

sourcing is President Bush's euphemism for throwing a federal employee onto the unemployment line for the purpose of contracting out his work to a private company.

Division F of this Omnibus Appropriations Act includes the Transportation, Treasury and General Government Appropriation bill. One will find in that division of the bill, under section 647, a largely meaningless and ineffective provision, that is rife with loopholes intended to mask the Bush administration's determined efforts to fire thousands of Federal employees. This provision did not always read this way. Indeed, the conferees on the Transportation, Treasury and General Government Appropriations bill met in open conference on Wednesday, November 12th and it was anticipated at that time that the conference agreement would be sent to the President as a freestanding bill. That conference was chaired by the very able Subcommittee Chairman Senator SHELBY. I was a conferee on that bill and I was proud to sign the conference report when it was presented to me.

The original conference agreement reached by the members of that conference committee included a sound and balanced policy to govern the President's competitive sourcing initiative. The conference agreement ensured that there would be uniform rules for this initiative across all agencies of the Federal Government. It also ensured that the administration would have to demonstrate meaningful cost savings to the taxpayers before contracting out federal work. The agreement also provided Federal employees an opportunity to appeal a wrongful contracting out decision. Under the Bush administration's regulations, only private contractors have that appeal right.

That tentative conference agreement was agreed to as a substitute for the amendment that was included in the House bill that was championed by Congressman VAN HOLLEN of Maryland. The Bush White House made it quite clear to all the conferees that inclusion of the Van Hollen amendment would result in the Transportation/Treasury bill being vetoed. Ever since the day that conference concluded—Wednesday, November 12th—we have been waiting for the conference agreement on the Transportation-Treasury bill to be filed in the House and Senate. Instead, what has happened has been an unpardonable effort by the Bush White House to dismantle this agreement as it pertains to its beloved "competitive sourcing" initiative.

Why did the administration not like this agreement? Because they do not care to have to demonstrate to the taxpayers that any real dollar savings will accrue to the taxpayer when they contract out Federal jobs; they do not want Federal employees to have the opportunity to appeal a decision that was made in error; and they do not want a consistent and fair policy for all Federal agencies in this area.

Believe it or not, the Bush administration complained about provisions in the Transportation/Treasury conference agreement that were identical to provisions that President Bush had already signed into law on the Department of Defense Appropriations Act and the Department of Interior Appropriations Act. When one now reviews the Omnibus Appropriations bill, it is clear that the Bush administration has succeeded in neutering the original conference agreement in this area. Never mind that we met in full and open conference and agreed to a meaningful set of safeguards. Never mind that all the members of the conference committee signed on to that agreement—Democrats and Republicans alike. This White House would have none of it. So, working through the offices of the House and Senate Republican leadership, the White House has succeeded in undermining the provisions of the original conference agreement to the point of making them largely hollow. The Bush administration has made a sham of our Federal procurement process and a sham of the appropriations process. So, on the Transportation Appropriations bill, once again, the President says it is my way or the highway.

Finally, there is the matter of the across the board cuts. The President set an arbitrary topline for discretionary spending of \$786 billion. In the President's view, we can afford \$1.7 trillion dollars of tax cuts. When it comes to the Medicare bill, we can afford \$12 billion for subsidies for private insurance companies. When it comes to the Energy bill, we can afford over \$25 billion of tax cuts and \$5 billion of mandatory spending for big energy corporations. But when it comes to discretionary programs that help average Americans, the President insists on cuts. A cut of 0.59 percent would reduce funding for No Child Left Behind programs by over \$73 million, resulting in 24,000 fewer kids being served by Title I. Overall, the Title I Education for the Disadvantaged program would be \$6 billion below the level authorized by the No Child Left Behind Act that the President signed in January of 2002. Another promise unfulfilled.

The across-the-board cut would reduce Head Start funding by \$40 million, resulting in 5,500 fewer kids attending Head Start. Veterans Medical Care funding would be cut by \$159 million, resulting in 26,500 fewer veterans receiving medical care or 198,000 veterans not getting the drugs they need.

