see that our seniors' Social Security checks either are shipped overseas or squandered on more bureaucrats in Washington, DC, with more spending programs proposed for money to be shipped overseas or bigger bureaucracies here in the nation's capital. Tragically it is what Chairman Greenspan warned us about just weeks ago. Referring to whether the surplus should be spent, saved, or returned to the taxpayers, Greenspan said, ". . . I

am also, however, aware of the pressures that will exist to spend it, and that in my judgment would be the worst of all outcomes."

Greenspan says, ". . . the pressures . . . to spend it . . . would be the worst of all outcomes."

Mr. President, if increased spending is labeled as "emergency" as an accounting gimmick in order to authorize us to spend the surplus, I will not be a party to it. Labeling the taxpayers' money "emergency" doesn't make it any less wasteful. Just because it is called emergency doesn't prevent it from adding government and adding bureaucracy. As was said by another, putting a sign on a pig and calling it a dog doesn't make the pig any less of a pig. And there is going to be plenty of pork in this "Mother of All Pigs," that is coming to the Senate for its approval by way of a proposal for spending.

For example, the Wall Street Journal this morning reported that Labor, Health and Human Services and Education account for the single largest part of the Omnibus bill in terms of add-ons sought by the Administration. The President wants a total of \$1.6 billion, including almost \$1.2 billion for his "class size" initiative and another \$182 million for a child care block grant.

Mr. President, all of this \$1.6 billion dollars in increased education spending is paid for from the Social Security Trust Fund. The President has not offered one dime in spending cuts to pay for his "priorities," which he has labeled as "emergencies."

What is equally as shocking is that the underlying Labor/HHS/Education appropriations bill is estimated to be about \$4 billion over its spending allocation even before accounting for the extra money sought by the Administration this weekend.

The President should explain to the voters that his pledge to "save every penny of any surplus" was untrue. His promise to "save Social Security first" was just a slogan—offered during his State of the Union with a wink and a nod, and broken days later.

Only days after first promising to save the surplus, he submitted a budget to Congress calling for \$150 billion in additional spending. And in the entire legislative year since the President made his pledge, he has done nothing to fix the Social Security problem—and far too much to fix the blame. He has wasted this entire year, just as he is proposing to waste our seniors' Social Security checks on overseas deployments and projects.

If the President truly meant what he said about Social Security, he would propose real fixes instead of empty promises. If the President truly meant what he said about saving the surplus, he would not be trying to spend the taxpayer's money under the camouflage of bogus "emergencies."

This whole notion of false "emergency" spending is a dangerous ploy. It