

in our schools showed a significant trend toward adopting character education programs in schools.

Character Counts! suggests three steps to teach young people for making the decision to do the right thing:

1. Think about the welfare of all people likely to be affected by your actions and make choices that avoid harm to and promote the well-being of others.

2. Demonstrate character by living up to all ethical principles of the Six Pillars of Character even when you must give up other things you want.

3. If you cannot live up to one ethical principle without giving up another, do the thing that you sincerely believe will promote a better society and should be done by all.

The National School Boards Association report found that schools with character education programs reported improvement in student leadership, discipline, violence, vandalism, academic performance, attendance and drug and alcohol incidents. It also stated, "Ultimately, . . . character education may be a long-term investment as improvement and contribution levels often increase over time."

As we work to train our children well, we must keep in mind that we are building the foundation for new generations. The examples we set about how we treat others, and what we accept in social behavior will influence not only our children, but all children.

In Mississippi, the Noxubee County Competitive Community Program, the Ocean Springs Chamber of Commerce, Kids With Character, and the Junior Auxiliary of Clinton are organizations who have joined the Character Counts! Coalition. They make specific commitments including:

To integrate character education into new and existing programs and to encourage young people and their parents to adopt and model the Six Pillars. And, to participate in CHARACTER COUNTS! Week.

I congratulate them on their important efforts and hope that this year more groups and communities will become involved in similar programs.

Mr. DOMENICI. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent the resolution be agreed to, the preamble be agreed to, the motion to reconsider be laid upon the table, and any statements relating to this resolution appear in the RECORD.

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

The resolution (S. Res. 98) was agreed to.

The preamble was agreed to.

The resolution, with its preamble, reads as follows:

S. RES. 98

Whereas young people will be the stewards of our communities, the United States, and the world in critical times, and the present and future well-being of our society requires an involved, caring citizenry with good character;

Whereas concerns about the character training of children have taken on a new sense of urgency as violence by and against youth threatens the physical and psychological well-being of people of the United States;

Whereas more than ever, children need strong and constructive guidance from their families and their communities, including schools, youth organizations, religious institutions, and civic groups;

Whereas the character of a nation is only as strong as the character of its individual citizens;

Whereas the public good is advanced when young people are taught the importance of good character, and that character counts in personal relationships, in school, and in the workplace;

Whereas scholars and educators agree that people do not automatically develop good character and, therefore, conscientious efforts must be made by institutions and individuals that influence youth to help young people develop the essential traits and characteristics that comprise good character;

Whereas although character development is, first and foremost, an obligation of families, the efforts of faith communities, schools, and youth, civic, and human service organizations also play a very important role in supporting family efforts by fostering and promoting good character;

Whereas the Senate encourages students, teachers, parents, youth, and community leaders to recognize the valuable role our youth play in the present and future of the United States and to recognize that character is an important part of that future;

Whereas in July 1992, the Aspen Declaration was written by an eminent group of educators, youth leaders, and ethics scholars for the purpose of articulating a coherent framework for character education appropriate to a diverse and pluralistic society;

Whereas the Aspen Declaration states, "Effective character education is based on core ethical values which form the foundation of democratic society.";

Whereas the core ethical values identified by the Aspen Declaration constitute the 6 core elements of character;

Whereas the 6 core elements of character are trustworthiness, respect, responsibility, fairness, caring, and citizenship;

Whereas the 6 core elements of character transcend cultural, religious, and socioeconomic differences;

Whereas the Aspen Declaration states, "The character and conduct of our youth reflect the character and conduct of society; therefore, every adult has the responsibility to teach and model the core ethical values and every social institution has the responsibility to promote the development of good character.";

Whereas the Senate encourages individuals and organizations, especially those who have an interest in the education and training of our youth, to adopt the 6 core elements of character as intrinsic to the well-being of individuals, communities, and society as a whole; and

Whereas the Senate encourages communities, especially schools and youth organizations, to integrate the 6 core elements of character into programs serving students and children: Now, therefore, be it

Resolved, That the Senate—

(1) proclaims the week beginning October 17, 1999, and the week beginning October 15, 2000, as "National Character Counts Week"; and

(2) requests that the President issue a proclamation calling upon the people of the United States and interested groups to—

(A) embrace the 6 core elements of character identified by the Aspen Declaration, which are trustworthiness, respect, responsibility, fairness, caring, and citizenship; and

(B) observe the week with appropriate ceremonies and activities.

