SPECTER, for the support he has given IDeA thus far, but I believe we can and should do more next year.

Mr. President, I would ask the Minority Leader, Senator DASCHLE, if he would like to add anything to what I have said.

Mr. DASCHLE. Mr. President, I thank the Majority Leader for his comments, and I share the Senator's concern about the concentration of NIH funds. I, too, ask if next year we can't find more than $10 million for this program—$10 million that will be split among researchers in 24 states.

I would also like to explain briefly why I believe IDeA ought to be funded at a much higher level. Mr. President, IDeA funds only merit-based, peer reviewed research that meets NIH research objectives. Let me state that another way: IDeA funds only good science, and it is in no way an earmarked program specific to a specific disease or disease-related issue. Researchers from the 24 IDeA states can submit proposals to any one of a number of existing NIH funding mechanisms, and those proposals are then peer-reviewed and funding decisions are made based on merit.

Mr. President, I think the statistics the Majority Leader mentioned regarding the extreme geographic concentration of NIH research funds are eye-opening. I think many members of the Senate would be surprised to learn that nearly one-half of NIH extramural funds go to just five states, and that 24 IDeA states combined received just over 5% of NIH extramural funding in FY95. In fact, the Majority leader and I were joined by 24 of our colleagues in the Senate in sending a letter to the Subcommittee Chairman, Senator SPECTER, supporting $100 million for IDeA in FY99.

To put that request in perspective, Mr. President, the final FY99 Labor, Health and Human Services and Education appropriation before us increases NIH funding by $2 billion. In other words, a $100 million IDeA program would have designated five percent of one year's increase for this program which funds competitive, peer-reviewed research in 24 states. The conferees did include $10 million for IDeA—an increase from the FY98 funding level of $5 million—and I thank Senator SPECTER for his support. Because this program is so important, I will continue to encourage the Chairman to increase IDeA funding next year and in the years that follow.

Mr. LOTT. I thank the Minority Leader for his remarks, and I look forward continuing to work with him to significantly increase IDeA funding next year.

THE ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT ADMINISTRATION REFORM ACT

Mr. STEVENS. I would like to ask the Chairman and Ranking Member of the Committee on Environment and Public Works a question regarding S. 2364, the Economic Development Administration Reform Act, which passed the Senate on Monday. As they are aware, the State of Alaska, while rich in resources, also has communities that suffer serious economic distress. EDA assistance can make a difference to many of these communities. Thus I am pleased to support the efforts of my friends to reauthorize this important agency; and indeed, I am a cosponsor of this bill.

Let me ask specifically about an issue that is very important to Alaskans, especially those in Southeast Alaska. Under this bill, EDA programs are available to aid distressed communities with both public works and economic adjustment assistance. In Southeast Alaska, many communities have faced economic adjustment problems, such as high unemployment, as a result of Federal regulatory changes with regard to timber harvests. If these communities meet the definition of ''distressed'' as outlined in the bill, would a situation such as theirs qualify as eligible for EDA assistance?

Mr. CHAFEE. Yes, we expect it would. The situation the Senator describes is exactly the type of situation that we would expect could be addressed by EDA. In fact, I would direct the senator's attention to the bill's new Section 2(a)(1), which specifically references areas that are affected by Federal actions. The language notes as possible distressed areas those that suffer dislocation as a result of ''certain Federal actions (including environmental requirements that result in the removal of economic activities from a locality).''

Mr. BAUCUS. I agree. In fact, many areas of the country, including Montana, face similar situations. We included that phrase intentionally to ensure that such distress may be addressed by EDA programs. It is our view, and it is a view shared by EDA officials, that such communities should be eligible to apply for EDA aid.

Mr. STEVENS. With regard to the criteria used to determine eligibility, Section 301(a)(3) refers to communities that experience special needs arising from severe unemployment or economic adjustment problems resulting from changes in economic conditions. Could my colleagues tell me whether EDA has flexibility in applying this criterion to areas—such as these timber-affected Alaskan communities—that are requesting EDA assistance?

Mr. CHAFEE. Section 301(a) sets the basic eligibility requirements for economically distressed areas. These criteria are intended to ensure that EDA assistance is targeted to truly distressed communities. The third criterion, which you mention, is intended to allow the necessary flexibility to address other situations of serious distress that, for a number of reasons, may not fulfill the first two criteria but that clearly would be considered by the Secretary and Congress as deserving of assistance. Thus, the bill before us provides the Secretary with sufficient flexibility in this regard.

Mr. BAUCUS. Again, I agree. We recognized that flexibility is required to ensure that EDA may address the varied causes and types of economic distress nationwide. Therefore, in his efforts to ensure that EDA assistance go to the communities of greatest distress, the Secretary is allowed some flexibility in making determinations for awards of assistance under this Act.

