

political associate of two Republican Senators who have views on this issue. He has served as a member of Senator HELMS' National Congressional Republican Club and was chairman of the North Carolina State Republican Party convention. He stands accused of engineering the removal of Whitewater counsel, Robert Fiske, and replacing him with an independent counsel who clearly has exercised his position with questionable judgment and clear partisanship. I speak, of course, of Kenneth Starr.

The decision to appoint Mr. Starr came only days after Judge Sentelle had a private luncheon with two Members of this institution who had strong views on the subject, in what was an extrajudicial and clearly inappropriate meeting.

Mr. President, despite poor judgment, inappropriate actions, Judge Sentelle was recently reappointed to his third term on the court. As senior judge in this position, with the other two judges serving in this similar capacity, both on senior status, he clearly has an extraordinary influence over the operation of the appointing process.

Five former presidents of the American Bar Association considered these facts, these extrajudicial communications, and determined they give rise to appearance of impropriety.

As long as Judge Sentelle sits on the special division, there will always be questions regarding the objectivity of the independent counsel appointments. I believe, therefore, whether you share my judgment that the trust should be placed in the Attorney General to determine whether or not the requisite requirements have been reached in the statute before appointing or requesting the appointment of an independent counsel or you agree with other Members of the Senate that those criteria have already been reached, we certainly, in the interest of fairness, can reach a judgment today that Judge Sentelle should recuse himself from his current responsibilities. Failing that recusal, it is certainly incumbent upon Chief Justice Rehnquist, given his general responsibility for the administration of the courts, to remove Judge Sentelle or request that he temporarily remove himself from the appointment process.

I recognize the strong divisions in the Senate. I understand the passions that this issue brings to different Members of the Congress. But certainly despite our partisan differences or our interpretations of the facts, our common interest in justice should lead us to one determination. There is a need in our country and in this Senate to come away from this debate with a feeling that an impartial and a fair administrator of justice is required to implement the independent counsel statute, whether that determination in naming an independent counsel is to be reached now or whether the facts dictate that they are to be named later.

Mr. President, it is a simple question of fairness and justice. I hope other Members of the Senate will join with me in calling upon Judge Sentelle, in the best traditions of the American judiciary, to recuse himself now, but I also hope, before any other Members of this Senate need to rise and express themselves on these facts, the Chief Justice of the United States will exercise his responsibilities to ensure that the courts are true to their traditions of justice.

Mr. President, I yield the floor.

RELATIVE TO THE DECISION OF THE ATTORNEY GENERAL ON THE INDEPENDENT COUNSEL PROCESS

Mr. TORRICELLI. Mr. President, pursuant to the unanimous consent agreement, on behalf of Senators LEAHY and LEVIN, I call up Joint Resolution 23.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will report.

The assistant legislative clerk read as follows:

A joint resolution (S.J. Res. 23) expressing the sense of the Congress that the Attorney General should exercise her best professional judgment, without regard to political pressures, on whether to invoke the independent counsel process to investigate alleged criminal misconduct relating to any election campaign.

The Senate proceeded to consider the joint resolution.

Mr. TORRICELLI. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that all time for debate on the joint resolution be yielded back.

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

Ms. MOSELEY-BRAUN addressed the Chair.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Illinois.

Ms. MOSELEY-BRAUN. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent to speak as in morning business.

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

Ms. MOSELEY-BRAUN. I thank the Chair.

(The remarks of Ms. MOSELEY-BRAUN pertaining to the introduction of S. 456 are located in today's RECORD under "Statements on Introduced Bills and Joint Resolutions.")

IN SUPPORT OF THE CONFIRMATION OF ALEXIS HERMAN

Ms. MOSELEY-BRAUN. Mr. President, today the Labor Committee is considering the nomination of Alexis Herman to be Secretary of Labor. Alexis Herman has been a friend and a colleague for many years. I believe she would make an outstanding Secretary of Labor. She has always shown the leadership, good judgment, and high principles that the job requires. Her commitment to improving the condition of America's working people is second to none.

Alexis Herman has long dedicated her efforts to putting all Americans to work. She began her career by bringing together workers needing employment and employers needing workers. She did this by providing relevant, necessary training for potential employees so that they possessed the skills needed by employers.

