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House of Representatives

The House was not in session today. Its next meeting will be held on Tuesday, January 9, 2007, at 10:30 a.m.

Senate

MONDAY, JANUARY 8, 2007

The Senate met at 11:30 a.m. and was called to order by the Honorable HERB KOHL, a Senator from the State of Wisconsin.

PRAYER

The Chaplain, Dr. Barry C. Black, offered the following prayer:

Let us pray.

Eternal God, who restores the soul and gives life in the midst of decay, empower our Senators to do Your will. Be to them a faithful guide on the challenging road they travel. Teach them to find contentment in striving to please You, and provide them with Your powerful companionship.

As tomorrow's difficulties loom large, remind them that You can move mountains and create opportunities. Blaze the trail ahead for our lawmakers with Your might and wisdom, for You are our shelter and hope. Keep them from flinching before the unknown ways that spread before them and give them Your peace.

We pray in Your holy Name. Amen.

PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

The Honorable HERB KOHL led the Pledge of Allegiance, as follows:

I pledge allegiance to the Flag of the United States of America, and to the Republic for which it stands, one nation under God, indivisible, with liberty and justice for all.

APPOINTMENT OF ACTING PRESIDENT PRO TEMPORE

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will please read a communication

to the Senate from the President pro tempore (Mr. BYRD).

The assistant legislative clerk read the following letter:

U.S. SENATE,
PRESIDENT PRO TEMPORE,
Washington, DC, January 8, 2007.

To the Senate:

Under the provisions of rule I, paragraph 3, of the Standing Rules of the Senate, I hereby appoint the Honorable HERB KOHL, a Senator from the State of Wisconsin, to perform the duties of the Chair.

ROBERT C. BYRD,
President pro tempore.

Mr. KOHL thereupon assumed the chair as Acting President pro tempore.

RECOGNITION OF THE MAJORITY LEADER

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. The majority leader is recognized.

SCHEDULE

Mr. REID. Mr. President, the time until 12 noon will be divided between the majority and minority. I know Senators LEVIN and STABENOW and SALAZAR want to make statements regarding President Ford. At noon we will have a rollcall vote on the adoption of S. Res. 19, which is a resolution honoring the late President.

Following that vote, we are going to begin consideration of S. 1, the ethics package. This will be for opening statements. The minority has agreed that we could go to this bill in the morning. I appreciate that very much. We are going to work through this bill as

quickly as we can. We would hope that people who want to offer amendments will be here tomorrow to offer amendments. The majority of the management of this bill will be by Senator FEINSTEIN, whose committee, Rules, has most of the jurisdiction. Senator LIEBERMAN will comanage it because there are some aspects of this legislation under the jurisdiction of his committee.

For the information of the Senate, there should be no other votes today after the 12 o'clock vote. Members are advised that the remainder of the week we should and will have rollcall votes during the day and into the evening. And we will have votes Friday. We hope to complete the voting by 12 noon if all goes right. But there will be votes Friday.

We will not finish this ethics bill this week, but we will finish next week, unless something untoward develops.

HONORING PRESIDENT GERALD FORD

Mr. REID. Mr. President, I never had the opportunity to meet with Gerald Ford when he was President, but I did when he was Vice President. I was chairman of the National Lieutenant Governors Conference. This was during the height of the energy crisis, and we came to Washington. One of the pleasures was meeting with the Vice President in the White House. That was really a big deal for me, a young Lieutenant Governor from Nevada. And a week or so after having met with the Vice President, he sent a picture to my home, a picture of me and the Vice

• This "bullet" symbol identifies statements or insertions which are not spoken by a Member of the Senate on the floor.



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President. That was really a significant event in the Reid family, but also my boy thought it was a significant event, and he took a crayon and marked all over that picture—my prized picture of my being in Washington, sitting with the Vice President. So my wife and I labored for some time and worked to get the crayon off that picture. We did a pretty good job. I still have the picture, but you can see my boy's marking on that with his crayon. I wish I had the opportunity to talk to the Vice President about that. I am sure he would have laughed.

President Ford was a wonderful man. We all know he died the day after Christmas. He was 93 years old. There were celebrations, as there should have been, in the Capitol Rotunda, at the National Cathedral, the Ford Presidential Library in Grand Rapids, MI, and the Episcopal Church in Grand Rapids, MI, where I had the opportunity to attend at the invitation of the former First Lady. The speeches were good. Former Secretary of Defense Rumsfeld spoke, President Jimmy Carter spoke, a noted historian spoke. It was really a quite moving event.

We have heard tales during the past couple weeks of Gerald Ford and the athlete he was. We have even read from Chevy Chase, who became famous literally making fun of Gerald Ford. He made fun of him because—he was a big man—coming out of an airplane once, he hit his head on the airplane door, and that was the beginning of Chevy Chase's career.

The fact is, even though Chevy Chase became famous making fun of President Ford, we have never had a more athletic President than President Ford—All-Big Ten; he was a great, outstanding football player at the University of Michigan.

As a Member of Congress, he was outstanding. He was praised by people who served with him. He served for about 25 years in the Congress and became the Republican leader. He, of course, was Commander in Chief as President of the United States. But one of the things we have learned so directly during the last couple weeks is how great he was to his wife Betty. She, during the time of their real public presence, had breast cancer and had a bout with alcoholism, and she approached both in a very strong, courageous way. The Betty Ford Clinic in Palm Springs is a place where people go to find that they are addicted and need help. But we have learned what a wonderful wife she was to President Ford and what a great First Lady she was to her entire country.

We have heard tributes from Senators, Governors, clergy, newsmen, and Presidents. They differed in tone and substance, but they all made the point of stressing one thing: Gerald Ford was, above all, a man of integrity, a man of honesty, and, ultimately, a role model for all of us who serve in Government.

He, of course, is the only man to become President who was never elected. Yet, time and time again, he proved himself the right man at the right time, healing the Nation after the scars of Watergate and moving our country forward.

Husband to his wife Betty, father to his beautiful children, Michael, John, Steven, and Susan, World War II veteran, star athlete, even an Eagle Scout—Gerald Ford was the core of what America is all about, a shining example of what we hold best in America. He took office at a dark time in our country's history and shepherded this Nation through the trials of Vietnam and Watergate, with a bipartisan spirit of reconciliation and grace, a shining example to us all. He reminded a wounded nation of the honesty and decency of its leaders.

Mr. President, we all hope when we pass on our friends and colleagues will look back and say we left the world a better place. With Gerald Ford, there is no doubt. This Government, this Nation, this world are better from Gerald Ford's life and service to our country, and for this the Senate honors his life today.

UNANIMOUS-CONSENT AGREEMENT—S. RES. 19

Mr. WARNER. Mr. President, do I understand from the distinguished majority leader that the resolution does include an insertion by the distinguished Senator from Michigan, Mr. LEVIN, and myself?

Mr. REID. Yes, I say to my distinguished friend. I ask unanimous consent that S. Res. 19 be modified with the changes now at the desk. This modification has been cleared by the Republican leader. That takes care of the problem the Senator raised.

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. Is there objection?

Without objection, it is so ordered.

Mr. WARNER. Mr. President, I thank the distinguished majority leader. Assuming we have time here—I am going to yield the floor to my leader—I will address that inclusion of the amendment.

RECOGNITION OF THE MINORITY LEADER

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. The Republican leader is recognized.

HONORING PRESIDENT GERALD FORD

Mr. MCCONNELL. Mr. President, many praiseworthy things have been said about Gerald Rudolph Ford over the past 2 weeks, and this is good. It is good to see so many people speak so well of a man who was often wrongly criticized in life, and it has been uplifting to watch an entire nation stop and reflect on what it means to live a good

life, good to see that old virtues still have the power to inspire.

Of course, Gerald Ford didn't seek out the Presidency, and certainly he came into the highest elected position in the land in the unlikely of ways.

I was recently reminded that his life didn't get off to the most promising start. Born Leslie Lynch King, Jr., in Omaha, NE, his mother and father divorced when he was 2.

His mother picked up and moved back home to Grand Rapids, where she married a paint and varnish salesman. Gerald Ford, Sr., gave Dorothy three more boys—and her first son a new name that he would carry into history.

The childhood home was pleasant, but since money was tight, Junior had to mow lawns and grill hamburgers after school.

The experiences of the boy had an effect on the man: Ford would later gain a reputation in Congress as a fiscal conservative, as someone who thought that Government, like any household, should live within its budget. He didn't learn this from a policy paper. He didn't need to.

We have heard that Gerald Ford was a great athlete, that he could have played with the Packers or the Lions, but he took a job as an assistant coach at Yale instead. And determined to go to Yale Law School, he convinced the faculty to let him on parttime. They did.

Gerry Ford once said:

The harder you work, the luckier you are. I worked like hell.

He ended up in the top fourth of a law school class that included a future Supreme Court Justice, a future Secretary of State—and a future President.

We have heard how President Ford signed up for the Navy after Pearl Harbor; that he put duty and country first, and nearly got swept off the deck of the USS *Monterey* in the middle of a typhoon. It wouldn't be his last brush with an early death.

And we have heard a love story: that Ford came home to Michigan after the war and married a pretty young dancer named Betty Bloomer; that he started to think about politics, and that Betty wasn't worried at all about it distracting from family life. "I never thought he'd win," she said.

But, of course, he did.

The Fords moved east, and decided to stay awhile, and stayed together through it all—until last week, when Betty, older now but no less graceful, said good-bye to her husband, the President, in the same church where they said "I do" 58 years ago.

We have been inspired by the story of President Ford's political career—how he didn't make a name for himself with high-profile speeches or partisan broadsides; how he did his job, and did it well, in big and little things.

He built a reputation as someone who could bridge the gap, who brought people together and worked problems out. Gerry Ford summed up his approach to lawmaking this way:

You have to give a little, take a little, to get what you really want. But you don't give up your principles.

All this is what we have heard about Gerald Rudolph Ford's life before the President of the United States called him at home on October 6, 1973, to see if he would be willing to replace a Vice President who had resigned in disgrace.

Congressmen all over Washington were sitting by their phones that night, hoping the call would come for them. Gerry Ford was swimming laps.

And 8 months later, when the President himself resigned, Ford was there again.

There's a plaque at the Ford library which says that Gerald Ford may have been among the unluckiest Presidents of the 20th century. Where I come from we don't call that luck. We call it providence.

As Ford himself put it: 1975 was "not a time for summer soldiers and sunshine patriots. It was a year of fears and alarms." Gerry Ford was the right man for the moment because he was a good man all along.

And what did he bring to the presidency? Exactly what we needed in that dark and painful hour: honesty, simplicity, and what he liked to call, "a little straight talk".

Ford's sincerity may have been his greatest gift, but it almost surely cost him the greatest honor the voters could have given him. He told them plainly, just a few months after taking the oath, that the state of the Union wasn't good.

He gave them bad news again the next year, an election year when most people would have been tempted to gloss over problems. The state of the Union was better, he said, but it still wasn't good enough.

And when he lost, he wasn't bitter. He even made a point to make sure the transition was smooth. He didn't want Jimmy Carter to face the same problems he did, he said.

I remember those days. I was a young lawyer in Ford's Justice Department. I remember how the new President restored hope in our country, in the presidency, and in the Republican Party.

I remember how he lost his own race for reelection but cleared the way for another great Midwesterner to win 4 years later.

This Nation has owed a tribute to Gerald Ford for a long time, and it is good that he has gotten it in these last days.

In weaker moments, we tend to think that victory goes to the fast, the brilliant, the well-born. But in one of our Nation's weakest moments, Gerald Ford showed us leadership through the gentlemanly virtues of honesty, integrity, and plain hard work.

The tributes now are almost done. But the greatest tribute we can give to Gerald Rudolph Ford lies ahead. The American people have shown how much they admire leaders who are honest, straightforward, kind.

In the early days of a new session, we best honor the memory of our 38th

President, and the Nation he loved and served so well, by making those qualities our own.

I yield the floor.

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. The Chair recognizes the Senator from Virginia.

Mr. WARNER. Mr. President, I thank our distinguished majority leader and minority leader for their initiative in putting this resolution together. I, also, thank both of our distinguished leaders for including in the resolution a reference to the action by the Senate, an initiative we took in the Senate Armed Services Committee at the time that I was privileged to be chairman and the distinguished Senator from Michigan, Mr. LEVIN, was the ranking member, to name one of America's future aircraft carriers, now under construction, the USS *Gerald R. Ford*. This initiative then was taken into consideration by the Department of Defense, the Secretary at that time, and, indeed, the Secretary of the Navy. The Secretary of the Navy has, traditionally, responsibility for the naming of ships. And whereas the Armed Services Committee recommended during floor consideration of the annual defense authorization bill that the naming be written in law, in conference, at the request of the Secretary of the Navy, we made it a sense of the Congress.

The Department of Defense will host a ceremony on January 16th, with the Ford family and others to formally name the ship in honor of President Ford.

I, also, thank Jack Marsh, former Secretary of the Army and former counselor to President Ford, for his participation in the effort by the Senate to take this initiative, as well as former Secretary of Defense Melvin Laird. I collaborated with both of those distinguished gentlemen. Secretary Laird was a lifetime friend and served in Congress with, then, Gerald Ford.

As we go forth in our careers, we always should look back to acknowledge those who made it possible for us to achieve our goals. I am always very humbled by the many people who helped inspire me to run for the Senate and who helped me win election. Gerald Ford was right there at the beginning of my first race with sound, practical advice.

I ask the indulgence of my colleagues where I recount some of that advice: It started, I remember, in the summer of 1960. I was an advance man for then Vice President Nixon. We were on a campaign train trip through the Middle Western States, that included a stop in Michigan. This was the old-fashioned train with the observation car, where the candidate would go out on the rear platform and give a speech to the crowds that gathered in all the little towns and communities along the route. But we had one very memorable stop, I remember the town was Muskegon, Michigan.

My job was to get the candidate, the Vice President, and some of his senior

staff off the train and to the auditorium in town. In performing these tasks, I was joined by an elected Michigan official. In a moment, I will provide his name. As we entered the building, we went into a holding area. I was awaiting a cue from the master of ceremonies on stage to bring on the Vice President. He was escorted by this local official. As we were waiting, unbeknownst to us, in the balcony, some mischievous people—I don't think it was evil, but it was mischievous—suddenly pelted us all with raw eggs. There we were, the Vice President with eggs streaming down off him. I took out my handkerchief and did the best I could to polish him up a bit, and the local official did the same. The Vice President went on the stage, fully composed, and gave an excellent speech.

I went back to the train thinking that I would be severely reprimanded and my first job in politics terminated. Well, it turns out that the local official who helped me get him up to the stage and who also helped to polish-up the Vice President joined me in the observation car, where they were serving beer. As he came in, I thanked him, but said: You know, I think this is the end of my political career.

And he said: Why so?

And I described my responsibility. And he then said: Well, of course, I am a local Congressman and I should bear the responsibility.

And we joined each other with a beer, he said to me: You know, I think both of us will survive.

That was Gerald Ford, showing the magnanimity of that marvelous man and his understanding of those types of situations.

I want to thank that wonderful American for his contribution to inspire me later in years to try for the Senate. He was then Vice President, and he used to counsel me on how to get started in public life. I was then Secretary of the Navy, having succeeded John Chafee, a former Member of this body, the much revered Senator from Rhode Island. And John Chafee had left the Navy Secretary's Office and ran for the Senate and was defeated in his first bid. And I was ready to plunge in and try my first race when Ford said to me: No, you want to kind of get behind you this career in the Department of Defense, because it was a highly controversial period of history. There was much concern among the citizenry, not unlike what we see today.

I took his advice. And he said: Go run the Bicentennial. I will get you appointed to that Presidential Office.

I said: Mr. President, I don't even know how to spell the word.

He said: Study up on it.

Not only did he do that, but he came down as Vice President and administered the oath to me on the steps of his beloved House of Representatives. The Bicentennial was a marvelous career opportunity to learn the fundamentals of public office. I worked with him

closely, took an enormous interest, as he knew the Bicentennial would become a healing mechanism for the country in the aftermath of Watergate. He was right. I traveled with him on July 4, 1976, in his helicopter, and we made stops along the way. I will never forget going to New York Harbor on the final day of the two year celebration. And there we were on the deck of a carrier. And he struck the ship's bell such that it triggered church bells all across the United States to celebrate that day in American history.

While we were standing there, he told me about his trip to sea in 1944. I read from his biography:

His closest call with death came not as a result of enemy fire, however, but during a vicious typhoon in the Philippine Sea in December 1944. He came within inches of being swept overboard while the storm raged. The ship, which was severely damaged by the storm and the resulting fire, had to be taken out of service. Ford spent the remainder of the war ashore and was discharged as a lieutenant commander in February 1946.

During the course of the war, he was awarded the Bronze Star, and other decorations for his valiant service. But I remember when I went overseas in 1951, as a communications officer for a Marine Corps squadron. We were aboard the same class of ship. It was a small carrier. We also went through a typhoon in the South Pacific en route to Korea. It was 72 hours of memory that will never be erased, but I know what he went through because I think that typhoon was far more severe than the one our ship experienced. So I take my hat off to this magnificent American, who was among those who made it possible for me, in many respects, to eventually be privileged to represent the State of Virginia in the Senate.

Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that a copy of the sense of Congress naming the CVN-78 aircraft carrier as the USS *Gerald R. Ford* be printed in the RECORD.

There being no objection, the material was ordered to be printed in the RECORD, as follows:

SEC. 1012. SENSE OF CONGRESS ON NAMING THE CVN-78 AIRCRAFT CARRIER AS THE U.S.S. GERALD R. FORD.

1. (a) FINDINGS.—Congress makes the following findings:

(1) Gerald R. Ford has served his country with honor and distinction for the past 64 years, and continues to serve.

(2) Gerald R. Ford was commissioned in the Naval Reserve in 1942 and served valiantly at sea on the U.S.S. *Monterey* (CVL-26) during World War II, taking part in major operations in the Pacific, including at Makin Island, Kwajalein, Truk, Saipan, and the Philippine Sea.

(3) Gerald R. Ford received 9 engagement stars and 2 bronze stars for his service in the Navy during World War II.

(4) Gerald R. Ford was first elected to the House of Representatives in 1948.

(5) During 25 years of service in the House of Representatives, Gerald R. Ford distinguished himself by an exemplary record for character, decency, and trustworthiness.

(6) Throughout his service in the House of Representatives, Gerald R. Ford was an ardent proponent of strong national defense and international leadership by the United States.

(7) From 1965 to 1973, Gerald R. Ford served as minority leader of the House of Representatives, raising the standard for bipartisanship in his tireless fight for freedom, hope, and justice.

(8) In 1973, Gerald R. Ford was appointed by President Nixon to the office of Vice President of the United States under the 25th Amendment to the Constitution, having been confirmed by overwhelming majorities in both Houses of Congress.

(9) On August 9, 1974, Gerald R. Ford became the 38th President of the United States, taking office during one of the most challenging periods in the history of the United States.

(10) As President from August 9, 1974, to January 20, 1977, Gerald R. Ford restored the faith of the people of the United States in the office of the President through his steady leadership, courage, and ultimate integrity.

(11) As President, Gerald R. Ford helped restore the prestige of the United States in the world community by working to achieve peace in the Middle East, preserve detente with the Soviet Union, and set new limits on the spread of nuclear weapons.

(12) As President, Gerald R. Ford served as Commander in Chief of the Armed Forces with great dignity, supporting a strong Navy and a global military presence for the United States and honoring the members of the Armed Forces.

(13) Since leaving the office of President, Gerald R. Ford has been an international ambassador of American goodwill, a noted scholar and lecturer, a strong supporter of human rights, and a promoter of higher education.

(14) Gerald R. Ford was awarded the Medal of Freedom and the Congressional Gold Medal in 1999 in recognition of his contribution to the Nation.

(15) As President, Gerald R. Ford bore the weight of a constitutional crisis and guided the Nation on a path of healing and restored hope, earning forever the enduring respect and gratitude of the Nation.

(b) NAMING OF CVN-78 AIRCRAFT CARRIER.—It is the sense of Congress that the nuclear-powered aircraft carrier of the Navy designated as CVN-78 should be named the U.S.S. *Gerald R. Ford*.

Mr. WARNER. I yield the floor.

Ms. STABENOW. Mr. President, I rise today to honor one of Michigan's great sons. Today we honor the remarkable life and lasting legacy of President Gerald R. Ford. I thank our leaders and colleagues for the wonderful tribute that will be voted on at noontime today.

This past week our Nation mourned the passing of a President, while Michigan mourned the loss of a family member. Throughout his decades in public service, including a quarter century representing Michigan in the Congress, Gerald Ford worked tirelessly to serve the people and the interests of our great State and his beloved country.

It is an honor that the State of Michigan will serve as the final resting place for one of our Nation's great leaders. The funeral last Wednesday, which I was fortunate enough to attend, was truly a moving tribute to a man who cared deeply for the city of Grand Rapids, his home State of Michigan, and the country. The thousands of mourners who came to pay their respects is evidence of what he meant to us. People standing in line for hours,

on into the night, and the wonderful, gracious way the family greeted so many of those coming to show their respect for Gerald Ford was a wonderful, meaningful act to watch.

I would be remiss if I didn't take the opportunity to speak about Gerald Ford's family. Betty Ford's grace and strength throughout the past few weeks have stood as a reminder not only of the importance of family in the life of Gerald Ford but also how much she has given to America through her courage, her example, and her charity. Betty Ford stood shoulder to shoulder with President Ford as a true partner throughout his life, while redefining the role of First Lady and serving the country with her own dedicated work on issues such as alcohol and drug abuse. Together the Fords raised four remarkable children—Michael, John, Steven, and Susan. It is a testimony to Gerald Ford's character that he will be remembered not only as a great leader but as a wonderful husband, father, grandfather, and great-grandfather.

Born July 14, 1913, in Omaha, NE, Ford moved at a young age with his mother to Grand Rapids, MI, to live with his stepfather.

While attending South High School in Grand Rapids, Ford proved himself an academic and athletic prodigy, being named not only to the honor society but all-city and all-State football teams.

In 1931, Gerald Ford entered the University of Michigan, playing center and linebacker for the Wolverines. He played on two undefeated teams and was named the team's most outstanding player in 1934. Ford's legacy will always be felt at the university. To this day, his number 28 is one of only 5 football jerseys retired by the University of Michigan, while the School of Public Policy bearing his name will shape and produce America's leaders for generations to come.

Gerald Ford's childhood in Grand Rapids and his education both on and off the field at the University of Michigan helped forge a man whose character and actions throughout his life exemplified what is best about Michigan—hard work, loyalty, honesty, and selflessness.

After graduating from Michigan, Ford rebuffed offers from the Detroit Lions and the Green Bay Packers in order to attend Yale University Law School. He continued his love of athletics there by serving as a boxing coach and assistant varsity football coach. In 1941, he earned his law degree from Yale, graduating in the top quarter of his class.

Gerald Ford then returned to the city he considered his home, Grand Rapids, to practice law before joining the U.S. Naval Reserve in April 1942, serving as an assistant navigator with the USS *Monterey* in the Pacific during World War II. Ford was discharged from the Navy in 1946 as a lieutenant commander, returning to Michigan to practice law.

Entering politics with the encouragement of his stepfather, Gerald Ford ran for Congress in 1948, unseating incumbent Bartel Jonkman in the primary and going on to receive 61 percent of the vote in the general election. Gerald Ford would go on to represent the people of Michigan in Congress for the next 25 years, in 1965 rising to become the minority leader in the House.

In late 1973, Ford was called on to serve the country in a different capacity, as we all know, being named and confirmed Vice President. Within 8 short months, he was again called on to take the mantle of responsibility he had not sought, taking the oath of office as the 38th President of the United States. Stepping into the Oval Office during one of America's greatest constitutional crises, President Ford's quiet demeanor and steady hand helped calm a nation and kept the Government moving forward during some of its darkest days.

It is a testament to President Ford and his time in public office, highlighted by his years in the White House, that even those who disagreed with his policy positions respected him as a person and a public servant. Gerald Ford dedicated his life to make our State and our Nation a better place to live, work, and raise a family. He was a man who understood that integrity and service are more than just words, they are ideals—ideals he learned in our wonderful Michigan and practiced every day of his life.

As a husband, a father, a Congressman, and our President, he led quietly by example, earning respect and friendship on both sides of the aisle through the hard work and honesty for which he was known. President Ford was a man utterly deserving of the words inscribed on a football resting on a home-made memorial outside the Ford Museum in Grand Rapids this week:

A true American and a hometown hero.

President Ford, we thank you for your service. You will be missed. Our continuing prayers and support go to your family.

Mr. COCHRAN. Mr. President, I am very pleased the Senate is formally expressing its respect and appreciation for the life and public service of President Gerald R. Ford.

No person in public service in my memory did more to restore confidence in our political institutions than President Ford.

He was a friend and mentor to me as a member of the body, giving me sound advice and serving as a wonderful role model during my career in Congress and in the Senate.

I admired him enormously. His seriousness of purpose and his common sense approach to solving our national problems were qualities that enabled him to give our nation a new sense of confidence and direction.

We are deeply grateful that he served so ably as our Republican Leader in the House, Vice President, and President of the United States.

Mr. OBAMA. Mr. President, I rise today in memory of Gerald Ford, the 38th President of the United States. President Ford shouldered his burden with a unique sense of humility and good humor, in an office not known for nourishing those traits. President Ford's unusual combination of courage, strength, and conviction led America out of a deep crisis, healing our wounds and strengthening our Constitution in the process.

Gerald Ford was a self-made Michigander who worked part-time jobs as a young man to help support his family, and later to put himself through Yale Law School. A man of many talents, he could have been a professional football player, or lived well as an attorney. But instead, he chose a life of service, first as a decorated naval officer, then a 24-year Member of Congress, leader of his party in the House of Representatives, and Presiding Officer of this Chamber as Vice President.

Domestic turmoil and foreign policy challenges marked the mid-1970s, and President Ford addressed them both. History has favorably judged his actions to move the country beyond the Watergate scandal, although he paid a heavy price at the time. He also acknowledged the severe economic difficulties faced by millions of Americans and worked head-on to alleviate them.

Despite the host of domestic challenges America faced, President Ford remained a committed internationalist. He advanced the cause of peace in the Middle East, helping to end hostilities between Israel and Egypt and laying the groundwork for a peace between those two countries that endures to this day. His backing of the Helsinki Accords, while controversial, gave important support to dissidents living under Soviet rule who sought respect for their human rights.

Throughout his life, Gerald Ford handled the responsibilities and challenges that circumstance thrust on him without losing his Midwestern openness and sensibility. To many who disagreed with him, he still came across as a comforting figure who had the Nation's best interests at heart. Central to this ability to connect with people was his self-deprecating sense of humor, summed up by the quip, "I'm a Ford, not a Lincoln."

And while he may not have been a Lincoln, he certainly was not a common President. America is a better place because of him, and we all owe President Ford and his wife, Betty, a tremendous debt of gratitude.

Mr. DOMENICI. Mr. President, I rise today to pay tribute to President Gerald Ford. His passing on December 26, 2006, was marked with a yearning for the unity he brought to our Nation over 30 years ago. I extend my sincerest and most heartfelt sympathies to his family.

Gerald Ford and I were in Congress together for a brief period of time. He was a friend to me when I was a fresh-

man Senator and throughout my career. I will always remember and appreciate his support and counsel.

President Ford came into office at a very difficult time and faced multiple tasks. He met those challenges and successfully brought the Nation through a tumultuous period in the history of the presidency. While his time in the White House was relatively short, his legacy continues to persist. President Ford's leadership and credibility worked to bring the Nation through the Watergate crisis and its aftermath. That proved to be invaluable and underscored the resiliency of our democratic government.

My wife Nancy and I send our condolences and prayers to First Lady Betty Ford and to the entire Ford family. We join the Nation in mourning President Ford and in honoring a long life of service. May his soul rest in peace.

• Mrs. HUTCHISON. Mr. President, I rise today to pay tribute to the 38th President of the United States.

Gerald Ford was an honest man, a modest man, and a patriotic man who cared deeply about this country. During World War II, he answered his Nation's call to duty, serving in the Navy aboard the USS *Monterey* in the Pacific Theatre. He later trained new naval officers for sea duty. Shortly after his discharge as a lieutenant commander in 1946, he began his storied political career.

During his 25 years of service in the House of Representatives, Gerald Ford earned the respect and admiration of nearly everyone in Washington. Gerald Ford's impeccable integrity made him the ideal choice to lead America at a time of considerable division.

When he was nominated by President Nixon to become Vice President, he was confirmed overwhelmingly by the Senate and the House. The Senate vote was 92-3, and the House vote was 387-35.

Before President Nixon submitted his nomination for Vice President, he asked the leadership of both parties who they would choose were they in his shoes. The obvious response was Gerald Ford.

When Gerald Ford assumed the Presidency following President Nixon's resignation, he moved quickly to bring our country together. He did this by always remaining true to his character. He also adhered to the common-sense principles that guided him throughout his career and his life. He never lost touch with his Midwestern values. And he never wavered from doing what he thought was in the best interests of the people of our country.

President Ford also attracted very talented employees. Among those who served in the Ford Administration were Alan Greenspan, Council of Economic Advisers; George H.W. Bush, CIA Director; James Baker, Undersecretary of Commerce; DICK CHENEY, Chief of Staff; and Donald Rumsfeld, Chief of Staff and later Secretary of Defense.

I had the pleasure of working with President Ford when he appointed me

vice chair of the National Transportation Safety Board in 1976.

President Ford was a reliable friend and invaluable counselor. I will never forget his coming to Texas to campaign with me during my first race for the Senate. President Ford was always available to offer advice and remained in close touch with those of us who were his many appointees, staff, and colleagues over the years. This is the kind of person he was. It was an honor and a privilege to consider him a friend.

He cared deeply for his family, for his loving wife Betty, and for his four children: Michael, John, Steven, Susan.

He cared for everyone he came to know during his magnificent political career.

My thoughts and prayers go out to Betty and the entire Ford family as we honor a public servant who gave tirelessly to our country. He will be missed.●

RESERVATION OF LEADER TIME

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. Under the previous order, the leadership time is reserved.

MORNING BUSINESS

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. Under the previous order, there will be a period for the transaction of morning business until 12 noon, with the time equally divided between the two leaders or their designees.

The Senator from Michigan is recognized.

GERALD R. FORD

Mr. LEVIN. Mr. President, I don't know if my friends on the other side of the aisle want any of the 3 minutes remaining. If not, I will proceed.

