low-income families. It is a savings program matched by grants that help families buy homes, start small businesses, return to college—pathways from poverty into middle class.

It speaks to Ben's belief in helping families succeed that he took a lead role in that program.

Ben's political affiliations ranged at times from Republican to Independent to Democrat. But no matter what party he belonged to, his focus first and foremost was always on creating a better Oregon.

In 2003, Ben gave one of the most passionate and moving speeches I have ever witnessed in my life. He gave his speech shortly after being diagnosed with cancer. He was not sure he would return to the legislature, and he wanted us to know we could not retreat in the face of the challenge of passing reforms for affordable and quality health care. He knew it was an enormous challenge, but he took his personal story and turned it to the cause. His work ethic was unmatched. Ben was working as recently as just last week. It was an honor to serve with Ben in the Oregon Legislature and to consult with him as he took on new challenges as Oregon's treasurer.

If you knew Ben, you knew he was gregarious. He lit up the room. Every moment, his enthusiasm for improving our State and our world was inspiring. I will miss him. I am sure his passion and his presence will be missed throughout our State, and I know all Oregonians join me today in honoring the legacy of Ben Westlund.

I yield the floor.

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. The Senator from Oregon.

Mr. WYDEN. Madam President, my colleague and friend, Senator MERKLEY, has spoken very eloquently about Ben Westlund, and I wanted to echo those thoughts and reflect on Ben's special and unique style and warmth.

All of us who have been around government and politics know the challenge of the early-morning meeting. Folks are a little bit sleep-deprived, they are looking for coffee, and maybe they are just trying to keep their eyes open at 7:30 or 8 a.m. Senator MERKLEY and I want to tell you a little bit about how Ben Westlund handled those meetings. Ben Westlund was able to master, like everything else, the challenge of the early-morning meeting in government. I am sure Senator MERKLEY remembers that even at that early hour, Ben Westlund would bound to the podium—would not walk, he would bound to the podium—and at the top of his lungs, Ben Westlund would shout: Good morning, Oregon. Good morning, folks. How are you doing? And within a matter of seconds, as Senator MERKLEY remembers, the entire room would be smiling and everybody would feel like attacking the challenge of the day. That was Ben Westlund.

As Senator MERKLEY noted, he was always on the offensive against injustice, always speaking out, for example, on health care.

Ben Westlund lived his life in full view. He shared his battle with cancer with his colleagues in the State legislature because he wanted everybody to know what it was like to try to wrestle with an illness.

He always made the point that he had all of these friends. One of our colleagues, Alan Bates, for example, was there for Ben, and Ben would always say: What would it have been like without Alan Bates? I have so many advantages other people did not have. And that was Ben, always sticking up for others.

He and I were trading calls before he passed—I think Senator MERKLEY will identify with this—because I think Ben was prepared to give me heck, and maybe a little stronger, on a couple of the provisions in the tax legislation that I just introduced with Senator GREGG. Ben was our treasurer. He had mastered the Tax Code in and out. I was trying to reach him because I knew that, invariably, Ben Westlund would be right, he would give us good input, and his thoughts would come directly from the people of Oregon. That was Ben Westlund.

Both of Oregon's U.S. Senators are going to deeply miss this wonderful man, his good counsel, and his companionship. We wanted to take a couple of minutes this morning to note that Oregon has lost a special person, a special person who did so much for our State and did a lot for our country as well.

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

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

The legislative clerk proceeded to call the roll.

Mr. DORGAN. I ask unanimous consent that the order for the quorum call be rescinded.

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

Mr. DORGAN. I ask unanimous consent to speak in morning business for such time as I may consume.

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

FAA REAUTHORIZATION

Mr. DORGAN. I assume we will report the FAA reauthorization bill shortly, and I believe Senator ROCKEFELLER will be on his way. He is chairing the Commerce Committee hearing right now. I will go over and chair the hearing in his stead when he comes to the floor.

Prior to bringing the bill to the floor today or prior to making it the order of the day, let me just speak in morning business before we get to the bill.

I wanted to talk just for a minute. Yesterday, I talked about what is in the FAA reauthorization bill. Much of what we will discuss today is about commercial aviation—getting on an airliner someplace and flying across the country or across the world. But I wanted to mention that there is another component to this, and that is what is called general aviation.

