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House of Representatives

The House was not in session today. Its next meeting will be held on Monday, July 17, 2006, at 12:30 p.m.

Senate

FRIDAY, JULY 14, 2006

The Senate met at 9:45 a.m. and was called to order by the Honorable JOHNNY ISAKSON, a Senator from the State of Georgia.

PRAYER

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

Let us pray.

Almighty God, the fountain of joy, we thank You for our legislative leaders. We are grateful for their dedication to freedom's cause, for their desire to do Your will, and for their faith in Your sovereign leading.

Bless and keep them in their varied endeavors. Give them patience to achieve, humility to listen, wisdom to decide, diligence to lead, and love to act with compassion. Keep them alert to the needs of our times.

And, Lord, bring peace to our world. We pray in Your holy Name. Amen.

PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

The Honorable JOHNNY ISAKSON 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. STEVENS).

The legislative clerk read the following letter:

U.S. SENATE,
PRESIDENT PRO TEMPORE,
Washington, DC, July 14, 2006.

To the Senate:

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

TED STEVENS,
President pro tempore.

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

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 now be a period for the transaction of morning business, with Senators permitted to speak for up to 10 minutes each.

RECOGNITION OF THE MAJORITY LEADER

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

SCHEDULE

Mr. FRIST. Mr. President, we will have a period for the transaction of morning business this morning. Senators are reminded that we will begin the stem cell debate on Monday. Last night, we reached an agreement to allocate debate time in blocks, alternating back and forth between the majority and minority sides of the aisle. We will begin that debate on Monday at 12:30 p.m. and continue through Tuesday afternoon. Then we will proceed to votes on those bills—as a reminder, we have three bills and each of those three bills will have a 60-vote threshold—beginning at 3:45 p.m. on Tuesday. Those will be the first votes of the week.

The issue of stem cell research is one this body has debated in the past, but what I hope we have been able to structure, in consultation with the Democratic side of the aisle, is a way to have a very good debate on what is a very complicated issue, both from a science standpoint and from an ethical and moral standpoint. It really does cause and force, in some ways, each of us as 100 Members of this body—but equally the American people—to go back and address an issue which is the first major moral, ethical, and scientific dilemma, challenge before us in the 21st century. And it is a tough issue. It is something, as a physician, as a scientist, I have spent a lot of time with, as a transplant surgeon when we are moving tissues around all the time—a heart, a lung, which I routinely transplanted before coming here.

It is a tough issue. It involves issues of life and death and promises of new cures for diabetes, Alzheimer's, Parkinson's. We have been prone, in this body and every legislative body, to overstatement, overpromising. I am very hopeful that the debate, the way we have it structured and giving people

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

time to prepare for it, will help educate this body, help educate the American people on an issue that is not going to go away—not just stem cells but as we look at the various challenges that are opened by the Human Genome Project, a very successful project 15 years ago, finished about 5 years ago on this floor—and opens up all concerns of ethical debates.

No matter whether people like it, no matter how hard it is, it is very important that this body become very comfortable in dealing with issues of advancing science and the great progress, the new opportunities we can make, whether it is addressing our 60 percent dependence on foreign sources of oil or looking at the great advances in health care and capturing the hopes and promise of new therapies. Whether it is genetic, biological stem cells, or the like means, we are going to have to do a good job in educating ourselves, developing that understanding, being comfortable talking about advances in science.

Science used to advance like this, then this, and in the 21st century, science is advancing like this. We, representing the American people, have that responsibility to define that advancing science and where it crosses with ethics and morality.

It is going to be a challenging debate, a good debate. I think the American people will pay attention, and I know our colleagues are working very hard on that particular issue.

Last night in closing, I proposed a unanimous consent agreement on the Water Resources Development Act, the so-called WRDA Act, a bill I feel very strongly we do need to bring to the floor. Chairman INHOFE has done a tremendous job in packaging the bill so that we can address the various issues with, I believe, nine amendments in the unanimous consent request. The Democratic leader has objected to that request, but I am very hopeful we will be able to address that agreement later today.

MEDICAL BREAKTHROUGH

Mr. FRIST. Mr. President, let me comment on one other issue before yielding the floor. It has to do with medicine again. It has to do with an issue which is very close to my heart, which I first saw in 1981 before I ever thought about getting into politics or public policy or running for the Senate. I first saw this particular issue in the early 1980s. Nobody had seen it in this country until 1981. Nobody had seen it before 1981, which is not that long ago, 25 years ago, but since that time, it killed 1 person, 3 people, 10 people, 1,000 people, 1 million people, 5 million people, 10 million people, 20 million people—25 million people have died since I first saw it; that is, HIV/AIDS, a tiny virus. You can't see it, touch it, taste it. We didn't have it in America. We didn't know what it was, and then it hit. Now 25 years later, 25 million people around the globe have died from that little, tiny virus. We don't have a cure for it yet. We don't have a vaccine for it yet, but we have made huge medical progress over the last 10 years.

Two days ago, the FDA announced that they had approved the world's first single-pill, once-a-day HIV/AIDS treatment. The bill combines three FDA-approved drugs into a single dose. The impact on HIV/AIDS patients will be profound.

It wasn't that long ago that patients had to take 20 pills a day and then 10 pills a day to control the virus, this little tiny virus, not to get rid of it totally but to keep it down so it doesn't have its ravaging impact on the human body. Some pills you have to take with food, some at 8 o'clock, some at 2 o'clock, some at 6 o'clock, some at 10 o'clock. Some people say it is not that big a deal; it is lifesaving. It is a big deal. If you are a patient having to do it or a physician taking care of a patient, it is impossible to comply with that regimen long term. It is inconvenient, it disrupts life, and now it is combined into one pill.

By the end of next week, people will be able to control the virus with one pill. Not everybody is going to switch to it, but it opens up huge opportunities.

It is good news not just in that it simplifies the prescription regimen of HIV/AIDS patients, but to quote a fellow doctor who is the current Acting Commissioner of the FDA, Andrew von Eschenbach:

> Compliance with therapy is as important as the therapy itself for a successful outcome.

To have a successful outcome, HIV/AIDS patients have to take at least 95 percent of their pills or the treatment doesn't take. It isn't as if you can take 2 or 3 of the 15 pills and it will work. You have to really take just about all the pills. Only one pill a day increases the likelihood of a patient meeting that threshold. That one pill will do the trick. Not only does improved compliance keep HIV/AIDS patients healthy, but it helps slow down that emergence and transmission of strains of virus that have become drug-resistant. The drugs you take over a period of time—the virus is smart, it is cagey, it moves around, and it will develop resistance to those drugs as it comes in. As it gets accustomed to the drugs, the virus will change.

Scientists hail this as a medical breakthrough for good reason. Wednesday's announcement approving the new pill was timely. Yesterday, the CSIS Task Force on HIV/AIDS hosted a conference to examine the sustainability of United States-led efforts in combating the virus. I have cochaired the CSIS task force along with my colleague, Senator RUSS FEINGOLD. I had the opportunity, as did Senator FEINGOLD, to deliver opening remarks to that conference.

Looking back over the 25 years, as we did yesterday, I recalled the same story I just told: 25 million people have died on our watch, over my lifetime as a physician. As recently as 5 years ago, less than $1 billion was spent by the world. If we put together all the world's resources, today it is more than eight times that—eight times that—in just 5 years.

Today about 40 million people worldwide, including a million people in this country—a million Americans—are HIV positive. That means they have the virus in them, and it can be detected. Over half of all people living with HIV/AIDS or HIV in the world live in a continent I go to every year, and that is the continent of Africa.

Ten years ago, in 1996, I went to Sub-Saharan Africa to Tanzania, to Kenya, in that whole central eastern region of Africa where I do medical mission work. That became an annual trip after 1996. Nothing quite prepares you for walking through a village in an AIDS-afflicted part of Africa. You see older people, and then you see very young people, but you don't see—there is like a big doughnut hole there—you don't see middle-aged people walking around. Why? Because that virus has ravaged traditionally the most productive part of society. They include teachers, police, law enforcement, wage earners, the people who are out moving, herding the animals, the people who are out growing the crops, the people who make up the strongest and most productive fabric of society.

The deadly disease has left countless children as orphans. It has disrupted the social framework of many communities. It has challenged the infrastructure and stability of many nations in ways that are totally unprecedented and we just haven't seen in history.

I outlined my vision at the conference yesterday for sustaining momentum and winning this war on HIV/AIDS, and already, with the successful development and approval of this single-pill therapy, we have seen how one piece of the vision that I put out yesterday—unity—is reaching across differences and we can reshape our approach to HIV/AIDS.

The breakthrough this week was made possible because of collaboration, partnership, a very unusual partnership, a collaborative venture by two drug companies that normally are competing. So that is a breakthrough that may not be readily apparent, but those of us who follow health, the pharmaceutical industry, and public health, this is a huge breakthrough.

Two drug companies set aside their competition, they set aside their concerns about the bottom line to work together and do what we need to do throughout health care, which we don't do today. As we look to health care 20 years from now, we have to do it, and that is put the patient at the center, put the patient first. That is what these two drug companies did yesterday.

I commend the makers of this single-pill therapy. I hope this does start a

new trend. I think the computer industry learned this collaborative effort a long time ago, and I am pleased that the pharmaceutical industry is catching on to it, as demonstrated today.

I will close with that final thought because it does remind me how important it is to put the patient first. They did this yesterday by developing this pill, having the FDA to approve this particular pill. We need to do that throughout our health care system. We do have a health care system that is chaotic, in terms of its organization. It is not really even a system; it is more of a sector.

If we can go back to that principle of putting the patient first, putting the patient in the center, we can weed out the waste and weed out the inefficiency and lower the cost and make a very optimistic future for our health care system.

EXECUTIVE SESSION

EXECUTIVE CALENDAR

Mr. FRIST. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the Senate immediately proceed to executive session to consider the following nominations on today's Executive Calendar: No. 735, No. 736, and No. 761.

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. Without objection, it is so ordered.

Mr. FRIST. I further ask unanimous consent the nominations be confirmed en bloc, a motion to reconsider be laid on the table, the President be immediately notified of the Senate's action, and the Senate then return to legislative session.

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. Without objection, it is so ordered.

The nominations considered and confirmed en bloc are as follows:

FEDERAL ENERGY REGULATORY COMMISSION

Philip D. Moeller, of Washington, to be a member of the Federal Energy Regulatory Commission for the term expiring June 30, 2010.

Jon Wellinghoff, of Nevada, to be a member of the Federal Energy Regulatory Commission for the term expiring June 30, 2008.

Marc Spitzer, of Arizona, to be a member of the Federal Energy Regulatory Commission for the term expiring June 30, 2011.

LEGISLATIVE SESSION

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. The Senate will resume legislative session.

Mr. FRIST. Mr. President, I see none of my colleagues on the floor at this juncture who want to speak, so I suggest the absence of a quorum.

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. The clerk will call the roll.

The assistant legislative clerk proceeded to call the roll.

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

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. Without objection, it is so ordered.

NET NEUTRALITY

Mr. WYDEN. Mr. President, 2 weeks ago I came to the floor of the Senate and announced I will do everything in my power to block consideration of the major communications overhaul legislation until it includes language that specifically ensures what is called Net neutrality.

Now, since this is a new concept, and certainly much of the country probably has not heard these words before and Senators have been asking questions about it, I am going to begin this morning, and intend on other instances to continue the discussion, to start talking about why Net neutrality is so important and why I will do everything in my power to block legislation, major communications legislation, unless it ensures that Net neutrality is preserved.

The bottom line about this concept is pretty simple. It means there will not be discrimination on the Internet. Today, after you pay your access charge, your Internet access fee, you get to take your browser and you get to go where you want, when you want, and everybody is treated the same: the mightiest person in the land, the most affluent, and somebody, say, in rural Georgia or rural Oregon who does not have a lot of power and does not have a lot of wealth.

The Internet has been a huge step forward, in my view, for democracy, for the proposition our country is based on which is to give everybody a fair shake, where everybody is treated equally. It has meant a real bonanza for our citizens in areas such as education, health, business—a whole host of fields. There needs to be a clear policy preserving the neutrality of the Internet. And without tough sanctions against those who would discriminate online, in my view, the Internet would be changed forever, for the worse. I intend to do everything in my power to keep that from happening.

Since I came to the floor to announce that I will do everything I can to block this legislation in its current form, the phone companies and the major communications lobbies in this country have launched an all-out advertising blitz. They are now spending millions of dollars trying to win passage of this legislation that does not include protection for Net neutrality. They are spending millions of dollars so they can make billions of dollars when they implement a two-tiered system online.

They have been telling Wall Street about their plans for some time. The Wall Street Journal, for example, outlined a pay-to-play plan that the phone companies and the cable companies have been talking about in a fairly open kind of fashion.

All this discussion suggests there is something of a looming shortage of bandwidth. Of course, bandwidth is the speed at which all the information on the Web travels to the user. But what has not been given enough attention thus far, and what I will talk about this morning and in the days ahead, is that the real Net neutrality fight is not primarily over bandwidth but who is going to call the shots in this country about content on the Web. Content is all the information that is out there on the Web. It includes music, movies, e-mails, newspaper articles and Web sites.

Bandwidth speeds are getting faster and faster, allowing all this content to reach the users faster. But bandwidth without content is akin to a swimming pool without water. It is there, but you cannot do anything with it. So the real Net neutrality fight is going to be about content.

Now, those who control the pipes—the way you get to the Internet—also want to control the content. The reason for that is because content is king. What good is one gigabyte Internet connection if you cannot get to the Web sites you want to visit? Legislation that does not have strong Net neutrality protections will mean the American people will face discrimination in content.

The Internet has thrived precisely because it is free of discrimination. It has thrived because consumers, and not some huge cable or phone company, get to choose what they want to see and how quickly they get to see it. I do not think there is anything odd about fighting against a bill that will take control of the Internet away from the American people.

What the cable and phone executives propose is that instead of providing equal access for everyone to the same content, at the same price, they are going to be in a position to cut sweetheart deals, to give somebody they favor a better break than somebody whom they do not look upon in the same way. Those who own the pipes do not want to be told they cannot discriminate. They do not want to be told by the Congress, or anybody else, sweetheart deals are off limits.

What I have done is tried to look at the Senate Commerce Committee legislation and compare it to the kinds of concerns I think the American people are going to have with the legislation in its current form. So what I would like to do now is outline three examples of what could happen in our country if communications legislation that allows discrimination on the Internet was allowed to go forward.

The first example involves what I am calling the Barns family. The Barns family owns a struggling electronics store. Sales have been hammered lately because a new ''big box'' electronics store opened up down the road. George Barns' son Mike came up with an idea to save the store. He said: We can reach new customers. We will start a Web

site to sell our products on the Net. In a world with Net neutrality, the Barns family would pay to access the Internet, create a Web page, and they would be off to the races with their business and looking for opportunities.

Under the Commerce Committee bill, in order for the Barns family to launch their Web page in the fast lane so they could get priority access to customers, they could have to pay an additional fee to hundreds, if not thousands, of Internet access providers across the land. Priority access fees are a drop in the bucket for that ''big box'' store that is already hurting the sales of that small business run by the Barns family. If the Barns family can't pay the extra fees, they lose their business to the ''big box'' store, both offline and online. You see how small businesses and people who are trying to make a contribution to the economy compete in the free markets; you are going to see how they are going to have difficulty under this legislation.

The second example involves somebody whom I am calling Joe Green. Joe wants to get Internet broadband in his new apartment. Local cable is the only choice for Internet access, and it charges $32.99 for a 1.5-megabyte-per-second connection. In a world with Net neutrality, when Joe buys his connection from local cable, he gets to visit any Web site he wants, when he wants, how he wants. If he wants to download a song, say, from iTunes for a buck, he can do that. If he wants to search the Web using Google or buy a DVD player online, Joe can do that, too. But under the legislation that came from the Commerce Committee, Joe may not be able to do any of those things unless he pays a new priority access charge on top of the $32.99 Internet access charge he is paying already. Unless he pays the additional priority fee, a Web search at Google could take 5 minutes to load because Google is not paying the extra fee to local cable for priority access. Downloading a song—say the download Joe wants to make at iTunes—could cost him more than the buck he is paying because iTunes is passing on the cost of paying local cable the priority access fee that you could charge if the Commerce Committee bill goes forward as written. Joe wants to switch to another broadband provider but guess what. In a lot of communities, there is no choice. Joe is stuck. This is example No. 2 of how the American people are going to get hammered if discrimination is allowed online under this legislation.

Let me offer a third example I have developed as I looked at the Commerce Committee bill on overhauling our communications law. The third example involves somebody I have been calling Sally Smith. She is a young computer programmer. She has a great new algorithm for a Web browser that is going to help people access information on the Net faster and in a more user-friendly way. In a world with Net neutrality, Sally can get her idea all over the tech Web sites that exist across the country, and people are going to be able to test it out. If all the people out there in the tech world like Sally's idea, word of her innovation would spread over the Web, across the land, and across the world. Millions of people would be able to download her new Web browser. But under the legislation coming from the Commerce Committee, Sally Smith could be stymied.

In addition to what she is already paying for Internet access, Sally is going to have to come up with yet more money to pay for priority access to the Internet fast lane that she so desperately will want in order to test her idea. If she wants her browser to succeed, she is going to be forced to fork over new priority access fees because she knows no one is going to go looking in the slow lane for a good new Web browser.

I came to the floor—I have already announced my hold on this legislation, and I will do everything to block this bill until it ensures that the Net in the future will be free of discrimination—because I wanted to go beyond my original statement to talk about how, under this bill, those who own the pipes to the Net, the phone and the cable people, could extend their reach under this legislation to put a stranglehold on Internet content. According to the business plans, plans that have been published in the Wall Street Journal, that is the direction in which we are headed.

Without Net neutrality, the people in these examples I have highlighted—a struggling entrepreneur, somebody getting started in their new home or apartment, a young computer programmer—are going to have real problems getting access to the Web and being able to afford the services that are now within their reach.

