Sam Billison, Navajo Code Talker, was one of an elite group of veterans, and yet he was more. He was a teacher, a school principal and a superintendent, helping educate thousands of young people, and setting an example for all to follow. In all sense of the word, he was a true American hero. He shall be dearly missed.●

TRIBUTE TO SENIOR AIRMAN NICHOLAS P. SEMONELLE, THE UNITED STATES AIR FORCE AIRMAN OF THE YEAR

● Mr. SESSIONS. Mr. President, I rise today to recognize the United States Air Force Airman of the Year for 2004, Senior Airman Nicholas P. Semonelle from Enterprise, Alabama.

Senior Airman Semonelle's recognition stems from his unique act of courage and bravery. On January 18, 2003, Senior Airman Semonelle was faced with a dangerous situation. Senior Airman Semonelle observed smoke from a nearby house that had caught fire and immediately called 911. Upon learning from a 14-year-old babysitter that three children were trapped inside, Semonelle immediately broke through a window and entered the burning structure to try to find the children. Despite the smoke and heat, Senior Airman Semonelle searched room to room locating a 7-year-old boy and evacuating him from the building. Without hesitation and regard for his own personal safety, he again risked his life to go back inside the home, now ablaze and filled with smoke, to locate and carry out a second child, a 3-year-old girl. Senior Airman Semonelle began a third rescue attempt of an 18-month-old baby girl still trapped in the now engulfed structure. Despite repeated attempts, the little girl could not be found. Emergency rescue personnel arrived to find the structure engulfed in flames, and were unable to locate the third child who did not survive. Senior Airman Semonelle, his brother-in-law who had helped with the rescues, and the two lucky children eventually collapsed on the ground in front of the house, exhausted and coughing from smoke inhalation.

Senior Airman Semonelle's quick action to enter the burning home and rescue those inside resulted in saving the lives of two children. His disregard for his own personal safety to save others is an act of bravery that warrants our gratitude. I commend this 1996 Elba High School graduate for his service to our country and for his bravery. He continues to distinguish himself, serving our country overseas in his assignment to the United States Air Force 435th Logistics Readiness Squadron at Ramstein Air Base, Germany. He is truly deserving of the recognition that the United States Air Force and the United Services Organization have bestowed on him as Airman of the Year.●

TRIBUTE TO PAT RAYMOND

● Mr. BENNETT. Mr. President, Pat Raymond prefers to be the person behind the person. She prefers to work behind the scenes, and as I can attest, late at nights, weekends, and holidays. For 30 years she has served the Senate faithfully, professionally, tirelessly, and as a stalwart advocate. But today I would like to put Pat front and center and thank her for her service to me and to the Senate.

For the past 2 years, Pat has worked as the clerk of the agriculture appropriations subcommittee that I chair. I have benefited from her institutional knowledge, her counsel, and her judgment. Because of consecutive reductions in the budget of the United States Department of Agriculture the last 2 years have been very challenging, but Pat has been up to the task. In 2003, even though the allocation to the subcommittee was nearly $1 billion below the prior years enacted level, we produced a bill that the Senate approved with only one dissenting vote. Pat has developed strong working relationships not only with the staff of Senator KOHL, the subcommittee ranking member, but also with the staffs of Representatives BONILLA and KAPTUR, the House agriculture appropriations chairman and ranking member. These relationships have enabled the agriculture appropriations subcommittees of both chambers to work together and overcome the challenges posed by being required to do more with less.

After 30 years of service Pat will retire at the end of this Congress. I thank her for her dedication, for her hard work, and for a job well done. More than that, I wish her well, as she travels to Florida for a well deserved rest. But I know that ''rest'' won't last long—Pat is too young, too vigorous, and has too much to contribute not to get involved in something important right from the start.●

IN HONOR OF SUPERVISOR REX BLOOMFIELD

● Mrs. BOXER. Mr. President, it is my honor to speak in recognition of Supervisor Rex Bloomfield, a strong advocate for the preservation of open space, improvement of county services, and balanced planning for the future of Placer County.