General aviation is a very large and increasingly important component of air travel in this country. In a State such as my home State of North Dakota, which is a very large State and one that does not have a great deal of interstate commercial airline service, the use of private planes is very prevalent, and general aviation plays a very significant role in our economy.

I learned to fly many years ago. I am not a current pilot at all. I was not even very good at it, I don't think. But I learned to fly and got out of the airplane one day, when the instructor said: You are ready. And I took off and wore this metal suit with an engine attached and got up about 5,000 or 6,000 feet and practiced stalls, steep turns, and the things that you do. So I understand a little about flying an airplane. It is an extraordinary thing.

The private pilots who have an airplane in their hangar out on the farm or in a town and the small business man or woman who has a Cessna 210 or perhaps a Cirrus or a Piper or any number of other small airplanes, single-engine, twin-engine, use those planes every day in every way for very important purposes—to travel around the State and the country to do commerce, to haul parts, to haul people. It is a very significant contribution to our economy. It is estimated that $150 billion annually is added to our economy by general aviation. It is also estimated that there are about 1.2 million jobs in America from general aviation.

I know the thoughts people have about general aviation are immediately to go to: OK, here is a big corporation flying a G–5 and sipping Cristal and eating strawberries dipped in chocolate, flying across the country. The fact is, big corporations do have airplanes that move their executives around. In most cases, they do that because they want to be at a meeting in Los Angeles in the morning and in Dallas in the afternoon and an evening meeting in New York. The only way they do that is through the use of private planes. It makes them much more effective and much more efficient. I understand that.

But much more than the large corporate jet that is flying people around this country, it is the smaller planes of general aviation that are used in all of our States in many ways across this country. You know, it is true that, yes, the corporate planes and the smaller private planes in general aviation every day are flying organ transplants around, flying hearts and so on around to be transplanted at a hospital; to reunite combat troops with their families; to take someone for cancer treatment, to an urgent appointment with a cancer specialist. All of that is the case. I understand that.

So what I wanted to say is that the use of general aviation and the extensive impact it has on our economy is

something we also should discuss and describe in this bill. The legislation we have created has things that are so important to all of aviation—yes, commercial aviation, but to general aviation and to private pilots as well.

The investment, for example, in airport infrastructure, the building of and maintaining of runways in communities that don't have scheduled airline service but do have a lot of activity with private pilots flying in and out is very important. The general aviation portion is important. Six hundred general aviation airplanes have now brought fresh doctors, relief services, workers, equipment, and supplies to the country of Haiti. Six hundred private airplanes have flown in and landed at airports—in most cases, airstrips—other than the airstrip at Port-au-Prince. That is a story that needs to be told. I have great admiration for the pilots, particularly the older pilots who have been around and used to fly those airplanes when there weren't many rules. They kind of chafe at the rules. When you meet with pilots, the older they are, the more they chafe at the fact that there are now rules because in the old days you would jump in an airplane and run off, and you could do almost anything.

We do have rules and regulations and general aviation subscribes to them willingly and ably. It is an important part of our aviation system.

I wish to mention as well Senator ROCKEFELLER, chairman of the committee, is now in the Chamber, and I will chair the Commerce Committee hearing that is underway. I would like to take a couple minutes to retrace what I described yesterday. This legislation, the FAA Reauthorization Act, has been extended 11 times. Rather than passing the bill, we have extended it 11 times. Finally, at long last, with the leadership of Senator ROCKEFELLER and Senator HUTCHISON and the work that I and Senator DEMINT did on the Aviation Subcommittee, we have a bill on the floor, and we want to get it done. We want to get to conference and finally reauthorize FAA programs. We are talking about investment in infrastructure, jobs, aviation safety. All that is critically important. I have held a number of hearings now on the issue of aviation safety.

The skies, particularly with respect to the record of commercial airlines, are very safe. We have a great record with respect to aviation safety. There is no question about that. But we are learning as well along the way from the last accident that occurred in this country that tragically killed 50 people, landing on a winter evening in icy conditions going into Buffalo, NY. I have held hearings on that. I have studied it. I have read the transcript of the cockpit voice recorder. I know a fair amount about the crash. What I know is pretty disconcerting. Let me describe a few things.