I wanted to comment, briefly, on the life and passing of Gerald Ford during this period. I was listening to the remarks of my good friend from Virginia, and except for the part about eggs being thrown in Michigan, it struck an absolutely accurate chord, everything he said. It was kind of hard to imagine that anyone would throw eggs in Michigan, but I have to defend my home State. Other than that, I am sure his memory is very accurate and even the location no doubt is accurate.

He talked about Gerry Ford and what he did heroically in World War II and how he survived the typhoon. Gerry Ford, when he became President, inherited a typhoon. Most Americans will remember President Ford for righting the ship of state during that stormy time when he became President. We all remember him for that because it was heroic what he did then for our Nation, a different kind of heroism from what he displayed in World War II but heroism nonetheless. He was deeply respected on both sides of the aisle for his civility, his bipartisanship, his integrity.

We, in Michigan, in addition to remembering him as all others will for what he did to right that ship of state of ours, also remember him for a lifetime of service, including 13 terms in the House of Representatives from Michigan's Fifth Congressional District. And we, also, take particular pride in this son of Michigan and the manner in which he always treasured his west Michigan roots. There were many eulogies that were recently given about Gerald Ford, but in all of them it was noted that he never forgot where he came from. That was a very important part of this absolutely wonderful man, a friend of mine, someone with whom I had a number of dealings.

Before time runs out for our morning business, I wanted to thank the Senator from Virginia. I don't know if this has been mentioned this morning or not. The Senator from Virginia authored an amendment during the last authorization bill which we adopted here which, by the way, is the John Warner Defense Authorization Act for the next fiscal year, named after JOHN WARNER in tribute to his chairmanship. But in that bill, Senator WARNER offered an amendment that would name the first of a future class of aircraft carriers the USS *Gerald Ford*. I understand that the Navy recently announced that it is going to follow the suggestion which was incorporated in the Warner amendment, which I was proud to cosponsor, but in presenting that amendment at that time, Senator WARNER recounted some of the heroism of our dear friend, the recently departed President Ford, and his heroism both in war and peacetime.

I thank Senator WARNER for the initiative he took to honor Gerry Ford's service to our country in a way which I think will have a very special meaning to President Ford because, as a Navy man, having the first of a future class of aircraft carriers named after him would bring a special pride to his heart.

Gerald Ford began his service to our country in the Navy during World War II, where he displayed great valor in combat, and this will be a fitting tribute.

Our thoughts and prayers are with Gerald Ford's beloved wife Betty and his family as we celebrate his life and legacy.

Mr. WARNER. Mr. President, I thank my colleague, and I acknowledge the Senator's help on that. It was a joint project by the two of us.

CONCLUSION OF MORNING BUSINESS

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. Morning business is closed.

HONORING PRESIDENT GERALD RUDOLPH FORD

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. Under the previous order, the hour of 12 noon having arrived, the

Senate will now proceed to the consideration of S. Res. 19, honoring President Gerald Rudolph Ford, which the clerk will report.

The assistant legislative clerk read as follows:

A resolution (S. Res. 19) honoring President Gerald Rudolph Ford.

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. The question is on agreeing to the resolution.

Mr. COCHRAN. Mr. President, I ask for the yeas and nays.

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. Is there a sufficient second?

There is a sufficient second.

The clerk will call the roll.

The legislative clerk called the roll.

Mr. LOTT. The following Senators were necessarily absent: the Senator from Tennessee (Mr. ALEXANDER), the Senator from Kansas (Mr. BROWNBACK), the Senator from North Carolina (Mrs. DOLE), the Senator from New Hampshire (Mr. GREGG), the Senator from Texas (Mrs. HUTCHISON), the Senator from Arizona (Mr. MCCAIN) and the Senator from Ohio (Mr. VOINOVICH).

Further, if present and voting, the Senator from North Carolina (Mrs. DOLE) and the Senator from Tennessee (Mr. ALEXANDER) would have voted "yea."

Mr. DURBIN. I announce that the Senator from Delaware (Mr. BIDEN), the Senator from Hawaii (Mr. INOUE), the Senator from South Dakota (Mr. JOHNSON), the Senator from New Jersey (Mr. LAUTENBERG), and the Senator from Vermont (Mr. SANDERS) are necessarily absent.

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Mr. MENENDEZ). Are there any other Senators in the Chamber desiring to vote?

The result was announced—yeas 88, nays 0, as follows:

[Rollcall Vote No. 1 Leg.]

YEAS—88

Akaka	Dorgan	Murkowski
Allard	Durbin	Murray
Baucus	Ensign	Nelson (FL)
Bayh	Enzi	Nelson (NE)
Bennett	Feingold	Obama
Bingaman	Feinstein	Pryor
Bond	Graham	Reed
Boxer	Grassley	Reid
Brown	Hagel	Roberts
Bunning	Harkin	Rockefeller
Burr	Hatch	Salazar
Byrd	Inhofe	Schumer
Cantwell	Isakson	Sessions
Cardin	Kennedy	Shelby
Carper	Kerry	Smith
Casey	Klobuchar	Snowe
Chambliss	Kohl	Specter
Clinton	Kyl	Stabenow
Coburn	Landrieu	Stevens
Cochran	Leahy	Sununu
Coleman	Levin	Tester
Collins	Lieberman	Thomas
Conrad	Lincoln	Thune
Corker	Lott	Vitter
Cornyn	Lugar	Warner
Craig	Martinez	Webb
Crapo	McCaskill	Whitehouse
DeMint	McConnell	Wyden
Dodd	Menendez	
Domenici	Mikulski	

NOT VOTING—12

Alexander	Gregg	Lautenberg
Biden	Hutchison	McCain
Brownback	Inouye	Sanders
Dole	Johnson	Voinovich

The resolution (S. Res. 19) was agreed to.

The preamble, as modified, was agreed to.

The resolution, with its preamble, as modified, reads as follows:

S. RES. 19

Whereas Gerald Rudolph Ford, the 38th President of the United States, was born on July 14, 1913, in Omaha, Nebraska;

Whereas Gerald Ford was raised in Grand Rapids, Michigan, where he was active in the Boy Scouts, achieving the Eagle Scout rank, and where he excelled as both a student and an athlete during high school;

Whereas after graduating from high school, Gerald Ford attended the University of Michigan at Ann Arbor, where he played on the university's national championship football teams in 1932 and 1933, and was honored as the team's most valuable player in 1934, before graduating with a B.A. degree in 1935;

Whereas Gerald Ford later attended Yale Law School and earned an LL.B. degree in 1941, after which he began to practice law in Grand Rapids;

Whereas Gerald Ford joined the United States Naval Reserve in 1942 and served his country honorably during World War II;

Whereas upon returning from his service in the military, Gerald Ford ran for the United States House of Representatives and was elected to Congress;

Whereas Gerald Ford served in the House of Representatives from January 1949 to December 1973, winning reelection 12 times, each time with more than 60 percent of the vote;

Whereas Gerald Ford served with great distinction in Congress, in particular through his service on the Defense Appropriations Subcommittee, of which he rose to become ranking member in 1961;

Whereas in addition to his work in the House of Representatives, Gerald Ford served as a member of the Warren Commission, which investigated the assassination of President John F. Kennedy;

Whereas, in 1965, Gerald Ford was selected as minority leader of the House of Representatives, a position he held for 8 years;

Whereas after the resignation of Vice President Spiro Agnew in 1973, Gerald Ford was chosen by President Richard Nixon to serve as Vice President of the United States;

Whereas following the resignation of President Nixon, Gerald Ford took the oath of office as President of the United States on August 9, 1974;

Whereas upon assuming the presidency, Gerald Ford helped the nation heal from one of the most difficult and contentious periods in United States history, and restored public confidence in the country's leaders;

Whereas Gerald Ford's basic human decency, his integrity, and his ability to work cooperatively with leaders of all political parties and ideologies, earned him the respect and admiration of Americans throughout the country;

Whereas the John Warner National Defense Authorization Act for Fiscal Year 2007 recommended that America's next nuclear-powered aircraft carrier, designated as CVN-78, be named as the U.S.S. Gerald R. Ford, in honor of our 38th President; and

Whereas Gerald Ford was able to serve his country with such great distinction in large part because of the continuing support of his widely admired wife, Elizabeth (Betty), who also has contributed much to the nation in many ways, and of their 4 children, Michael, John, Steven, and Susan: Now, therefore, be it

Resolved, That the Senate notes with deep sorrow and solemn mourning the death of President Gerald Rudolph Ford.

Resolved, That the Senate extends its heartfelt sympathy to Mrs. Ford and the family of President Ford.

Resolved, That the Senate honors and, on behalf of the nation, expresses deep appreciation for President Ford's outstanding and important service to his country.

Resolved, That the Senate directs the Secretary of the Senate to communicate these resolutions to the House of Representatives and transmit a copy thereof to the family of the former President.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The majority leader is recognized.

MORNING BUSINESS

Mr. REID. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that there now be a period for the transaction of morning business, with Senators allowed to speak therein for up to 10 minutes each.

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

Mr. REID. Mr. President, I further ask unanimous consent that Senator SALAZAR be recognized for up to 5 minutes, followed by Senator ALLARD for up to 5 minutes.

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

The Senator from Colorado.

Mr. SALAZAR. I thank the Chair.

(The remarks of Mr. SALAZAR and Mr. ALLARD pertaining to the introduction of S. 194 are printed in today's RECORD under "Statements on Introduced Bills and Joint Resolutions.")

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Maine is recognized.

Ms. COLLINS. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that I be permitted to proceed for 17 minutes.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Is there objection?

Without objection, it is so ordered.

Ms. COLLINS. Mr. President, before the two Senators from Colorado leave the floor, let me just indicate that the legislation they introduced to honor former President Ford would be referred to the Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs Committee, and as the ranking member of that committee, I wish to pledge my cooperation to them in moving this legislation. It is a fitting tribute.

Mr. ALLARD. I thank the Senator from Colorado. I appreciate all her fine work on that committee, and I really appreciate it for all the people of Colorado.

ACCESS TO AFFORDABLE HEALTH CARE ACT

Ms. COLLINS. Mr. President, last week, on the very first day of this new Congress, I joined with my colleague from Louisiana, Senator MARY LANDRIEU, in introducing the Access to Affordable Health Care Act. This is a comprehensive plan which builds on the strengths of our current public programs and private health care system to make affordable health care available to millions more Americans. It is similar to legislation we introduced in

the last Congress. I hope, given the urgency of dealing with the cost of health care and health insurance, that this will be the year this legislation moves forward.

One of my priorities in the Senate has long been to expand access to affordable health care. There are still far too many Americans without health insurance or with woefully inadequate coverage. As many as 46 million Americans are uninsured, and millions more are underinsured. The State of Maine is in the midst of a growing health insurance crisis, with insurance premiums rising at alarming rates. Whether I am talking to a self-employed fisherman, a displaced mill worker, the owner of a struggling small business, or the human resources manager of a large company, the soaring costs of health insurance are a common concern. These cost increases, double digit this past year, have been particularly burdensome for small businesses, the backbone of the Maine economy.

Maine's small business owners want to provide coverage for their employees, but they are caught in a cost squeeze. They know that if they pass on premium increases to their employees, more and more of them will decline coverage altogether because they simply can't afford their share. Yet these small businesses cannot continue to simply absorb the double-digit increases in their health insurance premiums year after year. The problem of rising costs is even more acute for individuals and families who must purchase health insurance on their own. Monthly health insurance premiums in my State often exceed a family's mortgage payment. Clearly, we must do more to make health insurance more available and more affordable.

The legislation Senator LANDRIEU and I are introducing is a seven-point plan that combines a variety of public and private approaches. The legislation's seven goals are, first, to expand access to affordable health care for small businesses; second, to make health insurance more affordable for individuals and families purchasing coverage on their own; third, to strengthen the health care safety net for those without coverage; fourth, to expand access to care in rural and underserved areas; fifth, to increase access to affordable long-term care, a major challenge as our population continues to age; sixth, to promote healthier lifestyles; and seventh, to provide more equitable Medicare payments to Maine providers to reduce the Medicare shortfall which has forced hospitals, physicians, and other health care providers to shift costs on to other payers in the form of higher charges, which, in turn, drives up the cost of health care premiums.

Let me discuss these points in greater detail.

First, expanding access for small businesses by helping small employers cope with rising health insurance costs. Since most Americans get their

health insurance through the workplace, it is a common assumption, but a false one, that people without health insurance are unemployed. In fact, as many as 83 percent of Americans who do not have health insurance are in a family with a worker or are working themselves. Uninsured working Americans are most often the employees of small businesses. In fact, some 63 percent of uninsured workers are employed by small firms. Smaller firms generally face higher costs for health insurance than larger companies, which makes them again less likely to offer coverage.

The legislation we have introduced will help these employers cope with rising costs by creating a new tax credit for small businesses to make health insurance more affordable. It will also encourage small businesses that do not offer health insurance to start doing so with the help of this tax credit, and it will help employers that do offer insurance to continue coverage in the face of escalating premiums.

Our legislation would also provide grants to provide startup funding to States to help businesses join in purchasing co-ops. These co-ops would enable small businesses to band together to purchase health insurance jointly, but this part of the bill does not preempt State law, so it is a different approach than some have taken.

The legislation would also authorize the Small Business Administration grant program for States, local governments, and nonprofit organizations to provide information about benefits of health insurance to small employers, including tax benefits, increased productivity of employees, and decreased turnover. These would also be used to help make employers aware of current incentives under State and Federal laws. It is an interesting fact that one survey showed that 57 percent of small employers did not know they could deduct 100 percent of their health insurance premiums as a business expense. I want to change that into a tax credit which is far more valuable, but many small businesses don't realize that there is a tax incentive even in our current tax laws.

The legislation would also create a new program to encourage innovation by awarding demonstration grants in up to 10 States conducting the innovative coverage expansions such as pooling arrangements or group market reforms, or subsidies to employers or individuals. We know the States are the laboratories for reform. Insurance is regulated at the State level. This would provide for some assistance in conducting some innovative projects to expand coverage.

The Access to Affordable Health Care Act would also expand access to affordable health insurance for individuals and families. One of the first bills I sponsored when I first came to the Senate in 1997 was legislation introduced by Senator HATCH and Senator KENNEDY to create the State Children's

Health Insurance Program, the SCHIP program, which provides insurance for children of low-income parents who cannot afford health insurance yet make too much money to qualify for the Medicaid Program. Since that time, this program has contributed to a one-third decline in the number of uninsured children in this country. Today, over 6 million children—including approximately 14,500 in Maine—are receiving health care coverage through this remarkably effective program.

Our legislation would shore up the looming shortfalls in the SCHIP program in 17 States, including Maine. We want to ensure that children currently enrolled in the program do not lose their coverage, and in order to achieve that goal, we need to make up that shortfall. Just prior to adjournment last month, Congress approved legislation which partially addressed that shortfall, but that provides only about one-fifth of the funds needed. Our legislation would help close that gap.

Our bill also builds on the success of the SCHIP program by giving States a number of new tools to increase participation. I won't go through all of the changes we would make, but let me mention one. We would allow the parents of those children enrolled in the SCHIP program to enroll in the health insurance program on a subsidized rate, depending on their income, if the State wants to take advantage of that option. The experts tell us that would help provide coverage for about 6 million more low-income Americans.

So what I am trying to do is take advantage of some existing programs such as SCHIP, expanding them, providing new tax incentives such as the tax credit for small businesses to help piece together a program that builds on the strengths of the existing program that still has a private sector approach and yet fills in the gaps in coverage and helps make health insurance more affordable. Part of that is providing for more funding for community health centers which operate in underserved urban as well as rural communities. They provide critical primary care services to millions of Americans regardless of their ability to pay.

We also know we need to deal with the problem of not enough physicians, physician assistants, nurse practitioners, and other primary care providers in underserved areas. We need to revamp the National Health Service Corps, which helps supply doctors, dentists, and other clinicians who serve in rural and inner-city areas. We want to revamp that program to make it more flexible. I was talking to physicians in Holten, ME, just recently who said that program used to be a source of physicians for rural Maine, but over the years it has become rigid and entrenched and not flexible enough and is no longer nearly as valuable as it once was. We would revamp that program.

As Senate cochair with Senator CLINTON of the bipartisan Congressional Task Force on Alzheimer's Disease, I

am particularly sensitive to the long-term needs of patients with chronic diseases such as Alzheimer's and of the impact on their families. Long-term care is the major catastrophic health expense faced by older Americans today, and these costs will only increase with the aging of the baby boomer generation—our generation.

I have been surprised that many Americans mistakenly believe that Medicare or their private health insurance policy will cover the cost of long-term care should they develop a chronic illness or a cognitive impairment such as Alzheimer's. Unfortunately, far too many do not discover they do not have coverage until they are confronted with the difficult decision of placing a much loved parent or spouse in a long-term care facility and facing the shocking realization that unless they have long-term care coverage, they have to cover the costs themselves. We need to encourage people to purchase long-term care insurance, to plan for this need.

The bill we are introducing provides a tax credit for long-term care expenses of up to \$3,000 to provide some help to families struggling with that cost, and it would encourage more Americans to plan for their future long-term care needs by providing a tax deduction to help them purchase long-term care insurance.

Health insurance alone is not going to ensure good health. As noted author and physician Dr. Michael Crichton has observed, "The future in medicine lies not in treating illness but in preventing it." Many of our serious health problems are directly related to unhealthy behaviors: Smoking, the lack of regular exercise, poor diet. These three major risk factors alone have made my State the State with the fourth highest death rate, due to four largely preventable diseases—or at least you can delay their onset—cardiovascular disease, cancer, chronic lung disease, and diabetes. These diseases are responsible for 70 percent of the health care problems in Maine.

Our bill, therefore, contains a number of provisions designed to promote healthy lifestyles. It includes, for example, grants to allow States to assist small businesses in establishing workplace wellness programs for their employees. It also authorizes a grant program to support new and existing community partnerships. There is a great one in Franklin County, in Maine. It is the Healthy Community Coalition, and it has made a difference in promoting healthy lifestyles.

Finally, the Access to Affordable Health Care Act will promote greater equity in Medicare payments and help to ensure that the Medicare system rewards, rather than punishes, States such as Maine that deliver high-quality, cost-effective Medicare services to our elderly and disabled citizens. The Medicare Modernization Act of 2003 and subsequent legislation did take some significant steps toward promoting

greater fairness by increasing Medicare payments to rural hospitals and by modifying geographic adjustment factors that discriminated against physicians and other providers in rural areas. Our legislation would build on these improvements by establishing pilot programs that reward providers of high-quality, cost-effective Medicare services.

The Access to Affordable Health Care Act outlines a blueprint for reform based on principles upon which I am hopeful that a bipartisan majority of Congress could agree. The plan takes significant strides toward the goal of access to health care coverage by bringing millions more Americans into the insurance system and by strengthening the health care safety net. Most of all, it helps address the No. 1 obstacle to health insurance—and that is its cost—through a variety of incentives.

Mr. President, I suggest the absence of a quorum.

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Ms. CANTWELL). The clerk will call the roll.

The legislative clerk proceeded to call the roll.

Mr. GRASSLEY. Madam President, I ask unanimous consent that the order for the quorum call be rescinded.

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

EXTENSION OF MORNING BUSINESS

Mr. GRASSLEY. Madam President, I ask unanimous consent to add time to the order for morning business so I can speak for 25 minutes.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Is there objection?

Without objection, it is so ordered.

MEDICARE PRESCRIPTION DRUG BENEFIT

Mr. GRASSLEY. Madam President, it is a very important issue that is going to be coming before the Senate very shortly, and it deals with the Medicare prescription drug benefit and whether the Government ought to negotiate prices as opposed to what is in the Medicare Part D bill. I wish to speak on that subject because this issue is very important to the seniors of America. It is important for the public and for Medicare beneficiaries to fully understand these proposed changes. It is equally important we explore in depth the effects these changes are going to have on this program and particularly the negative impact on the senior citizens of our country. So I am going to spend some time this week dealing with this issue.

First, everyone should recognize that political opponents of the drug benefit have, in every way, done everything they can to tear apart and denigrate this new benefit that the vast majority of seniors find to their liking, based upon a lot of different polls that have been taken over the last 7 or 8 months. In fact, the opponents of this legisla-

tion have done this ever since the ink was barely dry on the bill we called the Medicare Modernization Act of 2003.

First they said that no plan would offer—meaning no benefit plan; the people, the administrators of the program—that none of these plans would offer the new drug benefit in the first place, that eventually the Government was going to end up doing it. Of course, we know that is not the fact. The plan is up and running, and the plans are offering so many.

Then, after it was up and running, these opponents of the legislation said, well, there were too many plans. They said it was too confusing, seniors would not be able to choose a plan. But 91 percent of seniors are covered by some plan that has prescription drugs in it, and surveys show overwhelming satisfaction by seniors with their plans.

Opponents suggested plans could change their prices and the drugs they cover at the drop of a hat without even almost any notice. This did not turn out to be the case. The opponents tainted beneficiaries' views of the benefits before it even got off the ground. You wondered whether the millions of people who signed up would ever sign up, hearing so much negative stuff about it. But they did sign up.

And, as we have heard from the opponents over and over again, one of the biggest criticisms about the drug benefit is that the Government does not negotiate with drugmakers for lower prices. So they have gone to great lengths to make it sound as if nobody is negotiating with the drug companies. It is, of course, correct that the Secretary of Health and Human Services does not do negotiation with drug companies. But it is absolutely not true there are not negotiations going on with drug companies. People who say that are completely nonsensical in their understanding of the legislation or maybe they have some ulterior motive of wanting to continue to degrade and denigrate a piece of legislation that seniors have accepted.

The idea behind the drug benefit is that multiple drug plans would compete with each other to get the lowest prices from manufacturers, to be the best negotiator, and to offer beneficiaries the best possible drug plan.

The pattern for this was the 40-year-old Federal Employees Health Benefit Plan that has worked so well for Federal employees. We patterned this program, Part D, after that: plans negotiating for Federal employees, getting a good price; plans that have membership of senior citizens negotiating with drug companies to get the best possible price for senior citizens who are in a particular plan.

But the opponents of this legislation do not like plans negotiating. They think the Government directly can do a better job of negotiating because they have a belief about Government always doing good, Government always doing the best. Their faith is in big Government because they lack faith in

the American people. They find it very hard to believe anybody other than the Government could do a better job of negotiating.

Last week on the Senate floor, the senior Senator from Illinois said the law “took competition out of the program so that [the drug companies] could charge what they want.” Well, it did not take competition out of the program. Competition is what this program is all about.

In fact, the competition is working. Plans have no restrictions on the tools they can use to negotiate with drug companies. And, remember, these plans must be approved by the Secretary of Health and Human Services. Not every Tom, Dick, and Harry can go out and offer a plan and hoodwink seniors. There is control over these plans. But once the plan is approved, there are no restrictions on the tools they can use to negotiate. And, of course, this is very important because one thing we had learned is that Government is not actually a very good entity at figuring out what it should pay for drugs.

I have a chart in the Chamber with a quote from the Washington Post. They recognized this fact, that the Government cannot do a very good job of negotiating, where they said: “Governments are notoriously bad at setting prices. . . .” And then, as a matter of emphasis, it said: “and the U.S. government is notoriously bad at setting prices in the medical realm.” I will add to that: especially when it comes to medicine policy.

Now, we knew this because of the Government's experience for paying for drugs under another Medicare program, not Part D as in “Donald,” but Part B as in “Bob,” the one that pays for doctors. Those drugs are given during a physician's office visit, and they could be drugs such as oral cancer drugs.

Medicare payments for these drugs were based on what is called the average wholesale price. “AWP” is the moniker that is used for that. AWP is a little bit like the sticker price of a car. The sticker price on a car is not what you pay for the car. And the average wholesale price, AWP, is not what you pay for drugs. The joke was that AWP actually stood for “Ain't What's Paid.”

Over the past decade, reports issued by the Office of the Inspector General, the Department of Justice, and the Government Accountability Office found that by relying on AWP, Medicare was vastly overpaying for these drugs.

So the Federal Government sets the price, and we end up wasting a lot of taxpayer money under Part B with the few drugs that Medicare was paying for before we passed Part D.

Recommendations were made to change payments so that they reflected actual market cost. The Clinton administration tried to make some of these changes, but after push-back from providers, it backed off. Congress took another run at this issue in 2003 in

the Medicare Modernization Act, and we were successful. Congress reformed how Medicare pays for these drugs under Part B as opposed to the drug program Part D. Medicare now based its payments for many of these drugs on what it ought to, a market-based price. This change is already saving taxpayers and beneficiaries, but it took years to get fixed. All that time Medicare and taxpayers paid too much for these drugs. Billions and billions of dollars were wasted.

I compliment President Clinton for trying to do something about it, but he couldn't get it done. Congress had to act. But when we had all of this track record, as we were writing the prescription drug bill, I, for one, didn't want to repeat that experience under the Medicare drug benefit. We also knew that Medicare overpays for a lot of other services and equipment. The bookshelves are full of other reports from the Government Accountability Office, from the Inspector General, from the Medicare Payment Advisory Commission, from the Congressional Budget Office, and others, about how Medicare is paying too much in too many areas where the Government pays for health care through Medicare.

For example, Medicare overpaid for durable medical equipment for years until the Republican-led Congress made changes in 2005 in what we called the Deficit Reduction Act. In fact, just 12 months ago, now, that was a big issue before the Congress.

Each year, the Office of Inspector General issues its Red Book which presents cost-saving recommendations. The books are usually 50 or more pages long, and the recommendations span all aspects of Medicare—hospitals, physicians, home health, the Medicare Part D plans, among others. And this is more evidence on many areas where Medicare doesn't get the best deal, where the Government doesn't get the best deal. So Government doesn't always know best. In fact, the situation is so bad that several years ago, Congress created what is called the Medicare Payment Advisory Commission, also known as MedPAC, to provide advice to us in Congress and to the Center for Medicare Services on what we ought to pay for services. And every year Congress hears recommendations from MedPAC addressing Medicare overpayments; yes, trying to do something about wasting the taxpayers' money, paying more than we should for health care for our senior citizens.

But even though we have MedPAC, experts studying this, coming out with recommendations, it takes Congress or the Secretary of Health and Human Services far too many years to make the changes to save the taxpayers money—more evidence that Government doesn't always know best when it sets prices.

In making recommendations, MedPAC looks at profit margins as an example. One type of provider had been found to have a margin of 16 percent off

of Medicare payments. Congress has been able to act on many MedPAC recommendations, but it is not easy. There is always some special interest out there fighting saving the taxpayers money. As chairman of the Finance Committee, I received letters from Members saying, "Please don't cut benefits for this provider group or that provider group." So as the Clinton administration found, letters like that, where they come to Congress or to the administration, can make it difficult in very short order to solve a lot of these overpayment problems, despite compelling evidence of overpayment, despite the high profit margins, despite the fact that the proposed change could save the taxpayers billions of dollars.

The architects of the drug benefit—and I am one of them—were concerned that this same kind of dynamic would happen again. So 3 years ago, when we wrote the bill, we tried to deal with that problem. Political pressures on the Medicare drug benefit would tie the hands of the Secretary of Health and Human Services. If that happened, the program would be unmanageable, and the costs would skyrocket, just as they have in many of these other instances where the Government is setting the price. So, instead, Congress put competing private plans in charge of negotiating; again, following on the pattern of 40 years of the Federal Employees Health Benefits Program. So under the Part D Medicare prescription drug program, these health plans and their pharmacy benefit managers, because they have years of experience in this arena—it is what they do—they negotiate, and Health and Human Services has had very little experience and a very dismal track record in doing it.

These plans and managers have powerful bargaining clout in the market. They manage the drug coverage for tens of millions of people. There are plans that cover upwards of 50 million people—75 million in one case—far more than the 41 million Medicare beneficiaries. So, clearly, Medicare beneficiaries account for a large number of all prescriptions filled each year. Some might argue that 41 million beneficiaries have more clout than 75 million nonbeneficiaries. But numbers alone do not necessarily translate into lower cost. It is what is done to leverage those numbers that leads to lower costs.

That leverage comes from the plan being able to say to a drug company something like: I can get a better deal on a different drug that has the same clinical effect made by manufacturer Y. So thank you for your offer, but I am leaving the table.

Some plans get a better deal on drug A and put it on their formulary. Some plans get a better deal on drug B. But many experts agree, and experience suggests, that it would be difficult for Medicare itself to walk away from the table; in other words, the Government people doing the negotiating. There would be enormous pressure to cover

everything and, if it did, the negotiating power lies then with the manufacturers and not with Medicare.

In fact, in a November 2 Wall Street Journal editorial, Dr. Allen Enthoven, an economist at Stanford University, wrote:

When the government negotiates its hands are tied because there are few drugs it can exclude without facing political backlash from doctors and the Medicare population, a very influential group of voters.

Yesterday's New York Times quoted Dr. Alan Garber, the director of the Center for Health Policy at Stanford University, on the same subject. Dr. Garber said:

To obtain drugs at low prices, a purchaser must be able to say no to covering a particular drug.

He went on to say:

[I]f you cannot walk away from a deal, there's no way you can be sure of obtaining [the lowest possible] price.

Dr. Garber's point is exactly on point. The Medicare drug benefit recognizes that the Government would be a weaker negotiator. So as we set it up, it relies upon private sector plans to do the negotiating, as has been done for 40 years under the Federal Employees Health Benefits Program. We believed then that the private sector could be a tough negotiator, and we had a way to make competition work.

When Congress finished work on the new drug benefit in 2003, we knew it was an experiment. Nothing like this had been tried on this scale. Here is what we learned: Private competition works. It has been very successful in keeping costs down. These plans that negotiate their bids have come in lower than we even expected. This year they were down 10 percent from last year's bids. How many commodities do you see in America where you are going to find something 10 percent less this year than last year?

It happens that premiums are lower for people joining these plans; the premiums that they pay are lower than they were estimated to be. Before 2006, Medicare's chief actuary estimated that the average monthly premium would be \$37 a month. But because of competition, it was actually \$23 in 2006. That is 38 percent lower than expected. And because of the strong competition between plans, the average premium for beneficiaries is expected to be about \$22. That is \$1 cheaper this year than in 2006. The net cost to the Federal Government is also lower than expected. Just today the official Medicare actuaries are announcing that the net 10-year cost of Part D has dropped by \$189 billion over the original budget window used when the Medicare Modernization Act was enacted in 2003. That is, in fact, a 30-percent drop in actual cost compared to what was projected when the bill was being written.