The big cable and phone lobbies want the public to think Net neutrality is what they call a lose-lose proposition. My view is, no Net neutrality will be the real loss for consumers. It will mean double-barrel discrimination, discrimination in Internet content, and higher prices for the consumers. That is why scores of groups all across the country, all across the political spectrum—groups and people who, I dare say, disagree almost always—are united behind the proposition that the Internet should be free of discrimination.

We are going to hear a lot about this issue in the days ahead. We are going to be told constantly that the phone and cable people will not build out the network unless they can sock the consumer and the small businesses with higher access charges. The way the system works today, where there is a true free marketplace, where the mightiest is treated online in the same way someone is treated who doesn't have a lot of money, doesn't have clout, that is the best way to grow the network, to expand communications opportunities, preserve the free marketplace so that people, after they pay that Internet access charge, can go where they want, when they want.

Certainly a lot of our competitors around the world, people with whom we will be competing in the marketplace, treat everybody the same online. I can't figure out how we can expect to be competitive in the global marketplace if we start singling out, as I have described in the examples, the small businesses and entrepreneurs for what amounts to two-tiered communications services. They are not going to be able to compete. I want to make sure that somebody who is in a garage, say, in Texas, Oregon, or some other part of the country has the same opportunity to compete against people who are dreaming big in countries around the world.

As we discuss this communications issue, there will be a lot of talk about how this is a battle between big communications lobbies—say, the Verizon company and Google. It is sometimes portrayed as a fight between these overdogs, people who have a lot of clout and want to divide up the pie and get more for themselves. Verizon and Google can take care of themselves. They have deep pockets. They have lots of clout. But what I am concerned about are the future Googles, the people who are dreaming, the people with the startups, the people with innovative, cutting-edge ideas who have been able to go online and, as a result, have been successful. That is what the American dream is all about. That is what has made the Internet so exciting. It has created opportunities for those people who are a long way from major financial markets and who don't have deep pockets.

I do not want to see the American people face double-barrel discrimination and higher prices on the Net. I don't want to see them not have what they have today, which is a fair shake for all. Equal content gets equal treatment. I am going to stay at it with respect to this legislation as one Senator until we get true Net neutrality principles in the communications bill, until we ensure that the Net is free of discrimination.

The reason Net neutrality has become such a lightning rod in the debate about communications is that the Internet is the ball game. The 1996 telecommunications bill barely touched on the Net. In 2006, the Net neutrality debate on the Internet is the ball game because the Internet is how we are going to get all our communications in the future. It means we are going to look first to the Internet, and because it is so central to the future of communications, the Senate ought to insist that the Net be kept free of discrimination. We have done that in the area of taxation. I and other colleagues have said we are not going to allow multiple and discriminatory taxes on the Internet. We ought to make darn sure that it is done in this area as well so that

consumers don't get walloped with unnecessarily high prices and deteriorating service.

I will continue the fight to hold up this legislation until, for all time, the Net is free of discrimination.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Mr. CORNYN). The Senator from Georgia.

IMMIGRATION

Mr. ISAKSON. Mr. President, for a moment I wanted to address the subject of immigration before we leave for the weekend.

About 2 months ago, I offered an amendment to the Senate immigration bill which at the time was referred to as a deal-breaker. I want to suggest that it is now being referred to as a deal-maker. I wish to offer some suggestions constructively for the Senate to consider and others who are involved in this debate.

I want to repeat, for the benefit of everyone, what the amendment I offered and the distinguished Presiding Officer supported, as well as many other Members of the Senate—not enough but almost enough—simply said: That no program contained in the act that granted legal status to someone who was in America illegally could take effect until the Secretary of Homeland Security certified that all of the border security measures proposed in the act in title I and section 233 of title II were in force, funded, and operational.

It has become known as a trigger because it said that any guest worker program or any other reform that took place could only take place after we had done the job the American people suggested we should do.

A lot of people said: We can't secure our border. If we can transplant hearts and fly to the Moon, we can secure our border. What we have needed is resolve. I have been pleased to see just this week countless articles in countless newspapers where all of the players in the debate, from the White House to the Senate, the House of Representatives, have now opened themselves to discuss a trigger in the immigration reform bill to ensure that when we have immigration reform, it is truly comprehensive because I would suggest to them that in the absence of border security, there can be no comprehensive reform.

Only when people know that the door is closed will they cooperate with not only the spirit but the letter of the law and the reforms that we make.

Just to remind us in the Senate, we were very specific in title I. The specifics of title I said we will train the 6,000 Border Patrol agents and put them online. That takes 2 years to do. It said we will build the barriers where necessary geographically and the roads where essential. That is doable in 2 years. We will deploy the 27 UAVs, the eyes in the sky, to surveil the entire 2,000-mile southwestern border. That is doable, and it is doable within a year. We will build the detention facilities to end the catch-and-release practice and to begin to have true enforcement on the border. And we will have a verification program for guest workers and immigrants that is verifiable and not forgeable. That takes 2 years. So as a practical matter, as people have backed up from the original debate, they have looked forward. They now are seeing through the forest to look at the trees, and they say, yes, if we secure the border, it will take 2 years, but it is going to take 2 years to implement whatever else we would do on worker reform as well.

So folks are coming together. People are beginning to talk, and I am pleased with that—pleased with that because I am the grandson of an immigrant who came to this country, became a naturalized citizen, and I honor our immigration process. I am glad to see that because we depend on a workforce that is vibrant and dependable. And I am pleased to hear that because I believe the American people consider our border an emergency. And now that all the players are beginning to talk, hopefully we can close the deal.

Mr. President, yesterday the distinguished Senator from Alabama, Mr. SESSIONS, offered two amendments to the Homeland Security bill. Although they failed, they laid the groundwork for what I think is an important step for us to take and that is to go ahead and move forward with what all of us agree are the necessary steps for border security. That is the foundation upon which we can reach the final agreements on guest worker, on green cards, on quotas, and on citizenship, but only after the American people are convinced we have made the commitment to secure our border will the American people want us to make any deal on reform of immigration.

We pass emergency supplementals for various things in this body. We have done it in response to Katrina; we have done it in response to Iraq. I submit the American people would tell you there is no greater emergency than securing our border. If the White House sent an emergency supplemental to this Senate for the money to fund the UAVs, the 6,000 Border Patrol agents, and the rest of title I, I doubt we would see maybe one or two dissenters because everybody knows it is an emergency, they know it needs to be done. And if it is, in fact, correct, that border security first is the trigger for comprehensive reform which is necessary, then let's declare it an emergency. Let's have the proposal come to the floor, let's debate it, and let's fund it, so as the year progresses, as the hearings are done, as we come back in session in September, we in this Congress can deal with comprehensive reform built on the foundation of comprehensive border security first.

Mr. President, I appreciate your cooperation and that of all the colleagues in this body as we work dealing with a very difficult and complicated but a very doable reform of our immigration laws. I appreciate the commitment of those so far in border security first, and I think in the end all of us together—the executive and legislative branches—can come together on comprehensive reform that is built on securing our border to ensure the reforms we make are lasting and agreed to.

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

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will call the roll.

The legislative clerk proceeded to call the roll.

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

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. Without objection, it is so ordered.

UNANIMOUS CONSENT AGREEMENT—S. 728

Mr. FRIST. Mr. President, I will soon ask for several unanimous consent requests and then probably go back into a quorum call for little bit, and I will have a final statement on stem cells that will be very brief.

Mr. President, as I mentioned this morning, there has been an objection to proceeding on the unanimous consent request of last night, or late yesterday afternoon, on the Water Resources Development Act. At this point, I want to turn my attention to that.

Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that at a time to be determined by the majority leader, in consultation with the Democratic leader, on Tuesday July 18, the Senate proceed to the immediate consideration of Calendar No. 93, S. 728.

I further ask that the committee-reported amendments be withdrawn and the managers' substitute amendment at the desk be agreed to as original text for the purposes of further amendment and that the only other amendments in order be the following, the text of which is at the desk, with the specified time agreements equally divided in the usual form:

Boxer, Folsom Dam, 1 hour; Feingold-McCain, mitigation standards, 1 hour; Feingold-McCain, peer review, 4 hours; Inhofe-Bond, independent reviews, 1 hour; Inhofe, fiscal transparency, 1 hour; McCain-Feingold, prioritization report, 2 hours; McCain-Feingold, chief of engineers, 1 hour; Nelson of Florida, water projects, 1 hour; Specter, Federal hopper dredges, 1 hour.

I ask unanimous consent that there be 2 hours of general debate on the bill, and that following the disposition of amendments and the use or yielding back of time, the bill, as amended, be read the third time and the Senate proceed to the consideration of Calendar No. 166, H.R. 2864, the House companion, and that all after the enacting clause be stricken, and the text of S.

728, as amended, be inserted in lieu thereof; that the bill be read the third time and the Senate proceed to a vote on passage, and S. 728 be returned to the Senate calendar. I further ask that no points of order be waived by virtue of this agreement.

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. Is there objection? Without objection, it is so ordered.

CORRECTION IN THE CONGRESSIONAL RECORD

Mr. FRIST. Mr. President, I understand there was an inadvertent clerical error in Chairman INHOFE's statement in the CONGRESSIONAL RECORD last night. I ask unanimous consent that the correct statement be printed in the CONGRESSIONAL RECORD at this point and that the permanent RECORD reflect this correction.

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

Mr. INHOFE. Mr. President, if the unanimous consent request goes through, we will be able to move to the Water Resources Development Act of 2006, WRDA. We have not done a WRDA since the year 2000. As chairman of the Environment and Public Works Committee, I have been working on this for 3 years. We have had incredible cooperation, as everybody in the Chamber knows. It is always difficult to get something like this through, but it is necessary to keep this country moving.

All members of the Environment and Public Works Committee: Senators Thune, DeMint, Vitter, Warner, Isakson, Chafee, Murkowski, Senator Voinovich, Jeffords, Baucus, Lieberman, Boxer, Carper, Clinton, Lautenberg, and Obama have been particularly helpful. Senator Bond, who is chairman of the subcommittee, has been very helpful, along with Senator Voinovich who has a concern for maintaining our Nation's infrastructure.

The big four in this case, of course, would be Senators Bond, Baucus, Jeffords, and myself. We have worked closely together to overcome some of the obstacles. Early on, there were several holds on this bill because it is complicated. It is one that almost is of the magnitude of the Transportation reauthorization bill. But we had several people who had concerns and we worked with them, including Senator Snowe, who was nice enough to help us with some of the facets she had objections to; Senator Sessions; Senator McCain. Everybody was there working together. It was quite an undertaking to get us to the point where we are today.

I will single out several others. Senator Gregg had some concerns also. Probably one of the persons I was really gratified to work with is Senator Feingold, the Senator from Wisconsin. I thank him for his cooperation. He had a number of amendments that I thought would be more than we could really handle. We had to get the number down to a certain number that is workable so we could have a time agreement to get this bill passed. I thank Senator Feingold for his cooperation and for agreeing to offer limited amendments under short time agreements. If he wanted to be hard to get along with, he could have had long agreements and this would have gone into many nights. He didn't do that. He agreed to short time agreements, which will make this possible to pass. His willingness to work with us is very much appreciated by me.

Over the past few months, he consistently has been helpful and responsive in working on the WRDA bill. For anyone to suggest that Senator Feingold has not been helpful in keeping this process moving would be wrong. He has been a great partner with me in moving things forward and I thank the Senator from Wisconsin for his cooperation.

We have a lot that we need to authorize the Corps of Engineers to do in navigation, flood control and environmental restoration. This bill will allow us to do that. I thank everybody for his or her cooperation. Let's go forward.

Mr. FRIST. Mr. President, I thank my colleagues, especially Chairman INHOFE, for, as I mentioned this morning, doing an outstanding job in putting together a package, a mechanism by which we can develop this important water resources development bill. It is a very important bill which affects the United States, our economy, our infrastructure, in a very dramatic way.

WATER RESOURCES DEVELOPMENT ACT

Mr. FEINGOLD. Because all amendments that can be considered to S. 728, the Water Resources Development Act of 2006, had to be filed prior to the bill coming to the floor, I would like to inquire of the bill managers whether or not they would agree with me that reasonable modifications by the authors to their amendments would be acceptable as is the normal Senate practice.

Mr. INHOFE. The Senator is correct. We asked Senators to agree to a procedure that limits amendments and have requested that they file them in advance. Because these amendments have been filed prior to floor consideration, I would agree that it may be necessary to modify them once we are given floor time.

Mr. JEFFORDS. Mr. Chairman, I see that as a possibility and would, with the concurrence of the four bill managers, support reasonable modifications to be allowable.

Mr. BOND. As the subcommittee chairman and cosponsor of two amendments to be considered, I foresee that possibility and would not object to reasonable modifications to the filed amendments.

Mr. BAUCUS. I agree with my fellow bill managers.

Mr. FEINGOLD. I thank the managers and agree with them.

HOMELAND SECURITY APPROPRIATIONS BILL

Mr. DODD. Mr. President, I rise to discuss the fiscal year 2007 Homeland Security appropriations bill. The Senate passed this measure yesterday unanimously and I voted in support of it.

I would like to begin by thanking the principal authors and managers of this legislation: Senator GREGG and Senator BYRD. It is no easy task to write a bill that provides for our domestic security needs. I commend both of our colleagues and their staffs for the hard work they put into crafting this legislation.

The bill that passed the Senate funds our country's homeland security activities at $32.8 billion for the upcoming fiscal year. These activities include port security, rail security, truck security, aviation security, emergency first responders, customs and border patrol, immigration, the Coast Guard, and counterterrorism research. Taken together, these initiatives form the foundation upon which our country depends for its internal security.

In an age when terrorism continues to be a growing threat to our Nation, one would think that the Congress of the United States would be doing everything it could to shore up that foundation—to make it as impregnable as possible against those who wish us harm. Yet when we look at the legislation passed by the Senate, I do not believe it does enough to protect our people from terrorism. We are simply not investing the resources that are required to make this Nation as safe as possible. Instead of filling in the gaps that continue to exist within our homeland security foundation, we are letting those gaps and cracks grow in several critical respects.

One does not have to look further than protecting our critical infrastructure and funding our emergency first responders. These two areas arguably form the backbone of our efforts to prevent and effectively respond to terrorist attacks at home. They encompass protecting our ports, our railroads, our transit systems and our commercial vehicles. They encompass quickly and effectively responding to real or perceived threats in all parts of our country.

The bill that passed the Senate spends roughly $4 billion to protect our critical infrastructure, equip our first responders, an assist local governments in planning and coordinating their homeland security activities. While this may seem like a large number to many Americans, it has been cited by numerous national security and public health experts, along with first responders themselves, as being wholly inadequate to meet the homeland security demands of the 21st century. Furthermore, the number is actually less than what has been provided in the past. While on par with what was provided last year, it is approximately $500 million less than what was provided 2 years ago and approximately $700 million less than 3 years ago. Clearly, we are heading in the wrong direction—doing less to protect our country adequately when we ought to be doing more.

As we have seen in Madrid 2 years ago, in London last year, in India earlier this week, and in Iraq almost every week, terrorists have become adept at exploiting weak points in critical infrastructure, particularly transportation systems. I question what it will take for us to realize that we need to

be investing more in our domestic critical infrastructure and in our first responders.

Although we have taken steps to boost our homeland security since the attacks on September 11, our critical infrastructure remains largely exposed and our emergency first responders are spread too thin. Our port authorities have identified $8.4 billion for meeting Federal security requirements; transit agencies have identified $6 billion for making trains and buses safer for passengers; and firefighters have identified over $4 billion for performing their critical duties safely and efficiently.

As the Senate considered this legislation, I was offered an amendment that increased resources to our Nation's firefighters by $25 million above the bill's allocation of $655 million. This amendment was cosponsored by colleagues, Senators DEWINE, MIKULSKI, and SNOWE, and was agreed to by unanimous consent.

I also offered an amendment that would have increased critical infrastructure security and first responder funding by $16 billion to a total of $20 billion. My amendment would have codified a recommendation made 3 years ago by a task force chaired by our former colleague, Warren Rudman, along with a distinguished panel of national security, intelligence, military and public health officials.

Regrettably, this measure—along with other measures I supported seeking to raise resources for critical infrastructure protection and first responders—were not adopted. Members who spoke in opposition to these amendments argued that we could not afford the extra cost. Ironically, many of the Members who opposed these amendments have supported permanent tax cuts for the most affluent of Americans—tax cuts that have been projected to cost $1 trillion over the next 15 years. If we can afford to give such a generous tax break to the few thousand wealthiest Americans, then why can we not afford adequately to safeguard 281 million Americans from terrorist attacks at a mere fraction of that cost?

We are living in extraordinary times. Never before in our history has there been a prolonged period of time when the threat of harm to Americans on their own soil has been so high. While it has been almost 5 years since terrorists attacked the World Trade Center, the more recent attacks in Madrid, London, and Mumbai tell us that we must remain vigilant about our domestic security. They tell us that we must renew and redouble our efforts to prevent and respond to terrorism here at home.

On balance, I voted for this legislation because the funding it appropriates does take important steps towards meeting our domestic security needs. However, I look forward to working with my colleagues in the coming years to find and provide the necessary resources that can make our Nation as safe and strong as it can possibly be.

FEMA

Mr. BIDEN. Mr. President, earlier this week, I voted with a bipartisan majority of Senators to strengthen FEMA while leaving it in the Department of Homeland Security. In the aftermath of Hurricane Katrina and the woeful response of the Federal Emergency Management Administration, I was prepared to remove FEMA from the Department of Homeland Security. At the time, it was clear that FEMA had been stripped of necessary resources and leadership, and that, as a result of these choices, it had failed the citizens of the gulf coast.

I changed my mind and voted to strengthen FEMA for three important reasons. First, the Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs Committee conducted extensive hearings and oversight into the problems that led to the catastrophe of Katrina and how to fix this systemic failure. They conducted a 7-month investigation, including 23 hearings, heard testimony from 85 witnesses, interviewed 325 individuals, and reviewed 838,000 documents. They obviously did their homework.

