

that basis and, on Tuesday, move to a conference committee, a piece of farm legislation passed by the U.S. Senate in a bipartisan manner.

Mr. President, I yield the floor.

Mrs. KASSEBAUM. Mr. President, I just say, in answer to the Senator from North Dakota, I feel confident that Senators on both sides of the aisle want to reach an agreement on a substantial, constructive farm bill. Nothing is more important, and it is prime legislation. I feel sure that I can speak on behalf of Senators on my side of the aisle that would say we are going to reach that agreement, and we will all work together in good faith to achieve what is very important, coming from a farm State, as I do myself.

MORNING BUSINESS

Mrs. KASSEBAUM. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that there now be a period for the transaction of routine morning business, with Senators permitted to speak therein for up to 5 minutes each.

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

NATIONAL APPRECIATION WEEK FOR CATHOLIC SCHOOLS

Mr. PRESSLER. Mr. President, during this National Appreciation Week for Catholic Schools I would like to take a few moments to recognize the high quality and the hard work of the Catholic School System.

Our thanks and praise should go to the Catholic Schools for their special efforts to put children first. In the midst of increased school drop-outs, illiteracy, teenage pregnancy, drug-abuse, youth violence and growing pressures on teenagers and children—Catholic Schools provide their students a safe and healthy environment for learning. These schools give pupils an advantage by helping them develop a solid moral foundation.

In today's challenging society, mere words and good intentions are not enough. Catholic Schools' actions demonstrate their commitment to children. With a 99.98 percent graduation rate and 85 percent college matriculation rate, South Dakota Catholic Schools are proving that a solid combination of educational and spiritual guidance is the key to healthy living. In assisting pupils to build better lives, Catholic Schools reaffirm the value of life.

Catholic Schools extend the lessons we try to teach children at home: respect and love of our fellow neighbors, respect of the individual, personal discipline, individual responsibility and concern for the larger community. Catholic schools reinforce these family values which are the key to strong communities. We want the best for our families, our communities, and South Dakota. We must work to put the best tools in the hands of the future—our children. The Catholic schools give stu-

dents the tools to be responsible adults and concerned citizens.

I want to thank all the individuals who have contributed to Catholic School Systems' continued success and growth—the teachers, administrators, and of course the parents, many being graduates of Catholic schools themselves. One special week each year is a modest way to pay special tribute and thanks to the Catholic Schools across our country for the service they provide to our communities and our future.

GOOD THINGS ARE HAPPENING IN MALTA, MONTANA

Mr. BAUCUS. Mr. President, at a time when we hear so much about what is wrong with America, I want to take a moment to talk about a place where good things are happening. That place is Malta, Montana.

Malta is a small community in Northern Montana, up along what we in Montana call the "Hi-Line". Like any small Montana town, it is a place where people work hard and don't think twice about helping out a neighbor or a friend in need.

This past Christmas Eve, a fire destroyed Malta's high school and junior high school. But folks in Malta pitched right in to get a temporary school up and running.

Students, teachers, and others from the community have spent the past month salvaging lost items and fixing up temporary school sites. Almost every Montana community has helped by sending items to start up the new schools. Also, Federal and State Agencies, Veterans groups, private as well as small businesses and many other organizations have contributed to this effort.

And I was privileged to spend a day working as part of this effort. While the entire community deserves credit, I would like to recognize three individuals who have taken a leading role in this undertaking. First, I would like to acknowledge the Principal of Malta High, Marty Tyler, who quickly took control of the situation and led the students and the community in the effort to rebuild the schools. For example, Principal Tyler and members of the student council collected about 4,000 bricks to construct an entrance sign when the new school is built. During my work day at the Malta schools I participated in building windbreaks in front of doors and collecting bricks with Schoolboard Chairman Doug Ost and School Superintendent Bill Parker. Both of whom deserve a big thanks for the commitment and support they have given to the Malta School District.

Finally, this fire also prompted the creation of PRIDE, People Rebuilding Investing and Developing Education, a local group to offer advice and manpower to the school district. I would like to extend my sincere thanks for their community involvement.

Mr. President, it is an honor and a privilege for me to recognize the

achievements of the students, teachers, administrators, and citizens of the Malta community and all others who have helped to get this project off to a great start.

A STRONG NATIONAL GUARD

Mr. HOLLINGS. Mr. President, over the last month I've traveled to every county in South Carolina. And one of the things that I heard from people was that they want America to keep a strong National Guard.

As a veteran, I know that a strong National Guard is vital to national security. Time and again, National Guard troops proved themselves to be as competent—if not more so—as regular troops in the active military. Air National Guard troops from South Carolina routinely are rated among the best in the service. They flew countless missions in the Persian Gulf War and flew them with skill, accuracy and expertise. Army National Guard troops from South Carolina proved themselves to be ready to mobilize and fight almost at the drop of a hat.

Mr. President, a strong National Guard also makes common sense. In these days where dollars are stretched thin, we can get three qualified and highly trained guardsmen for the cost of one active-duty soldier. Perhaps more importantly, however, having a strong Guard builds community support for the military. Think about it—the men and women who serve in the National Guard work in towns and counties every day across the country. They work in stores, construction sites, mills, factories and offices. And they set the example of public service for everyone. When their units are called up, their co-workers all turn out to support their efforts.

Mr. President, a couple of weeks ago when I was in Laurens, South Carolina, Rich Browne, the local newspaper editor, and I discussed the value of a strong Guard. His comments in a recent column are to-the-point. I hope every Senator would read this wise column and resist efforts to reduce the size of our National Guard units.

Mr. President, I ask that Rich Browne's column from the January 4 edition of the Laurens County Advertiser be reprinted in the CONGRESSIONAL RECORD.

The column follows:

AVOIDING MILITARY ADVENTURES

[From the Laurens County Advertiser by
Rich Browne]

This should be an interesting year for the U.S. military.

With the active duty services once again calling on reserves to support the efforts to police the peace in Bosnia, according to news reports, the Department of Defense once again is leading a charge to reduce the role of National Guard units in preparing for the defense of the nation.

Well, the truth be known, the Department of the Army would like for all the combat arms units in the National Guard to just go away—they are a threat to the active Army's jobs. I saw this first-hand in Desert Storm