

Remember, today's official budget surplus projections assume discretionary spending will grow for the next 10 years at the rate of inflation, which makes the conclusion of a recent Concord Coalition report even more alarming. The report warns "that if discretionary spending continues to grow at the same rate it has in recent years, two-thirds of the projected 10-year non-Social Security surplus would disappear." That will translate into a reduction of the non-Social Security surplus by \$1.4 trillion.

While the White House was the chief engineer pushing the spending bonanza, my party, yet again, let pass a golden opportunity to showcase our fiscal discipline and resolute devotion to debt reduction. We could have supported spending bills with no hard-earned taxpayers' money spent at the behest of individual lawmakers without authorization and adequate congressional review, but we did not.

As we are close to the end of this Congress, we must look to the next Congress, indeed the next President, to address many of the pressing problems that plague our Nation. The real question that faces us is whether we will end the Washington partisan gridlock and achieve results for the American people on a range of critical issues, such as prescription drugs, HMO reform, Social Security reform, and military reform.

I strongly submit that to break the gridlock that cripples Washington, we must break the stranglehold of the special interests on our political process.

For example, we have been trying for nearly 2 years to get a decent health care bill of rights passed into law. The purpose of the legislation is to provide every American who is caught in a squeeze play between employers' HMOs and their doctors with some basic rights designed to ensure they get the quality health care they have paid for and deserve. Yet the trial lawyers and the health care industry lobbies have succeeded in derailing any hope of reaching a meaningful compromise. So Americans, average Americans, will go on suffering at the hands of health care bureaucracy decisions often guided more by the bottom line than the best interests of the patients.

We must have courage to say no to the special interests who pay the soft money fee to gain access to the high political councils while the average taxpayer is left out in the cold. It will not be easy breaking our addiction to soft money.

Roll Call newspaper reports that in a recent survey of 300 senior corporate executives conducted by the Tarrance Group:

Nearly three-quarters said pressure is placed on business leaders to make large political donations, and half of the executives said their colleagues "fear adverse consequences for themselves or their industry if they turn down requests" for contributions.

And 79 percent said the campaign finance system is "broken and should be reformed."

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator has used 15 minutes.

Mr. McCAIN. I thank the Chair. I will make the rest of my remarks brief.

Such pressure for campaign contributions seems to be paying dividends. According to the Center for Responsive Politics, in 1992, soft money accounted for 18 percent of the political parties' overall fundraising. Today, that figure has more than doubled to "40 percent of everything the parties raise."

We are going in the wrong direction, and it is undermining our democracy. That is why I pledge to bring campaign finance reform to the Senate floor when the Senate convenes next year.

Let me be clear; no matter which party prevails in November, our democracy will be the loser unless we clean up our political process. Without real change in how we conduct our politics, cynicism will prevail and continue to eat away at our public square, fueling even lower voter turnout and turning more and more Americans away from public service.

Mr. President, this is too high a price to pay. That is why I am committed to clean up the budget process and the way we fund campaigns. Please join me in this process.

LOW-POWER FM RADIO SERVICE

Mr. McCAIN. Mr. President, there is a great example of the influence of special interests, which I am told has been inserted into the Commerce-State-Justice, the Judiciary, and related agencies appropriations conference report, without a debate on this floor, without a vote on this floor.

Mr. President, I understand that legislation restricting low-power FM services has been added behind closed doors to that appropriations bill. The addition of this rider illustrates, once again, how the special interests of a few are allowed to dominate the voices of the many in the backdoor dealings of the appropriations process.

Low-power FM radio service provides community-based organizations, churches, and other nonprofit groups with a new, affordable opportunity to reach out to the public, helping to promote a greater awareness within our communities, about our communities. As such, low-power FM is supported by the U.S. Conference of Mayors, the National League of Cities, Consumers' Union and many religious organizations, including but not limited to, the U.S. Catholic Conference and the United Church of Christ. These institutions support low-power FM because they see what low-power FM's opponents also know to be true—that these stations will make more programming available to the public, and provide outlets for news and perspectives not currently featured on local radio stations.

But, the special interests forces opposed to low-power FM—most notably the National Association of Broadcasters and National Public Radio have

mounted a vigorous behind-the-scenes campaign against this service.

Let me repeat—and my dear friend from Nebraska joined me in this effort. Together, we tried to stop the National Association of Broadcasters and National Public Radio. Simply put, they have won again.