Second, as a result of this exhaustive research, they made substantive proposals to strengthen the role of FEMA within the Department of Homeland Security. These changes will provide new statutory protections to ensure that the Administrator had direct access to the President, that it restores authorities to work directly with State and local agencies, and that it strengthens regional authorities by creating teams to foster cooperation and joint training for local emergency managers and first responders.

The final, and most important, reason that I decided to vote to strengthen FEMA as a component of the Department of Homeland Security is because of the position of local law enforcement and first responders. The bottom line is that I have spent my career working with the Fraternal Order of Police, the National Sheriffs Association, the National Association of Police Organizations, the National Troopers Coalition, the International Association of Fire Chiefs, the International Association of Fire Fighters, the Major Cities Chief, and local first responders. I strongly value the opinions of these individuals, and if they believe that this is the right approach to help them in their efforts to save lives, I am willing to give it a shot.

I hope that the changes voted for by the vast majority of Senators earlier this week will return FEMA to its vaunted status of the 1990s. The American people deserve no less.

RECENT ATTACKS ON ISRAEL

Mr. VITTER. Mr. President, I come to the floor today to offer my full support of Israel's decision to defend itself. I also commend U.N. Ambassador John Bolton for vetoing the U.N. Security Council resolution addressing the situation in the Middle East, because of its unbalanced approach to the situation.

Unfortunately, due to the kidnapping of Israeli soldiers by Hamas and the continued rocket attacks by Hamas and Hezbollah against Israeli towns and villages, the Israeli Government was forced to defend itself.

There is no doubt that the Governments of Syria, Lebanon, and Iran are responsible for these attacks. These Governments provide the military equipment, training, and financing for Hamas and Hezbollah to conduct their terror campaigns. Their continued support for these terrorist organizations has left the Israeli Government with no other option than to defend itself by pursuing terrorist safe havens in Gaza and southern Lebanon.

Israel continues to be one of America's closest allies, and in this period of terror against the Israeli people it is essential that we support Israel's decision to defend itself against these terrorist attacks. I ask that the world community join in solidarity with Israel as it takes necessary steps to provide security to its people and dismantle the terrorist infrastructure in the Palestinian areas and in southern Lebanon.

Israel was attacked for one reason—these terror organizations and some governments in the region believe Israel does not have a right to exist as a country, much less live peacefully as a country. The unprovoked missile launches against Israel civilians, suicide bombings of women and children, and the kidnapping and torture of Israeli soldiers is the result of Iran, Syria, and certain factions of the Lebanese Government's inaction towards these terrorist organizations in their country.

The cycle of violence can only end if these countries dismantle these terrorist groups by cutting off funding and prohibiting terrorist organizations from participating in their governments. Otherwise, Israel will be required to continue defending itself against terrorist strongholds, and innocent civilians will suffer greatly—all of this because certain extreme elements remain bent on destruction rather than reconciliation.

Israel is a sovereign country that deserves to live in peace. Israel deserves to live in peace, free from the attacks of those who prey upon its open and democratic society. Unfortunately, innocent civilians are ones who pay the price on both sides of the conflict. Yet, until Israel is able to live free of missile attacks, kidnappings, and suicide bombers the unfortunate reality is that suffering will continue.

Mr. President, I believe that the United States should and must support Israel's right to defend itself. I hope that my colleagues will join me in expressing their support for one of our closest allies.

Mr. CORNYN. Mr. President, I wish to express my outrage at the terrorist actions of Hezbollah that we have seen in recent days.

As my colleagues are aware, this terrorist group conducted raids across Israel's border, kidnapping two Israeli soldiers, and also killed eight other Israeli soldiers. The stability in the region has been significantly compromised because of these terrorist actions.

These attacks on the sovereign nation of Israel are reprehensible, they are unacceptable, and they are not going unanswered. Israel has said it will not negotiate with terror organizations, and has demanded the release of its soldiers.

The United States must stand by Israel as it defends itself against such cowardly attacks. Israel has not only the right, but the responsibility to defend its citizens.

And there is certainly no doubt that Syria and Iran support the terrorist actions of Hezbollah. In fact, the latest State Department report on terrorism identifies Iran and Syria as state sponsors of terrorism. We will continue to wage the global war on terror, to do our best to rid the world of terrorists and those who support them.

But when acts of terrorism are perpetrated against sovereign nations, the international community must recognize that such nations will protect themselves and their citizens, as it is their right to do.

I extend my sympathy to the families of the Israeli soldiers who have been killed in these attacks and pray for the safe return of those captured.

TRIGGER LOCKS

Mr. LEVIN. Mr. President, safe storage and child access prevention laws are crucial steps in the effort to reduce the occurrence of accidental shootings and suicides involving guns. Such tragedies have claimed the lives of thousands of young people and destroyed thousands of families, even though many of these occurrences could have been prevented by commonsense legislation.

A study published in the Journal of the American Medical Association found that the application of responsible gun storage measures can significantly reduce the risk of unintentional shooting or suicide by minors using a gun. According to the study, when ammunition in the home is locked up, the risk of such injuries is reduced by 61 percent. Simply storing ammunition separately from the gun reduces such occurrences by more than 50 percent.

According to the Brady Campaign to Prevent Gun Violence, teenagers and children are involved in more than 10,000 accidental shootings in which nearly 800 people die each year. Reducing the number of accidental shootings involving children and teenagers requires that commonsense gun storage measures be adopted.

In 2005, Congress passed a law, which the President signed, requiring that all handguns sold by a dealer come with a child-safety lock. It was a clear bipartisan effort to protect the youth of this country from gun violence. Unfortunately, last month the House of Representatives adopted legislation to repeal effective enforcement of this requirement as part of its Science, State, Justice, Commerce, and Related Agencies Appropriations Act. The Senate has not yet considered its version of the appropriations bill.

Sarah Brady, wife of Jim Brady, who was shot in the attempted assassination of President Reagan, responded to last month's vote by saying:

> In a nation where gun violence takes such an enormous toll, this vote is disturbingly backwards. Every year more than 30,000 Americans are killed by guns, including more than 2,800 young people. Every day, we lose a classroom of children to gun violence. So many health advocates, law enforcement officials, and others have urged Americans to more safely secure and store guns. But in the millions of American homes where children and firearms are present, 40 percent had at least one unlocked firearm.

While the problems of youth suicide and accidental shooting clearly cannot be completely legislated away, trigger locks and other sensible gun safety measures can help limit access to firearms by children, and there can be no doubt that reducing access by our kids to firearms can save many lives.

REGULATING PAYROLL TAX DEPOSIT AGENTS

Ms. SNOWE. Mr. President, I have previously introduced a bill to regulate payroll tax deposit agents. This bill will help to protect small businesses from payroll tax fraud and provide them with greater confidence when working with payroll service providers that are registered with the Internal Revenue Service and bonded or audited.

In the fall of 2003, small businessman Roger Cyr, the owner of the Lily Moon Cafe in Saco, ME, learned that he was the victim of payroll tax fraud and owed $52,000 in back taxes. He was one of a number of small business owners in Maine who were forced to pay their payroll taxes twice after an unscrupulous payroll provider ran off with their tax deposits instead of making the required payments to the IRS.

Unfortunately, I know that this type of payroll fraud is not unique to Maine and has also occurred in Utah, Iowa, as well as elsewhere. When payroll tax fraud occurs, many small owners, mom-and-pop companies, and other businesses are forced to pay their payroll taxes twice. This additional and unexpected expense can drive many of these companies out of business.

These payroll fraud cases obscure the fact that most small businesses use payroll providers that are honest, meticulous, and trustworthy. The majority of payroll tax agents pay their clients' taxes accurately and on time, provide outstanding service, and help their clients with a range of complicated tax and accounting issues. In order to protect small business owners from the few dishonest payroll providers, and to protect the honest small payroll providers from the bad actors in their industry, I have introduced the payroll tax deposit agent's bill.

My bill contains a number of provisions designed to guard small business owners against fraud by increasing the IRS' oversight of the payroll service providers. The bill creates a separate section of the Internal Revenue Code that will govern the payroll industry, it defines the responsibilities of payroll tax deposit agents, and requires all agents to register with the IRS or be penalized. The bill requires payroll agents to inform their clients of the clients' continued liability for all payroll taxes and the clients' need to periodically verify that their taxes are paid in full. The bill penalizes payroll providers that collect but fail to make required payments by extending section 6672 penalties to all payroll tax agents.

These provisions also provide some reasonable flexibility to small payroll service providers. It gives payroll providers a choice between obtaining a surety bond or submitting to a third party audit that verifies if a payroll company's books are solid and well managed.

Many small payroll service providers prefer audit option, which confirms that the payroll agent is making their client's tax deposit completely and on time, over bonding—as surety bonds can be very difficult for many small businesses to obtain. Additionally, small payroll agents argue that a third party audit actually provides their clients more protection against fraud than bonding because the audit verifies the payroll agent's sound financial practices while a surety bond only provides a limited reimbursement in cases of wrongdoing.

Many of these payroll tax agent provisions were already approved by the Senate Finance Committee as part of the Good Government Act. The Good Government Act was approved by the Senate Finance Committee and passed the Senate by unanimous consent agreement in May of 2004. Unfortunately, the Good Governance Act never made it out of conference. Now, as I introduce this bill, I am hoping that we can help protect our small businesses by seeing that these necessary payroll protections become law.

I would like to encourage my colleagues to help protect our small businesses from devious payroll tax agents by increasing IRS oversight and protections as contained in this bill.

IMPROVING OUTCOMES OF CHILDREN AFFECTED BY ''METH'' ACT OF 2006

Mr. ROCKEFELLER. Mr. President, the Senate has passed an important bill, Chairman GRASSLEY's Improving Outcomes for Children Affected by ''Meth'' Act of 2006. This legislation will reauthorize the Safe and Stable Families Program and target $40 million in new funding to programs to help children affected by methamphetamine abuse and addiction.

West Virginia, like all too many States, is facing severe problems with a methamphetamine epidemic. There is by all reports a rapid spread and growth of this pernicious addiction. SAMSHA reports that methamphetamine abuse has increased more than 420 percent for persons 12 years and older during the past decade. And according to a well-cited National Association of Counties survey, the epidemic is no longer targeting rural States like my own. Much to my dismay we are finding addicts in suburban high schools as well as urban areas. Addicts are white and blue collar workers and the unemployed who are in their twenties or thirties. Use is equally divided among males and females.

The legislation offered today is part of the reauthorization for the Promoting Safe and Stable Families Program. Our child welfare system relies on the principles and services mandated by Safe and Stable Families Programs. I have wholeheartedly worked on this program since its inception in 1993. I have continued over the years to support modifications that fit the changing needs of the children.

It is essential that our most vulnerable children remain safe and that they find emergency placements and permanent homes. Programs such as Foster Care remain a foundational safeguard for children. Children find refuge in foster homes when they are placed in harm's way due to neglect or abuse. Permanence of placement represents an enduring goal of Safe and Stable. This objective provides a child the hope of living conditions that support physical and psychological health. The Safe and Stable Programs ultimately assist with decisions about family reunification and adoption.

Of course, there remains a lot more work to be done. Our foster care system is overburdened. There is all too often a lack of coordination among agencies and services that serve children and their families. And currently many programs are especially stressed by the expanding and invasive problems brought on by the next generation of illicit drugs. Right now our children need more help.

The goals of Improving Outcomes for Children Affected by ''Meth'' Act are consistent with the spirit and design of the Promoting Safe and Stable Families Programs. This act targets the growing problems caused by a cheaply made, easily available, lethal drug.

The facts are, to say the least, extremely disturbing. The National Association of Counties survey points to the rise of out-of-home placements due to methamphetamine addiction by as much as 71 percent in California counties and 70 percent in responding Colorado counties. This year in Montana, State officials reported at least 50 percent of child abuse and neglect cases involved methamphetamine abuse. I know that in southern West Virginia alone there have been over 100 laboratory busts since October, 2005. And according to a survey by the Rebecca Project, over 10,000 children in the U.S. were either present at a lab seizure or lived where the lab was seized between 2000 and 2003. These labs produce 5 pounds of toxic waste as a result of producing 1 pound of methamphetamine. There are too many children in harm's way.

This bill creates new competitive grants to support regional partnerships that provide services to children who are affected by their caretakers' methamphetamine abuses. The bill reserves $40 million to fund these grants.

I know that these grants are not a cure-all, but this legislation is a firm step in the right direction in several ways. First, regional demonstration projects can further identify intervention models that are showing some good results. We also are on the mark when we encourage community health care providers, law enforcement agencies, judges, and statewide child welfare agencies to form more coherent and efficient partnerships. These grants can target innovative prevention programs that reach at-risk children before out-of-home placements are necessary. Finally the grants are available for innovative family-based programs, comprehensive long-term treatment services, and counseling for the children. It is good that the Senate has passed this legislation, and we need to work with the House to secure passage of a final bill that can be signed into law by the President this year.

PEER TO PEER: TEEN DATING VIOLENCE PREVENTION

Mr. CRAPO. Mr. President, a serious and, at times, deadly form of physical and emotional interpersonal violence is alarmingly pervasive in our Nation today. It transcends race, socio-economic condition, and community size. It is dating violence and it happens every day in teen dating relationships. Like domestic violence to which it is a precursor, teen dating violence is something our society is finally talking about openly. A major driver of this public conversation is visual media, specifically, television.

I am proud to say that a high school in Eagle, ID on the leading edge of this awareness effort. Organizers of a teen dating violence awareness and prevention summit in Boise reached out to the Eagle High School media department asking for its participation in the summit. Taking up the challenge, media instructor Jim Seaney and his students produced a series of public service announcements, PSA, dealing with the crime of teen dating violence from the perspective of teens.

I featured one of the five segments on my monthly live townhall meeting, Capitol Watch, and at a national press conference in February kicking off National Teen Dating Violence Awareness and Prevention Week. Well-scripted, professionally produced, and riveting in their directness and simplicity, each PSA confronts the viewer with the tragedy of teen dating violence. The message is clear: teen dating violence exists—and in relationships and places you would never suspect.

Without any further acclaim, these productions stand as a tremendous accomplishment. But, I am pleased to say that they were recently selected as the winning entry to the 2005–2006 National Student Television Award for Excellence, Hubbard Family Public Affairs/Community Service/Public Service Category. I offer my heartfelt congratulations to Jim Seaney and his students, Bethany Ross, Cody Bolken, Robert O'Neal, Tommy Sauriol, Sabra Wiitanen, John Adkins, Natalie Volarich, Chase Gronowski, Vianey Conchas, Abby Sauriol, Jeremiah Mitchell, and Jim's daughter Aubree who also acts in one of the segments. I thank them for the time and effort they took to make the crime of teen dating violence something that families, schools, communities and a nation, talk about. These conversations open the door to truth and healing now and healthy, respectful relationships for life.

ADDITIONAL STATEMENTS

THE LIFE OF FRANK ZEIDLER

• Mr. FEINGOLD. Mr. President, I join the city of Milwaukee and the entire State of Wisconsin in mourning the loss of Mayor Frank Zeidler. When he passed away on July 7, Wisconsin lost one of its most principled and progressive leaders.

Mayor Zeidler was born in 1912 in Milwaukee, WI, and lived there throughout his life. He grew up in the Merrill Park neighborhood on the city's west side and attended Marquette University and the University of Chicago. In addition to his long career in public service to the city of Milwaukee, Zeidler read relentlessly, loved statistics, collected fossils, and rewrote Shakespeare.

Mayor Zeidler served in public office for more than 20 years and is widely known as Milwaukee's last socialist mayor. His career in public service began in 1938 when he was first elected to public office as county surveyor, and he then went on to serve for 7 years on the Milwaukee School Board.

Then, in 1948, he was elected to serve as mayor of the city of Milwaukee, a position he would hold for over a decade. When he took office, his goal was

to act in ''the public welfare'' and he did so by presiding over Milwaukee during a period of growth and prosperity.

Under Mayor Zeidler's leadership, Milwaukee reached new heights, as he improved city services and led Milwaukee in a time of strong economic growth. During his 12 years in office, Mayor Zeidler presided over a period of great development and prosperity: Milwaukee factories were booming, poverty and crime remained low, and the city's population peaked at over 740,000. He also revamped and expanded a wide array of city services.

It has been said that Mayor Zeidler was the ''opposite of a politician in it for the money.'' In 1953, when he earned $16,500 as the mayor of Milwaukee, he gave $2,400 of it back to the city. By 1983, when he was 70 years old, it was reported that he received Social Security but did not take a pension. He also took the bus for most of his life.

Zeidler was an expert on the history of Milwaukee and a man of unquestioned personal integrity. This is what made him one of Milwaukee's most respected political figures and local institutions. In 1985, the Greater Milwaukee Conference on Religion and Urban Affairs began awarding a Frank Zeidler Award for contributions to social concerns in the religious community. Then, in 1995, the Milwaukee government office building immediately east of City Hall was named the Frank Zeidler Municipal Building.

Throughout his life, Mayor Zeidler remained an active and respected member of the Milwaukee community. Wisconsin will always be grateful for what he achieved, and for who he was—a man dedicated to principle, progressive ideas, and public service.●

MESSAGE FROM THE PRESIDENT

A message from the President of the United States was communicated to the Senate by Ms. Evans, one of his secretaries.

EXECUTIVE MESSAGE REFERRED

As in executive session the Presiding Officer laid before the Senate a message from the President of the United States submitting a nomination which was referred to the Committee on Armed Services.

(The nomination received today is printed at the end of the Senate proceedings.)

MESSAGE FROM THE HOUSE

At 11:47 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 bill, in which it requests the concurrence of the Senate:

H.R. 9. An act to amend the Voting Rights Act of 1965.

MEASURES READ THE FIRST TIME

The following bill was read the first time:

H.R. 9. An act to amend the Voting Rights Act of 1965.

ENROLLED BILL PRESENTED

The Secretary of the Senate reported that on today, July 14, 2006, she had presented to the President of the United States the following enrolled bill:

S.J. Res. 40. An act authorizing the printing and binding of a supplement to, and revised edition of, Senate Procedure.

