that still bear his name in his home State of West Virginia.

Senator Byrd won the admiration of all his colleagues for his study of the history of this body. He delivered hundreds of addresses on Senate history and procedure, as well as the debt we owe to the original Senate that governed Ancient Rome for centuries. For such work, Senator Byrd has earned the gratitude of all future generations of Americans.

Texans especially appreciate Senator Byrd's attention to the contributions of our Senators to the history of this body. Senator Sam Houston, the original occupant of the seat I hold, was described by Senator Byrd in this way:

> The flamboyant Sam Houston of Texas used to stride into the old Senate chamber wearing such eye-catching accessories as a leopard-skin waist-coat, a bright red vest, or a Mexican sombrero. . . . He would while away the time in the old chamber by whittling, creating a pile of shavings beneath his desk, and pages would bring him his pine blocks and then clean up the shavings.

Senator Byrd also devoted several speeches of his history to the tenure of Senator Lyndon B. Johnson, which were all collected into a single chapter upon publication. In personal interviews with then-current and former Senators, Senator Byrd documents a remarkably personal account of Senator Johnson's leadership style and his influence over landmark legislation, including the Civil Rights Act of 1957.

During his discussion of Senator Johnson's use of the quorum call, Senator Byrd was asked to yield by his friend, Senator Russell Long of Louisiana, who wished to clarify his own recollection of the matter. Senator Long then continued with a fitting tribute to the Senator from West Virginia:

> I have no doubt that in years to come, his will be the most authoritative text anyone will be able to find to say what did happen and what did not happen in the Senate, both while the Senator from West Virginia was a member and in the years prior thereto.

I can offer no better epitaph to Senator Byrd than that offered by his former colleague more than two decades ago. He and his beloved Erma have now been reunited, and we offer our condolences to their children, grandchildren, great-grandchildren, and all who miss him most.

SAVING WEAK BANKS

Ms. SNOWE. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the article titled, SPIN METER: Program risks $30B to save weak banks,'' published on August 1 by the Associated Press, be printed in the RECORD.

There being no objection, the material was ordered to be printed in the RECORD, as follows:

[From the Associated Press, Aug. 1, 2010]

SPIN METER: PROGRAM RISKS $30B TO SAVE WEAK BANKS

(By Daniel Wagner)

WASHINGTON.—People are fed up with bank bailouts that risk taxpayer billions. The government's apparent solution: call them something else.

Congress is at work on a new program that would send $30 billion to struggling community banks, in a process similar to the huge federal bailouts of big banks during the financial crisis. This time, money is more likely to disappear as a result of bank failures or fraud.

Two weeks ago, President Barack Obama declared an end to taxpayer bailouts when he signed a sweeping overhaul of financial rules. In his weekly radio and Internet address on Saturday, he described the new bailout program as ''a common-sense'' plan that would give badly needed lending help to small-business owners to expand and hire.

At its core, the program is another bank rescue. Some lenders need the bailouts to survive. Others could take the bailouts and crumble anyway. That's what happens when banks run out of capital—the money they must keep in case of unexpected losses. Banks with too little capital can be shuttered to protect the taxpayer-insured deposits they hold.

Or, under this proposal, many could get bailouts. The new money would be available to banks that are short on cash. It's supposedly reserved for banks deemed ''viable.'' But regulators won't consider whether banks are viable now. They'll envision how strong a bank would be after receiving a fresh infusion cash from taxpayers and private investors. If the bank would become viable because of the bailout, the government can make it happen.

''This is a below-the-radar bailout for community banks,'' said Mark Williams, formerly a bank examiner with the Federal Reserve. ''What we lack here is oversight and true accountability.'' He said the potential costs are far greater than the program's impact on small businesses. The change for them would barely be noticed, he said.

Small banks are struggling partly because the economy is so weak. For banks in the hardest-hit areas, it can be nearly impossible to recover once too many loans sour.

Yet the bill would require that banks be protected against ''discrimination based on geography.'' It says the money must be available to lenders in areas with high unemployment.

Such banks are ''only as strong as the loans they make in their communities,'' said Williams, now a finance professor at Boston University.

Also, the government knows far less about these lenders than about Wall Street megabanks. Many community banks are overseen by state regulators struggling under budget cuts and limited expertise. Many are ill-equipped to monitor banks during a crisis, Williams said.

The administration says the bill is not a bailout, but a way to spur lending to small businesses and bolster the shaky economic recovery. The idea is that businesses want bank loans, but banks don't have enough money to lend. And they say the program has to include riskier banks in order to work.

''When banking groups have advocated for measures that were about saving or bailing out struggling banks and not spurring small business lending, we have strongly opposed those proposals,'' said Gene Sperling, a senior counselor to Treasury Secretary Tim Geithner who has met with community bank lobbyists on the issue.

