

rather than fulfilling a single, specific function nationwide. TVA undertook many duties that other Federal agencies were actively pursuing in other parts of the country, just as it does today, but TVA also undertook services which addressed the economic and natural problems unique to the Tennessee River watershed. TVA's charter was very broad and designed to give the agency leeway to address the region's interrelated needs of flood control, improved farming methods and conservation, rural electrification, and economic development as a single coordinating and executing body.

TVA undertook ambitious conservation, economic development, flood control, and electrification projects. The Tennessee River was tamed and became more readily navigable; topsoil loss and declining agricultural productivity had been stopped or even reversed; isolated families received electricity in their homes and workplaces; and the economy was expanding. By the 1950's the Nation's economy was strong and growing, and the economic gap between the Tennessee Valley region and the Nation as a whole was narrowing. By the 1980's, that gap no longer existed.

In a region that boasted a strong independent tradition and a general skepticism about the benefits of the Federal Government, the TVA had become viewed as more than just a benevolent hand providing economic opportunity and security to the depressed region, it became an integral part of the region's identity. In the minds of Tennesseans, TVA was credited with bringing the region out of poverty, depression, and existence at the mercy of nature.

Since its inception, TVA's mission has evolved, and the organization today is very different than in 1933. In 1959 the TVA Act was amended to fully separate the U.S. Treasury from the rapidly expanding TVA power program, which had seen an initial round of growth associated with the national security activities in Oak Ridge during the Second World War, but had continued to expand its size and revenues for regional industrial and residential consumption. TVA power would no longer rely on the support of taxpayers nationwide, but was thereafter dependent on the ratepayers and lenders to provide all operation expenses. TVA's power program far eclipsed the other original missions of conservation, flood control, and navigation from which had been separated. Today, TVA is one of the largest electric utilities in the world, with a revenue stream in excess of \$5 billion per year.

That's an impressive growth, but it didn't come without associated problems—some of them very serious. In the 1960's and 1970's, TVA began an ambitious nuclear powerplant construction program, borrowing heavily from public and private sources. Like other utilities that invested in nuclear power, TVA overextended itself badly as the costs of construction and fueling

the plants rose dramatically and the regulatory bar moved ever higher. TVA continued to go further into debt, and today its liability now exceeds a truly staggering \$27 billion.

TVA's benevolent role in the life of the region has also come into question. Decisions and behavior that many Tennesseans are now viewing as simply an extension of a grossly overgrown Federal bureaucracy in general, and a betrayal of the original benevolent mission envisioned for TVA in the formative act, served to end an era of trust between ratepayers and TVA. More worrisome, though, is that the errors in strategy and judgment have put the health, liability, and even the existence of TVA in jeopardy.

At its root, I believe, is the fact that TVA was allowed to fundamentally change its mission and to begin operating as a self-financing electric utility without the necessary structural changes. While TVA power grew rapidly as consequence, it still maintained the management and corporate structure of its original Depression-era mission of conservation, flood control, navigation, and economic development.

Yesterday, I introduced legislation to address those problems, and to make changes in the decisionmaking body of TVA that will more closely reflect its needs and the demands of the ratepayers and taxpayers. These are changes which, in truth, should have been incorporated into the TVA Act the day TVA became a self-financing corporation in 1959.

Under my TVA Modernization Act, the board of directors will grow from three full-time members to nine part-time members, and each member must have corporate management or a strong strategic decisionmaking background. My bill also shortens the members' terms from the current 9 years to staggered 5-year terms.

The expanded board would establish long-range goals and policies for TVA, as well as approve the annual budget and conduct public hearings on policies that have a major effect on ratepayers in the valley. The board will also determine electricity rates and ensure that independent audits of the corporation's management are conducted.

But unlike the current board, the expanded board will not be involved in the day-to-day management of TVA. Instead, it will appoint an independent chief executive officer to manage the corporation—much like businesses of its size throughout the country have done for decades.

While the President will retain the sole authority to appoint new board members, my bill will ensure that candidates have the business background necessary to take this \$6 billion corporation into the 21st century and a new era of deregulation. By requiring that no more than five members come from a single party affiliation, it will also help ensure that the board never becomes politicized. Together with an independent CEO, we can help avoid

the type of decisions and missteps that have saddled TVA with more than \$27 billion in debt over the years.