REPORTS OF COMMITTEES

The following reports of committees were submitted:

By Mr. GREGG, from the Committee on the Budget, with an amendment in the nature of a substitute:

S. 3521. A bill to establish a new budget process to create a comprehensive plan to rein in spending, reduce the deficit, and regain control of the Federal budget process (Rept. No. 109–283).

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. BENNETT (for himself and Mr. JOHNSON):

S. 3662. A bill to amend the Credit Repair Organizations Act to establish a new disclosure statement, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Banking, Housing, and Urban Affairs.

By Ms. LANDRIEU (for herself, Mr. KERRY, Mr. BAYH, and Mr. PRYOR):

S. 3663. A bill to amend the Small Business Act to increase the maximum amount for international trade loans, to direct the Administrator of the Small Business Administration to assign an international finance specialist, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Small Business and Entrepreneurship.

By Ms. LANDRIEU (for herself, Mr. KERRY, Mr. BAYH, and Mr. PRYOR):

S. 3664. A bill to amend the Small Business Act to improve assistance after a major disaster, to authorize emergency bridge loans, bridge loan guarantees, and recovery grants, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Small Business and Entrepreneurship.

By Mrs. FEINSTEIN:

S. 3665. A bill to extend temporarily the suspension of duty on certain ceramic knives; to the Committee on Finance.

By Mr. NELSON of Florida:

S. 3666. A bill to amend the Florida National Forest Land Management Act of 2003 to authorize the conveyance of an additional tract of National Forest System land under that Act, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Energy and Natural Resources.

By Mr. FRIST (for himself, Mr. LUGAR, Mr. INOUYE, and Mr. BROWNBACK):

S. 3667. A bill to promote nuclear nonproliferation in North Korea; to the Committee on Foreign Relations.

SUBMISSION OF CONCURRENT AND SENATE RESOLUTIONS

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

By Mr. BIDEN (for himself, Mr. ALLEN, Mr. SARBANES, Mr. DODD, Mr. KERRY, and Mr. FRIST):

S. Res. 530. A resolution calling on President George W. Bush and other leaders attending the 2006 Group of Eight (G–8) Summit in St. Petersburg, Russia, to engage in a frank dialogue with the President of Russia concerning actions of the Government of the Russian Federation that appear inconsistent with the Group's objectives of protecting global security, economic stability, and democracy, and for other purposes; considered and agreed to.

By Mr. LIEBERMAN (for himself, Mr. BURNS, Mr. REID, Mr. BOND, Mrs. MURRAY, Mr. LAUTENBERG, Mr. PRYOR, Mr. TALENT, Ms. MIKULSKI, Ms. SNOWE, and Ms. CANTWELL):

S. Res. 531. A resolution to urge the President to appoint a Presidential Special Envoy for Sudan; to the Committee on Foreign Relations.

By Ms. COLLINS (for herself and Mr. ISAKSON):

S. Res. 532. A resolution encouraging the adults of the United States to support, listen to, and encourage children so that they may reach their potential; to the Committee on Health, Education, Labor, and Pensions.

ADDITIONAL COSPONSORS

S. 484

At the request of Mr. WARNER, the name of the Senator from Iowa (Mr. HARKIN) was added as a cosponsor of S. 484, a bill to amend the Internal Revenue Code of 1986 to allow Federal civilian and military retirees to pay health insurance premiums on a pretax basis and to allow a deduction for TRICARE supplemental premiums.

S. 2354

At the request of Mr. NELSON of Florida, the names of the Senator from New Jersey (Mr. LAUTENBERG) and the Senator from Iowa (Mr. HARKIN) were added as cosponsors of S. 2354, a bill to amend title XVIII of the Social Security Act to reduce the coverage gap in prescription drug coverage under part D of such title based on savings to the Medicare program resulting from the negotiation of prescription drug prices.

S. 2392

At the request of Mrs. BOXER, the name of the Senator from Maryland (Ms. MIKULSKI) was added as a cosponsor of S. 2392, a bill to promote the empowerment of women in Afghanistan.

S. 2465

At the request of Mrs. BOXER, the name of the Senator from Washington (Mrs. MURRAY) was added as a cosponsor of S. 2465, a bill to amend the Foreign Assistance Act of 1961 to provide increased assistance for the prevention, treatment, and control of tuberculosis, and for other purposes.

S. 2491

At the request of Mr. CORNYN, the name of the Senator from Wyoming (Mr. ENZI) was added as a cosponsor of S. 2491, a bill to award a Congressional gold medal to Byron Nelson in recognition of his significant contributions to the game of golf as a player, a teacher, and a commentator.

S. 2592

At the request of Mr. HARKIN, the name of the Senator from Delaware

(Mr. CARPER) was added as a cosponsor of S. 2592, a bill to amend the Child Nutrition Act of 1966 to improve the nutrition and health of schoolchildren by updating the definition of ''food of minimal nutritional value'' to conform to current nutrition science and to protect the Federal investment in the national school lunch and breakfast programs.

S. 3568

At the request of Mr. BENNETT, the name of the Senator from South Dakota (Mr. JOHNSON) was added as a cosponsor of S. 3568, a bill to protect information relating to consumers, to require notice of security breaches, and for other purposes.

S. 3656

At the request of Mrs. FEINSTEIN, the name of the Senator from New York (Mrs. CLINTON) was added as a cosponsor of S. 3656, a bill to provide additional assistance to combat HIV/AIDS among young people, and for other purposes.

S. RES. 494

At the request of Mr. SANTORUM, the name of the Senator from Oregon (Mr. SMITH) was added as a cosponsor of S. Res. 494, a resolution expressing the sense of the Senate regarding the creation of refugee populations in the Middle East, North Africa, and the Persian Gulf region as a result of human rights violations.

S. RES. 500

At the request of Mr. COCHRAN, his name was added as a cosponsor of S. Res. 500, a resolution expressing the sense of Congress that the Russian Federation should fully protect the freedoms of all religious communities without distinction, whether registered or unregistered, as stipulated by the Russian Constitution and international standards.

At the request of Mr. BROWNBACK, the name of the Senator from Georgia (Mr. CHAMBLISS) was added as a cosponsor of S. Res. 500, supra.

S. RES. 529

At the request of Mr. OBAMA, the name of the Senator from Kentucky (Mr. BUNNING) was added as a cosponsor of S. Res. 529, a resolution designating July 13, 2006, as ''National Summer Learning Day''.

STATEMENTS ON INTRODUCED BILLS AND JOINT RESOLUTIONS

By Ms. LANDRIEU (for herself, Mr. KERRY, Mr. BAYH, and Mr. PRYOR):

S. 3663. A bill to amend the Small Business Act to increase the maximum amount for international trade loans, to direct the Administrator of the Small Business Administration to assign an international finance specialist, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Small Business and Entrepreneurship.

Ms. LANDRIEU. Mr. President, the gulf coast has made good progress in rebuilding after last year's hurricanes. Our small businesses and entrepreneurs have led the way in this recovery. As all of my colleagues know small businesses are the engines of our economy driving innovation and growth.

Following Katrina and Rita, one problem for our business owners in the gulf was that their customer bases were dispersed around the country by the storms and were slow to return. Without this revenue from their customers, many businesses struggled to make ends meet and relied upon U.S. Small Business Administration, SBA, disaster loans, insurance payouts, and in some cases, State-administered bridge loan funding to keep going.

We also have businesses that export goods and services to foreign countries. The 2,000 exporters in Louisiana, in addition to the other help available, were also able to rely on their international partners to stay in business. Their international customers showed great faith and commitment to our exporters by placing new orders after the storms.

I am introducing the Small Business International Trade Enhancements Act of 2006 to give all small businesses the opportunity to expand their operations into international markets. I am pleased to have Senator KERRY, the ranking member of the Senate Small Business Committee, as well as Senators PRYOR and BAYH, as cosponsors.

As I mentioned we have 2,000 exporters in Louisiana. However, there are many other businesses who are exporters, but they do not even realize it. They may have overseas Internet sales, or they focus operations on domestic sales, but have some international buyers as well. In fact, the Small Business Administration has stated that over 96 percent of all exporters of goods and services are small businesses.

Given the importance of these exporters to my State and to the rest of the gulf coast, I would like to improve their competitive edge in the international market and give them every resource they need to succeed. As they continue to recover, one of the main issues being faced by our small business is accessing capital. Our exporters are no different. They need help accessing export financing to cover export-related costs such as purchasing equipment, purchasing inventory, or financing production costs.

To help our small businesses access export financing, my legislation will create a gulf coast international finance specialist within SBA located in New Orleans to focus on the needs of businesses affected by Katrina and Rita. New Orleans had a finance specialist from 1998 until mid-2003, when that individual retired from the agency. SBA left the post vacant due to lack of funding. I believe it is important to locate this finance specialist in New Orleans because that is where the majority of Louisiana's exporters and export financing institutions are located. In New Orleans, this finance specialist also is in a prime location, within easy travel distance to the gulf coast sections of Mississippi and Alabama—where a majority of the exporters and export financing institutions in these States are located as well.

Fifteen SBA finance specialists operate out of 100 U.S. export assistance centers administered by the Department of Commerce around the country. That is a record staffing low for this program, down from a peak of 22 finance specialists in 2000. To ensure that all smaller exporters nationwide will continue to have access to export financing, this bill establishes a floor of 16 international finance specialists. I believe this will send a signal to our exporters that, despite current budget deficits, we are committed to our exporters and want to provide them with the necessary resources to compete internationally.

Mr. President, I realize that the need for export financing is not just limited to the gulf coast. There are small businesses nationwide that are looking to find markets overseas. One tool that they can use is the SBA's international trade loan, ITL, program. International trade loans can help exporters develop and expand overseas markets; upgrade equipment or facilities; and assist exporters that are being hurt by import competition. Exporters can borrow up to $2 million, with $1,750,000 guaranteed by SBA.

However, as currently structured these loans are not user-friendly to lenders or borrowers and, as a result, are underutilized. Let me explain what I mean. First, the $250,000 difference between the loan cap and the guarantee requires borrowers to take out a second SBA loan to take full advantage of the $2 million guarantee. ITLs can only be used to acquire fixed assets and not working capital, a common need for exporters. Furthermore, ITLs do not have the same collateral or refinancing requirements as SBA 7(a) loans. Because of these issues, lenders do not use these loans.

My legislation will reduce the paperwork by increasing the maximum loan guarantee to $2,750,000 and the loan cap to $3,670,000 to bring it more in line with the 7(a) program. This bill also creates a more flexible ITL by setting out that working capital is an eligible use for loan proceeds, in addition to making the ITL consistent with regular 7(a) loans by allowing the same collateral and refinancing terms as with 7(a).

The SBA international trade and export loans are valuable tools for exporters but they are useless if there is no one to assist borrowers with identifying which loans are right for them. Local lending institutions that specialize in export financing can help but at a cost over less than $2 million per year, the current group of finance specialists has obtained bank financing for more than $10 billion in U.S. exports since 1999. The $10 billion in export sales financed by these specialists helped to create over 140,000 new, high-paying U.S. jobs.

The Small Business International Trade Enhancements Act of 2006 is an

important first step, not just for exporters in the gulf coast, but also for small businesses nationwide who are looking to open markets overseas. I urge my colleagues to support this legislation since it will help our exporters in the gulf coast recover and also give small businesses nationwide more options when they are seeking export financing.

I thank the Chair and ask unanimous consent that a copy of the bill be printed in the RECORD, along with the accompanying material.

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

S. 3663

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

SECTION 1. SHORT TITLE.

This Act may be cited as the ''Small Business International Trade Enhancements Act of 2006''.

SEC. 2. DEFINITIONS.

In this Act, the terms ''Administration'' and ''Administrator'' mean the Small Business Administration and the Administrator thereof, respectively.

SEC. 3. INTERNATIONAL TRADE LOANS.

(a) IN GENERAL.—Section 7(a)(3)(B) of the Small Business Act (15 U.S.C. 636(a)(3)(B)) is amended by striking ''$1,750,000, of which not more than $1,250,000'' and inserting ''$2,750,000 (or if the gross loan amount would exceed $3,670,000), of which not more than $2,000,000''.

(b) WORKING CAPITAL.—Section 7(a)(16)(A) of the Small Business Act (15 U.S.C. 636(a)(16)(A)) is amended—

(1) in the matter preceding clause (i), by striking ''in—'' and inserting ''—'';

(2) in clause (i)—

(A) by inserting ''in'' after ''(i)''; and

(B) by striking ''or'' at the end;

(3) in clause (ii)—

(A) by inserting ''in'' after ''(ii)''; and

(B) by striking the period and inserting ''; or''; and

(4) by adding at the end the following:

''(iii) by providing working capital.''.

(c) COLLATERAL.—Section 7(a)(16)(B) of the Small Business Act (15 U.S.C. 636(a)(16)(B)) is amended—

(1) by striking ''Each loan'' and inserting the following:

''(i) IN GENERAL.—Except as provided in clause (ii), each loan''; and

(2) by adding at the end the following:

''(ii) EXCEPTION.—A loan under this paragraph may be secured by a second lien position on the property or equipment financed by the loan or on other assets of the small business concern, if the Administrator determines such lien provides adequate assurance of the payment of such loan.''.

(d) REFINANCING.—Section 7(a)(16)(A)(ii) of the Small Business Act (15 U.S.C. 636(a)(16)(A)(ii)) is amended by inserting '', including any debt that qualifies for refinancing under any other provision of this subsection'' before the period.

SEC. 4. GULF COAST EXPORT ASSISTANCE.

(a) INCREASE IN SMALL BUSINESS INTERNATIONAL TRADE STAFF.—The Administrator shall assign 1 additional full-time international finance specialist to the Office of International Trade of the Administration.

(b) LOCATION AND SERVICE AREA.—The international finance specialist assigned under subsection (a) shall—

(1) be located in the New Orleans, Louisiana United States Export Assistance Center;

(2) help to carry out the export promotion efforts described in section 22 of the Small Business Act (15 U.S.C. 649); and

(3) provide such services in the States of Louisiana, Mississippi, and Alabama.

(c) AUTHORIZATION OF APPROPRIATIONS.—

(1) IN GENERAL.—There are authorized to be appropriated to the Administration such sums as are necessary to carry out this section.

(2) AVAILABILITY OF FUNDS.—Amounts made available under this subsection shall remain available until expended.

SEC. 5. ASSIGNMENT OF EMPLOYEES OF THE OFFICE OF INTERNATIONAL TRADE.

Section 22 of the Small Business Act (15 U.S.C. 649) is amended by adding at the end the following:

''(h) In carrying out this section, the Administrator shall ensure that the number of full-time equivalent employees of the Office assigned to the one-stop shops referred to in section 2301(b) of the Omnibus Trade and Competitiveness Act of 1988 (15 U.S.C. 4721(b)) is not less than the number of such employees so assigned on January 1, 2006.''.

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

SMALL BUSINESS INTERNATIONAL TRADE ENHANCEMENTS ACT OF 2006

Exports and international trade are important to the U.S. economy and will be key to the long-term recovery of the Gulf Coast. To take advantage of increased demand for products from the Gulf Coast, particularly Louisiana and Mississippi, small businesses in the Gulf require access to export financing through the Export-Import Bank, the U.S. Small Business Administration (SBA), and in some cases, the U.S. Department of Agriculture.

The SBA employs International Finance Specialists which work with borrowers and lenders to navigate the various Federal government export financing programs.

Problem #1: Gulf Coast Export Financing Needs. Despite the increased need for export financing in the Gulf Coast, there is currently no International Finance Specialist located in any of the hardest hit states of Mississippi, Alabama and Louisiana. Instead there is one specialist in Texas with responsibility for Texas, Oklahoma, Arkansas and Louisiana and one specialist in Georgia responsible for Georgia, Alabama, Kentucky, Tennessee, and Mississippi. Due to the extensive territories they cover and limited travel budgets of the staff, these specialists must divide their time and cannot focus on the needs of Gulf Coast small businesses.

It is essential to have a Finance Specialist located on the Gulf Coast with a responsibility for the Gulf Coast.

Problem #2: Staff Reductions for SBA International Finance Specialists. At a cost of less than $2 million per year, the current group of Finance Specialists has obtained bank financing for more than $10 billion in U.S. exports since 1999. The $10 billion in export sales financed by these specialists helped to create over 140,000 new, high-paying U.S. jobs. Despite these figures, this program is experiencing record staffing lows.

In particular, there are over 100 U.S. Export Assistance Centers nationwide, however as of July 10, 2006 there were only 15 Finance Specialists nationwide. This figure is the lowest staff levels ever for the program and is down from a peak of 22 Finance Specialists in January 2000.

Problem #3: International Trade Loan Program. The SBA's International Trade Loan (ITL) program is used by exporters to expand or develop markets, upgrade equipment or facilities to improve competitive position, or to assist exporters currently hurt by import competition. As currently structured, however, ITLs are not user friendly or relevant. This is because, with a maximum guarantee amount of $1.75 million and loan cap of $2 million, ITLs require the SBA to make a second loan to the borrower to make use of the maximum guarantee. These loans are also restricted for use for only fixed assets and not working capital, which is a common need for exporters.

The Landrieu Small Business International Trade Enhancements Act of 2006 addresses these problems:

Gulf Coast International Finance Specialist: To help our small businesses access export financing, this bill provides for an International Finance Specialist in the New Orleans who would be responsible for Louisiana, Mississippi, and Alabama.

International Trade Loans: To make this loan program more responsive, this bill increases the maximum loan guarantee amount to $2.75 million and specifies that the loan cap for ITLs is $3.67 million, as well as sets out that working capital is an eligible use for loan proceeds.The bill also makes ITLs consistent with regular SBA 7(a) loans in terms of allowing the same collateral and refinancing terms as with regular 7(a) loans.

Stop International Finance Specialist Downsizing: To ensure that all smaller exporters nationwide will continue to have access to export financing, this bill establishes a floor of 16 International Finance Specialists.

By Ms. LANDRIEU (for herself, Mr. KERRY, Mr. BAYH, and Mr. PRYOR):

S. 3664. A bill to amend the Small Business Act to improve assistance after a major disaster, to authorize emergency bridge loans, bridge loan guarantees, and recovery grants, 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 we are in the second month of another hurricane season and 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 last year.

