you have been to the Senate. That is really true. The people of Alaska are so fortunate to have you in the Senate.

You are very constructive. You protect the State of Alaska like no one I have ever seen look out for the interests of a State.

And I think everyone in the Senate recognizes what a fine person you are, and as the days go on, you are going to get even better. So on a personal note, I appreciate all of your good work.

(At the request of Mr. REID, the following statement was ordered to be printed in the RECORD.)

FLAG DAY

● Mr. BYRD. Mr. President, our flag is the most recognizable symbol of the United States, an instant wordless message freighted with history and meaning. The Stars and Stripes is much more than a war banner. Each flag carries visions of smoke-clouded battles, to be sure, but also visions of brave explorers venturing into new lands, astronauts landing on the moon, athletes celebrating Olympic victories, and of coffins carried on somber caissons to a final honored resting place. Old Glory also marks every great American moment, from presidential inaugurations that celebrate the peaceful transition of power in our democracy to the defiant unfurling of flags over the battered ruins of the Pentagon and the Twin Towers.

June 14 is Flag Day. Although flags fly every day in front of many Federal, State and local office buildings every day, and many flags are displayed on other holidays such as the Fourth of July, Memorial Day, and Veterans Day, only on Flag Day do we honor the flag itself.

The first national observance of Flag Day was in 1877, though it was not until 1949 that President Truman signed into law legislation recognizing the anniversary of the adoption, on June 14, 1777, by the Continental Congress, of the Stars and Stripes as the official flag of the United States.

In earlier years, much more was done to mark the occasion of Flag Day. Schools educated students on the rituals and principles of citizenship, and held patriotic programs to honor the flag. These days, it is enough to mark the day by flying the flag. I hope that many Americans will do so, and do it properly—hoisting the flag up smartly, bringing it down reverently, and folding it away again properly. Once it is up and flapping in the breeze, take just a moment to admire it, or to say the Pledge of Allegiance.

On June 14, 1777, a congressional committee established the design of our flag in a few short words. The record notes simply that ''. . . the flag of the thirteen United States be thirteen stripes alternate red and white; that the union be thirteen stars, white in a blue field, representing a new constellation.'' In the years since, the number of stars in that constellation has expanded, but the brave ideals that it represents—that all men were created equal, endowed by their Creator with certain unalienable rights including life, liberty and the pursuit of happiness—shine as true today as they have since 1776.

Our flag is a symbol that goes well beyond the cloth out of which it is fashioned. It is America, and long may it wave.

I close with a favorite poem of mine, by Henry Holcomb Bennett, that I like to recite on Flag Day. It never fails to stir my spirits, as I hope it does for those listening.

THE FLAG GOES BY

(By Henry Holcomb Bennett)

Hats off!
Along the street there comes
A blare of bugles, a ruffle of drums,
A flash of color beneath the sky:
Hats off!
The flag is passing by!

Blue and crimson and white it shines,
Over the steel-tipped, ordered lines.
Hats off!
The colors before us fly;
But more than the flag is passing by.

Sea-fights and land-fights, grim and great,
Fought to make and to save the State:
Weary marches and sinking ships;
Cheers of victory on dying lips;

Days of plenty and years of peace;
March of a strong land's swift increase;
Equal justice, right, and law,
Stately honor and reverend awe;

Sign of a nation, great and strong
Toward her people from foreign wrong:
Pride and glory and honor,—all
Live in the colors to stand or fall.

Hats off!
Along the street there comes
A blare of bugles, a ruffle of drums;
And loyal hearts are beating high:
Hats off!
The Flag is passing by!●

XLIV COMPLIANCE

Mrs. LINCOLN. Mr. President, paragraph 4 of rule XLIV of the Standing Rules of the Senate provides that, ''If during consideration of a bill or joint resolution, a Senator proposes an amendment containing a congressionally directed spending item, limited tax benefit, or limited tariff benefit which was not included in the bill or joint resolution as placed on the calendar or as reported by any committee, in a committee report on such bill or joint resolution, or a committee report of the Senate on a companion measure, then as soon as practicable, the Senator shall ensure that a list of such items (and the name of any Senator who submitted a request to the Senator for each respective item included in the list) is printed in the CONGRESSIONAL RECORD.''

The term ''congressionally directed spending item'' is broadly defined to include ''a provision or report language included primarily at the request of a Senator providing, authorizing, or recommending a specific amount of discretionary budget authority, credit authority, or other spending authority for a contract, loan, loan guarantee, grant, loan authority, or other expenditure with or to an entity, or targeted to a specific State, locality or Congressional district, other than through a statutory or administrative formula-driven or competitive award process.'' In accordance with rule XLIV, I provide the following information relating to my amendment. No. 1181, that was adopted by the Senate during consideration of H.R. 2346. The amendment will modify interest limitations allowable in a State, as defined in 12 USC 1831 u(f), where the maximum rate of interest is not more than 5 percent above the Federal Reserve discount rate—Arkansas. Specifically, it will relax the maximum rate of interest allowed, increasing it to seventeen percent, effective from date of enactment through December 31, 2010. The provision is generally applicable to any lending occurring within that state that is not conducted by an insured depository institution. I am the principal sponsor of the amendment.

Mrs. HUTCHISON. Mr President, I submit pursuant to paragraph 4(a) of rule XLIV of the Standing Rules of the Senate the following congressionally directed spending item that I requested during consideration of H. R. 2346, the fiscal year 2009 supplemental appropriations bill, and I ask that it be printed in the RECORD.

The material follows.

For purposes of qualification for loans made under the Disaster Assistance Direct Loan Program as allowed under Public Law 111–5 relating to disaster declaration DR–1791 (issued September 13, 2008) the base period for tax determining loss of revenue may be fiscal year 2009 or 2010.

Mr. President, I submit pursuant to paragraph 4(a) of rule XLIV of the Standing Rules of the Senate the following congressionally directed spending item that I requested during consideration of H. R. 2346, the fiscal year 2009 supplemental appropriations bill, and I ask that it be printed in the RECORD.

The material follows.

For areas affected under FEMA–1791–DR, 100 percent federal funding under the Public Assistance Program for debris removal, 90 percent federal funding for all other categories of public assistance, and 90 percent federal funding for Hazard Mitigation.

SBIR/STTR REAUTHORIZATION ACT OF 2009

Ms. SNOWE. Mr. President, I rise today to speak on support of S. 1233, the SBIR/STTR Reauthorization Act of 2009, a bipartisan measure I recently introduced with Senator LANDRIEU. As former chair and now ranking member of the Senate Committee on Small Business and Entrepreneurship, I have long championed critical small business programs such as the Small Business Administration's Small Business Innovation Research, SBIR, and Small Business Technology Transfer, STTR, programs, which direct more than $2 billion in Federal research and development—R&D—funding each year to