Once enacted, the bill would take effect on May 18, 1999—exactly 66 years after the original TVA Act took effect. Current board members whose terms don't expire until after 1999 may remain on the board as part-time members, along with the President's seven new appointees. Part-time board members will receive an annual stipend and per diem pay for their services, the total of which will not exceed \$35,000 per year. And instead of having a Presidentially designated chairman of the board, members will elect their chairman.

TVA has experienced enormous growth over the years, from a Depression-era conservation and public works program to a multibillion-dollar electric utility. It's time we give TVA and ratepayers in the valley a management structure that's more responsive and stable and that can help this important agency face the upcoming dramatic changes in the electric utilities industry as effectively and efficiently as possible.●

EXPLANATION OF VOTES ON THE AGRICULTURE APPROPRIATIONS BILL

● Mr. ABRAHAM. Mr. President, I rise today to explain my final vote on the fiscal year 1998 appropriations bill. The last amendment to this legislation was a second attempt by Senator HARKIN to fully fund FDA efforts to prevent underage smoking. Specifically, the amendment sought to fully fund a program which was established to punish establishments that sell tobacco to individuals under 18 years of age.

I support efforts to curb underage smoking. Unfortunately, I was forced to vote against Senator HARKIN's first attempt to fund this program because the amendment's offset would have imposed a new, \$34 million tax. The majority of Senators shared my concerns and the amendment failed by a 52 to 48 margin. In recognition of that shortfall, the amendment which Senator Harkin reintroduced identified a new, noncontroversial offset from a minor USDA program. In light of this new funding source, I was pleased to vote in support of the Harkin amendment. The motion to table the Harkin amendment subsequently failed by a 28 to 70 margin and the amendment was agreed to.

It is my hope, Mr. President, that the conferees can move quickly to resolve the differences between the House and Senate bills and allow us to vote on the conference report in the coming weeks.●

SOJOURNER TRUTH

● Mr. LEVIN. Mr. President, I rise today to honor Sojourner Truth, a leader in the abolitionist movement and a ground breaking speaker on behalf of equality for women. The 200th

anniversary of Sojourner Truth's birth is being celebrated this year throughout the United States.

Sojourner Truth was born Isabella Baumfree in 1797 in Ulster County, NY and served as a slave under several different masters. She bore four children who survived infancy, and all except one daughter were sold into slavery. Baumfree became a freed slave in 1828 when New York State outlawed slavery. She remained in New York and instituted successful legal proceedings to secure the return of her son, Peter, who had been illegally sold to a slave-owner from Alabama.

In 1843, Baumfree, in response to a perceived command from God, changed her name to Sojourner Truth and dedicated her life to traveling and lecturing. She began her migration west in 1850, where she shared the stage with other abolitionist leaders such as Frederick Douglass. In October 1856, Truth came to Battle Creek, MI, with Quaker leader Henry Willis to speak at a Friends of Human Progress meeting. She eventually bought a house and settled in the area. Her antislavery, women's rights, and temperance arguments brought Battle Creek both regional and national recognition. Sojourner Truth died at her home in Battle Creek, November 26, 1883, having lived quite an extraordinary life.

Sojourner Truth was a powerful voice in the women's suffrage movement, playing a pivotal role in ensuring the right of all women to vote. She was a political activist who personally conversed with President Abraham Lincoln on behalf of freed, unemployed slaves, and campaigned for Ulysses S. Grant in the Presidential election in 1868. Sojourner was a woman of great passion and determination who was spiritually motivated to preach and teach in ways that have had a profound and lasting imprint on American history.

In 1851, Sojourner delivered her famous "Ain't I a Woman?" speech at the Women's Convention in Akron, OH. She spoke from her heart about the most troubling issues of her time. Her words on that day in Ohio are a testament to Sojourner Truth's convictions and are a part of the great legacy she left for us all.

Mr. President, I ask that the text of the Sojourner Truth "Ain't I a Woman" speech be printed in the RECORD.

The speech is as follows:

AIN'T I A WOMAN

(By Sojourner Truth)

Well, children, where there is so much racket there must be something out of kilter. I think that 'twixt the negroes of the South and the women at the North, all talking about rights, the white men will be in a fix pretty soon. But what's all this here talking about?

That man over there says women need to be helped into carriages, and lifted over ditches and to have the best place everywhere. Nobody ever helps me into carriages, or over mud puddles, or gets me any best place!

