it won't make it into their higher tax brackets. This is not how America was built. Private investment and initiative has historically been a strong part of our American heritage and we should encourage those values, not tax successful family businesses into submission.

That is why I will vote for this important legislation. We need to change the message we are sending to farmers and family business owners. The Death-tax repeal has been endorsed by numerous organizations that represent family farms and businesses such as the National Federation of Independent Business, the Farm Bureau, the Family Business Estate Tax Coalition, National Association of Women Business Owners, the National Black Chamber of Commerce, the National Indian Business Association, the U.S. Hispanic Chamber of Commerce, and the National Association of Neighborhoods.

Mr. President, if there is one thing Congress absolutely ought to do while we are trusted with our jobs it should be to protect American families and their interests. This tax is fundamentally unfair and would never survive if it were being proposed today. I urge my colleagues to support the repeal of the Death-tax and help restore a small degree of integrity to the tax structure imposed on America's families.

Thank you, Mr. President. I yield the floor.

Mr. BUNNING. Mr. President, I rise in support of H.R. 8, the Death Tax Elimination Act of 2000.

This is a sound, sensible approach to providing death tax relief. It phases out the tax over a ten-year period by gradually reducing the marginal rates that apply to estates. And it includes a so-called ''step-up'' in basis for the first $1.3 million in assets ($3 million for spouses) that applies if assets are ever sold by heirs.

Right now the marginal rates assessed against estates are the highest in our tax code—55 percent for estates larger than $3 million plus a 5 percent surcharge assessed against larger estates. In fact, the United States has the dubious honor of imposing the most onerous estate tax in the developed world. This comes on the heels of recent moves by China, Canada and other developed countries to repeal their death taxes.

It is pitiful that in the U.S. we have worse death taxes than Communist China.

The estate tax was originally passed in 1916 to help fund our efforts in World War I. The last time I checked, that war was over. By the way, for my friends in the Senate who are still living in the early 20th century and oppose death tax repeal, I should point out that we won World War I.

Mr. President, these are a number of sound reasons to repeal the death tax. The best of these is the awful effect it has on small business and family farms. For years and years Congress has heard the sad stories about how small business owners and farm families have to sell family enterprises just to pay the taxes on estates that are passed down from generation to generation.

Additionally, a number of recent analyses make the case for death tax repeal. Studies by the Joint Economic Committee, the National Center for Policy Analysis, the Heritage Foundation, the American Council for Capital Formation, the Institute for Policy Innovation, the Cato Institute, and others all indicate the federal estate tax imposes significant costs on the economy and family-owned businesses, resulting in lower economic growth, job creation, and the destruction of family businesses.

The death tax hurts the ability of small businesses to vie against larger competitors. For instance, in testimony before the House Ways and Means Committee, a lumberyard owner from New Jersey spoke of incurring up to $1 million in costs associated with preserving the family business pending the death of his grandmother. At the same time the family was incurring these costs, the business was also competing against a new Home Depot store that had moved into the area. Remember that Home Depot and other big business is not subject to the estate tax.

In fact, a recent survey of 365 businesses in upstate New York found an estimated 14 jobs per business were lost in direct consequence of the costs associated with estate tax planning and payment. That amounts to more than 5,000 jobs lost in a limited geographical area. Nationally, the Wall Street Journal reported that an estimated 200,000 jobs would be created or preserved if the estate tax were eliminated.

The liberals who oppose death tax repeal claim this is a red herring, and that the bill will really only would help the super-rich and multi-billionaires. In fact, 50 percent of the revenue the federal government derives from the death tax comes from estates worth less than $5 million.

Additionally, the death tax provides less than 2 percent of the federal government's total tax revenues. To hear the Chicken Little liberals talk about it, repealing this tax would cause the sky to fall and the government to collapse for lack of funding. These are only crocodile tears from the big government addicts who cannot bear the thought of hard-working Americans not being forced to send more of their money to Washington to fund big government programs.

Although this bill passed the House by a veto-proof margin, and enjoys bipartisan support here in the Senate, the President has still promised to veto it. Well, I think we should still pass it and let him explain to the American people why he favors ''death'' taxes that hurt our small business and rural communities.