Cost overruns is the name of the game with most people doing business with the Federal Government. In this particular case, this is an exception to cost overruns. This is where things are

coming in \$189 billion less than bureaucrats projected they would cost when the bill was written. Of course, States are involved in this as well because they had a lot of senior citizens on what we call Medicaid for low-income people. States are saving money in lower contributions. These are referred to as clawback payments. So State payments are now projected to be \$37 billion less over a 10-year period, and that is 27 percent lower than what we thought they would be when the legislation was written.

Just in the year 2006, the 50 States saved \$700 million. The plans are negotiating lower prices for drugs. Let's take the top 25 drugs used by seniors. Using them, the Medicare prescription drug plans have been able to negotiate prices that are, on average, 35 percent lower than the average cash price at the retail pharmacies. That is 35 percent lower. Some examples: Lipitor is 15 percent lower; Anetol, 63 percent lower; Norvas, 28 percent lower; Fosamax, 30 percent lower.

When the drug benefit was signed into law, we believed it would work. We believed it would hold down costs. That is certainly happening today, now going into the second year of experience with this legislation. At the time it was signed into law, we also said that if it did not work, if the negotiating model we wrote into the legislation did not hold costs down, then Congress would need to reexamine the whole setup. That makes sense. But if costs grew too fast, then the whole idea, obviously, would have to be revisited. Maybe we would have to restrict access to drugs. Maybe we would have to rely more on mail-order pharmacies, instead of liberal access to local retail pharmacies. Maybe more drastic cost-cutting measures would be needed. We thought of all those things as we were writing this legislation.

But as it turns out now, 3 years later, since the President signed the bill, that is not the case. Everyone has heard the old saying, "If it ain't broke, don't fix it." That certainly applies here, and the evidence shows it. I would be the first one to say the Medicare drug benefit is not perfect. There are improvements that can be made. The Senate version of the drug bill had some important features that I hope we can revisit at some point. Congress should look at ways to make it easier for low-income beneficiaries to get the additional assistance they need by eliminating the low-income subsidy asset tax. We need to look at payments to pharmacies and make some reforms in that area. We need to look at ways to simplify the enrollment process. And there are other areas, too, where we can make improvements.

But to emphasize one area that is working very well, it is the negotiating power of the Medicare drug plans. They have shown their ability to hold down costs, so it is working. The pleas from the drug plans' opponents to put the Government—because they believe in

big Government—in charge of negotiating are, quite frankly, about politics, not policy. These voices want to score political points with the drug benefit. It saddens me that we are going to start off this year with a new Democratic-controlled Congress playing politics with Medicare and raising issues that could harm our senior citizens as opposed to benefiting them.

But that is what this issue is all about; it is about politics. It is not about saving money because this program, through negotiations by the drug plans, is already saving money. It is surely not about improving the program. In fact, the Congressional Budget Office looked at the proposals made last year to have the Secretary negotiating drug prices, and they concluded they would not achieve any savings. So around here the Congressional Budget Office is like God. If they say something costs something and you don't have an offset for it, they are so much of a god around here, if you try to get it done, you have to have 60 votes to get it done. Now we have the Congressional Budget Office saying there are no savings, because the Government negotiates instead of having the plans negotiate. During the debate on the Deficit Reduction Act of 2005, Senators SNOWE, WYDEN, MCCAIN, and STABENOW offered an amendment to give the Secretary authority to negotiate with drug companies.

Here is what CBO said about that amendment: It would produce zero savings. So what is this amendment all about? If you are going to save senior citizens some money by having Government negotiate instead of the plans, you should not get a big zero out of the CBO.

I want to have a second chart observed by my colleagues. This is a person a lot of people 3 years ago were expressing was competent when he was judging that this bill would cost more than the CBO said it would cost, and that somehow the administration was playing games with these figures. All these figures ended up being too high because they are \$189 billion lower than they were saying they were going to be. There are no cost overruns in this program as in every other program. I am going to refer to the chief actuary for Medicare who examined these proposals we are talking about and having the Government negotiate. He came up with the same conclusion: Direct price negotiations by the Health and Human Services Secretary would be unlikely to achieve prescription drug discounts of greater magnitude than those negotiated by the Medicare prescription drug plans responding to competitive forces.

Competition in the marketplace is what getting the consumer the best buy for the money is all about. Every day consumers benefit from competition. We wrote competition into this program 3 years ago, and that competition is working for the seniors. Now we have people who want to come out here

and screw it all up for the senior citizens of America.

I hope we can put politics aside here and focus on some of the real improvements we could be making in the drug benefit program that I pointed out today that need to be made, and not deal with things that are working. "If it ain't broke, don't fix it."

Madam President, since no other Members are here, 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. DURBIN. Madam President, I ask unanimous consent that the order for the quorum call be rescinded.

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

TRIBUTE TO LINDA HAWKER

Mr. DURBIN. Madam President, I rise today to pay tribute to a great friend of mine, an amazing woman in Springfield, IL, a dedicated public servant, Linda Hawker.

After nearly 30 years in public life, Linda is retiring as Secretary of the Illinois State Senate and starting a new chapter in her life. Those who worked with Linda in the Illinois State capitol can tell you what an amazing difference she made in the office of the Secretary of the Senate. The job is a tough one. The hours are long. But Linda has worked tirelessly to serve the people of the Senate and the people of my State.

Linda is going to be missed. Linda and I started together working in the Illinois State Senate. I was fresh out of law school. She had just started as a secretary to one of the State senators back in the early 1970s. She was born and raised in Springfield. Linda is one of eight children. She worked hard throughout her life to raise her daughter. She graduated from Sangamon State University, now known as the University of Illinois-Springfield, with a degree in political studies.

Linda has worked so hard not only for the Senate but for many candidates for the Illinois State Senate over the years. She was the first woman to serve as Secretary of the Illinois Senate, the guardian of the public records of that institution. Before serving in that position, she was assistant secretary. Prior to that, she worked for the Senate Democratic leadership staff and served as special assistant to former Illinois Senate president Phil Rock.

As Secretary of the Senate, Linda is best known as the chief administrative and fiscal officer of the Senate. But those terms don't tell the whole story. She brought a state-of-the-art computer system into the Illinois State Senate to make it easier to track bills and debate them. She was also instrumental in the creation and development of the Illinois Women in Government Organization. In 2004, she was

honored by the Illinois Democratic Women with the Eleanor Roosevelt Outstanding Democratic Woman of the Year Award—an award presented to only one woman each year—for her work in grassroots politics. Linda is also a founder of the Illinois Women in Leadership Organization, which provides opportunities and training for women to become more politically involved in my State.

Linda is deeply involved in her community, having worked in a lot of organizations, including the Committee to Study the Honesty and Integrity of Springfield Elections, the University of Illinois at Springfield Alumni Council, the Springfield Urban League, and is a former member of the Executive Committee for the American Society of Legislative Clerks and Secretaries.

But if you ask those who know Linda well, they will tell you that her story should not just be told in terms of what she has done but the people's lives she has affected. She is known as the go-to person in my part of the world, especially if you want to run for office. She is known not just as a fabulous adviser and mentor; she is the hardest working person I have known in the political scene. She is not afraid to roll up her sleeves and get into the thick of it. Linda managed the campaign of Senator Penny Severns, whose life was taken away too soon by breast cancer. They were quite a team. Penny Severns won a district she was never supposed to win, and Linda was right by her side. She has always been a great person to talk to. She always had time to listen. To be Linda Hawker's friend is to know loyalty, honesty, a diligent worker, and the best kind of friendship.

Her leadership as both Secretary and Assistant Secretary of the Illinois Senate has been an example of quiet integrity to all of those, including myself, who have worked with her. She will start a new chapter in her life with retirement, but I know no matter what she does she will be successful.

Last night, they had a reception for Linda in Springfield and I was told by press accounts this morning it was one of the largest bipartisan turnouts in history, which she truly deserved. She was that kind of a person and still is and will be for many years to come. We hope she has many great adventures in the future.

Linda, congratulations for your hard work, and thanks for being my friend.

THE IRAQ RESOLUTION ON MILITARY FORCE

Mr. DURBIN. Madam President, it was just a few years ago—some days seem much longer—that we considered a resolution in the Senate to authorize the use of military force in Iraq. We cast thousands of votes. Most members of Congress cannot recall too many of them specifically, unless reminded. But you never forget a vote on a war because you know that, at the end of the

day, if you decide to go forward, people will die. It is your fervent hope that it will be the enemy, of course, but you know, in honesty, that it will be American soldiers and innocent people as well. So a vote on a war is one that Members of Congress—most every one of them—take so seriously. It costs you sleep, as you think about the right thing to do.

I can recall when the vote was cast on this war in Iraq. I sat on the Intelligence Committee for months listening to the testimony and all the evidence that was brought before us, listening behind closed doors to this classified information about the situation in that country, and then emerging from that Intelligence Committee and reading newspapers and watching television, saying the American people are not being told the same thing outside that room that I am being told inside that room. There were serious differences of opinion in this administration about whether there were even weapons of mass destruction.

At one point, we challenged the administration and said: If there are weapons of mass destruction, for goodness' sake, turn over some locations to the international inspectors. Let them find them. Once they discover them, it will confirm our fear, and other countries will join us in this effort against Saddam Hussein. But, no, they wouldn't do it. Although they told us there were hundreds of possible locations, they wouldn't turn over any specific location possibility to the international inspectors.

It raised a question in my mind as to whether they were very certain of any locations. And, if you remember, weapons of mass destruction were the centerpiece of the argument for the invasion of Iraq.

On Christmas Day many years later after that decision was made on the floor of this Senate, we learned that more Americans have now died in Iraq than died on September 11. Less than a week after that disclosure, on New Year's Eve, we marked a mournful milestone in the war in Iraq: the death of the 3,000th U.S. serviceman killed in Iraq.

Today, as I stand before the Senate, the Department of Defense reports that we have lost 3,014 American soldiers in Iraq. The 3,000th death is as tragic as the 1st death, the 300th death, the 1,000th death, but the staggering scope of casualties, the enormous toll this war has taken, must not be allowed to pass unnoticed.

America's service men and women are the bravest and best in the world. I know I say that with some patriotic pride, having been there to sit and have breakfast and lunch with them in Iraq, Afghanistan, and their other assignments. I just can't say enough about their courage and sacrifice, just ordinary, young-looking men and women who do extraordinary things.

This last October, with Senator JACK REED of Rhode Island, while sitting for

breakfast with a group of about 12 soldiers from Illinois, I went around the table: Where are you from? Downstate. Oh, you are from the suburbs of Chicago. Or, you live in the city. We talked about everything under the Sun. We talked about the Chicago Bears, the Cubs, the White Sox, and how things were going back home.

I asked them how things were going. They said: We had to get up early. We had to form an honor guard at dawn because one of our soldiers was killed in the middle of the night by one of these homemade bombs that takes so many lives.

I asked: How often does that happen?

Well, pretty frequently.

We know it does because we read the press accounts. We think of these young men and women and the challenges they face every single day as they risk their lives for America. We think about the families back home deep in prayer that their soldier is going to return home safely.

We owe them so much. We owe them our prayers and thanks for sure. But those of us in elected office owe them more than that. Part of what we owe them is a plan to bring this war to a close, a plan to bring them home safely, a plan to congratulate them as they return home for what they have given to this country.

Last March, President Bush was asked whether there would come a day when there will be no U.S. forces in Iraq. His answer to that simple question spoke volumes. The President said: That, of course, is an objective, and that will be decided by future Presidents and future Governments of Iraq.

Now we are told that in a few days the President will make a major policy announcement about this war. According to reports he is going to call for an increase, a major escalation of the U.S. troops committed in Iraq. The administration carefully has used the word "surge" to suggest this is somehow temporary, but we have to listen carefully when the President makes his announcement to see just how temporary it might be for the 10,000 or 20,000 or more American lives that will be at risk because of this decision.

Sending tens of thousands more troops to Iraq is not a change of course. It is not what our top military experts advise. In fact, they have said just the opposite. It is clearly not what the American people bargained for when they voted just a few months ago for a change in our direction in Iraq. It is literally and tragically more of the same. I think our troops deserve better.

President Bush has always said he will send more troops if the commanders in the field said they needed more. In December, General Abizaid, the head of the U.S. Central Command, testified before the Armed Services Committee. This is what the general said. The President told us he was listening to the generals:

Our troops' posture needs to stay where it is as we move to enhance the capabilities of the Iraq security forces and then we need to assess whether or not we can bring major combat units out of there. . . .

General Abizaid went on to say:

The ability to sustain that commitment [of 20,000 additional troops] is simply not something we have right now.

That was a statement made by General Abizaid just a few weeks ago. He is now moving on. He is being replaced. This was the advice of the leader of the Army and the Central Command in the field of battle. General Abizaid continued:

I met with every divisional commander, General Casey, the core commander, General Dempsey. We all talked together. And I said, "In your professional opinion, if we were to bring in more American troops now, does it add considerably to our ability to achieve success in Iraq?"

General Abizaid testified:

And they all said no. And the reason is, because we want the Iraqis to do more. It's easy for the Iraqis to rely upon us to do the work. I believe that more American forces prevent the Iraqis from doing more, from taking more responsibility for their own future.

Last month, the bipartisan Iraq Study Group, the group that was headed by former Secretary of State James Baker and Congressman Lee Hamilton of Indiana, offered a series of recommendations that they say could allow U.S. forces to largely redeploy safely out of Iraq by April 1, 2008. The President has made it clear—although he thanked the commission—that he doesn't share their feelings. He also apparently does not share the views of the Commission that the situation in Iraq is grave and deteriorating.

This war began with deception—a deception of the American people about the threat of weapons of mass destruction. It then moved into a phase of denial where we were told over and over: Oh, the Iraqi soldiers, the forces are just terrific; we are getting them ready to take our place there; we are going to stand down when they stand up. As violence ramped up dramatically, as more and more people died, including American soldiers, it went from deception to denial, and now we are in delusion, a delusion that somehow sending more American troops into the field of battle, putting them in the midst of a civil war that finds its roots in history 14 centuries old, that somehow placing our best and bravest soldiers, marines, airmen, and sailors in this crossfire of sectarian violence, putting more of them there, as the President is likely to suggest, is going to bring this to an end sooner.

I think the President is wrong, I think the Iraq Study Group had it right, and I think sending those troops in, as General Abizaid said, gives a message to the Iraqis that is completely wrong.

Think about this for a minute. We sent the best military in the world. They deposed Saddam Hussein, took him out of power in a matter of weeks,

dug him out of a hole in the ground, put him on trial which led to his execution. We then gave the Iraqis a chance to vote on their own constitution. We allowed them to form their own government. We have spent \$400 billion. We have lost 3,014 lives as of this moment, and the number, sadly, continues to mount. Twenty-three thousand American soldiers have come home injured, 2,000 of them multiple amputees, soldiers who are blinded, soldiers whose lives may never be the same. We have done all this for this nation of Iraq, and now what we ask of them is simply this: Stand up and defend your own country. If you believe in your country and your future, be willing to stand and fight for it. Be willing to make the hard political decisions to bring peace and stability to your country.

That is the message we should be giving them, but instead, this administration's message is we will send in more American soldiers, maybe 10,000, 20,000, 30,000. We will escalate this conflict. We will escalate our commitment. We will build up these forces.

According to two members of the Iraq Study Group who were present when the group met with the President in November, President Bush said he continues to use the word "victory" to describe the vision in Iraq because "it's a word the American people understand." The President said: If I start to change it, it will look like I am beginning to change my policy.

That is a staggering statement because, Mr. President, we do need a change of policy. We need to face the reality of what we are currently facing in Iraq.

There are other costs beyond what I have mentioned. There are costs that we feel at home. I voted against this Iraq war—23 of us did—but I voted for every single penny this President has asked for. My thinking on it is very basic and fundamental: If it were my son and daughter in uniform, I would want them to have everything they need—everything. I can quarrel with this President, debate him all day about the policy, but not at the expense of the safety of our troops.

The money we spent there—almost \$2 billion a week, over \$400 billion in total—is money that has been taken out of America, away from our needs at home, money that, sadly, has been piled up in debt as this administration refuses to even pay for the war they are waging.

We are currently spending about \$8 billion a month on Iraq—\$8 billion. We are going to be asked to come up with another \$100 billion soon and, sadly, that money we spent so far doesn't even include the cost of reequipping our Armed Forces or caring for our veterans who have come home. That is a long-term cost of this war that we will pay for decades to come.

What could we have done in America with the \$380 billion or \$400 billion that we spent in Iraq? We could have paid for all of the following that I am about

to list—all of the following: Health care coverage for all of the uninsured children in America for the entire duration of this war; 4-year scholarships to a public university for all of this year's graduating high school seniors in America; new affordable housing units for 500,000 needy families; all the needed port security requirements to keep our homeland safe; substantial new energy conservation programs. Or, we could have completely funded No Child Left Behind.

Remember that program where we tested our kids and found out they needed help and then the Federal Government didn't send the help? We could have done that.

Or, we could have provided savings accounts for low-income families preparing for retirement, or made a down-payment on reducing the alternative minimum tax.

From my State of Illinois, our share of the Iraq war comes to about \$19 billion. With that \$19 billion, we could have paid for 2.5 million Illinois children in Head Start, insured 11 million children for 1 year, paid the salaries of 330,000 teachers for a year, underwritten 170,000 new affordable housing units, and covered 900,000 4-year scholarships to public universities.

President Bush has the distinction not just for this policy in Iraq, but the fact that he is the first American President in our history who has cut taxes in the midst of a war. His tax cuts have benefited the wealthiest people in America and left the largest debt in the history of the United States, and every year we remain in Iraq we add \$75 billion to \$100 billion to that national debt.

Beyond the cost of human lives and dollars, there are strategic costs in this war. Our military is stretched dangerously thin. The National Guard units that have been activated have come home with less equipment. Today, in Illinois, we have about a third of the equipment we need to respond to another crisis either at home or overseas.

We also know that when it comes to combat readiness, there are no units prepared to go into war at this moment. We have stretched our military so thin. The costs of reequipping these units and rebuilding these services are enormous and go way beyond what we have already spent in Iraq. Investing U.S. troop levels in Iraq will almost certainly prolong our involvement in that nation. It almost certainly will make President Bush's statement that it will be up to the successors to bring our forces home a self-fulfilling prophecy. That is not what the American people voted for in November. Sending these troops to Iraq will send the wrong message to Iraq. It will signal that Americans will continue to bear the burdens of this war.

This year, the British, who have been the most cooperative in helping us there, are slated to pull their troops out. At that point, it will be virtually

an American struggle, with only a handful of countries remaining by our side.

General Casey, the commanding general in Baghdad, recently stated:

The longer we in the U.S. force continue to bear the main burden of Iraq's security, the longer it lengthens the time that the government of Iraq has to make the hard decisions about reconciliation and dealing with the militias.

General Casey also said:

It has always been my view that a heavy and sustained American military presence was not going to solve the problems in Iraq over the long term.

These are the generals President Bush said he listens to, and these are the people who are in command of our forces. These are voices which clearly disagree with the escalation of this war in Iraq.

Last week, America bid farewell to a good and decent man named Gerald Ford. I was honored to be at his funeral service in Grand Rapids, MI. He was a man who served at one of the most tumultuous times in American history. He inherited a war he couldn't win. Years later, when asked about that Vietnam war, President Ford said:

My approach was we inherited the problem with the job. It is my obligation on behalf of the country to try and solve the damn thing.

A generation later, our Nation faces a similar moment. We need to work together. We need to cooperate on a bipartisan basis to find a plan worthy of the courage and sacrifice of our men and women in uniform. It should begin now. It shouldn't be left to future Presidents.

If one reads the authorization for Iraq, one understands that the goals and missions of that statement for the use of force have changed dramatically. No weapons of mass destruction, no Saddam Hussein, no threat to America. It is time for us to announce that we achieved our goals in Iraq and now the American people need to hand this responsibility over to the people of that nation in Iraq.

Mr. President, I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Mr. PRYOR). The Senator from Florida is recognized.

Mr. NELSON of Florida. Mr. President, it is my understanding we have a 10-minute limit in morning business. I ask unanimous consent that I be allowed an extension of an additional 5 minutes, for a total of 15 minutes.

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

IRAQ STUDY GROUP RECOMMENDATIONS

Mr. NELSON of Florida. Mr. President, on the basis of the very kind comments of the Senator from Illinois and others, very reasoned comments, many of these comments having been stimulated by the Iraq Study Group, which Mr. Baker and Mr. Hamilton both made their first presentation to the Congress, to our Senate Armed

Services Committee, back in early December, there is a lot of wisdom in this. The members of this study commission are some of the finest public servants to have been produced in this country and who obviously have the interest of this country at heart and who are struggling through this thicket of unclear occurrences in the Middle East and Central Asia. The goal is to figure a way in which there might be a chance at stabilizing Iraq politically and economically so that country has a chance to continue to exist with a democratically elected government. Yet, at this point, it is certainly not clear that stability is going to materialize. We certainly hope it does because of the consequences for America and for the rest of the free world if Iraq crumbles into chaos.

Looming over that entire region is an ascendant Iran, an Iran that is penetrating its influence, not only through the Shiites in Iraq but through its efforts in other parts of the Middle East, through Syria, through Hezbollah in Lebanon, Hamas in the Palestinian Territories and as a result, we see the increasing influence of Iran and their brand of Shiite Islam. This is much to the consternation of a majority of the Arab world, in particular the Sunni Arab world as well as Israel.

In the 2 weeks preceding Christmas, I went on a visit to nine nations within a 12-day period, coming back just in time for Christmas. I was struck by the words I would hear from leaders in Israel where I first visited and the words I would hear by other Arab leaders, in some cases heads of state in Sunni Arab nations. Those words were almost identical in describing the real present and future threat posed by Iran. Of course, a lot of that concern was not only related to Iran obtaining a nuclear weapon but the immediate concern of Iraq spiraling into chaos, with no stability whatsoever, with the continued penetration by the Iranian Shiite influence.

I first went to Israel, and then continued on, visiting with the heads of state and the governments, in Palestine, and then on to Jordan, Syria, Lebanon, on to Qatar, Saudi Arabia, which, by the way, General Hayden, the head of the CIA, requested I go and spend time with the Saudi King, to urge the Saudis to exert their influence with the Sunni tribes in Iraq working towards reconciliation. I went from Saudi Arabia to Bahrain and then into Iraq. I have come away with a number of conclusions.

After visiting with the marines in western Iraq in Al Anbar Province, indeed a U.S. troop increase may well help us be better able to stabilize that part of Iraq. It is almost entirely Sunni, and the major threat there is al-Qaida, and of course the big military threat to us there is the IEDs, the improvised explosive devices.

I, along with Senator COLEMAN of Minnesota, as we were in Iraq together—and he can certainly speak for

himself, but I think we were persuaded by talking to the Marine commanders that an increase of some number of troops there would help them in what they are doing on a daily basis, which is trying to get the local Arab leaders to take over their own security. There is some degree of success in western Iraq but not in Baghdad. In Baghdad there is the sectarian violence that everyone has heard about.

What we were shocked to hear was from prominent Sunni members of the Government in Iraq, in Baghdad. One prominent, high-level Iraqi Government official, a shia, said to us: Sectarian violence is not the problem. Those were almost his exact words. In his opinion, the problem was the Sunni extremists, the Baathists who want to retain power, just like they had it in the old days under Saddam Hussein, and the foreign fighters from al-Qaida. For that high-level official to sit there and look two U.S. Senators in the eyes and say that sectarian violence was not the problem is either a complete misreading of the circumstances, the reality on the ground, or else his mind is so enveloped in sectarian violence and the old hatreds of the Shiites against the Sunnis and vice versa, those hatreds that are so ingrained that he can't see beyond that sectarianism.

So in a few days, we are going to receive the President's new plan. I look forward to seeing and hearing the details of it, but it is not a new plan because there is no plan now. We need some honest realism in the policy, not hardheaded ideology. This so-called new policy ought to be driven by realism. It is the situation on the ground in Baghdad that no surge is going to solve the problem. I think those who are leaking this report in advance of it coming out have it backwards. A surge to solve the sectarian violence is not going to work. We ought to have the sectarian violence subside because Iraqi Sunnis and Shiites decide that it is more in their interests to reconcile than it is to fight the old hatred fights. At the same time, it would be my recommendation, as the Iraq Study Group report has recommended, that we start moving more to a training mission from a combat mission. Only if the sectors decide they are going to reconcile, then we, the United States, can help them be better prepared in a training mission instead of a combat mission. It is my hope that the Saudis would utilize their extensive tribal Sunni contacts in order to urge those Sunnis in Iraq that the only way you are going to see a better end of the day is to have some reconciliation. And the Saudis told me that they are now starting to see this opportunity.

There have been things that have come out in the last couple of weeks that I don't think bode too well for us. The one general who, time after time, came before our Senate Armed Services Committee and in whom I had a degree of trust in what he was saying

was General Abizaid. Now General Abizaid is going to retire. He not only speaks the language, he has been involved in that region of the world for years, yet his advice is no longer going to be sought. That, to me, is a mistake.

What is at stake is the entire region with the Iranian ascendancy. What is at stake is the more than 140,000 American troops who are there now and all of those who will be rotated there in the future. What is at stake in the Middle East and central Asia is a part of the world of enormous importance to the United States.

It is hard to talk about this very difficult condition the United States is facing without also saying there is another policy we clearly ought to look at in order to make some changes to lessen our dependence on that part of the world in the future, and that is energy independence. If we did not have to import 60 percent of our daily consumption of oil from places such as the Persian Gulf region or Nigeria or Venezuela, wouldn't the defense outlook for the United States and the way we would approach our foreign policy in different parts of the world be considerably different and a lot easier for the United States?

As we eagerly anticipate the President's comments and his report on his new policy, let's understand there is not a new policy. There has not been a policy in the past. The idea that this surge of troops is a new policy is not new. We tried that before a couple of years ago and it did not work. It did not work because of the longstanding violence and hatred between those two groups of Islam which goes back to the 1600s, when the two brands of Islam started separating, and what ultimately came to be the Shiites separated from the Sunnis after the death of Mohammed. A separation, with the two sides wanting revenge is how this has played out over the years. It is still going on.

We have enormous stakes. We hope we can get it right. It is with a great deal of anticipation that I look forward to the Senate receiving the President's comments.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Michigan.

(The remarks of Ms. STABENOW pertaining to the death of President Gerald R. Ford are printed in today's RECORD under "Morning Business.")

Ms. STABENOW. Mr. President, I suggest the absence of a quorum.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will call the roll.

The legislative clerk proceeded to call the roll.

Mr. REID. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the order for the quorum call be rescinded.

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

AUTHORIZING SALARY ADJUSTMENTS FOR JUSTICES AND JUDGES OF THE UNITED STATES

Mr. REID. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the Senate proceed to the immediate consideration of S. 197, which was introduced earlier today.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will report the bill by title.

The legislative clerk read as follows: A bill (S. 197) to authorize salary adjustments for justices and judges of the United States for fiscal year 2007.

There being no objection, the Senate proceeded to consider the bill.

Mr. LEAHY. Mr. President, I thank Senator REID for expediting passage of legislation I introduced today with him and Senators SPECTER, REID, FEINSTEIN, and CORNYN to authorize cost-of-living adjustments for the salaries of United States Justices and judges for fiscal year 2007. This is a step I supported taking—and that we should have taken—in the last Congress. I am glad that a holdup on the Republican side that prevented us from passing this last week was resolved so that we could move forward in a unanimous and bipartisan way to take care of this unfinished business in the Senate. I hope that the House of Representatives will join us in making cost-of-living increase for judges an early item of business.

The legislation we pass today is a modest step towards addressing the issues raised by Chief Justice Roberts in his "Year End Report on the Federal Judiciary." I have commended the Chief Justice for speaking out on behalf of the judiciary and for seeking to strengthen the independence of the judicial branch. Judicial independence is critical for preserving our system of government and protecting the rights of all Americans.

In 1975, Congress enacted the Executive Salary Cost-of-Living Adjustment Act, intended to give judges, Members of Congress and other high-ranking executive branch officials automatic COLAs as accorded other Federal employees unless rejected by Congress. In 1981, Congress enacted section 140 of Public Law 97-92, mandating specific congressional action to give COLAs to judges. With the end of the last Congress, however, the continuing resolutions providing funding failed to suspend section 140, thus ensuring that no COLA would be provided for Federal judges during the current fiscal year, unless other action is taken. Four years ago, the last time Congress missed making a scheduled cost-of-living adjustment for the judiciary, I sponsored remedial legislation that was enacted. I have done so, again, in the hope that Congress will correct this slight.

The bipartisan legislation we pass today provides for a COLA for Federal judges consistent with the law and with fairness. I have worked hard as ranking member of the Judiciary Committee over the last 4 years to ensure the independence of the judiciary.

Some of us have tried over the years to improve the compensation of judges. I have sponsored bills for general increases in judicial compensation. One such measure did pass the Senate a few years ago only to be stalled by the Republican House leadership. Senator FEINSTEIN was the lead sponsor of such a bill last Congress.

I intend to do what I can to convince Congress to fairly evaluate this issue and the Chief Justice's arguments, so that we can see what solutions may be possible. I hope Congress and the President will reconsider a broader judicial compensation measure this year to adjust their salaries. We have taken a first step now by taking up and passing this bill allowing for the annual judicial COLA that was not enacted last year.

Mr. REID. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the bill be read a third time, passed, and the motion to reconsider be laid upon the table; that any statements related to this bill be printed in the RECORD. I also indicate this matter has been cleared with Senator MCCONNELL.

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

The bill (S. 197) was ordered to be engrossed for a third reading, was read the third time, and passed, as follows:

S. 197

Be it enacted by the Senate and House of Representatives of the United States of America in Congress assembled,

SECTION 1. AUTHORIZATION OF SALARY ADJUSTMENTS FOR FEDERAL JUSTICES AND JUDGES.

(a) IN GENERAL.—Pursuant to section 140 of Public Law 97-92, justices and judges of the United States are authorized during fiscal year 2007 to receive a salary adjustment in accordance with section 461 of title 28, United States Code.

(b) EFFECTIVE DATE.—This Act shall take effect as of January 1, 2007.

HONEST LEADERSHIP ACT

Mr. REID. Mr. President, tomorrow morning the Senate will begin the hard work of moving our country forward with S. 1. S. 1 is the ethics, lobbying, earmark reform legislation that will be before this body tomorrow.