THE ECONOMIC AGENDA

Mr. DOMENICI. Mr. President, I would like to speak a little about the President of the United States, his staff and his renewed focus on the domestic and economic issues of this country.

Across the land, it has been heralded that the President is once again coming back to address economic issues and wants to become a part of the economic agenda. He wants to be involved with what we are doing here in Congress in our work on approving money for programs, talking about Medicare, Social Security, and other things. I will say at the outset that it wasn't too many months ago that the President of the United States was promoting a plan that was considerably different from what he is espousing today. It wasn't long ago that you felt satisfied with saving only a portion of the Social Security surplus and using the rest for your spending initiatives. Yet, as of today, the President's plan has come the Republican way. We both say now that we should save 100 percent of the money that belongs to the Social Security recipients of our country and we should not let it be squandered on anything else.

This means that we are going to save the \$1.8 trillion dollar Social Security surplus over the next decade. In the Congressional plan, the only way that we can touch these funds is if they are needed to undertake substantive reforms of Social Security to ensure that the program works well for seniors. Nothing else.

In order to guarantee such restraint, we have developed a lockbox proposal—I came up with the basic idea and Senator ABRAHAM has taken a lead in promoting it. While the President's lockbox is different from ours, at least we are speaking the same language—even the President is saying that we must make sure not to spend any of the Social Security surplus. That puts us on the same path. He is following us. We thank him for that and are pleased to have him on board.

However, now is the chance for him to show his commitment to this principle. Up until now, we have faced opposition on our lockbox bill, both in our budget resolution and on the Senate floor. I would remind you that we have not been able to vote on this proposal here yet because the Democratic minority doesn't want to let us vote on our lockbox. We are going to ask them another time, very soon, to give us an opportunity to vote on it. This lockbox has the name, Abraham-Domenici. It is a real lockbox.

We are also joined by the distinguished junior Senator from Missouri as our third cosponsor, Mr. ASHCROFT. We wish others would join. We wish Senators from the other side would join. Let us make sure that when we say to the seniors that we are putting their Social Security funds in a lockbox, that it is real and is the most real one we can do. As a matter of fact,

our bill is so tough that the administration has opposed it on the basis that it might put our Government in a straitjacket. They fear that it might cause some harm to our Government and to our country because we tied the knot on our lockbox so tightly.

We do not agree. We think we need a tough lockbox to guarantee safety. However, the Administration should take comfort in the fact that the Office of Management and Budget—the President's experts on budgetary matters—has just revised up their surplus projections over the next decade in light of recent economic strength. As our economy grows and new jobs are added, people pay more in taxes. This means that once again, there is more revenue expected in the year 2000 than we contemplated 3 months ago. This means that we will now have an on-budget surplus in fiscal year 2000 above and beyond the Social Security surplus—both the President's budget shop and the Congressional Budget Office expect forecast this. This is true, even accounting for the \$7 billion we spent recently in FY2000 on Kosovo. This money came out of on-budget funds—we have not touched the funds that are accumulated by Social Security.

The President believes that we have a \$5 billion on-budget surplus remaining next year. I can't tell you what the Congressional Budget Office is going to say with certainty, but I can tell you it is more than that. I can tell you it is between \$10 and \$15 billion. That means we can lock up Social Security's money in the Trust Fund and still have a \$10 or \$15 billion buffer to absorb any unanticipated expenses. This should allay the Administration's concerns about our lockbox.

Having said that, let me talk for a moment about a profound change which has occurred in our country in recent years. Something very dynamic is happening to the US economy. Some say we're having a new industrial revolution of sorts in the high tech arena that is fundamentally changing the way we do business. It has fueled tremendous growth in all sectors. Now, no one knows for certain why this recovery is so long-lived. However, even though I am usually pretty cautious as budget chairman of the Senate, it does appear that this growth will propel us toward higher and higher surpluses going forward. It is realistic to assume that American taxpayers will be paying far more in taxes than we need to run the Government for many years to come.

