

and preserved the grand traditions of this institution.

Senator SIMON has been a national leader on literacy and on the power of the written word. His career and his life are a tribute to knowledge, learning, and the pursuit of excellence. Senator SIMON has walked these corridors with a quiet dignity and brought to them a sense of decency that we shall long remember.

Senator SIMON is truly a skilled teacher. He has taught us, in the U.S. Senate, the lesson of civility and he has taught us and every American who has heard his message that it is in the best interest of this Nation to put a premium on intellect again. He has done so in his actions, words, and deeds, and he shall be missed not only for his bow ties but for his honorable public service, his powerful independence, and his skill as a leader, a debater, and a quintessential U.S. Senator.

SENATOR DAVID PRYOR

I want to pay tribute to my distinguished colleague from Arkansas, Senator DAVID PRYOR who is a skilled and effective legislator with a gentlemanly southern charm and a modesty that belies his extraordinary skills and accomplishments.

Of his many accomplishments, not the least of which is his agricultural record for the people of Arkansas, Senator PRYOR became an outspoken critic of the prices that pharmaceutical companies charge for prescription drugs and his leadership on the issue brought national attention to the problem and gave hope to millions of elderly Americans who could not afford their medication.

Senator PRYOR's record of leadership in public service is marked by compassion and civility. I wish him all the best as he leaves the Senate and takes on new challenges.

#### MEN OF COLOR HEALTH INITIATIVE

Mr. KERRY. Mr. President, at this time, I would like to take a moment to recognize, encourage, and pay tribute to a comprehensive, new health initiative called "The Men of Color Health Initiative" which was started at the Harvard Street Neighborhood Health Center in my State of Massachusetts in 1993. This outstanding health service has combined years of careful and thoughtful research with a grassroots outreach program that brings to light important health care issues such as access to health care for people of African, Asian and Latino descent throughout Massachusetts and the United States.

The Men of Color Health Initiative was inspired by the need to address, in a comprehensive and culturally appropriate manner, the many health and social issues facing men of color today. In 1993, representatives of this program embarked upon a statewide study to examine why ethnic minority men did

not routinely have access to the health system. This project was designed to educate and activate men of African, Asian and Latino descent with regard to healthy lifestyles and appropriate medical care. The key to this process was the need to understand the health care needs, experiences, issues and perceptions of these highly exposed and often neglected groups.

This focused health care initiative takes a large step forward in attempting to help men of color become more aware of the health care options they have today. Many of the men interviewed before the inception of this program indicated that hospital emergency rooms were insensitive, inefficient, nonresponsive, and biased against ethnic minority men. There was an underlying distrust in and cynicism about the health system today. Many stated that language barriers keep them away from the options that they do have.

This program has gone the extra mile to see that the necessary surveys are conducted and discussion groups are available for male health system users and community-based providers to elicit information about viable methods to reach the population at risk. I applaud the efforts of this superb program and I wish it much success in the future. This thoughtful and successful program should be a model for others across the United States.

#### THE FEDERAL PRISON INDUSTRIES COMPETITION IN CONTRACTING ACT

Mr. LEVIN. Mr. President, on May 23, I introduced a bill—S. 1797—to implement the recommendation of the National Performance Review that we should "require [Federal Prison Industries] to compete commercially for Federal agencies' business" instead of having a legally protected monopoly. My bill would ensure that the taxpayers get the best possible value for their Federal procurement dollars. If a Federal agency could get a better product at a lower price from the private sector, it would be permitted to do so—and the taxpayers would get the savings.

Mr. President, many in both government and industry believe that FPI products are frequently overpriced, inferior in quality, or both. For example, I understand that the Veterans Administration has sought repeal of FPI's mandatory preference on several occasions, on the grounds that FPI pricing for textiles, furniture, and other products are routinely higher than identical items purchased from commercial sources. Most recently, VA officials estimated that the repeal of the preference would save \$18 million over a 4-year period for their agency alone, making that money available for veterans services.

Similarly, the Deputy Commander of the Defense Logistics Agency, wrote in a May 3, 1996, letter to Members of the

House that FPI has had a 42-percent delinquency rate in its clothing and textile deliveries, compared to a 6-percent rate for commercial industry. For this record of poor performance, FPI has charged prices that were an average of 13 percent higher than commercial prices.

On July 30, 1996, the master chief petty officer of the Navy testified before the House National Security Committee that the FPI monopoly on Government furniture contracts has undermined the Navy's ability to improve living conditions for its sailors. Master Chief Petty Officer John Hagan stated, and I quote:

In order to efficiently use our scarce resources, we need congressional assistance in changing the Title 18 statute that requires all the Services to obtain a waiver for each and every furniture order not placed with the Federal Prison Industry/UNICOR. \* \* \* Speaking frankly, the FPI/UNICOR product is inferior, costs more, and takes longer to procure. UNICOR has, in my opinion, exploited their special status instead of making changes which would make them more efficient and competitive. The Navy and other Services need your support to change the law and have FPI compete with GSA furniture manufacturers. Without this change, we will not be serving Sailors or taxpayers in the most effective and efficient way.

Mr. President, S. 1797 is supported by the National Association of Manufacturers, the U.S. Chamber of Commerce, the National Federation of Independent Business, the Business and Industrial Furniture Manufacturers' Association, the American Apparel Manufacturers' Association, the Industrial Fabrics Association International, and the Competition in Contracting Act Coalition. It is also supported by hundreds of small businesses from Michigan and around the country that have seen FPI take jobs away from their businesses and give them to persons convicted of crimes and serving time in prison, and are justifiably outraged.

We all want to do what we can to ensure that we make constructive work available for Federal prisoners, but the way we are doing it is wrong. As one small businessman in the furniture industry put it in testimony at a House hearing earlier this year:

Is it justice that Federal Prison Industries would step in and take business away from a disabled Vietnam veteran who was twice wounded fighting for our country and give that work to criminals who have trampled on honest citizens' rights, therefore effectively destroying and bankrupting that hero's business which the Veteran's Administration suggested he enter?

Mr. President, my bill would not restrict FPI's business. It would not require FPI to close any of its facilities. It would not force FPI to eliminate any jobs for Federal prisoners. It would not undermine FPI's ability to ensure that inmates are productively occupied. It would simply require FPI to compete for Federal contracts on the same terms as all other Federal contractors. That is simple justice to the hard-working citizens in the private sector,