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DEBATE OPENS ON 2004 BUDGET BUDGET COMMITTEE ADVOCATES NEED FOR ECONOMIC GROWTH

WASHINGTON—Debate began today on the 2004 Budget Resolution, which provides Congress with a blueprint on taxes and spending as legislative decisions are made throughout the year.

The Budget Resolution puts priority on the nation's most critical needs first: protecting America at home and abroad, and job creation and economic growth. The Budget provides for an economic growth plan that would create 1.4 million jobs in 18 months and grow the economy by hundreds of billions of dollars.

Some highlights from today's debate:

Chairman Don Nickles on the need for economic growth, "I don't really believe that doing nothing is satisfactory. I guess we could just do nothing and just hope that maybe things will get better. But I think we should do something."

Sen. Mike Crapo on the need for economic growth, "There are those who have basically advocated on the floor today that we should not have any tax relief. There's another side of the argument, and that side of the argument is that unless we do something to give a basic boost, a shot in the arm, a revitalization to our economy, we will see that the grow back of this weakened economy will be much, much slower."

Sen. Mike Enzi on the President's growth package, "The President's economic proposal is the most effective engine for spurring growth. We need to aid the people and businesses who make up our economic machine and get it moving down the tracks at full speed again."

Chairman Don Nickles on the need to control spending, "It is also important to note that we constrain the growth of government under this budget. And I have no doubt that many people will be complaining about the budget and they'll be complaining about the deficit. But they'll probably be some of the same people who will be voting to increase spending far and above what is proposed in this resolution."