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Outside of being patently wrong, it is exceedingly damaging for these kinds of messages, in the face of what we are confronting as a people and a nation. That would be like, instead of saying to the Nation, as President Roosevelt did, that this day will live in infamy and charging the Nation for what it had to do—which was not a very pretty picture—to have traveled around the country and saying the world is in pretty good shape, those fellows are really nice guys.

You are robbing the people of the will that is going to be required to meet this test when you tell them things like this—we are actually running a surplus, if it were not for the debt.

And while they are saying this, they have already added $1 trillion in new debt or increased it by 20 percent. The incongruities of this message are befuddling.

But the real damage is if it misleads the American people.

I will give the other side this. We can argue about what priorities are. The priorities that I might feel important may be different from those of the Senator from Minnesota, who was on the floor the other morning while we were talking about these issues of debt. We can argue about what we believe more important or less important. But it is not debatable that the United States is expending moneys it does not have. We are piling debt upon debt. We have spent every dime we have and $5 trillion we do not have, and now we are spending the livelihood of our children and grandchildren and the clock is running out, Mr. President.

Everybody can contemplate 10 years from now. You are either moving into retirement or your children are about ready to go to college or they are looking for a job. They would be staring down the barrel of this great democracy having no revenues left to do anything. That is a serious problem. And it is going to take a serious response. The administration needs to recognize that. They seem to be in denial, sending budgets that accelerate the problem, saying things such as Secretary Rubin has just said here. This is what the President said before Emory University students yesterday, March 29: "After two years we have a reduction in the deficit of $600 billion for the first time"—much applause, and they would—"this is the first time since the mid-sixties when your Government is running at least an operating surplus."

An operating surplus, Mr. President? This is just staggering and stunning. So like I said, Mr. President, we have an enormous problem. The clock has run out. It has run out. We cannot pass this baton to anybody else. The living Americans, the caretakers of this great democracy, have it in their lap. We must confront it. We cannot ignore it. And worse, to mislead is so damaging, so harmful, because it is taking the will away. Everybody would much rather hear a rosy story.

I want to say, in conclusion, that my message is not one of gloom. We can turn this around. We can tighten our belts fairly. We can remove the obstacles to an expanding economy. That means get the taxes down, Mr. President, get Government regulation down.

If your prescription for America is to raise taxes, make more Government, and regulate our lives, and in the meantime, tell them messages like this, there is going to be a very serious day of reckoning, a very serious day of reckoning.

Mr. President, I invite the President to an economic debate. I can suggest to him that the empirical evidence is, through all of time, you have to keep taxes down, government down, regulations down, and let people go to work. That is the way to get out of this problem. You do not get there by suggesting to people, in the face of everything, we know that we are running an operating surplus. I yield the floor in total befuddlement.

Mr. COHEN addressed the Chair.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Maine is recognized.

(The remarks of Mr. COHEN and Mr. D'AMATO pertaining to the introduction of S. 648 are located in today's RECORD under "Statements on Introduced Bills and Joint Resolutions.")

Mr. LOTT. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that I have 10 minutes instead of the previous 5 minutes for morning business.

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

Mr. LOTT. Mr. President, I thank the Chair.

(The remarks of Mr. LOTT pertaining to the introduction of S. 647 are located in today's RECORD under "Statements on Introduced Bills and Joint Resolutions.")

Mr. KERREY. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent to speak for 15 minutes as in morning business.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator has that time in the previous order.

Without objection, it is so ordered.

TELECOMMUNICATIONS

Mr. KERREY. Mr. President, last week, the Senate Commerce Committee reported out a piece of legislation, the Telecommunications Competition Deregulation Act of 1995, that I consider to be a very important piece of legislation.

I have come to the floor here this morning, though, to alert my colleagues, who are also interested and excited about this legislation, that I think it would be very unwise for Members to rush the enactment of this bill.

I take that position not because I have major objections to the legislation. Indeed, I have been intimately involved not just with this bill, but 1822 and the farm team coalition that worked it, trying to make certain there would be universal service for high-cost rural areas.