Through her work, companies across America had access to employees who had the specific skills necessary for each company's particular jobs, and the people she trained were able to obtain work because they were trained for positions that actually existed.

As you know, she went on to head the Women's Bureau of the Department of Labor under President Carter. Her work there included helping displaced homemakers enter the work force, increasing opportunities for women to apprentice in skilled trades, and promoting women-owned businesses, something that has received strong bipartisan support in the Congress.

I would like especially to highlight her efforts at the Women's Bureau to provide job training opportunities for welfare recipients. Now, more than ever, we need to promote practical policies for putting people to work. Last year's welfare bill will mean that a flood of untrained, unskilled people will be searching desperately for work, or their families will go hungry. Without skills and training, however, their prospects for finding a job are bleak. We need Alexis Herman's practical experience working with employers and employees in the coming years if we are to put over a million people to work.

Alexis Herman's commitment to diversity will also enhance our work force. We, in this Nation, have the best work force in this world. Any time we retreat from providing equal opportunities to all of our citizens, however, we risk weakening our greatest asset, our workers. If we fail to utilize the talents of all of our people, we sell ourselves short as a nation. With her vast experience in increasing diversity in the workplace, Alexis Herman will ensure that no talent goes untapped.

In addition, as public liaison for President Clinton, Ms. Herman worked with Americans across the country—Americans with diverse backgrounds and concerns. She has served as a liaison with these many diverse groups and the President so successfully, because she is interested in, sympathetic to, and able to work with, the full spectrum of the American people.

I would also like to note Ms. Herman's commitment to continue the work of Secretary Reich in enhancing pension security. I have spent the last several years focusing on retirement security for all Americans, and for women in particular. Secretary Reich was a strong ally and we are beginning to make progress. Retirement security is one of the most important issues for our time, with baby boomers turning 50 every 9 seconds. If we allow a generation to retire into poverty, the Nation

will lose a generation of consumers and gain a generation of dependents; an outcome that no one wants. I am confident that Alexis Herman's talent and experience will propel the efforts to improve retirement security forward and I would welcome the opportunity to work with her on this issue.

I would like to emphasize that I believe that one of Ms. Herman's greatest strengths is that she has formed partnerships with both business and labor in her many years working on employment issues. She understands the kind of investment business must make in human capital to improve productivity, increase profits, and create new jobs. She understands how difficult it is for small businesses to start up, and also how important these small businesses are to the economy as a whole. She understands that people want to work, and that they need the opportunity to be trained so that they can become productive members of the work force. She understands that we are all in this together.

Alexis Herman has spent many years serving the people and the country. I believe that there could be no better candidate for Secretary of Labor than Alexis Herman. She is an outstanding public servant. Her confirmation will make history; as Secretary of Labor she will make a difference in the lives of millions of Americans and workers throughout the world. I urge my colleagues to support the nomination of Alexis Herman to be Secretary of Labor and I look forward to her rapid confirmation.

Mr. President, I suggest the absence of a quorum.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will call the roll.

The legislative clerk proceeded to call the roll.

Mr. LOTT. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the order for the quorum call be rescinded.

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

MORNING BUSINESS

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

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

THE VERY BAD DEBT BOXSCORE

Mr. HELMS. Mr. President, at the close of business yesterday, Monday, March 17, 1997, the Federal debt stood at \$5,363,306,532,631.89.

Five years ago, March 17, 1992, the Federal debt stood at \$3,858,355,000,000.

Ten years ago, March 17, 1987, the Federal debt stood at \$2,247,176,000,000.

Fifteen years ago, March 17, 1982, the Federal debt stood at \$1,049,729,000,000.

Twenty-five years ago, March 17, 1972, the Federal debt stood at \$429,286,000,000 which reflects a debt in-

crease of nearly \$5 trillion (\$4,934,020,532,631.89) during the past 25 years.

CONGRATULATIONS TO DR. PAUL CURRIE ON HIS RETIREMENT

Mr. ASHCROFT. Mr. President, Senator Christopher S. "Kit" BOND and I would like to share with our colleagues in the U.S. Senate the example of a man who has been a model of citizenship, character, and service to humanity throughout his lifetime. The gentleman about whom I speak is Dr. Paul Currie, who will soon retire as pastor of the Presbyterian Church of Caruthersville.