Funding for highway construction would be cut by over \$170 million. Well, for this President, it is my way or the highway, but fewer Americans will be building highways next year.

Chairman STEVENS and I tried very hard to produce thirteen bills to send to the President. I commend him for his effort to do so. But, the process was kidnapped by the White House and the leadership. Instead of sending thirteen fiscally responsible appropriations bills

to the President, the House is filing a turkey of a conference report. That is no way to govern. That is no way to serve the American people.

I wish all Senators a happy Thanksgiving and a happy Christmas. I hope they stay safe for the holidays.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Oregon.

Mr. WYDEN. Mr. President, no one deserves that holiday more than Senator BYRD who constantly reminds us of what this wonderful, interesting discussion is all about; that is, stand up for the Constitution, and stand up for the people we represent. To Senator BYRD and his wonderful wife, we wish an especially warm and cheerful holiday.

Mr. BYRD. Mr. President, I thank again the Senator.

THANKFUL FOR THANKSGIVING

Mr. BYRD. Mr. President, Thanksgiving is one of the oldest and most cherished American holidays. Along with the Fourth of July, it is a uniquely American holiday. I realize that other countries and other cultures have their days of feasts, some even have them in autumn to glorify their harvests. But our Thanksgiving, our day of thanks, is a truly American holiday.

Thanksgiving is our special day. It is a day on which we celebrate with Turkey, gravy, dressing, cranberry sauce. You should try Erma's cranberry sauce; there is nothing like it anywhere in the world, my wife's cranberry sauce. Just to think of it, just to think of it makes me want to go home now—cranberry sauce, sweet potatoes, pumpkin pie.

In addition to being a time of family togetherness, it is a day of football games, parades, and the beginning of the Christmas holiday season—a little early for the Christmas holiday season, but that is the way it is in this commercial time in which we live.

But more profoundly, Thanksgiving is a day for recognizing and celebrating our Pilgrim heritage—that small group of men and women who left their homeland, crossed a mighty ocean, and settled in a wilderness so that they could worship God as they chose.

Before disembarking from the ship that brought them to these lands, the famous and legendary Mayflower, this gallant group of early American settlers gathered together and they formulated a government for their new world—a government based on the principle of self-rule. It was also a government under God—a government under God. The document that created that new government, the Mayflower Compact—we should have on our office walls. That government was anticipated in the Mayflower Compact. The Compact read in part—listen to this:

In the name of God, amen, we whose names are underwritten . . . Having undertaken for the Glory of God . . . Do by these Presents, solemnly and mutually in the Presence of

God and one another, covenant and combine ourselves together into a civil Body Politic.

How about that? That was the Mayflower Compact. A copy of that Compact ought to hang or appear in every schoolroom in this country. I know there are a few atheists around who wouldn't like it, but who cares that they wouldn't like it? Maybe we could win them over.

But let us read it again. How wonderful it is to read that. I wonder if there would be those who would say it is unconstitutional.

In the name of God, amen, we whose names are underwritten . . . Having undertaken for the Glory of God . . . Do by these Presents, solemnly and mutually in the Presence of God and one another, covenant and combine ourselves together into a civil Body Politic.

A year after landing—after months of privation, suffering, sickness, hunger, and death—these men and women set aside time to express their gratitude to God for protecting them and for the preservation of their community. With all the hardships and agony they had endured, they still set aside time to thank God for being good to them. They were not only men and women of great courage, they were also men and women of great religious faith.

Two years later, in 1623, the Pilgrims made this day of thanks a tradition. The spirit of that glorious day, which some people recognize as the first official Thanksgiving, was captured in a proclamation attributed to Governor Bradford that read:

Inasmuch as the Great Father has given us this year an abundant harvest of Indian corn, wheat, peas, squashes and garden vegetables, and made the forest to abound with game and the sea with fish and clams, and inasmuch as he has . . . spared us from the pestilence and granted us freedom to worship God according to the dictates of our own conscience, now I, your magistrate, do proclaim that all ye Pilgrims, with your wives and ye little ones, do gather at ye meeting house, on ye hill, between the hours of nine and twelve in the daytime on Thursday, November ye 29th, of the year of our Lord one thousand six hundred and twenty-three, and the third year since ye Pilgrims landed on ye Plymouth Rock, there to listen to ye Pastor and render Thanksgiving to ye all Almighty God for all his blessings.