I believe the Senator from Nebraska will agree with me there is no way they could have carried that vote on the floor of this Senate. There is no way they could have deprived all of these communities, all of these small business people, all of these religious organizations, all of these minority groups—but they stuck it into an appropriations bill, a piece of legislation that never had a single bit of debate and would never have passed through the Commerce Committee, of which I am the chairman, if it had been put to a vote.

Earlier this year, Senator KERRY and I introduced the Low Power FM Radio Act of 2000, which would have struck a fair balance between allowing low-power radio stations to go forward while at the same time protecting existing full-power stations from actual interference. Under our bill, low-power stations causing interference would be required to stop causing interference—or be shut down—but noninterfering low-power FM stations would be allowed to operate without further delay. The opponents of low-power FM did not support this bill because they want low-power FM to be dead rather than functional.

Congress should not permit the appropriations process to circumvent the normal legislative process.

Mr. President, low-power FM is an opportunity for minorities, churches and others to have a new voice in radio broadcasting. In the Commerce Committee, we constantly lament the fact that minorities, community-based organizations, and religious organizations do not have adequate opportunities to communicate their views. Moreover, over the years, I have often heard many Members of both the Committee and this Senate lament the enormous consolidation that has occurred in the telecommunications sector as a whole and the radio industry specifically. Here, we had a chance to simply get out of the way, and allow noninterfering low-power radio stations to go forward to help combat these concerns. Instead, we allowed special interests to hide their competitive fears behind the smokescreen of hypothetical interference to severely wound—if not kill—this service in the dead of night.

Mr. President, speaking for my side of the aisle, we are the party of Abraham Lincoln. We constantly endorse the importance of religious speech to American culture. How can we possibly stifle an opportunity for minority and religious organizations to communicate more effectively with their local communities? By permitting special interests to stifle these voices we are

truly compromising the most fundamental principles of our party and our Nation.

I stand before these community-based organizations, these religious organizations, these people throughout these small communities all over America and say: I apologize. I apologize to you for this action—behind closed doors—that we are going to deprive you of a voice, of a very small FM radio station. And I will tell you who did it. The National Public Radio and the National Association of Broadcasters—the same organization that got \$70 billion worth of free spectrum of public taxpayer-owned property. And, by the way, they are not giving back their analog spectrum, which is the subject for another speech. I say to the National Association of Broadcasters and the National Public Radio, shame on you.

Mr. President, I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Iowa is recognized for up to 30 minutes.

Mr. HARKIN. Mr. President, I listened somewhat tentatively to the comments made by my friend from Arizona. He talked about ending the partisan gridlock. If you want to end the partisan gridlock, take a look at the tax bill that just came over. This package was never considered in the Finance Committee, never considered on the Senate floor. No Democrats were ever invited to any of the meetings to work it out. There was no consultation with any Democrat. No paper was ever shared with any Democrat in putting it together. It was stuffed into an unrelated conference report. It was sent over here for a vote. And the Republicans have said to the Democrats: Take it or leave it, but you have no part in drafting it, debating it, or anything else.

I would say, if you want to end the partisan gridlock, Republicans should start working in a bipartisan fashion around here to fashion.

I hear George Bush out there. He is saying he wants to come to Washington and end this gridlock. I say to Governor Bush: Pick up the phone and call Senator LOTT. Pick up the phone and call Speaker HASTERT. Tell them to quit playing these kinds of games, these partisan games around here, where we get a tax bill on the Senate floor, in the closing days of this year, that we have had absolutely no part in—absolutely none whatsoever.

Mr. KERREY. I would just like to ask the Senator a question. If the Senator wouldn't mind yielding, I think we can do this almost as a colloquy.

Mr. HARKIN. Yes, I would be glad to.

Mr. KERREY. The Senator from Iowa has been around here a couple years longer than I have. I wonder if the Senator would agree with me. My experience is that all 100 people in this Senate—every single one of them—are trying to do the best job they can. They have different points of views. The Republicans bring certain things to the

arguments sometimes that Democrats don't bring, and Democrats bring things that Republicans don't bring from time to time.

Mr. HARKIN. True.

Mr. KERREY. I wonder if the Senator would agree with that.