Sperling said Treasury rejected proposals to further lower the bar for which banks are considered ''viable'' or to let banks delay accounting for commercial real estate losses.

Some banks will have an easier time granting loans after receiving bailouts. But Federal Reserve Chairman Ben Bernanke and others have questioned whether the problem is lack of capital, or if there simply aren't enough creditworthy borrowers.

The administration's haziness about whom the program benefits has fueled comparisons to the $700 billion bailout known as the Troubled Asset Relief Program, or TARP. A few important differences make this bailout riskier.

The bailouts that started in 2008 were subject to oversight by a special watchdog. Neil Barofsky, who heads that inspector general's office, recently saved taxpayers $553 million by stopping the Treasury from mailing a check to a failing bank accused of fraud.

Under the new law, it's not clear the money would have been saved. The new bailouts have the same investment structure, size limits and approval process as the old ones. Yet they aren't subject to Barofsky's oversight. His office has staff and procedures in place to monitor banks for bailout fraud—resources that cost taxpayers millions.

The new law creates an office that duplicates those efforts, and Barofsky's supporters say that's an effort to silence one of Treasury's loudest critics.

There's another reason banks want to join the new program: It will save them money.

Assuming they increase lending modestly, the banks will pay lower quarterly fees to Treasury. If lending falls, their fees will rise. But the banks still will pay less than they would to private investors, experts said.

Banks that were short on cash weren't even eligible for money from the $700 billion financial bailout passed in 2008. Yet limiting it to healthy banks was no guarantee the money would be safe.

A few bailed-out banks have failed. One-sixth of them were behind on their quarterly payments to Treasury at the end of May, according to an analysis by University of Louisiana finance professor Linus Wilson.

''The problem is, they're not really picking healthy banks,'' Wilson said.

Legislation to put the new program in place ran into a roadblock in the Senate last week. Further action isn't expected until September, after lawmakers' summer break.

The measure has been the subject of a months long lobbying push by small bankers. Disclosures show that community bank bailouts have been the most common topic of Treasury's bailout meetings with lobbyists over the past 10 months.

The trade groups insist that smaller banks are not necessarily riskier because they weren't behind the speculation that nearly toppled Wall Street.

History suggests that's not true. Most of the 268 banks that have failed since 2008 were community banks.

The proposal has drawn little notice from a public weary of bailouts for Wall Street, auto makers, insurers and homebuyers.

Wilson said that shows how well it's been sold.

''If you put small business in the name, people will like it, and if you put banks in the name no one will like it—but the money is going to banks, not small businesses,'' he said.

UGANDA

Mr. FEINGOLD. Mr. President, I want to discuss the important relationship that our country has with the East African nation of Uganda. Last month, Uganda was targeted by horrific bombings that killed 76 people and wounded scores more. We all continue to mourn for the victims of this cowardly attack and sympathize with the people and government of Uganda. The

Somali terrorist group, al Shebaab, whose leaders have links to al-Qaida, has claimed responsibility and likely targeted Uganda because of its role in AMISOM, the African Union peacekeeping force in Somalia. Uganda has contributed a large part of the troops for this difficult but important mission, and its commitment has not yielded in the aftermath of this attack.

The United States has long had a strong friendship and partnership with Uganda that has deepened in recent years, especially as Uganda has become more of a regional leader. We have worked closely with Uganda to address the crisis in Somalia, through bolstering AMISOM and supporting the fragile transitional government in Mogadishu. We have also supported the Ugandan army's operations across central Africa to dismantle the Lord's Resistance Army and end their horrific atrocities. Meanwhile, as a nonpermanent member of the U.N. Security Council since 2009, Uganda has worked with us on many important initiatives. And finally, we have long provided support for the Ugandan government's efforts to combat HIV/AIDS, improve access to education, and more.

This has been a fruitful relationship for both countries and it is in both of our interests to continue to collaborate in order to address pressing regional and domestic challenges. That is why I believe we must encourage and work with Uganda's leaders to ensure that their elections next February are peaceful, fair and free. Uganda's past elections have been marred by reports of fraud, intimidation, and politically motivated prosecutions of opposition candidates, causing international outcry. If these upcoming elections follow that same pattern or worse, it will put the United States and our relationship with Kampala in a very difficult position. We might have to consider restrictions to our assistance and limiting our engagement with Uganda's security forces.

Unfortunately, initial signs are worrying. In his annual testimony to Congress in February, the then-Director of National Intelligence said that the Ugandan government ''is not undertaking democratic reforms in advance of the elections scheduled for 2011.'' Also, the State Department reported to Congress in April that the Ugandan government had taken no actions to further the independence of the Electoral Commission or to establish an accurate and verifiable voter registry. In that same report, State noted that the government continues to restrict opposition parties' freedom of movement and assembly and to impose restrictions on local media. Credible experts and human rights organizations have documented the government's efforts to stifle free and independent political journalism, especially in rural areas.