Mr. STEVENS. I thank my colleagues for making these important clarifications.

LINDA MORGAN AND THE SURFACE TRANSPORTATION BOARD

Mr. FORD. Mr. President, in the closing days of the 105th Congress, it appears that S. 1802, a bill to reauthorize the Surface Transportation Board, may not be enacted into law. I hope that the STB is not penalized in any way for the failure of Congress to enact S. 1802. In fact, I want my colleagues to know that Linda Morgan, the current chairman of the STB, is well respected within the Senate on both sides of the aisle. She was a valued member of the staff of the Senate Committee on Commerce, Science, and Transportation for several years. The work ethic, honesty and balance that she demonstrated as a member of the Committee's professional staff have been evidenced also at the STB.

Linda Morgan and her staff have handled a significant number of complex matters in a timely, thorough manner despite very limited resources. Just one example of the Board's evenhanded approach is the exhaustive review of the acquisition of Conrail by CSX and Norfolk Southern. This transaction will yield significant competitive and environmental benefits, not only in Kentucky but throughout the Eastern United States. The Board's evenhanded, professional approach in reviewing this major transaction and assessing the public benefits is indicative of the excellent work that Chairman Morgan and the Board have done since its creation.

As a result, I support S. 1802 and hope that the bill could still become law before the conclusion of the 105th Congress. Also, I urge the Administration to renominate Ms. Morgan for an additional term as Chairman of the STB. She is a proven, well-qualified public servant, and she has earned the opportunity to complete the work that she has started.

PROVIDING INFORMATION ABOUT THE SENATE

Mr. WARNER. Mr. President, today, an enhanced Virtual Tour of the United States was published on the U.S. Senate web server. This enhanced tour uses state-of-the-art technology to combine high quality graphics with still pictures to provide information about historical events, rooms, and works of art in the Senate.

The Virtual Tour provides people from all over the country, and indeed from around the world, an opportunity to visit the U.S. Senate via the World Wide Web. Information provided can be used to learn more about the U.S. Capitol, as well as to plan for tours of the Senate.

From panoramic views of the Senate Chamber to a zoomed-in focus on the President's chair in the Old Senate Chamber, visitors to the Virtual Tour will experience the history of the Capitol Building and its famous rooms, as well as the richness of our country's heritage through artwork, statues, and sculptures that reflect the diversity of our Nation. The Virtual Tour currently has four rooms of the Senate available: the Senate Chamber, the Old Senate Chamber, the Old Supreme Court, and the President's room. Descriptions of important events associated with each room are provided with the graphics. Additional rooms are planned to be added on a monthly basis.

I encourage my fellow Senators to let their constituents know about the Virtual Tour. This is a resource meant to be shared with the public and enjoyed by all.

Finally, I would like to thank the following staff from the offices of the Senate Committee on Rules and Administration, the Senate Sergeant at Arms, the Secretary of the Senate, the Clerk of the House, and the Architect of the Capitol for their hard work and effort in planning, developing, and making the Virtual Tour of the Senate a reality: Cheri Allen, Chuck Badal, Richard Baker, Trent Coleman, Michael Dunn, Lisa Farmer, Wayne Firth, Charlie Kaiman, Betty Koed, Christopher Lee, Megan Lucas, Thomas Meenan, Heather Moore, Steve Payne, Brian Raines, Diane Skvarla, Ray Strong, Scott Strong, David Wall, and Wendy Wolff.

HUNGER IN AMERICA

Mr. GRAMS. Mr. President, I rise today to discuss the important issue of hunger in America. We often hear about hunger as a global problem affecting many people every day. Many in our own country warn us of a growing hunger problem in America.

One of my Minnesota constituents, Dr. Joseph Ioffe, is a former Russian professor of economics and challenges this thinking from his first hand knowledge of hunger in Russia. He has written an editorial that suggests our real problem is one that involves the quality of diet for low-income families rather than starvation.

Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that Dr. Ioffe's article be printed in the RECORD.

IS THERE REALLY HUNGER IN AMERICA

(By Joseph Ioffe)

Another day, another letter in my mailbox from public organizations fighting hunger in America. And every letter is overloaded with general statements and emotional appeals but lacks facts and specifics.

Here is one from Larry Jones, president of Feed The Children, an Oklahoma City-based organization: ''I am writing on behalf of a very special group that faces death every hour of every day of the year. It is the 15 million hungry children in the United States. Every 53 minutes a hungry child dies.'' A horrible picture—it looks like Rwanda or North Korea. Hard to believe that the U.S. government is providing food aid to many other countries while letting millions of its own people starve to death.