After a long time, it seems, the new Senate has been sworn in. Our 10 new colleagues are here. Today we govern, and we start with S. 1. It is called the Legislative Transparency and Accountability Act. When passed, this legislation will help ensure America has a government as good and as honest as the people whom it serves. I want the record to be spread with my appreciation for Senator MCCONNELL cosponsoring this legislation. As the Chair knows and has worked so hard to promote bipartisanship, we cannot accomplish anything in this 110th Congress unless the legislative body works together on a bipartisan basis and sends legislation to the President that he will sign. Senator MCCONNELL set the right tone in agreeing to cosponsor this most important legislation. Again, I

appreciate that very much. It is good for the American people to see that the first piece of legislation being brought before this body is one that is cosponsored by the Republican leader and the Democratic leader.

In the weeks leading to this new Congress, we have heard Members from both sides of the aisle talk about bipartisanship. S. 1 will have turned that talk into action. This is a bipartisan bill cosponsored by the two leaders, as well as the chairs and ranking members of the relevant committees.

The designation of the bill as S. 1 has symbolic importance. Often S. 1 is a vehicle for the majority party to make a partisan statement to its base. I have asked my staff to ascertain the last time a bill designated as S. 1 was jointly sponsored by the majority and minority leaders. It has been 32 years. In 1975, majority leader Mike Mansfield and minority leader Hugh Scott jointly sponsored a bipartisan criminal justice reform bill. I am very happy to revive the Mansfield-Scott tradition, where we have leaders working together to move this country forward.

There are many reasons ethics reform is the first legislative item the Senate will consider. Most importantly, because no issue facing this body is more fundamentally important. Honest government should not be a partisan goal. It is the key to a strong nation. All our work this year is based upon what S. 1 is to the American people. When we make leaders accountable to the people, not the special interests or lobbyists, there is no limit to what we can accomplish. We can be energy independent. We can have affordable health care. We can build a strong economy and provide real security for our country. Each of these goals can be accomplished if we ensure that the people's needs, not special interest needs, are put first.

Ethics reform is also the first order of business because it is a clear priority of the American people. In election day exit polls on November 7, voters spoke loudly and very clearly about their diminished faith in government. Forty-one percent of voters named corruption as extremely important in determining whom they would vote for. Americans want us to purge the Government of undue influence, and they want us to eliminate the conditions that led to the scandal-making headlines of last year and 2005: headlines about officials being flown to Scotland for rounds of golf; headlines about committee chairmen negotiating lucrative lobbying jobs with the industries they oversee, while working on legislation important to those industries; and, of course, headlines about "pay to play" schemes such as the infamous K Street Project, where jobs and campaign donations were traded for legislation and other official acts.

A number of elected officials and lobbyists have been put in jail for their activities that showed a disrespect for the Congress and the country. The

American people simply have had enough. This is not the first time the Senate has considered ethics legislation. Last year, in the wake of the scandals of 2005, we debated and passed a reform bill in the Senate. Unfortunately, it fell victim to politics and never emerged from a conference committee, even though that bill passed on a bipartisan basis in the Senate. This year we are not going to let that happen. We will pass this bill, put it into law.

The House of Representatives has already acted on part of this issue, as their rules allow them to proceed faster than the Senate, and that is an understatement. I applaud Speaker PELOSI for making ethics reform a House priority. We will address many of the same issues here. But because of our rules, we will proceed at a much slower pace, not because we want to but that is how the Senate operates.

This bill will not be referred to the committees of jurisdiction. Senator MCCONNELL and I have decided to begin the debate with the same bill that passed this Chamber 90 to 8 last year. It has been through the committees previously, providing us with a strong starting point for action this year.

The reforms in S. 1 are very real, very strong. To begin, it prohibits gifts and travel paid for by lobbyists, such as Jack Abramoff's infamous trips around the world. Under provisions of this bill, no Member or staff would be able to receive any gift or take any trip paid for by a registered lobbyist. Next, this legislation will slow the revolving door that shuffles lawmakers and top staff between Federal jobs and the private sector. We all remember the case of the House chairman to manage the Medicare Part D bill on the floor of the House only to leave shortly thereafter to make \$1 million a year as president of the Pharmaceutical Research and Manufacturers of America. This bill will ban former Members from lobbying for 2 years, toughen lobbying bans already in place for senior staff, require public disclosure by Members negotiating private sector employment, and strip former Members who become lobbyists of their floor privileges.

Third, this bill will improve Senate procedures to make our work more transparent to the public. It will require full disclosure of earmarks. It will provide new tools to ensure that Members of Congress and members of the public have a chance to review bills before they are voted on. It will make it harder to insert new provisions in conference reports and hand out special favors in the dead of night.

Fourth, it will improve lobbying disclosures. Today lobbyists must file reports semiannually. Our legislation will require them quarterly. Not only that, we will post the reports on the Internet, and we will require lobbyists to include their campaign contributions and fundraisers. Those who don't follow the rules will be subject to stiff new penalties.

Fifth, this bill will make partisan efforts to influence private sector hiring, such as the K Street Project, a violation of Senate rules and mandate ethics training for all Members and staff.

The bill I have outlined, in a broad sense, is a starting point. If we did nothing else other than pass this bill, we would have enacted the most sweeping ethics reforms in a generation or more. But we will not stop with this bill that has been introduced. Very soon I expect to offer a substitute amendment that will strengthen this legislation even more. I hope to do that sometime tomorrow. Then we will have ample time for other Senators to improve the bill through further amendment.

Our two Democratic managers, Senators FEINSTEIN and LIEBERMAN, will oversee a strong bipartisan debate. And together we will pass the strongest Government reform bill to come out of the Senate since Watergate.

Some of the improvements I expect to be approved this week include extending the gifts and travel ban to companies and groups that hire lobbyists, not just the lobbyists themselves. I also expect we will approve earmark disclosure and that we will toughen penalties for those who set up fraudulent, corrupt lobbying schemes such as the ones Mr. Abramoff created.

We have tremendous challenges facing us this year, but our first is to restore the people's faith in their government. With the bipartisan reforms I have outlined today, we can accomplish that task.

There is no better way to start this new Congress than by showing the American people that we will answer only to them.

I suggest the absence of a quorum. The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will call the roll.

The legislative clerk proceeded to call the roll.

Mrs. FEINSTEIN. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the order for the quorum call be rescinded.

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

Mrs. FEINSTEIN. Mr. President, I believe we are in morning business; is that correct?

The PRESIDING OFFICER. That is correct.

Mrs. FEINSTEIN. What is the length of time for each Senator?

The PRESIDING OFFICER. A 10-minute time limit.

Mrs. FEINSTEIN. I thank the Chair.

LOBBYING, ETHICS, AND EARMARK REFORMS

Mrs. FEINSTEIN. Mr. President, the majority leader has asked if, as the new chairman of the Rules Committee, I would come down and briefly say a few words about the bill we will be placing on the floor tomorrow. That bill is S. 1. This bill has passed the Senate before by a vote of 90 to 8. It offers the opportunity for the Senate to come

together, in a bipartisan way, and pass lobbying reforms, some ethics reform, some earmarks reform, and take a real step together in an important way.

As we all know, the House has passed a set of rules, and so the conference is going to be an interesting one because the Senate will have its own bill. The House will have its own exclusive rules and hopefully will present some bill language from relevant committees in the House that we will be able to reconcile in the conference committee.

Tomorrow, with Senator BENNETT as the ranking member, as well as Senators LIEBERMAN and COLLINS, we will formally present this bill. I hope that the presentation will reflect our commitment to work together to see that the discussion is full, that we understand that there are differences of opinion within the Senate on some of the points, but that it is critically important that action be taken.

We all know what has happened this past year. We all know that the results of the election have indicated that corruption is an important concern of the electorate, some say the most important concern, even with Iraq, that was voted on in this election. So the voice of the people calling us to move ahead, pass legislation, and see that our House is clean and scrupulous is increasingly important. I believe we will measure up.

The base bill that will be on the floor tomorrow is identical to the bill that was passed last year. It came to the floor in the early part of the year and was then passed by the Senate. It was held up in the House over a difference of opinion on 527 reform. And from that point on, it was stymied and went nowhere.

It is also my understanding—and my staff has been a party to the discussions—that there will be a leadership amendment. That leadership amendment will be concurred in by the majority leader, the minority leader, the chair and ranking member of Rules and others. It will essentially toughen the bill that was presented last year. We will deal with a number of issues, including strengthening the earmark language.

Now, I want to make a couple of personal comments on earmarks. In my view, this is the most difficult part of the entire bill, to reconcile feelings, to be able to develop some form of a consensus. An earmark is an appropriation placed in the budget by Members of Congress. I believe earmarks should exist. We have big States, and I come from a big State of 38 million people. We pay far more in taxes than we get back in services. Therefore, to be able to place in the budget certain critical items that benefit California's infrastructure and California's programs is important.

I also strongly believe that my name should accompany the earmark. I have no problem letting anyone know what earmark I have suggested.

I strongly believe that—and this is where I think I probably differ from

some of my colleagues—if an earmark is added in the dark of night, if the earmark is not voted on by a subcommittee of the Appropriations Committee, it should be subject to a 60-vote point of order. Right now, rule XXVIII, according to the Parliamentarian, does not apply to earmarks *per se* but out-of-scope matters only—for example, ANWR. So I think the discussion in the ensuing week and a half is going to be an interesting one.

Secondly, are earmarks just non-Federal additions, congressional additions to a budget, or do they also encompass funds that go to State entities or private entities? As we work on this issue, I say to the Members that I would very much like to know your views. I would like to work with every Member. It is my intention as the new chairman of the Rules Committee to work openly and, hopefully, in a bipartisan way not only with the ranking member but with other Republicans and Democrats on that committee. The first hearing we will have in the Rules Committee will be on the subject of the past election—specifically, the undervote in Sarasota, FL, on certain items on their ballot, e-voting, and what we might be able to do to assure people who vote that their vote is recorded accurately; that there are actually no switchovers; that there is no difference between how you press the button and how your vote is recorded; and that you can corroborate with a paper trail that, in fact, that is the way you voted.

I come to the Senate floor to make very brief opening remarks and signal my intention to work with the Rules Committee on this bill in a bipartisan way and, hopefully, to make as much progress as we can.

I have been an appropriator for 13 out of my 15 years in this body. I have served in different capacities, as we all have. We work our way up through the chairs in Appropriations. I think the time has come for earmarks, and for holds as well, to stop the anonymity, give them the full light of day; for Members who produce earmarks to be willing to defend them and that when earmarks are placed in the dark of night by a Member, they would be subject to a 60-vote point of order.

I will say one other thing about holds. A hold is something that a Member does to essentially indicate that they have a concern about a vote. It is difficult, from a parliamentary perspective, to take action because you may just want to hold a bill so that you have an opportunity to read it, which would just be 24 hours or so. Or you may have some mischief in your mind when you produce a hold. I have seen holds that were put on virtually everything that came out of a committee because one Member wanted to make a point. I have seen Members put holds on every bill another Member had to make a point. It seems to me that along with the era of the anonymous earmark, the era of the anonymous hold ought to be put to rest with a big sign that says "rest in peace."

This is a new day. I do agree that transparency and full disclosure act in the best interest of this body. I look forward to presenting the bill tomorrow, along with Ranking Member BENNETT, Senator LIEBERMAN, and Senator COLLINS, and to the ensuing 6 or 7 days of discussion and amendments.

I want to ask one other thing, and that is that when the bill comes to the floor, Members come down and file their amendments so that in addition to the leadership-proposed substitute, we will have knowledge of what is about to come to the floor.

I yield the floor and suggest the absence of a quorum.

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Mr. NELSON of Nebraska). The clerk will call the roll.

The legislative clerk proceeded to call the roll.

Mr. ROBERTS. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the order for the quorum call be rescinded.

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

Mr. ROBERTS. Mr. President, I understand we are in morning business with Members granted approximately 10 minutes apiece, if they so choose; is that correct?

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator is correct.

Mr. ROBERTS. I thank the Presiding Officer.

WESTERN KANSAS SNOWSTORMS

Mr. ROBERTS. Mr. President, I rise today to call your attention to what can only be described as a major disaster in my home State of Kansas and surrounding States—certainly the State represented by the distinguished Presiding Officer—along with New Mexico and eastern Colorado, more especially in western Kansas.

In the last days of December, a large winter storm spread over 30 inches of heavy snow and up to 3 inches of ice in much of my State of Kansas.

As you can see from this picture of what used to be a row of electric towers—a very idyllic scene in Kansas, where we produce the food and fiber this Nation needs—and then from the following picture—I will take this picture down and basically show you what happened after the blizzard—of what remains, this storm has caused overwhelming destruction all throughout the region. There are 21 towers in this condition, as shown in the picture. These are major towers of power, of electrical grid that have been destroyed all across my State of Kansas, more especially in the western part.

As a result, 15-foot snowdrifts closed highways and left over 60,000 customers without power. Over 10,000 downed utility poles litter the area. We did not get that picture blown up in time, but it is a marvelous picture of a road—you can see the snow here—that goes by with a whole bunch of telephone poles snapped off like matchsticks. And that has happened all throughout that area. Residents who are lucky enough to have

generators are now paying up to \$50 a day for diesel fuel to simply generate electricity to stay warm, to exist.

What is more, the storm hit one of the largest concentrations of livestock in the State. Let me put up a chart that is going to be a little difficult to discern from the standpoint of what it portrays. For reasons you can understand when you look at this image, we have received numerous reports of animals like this calf—yes, this is a calf. You can see the calf's nose, and one eye here and one eye here. We do not know whether the calf made it, in that our producers are working overtime, our ranchers are working overtime to get food to their livestock herds. But in this particular instance, you can see what happens to an animal that is caught in these kinds of conditions—a rather sad scene, to say the least. Either they succumb to a lack of food or a lack of water or they suffer extreme weight loss.

(Ms. STABENOW assumed the Chair.)

Mr. ROBERTS. Madam President, what happens, as you well know, coming from the State you represent, is that you will have a thaw, but the thaw will only involve a couple of inches, and it turns to ice, and then below that mud. So if you have any livestock there, they are stuck. You could even put a bale of hay right next to them and they could not eat it.

So many economic livelihoods are in danger if Kansas farmers are unable to reach their herds of cattle or keep them fed. I take great pride in reporting that all across our State our producers are doing the very best they can under very difficult circumstances.

In light of the overwhelming destruction this storm has thrust on our State, 44 counties were immediately declared states of disaster. This comes as no surprise to those of us who have seen the damage this storm has caused or those of us who have gone through previous storms. I remember the one in 1973, which caused great damage, and we had to use Air Force planes with bales of hay to keep the livestock herds, at least to the extent they could be, from dying. However, what comes as a surprise to myself and many others is that FEMA has been unable to fully respond to our vital requests for assistance.

Last night, the President issued a major disaster declaration for Kansas, allowing the State access to two—two—of the seven—that is important: Two of the seven—major types of public assistance. However, he agreed with me, when I showed the President these images of our State a moment ago at the White House that the damage in the western part of our State goes far beyond something called “debris removal” and “emergency protective services.”

Furthermore, we have been told that debris removal does not cover the removal of snow. Now, wait a minute. If you are in western Kansas or you are out on the high plains and you have 30

inches of snow and 15-foot snowdrifts but you cannot remove the snow because it cannot be categorized as debris, how on Earth can you reach the debris that is underneath the snow? That seems to be a quandary or a question that is rather ridiculous under the circumstances.

While I understand that Federal officials must confirm a record or near-record amount of snow in order to expend Federal funds—I understand that—30 inches of snow certainly covers any other debris one could hope to clear, including the 15-foot drifts.

The bottom line is that the State of Kansas needs its Federal Government to assist in restoring power and clearing massive amounts of snow. And they need this assistance immediately—not next week, next month, or next year.

I have been told that meetings this week will determine whether Kansas qualifies for the remaining categories of public assistance. You remember that picture of the transformer, which I will put back up—and I will cover the picture of this poor calf—these are the kinds of things where we have to have public assistance; otherwise, you have local, small generators and people paying \$50 a day for diesel fuel just to keep warm. That is the kind of category of public assistance—I am not going to list all of them—we desperately need.

I can only ask on behalf of Kansans, who will have been stuck in the snow for 2 weeks by the time these meetings occur, that these decisions be made sooner rather than later. I have been informed just this morning by our FEMA Director, Mr. David Paulison—who wants to be of all possible help—that much work remains to be done between the State and also our regional FEMA officials.

I understand that. There are a lot of regulations. There are a lot of things Congress itself has put into the regulations in regard to FEMA help or State officials, that they must work through this. But the 850 people in Sharon Springs, Kansas, cannot afford to clear the 15-foot snowdrifts that are currently covering six blocks of Main Street. Their county of 1,500 people could not have known to budget for the 600 truckloads of snow they estimate it will take to clear just their Main Street, just that area. They estimate it would take that to do the job. They need their Federal Government's help, and they need their State and also regional FEMA help to expedite this process, which I understand is going to take place on Wednesday. Why it cannot take place before that I am not sure. And why the Weather Service cannot at least discern this was a major snow—a major snow of 30 inches and 15-foot drifts—is a little bit beyond me. We will keep working on that.

As each day passes that FEMA is not able to issue the remaining categories of assistance—I am not blaming FEMA. I know there is a process. I am not blaming the State. I know there is a process. But the people of Saint

Francis and the people of many other communities—county seat communities, noncounty seat communities, very small communities—need the assistance now.

I hope FEMA and our Government do not give the impression that it is entirely focused solely on large urban and suburban communities, or natural disasters that make the headlines, make the headlines, and make the headlines. Obviously, I am talking about hurricanes, I am talking about mudslides, I am talking about forest fires, I am talking about major disasters where FEMA does the best job they possibly can. We have come through a lot in the past sessions of Congress.

So I am asking our State officials and our FEMA folks here in Washington and also on a regional level to prove this is not the case by quickly providing all available Federal resources to support this effort in our heartland. And again, let's do it this week. Let's not wait until next week and the week after and a month after.

I thank the distinguished Presiding Officer and yield the floor.

Madam President, I suggest the absence of a quorum.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will call the roll.

The legislative clerk proceeded to call the roll.

Mr. REID. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent the order for the quorum call be rescinded.

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Mr. NELSON of Florida). Without objection, it is so ordered.

TRIBUTE TO BOB MCGOWAN

Mr. REID. Mr. President, I rise today to honor the accomplishments of Bob McGowan, the Washoe County assessor. Last year, after more than 24 years in office, Bob retired as the longest serving elected department head in the county. His personable demeanor and dedication to service will be missed.

Bob has been a resident of Nevada for more than 38 years. After working in the Nevada Attorney General's office, Bob made the first of many successful runs for elected office. In 1982, the citizens of Washoe County elected him as their county assessor. For more than two decades, Bob has presided over the growth of Washoe County. From the rising real estate values at Lake Tahoe to the rapid development in the city of Reno, Bob has sought to provide fairness for Washoe County residents.

Most importantly, Bob has never forgotten that the goal of elected office is service. After his election in 2002, he told the Reno-Gazette Journal: “From the first day I went in office, we've always been a public service organization, not just a property appraisal.” Under Bob's guidance, the assessor's office has become more responsive to Washoe County residents. For example, Bob moved the assessor's office into the digital age, and residents of Washoe County can now access many forms online. Bob has also worked to

save the taxpayers money, trimming his own budget to return more than \$2 million dollars to the Washoe County general fund.

As the county assessor, Bob has always been in tune with the issues of Washoe County. He has navigated controversies over rising property values with ease, taking the time to talk with the people he serves. To this day, residents are amazed that Bob is so approachable and accessible. He can quickly put a visitor at ease with his humble demeanor and his frequent jokes. In fact, I cannot recall a time that I have met with Bob when he hasn't told me a funny anecdote or story.

In addition to his professional accomplishments, Bob is a dedicated part of his community. He has served as president for Habitat for Humanity and as an executive board member of the alumni organization for the University of Nevada, Reno. Additionally, as the president of the Keep Truckee Meadows Beautiful organization, he led an effort to protect the pristine areas surrounding Lake Tahoe. While working to improve Washoe County, Bob also raised three wonderful children in Reno. A few years ago, I had the privilege to host his daughter, Megan, in my Washington office. A finer former employee does not exist.

Bob McGowan has been an important part of Northern Nevada for more than two decades. His retirement will leave large shoes to fill, but I am confident that Bob will continue to improve Washoe County for many years to come. It is my great pleasure to offer my congratulations to Bob and the McGowan family.

HONORING OUR ARMED FORCES

CORPSMAN CHRISTOPHER ANDERSON

Mr. SALAZAR. Mr. President, I rise to reflect for a moment on the service and sacrifice of Navy Hospital Corpsman Christopher Anderson of Longmont, CO. Corpsman Anderson was killed in Iraq last month in the volatile Al Anbar province in service to this Nation. He was only 24, and was laid to rest late last month in Arlington National Cemetery here in our Nation's Capital.

In Longmont, they bade farewell to Hospital Corpsman Anderson with all appropriate honors that this Nation, his community and his family could bestow: A Purple Heart and 21-gun salute, a release of doves, and hundreds lining the streets to pay their final respects to a young man taken from this life all too soon.

Serving as a Navy Corpsman with a unit of Marines is no easy task. The job dates back to the Spanish-American War, and is an incredibly dangerous job which entails carrying a loaded weapon along with the tools of your trade: Saving lives.

The marines I have had the privilege of knowing are all proud, brave and honorable men whose respect must be

earned through hard work. For a Corpsman, the title of "Doc" comes only when you have earned the respect of your Marine unit, when they are prepared to risk their lives for you as they would one of their own, because they know with absolute conviction that you would do the same.

One fellow Navy Corpsman reflected on the honor of this title, saying of the Marines, "If they yell, 'Corpsman up,' they know Doc is going to be right there. . . . When the Marines call you 'Doc,' you know you'll never let them down, you'll never leave their side. That bond between a Marine and a Navy corpsman is something that will last forever. We call them 'My Marines'—they call us 'My Doc.'"

Navy Hospital Corpsman Christopher Anderson was "Doc" to his marines.

For Christopher Anderson, service was always in his blood. He was an uncommon young man of steady nerves and a unique ability to inspire others to find greatness in themselves. When he graduated Longmont High School in 2000, he sought a way to make a difference in the world, and had considered becoming a police officer or firefighter. His grandfather observed, "If he saw a wreck on the side of the road, he was the first to stop and help."

And then in 2005, a higher calling of service reached out to Christopher: America. When Christopher enlisted in the U.S. Navy in August, 2005, he was the fourth generation of his family to join the service. And he carried on his family tradition with honor and distinction.

Throughout training and during his service, Hospital Corpsman Anderson met every challenge with excellence. At his boot camp graduation, Corpsman Anderson was voted by his peers the "honor graduate" of his class, the premier member of his class. He sought advanced combat medic training and volunteered for an assignment to the front lines in Iraq. When one of his sergeants was injured by an IED in Iraq, a surgeon commented that Corpsman Anderson's emergency medical treatment was the finest he had ever seen.

A marine will tell you that he will always take a bullet for his Doc, because his Doc is the only one who can take it back out. Hospital Corpsman Christopher Anderson sacrificed his life for this Nation because he knew that our Nation needed his service. He accepted these great risks with a smile and extraordinary courage from which all of us can take a lesson. He sacrificed himself for the ideals of his country. It is a debt which we cannot repay, and a loss we cannot replace. And we are all humbled by his service and sacrifice.

To Christopher's parents, Rick and Debra, his brother Kyle, I know that no words can describe or assuage the pain you feel. I pray that you can find comfort in the knowledge that Christopher was doing something which he truly loved, and of which he was extraordinarily proud. He will endure in our hearts and prayers.

LANCE CORPORAL NICKLAS PALMER

Mr. President, I rise to commemorate the life and service of a young marine from Leadville, CO: Marine LCpl Nicklas James Palmer. Lance Corporal Palmer was killed last month in Fallujah, Iraq.

Nick Palmer was only 19 years old when he was taken from his family in Iraq. But he was serving his Nation with honor and distinction as a marine, something he had dreamed of doing as a high school student in Lake County.

Nick Palmer came to the State of Colorado as a boy, and in 2005 when he graduated from Lake County High School, he was a man prepared to find his place in the world. In high school, Nick was a football player who lettered all 4 years with the Lake County High varsity squad, a lineman to be precise.

I have known a few linemen in my day, and it tells us all something about his character and why he was drawn to the Marine Corps: Nick Palmer was a man who knew that there was tough work to be done, that it required leadership, physical skill and courage and that he was the right man for the job.

The Marine Corps was a natural fit for Nick Palmer. It was physical and independent, and allowed him the opportunity to become a leader. In fact, Nick prepared for Marine Corps boot camp by taking 10-mile runs with a 40-pound pack on his back, determined to be the finest recruit at Camp Pendleton in San Diego.

That is a lineman's mentality, and it is the steel at the very core of the U.S. Marine Corps: Through discipline, one achieves excellence.

Nick Palmer was not solely a man of serious character. His family, classmates, teachers, and community all reflected that he was a young man who always had a smile for a friend and saw the laughs to be had in life. He was a loyal friend, an independent young man who was always prepared to lend a hand or take the lead.

Lance Corporal Palmer was anxious to get to Iraq, to begin his service to his Nation. His time with the Marine Corps was marked by his continuing leadership: Lance Corporal Palmer's commanding officer in Iraq noted that he was never afraid to step forward and say, "I'll do it."

It was that spirit that moved Nick Palmer to serve this Nation in the first place as a member of the U.S. Marine Corps. His character, leadership, and courage exemplified that sacred motto of the Marines: Semper Parati. Always Faithful.

To Nick's mother and father, Brad and Rachele, and his brother Dustin, know that you and Nick will remain in the thoughts and prayers of an entire Nation. We are honored by his service, we are humbled by his sacrifice, and we are forever grateful for his courage and character.

PRIVATE FIRST CLASS SETH STANTON

Mr. President, I rise to reflect on the loss of a Coloradan and member of the U.S. Armed Forces, Army PFC Seth

Stanton. Private First Class Stanton was fatally wounded late last month in Taji, Iraq, when a roadside bomb exploded beneath his vehicle. He was only 19 years old.

In June 2005, after graduating from Coronado High School in Colorado Springs, he enlisted in the Army. At the time the improvised explosive device destroyed the humvee in which he was riding, had been in Iraq for 2 months.

Seth Stanton was a young man who, as his uncle noted, lived every minute of his life to the fullest. He was an outstanding student who was skipped all the way up to the 12th grade, ahead of his age, after being home schooled for many years.

And he loved off-roading in his prized Jeep Cherokee with its heavy-duty suspension and oversized tires rumbling across our state's rugged terrain. He even bragged to his friends about how four fellow service members told him one day "how illegal my Jeep is."

As a man, Seth Stanton had many opportunities ahead of him. But instead of choosing to attend college or join the workforce, Seth Stanton chose a different path: the U.S. Army. Private First Class Stanton knew that his Nation, and the people of Iraq, needed his service and support, and he bravely stepped forward and volunteered for this challenging duty.

Private First Class Stanton didn't choose to follow this path, as his grandmother Georgell noted, out of politics or economics or some other motive. He chose it because he knew in his heart it was the right thing to do: dedicate himself to a cause greater than his own.

The tragedy of a life of such promise going unrealized affects everyone in this body, and in this Nation, but not as deeply or personally as it will move his parents Stephen and Anna or the rest of his family. Every American mourns your loss with you, and Seth's courage and sacrifice will be honored always.

Chapter Five of the Book of Matthew chronicles that, in his Sermon on the Mount, Jesus tells us, "Blessed are the peacemakers: for they shall be called the children of God." I hope that this brings you solace in the coming days, with the knowledge that He holds Seth close, and blesses his character and sacrifice.

STAFF SERGEANT DAVID STAATS

Mr. President, I rise to call the Nation's attention to a service member whom we lost late last month in service to our country.

Army SSgt David Staats was killed in Taji, Iraq, when a roadside bomb detonated beneath his vehicle. Staff Sergeant Staats epitomized the spirit of service to his Nation. He was only a few weeks into his third tour in Iraq. He was a young man, only 30 years old, with his entire life ahead of him. He leaves behind his wife Meagan, his 8-year-old son Tyler, and stepdaughter, Katie.

He heard the call to serve his country early on, enlisting in the Army before he even graduated from high school in 1995. After his second tour, in which he was stationed in Kuwait and Iraq, he briefly left the service. But soldiering was in his blood, the core of who he was, and he reenlisted after only a year away from the Army.

In his service in Iraq, Staff Sergeant Staats was upholding the global values of human dignity, freedom and liberty. He did so not for glory or praise, but because he had absolute confidence in his values and his mission to protect those who cannot protect themselves.

Staff Sergeant Staats' mother said it best: "He was doing what he thought he should do."

David Staats was a loving son, husband and father, too. He treasured the time he spent with his son Tyler and his stepdaughter Katie, and was an adoring husband to his wife Meagan.

President Abraham Lincoln famously once said, "In the end, it's not the years in your life that count. It's the life in your years." The loss of David Staats was sudden, and tragic. It reminds each America of the gravity of that which we ask of our service members, and the brief nature of our time on this Earth.

But in his service to our Nation and his family, David Staats lived a life of honor, courage, character and distinction to which every American can look with respect and admiration.

To Meagan, Tyler, and Katie, to David's parents Roger and Wanda, and his sister Bethany, I hope that this knowledge can help ease the painful sorrow each of you feel. While your anguish from his loss may never fully pass, I hope that you can take comfort in the knowledge that David's service and sacrifice on behalf of each and every American will be forever honored by a humble and grateful Nation.

RETIREMENT OF DR. PHILIP ROYAL SHIPP, JR.

Mr. GRASSLEY. Mr. President, I am pleased to speak today to honor the career of Dr. Philip Royal Shipp, Jr., a devoted public servant who has served the Congress for nearly 30 years at the Congressional Research Service, CRS. During his tenure at the CRS, Dr. Shipp has served in several key management and leadership roles, demonstrating extraordinary levels of competence, intelligence, and intellectual creativity in each of these positions.

Most recently, Dr. Shipp has served as the Director of the Domestic Social Policy Division. The Domestic Social Policy Division offers the Congress research and analysis in many programs and policies that under the jurisdiction of the Senate Finance Committee, including the Medicare, Medicaid, and State Children's Health Insurance Programs, as well as Social Security, pensions, welfare, child welfare programs.