That means, year over year, your Government spends less than it takes in. It is great to run persistent surpluses. However, we will surely lose the faith of the American people if we end up spending those surpluses. We must save Social Security's money now and in the future. However, we should think carefully about what we do with the extra surplus—the surplus above Social Security's funds. The President is thinking about this and has formu-

lated 15 year budget plans. I should say as an aside, we will not use 15 year budget numbers—we will not go beyond ten years, regardless of what the President does. Ten-year estimates are long enough—we will have almost a trillion-dollar surplus beyond Social Security during the coming decade.

Now, I have not seen the entire new plan of the President, but I can tell you that it has some odd features. In the first five years, no one in America will get any tax relief. The Government of America will retain control of all the enormous projected surpluses. Tax relief is relegated to the second five years in the President's plan.

That is not fair to the American working man or woman. Now certainly, we will need to retain some of the projected surpluses to put toward Medicare reform. The President envisions one type of reform where he spends \$51 billion of surplus dollars on a Medicare prescription drug benefit. We don't know if that is right or not. But we can sit at the table and fix Medicare given our wonderful fiscal situation. But let's not kid ourselves. We don't need a trillion dollars. We should be giving some of this money back to the American people—they are the ones who generated all these extra tax payments, they ought to get some of them back.

In that regard, it appears we are on a collision course with the President. We will let the American people be the judge of who is correct. I don't think that these hardworking men and women will stand by as their taxes climb higher and higher—I think they will support our call for tax relief.

It is unfair to assume that the Government, having collected more than we need, ought to start saying: Well, let's find out how we can spend all of it in Government. How does that make sense? Should we wait for Washington to figure out which new program it needs? Should we do what the President is doing? He wants to put \$340 billion of IOUs into the Medicare trust fund, and then say, in 30 years when the IOUs come due, we will just raise income taxes to pay for it. Putting that money into the trust fund for Medicare does not enhance one payment, does not increase its solvency for one week. And here we sit failing to say exactly what it is. The President's proposal will lead to income tax increases down the road to cover these IOUs.

I should say a number of Democrats and almost every Republican have been critical of this presidential proposal. It is similar to writing a postdated check. Guess who is signing the check? The American people, because they back up the U.S. Government who signed that check. It is postdated 30 years. When it comes due, there isn't any money to pay it. So then you go out and tax the American people to pay it. But, in the meantime, you can for some reason run around and say there is a lot of money in the trust fund, ignoring the long-run consequences of this plan. Frankly, I

don't believe this is the right way to do things.

I look forward to a good, healthy debate. Normally, I would wonder whether the President is going to once again politicize the issue of Medicare so much so that it will turn out that we will not do anything, and we will all be frightened to death. But I actually believe that the President and Congress can work together. However, we do not endorse the President's reliance on trust fund accounting. Instead of forcing all the surpluses into some trust fund or another, why don't we give them back to the people who paid us? Maybe they could set up their own trust funds. Maybe they could start their own savings plan. Maybe they could put a little more into the kind of things they think they need for their families.

In a sense, I don't know about the rest of the Senators on both sides of the aisle, but I look forward to these issues we are going to discuss between Members of the Congress and the President. On some of them, I look for us to walk right down this aisle in bipartisan fashion and get some things done. However, we will not walk into an end agreement where no relief is given to American taxpayers. We will not be able to agree with the President of the United States if he is leading all the Democrats—which I somehow doubt—saying, no matter how big the surplus is, let's just wait around and see if Government doesn't need it. I submit that, if you do that, Government will need it. Government will use it. And the taxpayers who collectively paid more into Government than we need will see bigger Government, more money spent and less money in their own pockets, which is where more of it ought to be.

I think my time has expired. I yield the floor.

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

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

EXTENSION OF MORNING BUSINESS

Mr. DOMENICI. Mr. President, on behalf of the majority leader, I ask unanimous consent that we remain in morning business until 5 o'clock and that the time be equally divided.

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

Mr. DOMENICI. I thank the Chair.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Presiding Officer, in his capacity as a Senator from the State of Washington, suggests the absence of a quorum. The clerk will call the roll.

The assistant legislative clerk proceeded to call the roll.