To his credit, the President did sign into law some death tax relief in 1997 as part of the Taxpayer Relief Act. Of course, we had to lead him kicking and screaming to the signing ceremony. And this came on the heels of his vetoing stronger death tax relief in the 1995 balanced budget bill. Then later he vetoed death tax relief in last year's tax bill.

So who knows what he will actually do in the end. We should give him the chance to decide once and for all if he wants to help us repeal the death tax. Maybe, like Paul on the road to Damascus, he wills see the light. After all, as one senior House Democrat noted several years ago: ''We've learned that if you don't like the President's position on the issue, all you have to do is to wait for a few days for him to change his mind.'

Mr. President, surveys have consistently shown that death tax repeal is popular with Americans—70 to 80 percent usually favor it in opinion polls. It is popular for the reasons I have laid out, but the most compelling reason is a moral one. After the death of a loved one, when families are grieving, Americans just do not believe that they, or anyone else, should have to talk to the undertaker and tax man on the same day. It's just not right.

Since 1980, over 20 states have repealed their state death taxes, and it's time the federal government followed suit and learned a lesson from the states. It's time to kill the death tax, and I urge my colleagues to support this important legislation.

MORNING BUSINESS

Mr. ROTH. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the Senate proceed to a period of morning business with Senators permitted to speak for up to 10 minutes each.

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

IN HONOR AND REMEMBRANCE OF GERALD CLIFFORD

Mr. DASCHLE. Mr. President, I would like to take a moment to reflect on the life and work of Gerald Clifford, an important and influential South Dakotan and Oglala Sioux tribal member who recently passed away after courageously battling a debilitating illness.

Gerald Clifford, with whom I worked for many years, was a leader and a driving force for change among Native Americans in South Dakota and across the country. He was a champion for rural water development in southwestern South Dakota and a strong advocate for Indian education and Indian self-determination. Earlier this week, Mr. Clifford began his journey to the spirit world at the young age of sixty. I express my heartfelt condolences to Gerald's family and relatives during this difficult time. My prayers and thoughts are with them.

The void left by Gerald's passing was felt especially deeply today, as his life was celebrated at a funeral service in

Manderson, South Dakota, on the Pine Ridge Indian reservation. While the work of this body required my presence in Washington today, I do want to honor and remember Gerald here in the Senate for his many outstanding contributions to his community and state.

Over the years, Gerald and I worked together on a number of projects. And I can tell you for a fact: he is a tenacious advocate for his causes and never gives up. Never.

I had the honor and pleasure of working closely with Gerald on the construction of the Mini Wiconi Rural Water System. In his role as director of the Mini Wiconi project, Gerald accepted the daunting challenge of bringing the state of South Dakota, three South Dakota tribes and local non-Indian communities together to achieve a common vision. The project bridged historically-vast political and cultural gaps to bring the precious resources of clean water to rural communities and remote reservations areas.

Even after many South Dakotans had lost hope of ever seeing the Mini Wiconi water project finished, Gerald kept working at it. He shepherded the Mini Wiconi project during the last several years, a critical period in its construction, fulfilled the promise of clean water for many, and laid a strong foundation for completing the project in the foreseeable future.

Gerald managed this project with skill and with diplomacy, and I am proud to have been able to work with him to accomplish our mutual goal. His contribution will be felt for decades to come.

Gerald made many other contributions to his people and his state in addition to Mini Wiconi. I would like to highlight just a few examples that provide a snapshot of the magnitude of this involvement in efforts to benefit the people of South Dakota and our nation.

Gerald Clifford was first and foremost an articulate and impassioned advocate for justice for his people. No one who knew Gerald could ever question the intensity or sincerity of his commitment to this overriding goal.

Gerald also understood the critical importance of education as a means of improving the quality of life for Indian people, working hard to promote tribally-controlled education, particularly tribal colleges and universities, and contributing to the initiation and development in the early 1970's of the American Indian Higher Education Consortium (AIHEC) and the tribal college movement. He was also among the first to have assisted in the creation of tribally-controlled entities, such as the Coalition of Indian-Controlled School Boards. Through this work, he helped provide educational opportunities for 26,000 students at the nation's thirty-three tribal colleges and universities, and opened a major educational pathway for many generations to come.

Gerald Clifford was a highly respected leader of the American Indian people. He was elected by Great Plains tribal leaders and tribal peers to serve as the National Congress of American Indians (NCAI) Aberdeen area Vice-President. As their voice on Capital Hill, Gerald helped many tribes in South Dakota, North Dakota, Nebraska and throughout the mid-West.