I have been honored to serve as chairman of the Finance Committee for 4

years and am pleased to continue my service as the ranking Republican on the committee. Analysts under Dr. Shipp's supervision have worked closely with my Finance Committee staff, briefing them on complex programs and policies, helping them in the drafting of legislation and participating in Senate Finance Committee hearings.

We Members of Congress simply could not do our work effectively without the support we receive from organizations like the Congressional Research Service. There is simply no other organization with the reputation and the credibility of CRS. The work provided by CRS is always first rate, oftentimes quantitative and impeccably nonpartisan. Dr. Shipp, throughout his career, has embodied these characteristics.

Dr. Shipp began his Federal service in 1964 as an economist with the Federal Reserve. He was subsequently a program analyst with the Office of Management and Budget and later the Acting Administrator of the Food and Nutrition Service. Dr. Shipp made significant contributions to the Food and Nutrition Service, including an expanded view of the public policy purposes of food assistance programs such as food stamps. He also was instrumental in establishing and expanding the agency's in-house capacity to analyze programs, study their effects, and estimate the impact of legislative and regulatory changes.

Dr. Shipp joined the Congressional Research Service in 1977 as a Senior Specialist in Social Legislation in the former Education and Public Welfare, EPW, Division. He spent a significant part of the next decade leading teams of CRS analysts in high-level, committee-requested, legislatively relevant research studies focused on health and income issues. Topics included health insurance for the uninsured, retirement income for an aging population, and work incentives in income support programs. Under Dr. Shipp's direction, CRS developed a framework and quantitative model to compare legislative options for a new retirement system for Federal workers; this model was used in the development of the Federal employee retirement system that is in place today. During this period, in 1984, Dr. Shipp also served as Executive Director of the Congressional Panel on Social Security Organization, which was charged with developing an organizational and management framework for an independent agency for Social Security. The panel's principal recommendations were reflected in the legislation that eventually created the independent Social Security Administration.

In 1989, Dr. Shipp became Associate Director of CRS for Research Planning and Coordination, where he guided efforts to evaluate and improve CRS services and operations and led several of the agency's first strategic management reviews. He returned to EPW as

Division Chief in 1994 and became head of the expanded Domestic Social Policy Division in 1999. As Assistant Director for Domestic Social Policy, the largest research division within CRS, Dr. Shipp emphasized the building of analytic capacities, with a special focus on empirical analysis, as a way to enhance CRS' legislative support to Congress. He was instrumental in building CRS capacities in all areas of domestic social policy, in particular health policy analysis, Social Security and disability analysis, homeland and border security, public health preparedness, and housing and welfare policy. He organized and staffed the division to respond to new challenges, in particular the heightened need for expertise in domestic intelligence and counterterrorism after the attacks of September 11, 2001. Dr. Shipp also conceived and implemented an initiative to enhance CRS' strong analytic work in issues associated with the aging of the population, by expanding the division's staff to include new analysts with expertise in specific relevant disciplines. Under Dr. Shipp's leadership, CRS also obtained and developed the capacity to use a micro-simulation model for analysis of the distributional impact of alternative policy options for Social Security reform.

I am informed that Dr. Shipp was an exceptional manager with a clear vision of how CRS should be of service to the Congress. He leaves a strong legacy that will have a profound effect on the Congress for years to come. I know that my colleagues join me in thanking him for his service and wishing him well as he embarks on new challenges ahead.

VERMONT COMPANY BRIDGES THE DIGITAL DIVIDE

Mr. LEAHY. Mr. President, today I wish to tell my colleagues in the Senate about a family-owned telephone business in Vermont that has once again led the industry in customer service and technological advances. Waitsfield and Champlain Valley Telecom has successfully delivered high-speed broadband Internet service capability by way of Digital Subscriber Line, DSL, technology to every single one of its customers something most of its competitors have found difficult, if not impossible, to do.

The beautiful rural and mountainous landscape that makes Vermont such a wonderful place to live has proven to be a stubborn barrier in delivering broadband access to every Vermonter. Moreover, as one of the country's most rural States, Vermont struggles to implement large broadband infrastructure investments that reach relatively small population densities. Yet in the Mad River Valley—where Mother Nature has deposited plenty of these beautiful yet stubborn barriers and people settled where they wanted to and not where the roads told them to—Waitsfield and Champlain Valley

Telecom found a way to ensure that their customers have an access ramp to the information super highway.

By making this significant investment in their own network, Waitsfield and Champlain Valley Telecom has invested in the economic vitality of every household it serves. Broadband access is a necessity for the company looking to move to Vermont, for the student writing a research paper, or for the family doing research on an upcoming vacation. So much of our country's economy depends upon high-speed Internet access, and making this access available to every American will require more companies willing to follow the lead of Vermont's own Waitsfield and Champlain Valley Telecom.

Waitsfield and Champlain Valley Telecom is a growing company, but it remains independently owned and operated by the Haskin family, under the leadership of Gregg Haskin. My wife Marcelle and I are proud to call the Haskins close friends, and we are even prouder of the deep commitment they have to their community. We wish them continued success, and I hope that my friends in the Senate will take this story back to their home States and point to this company's model as a key factor toward bridging the digital divide.

IN HONOR OF BRUCE JAMES

Mr. ENSIGN. Mr. President, I rise today to honor a Nevadan whose ingenuity and leadership has changed the way that government operates. Bruce James has served as Public Printer for 4 years, but the impact of his service will be felt indefinitely.

President Bush chose Bruce to head the Government Printing Office because of his extensive experience in the printing industry, beginning when Bruce was 11 years old and set up a basement print shop in Cleveland, OH. His lifetime of work as a printer and executive has been full of great success and accolades, and, combined with his inspiring commitment to public service, he has earned the respect of Nevadans and leaders and organizations around the world.

While businesses in this country have been rapidly transforming and changing to accommodate technology, many sectors of our government have fallen drastically behind. While it is easy to blame bureaucracy and the slow speed at which government generally operates, we must focus our work on keeping pace. That is exactly why Bruce James was ideal for the job of transitioning the Government Printing Office from a 19th century print shop mentality and reputation to a 21st century digital tool for keeping Americans informed.

Bruce has successfully developed and managed printing and publishing ventures driven by technology for more than 30 years. With the same leadership and zeal that he put into private sector enterprises for all those years,

Bruce was determined to turn the Government Printing Office into a state-of-the-art information machine by today's standards.

When Bruce took over the Government Printing Office, the agency had lost \$100 million over the last 5 years. By 2004, Bruce had turned devastating losses into an \$11 million gain. As a staunch fiscal conservative looking to make government as efficient as possible, I applaud Bruce's efforts and ingenuity in turning this agency upside down and making it run more like a business—a successful business. He did so with compassion for the employees, a determination to succeed, and the vision to make it happen.

This country is fortunate to have had Bruce at the helm of the Government Printing Office. He made the agency more fiscally responsible, and he also has made great progress in making government documents more accessible. By the end of 2008, nearly every Federal Government document published since our Nation was founded will be available online.

It is a remarkable achievement, especially considering how far Bruce had to bring the agency to reach this point. In the position for only 4 years, he set a standard for all government agencies today and in the future. When Bruce first spoke to the White House about taking the position, he told them he could not get this sort of transformation done in less than 3 years, and if it took him more than 5, he was not the right person for the job. Turns out he was the perfect person for the job.

As he prepares to complete his term as the Nation's 24th Public Printer, I want to thank Bruce James for his commitment to the job, his respect for the position, and his tremendous contributions to furthering the core mission of the Government Printing Office—keeping America informed.

Nevadans welcome you and Nora home with open arms and great pride for the work you have done. Thank you and God bless you.

HONORING SENATORIAL SERVICE

• Mrs. DOLE. Mr. President, it is an honor indeed to pay tribute to a number of fine individuals who I am fortunate to call not just my colleagues, but also dear friends: Senators Bill Frist, George Allen, Conrad Burns, Lincoln Chafee, Mike DeWine, Rick Santorum and Jim Talent.

BILL FRIST

One of the greatest losses to the Senate is the departure of our majority leader, Dr. Bill Frist. I first became acquainted with Bill when he called me during my time as president of the American Red Cross to say that he would travel to Africa with us to volunteer as a surgeon.

Back then, I immediately recognized Bill's intelligence, integrity and compassion for others. I saw how dedicated he was about sound policy—especially

health care policy—and how dedicated he was to helping those most in need, whether they be in America, in Africa, or anywhere in the world. And I saw how his colleagues quickly came to respect him, to rely on his judgment, and to value his counsel.

In the fall of 2001, when terrorism hit home in the United States Capitol, we saw how Bill's colleagues immediately turned to him for his guidance and expertise, and Bill responded to the challenge. For example, he quickly transformed his Senate website into the best source of information for Senate staff on the issues surrounding possible anthrax exposure. And he was willing to speak with each and every Member of the Senate community to allay concerns with accurate medical information. Bill utilized his expertise to write legislation to help protect the entire Nation from the scourge of bioterrorism.

For the past 2 years, I was honored to serve as a member of Bill's leadership team. As our leader, Bill displayed extraordinary integrity, care and thoughtfulness in dealing with every Senator, and he worked tirelessly to bring together his colleagues for the betterment of our Nation.

Bill's record of achievement as our majority leader is exemplary. As a result of his steady leadership, we succeeded in securing historic tax relief that has helped put more money in the pockets of hard-working Americans while paving the way for today's stunning economic recovery. His leadership improved life for our seniors by lowering the cost of prescription drugs. He helped spearhead important reforms of our tort system and bankruptcy code. Under Bill's leadership, we passed a comprehensive energy bill that reduces our reliance on foreign oil. And to help keep our Nation's fiscal house in order, Bill led the fight to pass a landmark deficit reduction plan that put some brakes on mandatory Federal spending. Perhaps most importantly, Bill's leadership was indispensable in helping place men and women on our Federal courts, including the United States Supreme Court, who will strictly interpret the law rather than try to legislate from the bench.

During Bill's 12 years in the Senate, our Nation faced many challenges and many changes. But Bill retained his strong sense of direction, his dedication to reaching out to those most in need, and his devotion to his family—Karyn, Harrison, Jonathan, and Bryan. As he has done in medicine and in public service, I know that in future endeavors Bill will continue to serve and help his fellow man.

GEORGE ALLEN

It has also been a privilege to serve alongside my good friend and colleague, Senator George Allen. In the Senate, George built on an already remarkable record of service to the people of Virginia, where he served as a Member of the House of Delegates, a Member of the U.S. House of Rep-

resentatives and as one of the most respected and successful Governors in the history of the Commonwealth.

As a Senator, George continued his common sense, "Jeffersonian" style of conservative leadership. He proved time and again that he is a tremendous ally of Virginia's defense communities and military families. In 2005, George was a strong proponent of helping families of fallen soldiers by raising the death gratuity for next-of-kin from \$12,000 to \$100,000. And as a member of the Commerce Committee, George Allen was the Senate leader in working to maintain America's competitive advantage in technology and innovation. George founded the Senate Competitiveness Caucus to promote an agenda that ensures that the United States continues to create high paying jobs and produce the very best engineers and scientists in the world.

One of George's best attributes as a Senator was that he did more than just talk the talk—George delivered real results. He advocated for increased funding for math and science education, in particular at historically black colleges and other minority institutions. He has been a leader in the Senate on improving health savings accounts by increasing the amount individuals can contribute each year to their HSAs, thus allowing them to save more money for current and future health care needs. George also secured more than \$3.5 million in Federal funding for cutting-edge nanotechnology research and development. And he led the fight to ban Internet access taxes and make the internet tax moratorium permanent, as he understands that saddling consumers with high taxes will stifle innovation and expand the digital divide.

Throughout his career, George Allen has served the people of Virginia with courage and distinction, and he has provided a wonderful example for public servants who follow in his footsteps. I wish all the best to George, his dear wife Susan, and their three children.

CONRAD BURNS

For the past 18 years, Montanans were extremely fortunate to be represented by Conrad Burns. There is no question that Conrad delivered time and again for the people of his State.

As a member of the Senate Appropriations Committee, Conrad secured more than \$2 billion in Federal funds for Montana. And as chairman of the Senate Appropriations Subcommittee on Interior, he was a tireless advocate of programs that benefit all Montanans, such as protecting drinking water and defending his State's wilderness and wildlife. Conrad also fought hard for Malmstrom Air Force Base and Montana's military presence during the base realignment and closure process in 2005.

As chairman of the communications subcommittee of the Commerce Committee, Conrad fought for deregulation and new Internet and mobile phone technologies. And he worked to ensure

that rural Montana communities have access to the technologies that will keep them competitive in today's global marketplace.

Throughout his time in the Senate, Conrad was a strong proponent of government accountability, fiscal responsibility and lower taxes. He worked diligently to decrease America's dependence on foreign oil. And he was an early backer of the Medicare prescription drug benefit that is now helping millions of seniors afford their medicines.

Conrad's legacy will live on, across Montana, and in the halls of the Senate, long after he has shut the door to his office. He leaves behind an extraordinary record of service to the people of his State. My warmest wishes to my friend Conrad Burns, his wife Phyllis, and their family.

LINCOLN CHAFEE

Senator Lincoln Chafee also will be greatly missed in this Chamber. Lin served the people of Rhode Island with the utmost honor, integrity and compassion.

I have great respect for Lin Chafee for his commitment to the principles of personal freedom, individual responsibility and fiscal discipline. Well-known for his reputation as a fierce deficit hawk, he has been a vocal advocate for responsible government spending, and a strong supporter of abolishing the marriage tax penalty and increasing the child tax credit. Linc also took a very active interest in promoting the health care of women and children.

Lincoln Chafee also has been tirelessly dedicated to improving his home state. As a member of the Senate Committee on Environment and Public Works, he secured more than \$1 billion in Federal funding for Rhode Island's infrastructure, including the Warwick Station project and the development of the East Providence shoreline. And as chairman of the Subcommittee on Fisheries, Wildlife and Water, he worked diligently to protect air and water quality in his State.

Linc was a principled, independent Member, adamant about doing what he believed was right for the families he represented. Throughout his Senate career, he demonstrated a willingness to listen to all sides of an issue and work with members of both political parties. He is a man who speaks his mind, votes his conscience, and treats others with the dignity and respect they deserve.

Linc is a refreshing politician, a diligent public servant, and a devoted family man to his wife Stephanie and their three children. It goes without saying that my colleagues in the Senate—and the people of Rhode Island—will greatly miss Senator Lincoln Chafee.

MIKE DEWINE

Among the Senate's most effective legislators, Senator Mike DeWine of Ohio will use his many talents and expertise to tackle new endeavors. Mike's career is truly an American success story. As a boy, he learned the values of hard work and perseverance in the

fields and the mill of his family's small agricultural business in Yellow Springs, OH. It is those principles that have guided him throughout a stellar career in public service, in which he has served as prosecutor, an Ohio State Senator, a Member of the U.S. House of Representatives, and as Lieutenant Governor.

As a Senator, Mike made his mark in a number of policy areas. He was a strong proponent of education and children's health care. In particular, he advocated for children's hospitals because he understands that these hospitals are important centers for pediatric research.

During more than a decade of service on the Senate Intelligence Committee, Mike worked doggedly to investigate intelligence failures and revamp our intelligence community. As the chairman of the Retirement Security and Aging Subcommittee of the HELP Committee, he focused his efforts on modernizing our Nation's pension system. And as the first Ohio Senator in six decades to serve on the Appropriations Committee, Mike was committed to ensuring that our Nation's first responders have the resources they need. On the Judiciary Committee, Mike took the lead on a number of antiterror and anticrime initiatives, such as the Patriot Act, as well as proposals to curb drunk driving, to help keep all Americans safe.

Perhaps what I admire most about Mike is that this terrific father of eight, and grandfather of nine, always puts his family first. As a public servant, Mike has used his positions to contribute to the greater good, and he has brilliantly served the people of Ohio throughout his career. May God bless Mike DeWine, his wife Fran, and their family for many, many years to come.

RICK SANTORUM

It goes without saying that it pulls at my heartstrings to bid farewell to Senator Rick Santorum. On issue after issue—tax relief, education, affordable health care, national security Rick has stood tall for Pennsylvanians and all Americans.

Rick is a man of conviction, deep faith, and integrity—qualities instilled in him growing up in Pennsylvania as the son of an Italian immigrant. He doesn't beat around the bush, and you never have to wonder where he stands. His word is his bond, and he expresses his views with great passion and expertise.

Since his early days in the Senate, Rick was an inspirational leader. One of the qualities I admired most about him as a legislator was that he never was one to dodge the tough issues; in fact, he readily took the lead on those issues and set out to find solutions to very serious challenges. For example, he spearheaded the passage of welfare reform in 1996, which to date has helped more than 1 million Americans go from receiving welfare checks to paychecks. Rick fought hard for No Child Left Behind, and as a result,

today math and reading scores in Pennsylvania schools are on the rise. He also fought hard to ensure that all Pennsylvanians have access to high quality, affordable health care. He is a strong supporter of Federal cancer research, including increased funding for breast cancer research. And he led the charge to reform our medical malpractice laws to curb lawsuit abuse and ensure that patients continue to receive the critical care they need. Rick also recognizes that hard-earned dollars belong to families and small businesses, not Uncle Sam.

In addition, Rick was one of Congress's most dedicated and knowledgeable Members when it came to developing antipoverty initiatives. He was the driving force behind legislation that would provide a tremendous boost to charitable-giving through a series of targeted tax incentives aimed at helping the homeless, the drug addicted, and the less fortunate in our society. And he committed himself to working to eradicate the global HIV/AIDS pandemic. In short, Rick Santorum is the embodiment of what it means to be a compassionate conservative.

Rick was so attentive to the needs of those he represented and always put Pennsylvania first. For example, he helped secure \$100 million to build America's first ever coal to ultra-clean fuel plant in Pennsylvania, which not only creates jobs but also provides more affordable energy and benefits the environment. I often joked with Rick that he should hold another title, the "Mayor of Pennsylvania." It's no surprise that he made it a point each year to visit all of Pennsylvania's 67 counties. On so many issues, Rick has been a principled advocate for his constituents.

While Rick works incredibly hard, there is no question that he is first and foremost a dedicated family man to his wife Karen and their six children. It has been a privilege indeed to work closely with Rick—sometimes literally, as our offices were on the same hall. He is an all-around class act, and with his numerous accomplishments and exemplary record of service to his constituents, he will certainly be a tough act to follow.

JIM TALENT

Senator Jim Talent has been an outstanding representative of the people of Missouri. A dedicated public servant, he served for 8 years in the State House of Representatives, as well as 8 years in the U.S. House. Jim was the lead author in the House of the landmark 1996 welfare reform bill that has moved more than a million Americans off welfare and into work and self-sufficiency.

Jim is a man of impeccable character and a natural leader, and in the Senate he held a number of leadership posts in his freshman term—as the chairman of the Armed Services Seapower Subcommittee, as the chairman of the Agriculture Subcommittee on Marketing, Inspection, and Product Promotion, and as a deputy whip. He also dem-

onstrated a remarkable ability to make things happen legislatively, with many of his bills passed by Congress and signed into law. Jim's amazing legislative record reflects not just his abilities but also the respect he earned from his colleagues.

Jim delivered on his promises to Missourians to help create jobs, grow the economy and strengthen our national defense. He also worked to improve health care, and he advocated on behalf of those who suffer from sickle cell disease and breast cancer.

It has been my pleasure to serve with Jim on the Senate Armed Services Committee. I have seen him in action and know that there is no one more committed to ensuring that our country's defenses remain strong. I was proud to work closely with him to enact legislation to prevent predatory lenders from targeting our brave men and women in uniform and their families. There is no question that he is a steadfast supporter of our service members, their families, and their livelihood.

This Chamber needs more members like Jim, who understand that the only way to really make a difference is to put partisan concerns aside and work across the aisle. Throughout his public service career, Jim Talent has certainly made a positive difference, and he will surely be missed in the U.S. Senate.

As these men—Bill Frist, George Allen, Conrad Burns, Lincoln Chafee, Mike DeWine, Rick Santorum and Jim Talent—conclude their service in the U.S. Senate, let me say that I am so proud to have worked with individuals of such character, strength, and intellect. Our Nation is grateful for their many contributions. And as they each will undoubtedly continue to contribute to our country's greatness, their leadership and vision will be missed here in the U.S. Senate.●

ADDITIONAL STATEMENTS

A TRAGIC LOSS FOR IDAHOANS

● Mr. CRAPO. Mr. President, with sadness I recognize the passing of Dan Harpole, former executive director of the Idaho Commission on the Arts, president of the National Assembly of State Arts Agencies, and dedicated father and friend. I had the pleasure of working with Dan in recent years as he promoted arts in Idaho and truly changed the face of the Idaho Commission on the Arts. Dan successfully worked to integrate art appreciation and education into Idaho communities through local, State and Federal collaboration efforts. Dan's spirit has transformed the arts in Idaho, bringing them to a place of cultural and community preeminence. I respectfully submit a portion of his obituary, written by his good friend and fellow Idaho artist, Cort Conley, that describes, in detail, Dan's remarkable achievements in Idaho.

In November 2000, Dan was unanimously singled out from a field of 36 distinguished candidates as the new executive director of the Idaho Commission on the Arts. Although chosen for his reputation and recognition earned elsewhere, he was also selected for his optimistic, companionable disposition and pragmatic views, his ability to build bridges and get things done. Chair Marilyn Beck's estimate that he was the perfect person for the job proved astute. He came to inhabit Idaho arts the way paint does a painting. Dan thrived on the lives and challenges around him on what is now called networking. His attitude and leadership led to a legacy of accomplishments on behalf of the arts in Idaho. Not a little of it was his talent for consensus or accord, which he once attributed to being the seventh of ten children: When you're in a big family, you learn to negotiate for your life, he quipped. While in Idaho, Dan served on the executive committee of the board of directors for the National Assembly of State Arts Agencies and was elected president in 2005. He also served as trustee for the Western States Arts Federation. Among the exceptional achievements of his legacy: uniting the Idaho Congressional Delegation not only in support of the budget for National Endowment for the Arts, but for its first increased appropriation in over a decade; bringing the annual conference of the National Assembly of State Arts Agencies to Boise, 2005; statewide Arts Matter conferences; pursuit of strategies for a cultural trust and for art in public places; more recently, the unanimous support of the Joint Finance-Appropriations Committee and the Idaho Legislature for a significant one-time increase in the Commission's budget; and, finally, being awarded, in memoriam, the Chairman's Medal from the chair of the NEA for serving the National Endowment for the Arts and arts in America with distinction.

I was glad to hear of the NEA Chairman's Medal that Dan's family will receive on his behalf this month, but not the least bit surprised. I had the opportunity to recognize Dan's remarkable abilities and accomplishments in this Chamber almost a year ago when he was chosen to be president of the National Assembly of State Arts Agencies. Dan fully deserved this and all accolades that he received over the years. His love of the arts, his work promoting their appreciation in Idaho and his ability to provide leadership, vision, insight, and compassion lives on unmistakably in his legacy. Cort Conley concludes his tribute to Dan's life by stating:

In summary, then: love, laughter, courage. All estimable indeed. Still, as a tombstone in County Kerry reads, "Death leaves a heartache no one can heal/Love leaves a memory no one can steal." Nothing more appropriate can be said.

My wife Susan and I offer our condolences to his family and especially to his young children, Hunter and Fiona, at this difficult time.●

PEACE OFFICER: KEN JORDAN

● Mr. SALAZAR. Mr. President, I rise to praise the service of a police officer from Colorado Springs: Officer Ken Jordan. Ken Jordan was killed in the line of duty early last month during a traffic stop. He was only 34.

As anyone in law enforcement can tell you, there is no such thing as a

"routine" traffic stop. Every time you pull a driver over, there is the risk that something could go wrong, that this could be the one that proves too much for even your training and judgment. And yet, Ken Jordan, like countless other peace officers around this Nation do every day, set these fears aside and carried out his job with professionalism and courage.

In the Colorado Springs Police Department, Officer Jordan was a DUI specialist. His work removed unsafe drunk drivers from our roads, saving lives every time he was on duty. He was an outstanding example of his job, known to sometimes have three or four suspects lined up at Memorial Hospital in Colorado Springs, waiting to be tested for their blood alcohol level.

Ken Jordan was a native of Chicago, and graduated from Western Illinois University, where he studied law enforcement. In 2000, he joined the Colorado Springs Police Department and called Colorado his home.

Mr. President, I have every confidence that if Ken Jordan were here with us today, he would undoubtedly tell us of his love for the outdoors and adventure sports. He reveled in the joys of life, be it kayaking in Fiji or playing pranks on family members. His smile was as big as all the Rockies and just as ever-present.

One Denver police officer summed it up best: "He was the person you would want to have as a friend."

Every time we lose a peace officer, our entire Nation grieves for them, and for their families, and loved ones. To Officer Jordan's parents and sister Sue, and to his beloved Heidi, I know that no words can ease the pain you feel at this difficult time. But through your sorrow, I hope that you can find solace in this police officers' prayer:

Lord I ask for courage,
 Courage to face and conquer my own fears,
 Courage to take me where others will not go.
 I ask for strength,
 Strength of body to protect others and
 strength of spirit to lead others.
 I ask for dedication,
 Dedication to my job, to do it well, dedica-
 tion to my community, to keep it safe.
 Give me Lord, concern
 For others who trust me and compassion
 for those who need me.
 And please, Lord,
 Through it all, be at my side.

Officer Ken Jordan's service to his community will always be honored and never forgotten. Our entire Nation stands humbled by his sacrifice, in awe of his courage, honor, and character.●

TRIBUTE TO VERNON ASHLEY

● Mr. THUNE. Mr. President, today I wish to recognize the many and great achievements of Vernon Ashley. Vernon proudly served his country in World War II and later went on to graduate from Dakota Wesleyan College at the age of 34. He proceeded to be elected tribal chairman of the Crow Creek Indian Reservation and was later appointed South Dakota's Indian Affairs

Coordinator under three different Governors.

Mr. Ashley's achievements do not end there however. Vernon served as the executive director for Vista for both North and South Dakota and supervised all volunteer service during the recovery of the Rapid City flood disaster. Vernon was also a founding member of the American Indian Veterans Association and is a dedicated husband and the loving father of seven.

Mr. President, today with Vernon's friends and family, I congratulate him on his many and most recent accomplishments. I have known Vernon for many years. He is a man of impeccable character and integrity. Governor Rounds and the State legislature of South Dakota have rightly declared that in South Dakota, January 15, 2006, is Vernon Ashley Day. Today I join the Governor and members of the legislature in congratulating this great American.●

MESSAGE FROM THE HOUSE

At 11:33 a.m., a message from the House of Representatives, delivered by Ms. Niland, one of its reading clerks, announced that the House has passed the following concurrent resolution, in which it requests the concurrence of the Senate:

H. Con. Res. 1. Concurrent resolution regarding consent to assemble outside the seat of government.

The message also announced that the House has passed the following bill, without amendment:

S. 159. An act to redesignate the White Rocks National Recreation Area in the State of Vermont as the "Robert T. Stafford White Rocks National Recreation Area".

The message further announced that the House has agreed to H. Res. 11, resolving that the House of Representatives has learned with profound regret and sorrow of the death of Gerald R. Ford, 38th President of the United States of America.

MEASURES REFERRED

The following concurrent resolution was read, and referred as indicated:

H. Con. Res. 1. Concurrent resolution regarding consent to assemble outside the seat of government; to the Committee on Rules and Administration.

MEASURES PLACED ON THE CALENDAR

The following bills were read the second time, and placed on the calendar:

S. 2. A bill to amend the Fair Labor Standards Act of 1938 to provide for an increase in the Federal minimum wage.

S. 5. A bill to amend the Public Health Service Act to provide for human embryonic stem cell research.

S. 113. A bill to make appropriations for military construction and family housing projects for the Department of Defense for fiscal year 2007.

EXECUTIVE AND OTHER
COMMUNICATIONS

The following communications were laid before the Senate, together with accompanying papers, reports, and documents, and were referred as indicated:

EC-93. A communication from the Assistant Secretary, Department of the Interior, transmitting, pursuant to law, the Department's annual report relative to grants streamlining and standardization; to the Committee on Environment and Public Works.

EC-94. A communication from the Principal Deputy Associate Administrator, Office of Policy, Economics and Innovation, Environmental Protection Agency, transmitting, pursuant to law, the report of a rule entitled "2006 Reporting Notice and Amendment; Partial Updating of TSCA Inventory Database; Chemical Substance Production, Processing, and Use Site Reports" (FRL No. 8109-9) received on December 15, 2006; to the Committee on Environment and Public Works.

EC-95. A communication from the Principal Deputy Associate Administrator, Office of Policy, Economics and Innovation, Environmental Protection Agency, transmitting, pursuant to law, the report of a rule entitled "Approval and Promulgation of Air Quality Implementation Plans; Maryland; Redesignation of the Kent and Queen Anne's 8-Hour Ozone Nonattainment Area to Attainment and Approval of the Maintenance Plan" (FRL No. 8259-7) received on December 15, 2006; to the Committee on Environment and Public Works.

EC-96. A communication from the Principal Deputy Associate Administrator, Office of Policy, Economics and Innovation, Environmental Protection Agency, transmitting, pursuant to law, the report of a rule entitled "Approval and Promulgation of Air Quality Implementation Plans; Ohio; Revision to Ohio State Implementation Plan to Rescind Oxides of Nitrogen Rule" (FRL No. 8259-5) received on December 15, 2006; to the Committee on Environment and Public Works.

EC-97. A communication from the Principal Deputy Associate Administrator, Office of Policy, Economics and Innovation, Environmental Protection Agency, transmitting, pursuant to law, the report of a rule entitled "National Emission Standards for Hazardous Air Pollutants: Surface Coating of Automobiles and Light-Duty Trucks" (FRL No. 8260-7) received on December 15, 2006; to the Committee on Environment and Public Works.

EC-98. A communication from the Principal Deputy Associate Administrator, Office of Policy, Economics and Innovation, Environmental Protection Agency, transmitting, pursuant to law, the report of a rule entitled "National Emission Standards for Organic Hazardous Air Pollutants From the Synthetic Organic Chemical Manufacturing Industry" (FRL No. 8259-6) received on December 15, 2006; to the Committee on Environment and Public Works.

EC-99. A communication from the Principal Deputy Associate Administrator, Office of Policy, Economics and Innovation, Environmental Protection Agency, transmitting, pursuant to law, the report of a rule entitled "Toxics Release Inventory Burden Reduction Final Rule" (FRL No. 8260-4) received on December 15, 2006; to the Committee on Environment and Public Works.