The tradition of Thanksgiving was reaffirmed again during the American Revolution. Following the Battle of Saratoga in October 1777, the American victory that marked a crucial turning point in the war and the birth of our Nation, the Continental Congress approved a resolution designating a day of "Thanksgiving and praise." George Washington wrote of the day set apart—these are words I quoted—the "day set apart by the honorable Congress for Public Thanksgiving and praise, and duty calling us to devoutly to express our grateful acknowledgments to God for the manifold blessings he has granted us."

This was George Washington, the Father of our Country, Commander of the American Forces at Valley Forge—

George Washington, the first President of the United States, the greatest of all Presidents of these United States—who said in part when he wrote of the "day set apart by the honorable Congress for public Thanksgiving and praise, and duty calling us devoutly to express our grateful acknowledgments to God for the manifold blessings he has granted us."

That was George Washington.

Following the Revolutionary War, the Continental Congress used Thanksgiving as the day to give thanks to the proper authority for delivering the country from colonization and war into independence and peace.

These were our forefathers—George Washington, of whom there is none greater—nay, of whom there is no peer, George Washington.

On October 11, 1782, Congress proclaimed "the twenty-eight day of November next, as a day of solemn THANKSGIVING to God for all his mercies."

Think about that.

On October 11, 1782, Congress proclaimed "the twenty-eight day of November next, as a day of solemn THANKSGIVING to God for all his mercies: and they do further recommend to all ranks, to testify to their gratitude to God for his goodness."

I was just verifying from the fine man who serves on my staff that this coming Thanksgiving again falls on the calendar on the day of November 28.

The proclamation further stated:

It being the indispensable duty of all Nations, not only to offer up their supplication to ALMIGHTY GOD, the giver of all good, for his gracious assistance in a time of distress, but also in a solemn and public manner to give him praise for his goodness in general, and especially for great and signal interpositions of his providence in their behalf.

Following the establishment of the new government of the United States in 1789, President George Washington—he is now President; the President is George Washington—issued the first Presidential proclamation calling for "a day of public thanksgiving and prayer." He asked that the public observe that day "by acknowledging with grateful heart the many favors of Almighty God." At President Washington's request, Americans assembled in churches on the appointed day and thanked God for his blessings.

Then during the awful Civil War, President Abraham Lincoln officially asked the people of the United States to set aside the last Thursday of November "as a day of Thanksgiving and praise to our beneficent Father." "In the midst of a civil war of unequal magnitude and severity," President Lincoln proclaimed in 1863 that the country should take a day to acknowledge the gracious gifts of the most high God.

Perhaps we have noticed that in every one of these proclamations, the Founders and the early leaders of our country carefully and purposefully rec-

ognized and thanked Almighty God for their blessings.

So in a year when we have been told that it is wrong to post the Ten Commandments in our courthouses, and we have Federal courts ruling that ours is not a nation under God, it is well to remember how the Founders of our country, going back to the Pilgrims, continuing through the Continental Congresses and our foremost Presidents, Washington and Lincoln, certainly considered ours to be a nation under God.

I was a Member of the House of Representatives on June 7, 1954, when the House voted to insert the words "under God" in the Pledge of Allegiance to the flag. That was June 7, 1954. I was a Member of the House 1 year from that day, perhaps just coincidentally, when the House voted to place the words "In God We Trust" on the currency and coins of these United States. June 7, 1955, that was.

There you have it, June 7, 1954, the words "under God" were inserted in the Pledge of Allegiance, and 1 year from that day, June 7, 1955, they put the words "In God We Trust" on the currency of our Nation. And there they are, the words "In God We Trust."