Today, I am introducing legislation to improve the disaster response of one agency that had a great deal of problems last year, the Small Business Administration, SBA. While it did improve during the course of the months after the storm, it became clear to me that SBA needs additional tools for future disasters. SBA approached Katrina and the massive floods after the storm, using the same tools that it uses for much smaller, much less damaging disasters. I do not blame all of the people who work at this agency for the problems we saw in the gulf. They found themselves in a system that was insufficient to address this disaster.

My legislation, the Small Business Disaster Recovery Assistance Improvements Act of 2006, 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 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 bridge loans 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 make emergency bridge loans of up to $150,000 to affected small businesses in a declared disaster area. These bridge 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. My 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 bridge loans in this instance. But if you know that SBA's resources would be overwhelmed by a storm—just as they were initially with Katrina—bridge loans would be very helpful.

My legislation also would 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 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.

We had a lot of small business owners in the gulf coast who did not qualify for SBA disaster loans, or may not have had enough insurance to cover their losses. These people usually have to expend their personal finances or seek out small grants from non-profits to keep going. My legislation authorizes a small business disaster grant program to provide small grants of up to $25,000 to businesses that are not able to get access to get other assistance. These grants will only go to business owners that certify their intent to reopen in the disaster area and pursue technical assistance to continue their operations.

Following Katrina, it is clear that disaster loan amounts need to be updated to reflect current business needs and the average cost of housing today. The bill raises the cap on SBA disaster loans for businesses from $1.5 million to $2.25 million; the cap on SBA personal property loans from $40,000 to $50,000; and the cap on real property homeowner loans from $200,000 to $250,000.

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.

I was surprised to learn that the SBA did not have a full-time disaster planner on board before Katrina, nor did it have a comprehensive disaster response plan in place. While SBA is not a first-responder disaster agency like FEMA, they do hit the ground within days of a disaster strike. As the only Federal nonagricultural disaster lender, SBA should have an analytical, proactive plan in place to respond to disasters.

I pushed to get language in the recent hurricane supplemental appropriations bill to require SBA to develop a disaster plan and report to Congress on its contents by July 15, 2006. I look forward to this report. But writing a plan and making it work are two different things. SBA needs a full-time staff in place to ensure that this plan is implemented properly. My legislation directs the SBA to hire a full-time disaster planner to maintain this disaster response plan and to assist the SBA with its overall disaster preparedness, including coordination with other disaster response agencies like FEMA.

As we reflect next month on the 1-year anniversary of the worst natural disaster to hit our nation, now is the time for action—not words or empty promises. I want to be able to go back to my constituents and reassure them that if, God forbid, another natural disaster should hit my state or another part of the country, that the Small Business Administration is better prepared and more responsive to the needs of those impacted.

The Small Business Disaster Recovery Assistance Improvements Act will provide essential tools to make the SBA more proactive, flexible, and most important, more efficient during future disasters. In the coming weeks, I look forward to working with both Chairwoman SNOWE and Ranking Member KERRY on the Senate Small Business Committee to ensure that the SBA has everything it needs to meet these goals.

Mr. President, I am pleased to be joined on this legislation by the ranking member of the Small Business Committee, Senator KERRY, as well as my colleagues from the Small Business Committee, Senators PRYOR and BAYH. We urge our other colleagues to support this important legislation.

I thank the Chair and ask unanimous consent that a copy of the bill be printed in the RECORD, along with the accompanying materials.

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

S. 3664

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

SECTION 1. SHORT TITLE.

This Act may be cited as the ''Small Business Disaster Recovery Assistance Improvements Act of 2006''.

SEC. 2. FINDINGS.

Congress finds that—

(1) 43 percent of businesses that close following a natural disaster never reopen;

(2) an additional 29 percent of businesses close down permanently within 2 years of a natural disaster;

(3) businesses affected by a natural disaster require, within the first 60 days following the disaster, immediate access to capital and technical assistance to fully recover and prosper;

(4) in the aftermath of Hurricanes Katrina and Rita of 2005, due to initial Administration response issues, as well as extensive destruction in the region and wide distribution of affected business owners around the country—

(A) Administration loan approvals took longer than 3 months, on average, for homeowner disaster loans, and longer than 2 months, on average, for business disaster loans; and

(B) closings on disaster loans added an additional month to the process;

(5) the Administration requires new tools and authority to be more effective in responding to major disasters and to be responsive to the needs of affected small business concerns and homeowners;

(6) for major disasters, State-administered bridge loan programs can serve as an effective means of providing immediate capital, to allow businesses to make repairs, make payroll, and continue operations, as demonstrated by the fact that—

(A) following the 2004 hurricanes in Florida, the Florida State Bridge Loan Program was a successful program in providing immediate capital to struggling businesses, providing 1,679 small business concerns with $35,400,000 in bridge loans;

(B) following the 2005 impacts of Hurricanes Katrina and Rita on the Louisiana Gulf Coast, the Louisiana Bridge Loan Program was a successful program in providing immediate capital to struggling businesses, providing 407 small business concerns with $9,750,000 in bridge loans;

(C) following the 2005 impact of Hurricane Katrina on the Mississippi Gulf Coast, the Mississippi Bridge Loan Program was a successful program in providing immediate capital to struggling businesses, providing 464 small business concerns with $11,233,850 in bridge loans; and

(D) following the 2005 impact of Hurricane Wilma on the Florida Gulf Coast, the Florida State Bridge Loan Program was a successful program in providing immediate capital to struggling businesses, providing 593 small business concerns with $12,900,000 in bridge loans;

(7) in the aftermath of Hurricane Katrina of 2005 and Hurricane Rita of 2005, small business development centers had difficulties entering and utilizing disaster recovery centers of the Administration, resulting in delays of technical assistance service to affected businesses; and

(8) there is a need for greater cooperation between the Federal Government and State governments on bridge loans programs to respond to major disasters.

SEC. 3. DEFINITIONS.

In this Act—

(1) the terms ''Administration'' and ''Administrator'' mean the Small Business Administration and the Administrator thereof, respectively;

(2) the term ''approved State Bridge Loan Program'' means a State Bridge Loan Program approved under section 5(b);

(3) the term ''major disaster'' has the meaning given the term in section 102 of the Robert T. Stafford Disaster Relief and Emergency Assistance Act (42 U.S.C. 5122);

(4) the term ''small business concern'' has the meaning given the term in section 3 of the Small Business Act; and

(5) the term ''State'' means any State of the United States, the District of Columbia, the Commonwealth of Puerto Rico, the Northern Mariana Islands, the Virgin Islands, Guam, American Samoa, and any territory or possession of the United States.

SEC. 4. EMERGENCY BRIDGE LOANS AND GRANTS AFTER MAJOR DISASTERS.

Section 7(b) of the Small Business Act (15 U.S.C. 636(b)) is amended by inserting immediately after paragraph (3) the following:

''(4) EMERGENCY BRIDGE LOANS AND BUSINESS RECOVERY GRANTS AFTER MAJOR DISASTERS.—

''(A) DEFINITIONS.—In this paragraph—

''(i) the term 'disaster area' means an area for which a major disaster was declared, during the period of such declaration; and

''(ii) the term 'major disaster' has the meaning given the term in section 102 of the Robert T. Stafford Disaster Relief and Emergency Assistance Act (42 U.S.C. 5122).

''(B) BRIDGE LOANS.—

''(i) DEFINITION.—In this subparagraph, the term 'qualified small business concern' means a small business concern—

''(I) located in a disaster area; and

''(II) that is directly adversely affected by the major disaster for which such disaster area was declared.

''(ii) LOAN AUTHORITY.—The Administrator shall make such loans under this subparagraph (either directly (including through a district office of the Administration located in a disaster area) or in cooperation with banks or other lending institutions through agreements to participate on an immediate or deferred basis) as the Administrator determines appropriate to a qualified small business concern, to provide assistance until such small business concern is able to obtain funding through insurance claims, other Federal assistance programs, or other sources, based on such criteria as the Administrator may set by rule, regulation, or order.

''(iii) LOAN TERMS.—

''(I) PREPAYMENT.—A loan under this subparagraph may have no prepayment penalty.

''(II) INTEREST.—For not more than 6 months after the date on which a loan is made under this subparagraph, the interest rate on such a loan may be the same as for a loan under paragraph (2).

''(III) TRANSFER.—A loan under this subparagraph may include as a term that such loan may be transferred to a local bank or other financial institution in a disaster area.

''(IV) TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE.—The borrower for a loan under this subparagraph shall certify the intent of such borrower to participate in technical assistance consultation (either with a local small business development center or other technical assistance group approved by the Administrator) before the borrower may utilize funds received under the loan.

''(iv) USE OF FUNDS.—A loan under this subparagraph may be used for—

''(I) paying salaries, bills, and other existing financial obligations;

''(II) making minor repairs;

''(III) purchasing inventory; or

''(IV) paying other costs.

''(v) MAXIMUM AMOUNT.—Notwithstanding any other provision of law, the Administrator may make a loan under this subparagraph of not more than $150,000 to a qualified small business concern.

''(vi) DEFERRED PAYMENT.—

''(I) IN GENERAL.—The Administrator, or a bank or other lending institution, may defer payments of principal and interest on a loan under this subparagraph for not more than 180 days after the date on which the loan is made.

''(II) CAPITALIZATION OF INTEREST.—If payments are deferred under subclause (I), any interest accrued during the period for which such payments are deferred shall be capitalized.

''(vii) NOTICE TO BORROWERS.—In making any loan under this subparagraph—

''(I) the borrower shall be made aware that such loans are for those directly adversely affected by the major disaster; and

''(II) if such loans are made in cooperation with a bank or other lending institution, the lender shall document for the Administrator how the borrower was directly adversely affected by the major disaster.

''(viii) REPORTS.—

''(I) INSPECTOR GENERAL.—For any major disaster, not later than 6 months after the date on which such disaster is declared, and every 6 months thereafter until the date that is 18 months after the date on which such disaster is declared, the Inspector General of the Administration shall submit a report to the Committee on Small Business and Entrepreneurship of the Senate and the Committee on Small Business of the House of Representatives regarding loans described in clause (vii)(II), including verification that the program is being administered appropriately and that such loans are being used for purposes authorized by this subparagraph.

''(II) GAO.—Not later than 12 months after the date on which a final report for a major disaster is submitted by the Inspector General under subclause (I), the Comptroller General of the United States shall conduct a review of the loan program authorized under this subparagraph and submit a report to the Committee on Small Business and Entrepreneurship of the Senate and the Committee on Small Business of the House of Representatives containing the findings of the review and any recommendations.

''(C) BUSINESS RECOVERY GRANTS.—

''(i) DEFINITION.—In this subparagraph, the term 'eligible small business concern' means a small business concern—

''(I) directly adversely affected by a major disaster;

''(II) that has been declined for other assistance under this subsection and from private lending institutions and State-provided bridge loans;

''(III) that certifies that it intends—

''(aa) to reopen in the disaster area for which the major disaster described in subclause (I) was declared; and

''(bb) to participate in technical assistance consultation (either with a local small business development center or other technical assistance group approved by the Administrator).

''(ii) AUTHORIZATION.—The Administrator shall make such grants under this subparagraph as the Administrator determines appropriate to an eligible small business concern, to assist such small business concern in recovery from a major disaster.

''(iii) MAXIMUM AMOUNT.—The Administrator may make a grant in an amount not more than $25,000 under this subparagraph.

''(iv) DOCUMENTATION OF TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE.—An eligible small business concern receiving a grant under this subparagraph shall submit to the Administrator documentation indicating that such small business concern received technical assistance support through a small business development center or other technical assistance provider determined appropriate by the Administrator.

''(D) AUTHORIZATION OF APPROPRIATIONS.—There are authorized to be appropriated to the Administration such sums as are necessary to carry out this paragraph.''.

SEC. 5. STATE BRIDGE LOAN GUARANTEE.

(a) AUTHORIZATION.—After issuing guidelines under subsection (c), the Administrator may guarantee loans made under an approved State Bridge Loan Program.

(b) APPROVAL.—

(1) APPLICATION.—A State desiring approval of a State Bridge Loan Program shall submit an application to the Administrator at such time, in such manner, and accompanied by such information as the Administrator may require.

(2) CRITERIA.—The Administrator may approve an application submitted under paragraph (1) based on such criteria as the Administrator may establish under this section.

(c) GUIDELINES.—

(1) IN GENERAL.—Not later than 90 days after the date of enactment of this Act, the Administrator shall issue to the appropriate economic development officials in each State, the Committee on Small Business and Entrepreneurship of the Senate, and the Committee on Small Business of the House of Representatives, guidelines regarding approved State Bridge Loan Programs.

(2) CONTENTS.—The guidelines issued under paragraph (1) shall—

(A) identify appropriate uses of funds under an approved State Bridge loan Program;

(B) set terms and conditions for loans under an approved State Bridge loan Program;

(C) address whether—

(i) an approved State Bridge Loan Program may charge administrative fees; and

(ii) loans under an approved State Bridge Loan Program shall be disbursed through local banks and other financial institutions; and

(D) establish the percentage of a loan the Administrator will guarantee under an approved State Bridge Loan Program.

SEC. 6. AUTHORITY TO MAKE EXPEDITED 7(A) DISASTER LOANS TO SMALL BUSINESS CONCERNS.

Section 7(a) of the Small Business Act (15 U.S.C. 636(a)) is amended by adding at the end the following:

''(32) EXPEDITED LOANS.—

''(A) DEFINITIONS.—In this paragraph—

''(i) the term 'disaster area' means an area for which a major disaster was declared, during the period of such declaration;

''(ii) the term 'major disaster' has the meaning given the term in section 102 of the Robert T. Stafford Disaster Relief and Emergency Assistance Act (42 U.S.C. 5122); and

''(iii) the term 'essential small business concern in good standing' means a small

business concern that the Administrator, in consultation with appropriate officials in district offices of the Administration determines has the ability to repay the subject loan, and—

''(I) is in good standing and has a history of compliance with the terms of a program of the Administration (including having repaid, or being in the process of repaying, a loan under a program of the Administration, as required under the terms of such loan); or

''(II) has a bona fide reason for receiving an expedited loan under this paragraph (including being a major source of employment in a disaster area or essential to economic recovery of the area, such as by supplying building materials, housing, or debris removal services).

''(B) LOAN AUTHORIZATION.—Notwithstanding any other provision of law, the Administrator may make a loan under this subsection to an essential small business concern in good standing under expedited procedures, including expedited loss verification, loan processing, and approval.

''(C) AUTHORIZATION OF APPROPRIATIONS.—There are authorized to be appropriated to the Administrator, such sums as are necessary to carry out this paragraph.''.

SEC. 7. MAXIMUM LOAN AMOUNTS.

(a) IN GENERAL.—Section 7(a)(3)(A) of the Small Business Act is amended by striking ''$1,500,000 (or if the gross loan amount would exceed $2,000,000'' and inserting ''$2,250,000 (or if the gross loan amount would exceed $3,000,000''.

(b) DISASTER LOANS.—Section 7(c)(6) of the Small Business Act (15 U.S.C. 636(c)(6)) is amended—

(1) by striking ''$500,000'' each place such term appears and inserting ''$2,250,000'';

(2) by striking ''$100,000'' and inserting ''$250,000''; and

(3) by striking ''$20,000'' and inserting ''$50,000''.

(c) CONFORMING AMENDMENT.—Chapter I of the Emergency Supplemental Appropriations for Relief From the Major, Widespread Flooding in the Midwest Act of 1993 (Public Law 103-75; 107 Stat. 740) is amended by striking '': *Provided further*, That notwithstanding any other provision of law, the $500,000 limitation on the amounts outstanding and committed to a borrower provided in paragraph 7(c)(6) of the Small Business Act shall be increased to $1,500,000 for disasters commencing on or after April 1, 1993''.

SEC. 8. INCREASING COLLATERAL REQUIREMENTS.

Section 7(c)(6) of the Small Business Act (15 U.S.C. 636(c)(6)) is amended by striking ''$10,000'' and inserting ''$20,000''.

SEC. 9. CATASTROPHIC REGIONAL OR NATIONAL DISASTERS.

Section 7(b)(2) of the Small Business Act (15 U.S.C. 636(b)(2)) is amended—

(1) by redesignating subparagraphs (A), (B), (C), and (D) as clauses (i), (ii), (iii), and (v), respectively;

(2) by striking ''(2) to make such loans'' and inserting ''(2)(A) to make such loans'';

(3) in subparagraph (A), as so designated by this section—

(A) by striking ''or'' at the end of each of clauses (i), (ii), and (iii), as so redesignated by paragraph (1) of this section;

(B) by inserting after clause (iii), as so redesignated by paragraph (1) of this section, the following:

''(iv) a catastrophic regional or national disaster, as declared by the Secretary of Homeland Security, that is an actual or potential high-impact event that requires a coordinated and effective response by an appropriate combination of Federal, State, local, tribal, nongovernmental, or private-sector entities in order to save lives and minimize damage and provide the basis for long-term community recovery and mitigation activities; or''; and

(C) in clause (v), as so redesignated by paragraph (1) of this section, by striking ''subparagraph (A), (B), or (C)'' and inserting ''clause (i), (ii), (iii), or (iv)''; and

(4) by adding at the end the following:

''(B) Notwithstanding subsection (c)(6), in the case of a catastrophic regional or national disaster declared under subparagraph (A)(iv) of this paragraph, the Administrator may increase the maximum amount that may be outstanding and committed to borrower under this paragraph to $10,000,000.''.

SEC. 10. FULL-TIME DISASTER PLANNING STAFF.

(a) INCREASE IN SMALL BUSINESS ADMINISTRATION FULL-TIME DISASTER PLANNING STAFF.—The Administrator shall hire a full-time disaster planning specialist in the Office of Disaster Assistance of the Administration.

(b) RESPONSIBILITIES.—The disaster planning specialist hired under subsection (a) shall be responsible for—

(1) creating and maintaining the comprehensive disaster response plan of the Administration;

(2) ensuring in-service and pre-service training procedures for the disaster response staff of the Administration;

(3) coordinating Administration training exercises, including mock disaster responses, with other Federal agencies; and

(4) other responsibilities, as determined by the Administrator.