EC-100. A communication from the Principal Deputy Associate Administrator, Office of Policy, Economics and Innovation, Environmental Protection Agency, transmitting, pursuant to law, the report of a rule entitled "Clean Air Interstate Rule and Federal Implementation Plans for CAIR; Corrections"

(FRL No. 8254-7) received on December 15, 2006; to the Committee on Environment and Public Works.

EC-101. A communication from the Principal Deputy Associate Administrator, Office of Policy, Economics and Innovation, Environmental Protection Agency, transmitting, pursuant to law, the report of a rule entitled "Final Extension of the Deferred Effective Date for 8-hour Ozone National Ambient Air Quality Standards for Early Action Compact Areas; Correction" (FRL No. 8256-7) received on December 15, 2006; to the Committee on Environment and Public Works.

EC-102. A communication from the Principal Deputy Associate Administrator, Office of Policy, Economics and Innovation, Environmental Protection Agency, transmitting, pursuant to law, the report of a rule entitled "Final Rule Interpreting the Scope of Certain Monitoring Requirements for State and Federal Operating Permits Programs" (FRL No. 8257-3) received on December 15, 2006; to the Committee on Environment and Public Works.

EC-103. A communication from the Principal Deputy Associate Administrator, Office of Policy, Economics and Innovation, Environmental Protection Agency, transmitting, pursuant to law, the report of a rule entitled "National Emission Standards for Hazardous Air Pollutants for Area Sources: Polyvinyl Chloride and Copolymers Production, Primary Copper Smelting, Secondary Copper Smelting, and Primary Nonferrous Metals-Zinc, Cadmium, and Beryllium" (FRL No. 8257-4) received on December 15, 2006; to the Committee on Environment and Public Works.

EC-104. A communication from the Principal Deputy Associate Administrator, Office of Policy, Economics and Innovation, Environmental Protection Agency, transmitting, pursuant to law, the report of a rule entitled "National Emission Standards for Hazardous Air Pollutants From the Portland Cement Manufacturing Industry" ((RIN2060-AJ78) (FRL No. 8256-4)) received on December 15, 2006; to the Committee on Environment and Public Works.

EC-105. A communication from the Principal Deputy Associate Administrator, Office of Policy, Economics and Innovation, Environmental Protection Agency, transmitting, pursuant to law, the report of a rule entitled "Notice of Finding that Certain States Did Not Submit Clean Air Mercury Rule State Plans for New and Existing Electric Utility Steam Generating Units and Status of Submission of Such Plans" (FRL No. 8255-9) received on December 15, 2006; to the Committee on Environment and Public Works.

EC-106. A communication from the Principal Deputy Associate Administrator, Office of Policy, Economics and Innovation, Environmental Protection Agency, transmitting, pursuant to law, the report of a rule entitled "Protection of Stratospheric Ozone: The 2007 Critical Use Exemption from the Phaseout of Methyl Bromide" (FRL No. 8109-9) received on December 15, 2006; to the Committee on Environment and Public Works.

EC-107. A communication from the Assistant Secretary of the Army (Civil Works), transmitting, pursuant to law, a report relative to the assessment of the flood management system for the Sacramento and San Joaquin River basins; to the Committee on Environment and Public Works.

EC-108. A communication from the Principal Deputy Associate Administrator, Office of Policy, Economics and Innovation, Environmental Protection Agency, transmitting, a report relative to a document recently issued by the Agency that is related to its regulatory programs; to the Committee on Environment and Public Works.

EC-109. A communication from the Chairman, Nuclear Regulatory Commission, trans-

mitting, pursuant to law, a quarterly report relative to the status of the Commission's licensing and regulatory duties; to the Committee on Environment and Public Works.

EC-110. A communication from the Assistant Secretary of the Army (Civil Works), transmitting, pursuant to law, a report relative to the status of the comprehensive plan examining the deauthorization of the Mississippi River-Gulf Outlet; to the Committee on Environment and Public Works.

EC-111. A communication from the Principal Deputy Associate Administrator, Office of Policy, Economics and Innovation, Environmental Protection Agency, transmitting, pursuant to law, the report of a rule entitled "Fuel Economy Labeling of Motor Vehicles: Revisions to Improve Calculation of Fuel Economy Estimates" (FRL No. 8257-5) received on December 15, 2006; to the Committee on Environment and Public Works.

EC-112. A communication from the Principal Deputy Associate Administrator, Office of Policy, Economics and Innovation, Environmental Protection Agency, transmitting, pursuant to law, the report of a rule entitled "Oil Pollution Prevention; Spill Prevention, Control, and Countermeasure Plan Requirements—Amendments" ((RIN2050-AG23) (FRL No. 8258-3)) received on December 15, 2006; to the Committee on Environment and Public Works.

EC-113. A communication from the President of the United States, transmitting, pursuant to law, a report relative to his intent to add East Timor to the list of beneficiary developing countries and to the list of least-developed beneficiary developing countries under the Generalized System of Preferences; to the Committee on Finance.

EC-114. A communication from the Chief of the Publications and Regulations Branch, Internal Revenue Service, Department of the Treasury, transmitting, pursuant to law, the report of a rule entitled "Weighted Average Interest Rate Update" (Notice 2006-111) received on January 3, 2007; to the Committee on Finance.

EC-115. A communication from the Chief of the Publications and Regulations Branch, Internal Revenue Service, Department of the Treasury, transmitting, pursuant to law, the report of a rule entitled "Reporting Rules for Widely Held Fixed Investment Trusts" ((RIN1545-BF75) (TD 9308)) received on January 3, 2007; to the Committee on Finance.

EC-116. A communication from the Chief of the Publications and Regulations Branch, Internal Revenue Service, Department of the Treasury, transmitting, pursuant to law, the report of a rule entitled "Bulgarian Per Se Entity" (Notice 2007-10) received on January 3, 2007; to the Committee on Finance.

EC-117. A communication from the Chief of the Publications and Regulations Branch, Internal Revenue Service, Department of the Treasury, transmitting, pursuant to law, the report of a rule entitled "Notice on Cash Balance and Other Hybrid Defined Benefit Pension Plans and Section 701 of PPA '06" (Notice 2007-6) received on January 3, 2007; to the Committee on Finance.

EC-118. A communication from the Chief of the Publications and Regulations Branch, Internal Revenue Service, Department of the Treasury, transmitting, pursuant to law, the report of a rule entitled "Automatic Method Change Procedure for Executory Contract Liabilities" (Rev. Proc. 2007-14) received on January 3, 2007; to the Committee on Finance.

EC-119. A communication from the Chief of the Publications and Regulations Branch, Internal Revenue Service, Department of the Treasury, transmitting, pursuant to law, the report of a rule entitled "Executory Contract Liabilities" (Rev. Rul. 2007-3) received on January 3, 2007; to the Committee on Finance.

EC-120. A communication from the Chief of the Publications and Regulations Branch, Internal Revenue Service, Department of the Treasury, transmitting, pursuant to law, the report of a rule entitled "Maximum Vehicle Values for 2007 Used to Determine the Value of Personal Use of an Employer-Provided Vehicle Under the Special Valuation Rules Under Regulations Sections 1.61-21(d) and (e)" (Rev. Proc. 2007-11) received on January 3, 2007; to the Committee on Finance.

EC-121. A communication from the Chief of the Publications and Regulations Branch, Internal Revenue Service, Department of the Treasury, transmitting, pursuant to law, the report of a rule entitled "Guidance on Specified Covered Services Under Section 482" (Rev. Proc. 2007-13) received on January 3, 2007; to the Committee on Finance.

EC-122. A communication from the Chief of the Publications and Regulations Branch, Internal Revenue Service, Department of the Treasury, transmitting, pursuant to law, the report of a rule entitled "Notice on Temporary Section 482 Regulations" (Notice 2007-5) received on January 3, 2007; to the Committee on Finance.

EC-123. A communication from the Chief of the Publications and Regulations Branch, Internal Revenue Service, Department of the Treasury, transmitting, pursuant to law, the report of a rule entitled "Guidance Necessary to Facilitate Business Electronic Filing Under Section 1561" ((RIN1545-BF26) (TD 9304)) received on January 3, 2007; to the Committee on Finance.

EC-124. A communication from the Chief of the Publications and Regulations Branch, Internal Revenue Service, Department of the Treasury, transmitting, pursuant to law, the report of a rule entitled "Revision of Rev. Proc. 2005-12" (Rev. Proc. 2007-17) received on January 3, 2007; to the Committee on Finance.

EC-125. A communication from the Chief of the Publications and Regulations Branch, Internal Revenue Service, Department of the Treasury, transmitting, pursuant to law, the report of a rule entitled "User Fees for Processing Installment Agreements" ((RIN1545-BF69) (TD 9306)) received on January 3, 2007; to the Committee on Finance.

EC-126. A communication from the Chief of the Publications and Regulations Branch, Internal Revenue Service, Department of the Treasury, transmitting, pursuant to law, the report of a rule entitled "Source of Income from Certain Space and Ocean Activities; Source of Communications Income" ((RIN1545-AW50) (TD 9305)) received on January 3, 2007; to the Committee on Finance.

EC-127. A communication from the Chief of the Publications and Regulations Branch, Internal Revenue Service, Department of the Treasury, transmitting, pursuant to law, the report of a rule entitled "Changes in Computing Depreciation" ((RIN1545-BC18) (TD 9307)) received on January 3, 2007; to the Committee on Finance.

EC-128. A communication from the Chief of the Publications and Regulations Branch, Internal Revenue Service, Department of the Treasury, transmitting, pursuant to law, the report of a rule entitled "Notice Requesting Comments on In-Service Distributions—Section 905 of PPA '06" (Notice 2007-8) received on January 3, 2007; to the Committee on Finance.

EC-129. A communication from the Chief of the Publications and Regulations Branch, Internal Revenue Service, Department of the Treasury, transmitting, pursuant to law, the report of a rule entitled "TD 9281 Effective Date" (Notice 2007-1) received on January 3, 2007; to the Committee on Finance.

EC-130. A communication from the Commissioner, Social Security Administration, transmitting, pursuant to law, a report rel-

ative to the Administration's competitive sourcing efforts during fiscal year 2006; to the Committee on Finance.

EC-131. A communication from the Acting Regulations Officer, Social Security Administration, transmitting, pursuant to law, the report of a rule entitled "Exemption of Work Activity as a Basis for a Continuing Disability Review" (RIN0960-AE93) received on December 21, 2006; to the Committee on Finance.

EC-132. A communication from the Acting Regulations Officer, Social Security Administration, transmitting, pursuant to law, the report of a rule entitled "Rules for the Issuance of Work Report Receipts, Payment of Benefits for Trial Work Period Service Months After a Fraud Conviction, Changes to the Student Earned Income Exclusion, and Expansion of the Reentitlement Period for Childhood Disability Benefits" (RIN0960-AG10) received on December 21, 2006; to the Committee on Finance.

EC-133. A communication from the Director, Office of Regulations, Social Security Administration, transmitting, pursuant to law, the report of a rule entitled "Revised Medical Criteria for Evaluating Visual Disorders" (RIN0960-AF34) received on December 21, 2006; to the Committee on Finance.

EC-134. A communication from the Secretary of Health and Human Services, transmitting, pursuant to law, a report entitled "Patient Classification Under Medicare's Prospective Payment System for Skilled Nursing Facilities"; to the Committee on Finance.

EC-135. A communication from the Chief of the Publications and Regulations Branch, Internal Revenue Service, Department of the Treasury, transmitting, pursuant to law, the report of a rule entitled "Appeals Settlement Guidelines: Losses Reported from Inflated Basis Assets from Lease Stripping Transactions" (Coordinated Issue Paper UIL: 9226-01-00) received on December 21, 2006; to the Committee on Finance.

EC-136. A communication from the Chief of the Publications and Regulations Branch, Internal Revenue Service, Department of the Treasury, transmitting, pursuant to law, the report of a rule entitled "Applicable Federal Rates—January 2007" (Rev. Rul. 2007-2) received on December 21, 2006; to the Committee on Finance.

EC-137. A communication from the Chief of the Publications and Regulations Branch, Internal Revenue Service, Department of the Treasury, transmitting, pursuant to law, the report of a rule entitled "Corporate Reorganizations; Distributions Under Sections 368(a)(1)(D) and 354(b)(1)(B)" ((RIN1545-BF84) (TD 9303)) received on December 21, 2006; to the Committee on Finance.

EC-138. A communication from the Chief of the Publications and Regulations Branch, Internal Revenue Service, Department of the Treasury, transmitting, pursuant to law, the report of a rule entitled "Prohibited Allocations of Securities in an S Corporation" ((RIN1545-BC34) (TD 9302)) received on December 21, 2006; to the Committee on Finance.

EC-139. A communication from the Secretary of Health and Human Services, transmitting, pursuant to law, a report relative to the Outcome and Assessment Information Set Study; to the Committee on Finance.

EC-140. A communication from the Regulations Coordinator, Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services, Department of Health and Human Services, transmitting, pursuant to law, the report of a rule entitled "Non-discrimination and Wellness Programs in Health Coverage in the Group Market" (RIN0938-AI08) received on December 21, 2006; to the Committee on Finance.

EC-141. A communication from the Secretary of the Treasury, transmitting, pursu-

ant to law, the Financial Report of the United States Government for Fiscal Year 2006; to the Committee on Finance.

EC-142. A communication from the Chief of the Trade and Commercial Regulations Branch, Customs and Border Protection, Department of Homeland Security, transmitting, pursuant to law, the report of a rule entitled "United States-Chile Free Trade Agreement" (RIN1505-AB47) received on December 21, 2006; to the Committee on Finance.

EC-143. A communication from the Chief of the Publications and Regulations Branch, Internal Revenue Service, Department of the Treasury, transmitting, pursuant to law, the report of a rule entitled "Bureau of Labor Statistics Price Indexes for Department Stores—October 2006" (Rev. Rul. 2006-62) received on December 21, 2006; to the Committee on Finance.

EC-144. A communication from the Chief of the Publications and Regulations Branch, Internal Revenue Service, Department of the Treasury, transmitting, pursuant to law, the report of a rule entitled "Implementation of Section 402(i) of H.R. 4" (Notice 2006-105) received on December 21, 2006; to the Committee on Finance.

EC-145. A communication from the Chief of the Publications and Regulations Branch, Internal Revenue Service, Department of the Treasury, transmitting, pursuant to law, the report of a rule entitled "Section 846 Discount Factors for 2006" (Rev. Proc. 2007-9) received on January 3, 2007; to the Committee on Finance.

EC-146. A communication from the Chief of the Publications and Regulations Branch, Internal Revenue Service, Department of the Treasury, transmitting, pursuant to law, the report of a rule entitled "Extension of Transition Relief for Certain Partnerships and Other Pass-Thru Entities Under Section 470" (Notice 2007-4) received on December 21, 2006; to the Committee on Finance.

EC-147. A communication from the Chief of the Publications and Regulations Branch, Internal Revenue Service, Department of the Treasury, transmitting, pursuant to law, the report of a rule entitled "Section 832 Discount Factors for 2006" (Rev. Proc. 2007-10) received on December 21, 2006; to the Committee on Finance.

EC-148. A communication from the Chief of the Publications and Regulations Branch, Internal Revenue Service, Department of the Treasury, transmitting, pursuant to law, the report of a rule entitled "Annual Cumulative List of Changes in Plan Qualification Requirements" (Notice 2007-3) received on December 21, 2006; to the Committee on Finance.

EC-149. A communication from the Chief of the Publications and Regulations Branch, Internal Revenue Service, Department of the Treasury, transmitting, pursuant to law, the report of a rule entitled "Final Rules for Nondiscrimination and Wellness Programs in Health Coverage in the Group Market" ((RIN1545-AY32) (TD 9298)) received on December 21, 2006; to the Committee on Finance.

EC-150. A communication from the Chief of the Publications and Regulations Branch, Internal Revenue Service, Department of the Treasury, transmitting, pursuant to law, the report of a rule entitled "Guidance Necessary to Facilitate Business Electronic Filing" ((RIN1545-BC15) (TD 9300)) received on December 21, 2006; to the Committee on Finance.

EC-151. A communication from the Chief of the Publications and Regulations Branch, Internal Revenue Service, Department of the Treasury, transmitting, pursuant to law, the report of a rule entitled "Reduction in Taxable Income for Housing Hurricane Katrina

Displaced Individuals" (TD 9301) received on December 21, 2006; to the Committee on Finance.

EC-152. A communication from the Assistant Secretary, Office of Legislative Affairs, Department of State, transmitting, pursuant to law, a certification relative to waiving the restrictions contained in section 1305 of the National Defense Authorization Act for Fiscal Year 2000; to the Committee on Foreign Relations.

EC-153. A communication from the Assistant Secretary, Office of Legislative Affairs, Department of State, transmitting, pursuant to law, a report relative to the President's decision to exercise waiver authority with regard to a prohibition on military assistance; to the Committee on Foreign Relations.

EC-154. A communication from the Assistant Secretary, Office of Legislative Affairs, Department of State, transmitting, pursuant to law, a Presidential Determination to suspend the limitation on the obligation of State Department Appropriations contained in the Jerusalem Embassy Act of 1995; to the Committee on Foreign Relations.

EC-155. A communication from the Assistant Secretary, Office of Legislative Affairs, Department of State, transmitting, pursuant to law, a report relative to the Benjamin A. Gilman International Scholarship Program; to the Committee on Foreign Relations.

EC-156. A communication from the Assistant Legal Adviser for Treaty Affairs, Department of State, transmitting, pursuant to the Case-Zablocki Act, 1 U.S.C. 112b, as amended, the report of the texts and background statements of international agreements, other than treaties (List 2006-271-2006-280); to the Committee on Foreign Relations.

EC-157. A communication from the Assistant Secretary, Office of Legislative Affairs, Department of State, transmitting, pursuant to law, a report relative to the President's determination to exercise his waiver authority in certain countries with respect to the prohibition on the use of fiscal year 2006 Economic Support Funds provided for in section 574(a) of the Foreign Operations, Export Financing, and Related Programs Appropriations Act of 2006; to the Committee on Foreign Relations.

EC-158. A communication from the Assistant Secretary, Office of Legislative Affairs, Department of State, transmitting, pursuant to law, the certification of a proposed license for the export of defense articles or defense services sold commercially under contract in the amount of \$100,000,000 or more to Colombia and Ecuador; to the Committee on Foreign Relations.

EC-159. A communication from the Interim Director, Pension Benefit Guaranty Corporation, transmitting, pursuant to law, the report of a rule entitled "Payment of Premiums; Assessment of and Relief From Penalties" (RIN1212-AA95) received on December 21, 2006; to the Committee on Health, Education, Labor, and Pensions.

EC-160. A communication from the Interim Director, Pension Benefit Guaranty Corporation, transmitting, pursuant to law, the report of a rule entitled "Allocation of Assets in Single-Employer Plans; Valuation of Benefits and Assets; Expected Retirement Age" (29 CFR Part 4044) received on January 3, 2007; to the Committee on Health, Education, Labor, and Pensions.

EC-161. A communication from the Interim Director, Pension Benefit Guaranty Corporation, transmitting, pursuant to law, the report of a rule entitled "Benefits Payable in Terminated Single-Employer Plans; Allocation of Assets in Single-Employer Plans; Interest Assumptions for Valuing and Paying Benefits" (29 CFR Parts 4022 and 4044) received on January 3, 2007; to the Committee on Health, Education, Labor, and Pensions.

EC-162. A communication from the Interim Director, Pension Benefit Guaranty Corporation, transmitting, pursuant to law, the report of a rule entitled "Benefits Payable in Terminated Single-Employer Plans" (29 CFR Part 4022) received on January 3, 2007; to the Committee on Health, Education, Labor, and Pensions.

EC-163. A communication from the Director, Office of Workers' Compensation Programs, Department of Labor, transmitting, pursuant to law, the report of a rule entitled "Performance of Functions; Claims for Compensation Under the Energy Employees Occupational Illness Compensation Program Act of 2000, as Amended" (RIN1215-AB51) received on January 3, 2007; to the Committee on Health, Education, Labor, and Pensions.

EC-164. A communication from the Secretary of Health and Human Services, transmitting, pursuant to law, a report entitled "Study Regarding Barriers to Participation of Farmworkers in Health Programs"; to the Committee on Health, Education, Labor, and Pensions.

EC-165. A communication from the Human Resources Specialist, Office of the Assistant Secretary for Administration and Management, Department of Labor, transmitting, pursuant to law, the report of a nomination for the position of Assistant Secretary for Policy, received on December 21, 2006; to the Committee on Health, Education, Labor, and Pensions.

EC-166. A communication from the Chief and Human Capital Officer, Corporation for National and Community Service, transmitting, pursuant to law, the report of a change in previously submitted reported information and nomination for the position of Inspector General, received on December 21, 2006; to the Committee on Health, Education, Labor, and Pensions.

EC-167. A communication from the Secretary of Education, transmitting, pursuant to law, the annual report of the National Advisory Committee on Institutional Quality and Integrity for fiscal year 2006; to the Committee on Health, Education, Labor, and Pensions.

EC-168. A communication from the Regulations Coordinator, Office of the Secretary, Department of Health and Human Services, transmitting, pursuant to law, the report of a rule entitled "Acquisition Regulations" (48 CFR Part 301) received on December 21, 2006; to the Committee on Health, Education, Labor, and Pensions.

EC-169. A communication from the Human Resources Specialist, Office of the Assistant Secretary for Administration and Management, Department of Labor, transmitting, pursuant to law, the report of a vacancy and designation of acting officer for the position of Assistant Secretary for Employee Benefits Security, received on December 21, 2006; to the Committee on Health, Education, Labor, and Pensions.

EC-170. A communication from the Secretary of Health and Human Services, transmitting, pursuant to law, a report relative to the interjurisdictional adoption of children in foster care; to the Committee on Health, Education, Labor, and Pensions.

EC-171. A communication from the Secretary of Health and Human Services, transmitting, pursuant to law, a report relative to states' effectiveness in establishing and enforcing medical support obligations; to the Committee on Health, Education, Labor, and Pensions.

EC-172. A communication from the Assistant Secretary for Administration and Management, Department of Labor, transmitting, pursuant to law, a report relative to the Department's competitive sourcing activities during fiscal year 2006; to the Committee on Health, Education, Labor, and Pensions.

EC-173. A communication from the Director, Office of Standards, Regulations and Variances, Department of Labor, transmitting, pursuant to law, the report of a rule entitled "Emergency Mine Evacuation" (RIN1219-AB46) received on December 21, 2006; to the Committee on Health, Education, Labor, and Pensions.

EC-174. A communication from the Secretary of Health and Human Services, transmitting, pursuant to law, a report relative to the Family Violence Prevention and Services Program for fiscal years 2002-2004; to the Committee on Health, Education, Labor, and Pensions.

EC-175. A communication from the Acting Assistant Secretary, Employee Benefits Security Administration, Department of Labor, transmitting, pursuant to law, the report of a rule entitled "Final Rules for Non-discrimination and Wellness Programs in Health Coverage in the Group Market" (RIN1210-AA54) received on December 21, 2006; to the Committee on Health, Education, Labor, and Pensions.

EC-176. A communication from the Chairman, National Credit Union Administration, transmitting, pursuant to law, the Semi-Annual Report of the Inspector General for the period from April 1, 2006 through September 30, 2006; to the Committee on Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs.

EC-177. A communication from the Secretary of the Interior, transmitting, pursuant to law, the Semi-Annual Report of the Inspector General for the period from April 1, 2006 through September 30, 2006; to the Committee on Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs.

EC-178. A communication from the Secretary of the Treasury, transmitting, pursuant to law, the semi-annual reports of the Inspector Generals of the Treasury Department and Tax Administration for the period ending September 30, 2006; to the Committee on Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs.

EC-179. A communication from the Chief Executive Officer, Corporation for National and Community Service, transmitting, pursuant to law, the Semi-Annual Report of the Inspector General for the period from April 1, 2006 through October 31, 2006; to the Committee on Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs.

EC-180. A communication from the Inspector General, U.S. Nuclear Regulatory Commission, transmitting, pursuant to law, the Commission's fiscal year 2006 Performance Report; to the Committee on Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs.

EC-181. A communication from the Chairman, Federal Housing Finance Board, transmitting, pursuant to law, the Board's Performance and Accountability Report for fiscal year 2006; to the Committee on Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs.

EC-182. A communication from the Secretary of Energy, transmitting, pursuant to law, the Semi-Annual Report of the Inspector General for the period from April 1, 2006 through September 30, 2006; to the Committee on Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs.

EC-183. A communication from the Chairman, National Endowment for the Arts, transmitting, pursuant to law, the Organization's Performance and Accountability Report for fiscal year 2006; to the Committee on Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs.

EC-184. A communication from the Executive Director and Chief Operating Officer, American Battle Monuments Commission, transmitting, pursuant to law, the Commission's annual report for fiscal year 2006; to the Committee on Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs.

EC-185. A communication from the Chairman, Broadcasting Board of Governors, transmitting, pursuant to law, the Semi-Annual Report of the Inspector General for the period from April 1, 2006 through September 30, 2006; to the Committee on Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs.

EC-186. A communication from the Secretary of Health and Human Services, transmitting, pursuant to law, the Semi-Annual Report of the Inspector General for the period from April 1, 2006 through September 30, 2006; to the Committee on Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs.

EC-187. A communication from the Acting Chairman, Consumer Product Safety Commission, transmitting, pursuant to law, the Semi-Annual Report of the Inspector General for the period from April 1, 2006 through September 30, 2006; to the Committee on Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs.

EC-188. A communication from the Chairman, National Endowment for the Humanities, transmitting, pursuant to law, the Organization's Performance and Accountability Report for fiscal year 2006; to the Committee on Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs.

EC-189. A communication from the Office of the Administrator, National Aeronautics and Space Administration, transmitting, pursuant to law, the Semi-Annual Report of the Inspector General for the period from April 1, 2006 through September 30, 2006; to the Committee on Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs.

EC-190. A communication from the Chairman, Securities and Exchange Commission, transmitting, pursuant to law, the Commission's Performance and Accountability Report for fiscal year 2006; to the Committee on Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs.

EC-191. A communication from the Chairman, U.S. Merit Systems Protection Board, transmitting, pursuant to law, the Board's Performance and Accountability Report for fiscal year 2006; to the Committee on Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs.

EC-192. A communication from the Chairman, Securities and Exchange Commission, transmitting, pursuant to law, the Semi-Annual Report of the Inspector General for the period from April 1, 2006 through September 30, 2006; to the Committee on Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs.

EC-193. A communication from the President and Chief Executive Officer, Overseas Private Investment Corporation, transmitting, pursuant to law, the Corporation's Management Report for fiscal year 2006; to the Committee on Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs.

EC-194. A communication from the Executive Director, Federal Retirement Thrift Investment Board, transmitting, pursuant to law, a report relative to the seven audit reports issued during fiscal year 2006; to the Committee on Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs.

EC-195. A communication from the Administrator, U.S. Agency for International Development, transmitting, pursuant to law, the Semi-Annual Report of the Inspector General for the period from April 1, 2006 through September 30, 2006; to the Committee on Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs.

EC-196. A communication from the Chairman of the Board, Pension Benefit Guaranty Corporation, transmitting, pursuant to law, the Semi-Annual Report of the Inspector General for the period from April 1, 2006 through September 30, 2006; to the Committee on Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs.

EC-197. A communication from the Chairman and Chief Executive Officer, Farm Cred-

it Administration, transmitting, pursuant to law, the Administration's Performance and Accountability Report for fiscal year 2006; to the Committee on Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs.

EC-198. A communication from the Assistant Secretary, Office of Legislative Affairs, Department of State, transmitting, pursuant to law, the 2006 Annual report on the implementation of the Federal Financial Assistance Management Improvement Act of 1999; to the Committee on Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs.

EC-199. A communication from the Director, Office of Personnel Management, transmitting, pursuant to law, the Semi-Annual Report of the Inspector General for the period from April 1, 2006 through September 30, 2006; to the Committee on Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs.

EC-200. A communication from the Chairman, Federal Election Commission, transmitting, pursuant to law, the Semi-Annual Report of the Inspector General for the period from April 1, 2006 through September 30, 2006; to the Committee on Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs.

EC-201. A communication from the Associate General Counsel for General Law, Department of Homeland Security, transmitting, pursuant to law, the report of a nomination for the position of Under Secretary, received on December 21, 2006; to the Committee on Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs.

EC-202. A communication from the Deputy Director of Communications and Legislative Affairs, Equal Employment Opportunity Commission, transmitting, pursuant to law, the Commission's Performance and Accountability Report for fiscal year 2006; to the Committee on Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs.

EC-203. A communication from the Chairman, Farm Credit System Insurance Corporation, transmitting, pursuant to law, a report relative to the Federal Managers' Financial Integrity Act and the Inspector General Act of 1978; to the Committee on Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs.

EC-204. A communication from the Administrator, General Services Administration, transmitting, pursuant to law, information copies of prospectuses supporting the Administration's fiscal year 2007 Capital Investment and Leasing Program; to the Committee on Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs.

EC-205. A communication from the Secretary, Postal Rate Commission, transmitting, pursuant to law, the report of a vacancy in the position of Commissioner, received on December 21, 2006; to the Committee on Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs.

EC-206. A communication from the Acting Senior Procurement Executive, Office of the Chief Acquisition Officer, Department of Defense, transmitting, pursuant to law, the report of a rule entitled "Federal Acquisition Regulation; Federal Acquisition Circular 2005-14" (FAC 2005-14) received on December 21, 2006; to the Committee on Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs.

EC-207. A communication from the General Counsel, National Labor Relations Board, transmitting, pursuant to law, the Semi-Annual Report of the Inspector General for the period from April 1, 2006 through September 30, 2006; to the Committee on Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs.

EC-208. A communication from the Deputy Archivist of the United States, National Archives and Records Administration, transmitting, pursuant to law, the report of a rule entitled "Use of NARA Facilities" (RIN3095-AB55) received on December 21, 2006; to the Committee on Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs.

EC-209. A communication from the Chair, Equal Employment Opportunity Commission, transmitting, pursuant to law, the Semi-Annual Report of the Inspector General for the period from April 1, 2006 through September 30, 2006; to the Committee on Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs.

EC-210. A communication from the Inspector General, Small Business Administration, transmitting, pursuant to law, the Semi-Annual Report of the Inspector General for the period from April 1, 2006 through September 30, 2006; to the Committee on Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs.

EC-211. A communication from the Chief Financial Officer, Federal Trade Commission, transmitting, pursuant to law, the Commission's Performance and Accountability Report for fiscal year 2006; to the Committee on Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs.