Mr. HARKIN. That is true. That is the way the legislative process works. I am not always right. You are not always right. Republicans are not always right. But if we work together in that kind of a spirit, it can be worked out. That is the way it should be done.

Mr. KERREY. I wonder if the Senator from Iowa would yield for a second question.

Mr. HARKIN. Sure.

Mr. KERREY. I heard the Governor of Texas say he does not like the Vice President's tax cut proposal because it is targeted. Doesn't it seem that the tax cut proposal that is being brought to us—though it might be hard for my friends on the other side of the aisle to state that they are saying the Vice President is right—is not an across-the-board tax cut, this is a targeted tax cut? Will my friend from Iowa agree they seem to be saying we should have a targeted tax cut?

Mr. HARKIN. I agree on targeted tax cuts, but I would appreciate the Senator expanding on his point.

Mr. KERREY. Well, their bill does not have across-the-board tax cuts. There has been a debate going on between the Vice President and the Governor of Texas as to whether or not there should be an across-the-board tax cut of \$1.6 trillion that the Governor of Texas wants to do, on top of \$1.1 trillion of payroll tax cuts, and hundreds of billions of dollars of spending as well.

I said the other day, it reminds me of voodoo economics II. I do not think he would be proposing this, which is essentially the failed policies of the past. We tried that once before. President Bush, in 1990, broke from the failed policies of that.

I heard the Senator from Arizona earlier talk about the budget caps that were in the 1990 budget agreement. That started us on the road of eliminating our deficits. But he has an across-the-board tax cut. He is criticizing the Vice President for targeting tax cuts, and it seems our friends on the other side of the aisle are saying the Vice President is right, we should have a targeted tax cut.

I wonder if my friend from Iowa has also experienced, when you are having discussions, there are some things Democrats bring to the argument, bring to the discussion. I wonder, as I look at this tax bill, if any of the people, the Republicans who are part of this thing, ever asked the question: Now that we are going to target tax cuts, is it fair? Are we being fair here? Are we targeting it to the right group of people?

It seems to me, as I look at least at the early analysis, that that question couldn't have been asked.

Mr. HARKIN. Would the Senator enlighten us a little further?

Mr. KERREY. I don't know. I am certain we will have a chance to look at the precise numbers that CBO and others have done. As I look at the numbers right now, it seems our friends on the other side of the aisle, having put this together without Democrats there—if the American people wonder what they lost by not having Democrats there, it doesn't look as if anybody was there to say: Is this fair?

What they have said is, we are going to target \$4 billion a year of tax cuts to Americans who make more than \$319,000 a year. A lot of my friends make more than \$319,000 a year, but \$4 billion total out of what appears to be about \$6 or \$7 billion a year seems to be a pretty big targeted tax cut for people over \$300,000 a year. For Members of Congress on up, we are a little over \$130,000. It is \$670 million of targeted tax cuts to that group. But for the group of Americans under \$40,000 a year, they get about \$50 or \$60 million total.

I don't know. I guess many of my colleagues felt the same sort of movement of their hearts when they read the stories of the sailors who lost their lives on the U.S.S. *Cole*. We had a chance to read the biographies. It was a very moving thing to think about their lives. I noted that not a single one of those individuals were college graduates. They were all high school graduates. They were all enlisted, save one who was an ensign, just became an ensign after 12 years of enlistment. If you read their stories, their moms and dads are waiters; their moms and dads are nurses; their moms and dads are schoolteachers; their moms and dads are making less than \$40,000 a year. That is a majority of the country. Those are the folks who are running our Little League baseball groups. Those are the people who are volunteering at church.

If you decide the Vice President is right—we should not have an across-the-board tax cut; we ought to have a targeted tax cut—it seems to me that we ought to be trying to target it to those folks who are having trouble sending their kids to college, having trouble paying health care, having trouble doing all sorts of other things as well. It seems to me what was missing as they put this thing together was some Democrat raising their hand and saying: Is this fair?

I wonder if the Senator from Iowa would agree with that sort of quick analysis.

Mr. HARKIN. I appreciate the Senator from Nebraska bringing that out because obviously this is a targeted tax cut. As the Senator just said, they have targeted it to the wrong people: not the kind of people and the families whose sons and daughters lost their lives in the Persian Gulf recently, not those, but to those with the highest incomes.

I know the Senator had the aggregate figures, but he mentioned the fact