

Mr. CRAIG. Mr. President, I rise in support of the Conference Report for H.R. 1836, the Economic Growth and Tax Relief Reconciliation Act of 2001.

I commend the leadership and hard work of the chairman and ranking member of the Finance Committee, as well as the many colleagues who have actively helped shape this bill. This bill is a true accomplishment, and a truly bipartisan one at that.

As an adoptive parent, myself, I especially want to comment on one section: Section 202, for the extension, expansion, and improvement of the adoption tax credit and adoption assistance programs.

I am happy to note that this section is virtually identical to the Senate floor amendment proposed by the Senator from Louisiana, Ms. LANDRIEU, and myself. This is a perfect example of a bipartisan effort that will accomplish much good for so many people in need.

The adoption provisions include the following:

Extending the regular adoption tax credit, and the exclusion from income for adoption assistance programs, making them permanent, like the currently-permanent special needs adoption tax credit; Increasing both the tax credit and the income exclusion to \$10,000; For families adopting special needs children, de-linking the special needs credit from cumbersome and inflexible IRS regulations that currently exclude a wide range of legitimate adoption expenses related to these children; Protecting the benefit of the adoption tax credit by allowing the credit against the alternative min-

imum tax, permanently; and Making both the adoption credit and exclusion for assistance available to more families—and more children needing adoption—by lifting the cap on income eligibility to \$150,000.

It is not possible to overstate the importance of these provision to the many families and many children who have hoped to build an adoptive family, but have found so many barriers to doing so. In agreeing to include these provisions in this conference report, the Congress has taken a giant pro-adoption and pro-family step forward. More children will have loving and permanent homes. I thank my colleagues for that.

Overall, this bill signals a great day in America. The Congress has delivered the tax relief the American people voted for when they put George Bush in the White House, and elected this Congress.

There has never been a more important time to reduce the tax burden—right now Americans are more heavily taxed than at any time in history and pay more in taxes than they spend on food, clothing, and housing combined.

This tax relief agreed upon today is a quality example of how Republicans and Democrats can work together to get the job done for the American taxpayer.

This bill means relief for every American who pays taxes. Compared with their current tax burdens, this bill provides the most relief to modest—and middle-income families. It is good for small businesses and jobs, and it will help jump-start the economy at a critical time. This bill means hard-working Americans and their families will have a little more freedom, and the Federal Government a little less control over their lives.

I commend my colleagues for passing this bill, and I applaud our President for having the vision and tenacity to initiate this tax relief and see it through to becoming law.