(c) AUTHORIZATION OF APPROPRIATIONS.—

(1) IN GENERAL.—There are authorized to be appropriated to the Administration such sums as are necessary to carry out this section.

(2) AVAILABILITY OF FUNDS.—Amounts made available under this section shall remain available until expended.

SEC. 11. ADDITIONAL AUTHORITY FOR DISTRICT OFFICES OF THE ADMINISTRATION.

Section 7(b) of the Small Business Act (15 U.S.C. 636(b)) is amended by inserting immediately after paragraph (4), as added by this Act, the following:

''(5) USE OF DISTRICT OFFICES.—In the event of a major disaster (as that term is defined in section 102 of the Robert T. Stafford Disaster Relief and Emergency Assistance Act (42 U.S.C. 5122)), the Administrator may authorize a district office of the Administration to process loans under paragraph (1) or (2).''.

SEC. 12. ECONOMIC INJURY DISASTER LOANS TO NONPROFITS.

(a) IN GENERAL.—Section 7(b)(2)(A) of the Small Business Act, as redesignated by this Act, is amended—

(1) in the matter preceding clause (i)—

(A) by inserting after ''small business concern'' the following: '', private nonprofit organization,''; and

(B) by inserting after ''the concern'' the following: '', organization,''; and

(2) in clause (v), by inserting after ''small business concerns'' the following: '', private nonprofit organizations,''.

(b) CONFORMING AMENDMENT.—Section 7(c) of the Small Business Act (15 U.S.C. 636(c)) is amended in paragraph (5)(C), by inserting '', organization,'' after ''business''.

SEC. 13. SMALL BUSINESS DEVELOPMENT CENTER PORTABILITY GRANTS.

Section 21(a)(4) of the Small Business Act (15 U.S.C. 648(a)(4), as amended by this Act, is amended by adding at the end the following:

''(E) WAIVER OF MAXIMUM AMOUNT.—In the event of a major disaster (as that term is defined in section 102 of the Robert T. Stafford Disaster Relief and Emergency Assistance Act (42 U.S.C. 5122)), the Administrator may waive the maximum amount of $100,000 for grants under subparagraph (C)(viii), and such grants shall be made available for small business development centers assisting small business concerns adversely affected by such major disaster.''.

SEC. 14. DISASTER LOAN PROGRAM MONTHLY ACCOUNTING REPORT.

(a) DEFINITION.—In this section, the term ''applicable period'' means the period beginning on the date on which the President declares a major disaster and ending on the date that is 30 days after the later of the closing date for applications for physical disaster loans for such disaster and the closing date for applications for economic injury disaster loans for such disaster.

(b) REPORT TO CONGRESS.—Not later than the 5th business day of each month during the applicable period for a major disaster, the Administrator shall provide to the Committee on Small Business and Entrepreneurship and the Committee on Appropriations of the Senate and to the Committee on Small Business and the Committee on Appropriations of the House of Representatives a report on the operation of the disaster loan program authorized under section 7 of the Small Business Act (15 U.S.C. 636) for such disaster during the preceding month.

(c) CONTENT OF REPORTS.—Each report under subsection (b) shall include—

(1) the daily average lending volume, in number of loans and dollars, and the percent by which each category has increased or decreased since the previous report under subsection (b);

(2) the weekly average lending volume, in number of loans and dollars, and the percent by which each category has increased or decreased since the previous report under subsection (b);

(3) the amount of funding spent over the month for loans, both in appropriations and program level, and the percent by which each category has increased or decreased since the previous report under subsection (b);

(4) the amount of funding available for loans, both in appropriations and program level, and the percent by which each category has increased or decreased, noting the source of any additional funding;

(5) an estimate of how long the available funding for such loans will last, based on the spending rate;

(6) the amount of funding spent over the month for staff, along with the number of staff, and the percent by which each category has increased or decreased since the previous report under subsection (b);

(7) the amount of funding spent over the month for administrative costs, and the percent by which such spending has increased or decreased since the previous report under subsection (b);

(8) the amount of funding available for salaries and expenses combined, and the percent by which such funding has increased or decreased, noting the source of any additional funding; and

(9) an estimate of how long the available funding for salaries and expenses will last, based on the spending rate.

SEC. 15. DISASTER LOANS AFTER MAJOR DISASTERS.

Section 7(b) of the Small Business Act (15 U.S.C. 636(b)) is amended by inserting immediately after paragraph (5), as added by this Act, the following:

''(6) AUTHORITY FOR LENDERS TO PROCESS DISASTER LOANS.—The Administrator may enter into an agreement with a qualified lender, as determined by the Administrator, to process loans under this section, under which the Administrator shall pay the lender a fee for each loan processed.

''(7) AUTHORITY FOR THE ADMINISTRATOR TO CONTRACT WITH LENDERS FOR LOAN LOSS VERIFICATION SERVICES.—The Administrator may enter into an agreement with a qualified lender or loss verification professional, as determined by the Administrator, to verify losses for loans under this section, under which the Administrator shall pay the lender or verification professional a fee for each loan for which such lender or verification professional verifies losses.''.

SEC. 16. WAIVER OF GEOGRAPHIC RESTRICTIONS ON SBDC COUNSELORS.

Section 21(b) of the Small Business Act (15 U.S.C. 648(b)) is amended by adding at the end the following:

''(4) WAIVER OF GEOGRAPHIC RESTRICTIONS ON SBDC COUNSELORS.—

''(A) IN GENERAL.—The Administrator shall authorize any small business development center, regardless of location, to provide advice, information, and assistance, as described in subsection (c), to a small business concern located in an area in which the President declared a major disaster (as defined in section 102 of the Robert T. Stafford Disaster Relief and Emergency Assistance Act (42 U.S.C. 5122)), during the period of such declaration.

''(B) CONTINUITY OF SERVICES.—A small business development center that provides counselors to an area described in subparagraph (A) shall, to the maximum extent practicable, ensure continuity of services in the State it currently serves.

''(C) ACCESS TO DISASTER RECOVERY FACILITIES.—For purposes of providing recovery assistance under this paragraph, the Administrator shall permit small business development center personnel to use any site or facility designated by the Administration for use for such purpose.''.

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

SMALL BUSINESS DISASTER RECOVERY ASSISTANCE IMPROVEMENTS ACT OF 2006

Bridge Loans and Grants: For future major disasters, the bill provides the SBA Administrator the authority to make up to $150,000 in emergency bridge loans or $25,000 in emergency grants to affected small businesses in a declared disaster area. The bridge loans and grants would allow businesses to make payroll, begin making repairs, and address other immediate needs while they are awaiting insurance payouts or SBA disaster loans. As part of receiving these bridge loans or grants, affected businesses would be required to seek technical assistance.

State Bridge Loan Guarantee: This bill requires that the SBA Administrator issue guidelines on an SBA-approved State bridge loan program for future disasters. Once the guidelines are issued, states may then submit their bridge loan programs for approval to receive SBA guarantee assistance on bridge loans in the event of a disaster. The program rewards states that are prepared well-before future disasters strike and could be in place before the end of the current Hurricane season.

Expedited 7(a) Disaster Loans: Many affected businesses in the Gulf Coast had repaid previous SBA loans yet despite being in good standing with the SBA, were required to wait months for disaster loan decisions. Other affected businesses were major sources of employment in their areas or could provide substantive assistance to recovery efforts but were also made to wait months for SBA loans. This bill provides expedited SBA disaster loans to businesses that are in good standing with the SBA or those who can provide unique assistance to recovery efforts. These expedited loans would jump-start impacted economies, get vital capital to businesses, and retain essential jobs following future disasters.

Increased Caps on Disaster Loans: The bill would raise the cap on business Disaster Loans from $1.5 million to $2.25 million. It would also raise the cap on Personal Property homeowner disaster loans from $40,000 to $50,000 and the cap on Real Property homeowner disaster loans from $200,000 to $250,000.

Lender Assistance for Loss Verification/Loan Processing: The bill gives the Administrator permanent authority to enter into agreements with local banks and other lenders to help address the SBA loss verification and loan processing backlog for future disasters.

Increased Collateral Requirements: Currently, the SBA cannot disburse more than $10,000 on an approved loan before requiring additional collateral. This is to limit the loss to the SBA in the event that a loan defaults, but is an added protection for the SBA because before loans are approved; the SBA reviews the borrower's ability to repay the loan in question. To help loan disbursement for future disasters, the bill would increase this collateral requirement to $20,000 to borrowers who have been approved for SBA disaster loans.

Increased Disaster Loan Caps for Catastrophic Regional or National Disaster: The bill provides that, for a disaster designated by the Secretary of Homeland Security as a catastrophic regional or national disaster, that SBA Administrator may increase the maximum Disaster Loan amount to $10 million.

Additional Authority for SBA District Offices: Following Hurricanes Katrina and Rita, the SBA struggled to handle increased loan volume created by the disasters. Months after Katrina first hit, the SBA authorized District Offices to process disaster loans, which greatly reduced the existing loan backlog in the span of a month. For major future disasters, the bill authorizes the Administrator to allow District Offices to process all business disaster loans.

Small Business Development Center Assistance: The bill addresses many problems experienced by Gulf Coast Small Business Development Centers (SBDCs) following Hurricanes Katrina and Rita. First, these SBDCs had to apply for multiple portability grants and then had to wait months for this funding. This bill allows the Administrator to waive the $100,000 cap on SBDC portability grants following a disaster which would allow SBA to quickly provide more funds to SBDCs, rather than requiring them to apply for multiple portability grants. The bill also allows other SBDCs to provide assistance in declared disaster areas by allowing them to travel beyond their traditional geographic boundaries. Lastly, since many Gulf Coast SBDCs had trouble accessing Federal Disaster Recovery Centers to provide business counseling, which caused extended delays in business counseling services, the bill directs the SBA Administrator to permit SBDC staff into these recovery centers for future disasters.

Improved SBA Accountability: The bill directs the SBA, for future major disasters, to provide a monthly report to Congress on the disaster loan program (loan volume, loan averages, funding available, etc.) to prevent the SBA Disaster Loan program from running out of money.

Loans to Non-Profits: Allows SBA to make loans to non-profits that are located or operating in a disaster area.

Full-Time Disaster Planning Staff: The SBA had neither a comprehensive disaster response plan nor full-time planning staff in place for Hurricane Katrina. As a result, the SBA's disaster response was plagued by mismanagement, delays, and a lack of flexibility which left borrowers waiting between two to four months for initial loss inspections and four to eight months for decisions on their loan applications. As part of the recent Hurricane Supplemental Appropriations bill, SBA was tasked with drafting up a comprehensive disaster response plan but they still do not have a full-time planner on board to ensure that this plan is implemented or that it is updated following future disasters. This bill directs the SBA to hire a full-time disaster planner to maintain this disaster response plan and to assist with SBA disaster preparedness for future disasters.

By Mr. NELSON of Florida:

S. 3666. A bill to amend the Florida National Forest Land Management Act of 2003 to authorize the conveyance of an additional tract of National Forest System land under that Act, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Energy and Natural Resources.

Mr. NELSON of Florida. Mr. President, I rise today to introduce legislation that helps the U.S. Forest Service protect sensitive and precious forest by selling developed land in Leon County, FL, in order to purchase at-risk land in the heart of our national forests.

Specifically, this bill allows for the sale of tract W–1979, which is 114 acres in Tallahassee, the proceeds of which are specifically designated to purchase private inholdings in the Apalachicola National Forest. The Forest Service believes that W–1979 has lost its national forest character and is unmanageable. The land will be sold to Leon County, where it will help the continued advancement of Blueprint 2000, a series of community initiatives to improve Tallahassee and Leon County. By selling this land on the outskirts of the Apalachicola National Forest, the U.S. Forest Service can acquire precious land deep in the forest that could be lost to development.

This legislation also gives the U.S. Forest Service in Florida the same flexibility to manage lands and capital that it has in many other states. Previously, whenever National Forest land was sold, the funds could only be used to purchase more land, while many important infrastructure projects went undone. With passage of this bill, proceeds only from the sale of ''non-green'' lands can go towards capital improvements, such as administrative facilities that help the Forest Service manage the Ocala, Apalachicola and Osceola National Forests. These non-green lands have already been developed with urban improvements, and no longer align with the goals of the U.S. Forest Service.

Congressmen CRENSHAW and BOYD have introduced similar legislation in the House of Representatives. I hope that we can quickly pass these bills and help Leon County and the Forest Service.

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

S. 3666

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

SECTION 1. CONVEYANCES UNDER FLORIDA NATIONAL FOREST LAND MANAGEMENT ACT OF 2003.

(a) ADDITIONAL CONVEYANCE AUTHORIZED.—Subsection (b) of section 3 of the Florida National Forest Land Management Act of 2003 (Public Law 108–152; 117 Stat. 1919) is amended—

(1) by striking ''and'' at the end of paragraph (17);

(2) by redesignating paragraph (18) as paragraph (19);

(3) by inserting after paragraph (17) the following new paragraph:

''(18) tract W-1979, located in Leon County consisting of approximately 114 acres, within T. 1 S., R. 1 W., sec.25; and''; and

(4) in paragraph (19), as so redesignated, by striking ''(17)'' and inserting ''(18)''.

(b) ADDITIONAL USE OF PROCEEDS.—Paragraph (2) of subsection (i) of such section (117 Stat. 1921) is amended—

(1) by striking ''and'' at the end of subparagraph (A);

(2) by striking the period at the end of subparagraph (B) and inserting ''; and''; and

(3) by adding at the end the following new subparagraph:

''(C) acquisition, construction, or maintenance of administrative improvements for units of the National Forest System in the State.''.

(c) LIMITATIONS ON USE OF PROCEEDS.—Subsection (i) of such section is further amended by adding at the end the following new paragraphs:

''(3) GEOGRAPHICAL AND USE RESTRICTION FOR CERTAIN CONVEYANCE.—Notwithstanding paragraph (2), proceeds from the sale or exchange of the tract described in subsection (b)(18) shall be used exclusively for the purchase of inholdings in the Apalachicola National Forest.

''(4) RESTRICTION ON USE OF PROCEEDS FOR ADMINISTRATIVE IMPROVEMENTS.—Proceeds from any sale or exchange of land under this Act may be used for administrative improvements, as authorized by paragraph (2)(C), only if the land generating the proceeds was improved with infrastructure.''.

By Mr. FRIST (for himself, Mr. LUGAR, Mr. INOUYE, and Mr. BROWNBACK):

S. 3667. A bill to promote nuclear nonproliferation in North Korea; to the Committee on Foreign Relations.

Mr. FRIST. Mr. President, last week, on the fourth of July, a day when Americans across the Nation were outside barbecuing, watching fireworks, and celebrating the 230th anniversary of our independence, North Korea launched seven long- and medium-range missiles into the Sea of Japan.

One of the missiles, the Taepodong-2, has a potential range of approximately 9,000 miles—placing the United States well within reach of attack by North Korea.

Kim Jong Il's regime took this dangerous and provocative action despite repeated warnings not to do so from the United States, its close neighbors and participants in the six-party talks, and many others in the international community.

Last week's missile launches reminded us yet again of the threat posed by Kim Jong Il's regime.

North Korea's pursuit of nuclear weapons and its possession of long-range missiles that could potentially strike our Nation is a grave threat to the security of the American people—and to peace and stability in East Asia.

Since November 2005, North Korea has boycotted the six-party talks aimed at ending the regime's illicit nuclear weapons program. The combination of nuclear weapons and long-range missiles capable of threatening the American people is a threat that the United States should not tolerate.

For these reasons, I rise this morning to introduce the North Korea Nonproliferation Act of 2006. This legislation will add North Korea to the list of countries currently covered by the Iran and Syria Nonproliferation Act.

Under this bill, the President would be required to submit a report to Congress every 6 months listing all foreign persons believed to have transferred to or acquired from North Korea materials that could contribute to the production of missiles, nuclear weapons, and other weapons of mass destruction.

This legislation also authorizes the President to impose sanctions on all foreign persons identified on this list.

These sanctions include prohibitions on U.S. Government procurement from such persons and on the issuance of U.S. Government export licenses for exports to such persons.

Ultimately, the bill will lead to U.S. sanctions on foreign persons and foreign companies that transfer missile- and WMD-related items to North Korea, or that buy such items from North Korea.

The U.S. is already doing this with respect to transfers of these items to and from Iran and Syria under the Iran and Syria Nonproliferation Act. The time has come for us to treat transfers of these items to North Korea no less seriously than we already treat transfers of these same items to Iran and Syria.

We currently are working with our allies and partners at the U.N. Security Council to send a strong and unified message to the North Koreans that their latest provocations are unacceptable.

Japan has introduced a resolution that would prohibit the very same transfers to North Korea that this bill would sanction.

However, some at the UN, particularly China, are opposing the Japanese resolution. In fact, China and Russia have introduced a competing resolution that does not prohibit the transfer to North Korea of sensitive items that could contribute to that country's weapons programs—which is the critical element of the resolution that has been offered by Japan and supported by the U.S., the U.K., France, and others.

This bill will reinforce the crucial elements of Japan's Security Council resolution if that resolution is adopted. It will also serve as an alternative to that resolution in the event that China vetoes or otherwise sidetracks it.

The United States cannot allow Kim Jong Il and the North Korean regime to obtain additional materials for its WMD and missile programs.

If the U.N. Security Council fails to act, the United States must fulfill its responsibility to protect the American homeland from the North Korean threat.

These items in the hands of Kim Jong Il pose a direct threat to the American people, the people of the region, and peace and security in East Asia.

If we are in earnest about protecting the American homeland, then it is imperative that we prevent the North Korean regime from acquiring these dangerous materials. I thank Chairman LUGAR, as well as Senators INOUYE and BROWNBACK, for cosponsoring this bill, and I urge the rest of my Senate colleagues to support it.

Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the text of the bill be printed in the RECORD.

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

S. 3667

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

SECTION 1. SHORT TITLE.

This Act may be cited as the ''North Korea Nonproliferation Act of 2006''.