That was a Dash 8 propeller airplane, flying in ice at night. The pilot had not slept in a bed for the two previous evenings. The copilot had not slept in a bed the previous evening. The copilot was a person earning somewhere between $20,000 and $23,000 a year, living in Seattle, and the work station was flying out of Newark.

That copilot flew all the way from Seattle, deadheaded on a FedEx jet that landed in Memphis, flew all night to go to work at Newark. The pilot flew up from Florida in order to fly on that Colgan route. But you had two people in the cockpit, according to testimony, the captain of which had not slept in a bed. There was no record of his sleeping in a bed. He was in the crew lounge, where there is no bed. The captain hadn't slept in a bed for 2 days and the copilot for 1 day. They had inadequate training, with respect to stick shakers and other related issues. The fact is, there are a series of things that have now led us to understand that fatigue is an issue. There is a rulemaking on fatigue going on right now.

Administrator Babbitt has now sent that to the Office of Management and Budget. That is important. Training is an issue, critically important.

Commuting is an issue. I wish to put up this chart. This shows where Colgan pilots commute in order to go to work. They commute from all over the country to Newark. There clearly is a fatigue factor. There has to be some action taken on a range of these issues—training, fatigue, sterile cockpits, which were violated on this flight, training in icing, a whole series of things such as those. There is a most wanted list at the NTSB that has said: Here is what you must do. That most wanted list, for 15 or 18 years, has had icing and fatigue on that list, and the FAA has not taken appropriate action. I will speak more about this, but I do have to go spell Senator KERRY, who is now chairing the Commerce Committee.

Senator ROCKEFELLER, chairman of the committee is here, as is the Senator from Texas.

I yield the floor and 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. VITTER. I ask unanimous consent that the order for the quorum call be rescinded.

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

CIAP FUNDS

Mr. VITTER. Madam President, I rise to speak about Vitter amendment No. 3458. I hope, by the time I wrap up, the Members leading the discussion on this bill will be prepared to make the bill pending so I may also make my amendment pending.

This amendment is real simple. It is about the Coastal Impact Assistance Program, CIAP, which was established in the Energy Policy Act of 2005. This program is very important for energy-producing States. It takes some revenue from that energy production and leaves it in those States to deal with the impacts of energy production. The problem is, that funding was supposed to be distributed to these States from 2007 to 2010. The entirety of it was supposed to be distributed by and through this year. But that has not been happening at all because MMS has added an additional bureaucratic layer to getting funding out beyond that which was talked about and established in the statute.

My amendment is simple. It would get rid of that bureaucratic layer. It would still retain oversight. It would still retain all the protections of the statute, but it would streamline the process so this funding actually gets out to the States as intended. It is way behind. Rather than 100 percent being distributed to the States by this year, they have only distributed 15 percent. Obviously, we are way behind the 8 ball. We would accelerate that. Because this funding has already been allocated, this amendment does not cost anything, does not score. This is the same money that was allocated through the CIAP in the Energy Policy Act of 2005.

This streamlines the process. This helps us get back on track in terms of distributing that vital money to coastal States. It doesn't cost anything because all that money was supposed to be distributed by this year anyway. This is important.

One of the crucial areas the Coastal Impact Assistance Program can help with in my State is related to hurricanes, all sorts of uses—mitigation, emergency preparedness, hurricane evacuation routes related to hurricanes.

Yesterday, hurricane forecasters predicted, unfortunately, that 2010 is going to be a very severe hurricane season. We are preparing for that in any way we can. The fact that this CIAP funding has been blocked, has not gone to the coastal States, is a real problem in that regard. We need to do better. This amendment streamlines the process so we can do better.

This amendment also retains the oversight mechanism in the underlying bill. As the plain language of CIAP in the bill says, if the Secretary determines that any expenditure made by a producing State is not consistent with the underlying plan, then the State may not be disbursed any further funds until repayment of the unauthorized use of already obligated funds. Clearly, there is that mechanism for complete accountability.

In addition, a State CIAP plan has to be approved to begin with by MMS, and that has already occurred. This gets back to the intent of the statute. It gets back to the timeline of the statute. It streamlines that process so we can get on with it. One hundred percent of these funds were supposed to be