Do you think we would ever have to remove those words from the walls of this Chamber? Let us trust in God that those words will never be removed. No court will ever think that it can remove those words "In God We Trust" from the walls of this Chamber.

So our foremost Presidents, Washington and Lincoln, certainly considered ours to be a nation under God. They used Thanksgiving, our special unique American holiday, as a time and a reason to celebrate it.

That acknowledgment of divine blessing did not stop there. After 1863, President Lincoln issued other Thanksgiving proclamations, and subsequent Presidents who followed him, followed his example.

In 1905, President Theodore Roosevelt talked of how appropriate it was to "set apart one day in each year for a special service of thanksgiving to the Almighty." "It is eminently fitting," he proclaimed, "that once a year our people should set apart a day of praise and thanksgiving to the Giver of Good . . . [therefore] I ask that through the land the people gather in their homes and places of worship and in rendering thanks unto the Most High for the manifold blessings of the past year."

In his 1938 Thanksgiving proclamation, President Franklin Roosevelt noted:

[F]rom the earliest recorded history, Americans have thanked God for their blessings. In our deepest natures, in our very souls, we, like all mankind, since the earliest origin of mankind, turned to God in time of happiness.

Mr. President, 20 years later in his 1958 Thanksgiving proclamation, President Eisenhower proclaimed:

Let us be especially grateful for the religious heritage bequeathed us by our forefathers, as exemplified by the Pilgrims, who,

after the gathering of their first harvest, set apart a special day for rendering thanks to God for the bounties vouchsafed to them.

In 1962, President John F. Kennedy asked the American people to "renew the spirit of the Pilgrims at the first Thanksgiving, lonely in an inscrutable wilderness, facing the dark unknown with a faith borne of their dedication to God and a fortitude drawn from their sense that all men were brothers."

So it is that we celebrate this unique American holiday, a day devoted to family, to country, and to God. It always has been. I pray it always will be a day for giving thanks. With the turmoil of the past year with our sons and daughters in far away lands putting their lives in danger, we still have so much for which to be thankful.

We can be thankful for the heritage of liberty bequeathed to us by our ancestors, and from whom we are entrusted to preserve for future generations of Americans.

Mr. President, we can be thankful for the wisdom and the foresight of our Founding Fathers, who bequeathed to us a form of government unique in history, with its three strong pillars of the executive, the legislative, and the judicial branches, each balanced and checked one against the other.

Like President Washington, we can be thankful for "the many favors of Almighty God," including a government that ensures our "safety and happiness."

And like President Lincoln, we can be thankful for the "gracious gifts of the most high God, who, while dealing with us in anger for our sins, hath nevertheless remembered mercy."

While we are saddened that there are so many young American men and women in uniform who will not be able to be with their families on this holiday, we can be thankful for their courage, thankful for their devotion to duty, and thankful for their service to our Nation.

We can be thankful for those men and women who, 383 years ago, had the courage, the faith, and the devotion to our Almighty Father, to God, to embark upon the most difficult and dangerous of journeys and face the darkest unknown so that they, and we, could worship freely.

We can be thankful, can we not, for the abundance of America, an abundance that includes an annual production of millions of turkeys, millions of pounds of cranberries and sweet potatoes and pumpkins.

Mr. President, a few minutes ago, I read from President Lincoln's Thanksgiving Proclamation of 1863. Permit me now to read from the 1863 White House Thanksgiving menu.

According to that menu, in 1863, the White House Thanksgiving dinner consisted of the following, and I quote from that menu: cranberry juice; that is good. How sweet it is, cranberry juice; roast turkey with dressing, cranberry sauce.

Look at that man sitting in the chair, presiding over this Senate. Yes, there he is. I can see his mouth is watering like mine is watering.

Sweet potatoes, creamed onions. Well, I like my onions just plain onions, not creamed, but that was on the menu. Squash, pumpkin pie, plum pudding, mince pie, milk, and coffee.

Does that sound familiar? How about it, does it sound familiar?