I have been very much involved with the deregulation of telecommunications. I suspect I am the only Member of Congress who is actually able to say I have signed a significant deregulation act in 1985 when I was Governor.

The delay that I am suggesting, Mr. President, comes as a consequence of a very interesting, what I would call, disconnect.

Just last November I finished a successful reelection campaign. In meeting after meeting, in debates and so forth that we have when facing the voters, they were asking me about term limits, balanced budgets, health care, and agriculture policy. Crime, of course, dominated almost every discussion and debate. What are we going to do about crime?

I must say, Mr. President, that never in my campaign did the issue of telecommunications arise.

I say to my colleagues, as important as this legislation is, and I think it is an urgent and exciting opportunity here, the citizens, in my judgment, are not prepared for the change that this legislation would bring to them—significant change.

I suspect the occupant of the Chair can remember in 1983 when the divestiture occurred. I know in Nebraska, if I put it to the voters, do voters want to go back to the old AT&T or do voters like the new divestiture arrangement, a very large percentage would have said, "Give me the good old days." Because, all of a sudden, choice meant confusion, choice meant competition, choice meant a lot of problems that people were not prepared for.

The same, in my judgment, is apt to occur here. I believe that we need to come to the floor and argue such things as access charges, so we not only understand what an access charge is but what happens when the access charges are decreased, understand what happens when something called rate rebalancing occurs at the local level in a competitive environment—which I am an advocate of. Chairman PRESSLER and Senator HOLLINGS deserve an enormous amount of credit for being able to move this bill out of committee.

One of the things I brought in a focused way to this argument was the need to make sure we had straightforward competition at the local level. So when an entrepreneur comes to the information service business and wants to go to a household and sell information, and that entrepreneur buys his lawyers at $50 an hour, he should know with certainty they are going to prevail over a company that buys, at $500 or $1,000 an hour, its lawyers who have regular, familiar contact with the regulators. If we are going to have that competition, we need that level playing field for the entrepreneur. They need to know with certainty they are going to be able to offer their services to the customer as well.

But in a competitive environment, you cannot price your product below cost for very long. That is what we

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have been allowing for 60 years, basically. We used to have a competitive environment prior to 1934. The country made a conscious decision at the time that we wanted a monopoly, both at the local and long-distance level. We changed the law in 1934. We created a monopoly arrangement. And, as I said, people, I think, would be hard pressed to argue against the statement that it has resulted in the United States having the best telecommunications system in the world. Though monopolies in general do not seem to work, this particular one did.

We made a good decision, although it was unpopular, in 1983 to divest. The divestiture has worked in the context of providing competition in the long-distance area. We now see rates have gone down. We see increased quality. We see improvement as a consequence of this competitive environment.

But, again, to be clear on this, all of us should understand the implications of the statement that in a competitive environment you cannot price your product below cost for very long. What that means is that if I have a residential line into my home and I am paying $12 a month for that residential line and a business is paying $30 a month for the very same thing, we cannot, as residential users, count on that for long. If the price and the cost to provide that residential service is $14 or $15, we are not going to be able to count for very long on being able to get that service for $12. And many of our rural populations now enjoy $4, $5, $6, $7 a month for basic telephone service.

There are other issues that I think are terribly important for us to bring to this floor under the rules of the Senate, which allow unlimited debate. We need to have a debate. There is tremendous promise in telecommunications, promise for new jobs, particularly in a competitive environment, particularly from those entrepreneurs who are apt to create most of the new jobs. Those individuals who come in as small business people with a great new idea tend to be enormously innovative and competitive when it comes to pricing their good or service. I am excited about what competition is going to be able to do, not just for price and quality, but also for the creation of new jobs in the country.

There is tremendous promise, second, Mr. President, in our capacity to educate ourselves. I give a great deal of praise, again, to Senator PRESSLER and Senator BURNS and Senator ROCKEFELLER and others on the committee who put language in here to carve out special protection for our K–12 environment.