On September 22, 1983, Dr. Paul Currie was present in this Chamber serving as Chaplain and offering the opening prayer. While this is historically an honor for any individual, we believe it was more of an honor for the U.S. Senate to have Dr. Currie serving in this chamber. Indeed, we believe the nearly four decades of service rendered to the community of Caruthersville, MO, serves as the real testimony to his compassion for his fellow man.

Since arriving in Caruthersville in 1958, Dr. Currie has always sought to reach beyond the lines of faith and unite all denominations in service to those in need. We can take faith that there are others who have been inspired by Dr. Currie and now live outside our great state, serving others.

Although Dr. Currie will be retiring, we will never forget his leadership. This veteran of the Korean war, this humble servant of God, community, and family, deserves to be recognized for his decades of service to his fellow man.

Senator BOND and I recognize today not only a lifetime of accomplishments by Dr. Currie, but also his inspiration of others. His example will inspire others to seek to enhance freedom, opportunity, and family life for generations to come.

In closing, I would like to quote a few words from Matthew 25:21, which I feel summarizes Dr. Paul Currie's many great deeds: "Well done, my good and faithful servant!"

We congratulate Dr. Currie on his retirement and extend him our best wishes for health and happiness for many years to come.

MESSAGES FROM THE HOUSE

At 4:29 p.m., a message from the House of Representatives, delivered by Ms. Goetz, one of its reading clerks, announced that pursuant to the provisions of section 274(b)(2) of Public Law 104-264, the Speaker appoints to the National Civil Aviation Review Commission the following members from private life on the part of the House: Mr. John J. O'Connor of Pennsylvania and Mr. D. Scott Yohe of Washington, DC.

The message also announced that pursuant to the provisions of section

274(b)(2) of Public Law 104-264, the minority leader appoints to the National Civil Aviation Review Commission the following members from private life on the part of the House: Col. Leonard Griggs (retired) of Missouri and Mr. John O'Brien of Virginia.

At 6:50 p.m., a message from the House of Representatives, delivered by Ms. Goetz, one of its reading clerks, announced that the House has passed the following bill, in which it requests the concurrence of the Senate:

H.R. 924. An act to amend title 18, United States code, to give further assurance to the rights of victims of crime to attend and observe the trials of those accused of the crime.

MEASURE PLACED ON THE CALENDAR

The following measure was read the second time and placed on the calendar:

H.J. Res. 58. Joint resolution disapproving the certification of the President under section 490(b) of the Foreign Assistance Act of 1961 regarding foreign assistance for Mexico during fiscal year 1997.

EXECUTIVE AND OTHER COMMUNICATIONS

The following communications were laid before the Senate, together with accompanying papers, reports, and documents, which were referred as indicated:

EC-1436. A communication from the Secretary of Veterans' Affairs, transmitting, pursuant to law, the report on the Veterans Equitable Resource Allocation (VERA) plan; to the Committee on Veterans' Affairs.

EC-1437. A communication from the Director of the Office of Management and Budget, Executive Office of the President, transmitting, pursuant to law, a request for supplemental relative to the National Transportation Safety Board; to the Committee on Appropriations.

EC-1438. A communication from the Secretary of Defense, transmitting, pursuant to law, the notice concerning a retirement; to the Committee on Armed Services.

EC-1439. A communication from the Director of the Office of Personnel Management, transmitting, pursuant to law, a notice of approval for a personnel management demonstration project for the Department of the Navy; to the Committee on Armed Services.

EC-1440. A communication from the Secretary of Defense, transmitting, pursuant to law, the report on the Joint Demilitarization Technology Program; to the Committee on Armed Services.

EC-1441. A communication from the Legislative and Regulatory Activities Division, Comptroller of the Currency, Administrator of National Banks, transmitting, pursuant to law, a rule entitled "Government Securities Sales Practices," (RIN3064-AB66) received on March 14, 1997; to the Committee on Banking, Housing, and Urban Affairs.

EC-1442. A communication from the Managing Director of the Federal Housing Finance Board, transmitting, pursuant to law, the report of a rule entitled "Advances to Nonmembers"; to the Committee on Banking, Housing, and Urban Affairs.