And Ain't I a Woman?

Look at me! Look at my arm! I have ploughed, and planted, and gathered into barns, and no man could head me!

And Ain't I a Woman?

I could work as much and eat as much as a man—when I could get it—and bear the lash as well!

And Ain't I a Woman?

I have borne five children and seen most all sold off to slavery, and when I cried out with a mother's grief, none but Jesus heard me.

And Ain't I a Woman?

Then they talk about this thing in the head; what's this they call it? (member of the audience whispers "intellect") That's it, honey.

What's that got to do with women's right or negroes' rights? If my cup won't hold but a pint, and your holds a quart, wouldn't you be mean not to let me have my little half measure full?

Then that little man in black there, he says women can't have as much rights as men, cause Christ wasn't a woman?

Where did your Christ come from? Where did your Christ come from? From God and a woman! Man had nothing to do with Him.

If the first woman God ever made was strong enough to turn the world upside down all alone, these women together ought to be able to turn it back, and get it right side up again! And now they is asking to do it, the men better let them.

Obliged to you for hearing me, and now old Sojourner ain't got nothing more to say. ●

CHILD SUPPORT INCENTIVE BILL

● Ms. SNOWE. Mr. President, I am extremely pleased to join my colleague, Senator ROCKEFELLER, in introducing the Child Support Performance Improvement Act of 1997. This bill establishes a new formula for State child support incentive payments, in order to reward those States which truly excel at collecting child support. Over the years, Senator ROCKEFELLER has shown an extraordinary commitment to children and families across America, and his leadership on this bill represents more of the same.

Mr. President, States need to crack down on deadbeat parents who renege on their financial responsibilities to their children. While noncustodial parents owed \$47 billion in child support in 1995, States collected only \$14 billion. Collections increased to approximately \$16 billion in 1996, and are likely to further increase as the result of tough new child support reforms which I authored and which were contained in the Welfare Reform Act.

States performance in collecting child support varies tremendously. For example, Maine has worked very hard to successfully improve its child support collections. While Maine has collected over \$580 million since 1975, half of that amount—\$286 million—was collected within the past 5 years. Last year alone, Maine collected almost \$72 million, representing a 10-percent increase over the previous year. This considerable improvement is due to comprehensive State reforms pioneered under Governor John McKernan in 1993, and Federal child support reforms contained in the Welfare Act. But not all

States share this heightened commitment to collecting support. That is why my child support provisions in the Welfare Reform Act required the Secretary of HHS, in consultation with the States, to develop a new formula for State incentive payments that is based on performance, in order to further improve State collections, and to report back to Congress on the subject. The bill that Senator ROCKEFELLER and I introduce today is based on that report.

Under current law, the Federal Government provides States with an extra incentive payment in order to increase child support collections. The current formula for incentive payments is based on the cost-effectiveness of a State's child support collection program—the collection-to-cost ratio—meaning that States are rewarded for bringing in more dollars for each dollar they invest in the program. Incentive payments start at 6 percent of collections, and rise as high as 10 percent for the most cost-effective States. In fiscal year 1995, Federal incentive payments to States were \$400 million, nearly 33 percent of the gross Federal share of child support collections.

Mr. President, the current system does not make sense in that every State, no matter how dismal its record in collecting child support, receives a minimum incentive payment. This perpetuates mediocrity and does not serve children. Instead, States should be rewarded on the basis of performance outcomes that will help children, such as establishing paternity and support orders quickly, obtaining medical support, and collecting support on a regular basis so families can rely on it.

The Child Support Performance Improvement Act establishes a formula which takes into account performance-based measures and standards in five areas: establishing of paternity; establishing child support orders; collecting currently-owed support; cost-effectiveness; and collection of past-due support. The first three measures receive the most weight in the formula because they translate most directly into support that helps keep families financially self-sufficient. Giving them more weight will help concentrate State efforts where they matter most.

Under our bill, States would only qualify for incentive payments if they meet threshold performance requirements in these five areas. States that perform below the threshold level can qualify for minimum incentive payments only if they significantly improve their performance compared to performance in a prior year. The bill also requires the Secretary of HHS to establish standards for collecting medical support to be implemented later, to ensure that children of divorced parents have health insurance. Finally, the bill requires States, for the first time, to reinvest their incentive payments back into the child support system, so they can further improve collections and better serve children.