
⁶⁹(...continued)

....

I believe the proposal such as the rural health care package and others are meritorious in their own right and can withstand the test of the normal legislative process, and they should. Reducing the deficit is a priority; the deficit keeps climbing, and we have not had much success in getting it down. I am not certain everybody in America understands all the inside baseball that goes on around here, whether they understand reconciliation and conference committees and motions to strike, but I do believe the American people recognize responsibility when they see it, and tonight they are seeing responsibility in action.

That is the whole purpose of this amendment. The authors will oppose any effort to add back individual provisions, and I certainly urge our colleagues to support those efforts. That does not mean that a provision that some Senator might have — and I will speak to this side of the aisle — will not be picked up in another revenue bill or in a separate piece of legislation. We are not here to pass judgment on what Senators may have in mind as far as legislation is concerned. On this package, it is going to be a reconciliation bill in the finest sense of the word.

....

Mr. SASSER. Mr. President, with this amendment we are firing a shot, I believe, for fiscal responsibility, a shot that I think will be heard throughout the corridors of this Congress. . . . With this amendment, we are putting a deficit reduction bill back in the category of being a deficit reduction bill. It is an amendment that sets this body's priorities straight.

What we are seeking to do is to remove from this reconciliation vehicle, all extraneous matter, everything that does not either reduce Federal spending or raise Federal revenues will be stricken. That is the purpose of a reconciliation bill. Extraneous matters have been accumulating on these reconciliation bills now for a number of years, to the point that they are on the verge of sinking the reconciliation bill, and in so doing, defeating the budget process.

At some point in the not too distant future, if we continue down the path that we have been going, the Parliamentarian, on a point of order, will be forced to rule that a so-called reconcil[i]ation bill is not a reconcil[i]ation bill at all, that it is simply a vehicle for so much extraneous matter that deficit reduction has become a subordinate and wholly incident[a]l purpose for which a so-called reconciliation bill will be offered in the future. I do not say that to impugn the worth of many extraneous matters on this reconciliation bill.

....

Mr. DOMENICI. . . .

....

There are a few things about the U.S. Senate that people understand to be very, very significant. One is that you have the right, a rather broad right, the most significant right, among all the parliamentary bodies in the world to amend freely on the floor. The other is the right to debate and to filibuster.

(continued...)