Gerald was a dominant presence at the forefront of the many struggles that the Aberdeen area tribes faced over the past four decades. It was through his focused dedication and skilled advocacy that Indian people have prevailed in the face of numerous adversities placed in their way. Gerald served as an elder, mentor, colleague and friend to so many young Indian men and women, imparting many of his outstanding qualities to this and future generations of tribal leaders.

Earlier this year, I addressed the National Congress of American Indians general assembly while Gerald was in Washington fighting hard on issues that meant so much to him. Later, I learned that he was forced to return to South Dakota prematurely because he was struggling with his health. As a result, I was unable to see him. I will always regret that I did not get to visit with Gerald during his last visit here.

Gerald fought illness with courage, determination and indomitable spirit. Even as he was ailing, he was not deterred from the pursuit of his work. He continued to fight for Indian people and for the causes that cared so much about. He never gave up.

In passing, Gerald Clifford left a large, significant and important legacy. He truly will be missed, but his work will live on, enriching the lives of South Dakotans for generations

BORDER DRUG PROSECUTIONS

Mrs. HUTCHISON. Mr. President, shortly before the July 4th recess, the Senate passed an Emergency Supplemental spending measure as part of the Military Construction Appropriations Bill. This measure dealt with a number of critical needs, including aid for fire victims in New Mexico and funds to continue the war on drugs in Colombia. I am pleased that this legislation also included $12 million to reimburse county and municipal governments along the U.S.-Mexico border for the high costs that they have incurred in handling drug prosecutions and incarcerations for the federal government.

Dramatic increases in manpower and resources for the Border Patrol and Customs Service has meant dramatic increases in drug and alien smuggling and illegal crossing apprehensions. Our border counties, which have handled these cases for the federal government for many years, have borne heavy costs of these prosecutions with no reimbursement from the federal government. These are some of the poorest counties and communities in the nation, and they can no longer afford to pay the costs associated with an expanded caseload they are handling for the federal government.

Specifically, this provision will enable the United States Attorneys to assist border county and municipal governments in the Southwest Border states of Texas, New Mexico, Arizona, and California with their court costs, courtroom technology needs, the building of prisoner holding spaces, administrative staff, and indigent defense costs that are associated with the handling and processing of drug cases that would otherwise fall under the jurisdiction of the Federal government.

I appreciate the help and commitment of Senator GREGG, Chairman of the Commerce-Justice-State Appropriations Subcommittee, and Senator STEVENS, the Chairman of the Appropriations Committee, for working so closely with me to address the needs of the Southwest border. I also want to thank Jim Morhard, Staff Director of the Commerce-Justice-State panel, and Kevin Linskey, for their hard work on this matter. Jim and Kevin serve both the Committee and Senator GREGG very well, and their efforts on the staff level are making a difference in improving the lives of people living along the U.S.-Mexico border.

GUNRUNNING IN THE STATES

Mr. LEVIN. Mr. President, two new studies just released show that states with a high concentration of gun industry activity and weak gun laws tend to be the major suppliers of crime guns in other states.

On June 28, 2000, the Violence Policy Center (VPC) released Gunland USA, a study which ranks states by their level of gun industry activity. For each state VPC reported the number of gun shows, licensed firearms retailers (including pawnshops), manufacturers producing firearms, and licensed machine gun dealers as well as the number of registered machine guns. In each of these categories, Texas ranks number one. Other states that showed a very high level of gun industry presence were California, Florida, Illinois, Georgia and Ohio.

People in my state of Michigan may wonder how activity in other states like Illinois or Georgia affects them at home. A study released by Senator SCHUMER entitled War Between the States explains that many of the crime guns used in Michigan come from out of state. Interstate gunrunners acquire guns in states with weak laws and flood the markets in specific states and regions that have stricter gun laws. According to this report, states such as Texas, California, Florida, Georgia, and Ohio—the same states with high levels of gun industry activity—are the major suppliers of guns used to commit crimes in other states with tougher gun laws. The study cites Michigan as a state ''with strict gun laws'' and as one with 41% of guns traced to crime coming from other states such as Ohio and Georgia.

These findings demonstrate the need to tighten our national gun laws. Without national standards, states with a