

more than 25 percent last year. Those complaints run the gamut from ephemeral ticket pricing; being sold a ticket on already oversold flights; lost luggage; and flight delays, changes, and cancellations. This bill addresses these issues and more.

Perhaps of more importance, this bill does so without forcing airlines to compile information that they don't already keep. The bill simply allows air travelers the right to that basic information and the ability to make informed decisions.

Mr. President, I am fortunate to represent and be a customer of the nation's premier airline when it comes to customer satisfaction. For years, Midwest Express Airlines has enjoyed some of the highest airline customer satisfaction ratings in the country. For those of my colleagues who haven't had the pleasure to ride on Midwest Express, I, and I'm sure I speak for the senior Senator from Wisconsin, encourage you to do so.

Mr. President, Midwest Express maintains those superlative ratings because it already incorporates some of the provisions spelled out in this bill. Midwest Express already tries to notify its travelers if it anticipates a flight delay, flight change, or flight cancellation. The airline already attempts to make information on oversold flights available to its customers. Midwest Express already makes efforts to allow its customers access to frequent flyer program information.

These are some of the reasons the airline has been awarded the Consumer Reports Travel Letter Best Airline Award every year from 1992 to 1998; Zagat Airline Survey's #1 Domestic Airline award in 1994 and 1996; Travel & Leisure's World's Best Awards for Best Domestic Airline in 1997 and 1998; and Conde Nast Traveler's Business Travel Awards for Best U.S. Airline in 1998, among many awards.

Mr. President, other airlines should see this bill as a challenge to meet the lofty standards set by airlines like Midwest Express.

Mr. President, air travel is on the rise, but so are air travel complaints. This bill responds to the complaints by giving our constituents access to the information they need to make wise choices in air travel. Airlines truly concerned about their customers should already be making these efforts. As I noted, one Wisconsin-based airline is already making the effort. I urge my colleagues to join in this effort. •

EXXON VALDEZ OILSPILL

• Mr. GORTON. Mr. President, this month is the 10th anniversary of the infamous Exxon Valdez oilspill. On March 24, 1989, one of Exxon's largest tankers, under the command of a captain who had been drinking and had abandoned the bridge, struck Bligh Reef and spilled 11 million gallons of North Slope crude oil into the pristine waters of Prince William Sound.

The Exxon Valdez oilspill remains the largest man-made environmental disaster in American history. The oil spread almost 600 miles, harming wildlife, closing fisheries, and damaging the subsistence way of life of Alaska Natives living in the region. To its credit, Exxon spent as much as \$2-3 billion trying to rectify the effects of the spill, but much damage remains.

The spill brought home to all of us in the Pacific Northwest a deeper appreciation for the importance of preventing oilspills. Clean water, a vibrant fishery, and abundant wildlife are all parts of our Northwest way of life, and they are all at risk to oilspills.

In Commerce Committee hearings shortly after the spill, I told the Exxon CEO that a Japanese CEO would have been expected to resign after such a calamity. I said this not to be unkind, but because of my strongly-held view that oilspills caused by a company's reckless conduct cannot be tolerated.

It is now 10 years later, and Exxon is ready to move on. It has announced its intention to merge with Mobil, creating the largest corporation in the world, with annual revenues of over \$180 billion.

The federal government is in the process of reviewing this proposed merger. I object to the merger of Exxon and Mobil unless Exxon first resolves some important unfinished business resulting from the 1989 spill. That unfinished business is the litigation brought by the tens of thousands of fishermen, small business owners, and Alaska Natives who were harmed by the spill.

About 6,500 of these people live in Washington State. They, too, would like to move on with their lives, but they can't. They have been waiting ten years since the spill, and almost five years since a federal jury determined that Exxon should pay them over \$5 billion.

They will be waiting a lot longer if Exxon has its way. Every year of delay is worth about \$400 million to Exxon, the difference between the 6 percent interest rate on the \$5 billion judgment and Exxon's own rate of return of about 14 percent on the same \$5 billion. If this case drags on long enough, Exxon will be able to pay most of the jury verdict out of money that it made solely because of the delay in paying the judgment.

Exxon has appealed the jury verdict, raising a number of issues. This is to be expected in a case involving this much money. But while this case crawls through our court system, the victims are left waiting for closure to a horrible event that changed their lives forever, and they are waiting for a sense that justice has been done. We need to find a way to meet these perfectly understandable human needs. Exxon has the power and resources to make that happen.

We need to send the strongest possible message to Exxon and other oil companies: you use our waterways to transport your product, and you know

the consequences if your product spills, so it is your duty to take every precaution. If you act recklessly, you will pay dearly.

That message is fading after 10 years, and will be largely lost after a merger of these proportions. Now, before the merger, we have an opportunity to make an indelible impression on what would be the largest corporation on Earth—that an oilspill like this must never happen again. •

TRIBUTE TO WAYNE PERKEY

• Mr. McCONNELL. Mr. President, I rise today to commend Wayne Perkey for 30 years of dedicated service to WHAS-AM radio and his listeners in Louisville, Kentucky.

Wayne's voice has been heard by thousands of listeners over the past 30 years as a constant in the life of morning talk radio. He has made an unforgettable impression on WHAS radio, and has carefully molded the station into what it is today. When Wayne began work at WHAS the station had primarily an all-music format, and Wayne spent years transforming the station from that format into the all-talk format that they have today.

Most stations would not have been able to accomplish that kind of transition without losing a number of listeners, but Wayne's voice on the morning airwaves clenched listener support and WHAS has enjoyed long-lived success. Wayne's positive, up-beat morning program made Wayne an icon in the Louisville market. Certainly he is a mainstay that will be missed.

He presented up-to-the-minute news to hundreds of thousands of Kentuckians for the past 30 years and used his position at WHAS to serve the community. Wayne says that one of the things that drew him to work at WHAS in the first place was the stations' Crusade for Children program. He immediately took an interest in the Crusade, and played an integral role as master of ceremonies for many of his 30 years.

The Crusade is known as the most successful single-station telethon in the United States, raising \$70 million for the care and treatment of handicapped children in Kentucky and Southern Indiana since its inception in 1954. Wayne saw how vital this program was to the millions of children who benefit from the Crusade each year, and has committed to emcee the telethon for one last year. His sincere concern for Kentucky's children is admirable, and we commend him for his 30 years of commitment to this cause.

Wayne's leadership on the WHAS morning team produced numerous recognitions for its award-winning broadcasts over the years. Wayne was individually honored by receiving the very first Spirit of Louisville Award at the Mayor's Community Thanksgiving Breakfast in 1994. His professional talent will be remembered and revered, and will certainly follow him through life in whatever endeavors he pursues.