So I wrote a letter to Jones, asking him for specifics and, in particular, to furnish the names and addresses, at random, of children who died from starvation, say, last year. As it appeared from Jones' response, he personally had never witnessed such cases, never kept any records of the victims of hunger, but relied on statistics from other organizations.

After all, he said, his mission was not in studying facts about hunger but raising money for children who, he believed, were starving in the U.S.—which he has been doing for years by hitting mailboxes all around the country.

So I decided to go to the source Jones referred to. In a publication by the Children's Defense Fund, a Washington, DC-based public organization, I found the numbers but defined differently: 15 million children living in poverty . . . every 53 minutes a child dies from poverty. . . . It appeared that Jones did not just borrow the statistics from CDF but adjusted it to the purpose of his own understanding.

Poverty does not necessarily mean hunger. In the U.S. the poverty lines is set up fairly high. Suffice it to say that a family living at the poverty level in America has a higher income than the median income of the same size family in 150 other countries throughout the world including Eastern Europe and the former Soviet Union.

But let us put aside the difference between hunger and poverty. The point is that the CDF ''death from poverty'' statistics were unfounded as well. The official mortality statistics are based on the records of hospitals, and do no operate with such cause of death as ''poverty.''

So any responsible statement about children dying from poverty is supposed to be supported and substantiated by special studies establishing the link between medical and social causes. Nothing like that could be found in the CDF publications. Small wonder that my requests for information of this kind was just ignored by CDF.

And here is another letter, this one from Christine Vladimiroff, president of Second Harvest, a food bank network based in Chicago; ''Tonight millions of Americans won't get enough to eat . . .'' Again, no specifics about numbers, not the slightest attempt to prove that is real. Instead, attached to the letter was a picture of the Statute of Liberty holding the ''Will work for food'' poster, it was ridiculous.

Those men and women with such posters on the busy city streets, idlers and drifters, don't care about work and food at all. They are just playing a trick on compassionate motorists. At the red light, the motorists reach out for their pocket-books and hand out a dollar or two to the ''hungry'' guys. None of them has ever accepted any offer to work. But their day's ''work'' with the poster usually brings in $100 or more and the money is being spent, right away, for drugs and alcohol.

As for food, they get it at the soup kitchens. In the 30's soup kitchens served real hungry people, victims of the bad economic situation. Nowadays in America they are mostly a feeding place for people of anti-social behavior like idlers, drifters, drug abusers and alcoholics. Now the old saying, ''he who does not work, does not eat.'' is out of date.

So is there hunger in America. It is common knowledge that the U.S. is the world leader in food production, that the food prices, in relation to the wages, are the lowest, that the food stamps program combined with free distribution of basic nutritional products from the state reserves for the low-income families provides a safeguard against any threat of hunger in America. Nobody is starving in this country, and, moreover, nobody is dying from starvation.

The real problem is not feeding the hungry but improving the quality of the daily diet of the low-income families, extending their diet beyond a certain number of plain products and bringing it, gradually, to the modern nutritional standards. That is where the efforts of the charitable organizations should be directed.

Those ambitious activities who are trying to impress the public with sensations and high drama, talking about millions of starving Americans facing death, don't do any good to the country.

BAILEY ''USE OR CARRY'' FIREARMS BILL, S. 191

Mr. DEWINE. Mr. President, I rise to hail the passage last night of the Bailey Fix Act, also known as the use or carry bill, after two Congresses. This legislation will provide enhanced mandatory minimum penalties for those criminals who use guns while trafficking in drugs or in the commission of violent crimes. When the Supreme Court handed down its decision in Bailey versus United States in 1995, the Court dealt a serious blow to law enforcement. Prior to that decision, drug traffickers who ''used or carried'' firearms during or in relation to their drug trafficking crimes were subject to mandatory minimums of five years under Section 924(c) of Title 18. With this decision, the Court significantly limited prosecutors' ability to put gun-using, drug trafficking criminals away.

In Bailey, the Supreme Court, in a unanimous decision, announced that in order to receive the sentence enhancement for using or carrying a firearm during a violent or drug trafficking crime under Title 18 U.S.C. 924(c), the criminal must ''actively employ'' a firearm. This decision severely restricted an important tool used by federal prosecutors to put gun-using drug criminals behind bars. According to the U.S. Sentencing Commission, there were 9,182 defendants sentenced nationwide from 1991 to 1995 under 924(c). The Commission notes that the vast majority, about 75% of these cases are drug trafficking and bank robbery cases. Since the Bailey decision, the number of federal cases involving a 924(c) enhancement has declined by about 17%.

The question before this Congress for almost four years, two Senate hearings, and seven bills was how to restore this crime fighting tool. Across the political spectrum there is a consensus about the problem. There is also a consensus, I believe, that the purpose of this ''use or carry'' provision is twofold; to punish criminals who use guns,