level, doing math at the proper level? If we really care about our children, let's put some responsibility on the teachers, and this is one way I think we ought to do it.

Superfund reform. We have toxic waste dumps all over this country. We need to clean them up. The law needs to be refined. Too much money goes to attorneys and not enough to clean up the mess. The polluter has to pay. We can't allow the taxpayers to pick up the tab. We need to move forward.

In closing, I want to say this. We are going to be celebrating Veterans Day on November 11. It is a special, special day. It also happens to be my birthday, and I am very proud to share it with the veterans.

Year in and year out, we hear about how many of the homeless in our streets are veterans. Mr. President, how can we, as the United States of America, celebrate Veterans Day knowing that so many of our vets have been turned aside?

I hope we will move on that and on the gulf war syndrome. We cannot turn our back on veterans who served our Nation in wartime and came back sick.

We did it in Vietnam when our veterans were exposed to agent orange. We did it again with gulf war syndrome. We ought to hold our heads up as a nation this Veterans Day.

I really look forward to coming back here and righting some of these wrongs. Senator ROCKEFELLER has a great bill. It says if you are a gulf war veteran and suffer from a disease, you don't have to prove anything except you were in that war theater and you are now disabled in order to qualify for disability benefits. It seems to me if we stand for anything around here, it ought to be standing by our veterans when they are sick and when they are homeless.

So I leave here with a good feeling about a lot of what we did and a little bit of regret about some other things I didn't agree with. But I am excited as I think about coming back here, because I think you heard me describe that there are a number of issues we ought to address that will make life better for all of our people in the context of a balanced budget that has a heart.

Thank you very much, Mr. President. I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Under the previous order, the Senator from Pennsylvania is recognized.

Mr. SPECTER. I thank the Chair. I have sought recognition to discuss briefly two matters: First, the pending fast-track issue and, second, the pendency of our judicial confirmations.

FAST TRACK

Mr. SPECTER. Mr. President, I will begin on the question of fast track with a statement made by the distinguished Senator from West Virginia saying that it would be disingenuous to believe that trade agreements would not be rewritten in the U.S. Senate. I say to my colleagues that I consider it unlikely that trade agreements would be rewritten in this body, considering how hard it is to get 51 votes against a committee report or against an administration position or that we might have the structure on amendments made so that it would require passage of a bill then subject to veto by the President and then subject to a two-thirds override. But if, in fact, trade agreements would be rewritten on the floor of the U.S. Senate or on the floor of the House of Representatives, then it might be something which is desirable.

I oppose fast track, although I am not opposed to free-trade agreements, because I do favor such agreements and supported NAFTA, the North American Free-Trade Agreement, and GATT, notwithstanding very considerable constituent opposition in my own State. Being elected in Pennsylvania, with 12 million constituents, it is my view that I ought to have standing as a Senator to offer amendments, and because we have had a certain amount of wisdom coming from Members of Congress on issues of trade, which are matters of very, very considerable importance.

I will analogize the activity of the Senate regarding trade agreements to what we do on treaties in general, where a two-thirds vote is required. If amendments could be offered to trade agreements, it could be of some substantial value to the President, and the executive branch in negotiating agreements with foreign powers saying, ''Well, we understand your position, but you have to understand ours, and there are certain political realities in the U.S. Congress.''

We have a variety of protocols where you have executive agreements which look very much like treaties which are not subject to ratification by the Senate. A very complicated agreement was entered into with North Korea which involved very substantial issues on nuclear power. That was the subject of a letter from the chairman of the Foreign Relations Committee, the chairman of the Interior Committee and myself, in my capacity last year as chairman of the Intelligence Committee, asking for Senate action. So there are precedents for having the Senate exercise its judgment and I think we have some substantial judgment in the field.

I recall very well in 1984, when the International Trade Commission came down with a decision which was in favor of the American steel industry. At that time the issue arose as to whether President Reagan would overrule the decision of the International Trade Commission. Senator Heinz, my late departed colleague, a great Senator, and I went to talk to then Secretary of Commerce Mack Baldrige who thought that we were right, the American steel industry ought to have that favorable decision from the International Trade Commission. Bill Brock, the trade representative, agreed. We then talked to Secretary of State George Shultz and Secretary of Defense Caspar Weinberger who disagreed.

The President overruled the International Trade Commission and made the decision which was based really on foreign policy and defense policy. The American steel industry paid a very high price which should have been paid out of the general revenues. Western Pennsylvania especially, but eastern Pennsylvania, too, with Bethlehem Steel, suffered very substantially.

Right now, my distinguished colleague, Senator SANTORUM, and I are working very hard on trying to get Cigna fair access to the Japanese markets. Notwithstanding certain commitments by the executive branch and the trade representatives, we have not been able to accomplish that.

So it seems to me that there is a very good reason on principle why matters which come to the Congress on trade issues ought to be subject to amendment. We have some understanding of the trade issues, and we have some understanding of our States' stakes. I think it would be entirely appropriate for us to be able to offer those amendments and not to have to simply vote yes or no, take it all or leave it.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The time of the Senator from Pennsylvania has expired.

Mr. SPECTER. I ask unanimous consent for 2 additional minutes.

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

MY GRANDDAUGHTER SILVI

Mr. SPECTER. Before commenting briefly on judges, I have a very brief personal note. Yesterday, I spoke about the appropriations bill on Labor, Health and Human Services. My 3-year-old granddaughter, Silvi, was watching the screen on C–SPAN 2, perhaps one of the few watching. She said to her father, my son, Shanin, ''Why doesn't he say hi?''

I told her I might speak this afternoon and alerted her, although the time is somewhat delayed. I do not think it is somewhat inappropriate to say hi to my granddaughter, Silvi. I know in the old days, they said you couldn't do that. But without objection, I say hi to her.

JUDGES

Mr. SPECTER. Mr. President, I want to say a word or two about judges.

It is a very difficult matter getting judges confirmed in the Senate. I congratulate my distinguished colleague, Bruce Kauffman, a former Supreme Court Justice in Pennsylvania, for his confirmation yesterday.

I understand the distinguished Pennsylvanian from Wilkes-Barre, A. Richard Caputo, Esquire, is subject to confirmation with no objection.

I urge my colleagues to support the confirmation of Judge Frederica