Rex Bloomfield has dedicated the last 12 years as Supervisor to improving his community and Placer County. His many accomplishments are testament to his strong leadership and devotion to public service. By creating the Placer Legacy Program he has helped to preserve thousands of acres of open space and agricultural lands in Placer County. Committed to the fight for clean air, he initiated the Sacramento Ozone Summit and worked hard to adopt regional policies to reduce smog, for which he received the American Lung Association's regional award for outstanding leadership. Supervisor Bloomfield established Placer County's first redevelopment area to help fund community projects, such as the Squaw Valley Community Park. Throughout his three terms in office he has made many improvements to his district. Four parks were built, miles of new trails for recreation were constructed, a new library was built with two others expanded, fire safe councils and fire fuels reduction programs were created, Sheriff substations in outlying areas were added, emergency personnel were provided more safety equipment and medical supplies, and a computerized emergency telephone system to warn residents of pending danger was established.

Rex Bloomfield has not only committed himself to the betterment of Placer County as supervisor, but also as a teacher and involved member of the community. His teaching career has spanned 31 years. He is currently teaching fifth grade at Alta Vista School in Auburn. He has been a board member with the Sierra Economic Development District, Sierra Planning Organization, Foothill Airport Land Use Commission, Placer County Air Pollution Control District, Placer County Flood Control and Water Conservation District, Colfax Veterans Memorial Hall Board, and Foresthill Veterans Memorial Hall Board.

I commend Rex for dedicating his life to his family and his community. His accomplishments have touched the lives of many, and his impact on his community and Placer County will be long remembered. I extend my sincere best wishes for his continued health, happiness, and good work. Rex Bloomfield is a distinguished member of the community, and it is with great pleasure that I recognize him today.●

TAXATION OF FEDERAL EMERGENCY MANAGEMENT ADMINISTRATION MITIGATION GRANTS

● Mr. NELSON of Florida. Mr. President, in these final days of the 108th Congress, I would like to call attention to an issue of great consequence to the people of Florida and to other States that recently have been victimized by natural disasters.

This year, four hurricanes wrought a path of damage and destruction across Florida and other areas. The U.S. Congress was quick to provide Federal relief for victims of the storms, and we are grateful for this. Yet a June Internal Revenue Service ruling determines that this assistance ought to be taxed.

This means that if a homeowner accepts a $25,000 Federal grant to elevate their flood prone home, the grant would be included in their taxable income. This unexpected tax liability could be financially devastating to a retiree living on a fixed income after already having faced the costs of hurricane cleanup. It also creates a strong disincentive for homeowners to participate in Federal mitigation programs,

increasing the risk of damage and expense in future disasters. The IRS policy runs counter to good public policy and common sense.

Senator KIT BOND and Representative MARK FOLEY have introduced S. 2886 and H.R. 5206, respectively, identical bills that would fix this problem by exempting mitigation grants from being included as taxable income. These bills have drawn support from both sides of the aisle and a large number of the Florida Congressional delegation. I am disappointed that we will not have an opportunity to pass these bills before Congress adjourns. If we fail to act early on in the 109th Congress, come April, some homeowners could be in for a rude awakening in the form of a higher tax bill from the IRS.

To help ease the minds of Floridians and other Americans living in disaster prone areas of the country, I joined Senator LANDRIEU in sending a letter to Finance Committee Chairman GRASSLEY and Ranking Member BAUCUS asking them to direct the Treasury and the IRS to delay implementing this policy until Congress has the opportunity to act.

I will continue to work with my colleagues in the Senate to find a solution to this problem.●

WOOL TRUST FUND

● Mr. BAUCUS. Mr. President, today I make note of a technical error in the drafting of the Wool Trust Fund, which was included in H.R.1047, the ''Miscellaneous Trade and Technical Corrections Act of 2004.'' Section 4002, entitled ''Extension and Modification of Duty Suspension on Wool Products, Wool Research Fund, Wool Duty Refunds,'' extends the current Wool Trust Fund through December 31, 2007. The purpose of this provision is to extend the current program, as well as to provide grants to textile mills, for an additional 2 years beyond the current date of expiration, which is December 31, 2005. This fact is reflected in the conference report of H.R. 1047, in which the conferees observe that the House recedes to the Senate proposal ''so that all programs are extended by two years beyond the current date of expiration of the current programs.'' In other words, all provisions—including all programs and all tariff reductions—are to be in effect through 2007.

Unfortunately, a drafting error occurs in section 4002(a)(5), entitled ''Fabrics of Combed Wool,'' and mistakenly terminates the extension of duty reductions, for the goods identified in that subsection, at the end of 2006, rather than 2007. This error is clearly and patently inconsistent with the expressed intention of the conferees to extend the program through 2007.