SEC. 2. STATEMENT OF POLICY.

In view of North Korea's manifest determination to proliferate missiles, nuclear weapons, and other weapons of mass destruction in violation of international norms and expectations, it should be the policy of the United States to impose sanctions on persons who transfer such weapons, and goods and technology related to such weapons, to and from North Korea in the same manner as persons who transfer such items to and from Iran and Syria currently are sanctioned under United States law.

SEC. 3. AMENDMENTS TO IRAN AND SYRIA NONPROLIFERATION ACT.

(a) REPORTING REQUIREMENTS.—Section 2 of the Iran and Syria Nonproliferation Act (Public Law 106–178; 50 U.S.C. 1701 note) is amended—

(1) in the heading, by inserting ''**, NORTH KOREA,**'' after ''**IRAN**''; and

(2) in subsection (a)—

(A) in the matter preceding paragraph (1)—

(i) by striking ''Iran, or'' and inserting ''Iran,''; and

(ii) by inserting after ''Syria'' the following: '', or on or after January 1, 2006, transferred to or acquired from North Korea'' after ''Iran''; and

(B) in paragraph (2), by inserting '', North Korea,'' after ''Iran''.

(b) CONFORMING AMENDMENTS.—Such Act is further amended—

(1) in section 1, by inserting ''**, NORTH KOREA,**'' after ''**IRAN**'';

(2) in section 5(a), by inserting '', North Korea,'' after ''Iran'' both places it appears; and

(3) in section 6(b)—

(A) in the heading, by inserting '', NORTH KOREA,'' after ''IRAN''; and

(B) by inserting '', North Korea,'' after ''Iran'' each place it appears.

SEC. 4. SENSE OF CONGRESS ON INTERNATIONAL COOPERATION.

Congress urges all governments concerned about the threat of proliferation involving North Korea to impose measures on persons involved in such proliferation that are similar to those imposed by the United States Government pursuant to the Iran, North

Korea, and Syria Nonproliferation Act, as amended by this Act.

SUBMITTED RESOLUTIONS

SENATE RESOLUTION 530—CALLING ON PRESIDENT GEORGE W. BUSH AND OTHER LEADERS ATTENDING THE 2006 GROUP OF EIGHT (G-8) SUMMIT IN ST. PETERSBURG, RUSSIA, TO ENGAGE IN A FRANK DIALOGUE WITH THE PRESIDENT OF RUSSIA CONCERNING ACTIONS OF THE GOVERNMENT OF THE RUSSIAN FEDERATION THAT APPEAR INCONSISTENT WITH THE GROUP'S OBJECTIVES OF PROTECTING GLOBAL SECURITY, ECONOMIC STABILITY, AND DEMOCRACY, AND FOR OTHER PURPOSES

Mr. BIDEN (for himself, Mr. ALLEN, Mr. SARBANES, Mr. DODD, Mr. KERRY, and Mr. FRIST) submitted the following resolution; which was considered and agreed to:

S. RES. 530

Whereas the leaders of 6 major industrialized democracies including France, West Germany, Italy, Japan, the United Kingdom, and the United States, gathered in 1975 for a summit meeting in Rambouillet, France and for annual meetings thereafter under a rotating presidency known as the Group of Six (G-6);

Whereas the G-6 was established based on the mutual interest of its members in promoting economic stability, global security, and democracy;

Whereas, in 1976, membership of the G-6 was expanded to include Canada;

Whereas the members of the G-7 share a commitment to promote security, economic stability, and democracy in their respective nations and around the world;

Whereas Russia was integrated into the Group in 1998 at the behest of President William Jefferson Clinton as a gesture of appreciation to then-President of Russia Boris Yeltsin for pursuing reforms and assuming a neutral position with respect to the eastward expansion of North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO);

Whereas, in 2002, Russia was selected to hold the rotating presidency of the G-8 and to host the Summit of the G-8 in 2006;

Whereas the official G-8 statement issued on June 26, 2002, in Kananaskis, Canada regarding the selection of Russia as host of the 2006 Summit stated that the decision reflected ''the remarkable economic and democratic transformation that has occurred in Russia in recent years and in particular under the leadership of President Putin'';

Whereas in the intervening 4 years since Russia was selected to host the 2006 G-8 Summit, the Government of the Russian Federation has pursued policies that raise serious concerns about the commitment of the Government of the Russian Federation to upholding democratic values both at home and abroad;

Whereas the United States Department of State 2005 Country Report on Human Rights Practices noted that trends in Russia, including the ''centralization of power in the executive branch . . . continuing corruption and selectivity in enforcement of the law, political pressure on the judiciary, and harassment of some non-governmental organizations (NGOs) [have] resulted in an erosion of the accountability of government leaders to the people'' in Russia;

Whereas, in 2005, the independent non-governmental organization Freedom House reclassified Russia from ''partly free'' to ''not free'' in its global survey of political rights and civil liberties;

Whereas the Government of the Russian Federation has placed onerous restrictions and monitoring requirements on non-profit organizations operating in Russia that limit the ability of both Russians and non-Russians to create a vibrant civil society in the country;

Whereas the freedom of the media in Russia has been seriously compromised due to the Government of the Russian Federation's continuing control and censorship of major mass media outlets and efforts to obstruct the reporting of independent journalists;

Whereas regulators from the Ministry of Culture of the Government of the Russian Federation have reportedly threatened radio stations with revocation of their broadcast licenses if they continue airing material from the Voice of America (VOA) and Radio Free Europe/Radio Liberty (RFE/RL), thereby precipitating the largest decrease in the number of outlets for VOA and RFE/RL reporting since the end of the Cold War;

Whereas the Government of the Russian Federation has sought to interfere in the electoral processes and democratic governance of neighboring countries including Georgia and Ukraine;

Whereas Russia was the only member of the G-8 to applaud the outcome of fraudulent presidential elections in Belarus that were characterized by the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe as evidencing ''a disregard for the basic rights of freedom of assembly, association, and expression'';

Whereas the United States Commission on International Religious Freedom and other monitoring organizations have reported increased evidence of racism, anti-Semitism, nationalism, and xenophobia among segments of Russian society;

Whereas, in late 2005, Gazprom, a company majority owned and operated by the Government of the Russian Federation, insisted on a more than four-fold increase in the price charged for natural gas sold to Ukraine and subsequently shut off gas supplies to Ukraine, causing cascading energy shortages in many countries throughout Europe;

Whereas there have been interruptions in the supply by Russia of energy to Georgia and Moldova;

Whereas the March 2006 report of the Independent Task Force on Russia of the Council on Foreign Relations stated that ''to protect the credibility of the G-8 at a time when many are questioning Russia's chairmanship, the United States should make clear that this role does not exempt Russian policies and actions from critical scrutiny'';

Whereas the United States recognizes and applauds the proud history of achievement, creativity, and sacrifice of the people of Russia;

Whereas the United States seeks the development of Russia as a strong, responsible, democratic partner in promoting global peace and security; and

Whereas the United States believes that both the people of Russia and the Government of the Russian Federation will be shackled in their efforts to build a strong society domestically and contribute to the work of the international community so long as the Government of the Russian Federation fails to fully embrace the values of democracy: Now, therefore, be it

Resolved, That it is the sense of the Senate that—

(1) in order to preserve the integrity of the G-8 as a forum of the leading industrialized democracies of the world, President George W. Bush and other heads of state attending the G-8 Summit should explicitly, frankly, and honestly engage Russian Federation President Vladimir Putin in a dialogue about the anti-democratic behavior of the Government of the Russian Federation;

(2) the United States and other democratic countries should reaffirm their support for civic and non-governmental organizations working to promote democracy and the rule of law in Russia;

(3) the Government of the Russian Federation should take action to ensure that it guarantees the full range of civil and political rights to its citizens, as it is obligated to do under the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights;

(4) consistent with its obligations under the International Covenant, the Government of the Russian Federation should take steps to cease its interference with foreign news organizations, including the Voice of America and Radio Free Europe/Radio Liberty;

(5) the Government of the Russian Federation should take action to combat rising racism, anti-Semitism, and xenophobia in Russian society; and

(6) the United States and countries of the G-8 should reaffirm their support for new democracies on the borders of Russia and, where applicable, expedite their integration into Euro-Atlantic institutions to provide a bulwark for democracy in eastern Europe and the Caucuses.

SENATE RESOLUTION 531—TO URGE THE PRESIDENT TO APPOINT A PRESIDENTIAL SPECIAL ENVOY FOR SUDAN

Mr. LIEBERMAN (for himself, Mr. BURNS, Mr. REID, Mr. BOND, Mrs. MURRAY, Mr. LAUTENBERG, Mr. PRYOR, Mr. TALENT, Ms. MIKULSKI, Ms. SNOWE, and Ms. CANTWELL) submitted the following resolution; which was referred to the Committee on Foreign Relations:

S. RES. 531

Whereas, on July 22, 2004, the Senate and House of Representatives declared that the atrocities occurring in the Darfur region of Sudan are genocide;

Whereas, on September 9, 2004, Secretary of State Colin L. Powell stated before the Committee on Foreign Relations of the Senate, ''When we reviewed the evidence compiled by our team, along with other information available to the State Department, we concluded that genocide has been committed in Darfur and that the Government of Sudan and the [Janjaweed] bear responsibility—and genocide may still be occurring.'';

Whereas, on September 21, 2004, in an address before the United Nations General Assembly, President George W. Bush affirmed the finding of Secretary of State Powell and stated, ''At this hour, the world is witnessing terrible suffering and horrible crimes in the Darfur region of Sudan, crimes my government has concluded are genocide.'';

Whereas various nongovernmental organizations have estimated that up to 400,000 people have died in Darfur from combat, hunger, and disease since February 2003;

Whereas prominent human rights groups, think tanks, and members of Congress have called for the appointment of a Presidential Special Envoy for Sudan;

Whereas Deputy Secretary of State Robert Zoellick, who had acted as the lead negotiator and coordinator for the United States Government toward Darfur, resigned from that position on June 19, 2006;

Whereas Ambassador Zoellick was instrumental in securing the peace agreement among the Government of Sudan and rebel

factions on May 5, 2006, and was described by Secretary of State Condoleezza Rice as ''indispensable in our efforts to bring peace to Sudan and to end the violence in Darfur'';

Whereas other United States Government officials deeply involved in Darfur are departing public service or moving to new positions, including White House Policy Advisor Michael Gerson, National Security Council Senior Director for African Affairs Cindy Courville, and the State Department Special Representative to Sudan Michael Ranneberger; and

Whereas the crisis in Darfur, and generally Sudan, continues to command urgent attention due to the ongoing displacement of roughly 2,500,000 people, the continuing instability in the region, the fragility of the May 5, 2006, peace accord, the spread of the conflict to neighboring Chad, the lack of security that prevents multilateral organizations and nongovernmental organizations from providing assistance to the most vulnerable displaced persons of Darfur, the reluctance by the Government of Sudan to allow a robust United Nations presence in that country, and the difficulties involved in assisting the African Union Mission in Sudan and transitioning that body into a United Nations force: Now, therefore, be it

Resolved, That—

(1) the Senate commends the efforts of former Deputy Secretary of State Robert Zoellick in Darfur and the contributions of White House Policy Advisor Michael Gerson, Ambassador Cindy Courville, and Ambassador Michael Ranneberger; and

(2) it is the sense of the Senate that—

(A) the United States urgently needs an individual of Ambassadorial rank and high stature to devote exclusive attention to Darfur and related issues concerning peace and stability in Sudan;

(B) such individual should formulate and coordinate policy, lead negotiations, engage with parties to the conflict to monitor their compliance with the terms and deadlines of the May 5, 2006, Darfur Peace Agreement, gather resources from donors, and ensure that this crisis retains high visibility and remains a top priority for the United States Government until it is substantially resolved; and

(C) the President should, at the earliest date possible, appoint a Presidential Special Envoy for Sudan with the rank of Ambassador and should provide not less than $250,000, to support the Presidential Special Envoy, in accordance with Senate Amendment 3719 to H.R. 4939 of the 109th Congress, as agreed to in the Senate on May 3, 2006.

SENATE RESOLUTION 532—ENCOURAGING THE ADULTS OF THE UNITED STATES TO SUPPORT, LISTEN TO, AND ENCOURAGE CHILDREN SO THAT THEY MAY REACH THEIR POTENTIAL

Ms. COLLINS (for herself and Mr. ISAKSON) submitted the following resolution; which was referred to the Committee on Health, Education, Labor, and Pensions:

S. RES 532

Whereas research shows that spending time together as a family is critical to raising strong and resilient children;

Whereas strong, healthy families improve the quality of life and the development of children;

Whereas it is essential to celebrate and reflect upon the important role that all families play in the lives of children and their positive effect for the future of the United States; and

Whereas the greatest natural resource of the United States is its children: Now, therefore, be it

Resolved, That the Senate supports the goals and ideals of National Children and Families Day—

(1) to encourage adults to support, listen to, and encourage children throughout the United States;

(2) to reflect upon the important role that all families play in the lives of children; and

(3) to recognize that strong, healthy families improve the quality of life and the development of children.

CALLING ON THE PRESIDENT AND OTHER LEADERS TO ENGAGE IN FRANK DIALOG

Mr. FRIST. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the Senate proceed to the immediate consideration of S. Res. 530, introduced earlier today by Senator BIDEN.

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. The clerk will report the resolution by title.

The legislative clerk read as follows:

A resolution (S. Res. 530) calling on President George W. Bush and other leaders attending the 2006 Group of Eight (G–8) Summit in St. Petersburg, Russia to engage in a frank dialogue with the President of Russia concerning actions of the Government of the Russian Federation that appear inconsistent with the Group's objectives of protecting global security, economic stability, and democracy, and for other purposes.

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

Mr. FRIST. Mr. President, I further ask unanimous consent that the resolution be agreed to, the preamble be agreed to, the motion to reconsider be laid upon the table, with no intervening action or debate, and that any statements relating to the measure be printed in the RECORD.

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. Without objection, it is so ordered.

The resolution (S. Res. 530) was agreed to.

The preamble was agreed to.

The resolution, with its preamble, reads as follows:

S. RES. 530

Whereas the leaders of 6 major industrialized democracies including France, West Germany, Italy, Japan, the United Kingdom, and the United States, gathered in 1975 for a summit meeting in Rambouillet, France and for annual meetings thereafter under a rotating presidency known as the Group of Six (G–6);

Whereas the G–6 was established based on the mutual interest of its members in promoting economic stability, global security, and democracy;

Whereas, in 1976, membership of the G–6 was expanded to include Canada;

Whereas the members of the G–7 share a commitment to promote security, economic stability, and democracy in their respective nations and around the world;

Whereas Russia was integrated into the Group in 1998 at the behest of President William Jefferson Clinton as a gesture of appreciation to then-President of Russia Boris Yeltsin for pursuing reforms and assuming a neutral position with respect to the eastward expansion of North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO);

Whereas, in 2002, Russia was selected to hold the rotating presidency of the G–8 and to host the Summit of the G–8 in 2006;

Whereas the official G–8 statement issued on June 26, 2002, in Kananaskis, Canada regarding the selection of Russia as host of the 2006 Summit stated that the decision reflected ''the remarkable economic and democratic transformation that has occurred in Russia in recent years and in particular under the leadership of President Putin'';

Whereas in the intervening 4 years since Russia was selected to host the 2006 G–8 Summit, the Government of the Russian Federation has pursued policies that raise serious concerns about the commitment of the Government of the Russian Federation to upholding democratic values both at home and abroad;

Whereas the United States Department of State 2005 Country Report on Human Rights Practices noted that trends in Russia, including the ''centralization of power in the executive branch . . . continuing corruption and selectivity in enforcement of the law, political pressure on the judiciary, and harassment of some non-governmental organizations (NGOs) [have] resulted in an erosion of the accountability of government leaders to the people'' in Russia;

Whereas, in 2005, the independent non-governmental organization Freedom House reclassified Russia from ''partly free'' to ''not free'' in its global survey of political rights and civil liberties;

Whereas the Government of the Russian Federation has placed onerous restrictions and monitoring requirements on non-profit organizations operating in Russia that limit the ability of both Russians and non-Russians to create a vibrant civil society in the country;

Whereas the freedom of the media in Russia has been seriously compromised due to the Government of the Russian Federation's continuing control and censorship of major mass media outlets and efforts to obstruct the reporting of independent journalists;

Whereas regulators from the Ministry of Culture of the Government of the Russian Federation have reportedly threatened radio stations with revocation of their broadcast licenses if they continue airing material from the Voice of America (VOA) and Radio Free Europe/Radio Liberty (RFE/RL), thereby precipitating the largest decrease in the number of outlets for VOA and RFE/RL reporting since the end of the Cold War;

Whereas the Government of the Russian Federation has sought to interfere in the electoral processes and democratic governance of neighboring countries including Georgia and Ukraine;

Whereas Russia was the only member of the G–8 to applaud the outcome of fraudulent presidential elections in Belarus that were characterized by the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe as evidencing ''a disregard for the basic rights of freedom of assembly, association, and expression'';

Whereas the United States Commission on International Religious Freedom and other monitoring organizations have reported increased evidence of racism, anti-Semitism, nationalism, and xenophobia among segments of Russian society;

Whereas, in late 2005, Gazprom, a company majority owned and operated by the Government of the Russian Federation, insisted on a more than four-fold increase in the price charged for natural gas sold to Ukraine and subsequently shut off gas supplies to Ukraine, causing cascading energy shortages in many countries throughout Europe;

Whereas there have been interruptions in the supply by Russia of energy to Georgia and Moldova;

Whereas the March 2006 report from of the Independent Task Force on Russia of the Council on Foreign Relations stated that ''to protect the credibility of the G–8 at a time when many are questioning Russia's chairmanship, the United States should make clear that this role does not exempt Russian policies and actions from critical scrutiny'';

Whereas the United States recognizes and applauds the proud history of achievement, creativity, and sacrifice of the people of Russia;

Whereas the United States seeks the development of Russia as a strong, responsible, democratic partner in promoting global peace and security; and

Whereas the United States believes that both the people of Russia and the Government of the Russian Federation will be shackled in their efforts to build a strong society domestically and contribute to the work of the international community so long as the Government of the Russian Federation fails to fully embrace the values of democracy: Now, therefore, be it

Resolved, That it is the sense of the Senate that—

(1) in order to preserve the integrity of the G–8 as a forum of the leading industrialized democracies of the world, President George W. Bush and other heads of state attending the G–8 Summit should explicitly, frankly, and honestly engage Russian Federation President Vladimir Putin in a dialogue about the anti-democratic behavior of the Government of the Russian Federation;

(2) the United States and other democratic countries should reaffirm their support for civic and non-governmental organizations working to promote democracy and the rule of law in Russia;

(3) the Government of the Russian Federation should take action to ensure that it guarantees the full range of civil and political rights to its citizens, as it is obligated to do under the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights;

(4) consistent with its obligations under the International Covenant, the Government of the Russian Federation should take steps to cease its interference with foreign news organizations, including the Voice of America and Radio Free Europe/Radio Liberty;

(5) the Government of the Russian Federation should take action to combat rising racism, anti-Semitism, and xenophobia in Russian society; and

(6) the United States and countries of the G–8 should reaffirm their support for new democracies on the borders of Russia and, where applicable, expedite their integration into Euro-Atlantic institutions to provide a bulwark for democracy in eastern Europe and the Caucuses.