I hope my wife Erma is watching right at this moment because nobody in my lifetime can spread a table like my wife Erma. She has been spreading that table in my family now for 66 years, bless her heart.

But does it sound familiar? It sure sounds like the 2003 Thanksgiving menu at the Byrd house. Boy, how I look forward to it. I am getting hungry just thinking about it. I am getting hungry. How about that?

I hope that my listeners are getting hungry also, and thinking about the first Thanksgiving. The first Thanksgiving, how would you have liked to have sat with that incredible, intrepid band of men and women?

So I am going to stop talking now, and I am going to head home, before too long, for our great Thanksgiving meal with my wife Erma and our two daughters and their husbands and our five grandchildren, their spouses, and our three great-grandchildren and our little dog, Trouble.

Happy Thanksgiving, everyone. Happy Thanksgiving.

THE PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from New Mexico.

Mr. DOMENICI. Mr. President, I note the presence of Senator BURNS. Does he wish to speak? I will tell him how long I will be.

Mr. BURNS. Mr. President, not on the Senator's time.

Mr. DOMENICI. I will only be a few moments.

GREAT ECONOMIC NEWS

Mr. DOMENICI. Mr. President, economic growth is the lifeblood of this country. Economic growth is what gets rid of deficits. Economic growth is what provides jobs. Economic growth is what causes investments. Economic growth is what gives our people hope.

Today, the Government just released news that our economy grew by an amazing 8.2 percent last quarter, up from an earlier estimate in the same quarter of 7.2 percent. I recall when it went up 7.2 percent. We were all saying: Isn't that fantastic? The economy is really booming.

Well, it turns out there is always an adjustment, and they made the adjustment. Frequently, the adjustment is downward. In this case, the adjustment is upward, an astronomical 8.2 percent growth in the domestic product last quarter. This means solid growth this quarter and into next year. This is a tribute to the resilient American economy and to the fiscal policy pursued by the President and the Republican-led Congress.

The naysayers, principally on the other side of the aisle, have been the ones saying we should not have cut taxes. Taxes create deficits. On everything the President chose to ask us to do about the economy, the naysayers said no. Now they have been proven wrong and we have the second basket on the floor in the nature of great big positive news for the American people. Even more important to the future, confidence among the American consumers soared. They know when things are going well. It soared to almost 92 percent, a full 10 percent gain from last month. We remember when we were all worried because it was extremely low, into 60 percent, and the naysayers were saying: It is all President Bush's fault. Well, if that is the case—it is 92 percent now—is that not his fault? Or is that not to his credit? I would think so.

The kind of extraordinary growth I am talking about obviously cannot continue for years and years, perhaps not even for very many quarters, but it does mean that most estimates of growth for the year 2004 will prove to be pessimistic. They will prove to be too low. If we get a solid 3 and 3½ percent growth rate each of the next quarters for an entire fiscal year, then we will see Federal deficits also decline. Employment will increase and investments will improve.

The naysayers will be stuck. How will they answer all of these items of good news when employment starts coming down, which it already has but will come down more; when Federal deficits, instead of going up, which they run around talking about President Bush created, when everybody knows we have a huge expenditure for our military men and equipment because we have been in a series of warlike efforts from Somalia, Afghanistan, and now this one. Nothing can be done without spending a lot of money. But we are going to see the deficit come down if these growth numbers continue up.

Yes, we have all been worried about American business: Where is it going? First, we have to give American business some credit. I used the words "resilient economy" awhile ago. When there is a recession, American business takes action. They are not like us. They do not have all of the money to spend. They have to stop spending. They have to make changes.

They made changes. Guess what happened. Productivity went through the roof, and enormous productivity growth normally is accompanied by great GDP growth, and that has happened.

Now, it seems as if productivity growth is probably going to stop. They have taken about as much as they can out of their businesses, and now we are going to have the growth that will follow it, the job increases that will follow it, and the deficits that will diminish.

I close where I started, by saying it seems as if good news comes in bushels.