These developments are disturbing not only in terms of Uganda's political space and democratic institutions, but also when we consider the country's stability. Riots in Buganda last September showed that regional and ethnic divisions remain strong in many parts of the country and that violence can erupt suddenly. Since Uganda gained independence in 1962, political leaders have pitted groups against one another and used force to access and control power. This legacy endures, even though Uganda transitioned to a multiparty democracy 5 years ago. Until there is a genuine effort to address these divisions, achieve national reconciliation and consolidate democracy, Uganda continues to be at risk of instability—a risk that will be heightened during the electoral period.

In the aftermath of the July 11 bombings, the Ugandan government will understandably need to address security issues, and we should offer our assistance in this regard. But at the same time, it is equally important that the government reinvigorate its efforts to promote national unity and reconciliation. Divisions and upheaval surrounding this February's elections could undermine the country's unity and potentially its stability. It could also weaken the government's international reputation and partnerships. Therefore, it is critical that the government take steps now to build public trust in the election process and the country's democratic institutions. As a true friend to the Ugandan government and people, we should press them to take these steps and provide support as appropriate. The stakes are too high to ignore these issues.

NATIONAL INFANT MORTALITY MONTH

Mr. CARDIN. Mr. President, I rise today to discuss a resolution I have submitted supporting the goals and ideals of National Infant Mortality Awareness Month. I am joined by my colleague from North Carolina, Senator BURR, in drawing attention to this important health issue.

Infant mortality is an important indicator of the health of a nation, and since 2000, the infant mortality rate in the United States has remained stagnant, generating concern among researchers and policymakers. The United States ranks 29th among industrialized countries in the rate of infant mortality, with 6.8 deaths per 1,000 live births in 2007, according to the National Center for Health Statistics.

The primary reason for the United States' higher infant mortality rate is the higher percentage of preterm births, that is, babies born before 37 weeks of gestation. In 2004, one in eight infants born in the United States was preterm, compared with one in 18 in Ireland and Finland. Among reported European countries, only Austria has a comparable preterm birth rate; the other countries, including England, Sweden, and France, have far lower rates. Preterm infants have much higher rates of death or disability than infants born at full term. In fact, if the United States had the same gestational age distribution of births as Sweden, with fewer preterm births, the U.S. infant mortality rate would decrease by about 30 percent. These data from the National Center for Health Statistics suggest that preterm birth prevention is crucial to lowering the U.S. infant mortality rate.

The rate of preterm births in the United States rose by one-third between 1984 and 2006, and in 2004, the National Center for Health Statistics reported that 36.5 percent of all infant deaths in the U.S. were related to premature birth. This accounts for 12.5 percent of babies born in the United States. In addition to contributing to a higher infant mortality rate, this high rate of premature births constitutes a public health concern that costs society more than $26 billion a year, according to a 2006 Institute of Medicine report.

There are indications that the situation is improving. Following a long period of steady increase, the U.S. preterm birth rate declined for the second straight year in 2008 to 12.3 percent, from 12.8 percent in 2006, marking the first two-year decline in the preterm birth rate in nearly three decades.

We have seen similar trends in my own state of Maryland, where the infant mortality rate decreased by ten percent from 2008 to 2009, improving from 8 infant deaths per 1,000 live births to 7.2 infant deaths per 1,000 live births.

The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention reports that despite these positive trends, significant racial disparities in infant mortality rates persist. In 2006, the infant mortality rate for African-American infants in the U.S. was more than twice the rate for non-Hispanic White infants, at 13.4 deaths per 1,000 live births for African-Americans compared to 5.6 for non-Hispanic Whites. In American Indian and Alaska Native populations, the death rate is 50 percent higher than in non-Hispanic Whites, and the sudden infant death syndrome, SIDS, mortality rate for this population is also twice as high as the SIDS mortality rate for non-Hispanic Whites. The Puerto Rican population also experiences significant disparity in this area, with an infant mortality rate 40 percent higher than that for non-Hispanic Whites.

Disparities in prenatal care also contribute to higher infant mortality among minority populations. Nationwide, African-American mothers were 2.5 times more likely than white mothers to receive late or no prenatal care. This trend is also evident in Maryland, where in 2009, the number of babies born to all mothers receiving late or no prenatal care was 4.7 per 1,000 live births, but the number of babies born to African-American mothers lacking prenatal care increased from 6.3 per 1,000 live births in 2008 to 7 in 2009. A lack of prenatal care can contribute to low birth weight and increased risk for