EC-212. A communication from the Administrator, Small Business Administration, transmitting, pursuant to law, the Semi-Annual Report of the Inspector General for the period from April 1, 2006 through September 30, 2006; to the Committee on Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs.

EC-213. A communication from the Chairman, Federal Housing Finance Board, transmitting, pursuant to law, the Semi-Annual Report of the Inspector General for the period from April 1, 2006 through September 30, 2006; to the Committee on Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs.

EC-214. A communication from the District of Columbia Auditor, transmitting, pursuant to law, a report entitled "Letter Report: Auditor's Review of the HIV/AIDS Crisis Area Capacity Building Fund Authorized by the Fiscal Year 2006 Budget Support Act of 2005"; to the Committee on Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs.

EC-215. A communication from the Deputy Secretary of Defense, transmitting, pursuant to law, the Semi-Annual Report of the Inspector General for the period from April 1, 2006 through September 30, 2006; to the Committee on Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs.

EC-216. A communication from the Director, U.S. Trade and Development Agency, transmitting, pursuant to law, a report relative to the Agency's competitive sourcing activities for fiscal year 2006; to the Committee on Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs.

EC-217. A communication from the Administrator, General Services Administration, transmitting, pursuant to law, a report relative to the Administration's competitive sourcing efforts for fiscal year 2006; to the Committee on Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs.

EC-218. A communication from the Director of the Peace Corps, transmitting, pursuant to law, the Semi-Annual Report of the Inspector General for the period from April 1, 2006 through September 30, 2006; to the Committee on Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs.

EC-219. A communication from the Director, Office of Personnel Management, transmitting, pursuant to law, a report relative to the Office's competitive sourcing activities for fiscal year 2006; to the Committee on Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs.

EC-220. A communication from the Director, Strategic Human Resources Policy Division, Office of Personnel Management, transmitting, pursuant to law, the report of a rule entitled "Implementation of Title II of the Notification and Federal Employee Antidiscrimination and Retaliation Act of 2002—Reporting and Best Practices" (RIN3206-AK55) received on December 21, 2006; to the

Committee on Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs.

EC-221. A communication from the Secretary of Education, transmitting, pursuant to law, the Semi-Annual Report of the Inspector General for the period from April 1, 2006 through September 30, 2006; to the Committee on Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs.

EC-222. A communication from the Secretary for Regulatory Policy and Management, Veterans Benefits Administration, Department of Veterans Affairs, transmitting, pursuant to law, the report of a rule entitled "Filipino Veterans' Benefits Improvements" (RIN2900-AK65) received on December 21, 2006; to the Committee on Veterans' Affairs.

EC-223. A communication from the Director of Regulatory Management, Veterans Health Administration, Department of Veterans Affairs, transmitting, pursuant to law, the report of a rule entitled "Medical: Informed Consent—Extension of Time Period and Modification of Witness Requirement for Signature Consent" (RIN2900-AM19) received on December 21, 2006; to the Committee on Veterans' Affairs.

EC-224. A communication from the Director of Regulatory Management, Veterans Health Administration, Department of Veterans Affairs, transmitting, pursuant to law, the report of a rule entitled "Transfer of Montgomery GI Bill—Active Duty Entitlement to Dependents" (RIN2900-AM12) received on December 21, 2006; to the Committee on Veterans' Affairs.

EC-225. A communication from the Chief of the Immigration Unit, Executive Office for Immigration Review, Department of Justice, transmitting, pursuant to law, the report of a rule entitled "Board of Immigration Appeals: Composition of Board and Temporary Board Members" ((RIN1125-AA57) (EOIR No. 1581)) received on December 21, 2006; to the Committee on the Judiciary.

EC-226. A communication from the Senior Counsel, United States Marshals Service, Department of Justice, transmitting, pursuant to law, the report of a rule entitled "Supplement to Justice Department Procedures and Council on Environmental Quality Regulations to Ensure Compliance with the National Environmental Policy Act" ((RIN1105-AB13) (USMS 101)) received on December 21, 2006; to the Committee on the Judiciary.

EC-227. A communication from the Secretary, Judicial Conference of the United States, transmitting, pursuant to law, a report relative to the need for existing bankruptcy judgeships; to the Committee on the Judiciary.

EC-228. A communication from the Acting Director, Regulations and Rulings Division, Alcohol and Tobacco Tax and Trade Bureau, transmitting, pursuant to law, the report of a rule entitled "Establishment of the Shawnee Hills Viticultural Area" (RIN1513-AA70) received on December 21, 2006; to the Committee on the Judiciary.

EC-229. A communication from the Acting Director, Regulations and Rulings Division, Alcohol and Tobacco Tax and Trade Bureau, transmitting, pursuant to law, the report of a rule entitled "Establishment of the Chehalem Mountains Viticultural Area" (RIN1513-AA57) received on December 21, 2006; to the Committee on the Judiciary.

EC-230. A communication from the Junior Past National Treasurer, Navy Wives Clubs of America, transmitting, pursuant to law, a report relative to the latest audit of the organization; to the Committee on the Judiciary.

EC-231. A communication from the Deputy Assistant Administrator, Office of Diversion Control, Department of Justice, transmitting, pursuant to law, the report of a rule entitled "Clarification of Registration Require-

ments for Individual Practitioners" (RIN1117-AA89) received on December 21, 2006; to the Committee on the Judiciary.

EC-232. A communication from the Acting Assistant Attorney General, Office of Legislative Affairs, Department of Justice, transmitting, pursuant to law, the annual report of the National Institute of Justice for fiscal year 2005; to the Committee on the Judiciary.

EC-233. A communication from the Secretary of the Air Force, transmitting, pursuant to law, a report relative to the submission of its report on Defense base closures and realignments; to the Committee on Armed Services.

EC-234. A communication from the Secretary of Commerce, transmitting, pursuant to law, a report relative to the national emergency declared by Executive Order 13222 of August 17, 2001; to the Committee on Banking, Housing, and Urban Affairs.

EC-235. A communication from the Deputy Chief Counsel, Transportation Security Administration, Department of Homeland Security, transmitting, pursuant to law, the report of a rule entitled "Transportation Worker Identification Credential Implementation in the Maritime Sector; Hazardous Materials Endorsement for a Commercial Driver's License" (RIN1652-AA41) received on January 3, 2007; to the Committee on Commerce, Science, and Transportation.

EC-236. A communication from the Chairman, Federal Election Commission, transmitting, pursuant to law, a report relative to the Commission's competitive sourcing efforts for fiscal year 2006; to the Committee on Rules and Administration.

EC-237. A communication from the Chief Information Office and the Chief Privacy Officer, Federal Election Commission, transmitting, pursuant to law, an annual report relative to activities that affect privacy; to the Committee on Rules and Administration.

INTRODUCTION OF BILLS AND JOINT RESOLUTIONS

The following bills and joint resolutions were introduced, read the first and second times by unanimous consent, and referred as indicated:

By Mr. ALLARD (for himself and Mr. SALAZAR):

S. 194. A bill to designate the facility of the United States Postal Service located at 1300 North Frontage Road West in Vail, Colorado, as the "Gerald R. Ford, Jr. Post Office Building"; to the Committee on Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs.

By Mr. DORGAN (for himself, Mr. CONRAD, Mr. THUNE, and Ms. LANDRIEU):

S. 195. A bill to amend the Federal Crop Insurance Act to establish permanent authority for the Secretary of Agriculture to quickly provide disaster relief to agricultural producers that incur crop or livestock losses as a result of damaging weather or related condition in federally declared disaster areas, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Agriculture, Nutrition, and Forestry.

By Mr. KERRY (for himself and Mr. SALAZAR):

S. 196. A bill to amend title 5, United States Code, to deny Federal retirement benefits to individuals convicted of certain offenses, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs.

By Mr. LEAHY (for himself, Mr. SPECTER, Mr. REID, Mrs. FEINSTEIN, and Mr. CORNYN):

S. 197. A bill to authorize salary adjustments for justices and judges of the United

States for fiscal year 2007; considered and passed.

By Mr. LUGAR:

S. 198. A bill to improve authorities to address urgent nonproliferation crises and United States nonproliferation operations; to the Committee on Foreign Relations.

By Ms. MURKOWSKI:

S. 199. A bill to amend the Safe Drinking Water Amendments of 1996 to modify the grant program to improve sanitation in rural and Native villages in the State of Alaska; to the Committee on Environment and Public Works.

By Ms. MURKOWSKI:

S. 200. A bill to require the Secretary of the Interior, acting through the Bureau of Reclamation and the United States Geological Survey, to conduct a study on groundwater resources in the State of Alaska, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Energy and Natural Resources.

By Mrs. CLINTON (for herself, Mr. SCHUMER, Mr. KENNEDY, Mr. MENENDEZ, and Mr. LAUTENBERG):

S. 201. A bill to establish a grant program for individuals still suffering health effects as a result of the September 11, 2001, attacks in New York City and at the Pentagon; to the Committee on Health, Education, Labor, and Pensions.

By Ms. MURKOWSKI (for herself and Mr. STEVENS):

S. 202. A bill to provide for the conveyance of certain Forest Service land to the city of Coffman Cove, Alaska; to the Committee on Energy and Natural Resources.

By Ms. MURKOWSKI:

S. 203. A bill to provide equitable treatment for the people of the Village Corporation established for the Native Village of Saxman, Alaska, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Energy and Natural Resources.

By Mr. BINGAMAN:

S. 204. A bill for the relief of Ziad Mohamed Shaban Khweis, Heyam Ziad Khweis, and Juman Ziad Khweis; to the Committee on the Judiciary.

By Mr. STEVENS (for himself and Ms. MURKOWSKI):

S. 205. A bill to grant rights-of-way for electric transmission lines over certain Native allotments in the State of Alaska; to the Committee on Energy and Natural Resources.

SUBMISSION OF CONCURRENT AND SENATE RESOLUTIONS

The following concurrent resolutions and Senate resolutions were read, and referred (or acted upon), as indicated:

By Mrs. CLINTON (for herself and Mr. SCHUMER):

S. Res. 21. A resolution recognizing the uncommon valor of Wesley Autrey of New York, New York; to the Committee on the Judiciary.

ADDITIONAL COSPONSORS

S. 1

At the request of Mr. BROWN, his name was added as a cosponsor of S. 1, a bill to provide greater transparency in the legislative process.

S. 2

At the request of Mr. KENNEDY, the names of the Senator from Pennsylvania (Mr. SPECTER), the Senator from Connecticut (Mr. DODD) and the Senator from North Dakota (Mr. DORGAN) were added as cosponsors of S. 2, a bill

to amend the Fair Labor Standards Act of 1938 to provide for an increase in the Federal minimum wage.

S. 4

At the request of Mr. DORGAN, his name was added as a cosponsor of S. 4, a bill to make the United States more secure by implementing unfinished recommendations of the 9/11 Commission to fight the war on terror more effectively, to improve homeland security, and for other purposes.

S. 10

At the request of Mr. CONRAD, the name of the Senator from Wisconsin (Mr. KOHL) was added as a cosponsor of S. 10, a bill to reinstate the pay-as-you-go requirement and reduce budget deficits by strengthening budget enforcement and fiscal responsibility.

S. 43

At the request of Mr. ENSIGN, the names of the Senator from Kansas (Mr. ROBERTS), the Senator from Missouri (Mr. BOND) and the Senator from Alaska (Ms. MURKOWSKI) were added as cosponsors of S. 43, a bill to amend title II of the Social Security Act to preserve and protect Social Security benefits of American workers and to help ensure greater congressional oversight of the Social Security system by requiring that both Houses of Congress approve a totalization agreement before the agreement, giving foreign workers Social Security benefits, can go into effect.

S. 57

At the request of Mr. INOUE, the name of the Senator from Hawaii (Mr. AKAKA) was added as a cosponsor of S. 57, a bill to amend title 38, United States Code, to deem certain service in the organized military forces of the Government of the Commonwealth of the Philippines and the Philippine Scouts to have been active service for purposes of benefits under programs administered by the Secretary of Veterans Affairs.

S. 65

At the request of Mr. INHOFE, the name of the Senator from Nevada (Mr. ENSIGN) was added as a cosponsor of S. 65, a bill to modify the age-60 standard for certain pilots and for other purposes.

S. 85

At the request of Mr. MCCAIN, the name of the Senator from Washington (Ms. CANTWELL) was added as a cosponsor of S. 85, a bill to amend the Omnibus Crime Control and Safe Streets Act of 1968 to clarify that territories and Indian tribes are eligible to receive grants for confronting the use of methamphetamine.

S. 87

At the request of Mr. VITTER, the name of the Senator from Mississippi (Mr. LOTT) was added as a cosponsor of S. 87, a bill to permit the cancellation of certain loans under the Robert T. Stafford Disaster Relief and Emergency Assistance Act.

S. 101

At the request of Mr. STEVENS, the name of the Senator from Maine (Ms.

SNOWE) was added as a cosponsor of S. 101, a bill to update and reinvigorate universal service provided under the Communications Act of 1934.

S. 119

At the request of Mr. LEAHY, the names of the Senator from Illinois (Mr. DURBIN), the Senator from California (Mrs. FEINSTEIN), the Senator from Louisiana (Ms. LANDRIEU) and the Senator from Wisconsin (Mr. FEINGOLD) were added as cosponsors of S. 119, a bill to prohibit profiteering and fraud relating to military action, relief, and reconstruction efforts, and for other purposes.

S. 136

At the request of Mr. ALLARD, the name of the Senator from Colorado (Mr. SALAZAR) was added as a cosponsor of S. 136, a bill to expand the National Domestic Preparedness Consortium to include the Transportation Technology Center.

S. 170

At the request of Mr. ENSIGN, the names of the Senator from New Hampshire (Mr. SUNUNU), the Senator from South Dakota (Mr. THUNE), the Senator from Nebraska (Mr. HAGEL) and the Senator from Kansas (Mr. ROBERTS) were added as cosponsors of S. 170, a bill to amend the Internal Revenue Code of 1986 to repeal the excise tax on telephone and other communications services.

S. 190

At the request of Mrs. HUTCHISON, the name of the Senator from Ohio (Mr. VOINOVICH) was added as a cosponsor of S. 190, a bill to provide a technical correction to the Pension Protection Act of 2006.

STATEMENTS ON INTRODUCED BILLS AND JOINT RESOLUTIONS—JANUARY 4, 2007

By Mr. KERRY (for himself, Ms. SNOWE, Ms. LANDRIEU, and Mr. VITTER):

S. 163. A bill to improve the disaster loan program of the Small Business Administration, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Small Business and Entrepreneurship.

Ms. LANDRIEU. Mr. President, as we all know, there was a tremendous amount of criticism of the Federal Government's response to Hurricanes Katrina and Rita last year. Things are better now and the region is slowly recovering. But, having just finished the 2006 hurricane season, and with the 2007 season a few months away, we must be sure that if we have another disaster, the Federal Government's response will be better this time around. Disaster response agencies have to be better organized, more efficient, and more responsive in order to avoid the problems, the delays, mismanagement, and the seeming incompetence that occurred in 2005.

Today, I am proud to be an original cosponsor of legislation to improve the disaster response of one agency that had a great deal of problems last year,

the Small Business Administration, SBA. This bill, the "Small Business Disaster Response and Loan Improvements Act" makes major improvements to the SBA's disaster response and provides them with essential tools to ensure that they are more efficient and better prepared for future disasters—big and small. I should also note that this bill is a result of intensive bipartisan work over the past couple of months and was introduced shortly before the 109th Congress adjourned as S. 4097. Unfortunately, there was no action on that bill so it must be reintroduced in the new Congress. I strongly believe though we can secure passage during this Congress as the bill is reflective of the priorities from Senators KERRY and SNOWE, respectively, Chair and Ranking Member of the Senate Small Business Committee, as well as Senators LANDRIEU and VITTER. For my part, I have heard loud and clear from our impacted businesses that SBA reforms should be implemented as soon as possible. That is why in September, I sent a letter to the new SBA Administrator Steve Preston, expressing concerns on the lack of progress on SBA disaster reforms, which were included in S. 3778, the FY07 SBA Reauthorization bill reported out of the Senate Small Business Committee. In this letter, I requested his cooperation, along with our committee to pass this important legislation before Congress adjourns at the end of the year. The introduction of this bill today, shows the progress that the committee made since September on this issue. I hope that this spirit of bipartisanship continues into the 110th Congress and that I can continue to work with my colleagues on the Senate Small Business Committee to reform SBA.

This legislation offers new tools to enhance SBA's disaster assistance programs. In every disaster, the SBA Disaster Loan program is a lifeline for businesses and homeowners who want to rebuild their lives after a catastrophe. When Hurricane Katrina hit, our businesses and homeowners had to wait months for loan approvals. I do not know how many businesses we lost because help did not come in time. Because of the scale of this disaster, what these businesses needed was immediate, short-term assistance to hold them over until SBA was ready to process the tens of thousands of loan applications it received.

That is why this legislation provides the SBA Administrator with the ability to set up an expedited disaster assistance business loan program to make short-term, low-interest loans to keep them afloat. These loans will allow businesses to make payroll, begin making repairs, and address other immediate needs while they are awaiting insurance payouts or regular SBA disaster loans. However, I realize that every disaster is different and could range from a disaster on the scale of Hurricane Katrina or 9-11, to an ice storm or drought. This legislation

gives the SBA additional options and flexibility in the kinds of relief they can offer a community. When a tornado destroys 20 businesses in a small town in the Midwest, SBA can get the regular disaster program up and running fairly quickly. You may not need short-term loans in this instance. But if you know that SBA's resources would be overwhelmed by a storm—just as they were initially with Hurricane Katrina—these expedited business loans would be very helpful.

This legislation also would direct SBA to study ways to expedite disaster loans for those businesses in a disaster area that have a good, solid track record with the SBA or can provide vital recovery efforts. We had many businesses in the Gulf Coast that had paid off previous SBA loans, were major sources of employment in their communities, but had to wait months for decisions on their SBA disaster loan applications. I do not want to get rid of the SBA's current practice of reviewing applications on a first-come first-served basis, but there should be some mechanism in place for major disasters to get expedited loans out the door to specific businesses that has a positive record with SBA or those that could serve a vital role in the recovery efforts. Expedited loans would jumpstart impacted economies, get vital capital out to businesses, and retain essential jobs following future disasters.

This bill also makes an important modification to the collateral requirements for disaster loans. The SBA cannot disburse more than \$10,000 for an approved loan without showing collateral. This is to limit the loss to the SBA in the event that a loan defaults. However, this disbursement amount has not been increased since 1998 and these days, \$10,000 is not enough to get a business up and running. That is why this bill increases this collateral requirement to \$14,000 and gives the Administrator the ability to increase that amount, in the event of another large-scale disaster. I believe this is a reasonable and fiscally responsible increase, and at the same time gives the Administrator flexibility for future disasters which will inevitably occur.

As you may know, I pushed to get language in the last Hurricane Supplemental Appropriations bill in June 2006 to require SBA to develop a disaster plan and report to Congress on its contents by July 15, 2006. SBA provided this status report in July and I am pleased that, since then, SBA has been working on a comprehensive disaster response plan. That said, I believe that with the 2007 Atlantic hurricane season fast approaching, and other disasters possible before then, the SBA should be looking at additional ways to improve upon this plan. This legislation requires SBA to report to Congress, by March 15, 2007 on the current status of its response plan and to provide us with a snapshot of where they were with Hurricane Katrina and where they are now. The report also requests SBA

feedback on suggested improvements. These improvements include better incorporating State disaster assistance efforts into SBA's response, as well as better coordination with Federal response agencies like FEMA.

The Small Business Disaster Response and Loan Improvements Act will provide essential tools to make the SBA more proactive, flexible, and most important, more efficient during future disasters. Again, I look forward to working with both Senator SNOWE and Senator KERRY during this new session of Congress to ensure that the SBA has everything it needs to meet these goals.

I ask unanimous consent that a copy of my September 27, 2006 letter to SBA be printed in the RECORD.

There being no objection, the letter was ordered to be printed in the RECORD, as follows:

U.S. SENATE,

Washington, DC, September 27, 2006.

Hon. STEVEN C. PRESTON,
Administrator, U.S. Small Business Administration, Washington, D.C.

DEAR ADMINISTRATOR PRESTON: Let me take this opportunity to again congratulate you on your confirmation as Administrator of the U.S. Small Business Administration (SBA). Your management experience and passion to serve will prove extremely helpful to you in this challenging position.

I write you today because as a member of the Senate Committee on Small Business and Entrepreneurship, as well as senator from a state hit hard by both Hurricanes Katrina, and Rita. I believe it is my duty to ensure that we implement substantive changes to SBA's Disaster Assistance Program during this session of Congress.

The SBA's response to Katrina and Rita was too slow and lacking in urgency—threatening the very survival of our affected businesses. A year has passed since Hurricanes Katrina and Rita, yet while Congress is currently acting on extensive reforms for the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA), there has been only incremental changes to SBA's Disaster Assistance Program. That is why I am pleased to learn that you have recently created the Accelerated Disaster Response Initiative to identify and help implement process improvements to enable the SBA to respond more quickly in assisting small businesses and homeowners in need of assistance after a disaster. I applaud these efforts and your leadership on this issue. But much more must be done to address the systemic problems that led to delays and inaction post-Katrina and Rita.

For our part, the Senate is also attempting to address the multiple problems that hampered SBA's ability to assist impacted Gulf Coast small businesses and homeowners. Under the leadership of the Chair and Ranking Member of the Senate Committee on Small Business and Entrepreneurship, Senators Snowe and Kerry, the committee voted unanimously to approve S. 3778, the "Small Business Reauthorization and Improvements Act of 2006" and sent it to the full Senate for consideration. A copy of the bill is attached for your convenience. This bipartisan legislation reauthorizes SBA programs, and also of great importance to me and my constituents, makes essential reforms to SBA's Disaster Assistance Program. However, since S. 3778 was introduced on August 2, 2006, almost nine weeks ago, it has been blocked from consideration and the Committee is still waiting for budget information so that it may file its report on the bill. It is my un-

derstanding that the administration and SBA has several concerns about this bill in its current form.

I am very concerned at this apparent deadlock, a deadlock which threatens our bipartisan efforts to implement comprehensive SBA Disaster Assistance reforms before the end of the year. In particular, I believe that there must be SBA reforms in the following areas:

Short-Term Assistance: Following Katrina and Rita small businesses waited, on average, four to six months for approvals and disbursements on SBA Disaster Loans. In order to ensure the long-term survival of small businesses impacted by a catastrophic disaster, SBA needs to be in the business of short-term recovery—by providing either emergency bridge loans or grants.

Disaster Loan Process for Homeowners: While SBA's mission is to "aid, counsel, assist and protect, insofar as is possible, the interests of small business concerns" it also has the added responsibility of helping affected homeowners rebuild their housing post-disaster. Katrina and Rita resulted in record numbers of SBA Disaster Loan applications from homeowners, which strained SBA's existing resources and personnel. If the SBA must bear this responsibility, the agency should improve the process as well as possibly seek greater coordination and cooperation with the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development on disaster housing assistance.

Expedited Disaster Loans to Businesses: The SBA currently has no mechanism in place to expedite Disaster Loans to impacted businesses that are either a major source of employment or that can demonstrate a vital contribution to recovery efforts in the area, such as businesses who construct housing, provide building materials, or conduct debris removal. The SBA needs the ability to fast-track loans to these businesses, in order to jumpstart local economies and recovery efforts.

Economic Injury Disaster Loans: Although Katrina and Rita directly affected businesses along the Gulf Coast, additional businesses in the region, as well as the rest of the country, were economically impacted by the storms. The SBA must have the ability to provide nationwide, or perhaps regional, economic injury disaster loans to businesses which can demonstrate economic distress or disruption from a future major disaster.

Loss Verification and Loan Processing: Following the Gulf Coast hurricanes, the SBA struggled for months to hire enough staff to inspect losses and process loan applications. Although SBA now has trained reserves to handle such surges in demand, the SBA also needs the permanent authority to enter into agreements with qualified private lenders and credit unions to process Disaster Loans and provide loss verification services.

Administrator Preston, I was impressed by your expressed willingness to be a bridge between Congress and the White House. For the SBA to truly bring its disaster capabilities to the next level, I believe that it must work in concert with the Congress. Together, we must remove layers of bureaucracy and red tape, which, following Katrina and Rita, both overwhelmed and frustrated dedicated SBA employees and those affected by the hurricanes. We must also give the SBA new tools to ensure that problems that occurred post-Katrina and Rita never happen again.

Last month we marked the one-year anniversary of Hurricane Katrina, and now mark the one-year anniversary of Hurricane Rita. It is essential that we take action now to make substantive reforms to the SBA Disaster Assistance Program. We owe nothing less to our small businesses. I ask that you continue working with my office on this important issue and respond to our approach in

writing no later than October 31, 2006. This will help us develop a proposal which can address the concerns of the SBA as well as provide a better and more responsive SBA Disaster Assistance Program for our Small businesses.

Thank you in advance for your assistance with this request.

Sincerely,

MARY L. LANDRIEU,
United States Senator.

STATEMENTS ON INTRODUCED BILLS AND JOINT RESOLUTIONS

By Mr. ALLARD (for himself and
Mr. SALAZAR):

S. 194. A bill to designate the facility of the United States Postal Service located at 1300 North Frontage Road West in Vail, Colorado, as the "Gerald R. Ford, Jr. Post Office Building"; to the Committee on Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs.

Mr. ALLARD. Mr. President, as my good friend and colleague from Colorado just mentioned, we are introducing S. 194 naming the post office in Vail, CO, after former President Gerald R. Ford. As this vote just showed, we are all aware that when Gerald Ford passed away last month, our country lost a great man. Much has been said recently about President Ford: How he selflessly came to the aid of this country in one of its most trying times, how he governed through his beliefs about what was the best decision for the Nation regardless of the personal consequences, and his lifelong pursuit of bipartisanship and debate.

The defining characteristic of President Ford was his ability to remain humble and a man of the people. As testimonies poured in across the Nation, we were reminded about how he played selflessly as center at the University of Michigan, worked as a busboy while attending law school, and often hosted barbecues for his neighbors at his home in Alexandria, VA, while serving as House minority leader.

President Ford's charm and likability were shown all over the country, but away from his home State and the microscope of Washington, DC, Gerald Ford and his family also touched Colorado. As a Congressman from Michigan, the Ford family visited Colorado to ski in 1968 and since then have remained a constant presence in that community. He skied there, he built a house in nearby Beaver Creek, and he hosted a golf tournament for 20 years.

Following President Ford's passing, more than 2,500 people gathered at the base of Vail Mountain to witness a touching tribute to the President that included 500 ski instructors and a torchlight parade on Vail's Golden Peak. In Vail, like many other communities, President Ford was regarded as a tremendous asset and a man who treated everyone as an equal. Several residents remarked that one would never know he was a former President.

As a lasting tribute to this tremendous man, I cannot think of a more ap-

propriate honor than to have Vail's post office bear the name of Gerald R. Ford, Jr. A post office is the point in every community that brings all people together, and there is no better way to symbolize the virtues President Ford demonstrated through his public and private life. I encourage the Senate to pass legislation entitled "Senate Bill 194" in recognition of President Ford and his contributions to Vail, CO.

Mr. SALAZAR. Mr. President, I rise today to speak in favor of a bill that will be introduced by Senator ALLARD and myself to name the post office in Vail, CO, after President Gerald R. Ford.

I call myself fortunate because I worked with President Ford. In our brief time together, it was obvious to me he was a man of honor, integrity, and courage.

Gerald Ford was a man who loved the State of Colorado, who loved its people and its culture. So it is a fitting tribute that the post office in his adopted town of Vail should bear his name.

President Ford led a remarkable life—remarkable not only for his great success but for the humility, dignity, and candor which were the hallmarks of his career. And what a career it was: from the University of Michigan to Yale Law School to service in the Navy to a leadership position in the U.S. Congress, and eventually, of course, to the Presidency of these United States, to say nothing of a long and productive post-Presidential career.

Of course, it is his time in the White House which people will remember most, and for good reason. It was President Ford who, through his leadership, brought the country together during a time of crisis. He was not only the right man at the right time for a very difficult job, he was a perfect man to deal with circumstances, the likes of which this country had never seen.

But I will remember President Ford not only for his good deeds in public office but for his unending commitment to justice and equality well after he left the White House behind. In 1999, when our shared alma mater, the University of Michigan, had its diversity policies challenged in court, President Ford wrote an op-ed piece in the New York Times about diversity, and he talked about an inclusive America which was essential to the future and the strength of the United States. In his op-ed piece, which was widely circulated, about which he and I spent time talking one day, he wrote the following:

Of all the triumphs that have marked this as America's century—breathtaking advances in science and technology, the democratization of wealth and dispersal of political powers in ways hardly imaginable in 1899—none is more inspiring, if incomplete, than our pursuit of racial justice.

President Ford bravely defended the University of Michigan's diversity program with the same elegance and bravery with which he confronted the tribulations of the Watergate era and, in the

process, left behind a legacy of tolerance and justice which will not soon be forgotten.

Of course, no tribute to President Ford would be complete without mention of his extraordinary family, particularly his wife, Betty, and as President Ford famously said:

I am indebted to no man, and only to one woman—to my dear wife.

Betty Ford's bravery and her candor has inspired millions upon millions of Americans, and we are grateful for her service, and we wish her and the Ford family the very best.

The people of Colorado thank Gerald Ford for his service, and we are proud to move forward in helping the post office in Vail, CO, bear his name.

By Mr. KERRY (for himself and
Mr. SALAZAR):

S. 196. A bill to amend title 5, United States Code, to deny Federal retirement benefits to individuals convicted of certain offenses, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs.

Mr. KERRY. Mr. President, today Senator SALAZAR and I are the Congressional Pension Accountability Act legislation to deny Federal pensions to Members of Congress who are convicted of white collar crime such as bribery. A similar provision passed the House of Representatives during the 109th Congress. I look forward to working with my colleagues to include this legislation in the ethics reform legislation to be considered by the Senate this week.

I strongly believe that all Members of Congress must be held to the highest ethical standards and those who violate the public trust must be held accountable for their actions. Last year, a series of scandals exposed Washington lobbyists and Members of Congress who used undue and improper influence to represent special interests in their dealings with the Federal Government.

In 2005, the now infamous Washington lobbyist Jack Abramoff pleaded guilty to conspiracy, mail fraud and tax evasion charges in a plea agreement. The Justice Department is currently investigating his attempts to influence Federal Government policy in both Congress and the Executive Branch.

