SMITH, Anna Elizabeth Smoot, and Laura Camille Wilson from the Wilderness Road Girl Scout Council.

Girl Scouts of the U.S.A., an organization serving over 2.5 million girls, has awarded more than 20,000 Girl Scout Gold Awards to senior Girl Scouts since the inception of the program in 1980. To receive the award, a Girl Scout must earn four interest project patches, the Career Exploration Pin, the Senior Girl Scout Leadership Award, and the Senior Girl Scout Challenge, as well as design and implement a Girl Scout Gold Award project. A plan for fulfilling these requirements is created by the senior Girl Scout and is carried out through close cooperation between the girl and an adult Girl Scout volunteer.

Mr. President, I ask you and my colleagues to join me in paying tribute to these outstanding young ladies. They deserve recognition for their contributions to their community and their country and I wish them continued success in the years ahead.●

FILEGATE WAS BAD ENOUGH—NOW THIS?

● Mr. SIMON. Mr. President, the FBI and the Office of Personnel Management are making a terrible move that is not in the national interest, that may save a few dollars temporarily, but will cost us in the long run. They are privatizing many of our background checks.

Not only is this questionable from a security point of view, it will result in a massive invasion of privacy.

Those of us in public life are on a big ''privatizing'' kick. The reason is rarely to save money. The main reason is so that people who are in executive positions can go out and say ''When I took office, there were so many Federal employees or State employees or city employees, but now there are fewer.'' The decrease makes it appear that a great job is being done.

The reality is while that kind of talk goes on, the budgets tend to go up.

Frequently, those who are adversely affected by privatization are people at the very bottom of the economic ladder.

For example, we have privatized custodial services at some of the Federal buildings in Chicago. The already low wages for these people are being depressed more, and they lose the benefits of retirement pay and other things.

Privatizing background checks for those who either are coming into government or who may be given greater responsibilities is simply foolish.

Prof. Stephen Gillers of the New York University School of Law had an op-ed piece in the New York Times about this that should be creating some concerns among Federal officials, as well as people at the State and local level.

I ask that the New York Times op-ed be printed in the RECORD.

The op-ed follows:

FILEGATE WAS BAD ENOUGH. NOW THIS?

(By Stephen Gillers)

The F.B.I. called again last month. It phones several times a year to ask me about former students who are seeking sensitive Government jobs. I could verify that indeed it was the Federal Bureau of Investigation calling. The voice-mail message had the bureau's telephone exchange, and the agent talked the way agents do, unfailingly polite and right to the point.

I answered all his questions. I trusted the confidentiality of my answers, even though Louis J. Freeh, the F.B.I. director, had recently acknowledged that the White House had managed to ''victimize'' the bureau by getting its secret files on prominent Republicans and others. I figure that two ''Filegates'' in a generation is not something the bureau will permit.

It seems that my next call may come not from the F.B.I., or from the Office of Federal Investigations, which also checks out Government personnel. It may instead come from a private company, which under a Clinton Administration plan will conduct 40 percent of Government security clearances. And I may be questioned not by a G-Person (formerly G-Man), but by a private investigator whose employer submitted a winning bid. The decision to privatize this work, rash in the best of times, needs a close second look after Filegate.

Take quality. Privatizing will dilute it. The company will be free to accept other customers, including private ones. Can I be confident that what I say will not be shared with those customers? I'm not going to be as candid if my answers can find their way into private files.

What about subpoenas? I doubt the courts will protect private records as jealously as they do F.B.I. files. And whom will I be talking to? I have a pretty good idea of what's required to become a Government investigator, the quality of supervision, and the length of time people hold that job. But who will the private investigators be, who will check their work, and where will they be working tomorrow?

The need to earn a profit will also compromise quality. Under the plan, a private company owned by former Government employees will have an exclusive contract for three years. Then the work will be put up for bid. Whether payment is a fixed sum for all investigations, or like piecework, a flat fee per investigation, profitability will encourage companies to do the minimum and not pursue the last elusive detail.

Abuse will also be easier. The F.B.I. has many ways to protect itself. Its director cannot easily be fired, it enjoys broad public support, and it has excellent media contacts. Yet it did not stand up to a White House that, by accident or design, easily obtained files for no lawful reason. Will a private company, dependent on Government officials for renewal of a lucrative contract, be able to challenge an improper request? Don't count on it.

The only defense offered for this misguided plan is that it may save $25 million yearly. But even that is unsure. While the General Accounting Office cautiously concluded that ''privatization would be likely to produce a net savings to the Government in the long term,'' it added that ''any new business faces many uncertainties that affect profitability.''

One hidden cost will be duplication of work. Certain law-enforcement records will be unavailable to private investigators. So Government personnel will have to complete the assignments, inevitably requiring them to retrace some steps. This time must be added in figuring the true cost.

In any event, the savings are not worth it. As one Federal investigator put it, this work is ''inherently governmental.'' Some tasks should not be privatized because the value of having the Government do them is priceless. Enforcing the law and approving new drugs are two examples. Security investigations for public jobs are a third. No business, especially one with other customers, should be authorized to routinely collect sensitive information on American citizens in the name of the United States.●

TRIBUTE TO PAUL BOFINGER

● Mr. SMITH. Mr. President, I rise today to pay tribute to Paul Bofinger from Concord, NH, as he retires as president of the Society for the Protection of New Hampshire Forests. Paul ends a distinguished 35-year career with this organization, serving as its president for the last 23 years. This exceptionally hard-working man has long been recognized as one of the top conservationists in our State.

The last 35 years have seen a steady period of growth and awareness of conservation issues in New Hampshire, and Paul has played a large role in this development. In the last three and a half decades, New Hampshire became the first State to establish statewide control over septic systems, and the first to take steps toward preserving wetlands. Paul is justly proud of his record and the fact that the number of New Hampshire residents who are concerned about protecting the environment is increasing each year.

Paul is described by many as a master of negotiations. During the struggle over the Wilderness Protection Act, he negotiated a balanced agreement which set aside 77,000 acres as national forest land while preserving land for timber as well. He demonstrated understanding for both sides but always urged what was best for the land. Another of Paul's brilliant negotiations involved the construction of the Franconia Notch Parkway, a compromise between the preservation of forest lands and the construction of a four-lane interstate highway. Paul had a rare intuition for politics and policy and his heart was always in the right place when it came to protecting our State.

Paul's many projects, from the Trust for New Hampshire Lands and the Northern Forest Lands Council to the fight against acid rain and his support of current use legislation, have earned him numerous awards. Some of his more prestigious awards include: the John Aston Warner Medal for American Forests, the President's Conservation Achievement Award from the Nature Conservancy, and the Tudor Richards Award from the Audubon Society of New Hampshire.

As Paul leaves the field of nature conservation, he will be sorely missed, but his memory and work will endure. It is he and others like him whom we should credit for preserving our beautiful New Hampshire wilderness for the next generation of Granite-staters. I thank Paul for his 35 years of service