I urge the Members of the 109th Congress to correct this technical error, in order to allow the program to operate as clearly and expressly intended by the 108th Congress.●

MESAGES FROM THE HOUSE

At 12:32 p.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 to concurrence of the Senate:

H.R. 5370. An act to designate the facility of the United States Postal Service located at 4985 Moorehead Avenue in Boulder, Colorado, as the ''Donald G. Brotzman Post Office Building''.

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

S. 2618. An act to amend title XIX of the Social Security Act to extend medicare cost-sharing for the medicare part B premium for qualifying individuals through September 2005.

The message further announced that the House has agreed to the following concurrent resolution, without amendment:

S. Con. Res. 8. Concurrent resolution expressing the sense of Congress that there should be established a ''National Visiting Nurse Association Week.''

ENROLLED BILLS SIGNED

The message also announced that the Speaker has signed the following enrolled bills:

H.R. 1113. An act to authorize an exchange of land at Fort Frederica National Monument, and for other purposes.

H.R. 1417. An act to amend title 17, United States Code, to replace copyright arbitration royalty panels with a Copyright Royalty Judge, and for other purposes.

H.R. 1446. An act to support the efforts of the California Missions Foundation to restore and repair the Spanish colonial and mission-era missions in the State of California and to preserve the artworks and artifacts of these missions, and for other purposes.

H.R. 1964. An act to assist the States Connecticut, New Jersey, New York, and Pennsylvania in conserving priority lands and natural resources in the Highlands region, and for other purposes.

H.R. 3936. An act to amend title 38, United States Code, to increase the authorization of appropriations for grants to benefit homeless veterans, to improve programs for management and administration of veterans' facilities and health care programs, and for other purposes.

H.R. 4516. An act to require the Secretary of Energy to carry out a program of research and development to advance high-end computing.

H.R. 4593. An act to establish wilderness areas, promote conservation, improve public land, and provide for the high quality development in Lincoln County, Nevada, and for other purposes.

The enrolled bills were signed subsequently by the President pro tempore (Mr. STEVENS).

At 3:07 p.m., a message from the House of Representatives, delivered by Mr. Hays, one of its reading clerks, announced that the House agreed to the amendment of the Senate to the act (H.R. 1630) to revise the boundary of the Petrified Forest National Park in the State of Arizona, and for other purposes.

The message further announced that the House has passed the following bill, in which it requests the concurrence of the Senate.

H.R. 5382. An act to promote the development of the emerging commercial human space flight industry, and for other purposes.

The message also announced that the House has agreed to the following concurrent resolution, in which it requests the concurrence of the Senate:

H. Con. Res. 528. Concurrent resolution directing the Clerk of the House of Representatives to make technical corrections in the enrollment of the bill H.R. 4818.

At 4:22 p.m., a message from the House of Representative, delivered by Mr. Hays, one of its reading clerks, announced that the House has agreed to the report of the committee of conference on the disagreeing votes of the two Houses on the amendment of the Senate to the bill (H.R. 4818) making appropriations for foreign operations, export financing, and related programs for the fiscal year ending September 30, 2005, and for other purposes, having met, have agreed, that the House recede from its disagreement to the amendment of the Senate, and agree to the same with an amendment.

The message further announced that the House has passed the following joint resolution, in which it requests the concurrence of the Senate:

H.J. Res. 114. Joint resolution making further continuing appropriations for the fiscal year 2005, and for other purposes.

At 5:08 p.m., message from the House of Representatives, delivered by Ms. Niland, one of its reading clerks, announced that the House has passed the following bills, in which it requests the concurrence of the Senate:

H.R. 3818. An act to amend the Foreign Assistance Act of 1961 to improve the results and accountability of microenterprise development assistance programs, and for other purposes.

H.R. 5419. An act to amend the National Telecommunications and Information Administration Organization Act to facilitate the reallocation of spectrum from governmental to commercial users; to improve, enhance, and promote the Nation's homeland security, public safety, and citizen activated emergency response capabilities through the use of enhanced 911 services, to further upgrade Public Safety Answering Point capabilities and related functions in receiving E–911 calls, and to support in the construction and operation of a ubiquitous and reliable citizen activated system; and to provide that funds received as universal service contributions under section 254 of the Communications Act of 1934 and the universal service support programs established pursuant thereto are not subject to certain provisions of title 31, United States Code, commonly known as the Antideficiency Act, for a period of time.

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

S. 2192. An act to amend title 35, United States Code, to promote cooperative research involving universities, the public sector, and private enterprises.

S. 2873. An act to extend the authority of the United States District Court for the