Last November, Representative Bob Ney resigned from the House of Representatives after pleading guilty to conspiracy and making false statements. In a plea agreement, former Representative Ney acknowledged taking trips, tickets, meals and campaign donations from Mr. Abramoff in return for taking official actions on behalf of Abramoff clients.

In March 2002, Representative Ney inserted an amendment in the Help America Vote Act to lift an existing Federal ban against commercial gaming by a Texas Native American tribal client of Abramoff. In return, Representative Ney received all-expense-paid and reduced-price trips to Scotland to play golf, a trip to New Orleans

to gamble and a vacation in Lake George, NY, all courtesy of Mr. Abramoff.

In the largest bribery case in the Congress since the 1980s, Representative Randy "Duke" Cunningham recently resigned from the House of Representatives after pleading guilty in Federal court to receiving \$2.4 million in bribes from military contractors and evading more than \$1 million in taxes. In a plea agreement, former Representative Cunningham admitted to a pattern of bribery lasting close to 5 years, with Federal contractors giving him Persian rugs, a Rolls-Royce, and antique furniture and paying for travel and hotel expenses, use of a yacht and a lavish graduation party for his daughter.

These stories are outrageous and they sicken me. As elected representatives, we must hold ourselves and all those who represent the Federal Government to the highest ethical standards. The principle is a simple one: Public servants who abuse the public trust and are convicted of ethics crimes should not collect taxpayer financed pensions.

Under current law, former Representatives Cunningham, Ney and others convicted of serious ethics abuses will receive a Congressional pension of approximately \$40,000 per year—paid for by American taxpayers. Only a conviction for a crime against the United States, such as treason or espionage, will cost a Member of Congress their pension. This law must be changed to ensure that Congress does not reward unethical behavior.

The Congressional Pension Accountability Act will bar Members of Congress from receiving taxpayer-funded retirement benefits after they have been convicted of bribery, conspiracy, perjury or other serious ethics offenses.

It is my understanding that there is some concern about how this legislation may affect innocent spouses and children of Members of Congress who lose their pensions as a result of this legislation. Even after this legislation is enacted, the Member will still receive a refund of all contributions into either the Federal Employees Retirement System (FERS) or the Civil Service Retirement System (CSRS) and will retain all benefits from the Thrift Savings Plan (TSP).

The Congressional Pension Accountability Act is supported by the National Taxpayers Union and a similar provision is supported by Taxpayers for Common Sense, the Family Research Council and Citizens Against Government Waste.

Together we can significantly improve our government by changing the way business is done in Washington. I believe this legislation will help ensure that our government once again responds to the needs of our people, not special interests. I ask all my colleagues to support this legislation.

By Mr. LUGAR:

S. 198. A bill to improve authorities to address urgent nonproliferation crises and United States nonproliferation operations; to the Committee on Foreign Relations.

Mr. LUGAR. Mr. President, today I am introducing the Nunn-Lugar Cooperative Threat Reduction Act of 2007. This legislation is based on a bill I first offered in 2005. It is focused on facilitating implementation of the Nunn-Lugar program and removing some of the self-imposed restrictions that complicate or delay the destruction of weapons of mass destruction.

In 2005, the Senate approved this legislation in the form of an amendment I offered to the National Defense Authorization Act by an overwhelming vote of 78 to 19. Last year, the Senate adopted a similar amendment by unanimous consent. Unfortunately, these provisions were not included in either conference agreement.

While well-intentioned, the congressionally-imposed conditions on Nunn-Lugar have inhibited the amount of work that can be done to eliminate and safeguard weapons of mass destruction in the former Soviet Union. Each year, a six month, thirteen step certification and waiver process must be completed before appropriated funds can be obligated to eliminate weapons of mass destruction. This annual process wastes money and valuable time—time lost in the fight against proliferation. In the field, it can prevent the availability of funds already authorized and appropriated by Congress for the Nunn-Lugar Program, thus delaying critical dismantlement work.

To date, the Nunn-Lugar program has deactivated for destroyed: 6, 934 nuclear warheads; 637 ICBMs; 485 ICBM silos; 81 ICBM mobile missile launchers; 155 bombers; 906 nuclear air-to-surface missiles; 436 submarine missile launchers; 601 submarine launched missiles; 30 nuclear submarines; and 194 nuclear test tunnels.

Perhaps most importantly, Ukraine, Belarus, and Kazakhstan emerged from the Soviet Union as the 3rd, 4th, and 8th largest nuclear weapons powers in the world. Today, all three are nuclear weapons free as a result of cooperative efforts under the Nunn-Lugar program.

The Nunn-Lugar Program currently has a permanent waiver authority, to be used on an annual basis, for the congressionally-imposed certifications on the Nunn-Lugar program. While the waiver permits the program to continue its important work, the waiver does not solve the underlying problem.

In 1991, concerns surrounding Russian commitments to nonproliferation led the original Nunn-Lugar legislation to require President to certify annually that each recipient is "committed to" meeting six conditions: 1. Making a substantial investment in dismantling or destroying such weapons; 2. forgoing any military modernization program that exceeds legitimate defense requirements and forgoing the replacement of destroyed weapons of mass de-

struction; 3. forgoing any use of fissionable and other components of destroyed nuclear weapons in new nuclear weapons; 4. facilitating United States verification of weapons destruction carried out under the program; 5. complying with all relevant arms control agreements; and 6. observing internationally recognized human rights, including the protection of minorities.

At the time, these conditions were important to defining the U.S. strategic relationship with each Nunn-Lugar recipient. The question we must answer today is, what national security benefit do the certification requirements provide the American people? Do the conditions make it easier or harder to eliminate weapons of mass destruction in Russia or elsewhere? Do the conditions make it more likely or less likely that weapons are eliminated?

Congress imposed an additional six conditions on construction of the chemical weapons destruction program at Shchuchye. These conditions include: 1. Full and accurate Russian declaration on the size of its chemical weapons stockpile; 2. allocation by Russia of at least \$25,000,000 to chemical weapons elimination; 3. development by Russia of a practical plan for destroying its stockpile of nerve agents; 4. enactment of a law by Russia that provides for the elimination of all nerve agents at a single site; 5. an agreement by Russia to destroy or convert its chemical weapons production facilities at Volgograd and Novocheboksark; and 6. a demonstrated commitment from the international community to fund and build infrastructure needed to support and operate the facility.

Some will suggest that the certification process is, at most, an annoyance, but not a serious programmatic threat. I disagree. While well intentioned, these conditions delay and complicate efforts to destroy weapons of mass destruction. If the proliferation of weapons of mass destruction is the number one national security threat facing our country, we cannot permit any delays in our response.

The Bush Administration withheld Russia's certification in 2002 because of concerns in the chemical and biological weapon arenas. President Bush recognized the predicament and requested waiver authority for the Congressionally-imposed conditions. While awaiting temporary waiver to be authorized in law, new Nunn-Lugar projects were stalled and no new contracts were finalized between April 16 to August 9, 2002. This delay caused numerous disarmament projects in Russia to be put on hold, including: 1. Installation of security enhancements at ten nuclear weapons storage sites; 2. initiation of the dismantlement of two strategic missile submarines and thirty submarine-launched ballistic missiles; and 3. initiation of the dismantlement of SS-24 rail-mobile and SS-25 road-mobile ICBMs and launchers. Clearly,

these projects were in the national security interest of the United States, but they were delayed because of self-imposed conditions and bureaucratic red tape. A second period of delay began on October 1, 2002, with the expiration of a temporary waiver. Again, U.S. national security suffered with the postponement of critical dismantlement and security activities for some six weeks until Congress acted.

The events of 2002 are not the exceptions: They are the rule. In some years, Nunn-Lugar funds are not available for expenditure until more than half of the fiscal year has passed, and weapons of mass destruction slated for dismantlement await the U.S. bureaucratic process. This means that the program is denied access to these funds for large portions of the fiscal year in which they were intended to be spent while critical nonproliferation projects are put on hold. The bureaucracy generates reams of paper and yet ultimately produces an outcome that was never in doubt; namely, that it is in the national security interests of the United States to eliminate weapons of mass destruction in Russia and elsewhere.

The certification and waiver processes consume hundreds of man-hours of work by the State Department, the Intelligence Community, the Pentagon, as well as other departments and agencies. This time could be better spent tackling the proliferation threats facing our country. Instead of interdicting WMD shipments, identifying the next AQ Khan, or locating hidden stocks of chemical and biological weapons, our nonproliferation experts spend their time compiling reports and assembling certification or waiver determinations. Even more frustrating is the fact that the majority of these reports are repetitive, in that the Department of State already reports on most of these issues in other formats.

Some will argue that the certification process provides the Administration with leverage on Russian behavior. I disagree. I do not believe any of the certification subjects are a good reason to stop the destruction and safeguarding of weapons of mass destruction. I would argue just the opposite; these are reasons for us to accelerate our efforts and become more vigilant in our approach.

These programmatic delays have given Russia, and others, cover to hide behind, pointing the finger of blame on the United States for slow program implementation and taking the spotlight off their failure to provide access and transparency. While we call on President Putin to speed up dismantlement and open more sites for security upgrades, congressionally-imposed conditions and funding delays are used as arguments against accelerating Nunn-Lugar projects.

I have concluded that despite the best intentions of Congress, the certification requirements on the Nunn-Lugar program have outlasted their utility. While the goals of the condi-

tions are pure, they simply do not belong on nonproliferation programs. I would point out that the equally important nonproliferation programs at the Departments of Energy and State do not have these conditions. They do not suffer from the annual certification and waiver process. Why should the Nunn-Lugar program, focused on the dismantlement of nuclear, chemical and biological weapons, be singled out for this treatment or need for leverage.

I am pleased that a number of administration officials and groups have endorsed the elimination of the certification and waiver process. The 9/11 Commission Report weighed in with an important endorsement of the Nunn-Lugar program, saying that "Preventing the proliferation of [weapons of mass destruction] warrants a maximum effort—by strengthening counter-proliferation efforts, expanding the Proliferation Security Initiative, and supporting the Cooperative Threat Reduction Program." The Report went on to say that "Nunn-Lugar . . . is now in need of expansion, improvement and resources." More recently, the follow-on 9/11 Public Discourse Project wrote that the elimination of the certification requirements "is an important step forward in protecting the United States against catastrophic attack."

Secretary Rice has testified that the Administration strongly supports my efforts pointing out that "flexibility in being able to administer the program would be most welcome." Bob Joseph, the Under Secretary of State for Arms Control and International Security, also expressed his support saying pointedly to me that "the fact that there are 13 steps that can take . . . six months or longer to get through certainly . . . underlines the rationale for [this legislation] . . . Whatever we can do, Senator, to improve the efficiency of the process, to reduce the time lines involved, and to provide greater flexibility for action, I would be in favor of."

Charles Boyd, USAF (Ret.) and Stanley Weiss, the Chief Executive Officer and Chairman, respectively, of the Business Executives for National Security, wrote to the Armed Services Committees of the House and Senate expressing support for the elimination of the certification requirements on the Nunn-Lugar program. They wrote in part: "Even though conditions can be waived, doing so diverts time and effort that could otherwise be used to meet proliferation challenges. Relying on waivers also preserves the risk that funding delays could threaten existing projects and investments."

In sum, the proliferation of weapons of mass destruction is the number one national security threat facing the United States today. The Nunn-Lugar program is making tremendous contributions to the elimination of potentially vulnerable stockpiles. While the Congress' intentions in imposing annual certification requirements were

pure, the process has evolved into a bureaucratic quagmire in to which months of work by numerous departments, agencies and bureaus are sunk. The Administration toils to produce a forgone conclusion; namely, that it is in U.S. interests to eliminate and secure weapons and materials of mass destruction. The funds for these operations are delayed while threats remain unaddressed. This is red-tape that we can do without. The only practical effect is unnecessary delays to our response to the number one national security threat facing the United States.

There being no objection, the text of the bill was ordered to be printed in the RECORD, as follows:

S. 199

Be it enacted by the Senate and House of Representatives of the United States of America in Congress assembled,

SECTION 1. GRANTS TO ALASKA TO IMPROVE SANITATION IN RURAL AND NATIVE VILLAGES.

Section 303 of the Safe Drinking Water Act Amendments of 1996 (33 U.S.C. 1263a) is amended—

(1) by redesignating subsection (e) as subsection (h);

(2) by inserting after subsection (d) the following:

"(e) REQUIREMENTS.—As a condition of receiving a grant under this section, the State of Alaska shall—

"(1) require each applicant to clearly identify the scope and the goal of the project for which funding is sought and how the funds will be used to meet the specific, stated goal of the project;

"(2) establish long-term goals for the program, including providing water and sewer systems to Alaska Native villages; and

"(3) carry out regular reviews of grantees to determine if the stated scope and goals of each grant are being met.

"(f) REPORTING.—Not later than December 31 of the calendar year following the fiscal year in which this subsection is enacted, and annually thereafter, the State of Alaska shall submit to the Administrator of the Environmental Protection Agency a report describing the information obtained under subsection (e) during the fiscal year ending the preceding September 30, including—

"(1) the specific goals of each project;

"(2) how funds were used to meet the goal; and

"(3) whether the goals were met.

"(g) REVIEW.—

"(1) IN GENERAL.—The Administrator of the Environmental Protection Agency shall require the State of Alaska to correct any deficiencies identified in a report under subsection (f).

"(2) FAILURE TO CORRECT OR REACH AGREEMENT.—

"(A) IN GENERAL.—If a deficiency in a project included in a report under subsection (f) is not corrected within a period of time agreed to by the Administrator and the State of Alaska, the Administrator shall not permit additional expenditures for that project.

"(B) TIME AGREEMENT.—

"(i) IN GENERAL.—Not later than 180 days after the date of submission to the Administrator of a report under subsection (f), the Administrator and the State of Alaska shall reach an agreement on a period of time referred to in subparagraph (A).

"(ii) FAILURE TO REACH AGREEMENT.—If the State of Alaska and the Administrator fail to reach an agreement on the period of time to correct a deficiency in a project included

in a report under subsection (f) by the deadline specified in clause (i), the Administrator shall not permit additional expenditures for that project.”; and

(3) in subsection (h) (as redesignated by paragraph (1))—

(A) by striking “\$40,000,000” and inserting “\$42,000,000”; and

(B) by striking “2005” and inserting “2010”.

By Ms. MURKOWSKI:

S. 199. A bill to amend the Safe Drinking Water Amendments of 1996 to modify the grant program to improve sanitation in rural and Native villages in the State of Alaska; to the Committee on Environment and Public Works.

Ms. MURKOWSKI. Mr. President, I rise to introduce a bill that will allow the Environmental Protection Agency to continue to provide grant funding and technical assistance to remote communities in Alaska for critical water and sewer projects. These remote communities are only accessible by either aircraft or boat.

This important funding was originally authorized as part of the Safe Drinking Water Act Amendments of 1996 and was reauthorized in 2000. Every fiscal year, the EPA transfers funding authorized by this program to the State of Alaska’s Village Safe Water Program, which is managed by the Alaska Department of Environmental Conservation.

The water and sewer conditions in the villages in Alaska that still need this critical funding rival the conditions in rural communities in third world countries. For example, residents in some villages in Alaska have to go to a central source in the community to get fresh water. Instead of flushing toilets, residents of some villages have to use a device called a “honeybucket.” This device is a large bucket with a toilet seat on top. When the honeybucket is full, it is usually dumped in a lagoon or on land. Sometimes, these dump locations are near sources of drinking water.

The Village Safe Water program has been a success over the years. Many homes in Alaska’s remote communities now have plumbing due to funds authorized by this program. However, 34 percent of homes in these communities still do not have indoor plumbing. It is unacceptable that these Americans still do not have access to conventional plumbing in their homes in 2007.

Previously, the Office of Management and Budget published a Program Assessment Rating Tool report concerning this program. This report found several deficiencies concerning the administration of this program. In response to that report, the Alaska Department of Environmental Conservation has put in place several changes to correct these deficiencies, including hiring additional accounting staff and initiating a memorandum of understanding with EPA Region 10 regarding program procedures and requirements.

This legislation reauthorizes the program through fiscal year 2010 and in-

creases the authorized funding level from \$40 million to \$42 million, a modest five percent increase. Also, the legislation requires the State of Alaska to mandate that grant recipients clearly identify the scope and the goal of the project for which funding is sought and how the funds will be used to meet the specific, stated goal of the project; establish long-term goals for the program and carry out regular reviews of grantees to determine if the stated scope and goal of each grant are being met. This bill also requires the State of Alaska to submit an annual report to the EPA that addresses these issues. If a project-specific problem included in the report is not rectified within an amount of time agreed to by the State of Alaska and the EPA or if both entities are not able to agree on a timetable to fix the problem, the EPA will not disburse any additional funding for the project in question.

It is imperative that we reauthorize this critically important program soon. The health and well-being of rural Alaskans is at stake.

I ask unanimous consent that the text of this bill be printed in the RECORD.

By Ms. MURKOWSKI:

S. 200. A bill to require the Secretary of the Interior, acting through the Bureau of Reclamation and the United States Geological Survey, to conduct a study on groundwater resources in the State of Alaska, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Energy and Natural Resources.

Ms. MURKOWSKI. Mr. President, in 2005 I first introduced a measure of benefit to my home State of Alaska, the Alaska Water Resources Act, for a number of reasons. While the bill easily passed the U.S. Senate in 2005, it did not complete its journey to final passage, which is why I am reintroducing the bill today. The importance of water resource data collection to a State that has a resource-based economy cannot be overstated. Economic development is predicated on access to an adequate water supply, and in my State there is inadequate hydrologic data upon which to secure both economic development and the health and welfare of Alaskan citizens.

Alaska is an amazing State from a hydrological viewpoint. It is home to more than 3 million lakes—only about 100 being larger than 10 square miles—more than 12,000 rivers and uncounted thousands of streams, creeks and ponds. Together these water bodies hold about one-third of all the fresh water found in the United States.

Alaska is home to a number of large rivers. The Yukon, which originates in western Canada, runs 1,400 miles—discharging from 25,000 cubic feet of water per second in early spring to more than 600,000 cubic feet per second in May during the spring thaw. The Yukon drains roughly 330,000 square miles of Alaska and Canada, about one-third of the State. Besides the Yukon, Alaska

is home to nine other major rivers and creeks all running more than 300 miles in length: the Porcupine, Koyukuk, Kuskokwim, Tanana, Innoko, Colville, Noatak, Kobuk and Birch Creek.

Alaska residents from early spring to fall face substantial flood threats, from spring flooding caused by breakup and ice damming to fall’s heavy rains, but the State has fewer than 100 stream gaging stations operated by the U.S. Geological Survey—Alaska having less than 10 percent of the stream flow information that is taken for granted by all other States in the Nation. Alaska averages one working gage for each 10,000 square miles, while, as an example, Pacific Northwest States average one gage for each 365 square miles. To emphasize the lack of data now available for Alaska, I would point out that to equal the stream gage density of the Pacific Northwest States my State would need to have over 1,600 total gage sites.

Alaska also supports the Nation’s least modern and undeveloped potable water distribution system. Water for Alaska towns outside of the more densely populated “Railbelt” comes predominately from groundwater sources. Surface water sources often result in supply/storage problems since these surface sources freeze and are not readily available for up to half of the year. The chances for water-borne contaminants to affect potable water supplies, including fecal matter from Alaska’s plentiful wildlife populations, human waste from inquate or non-existent sewage treatment facilities, and natural mineral deposits, natural arsenic levels in mineralized zone creeks frequently exceeding EPA standards) are present and increasing. In areas that predominately depend on groundwater sources, such as the “Railbelt” there is only very limited knowledge of the nature and extent of aquifers that support those critical groundwater supplies. Extensive permafrost further complicates the potential for adverse impacts to Alaska. In portions of Southcentral Alaska where there is a dependence on groundwater as the source for an adequate healthy water supply, the availability of that supply is starting to be in jeopardy. Allocations of water need to be based on scientific data, and the data needed upon which the allocations are made is unavailable. Users of water are only beginning to realize the potential conflicts that may arise, and the limits on future economic development that may result from inadequate knowledge of the water resource, particularly in the Matanuska-Susitna Borough, on the Kenai Peninsula, and to a lesser extent in portions of the municipality of Anchorage and in the Fairbanks area, where groundwater provided by wells is a crucial part of the State’s water distribution system, and where there is little known about the size, capacity, extent and recharge capability of the aquifers that these wells tap.

Alaska, according to the Alaska Department of Environmental Conservation, still has some 16,000 homes in 71 generally Native villages not being served by piped water or enclosed water haul systems. There are still 55 villages in Alaska where up to 29 percent of the residents are not served by sanitary water systems, with more than 60 percent of residents not being served in 16 villages. Even though, since statehood in 1959, the State and Federal governments have spent \$1.3 billion on rural water-sanitation system improvements, the State still has an estimated need for nearly \$650 million in additional funding to complete installation of a modern water-sanitation system.

Planning and engineering for those locations cannot be easily completed without better information as to the availability and extent of supply of water and better analysis of new technologies that could be used for water system installations, including possible desalination for some island and coastal communities.

For all these reasons today I have reintroduced legislation authorizing the Department of the Interior's Commissioner of Reclamation and the Director of the U.S. Geological Survey to conduct a series of water resource studies in Alaska. The studies will include a survey of water treatment needs and technologies, including desalination treatment, which may be applicable to water resources developments in Alaska. The study will review the need for enhancement of the National Streamflow Information Program administered by the U.S. Geological Survey. The Streamflow review will determine whether more stream gaging stations are necessary for flood forecasting, aiding resource extraction, determining the risk to the state's transportation system, and for wildfire management. Groundwater resources will also be further evaluated and documented to determine the availability of water, the quality of that groundwater, and the extent of the aquifers in some urban areas.

This type of study, already conducted for most all other States in the Nation, should help Alaska better plan and design water systems and transportation infrastructure and also better prepare for floods and summer wildfires.

There is literally "water, water everywhere" in Alaska, but too often, especially in communities such as Ketchikan that take water from surface sources, or the rapidly growing Mat-Su Valley where there may be less water to drink during unusually dry summers, there is a real and growing problem of maintaining an adequate healthy supply of pure water. This problem is only going to grow more severe with a growing population and economy. This bill is designed to provide more information to help communities plan for future water needs and to help State officials plan for flood and fire safety concerns and further economic development.

By Mr. STEVENS (for himself and Ms. MURKOWSKI):

S. 205. A bill to grant rights-of-way for electric transmission lines over certain Native allotments in the State of Alaska; to the Committee on Energy and Natural Resources.

Mr. STEVENS. Mr. President. Today I reintroduce legislation which will resolve an ongoing dispute in my State concerning rights of way in the Copper River Valley region.

In the 109th Congress, both the Senate and House of Representatives held hearings on this bill. It is my hope that we can move this important legislation quickly through the Senate.

When Congress attempted to settle outstanding land claims in Alaska, it unintentionally created a land dispute between Native allottees and utility companies. In the 1950s and 1960s, the Federal Government and the State of Alaska granted rights of way to the Copper Valley Electric Association to run power lines across areas in our state that were later claimed by Alaska Natives. These rights were conveyed before Alaska Native allotment claims had been filed and processed.

In 1980, Congress passed the Alaska National Interest Lands Conservation Act in 1980, which legislatively ratified native allotment land claims subject to the valid existing rights of other land holders. However, several Native allottees challenged the existing rights of other land holders and claimed that the Copper Valley Electric Association was trespassing on their lands. In 1987, the Department of Interior's Interior Board of Land Appeals affirmed this position, finding native allottees have priority over other competing uses of land—in this case, those of the utility company—regardless of the fact that the rights of way were granted prior to the conveyance of the property in question to the allottees. This situation is still unresolved and has resulted in years of litigation.

We have been unable to settle these disputes through existing remedies. These conflicts now jeopardize existing transportation and utility corridors and threaten future infrastructure development in the region.

At my request, the Government Accountability Office (GAO) reviewed this situation. The GAO issued its report and recommended solutions. This bill incorporates the GAO's recommendation. It compensates the owners of the Native allotments, while ensuring that the utility companies are able to provide residents with the infrastructure and services they need. I believe this is the most equitable solution available, and I urge the Senate to pass this bill.

SUBMITTED RESOLUTIONS

SENATE RESOLUTION 21—RECOGNIZING THE UNCOMMON VALOR OF WESLEY AUTREY OF NEW YORK, NEW YORK

Mrs. CLINTON (for herself and Mr. SCHUMER) submitted the following res-

olution; which was referred to the Committee on the Judiciary:

S. RES. 21

Whereas Wesley Autrey is a citizen of New York, New York;

Whereas Wesley Autrey is a veteran of the United States Navy;

Whereas Wesley Autrey has been a member in good standing of the Construction and General Building Laborers' Local 79 since 1996;

Whereas Wesley Autrey witnessed a fellow subway passenger suffer from a seizure and fall onto the train tracks;

Whereas Wesley Autrey was compelled by his belief that he should "do the right thing" and serve as an example to his 2 young daughters;

Whereas Wesley Autrey demonstrated uncommon valor and tremendous bravery in diving onto the train tracks to save the life of his fellow subway passenger only moments before an incoming train passed over them;

Whereas the beneficiary of Wesley Autrey's courageous actions is now recovering at St. Luke's Roosevelt Hospital Center, New York;

Whereas Wesley Autrey has conducted himself with the utmost humility in the midst of his newfound fame; and

Whereas Wesley Autrey stands out as an example of selflessness to members of his community, his State, and the Nation: Now, therefore, be it

Resolved, That the Senate—

(1) recognizes that Wesley Autrey acted heroically by putting his own life at risk to save that of his fellow citizen; and

(2) expresses its deep appreciation for Wesley Autrey's example and the values that his actions represent.

MEASURES PLACED ON THE CALENDAR—S. 2, S. 5, S. 113

Mr. REID. Mr. President, it is my understanding that there are three bills at the desk that are now due for a second reading.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator is correct. The clerk will read the titles of the bills for the second time.

The legislative clerk read as follows:

A bill (S. 2) to amend the Fair Labor Standards Act of 1938 to provide for an increase in the Federal minimum wage.

A bill (S. 5) to amend the Public Health Service Act to provide for human embryonic stem cell research.

A bill (S. 113) to make appropriations for military construction and family housing projects for the Department of Defense for fiscal year 2007.

Mr. REID. Mr. President, I object to any further proceedings with respect to these bills, en bloc.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Objection is heard. The bills will be placed on the calendar.

UNANIMOUS CONSENT AGREEMENT—S. 1

Mr. REID. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent the Senate proceed to the consideration of Calendar No. S. 1, the ethics bill, at 11 a.m. tomorrow morning, January 9, for debate only until 2:15 p.m., with the time, until the Senate recesses for the party lunches, equally divided and controlled between the leaders and their designees.

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

ORDERS FOR TUESDAY, JANUARY 9, 2007

Mr. REID. I ask unanimous consent that when the Senate completes its business today, it stand adjourned until 10 a.m., Tuesday, January 9; that on Tuesday, following the prayer and pledge, the Journal of proceedings be approved to date, the time for the two leaders be reserved for their use later in the day, and that there be a period of morning business until 11 a.m., with the Senator permitted to speak therein, with the first half controlled by the minority and the second half controlled by the majority; and that the Senate stand in recess from 12:30 until 2:15 for the party caucus luncheons.

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

PROGRAM

Mr. REID. Mr. President, I direct to the attention of all Senators that tomorrow afternoon Senators who have amendments to the ethics lobbying earmark reform legislation, S. 1, be prepared to start offering them. We are going to work until we complete this legislation. It is my goal to complete the bill the following week.

I remind Senators that Monday is the Dr. Martin Luther King holiday; therefore, of course there will be no votes on Monday. The first vote on Tuesday will be at 5:30 on that day, Tuesday; the 16th, I think, is the date. It is Tuesday, a week from tomorrow. I will indicate the reason I am not moving more quickly is I have had a number of Senators tell me they have events on Monday dealing with the commemoration of the Dr. King holiday and that they

could not be here in time for work on Tuesday.

We are going to work hard. We are going to finish the bill the following week. I advise Senators we are going to finish the bill the following week. Everyone should be aware that we will finish it. Even if we have to go past Friday at noon, we are going to finish this bill because we are going to move thereafter to minimum wage. Thereafter, it appears at this stage we are going to move to either the stem cell legislation and then the negotiating for lower prescription drug prices for Medicare. I don't know if we are going to do stem cell first or the Medicare negotiation bill, but one of those will be the third matter.

We have a lot to do. Today the Senate voted to adopt a resolution honoring the late President Gerald Ford. Tomorrow we are beginning the ethics bill at 11, as under a previous order. Tomorrow will be a full day for debate and amendments to that bill.

As I mentioned, the bulk of the bill is under the auspices of the Rules Committee. Senators FEINSTEIN and BENNETT will be ready to go tomorrow at 11. We also will see Senators LIEBERMAN and COLLINS managing certain parts of that bill when the Senate Homeland Security Committee's jurisdiction is primary.

ORDER FOR THE EXPIRATION OF THE MORNING HOUR

I ask, Mr. President, that the morning hour be deemed to have expired tomorrow morning when we reconvene.

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

COMPLETION OF VOTES

Mr. President, as I indicated in our conversations that we have had about

the conduct of the Senate, one of the things that I have seen over the years is how much time is wasted, waiting for Senators to come from committee meetings, from airports and other places, causing the Senate, in effect, to be in lockdown until a vote is complete. We have had votes that take a long time—an hour. We had a first vote today. We finished the 15 minutes, the 5 minutes—the vote is over. That is the way it is going to be.

Today at least one Democratic Senator missed that vote. I hope that Senator doesn't miss any more votes. We are going to get in the habit of completing the votes on time.

I have told my counterpart, Senator MCCONNELL, if there is an issue that is one vote here, one vote there, it is 50 to 50 and people are moving around trying to get someone to change a vote, we will extend the time. But 98 percent of the votes are not close; 98 percent of the time we are going to finish the vote in 20 minutes. Everyone should be aware of that, Democrats and Republicans. This applies to Senator MCCONNELL and Senator REID. If we are not going to be here, the vote will be closed.

ADJOURNMENT UNTIL 10 A.M. TOMORROW

Mr. REID. Mr. President, if there is no further business, I ask unanimous consent that the Senate stand adjourned under the previous order.

There being no objection, the Senate, at 5:21 p.m., adjourned until Tuesday, January 9, 2007, at 10 a.m.