EXPRESSING THE SENSE OF CONGRESS REGARDING THE RUSSIAN FEDERATION

Mr. FRIST. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the Foreign Relations Committee be discharged from further consideration and the Senate now proceed to S. Res. 500.

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. Without objection, it is so ordered. The clerk will report the resolution by title.

The legislative clerk read as follows:

A resolution (S. Res. 500) expressing the sense of Congress that the Russian Federation should fully protect the freedoms of all religious communities without distinction, whether registered or unregistered, as stipulated by the Russian Constitution and international standards.

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

Mr. FRIST. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the resolution be agreed to, the preamble be agreed to, and the motion to reconsider be laid upon the table.

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. Without objection, it is so ordered.

The resolution (S. Res. 500) was agreed to.

The preamble was agreed to.

The resolution, with its preamble, reads as follows:

S. RES. 500

Whereas the Russian Federation is a participating State of the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE) and has freely committed to fully respect the rights of individuals, whether alone or in community with others, to profess and practice religion or belief;

Whereas the 1989 Vienna Concluding Document calls on OSCE participating States to ''take effective measures to prevent and eliminate discrimination against individuals or communities on the grounds of religion or belief'' and to ''grant upon their request to communities of believers, practicing or prepared to practice their faith within the constitutional framework of their States, recognition of the status provided for them in the respective countries'';

Whereas Article 28 of the Constitution of the Russian Federation declares that ''everyone shall be guaranteed the right to freedom of conscience, to freedom of religious worship, including the right to profess, individually or jointly with others, any religion'' and Article 8 of the 1997 Law on Freedom of Conscience and Religious Associations provides for registration for religious communities as ''religious organizations,'' if they have at least 10 members and have operated within the Russian Federation with legal status for at least 15 years;

Whereas religious freedom has advanced significantly for the vast majority of people in Russia since the collapse of the Soviet Union;

Whereas many rights and privileges afforded to religious communities in the Russian Federation remain contingent on the ability of the communities to obtain government registration;

Whereas some religious groups have not attempted to register with government authorities due to theological considerations, and other communities have been unjustly denied registration or had their registration improperly terminated by local authorities;

Whereas many of the unregistered communities in the Russian Federation today were never registered under the Soviet system because they refused to collaborate with that government's anti-religious policies and they are now experiencing renewed discrimination and repression by authorities of the Russian Federation;

Whereas over the past 2 years there have been an estimated 10 arson attacks on unregistered Protestant churches, with little or no effective response by law enforcement officials to bring the perpetrators to justice;

Whereas the Government of the Russian Federation reacted swiftly in response to the January 2006 attack on a Moscow synagogue, but there have been numerous other anti-Semitic attacks against Jews and Jewish institutions in the Russian Federation, and there is increasing tolerance of anti-Semitism in certain segments of society in that country;

Whereas there has been evidence of an increase in the frequency and severity of oppressive actions by security forces and federal and local officials against some Muslim communities and their members;

Whereas there are many cases involving restitution for religious property seized by the Soviet regime that remain unresolved;

Whereas in some areas of the Russian Federation law enforcement personnel have carried out acts of harassment and oppression against members of religious communities peacefully practicing their faith and local officials have put overly burdensome restrictions on the ability of some religious communities to engage in religious activity; and

Whereas the United States has sought to protect the fundamental and inalienable right of individuals to profess and practice their faith, alone or in community with others, according to the dictates of their conscience, and in accordance with international agreements committing nations to respect individual freedom of thought, conscience, and belief: Now, therefore, be it

Resolved, That it is the sense of Congress that the United States Government should—

(1) urge the Government of the Russian Federation to ensure full protection of freedoms for all religious communities without distinction, whether registered or unregistered, and end the harassment of unregistered religious groups by the security apparatus and other government agencies, thereby building upon the progress made over the past 15 years in promoting religious freedom in the Russian Federation;

(2) urge the Government of the Russian Federation to ensure that law enforcement officials vigorously investigate and prosecute acts of violence, arson, and desecration perpetrated against registered and unregistered religious communities, as well as make certain that government authorities are not complicit in such incidents;

(3) continue to raise concerns with the Government of the Russian Federation over violations of religious freedom, including those against unregistered religious communities, especially indigenous denominations not well known in the United States;

(4) ensure that United States Embassy officials engage local officials throughout the Russian Federation, especially when violations of freedom of religion occur, and undertake outreach activities to educate local officials about the rights of unregistered religious communities;

(5) urge the Government of the Russian Federation to invite the three Personal Representatives of the OSCE Chair-in-Office and the United Nations Special Rapporteur on Freedom of Religion or Belief to visit the Russian Federation and discuss with federal and local officials concerns about the religious freedom of both registered and unregistered religious communities; and

(6) urge the Council of Europe, its member countries, and the other members of the G–8 to raise issues relating to religious freedom with Russian officials in the context of the Russian Federation's responsibilities both as President of the Council in 2006 and as a member of the G–8.

MEASURE READ THE FIRST TIME—H.R. 9

Mr. FRIST. Mr. President, I understand there is a bill at the desk, and I ask for its first reading.

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. The clerk will report the bill by title for the first time.

The legislative clerk read as follows:

A bill (H.R. 9) to amend the Voting Rights Act of 1965.

Mr. FRIST. Mr. President, I now ask for a second reading, and in order to place the bill on the calendar under the provisions of rule XIV, I object to my own request.

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. Objection is heard.

ORDERS FOR MONDAY, JULY 17, 2006

Mr. FRIST. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that when the Senate completes its business today, it stand in adjournment until 12 noon on Monday, July 17. I further ask that following the prayer and pledge, the morning hour be deemed expired, the Journal of proceedings be approved to date, the time for the two leaders be reserved, and the Senate proceed to a period of morning business, with the time equally divided until 12:30. Further, I ask that at 12:30 the Senate proceed to the stem cell bills as under the previous order.

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. Without objection, it is so ordered.

THIS WEEK IN THE SENATE

Mr. FRIST. Mr. President, we made real progress this week in passing a very important bill, the Homeland Security appropriations bill, under the leadership of Chairman JUDD GREGG, who did a superb job on a very important bill which adds billions of dollars to issues we spend a lot of time talking about and debating but that puts real money, real resources where they are needed: over $14 billion for issues surrounding tightening our borders, increasing the number of border security agents by 1,000, increasing the number of detention beds by over 1,000, and well over $14 billion for border security and immigration issues. It is a very important bill.

Over the course of this month I also intend to address other issues surrounding securing our homeland, issues such as the Department of Defense authorization and our military construction bills, all of which focus on getting money down to where it is needed, protecting our homeland, supporting our troops here and overseas.

Also, it was an interesting week in that we had very positive economic developments announced with not just the 5.4 million jobs that have been created over the last 30 months or so, not just the low unemployment—4.6 percent, which is lower than the average of the 1960s, 1970s, 1980s, or 1990s, but the fact that the deficit is coming down much faster than anyone had anticipated. That is in large part—in most part—because of the progrowth President-Bush-led policies of less taxation which promotes that strong economic growth. Revenues are coming into the Federal Government with lower tax rates, and the revenues are coming in much faster than anticipated because of those policies. And those increased revenues coming in, by definition, lower that deficit. The deficit is projected this year to be 30 percent lower than what we thought it was going to be just in February, earlier this year.

The important thing to recognize, as we have this great, what we call ''macro'' or large global prosperity, in the sense of our global or American economy here, with 5.6 percent growth in GDP last quarter, the fastest it has been in years and years—at the same time we have the squeeze that is on our average person, average taxpayer out there today. That is due in part to the high gasoline prices that we are going to see go up again—in part because of the international turmoil in the Middle East, the fact we are 60 percent dependent on the Middle East. Our response on this floor should be and will be to address issues surrounding lowering that dependence on foreign sources of oil. I hope we can do that in the next several weeks.

We had a very positive bipartisan announcement about opening exploration in the Gulf of Mexico. It is bipartisan, so I am very hopeful about that.

Health care is another one of those issues that squeezes people so much because health care prices continue to go up two to three times faster than wages. When that is the case, you get squeezed as an individual. So in spite of the great macro numbers around the United States of America, the individual feels squeezed with gasoline prices and health care. So small business health plans are something we should come back to, something we need to come back to and address. Most people today work for what we call small businesses. These small business health reform plans allow small businesses and the individuals to have lower health care costs. They slow that growth of health care costs over time and hit at one of the major reasons they feel the pinch.

I mentioned energy. A lot of that focuses on the area called 181, in the Gulf of Mexico. And I mentioned health care costs with the focus on the small business health plans. We have the support of 56 Senators on the floor, and I need 60 Senators to actually pass that bill. So I hope a few more of our Senators will recognize, from a small business perspective, from the perspective of the individual employee, how important it is to allow small businesses to group together, to have the purchasing power to get those lower costs, to get those lower charges just like the big companies can get—the clout, the muscle you can get by grouping small business together.

It is common sense. The American people scratch their heads and say: Why can't you pass it? We have majority support.

We don't have 60 people yet supporting it. We need to work on that, and I think we have to do it sometime this year.

Let me just comment and then I am going to take a short break and I will come back to the floor to make a final comment on stem cells. On Monday we will begin the debate on the three bills—one, a fetal farming bill, a second bill that looks at alternative ways of developing pluripotent cells or embryo-like cells—very exciting research—and a third, the House bill which increases Federal support for embryonic stem cells that are derived from embryos that are otherwise going to be discarded. Those are the exact words in that bill.

We will have very good debate. It will be on Monday and Tuesday of next week. We will have those votes starting at 3:45 on Tuesday. Each of those votes will have 60 votes for passage. People ask why. We all agree to that because we can spend weeks and weeks on the floor of the Senate and with all the filibuster and cloture and the like, that is what you end up with, is you have to have a 60-vote threshold. That is why we have agreed with that.

Mr. President, I will close and will come back and within 10 minutes or so speak on stem cells for about 4 or 5 minutes, and at that time we will formally close.

I suggest the absence of a quorum.

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. The clerk will call the roll.

The assistant legislative clerk proceeded to call the roll.

Mr. FRIST. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the order for the quorum call be dispensed with.

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. Without objection, it is so ordered.

STEM CELL RESEARCH

Mr. FRIST. Mr. President, on Monday, the Senate will begin debate on three important pieces of legislation under an agreement that was reached between both sides of the aisle several days ago. Those three bills are as follows:

The Alterative Pluripotent Stem Cell Therapies Enhancement Act, a bill sponsored by Senator SANTORUM and Senator SPECTER; second, the Stem Cell Research Enhancement Act, which is the bill from the House, H.R. 810—the House—Castle and DeGette, Senate—Specter and Hatch bill; and, third, the Fetus Farming Prohibition Act of 2006—the Santorum and Brownback bill.

It was 5 years ago almost exactly—on July 18, 2001, before the administration laid out its policy—that I laid out a comprehensive proposal to promote stem cell research within a strong ethical and moral framework. I proposed at that time on the floor 10 specific interdependent principles. I also laid out a proposal and told policymakers and my colleagues I felt it was our responsibility to assess and to reassess, on a periodic basis, whatever we or the administration does because of the rapidly advancing science that so characterizes this decade or the 21st century.

As this century progresses and as science advances—and it is skyrocketing in terms of the advances

that are being made—we are going to continually have to face our responsibility to face the moral and ethical challenges and limits. It is our responsibility, as individuals, as part of this body politic, to reassess whatever constructs we come up with that frame and that govern biomedical research.

It is uncomfortable, it is challenging, and it causes each of us to go back and study the science which can be confusing for everyone, including scientists as well as nonscientists, and to look at the framework—both moral and ethical framework that individuals have and that we have—in representing the people of our States, our constituents.

I said 5 years ago, on July 18, 2001, and I believe now that we must also do all we can to pursue promising alternative strategies that hold the magnificent potential for developing these powerful pluripotent cell lines without damaging or destroying nascent human life.

That is why, in the package we will be looking at Monday, I have asked the Senate to consider legislation to enhance support for alternatives to embryonic stem cell research.

I have worked very closely with my distinguished colleague from Georgia, who is occupying the chair, on this very issue. I have asked Senators SANTORUM and SPECTER to work together, and they have done a tremendous job in crafting the Alternative Pluripotent Stem Cell Therapies Enhancement Act, S. 2754, in this regard. Their bill is very similar to the legislation that Senator ISAKSON and I and a number of other colleagues introduced last year. And I encourage every Senator to look very carefully at it because I believe every Senator should be able to support that bill.

There is no reason why that piece of legislation should not unite this body and be something that everybody can support.

Third is the Fetus Farming Prohibition Act of 2006. People ask the question—and I have been asked over the course of today and the reason I wanted to come back to the floor and close and begin to frame the debate—what is fetus farming? It is the implantation, growth or gestation of an embryo in a human or in an animal for the purpose of aborting that growing fetus for research. Fetus farming is not currently employed. But it is forward thinking because it is a trend that we could inadvertently move to in trying to advance science, and that line should not be crossed. Therefore, Senators BROWNBACK and SANTORUM have proposed legislation that would draw a clear line that should not be crossed—a clear line that is not there today.

Again, 5 years ago on July 18, when I outlined the proposal on the floor, it was covered in an article in the Wall Street Journal on that same day. I outlined my principles. Shortly after—1 month later—the President laid out the administration's policy on embryonic stem cell research.

A lot of people do not pay attention to it today.

The President's legislation was the first Federal legislation to fund embryonic stem cell research. It did so within an ethical framework, a moral and ethical framework. It showed respect for basic human life.

President Bush and I do not differ about the need for strong guidelines supporting embryonic stem cell research. His policy was generally consistent with the principles I set forth a month before his announcement in 2001. However, what has now sort of changed, since that point in time, is science has progressed over the last 5 years, and I feel that the limit on cell lines available for federally funded research, those original limits—given what has happened in science today and what we have learned—are too restrictive.

Because people's views shift, let me refer back to the principle I presented 5 years ago. The fifth principle which I presented on the floor 5 years ago, No. 5, and I quote:

> Provide funding for embryonic stem cell research only from blastocysts that would otherwise be discarded. We need to allow Federal funding for research using only those embryonic stem cells derived from blastocysts that are left over after in vitro fertilization and would otherwise be discarded.

I quote that to point out that that was my stance 5 years ago, and indeed when people ask: Why, Senator FRIST, or Dr. FRIST, are you supporting the House bill, you can see the consistency there.

This is very important. H.R. 810, despite its many shortcomings which I mentioned last week, is clearly consistent with that principle. And the bill applies this restriction almost verbatim. The very words ''would otherwise be discarded'' were from my remarks 5 years ago and is also in the House bill.

All three of the bills the Senate will address raise profound ethical questions. They will require a lot of thought, a lot of study over the course of the next several days. They are challenging to us as a body and challenging to us as individuals. They merit serious debate. That is why I am pleased, on an issue of this magnitude, that Senators will have an opportunity to have their ideas considered in an orderly, respectful and dignified way and voted on separately and clearly.

ADJOURNMENT UNTIL MONDAY, JULY 17, 2006

Mr. FRIST. Mr. President, if there is no further business to come before the Senate, I ask unanimous consent that the Senate stand in adjournment under the previous order.

There being no objection, the Senate, at 12:27 p.m., adjourned until Monday, July 17, 2006, at 12 noon.

NOMINATIONS

Executive nomination received by the Senate July 14, 2006:

IN THE ARMY

THE FOLLOWING NAMED OFFICER FOR APPOINTMENT IN THE UNITED STATES ARMY TO THE GRADE INDICATED WHILE ASSIGNED TO A POSITION OF IMPORTANCE AND RESPONSIBILITY UNDER TITLE 10, U.S.C., SECTION 601:

To be general

GEN. BANTZ J. CRADDOCK, 0000

CONFIRMATIONS

Executive nominations confirmed by the Senate Friday, July 14, 2006:

FEDERAL ENERGY REGULATORY COMMISSION

PHILIP D. MOELLER, OF WASHINGTON, TO BE A MEMBER OF THE FEDERAL ENERGY REGULATORY COMMISSION FOR THE TERM EXPIRING JUNE 30, 2010.

JON WELLINGHOFF, OF NEVADA, TO BE A MEMBER OF THE FEDERAL ENERGY REGULATORY COMMISSION FOR THE TERM EXPIRING JUNE 30, 2008.

MARC SPITZER, OF ARIZONA, TO BE A MEMBER OF THE FEDERAL ENERGY REGULATORY COMMISSION FOR THE TERM EXPIRING JUNE 30, 2011.

THE ABOVE NOMINATIONS WERE APPROVED SUBJECT TO THE NOMINEES' COMMITMENT TO RESPOND TO REQUESTS TO APPEAR AND TESTIFY BEFORE ANY DULY CONSTITUTED COMMITTEE OF THE SENATE.