

QUARTERLY REPORTS—1996 APRIL

The mailing and filing date of the April quarterly report required by the Federal Election Campaign Act, as amended, is Monday, April 15, 1996. All principal campaign committees supporting Senate candidates in the 1996 races must file their reports with the Senate Office of Public Records, 232 Hart Building, Washington, DC 20510-7116. Senators may wish to advise their campaign committee personnel of this requirement.

The Public Records office will be open from 8 a.m. until 7 p.m. on April 15, to receive these filings. For further information, please contact the Office of Public Records on (202) 224-0322.

REGISTRATION OF MASS MAILINGS

The filing date for 1996 first quarter mass mailings is April 25, 1996. If a Senator's office did no mass mailings during this period, please submit a form that states "none."

Mass mailing registrations, or negative reports, should be submitted to the Senate Office of Public Records, 232 Hart Building, Washington, DC 20510-7116.

The Public Records office will be open from 8 a.m. to 6 p.m. on the filing date to accept these filings. For further information, please contact the Public Records office on (202) 224-0322.

COAST GUARD AUTHORIZATION ACT OF 1996

Mr. LOTT. Mr. President, I support the motion to go to conference on S. 1004, the Coast Guard Authorization Act of 1996. Both the House and the Senate have passed versions of this bill. The House called for a conference with the Senate to resolve differences in the bill and appointed conferees. The Senate must respond to this request. We need to do this before the recess so staff can meet and have issues ready for the conferees to vote on in early April.

My colleague from South Carolina opposes going to conference on this bill. I do not understand why he is so opposed to going forward with this basic process. Last time I checked, conference is the process to resolve differences between the House and the Senate. The House has its bill. We have the Senate bill. Conferees sit down together to iron out the differences. Why should he object?

I know there is a provision in the House-passed Coast Guard bill that my colleague opposes. Each year, hundreds of foreign crewmembers file suit in U.S. courts against foreign ship owners in U.S. courts. Since 1989, 724 of these cases have been filed in one Florida county alone. The House bill includes a provision that would address this flood of nonresident crew cases against ship owners being brought in the United States. The House passed this provision as part of the Coast Guard bill twice.

Mr. President, I happen to agree with the House provision. There is no public or private policy reason to litigate these cases in the U.S. legal system.

These cases: Contribute to the overcrowding of court dockets, frustrate the ability of U.S. citizens to obtain timely resolution of their claims, and require citizens to serve as jurors on cases which do not affect U.S. public or private interests.

In Dade County, FL, it costs about \$3,000 a day to conduct a jury trial. The U.S. taxpayer and consumer should not bear the cost of litigating these cases in our courts.

Of course we know who opposes this provision—the trial lawyers. There is no reason for these foreign cases to be heard in U.S. courts at the expense of the U.S. taxpayer, but a small handful of trial attorneys enriched by these cases resist any change. The trial lawyers as a group resist this tiny change because they see it as the camel's nose under the tent.

We have seen this from the trial lawyers before:

We saw it with reform of the general aviation liability laws. The lawyers nearly wrecked a whole industry before Congress was able to enact a very modest reform.

We saw it with modest efforts to reform securities laws. The President vetoed this measure at the urging of the trial lawyers and sustained his first veto override.

We saw it as recently as last week with efforts to oppose reasonable product liability laws. The trial lawyers may prevail on the President to veto this as well.

To take a quote from a former candidate, the trial lawyers will oppose any legal reform until hell freezes over, and then they will fight on the ice. That is what is happening here.

The trial lawyers do not care what is good for the country, what makes sense for consumers and businesses, what the burden is to the taxpayer. They only care if it enhances their ability to rake in huge contingency fees. If a change affects that ability, they will oppose it no matter how reasonable or meritorious.

A recent Florida Supreme Court case highlighted the problem created in Florida by lawyers using its courts for the whole world's litigation. In *Kinney System, Inc. versus The Continental Insurance Co.*, the Florida court noted that the growing trend of lawyers filing suit in the United States for injuries occurring outside the United States was growing to abusive levels. The court was concerned about the burden these cases impose on trial courts. The court concluded, "(n)othing in our law establishes a policy that Florida must be a courthouse for the world, nor that the taxpayers of the State must pay to resolve disputes utterly unconnected with this State's interests." I agree.

Mr. President, the forum selection provision in the House Coast Guard bill

is a reasonable legal reform that attempts to address part of the problem described in the Kinney case.

The provision will: Help assure the U.S. courts are available for U.S. citizens, provide an alternative to devoting scarce judicial resources to cases utterly unconnected to the Nation's interests, and assure that nonresident alien seamen receive fair treatment.

It does not affect the ability of U.S. citizens or permanent resident aliens to bring suit in U.S. courts.

It does not leave foreign crewmembers without a remedy. The provision would honor forum selection provisions in foreign employment contracts where there is an adequate remedy available to the seaman. And these remedies are available in other countries. Contrary to what the trial lawyers may want to believe, the United States is not the only civilized nation in the world. I have a whole stack of letters from different countries outlining the remedies available to seamen: Jamaica, Canada, Greece, Italy, Norway.

Mr. President, I could go on, but this issue should be resolved in conference. Its in the House bill—its not in the Senate bill. We need to resolve the differences between the House and the Senate on this important bill and go on and send it to the President. The only way we are going to do this is agree to the House request for a conference and appoint conferees. I urge my colleagues to do that and let the Senate get on about its business.

TRIBUTE TO SENATOR RUSSELL AND SENATOR NUNN

Mr. BYRD. Mr. President, I want to comment on two very distinguished Senators from Georgia, Senator Richard Brevard Russell and his successor, the very able Senator SAMUEL AUGUSTUS NUNN. On January 24, 1996, I had the great pleasure of taking part in the dedication of a statute of Senator Russell in the rotunda of the Russell Senate Office building. The unveiling of Senator Russell's statue last month occurred 25 years after Senator Russell's death in 1971. I was very pleased to be a part of this ceremony, because of my own high regard and esteem for Senator Russell. Twenty-four years ago, in 1972, I offered the resolution to rename the "Old Senate Office Building," as it was then known, in honor of Senator Russell. The grandeur embodied in both the building and the statue are fitting monuments to the very great legacy of statesmanship bequeathed to us by Senator Richard Brevard Russell.

The statue of Senator Russell stands in front of the entry to the Senate Armed Services Committee, where Senator Russell served as chairman for fifteen years during his 38-year Senate career, and where Senator NUNN has served as chairman and ranking member for ten years. Senator SAM NUNN is a worthy successor to Senator Russell's great legacy on national defense.