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REGARDING S. 173, THE TELECOMMUNICATIONS EQUIPMENT RESEARCH AND MANUFACTURING COMPETITION ACT

Mr. WALLOP. Mr. President, yesterday the Senate adopted S. 173, the Telecommunications Equipment Research and Manufacturing Competition Act by a vote of 71 to 24. I voted against the measure because of my reservations about its domestic content provision. I regret that my friend and colleague from Texas, Mr. GRAMM, was unsuccessful in convincing the majority of the Senate that it was a mistake to retain such a protectionist measure.

As the Senator from Texas pointed out so eloquently, including a domestic content provision in a bill primarily intended to make America more competitive in the telecommunications industry flies in the face of common sense. Domestic content violates six treaties, is potentially unconstitutional, and is an inefficient way to do business.

For many, many years, we as a nation have worked very hard to open foreign markets to our products. We have made great progress in that regard, a fact boldly demonstrated by the rather dramatic reduction in our trade deficit. Nowhere is that reduction more obvious than in the telecommunications industry where we have a trade surplus of $1.3 billion in the high value lines and our overall deficit has dropped from $2.61 billion in 1988 to $790 million in 1990. Telecommunications equipment exports have grown 157 percent while imports have increased only 64 percent.

Yet, in our fervor to appease one particular special interest group—notwithstanding what its impact might be on the consumers of America—we make an agreement which has the potential for building a brick wall around our country and sends a signal to other countries that we aspire to anticompetitive practices.

Mr. President, we cannot have it both ways on trade. We cannot expect to close our doors to foreign products and anticipate negotiations will result in anything but reciprocal treatment. Therefore, I urge our House colleagues to inject some reason and good judgment into this domestic content dispute. My hope is that common sense will prevail so we can move forward with a bill that produces jobs, telecommunications industry growth, and sophisticated technologies that other countries now enjoy.

CONCLUSION OF MORNING BUSINESS

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The time for morning business has expired.

Mr. DOLE. Mr. President, is there any leader time left or did I use it all earlier?

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator has 2½ minutes remaining.

Mr. DOLE. Thank you, Mr. President.

CRIME BILL

Mr. DOLE. Mr. President, Americans want action in the war against crime. And they want it now. President Bush heard that message, and responded by proposing the Crime Control Act of 1991, and challenging Congress to take action within 100 days.

I am proud to say that the Senate also heard that message loud and clear, and next week we will consider crime legislation.

And I want to join my colleagues in praising Senator MITCHELL, Senator BIDEN, and Senator THURMOND, for their work in meeting the President's 100-day calendar.

Unfortunately, the members of the majority party in the House of Representatives have turned a deaf ear to the demands of the people. They have closed their eyes to the epidemic of crime which continues to sweep the Nation. They continue to believe that the best way to combat crime is to ignore it and the best way of handling criminals is to let them roam the streets.

I sincerely hope that next week's debate in the Senate will enlighten those who want to wave the white flag in the war against crime.

Next week's debate should not be lengthy. We have discussed and debated these issues before.

Thre are a number of crime bills floating around. But it is clear to me that the best bill, the hardest-hitting bill, the bill that will make the biggest difference, is the President bill.

No one can deny that our courts are clogged and overburdened. And the President's bill deals with this by putting a stop to repetitive and frivolous delays.

No one can deny that our courts all too often let the guilty go free because of minor procedural errors by the police. And the President's bill deals with this by permitting evidence collected in good faith to be introduced, and by allowing all firearms to be introduced as evidence, no matter how they are obtained.

No one can deny that one way to decrease handgun violence is to put those who use handguns behind bars. The President's bill creates additional categories of firearm offenses and penalties. And it says that first time felons caught with firearms should serve 5 years behind bars. No plea bargaining. No early release. No kidding.

And no one can deny that the vast majority of Americans favor the death penalty for the most heinous of criminals, such as cop killers and terrorists. And the President's bill does just that.

The President's bill also does more. It includes provisions designed to curb terrorism, racial injustice, sexual violence, and juvenile crime. It makes it easier for Federal officials to prosecute those who commit acts of sexual violence against children. It requires drug testing as a condition of postconviction release for Federal prisoners. It guarantees a victim's right to address the court at sentencing.

It is a good bill, a comprehensive bill, and a bill that will reduce crime, that will save lives, if it becomes law.

Given the situation in the House of Representatives, it is a tough fight. But it is a fight that we owe the American people. And it is a fight we cannot afford to lose.

DEMOCRATS ON HEALTH CARE

Mr. DOLE. Mr. President, yesterday the majority leader joined by four of his colleagues announced their solutions to certain aspects of the health care crisis confronting this Nation. They are to be commended for helping to begin and shape the long overdue debate on access to health care.

Frankly, Mr. President, there is little disagreement over the existence of serious problems. People are undoubtedly falling through the cracks—in fact, whole regions, particularly rural areas, are falling through the cracks. Children as a group are woefully underserved. Costs are too high and getting higher and the quality and appropriateness of some care is certainly in question. All of these things lead to the inevitable conclusion that the status quo cannot survive. Our disagreement—if we have a disagreement, and it is not a partisan disagreement as much maybe as a philosophical disagreement—comes over how best to proceed.

In the coming weeks and months many proposals will be discussed. And in fact, there is much in the Democrat's proposal worth discussing—there are other ideas, however, which clearly take us in the wrong direction.

PAY OR PLAY

As a number of my colleagues have already pointed out, the central focus I believe of the proposal are the so-called pay or play requirements. I, for one, see no reason to look to the State of Massachusetts for solutions to our problems. Yet, what the Democrats have proposed is largely the old Dukakis plan.

Now that the Federal Government is running in the red, and State governments are faced with budget deficits that rise each year, the Democrats are looking for a new pocket to pick, and small business will fill that role.

The proposed mandate on employers is, in effect, a heavy tax on jobs. As with any tax, the more Government taxes something, the more it discourages it. Taxing employment means fewer jobs.

The proposal pretends that it is employers who would bear the cost of the new mandates, but the costs really fall on the workers, particularly low-wage workers, the very worker who is most likely to lack health insurance. For these workers, the costs will come in

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