Some will say, why? If it is going to be market oriented, why would you do that? For the moment, at least, our schools are not market-oriented businesses. By that I mean they are government run. At $240 billion a year, about 40 million students at $6,000 apiece have to go to school for 180 days a year and learn whatever it is that the States have decided they are supposed to learn. It is a government-run operation. And they are going to be unable, if property taxes and State sales and income taxes are the source of revenue, they are going to be unable to take advantage of this technology. So I was pleased we carved out provisions for schools in this legislation.

We are going to have to debate how do we get our institutions at the local level to change. It is not going to be enough for us merely to change the Federal regulation, giving them the legal authority to ask their local telephone company for a connect and to get a subsidized rate. There is a need for institutional change, both at the local level and at the State level. There is tremendous promise, in my judgment, in communication technology to help our schoolchildren and to help our people who are in the workplace to learn the things they need to know, not just to be able to raise their standard of living, but also to be able to function well as a citizen and to be able to get along with one another in their communities.

Finally, there is tremendous promise with communication technology in helping a citizen of this country become informed. When you are born in the United States of America or you become a citizen of the United States of America through the naturalization process, it is an extraordinary thing to consider. We are the freest people on Earth. No one really seriously doubts that. And the freedoms that we enjoy as a consequence of being a citizen are very exciting.

But balanced against that, a citizen of this country also has very difficult responsibilities. It is a hard thing to be a citizen, a hard thing. Pick up the newspaper, and if you read a newspaper cover to cover today, you have processed as much information in one single reading as was required in a lifetime in the 17th century. We are getting deluged with information. Suddenly a citizen needs to know where is Chechnya, for gosh sakes? What is the history of Haiti, for gosh sakes? All of a sudden I have to know things that I did not have to know before. To make an informed decision is not an easy thing to do. This technology offers us an opportunity to help that citizen, our citizens—ourselves included, I might add—make good decisions.

That will necessitate institutional change, I believe, at the Federal level, but also at the State level to get that done. This, along with education, along with jobs, and along with the changes that our people can expect to have happen, need a full and open and perhaps even lengthy debate on this floor before we enact what I consider to be a pretty darned good piece of legislation.

The committee finished the bill. They are fine tuning it now. They have not actually introduced it yet or given it a title. I am very appreciative of the fine work that Chairman PRESSLER has done and that Senator HOLLINGS and other members of the committee have done to bring this legislation out. I consider it to be at least as important as many other things that we have debated thus far this year. Indeed, over the course of the next 10 years it is apt to be the most important thing that we do.

Therefore, I believe it is incumbent upon us not to just come here with an urgency to change the law, but it is incumbent upon us to come here and examine the law we propose to change and examine the details of the law as we propose to change them and engage the American people in a discussion of what these changes are going to mean for them.

Again, I have high praise for the committee and look forward and hope we have the opportunity to come to this floor for a good, open, and informative debate for the American people.

Mr. President, I yield the floor and 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. SPECTER. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the order for the quorum call be rescinded.

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Mr. COVERDELL). Without objection, it is so ordered.

THE NOMINATION OF DAN GLICKMAN

Mr. SPECTER. Mr. President, in a few moments we will be voting on confirmation of Dan Glickman to be Secretary of Agriculture. I compliment the President on his nomination for that position. I think that former Congressman Glickman is preeminently well qualified for that position.

I would like to say that I have known Dan Glickman since before he was born because we come from the same town, Wichita, KS. Actually we come from a number of towns: Wichita, KS and Philadelphia, PA. But at various times in my life I have lived in those places, and lived in Wichita. The Specter family and the Glickman family were friends for many, many years. In fact, my father, Harry Specter, was a business associate of Dan Glickman's grandfather, J. Glickman. Maybe that is too high an elevation. Actually, my father borrowed $500 from J. Glickman in about 1936 or 1937 at the start of a junk business. In those days my dad would buy junk in the oil fields of Kansas and ship them in boxcars, and ship them through Glickman Iron and Metal. And J. Glickman got the override on the tonnage. So our family relationship goes back many, many years.

My family left Wichita in 1942, a couple of years before Dan Glickman was born. So that I like to say that I have known Dan since before he was born. But I have certainly have known him for his entire lifetime. I have a very, very high regard for him.

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