focus attention on our commitment—hopefully, our commitment—to veterans.

They were saying there is a whole set of issues that are really important to their lives. Some of them have to do with the ever-aging veteran's population and how we will deal with these needs. Some of them have to do with veterans, a third of the homeless population being veterans, which I think is just a national disgrace. Many of those veterans are struggling with substance abuse problems and they were saying: Where is the treatment for these veterans? But some of what they were saying was, even if you put aside some of these challenges and the flatline budget proposed by the President—and then they were looking at our budget resolution and what we have come up with—it doesn't even keep up with medical inflation.

The point was: We are worried about access to services. We are worried about much longer waits. We are worried about a lot of the staffs at medical centers having to work double shifts. We are worried about some of the facilities having to close. We are worried about not being able to get the care that we so desperately need and, I argue, so clearly deserve.

I just wanted to say, since I heard my colleague from Hawaii speak—as he knows, I am critical of the Pentagon budget. I admire the Senator from Hawaii, and I absolutely mean that, but I don't usually agree with these budgets. I usually disagree with some portions. As long as we are talking about our Armed Forces, I hope when we get to the veterans appropriations bill, we will get this right, and I hope we will make the investment we should make.

There is a considerable amount of indignation on the part of veterans. And they are right; I wish they were wrong, but I have had a chance to see some of this firsthand. They just feel a sense of betrayal. I hope we are going to rectify what I think is a real injustice to veterans.

WELFARE REFORM

Mr. WELLSTONE. Mr. President, the other matter I wanted to bring up is the amendment to the DOD authorization bill which lost on a 50–49 vote. I don't know whether I will do an amendment on this bill or whether I will wait for the bankruptcy bill, but my amendment had to do with the compelling need for all of us as responsible policymakers to do some systematic and systemic evaluation of what is going on with welfare reform.

I want to know about those mothers and those children. I have come to the floor and I have said it is fine that we have reduced the caseload by a third, or thereabouts, but the question is; has the reduction in welfare led to a reduction in poverty? Where are the women and children? What kind of jobs do they have? What kind of wages do they earn? Is there decent child care?

I bring to the attention of my colleagues the General Accounting Office report of May 27, 1999, and I point out a quote on page 2 at the beginning of this report:

> Because there are no Federal requirements for States to report on the status of former welfare recipients, the only systematic data currently available on families who have left welfare come from research efforts initiated by States to meet their own information needs.

Then they go on to point out that only States currently provide adequate data. So I will be coming to the floor again and taking up a considerable amount of time. I will be drawing from a lot of reports about some pretty brutal conditions, because I am determined to win this vote. I really do believe that it is not too much to ask that the Senate—for that matter, the House of Representatives—go on record calling on the Secretary of Health and Human Services to call on States to provide the data as to what is happening to these families. Yes, they are poor families, and I understand that sometimes to be poor and to be on welfare is to be despised in America, but I think we ought to know what is going on with these women and children. That is what we are talking about—women and children.

So I thought, since I had a moment, I would announce that maybe on this bill, or maybe on the next bill, I am going to come back with this amendment, and I will bring out some of the important reports by the Conference of Mayors, the Catholic Church's Network Organization, which has done some wonderful work, and what the Conference of State Legislatures is saying, and the reports on the rise of homelessness with a special emphasis on the population of women and children. Then, after going through all of that, and also talking about some of my own observations as a Senator who has done a lot of work with low- and moderate-income people, one more time, I will call on the Senate to vote for this very reasonable amendment.

We ought to know what is going on in the country. It is irresponsible for us not to have the information to see whether or not this legislation is really working. I say that because pretty soon, over the next couple of years, we are going to reach a drop-dead date where, in all of the States—5 years being the maximum period of time from when we pass this bill—everybody is going to be driven off the rolls. There is going to be no assistance any longer. Of course, we are talking about a lot of women who have been battered, who have struggled with substance abuse, and who have struggled with mental illness. It is not clear whether they are going to be able to work or what will happen to them and their children. It is not at all clear what is happening right now to some women and children in this country. Have we made it possible for them to move to economic self-sufficiency, to live more independent lives?

I say to the Chair, who cares an awful lot about children, are these children better off? We need to know. I want to bring to the attention of my colleagues that I want to come back with this amendment, and I am hoping that a couple of Senators, this time around, will be willing to vote for it on a different piece of legislation.

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

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

DEPARTMENT OF DEFENSE APPROPRIATIONS ACT, 2000

UNANIMOUS CONSENT AGREEMENT—S. 1122

Mr. COCHRAN. Mr. President, with clearance on both sides of the aisle, I ask unanimous consent that at 9:30 a.m., on Tuesday, the Senate resume consideration of the defense appropriations bill and there be 15 minutes remaining for debate relative to amendment No. 540, and at the hour of 9:45 a.m. the Senate proceed to vote on the amendment, with no amendments in order to the Grassley amendment.

I further ask that all first-degree amendments to the defense appropriations bill must be offered by 2:30 p.m. on Tuesday, and that at the hour of 2:15 p.m. Senator INOUYE be recognized to offer and lay aside amendments on behalf of Members on his side of the aisle, and at 2:20 p.m. Senator STEVENS be recognized to offer and lay aside amendments for Members on the Republican side of the aisle, and that all amendments must be relevant to the defense appropriations bill and subject to relevant second-degree amendments.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Is there objection?

Without objection, it is so ordered.

Mr. COCHRAN. Mr. President, under this agreement, a rollcall vote will occur at 9:45 a.m. on Tuesday, and all first-degree amendments must be offered by 2:30 p.m. on Tuesday.

I thank all Senators for their cooperation.

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

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

Y2K ACT—MOTION TO PROCEED

Mr. COCHRAN. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the Senate now proceed to S. 96 regarding the Y2K legislation.

Mr. INOUYE. Mr. President, in behalf of my leader, I object.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Objection is heard.