

at Ohio State University. His lifetime of service at EPA began in 1971. Most recently, on February 17, 1997, Mr. Fields was appointed Acting Assistant Administrator for the Office of Solid Waste and Emergency Response (OSWER). Prior to this, Mr. Fields served for three years as Principal Deputy Administrator for OSWER where he was responsible for Superfund and solid waste under RCRA, Director of EPA's Superfund office for over two years and serving in that office for five years, and Director of EPA's Emergency Response Division for four and a half years and Deputy Director of the Hazardous Site Control Division for a year and a half.

Even more remarkable is his list of achievements. He received the highest award for civil servants, the Presidential Rank Award for Distinguished Executive Service—not once but four times. He was recommended twice under President George Bush and twice under President Bill Clinton. He is the only EPA employee to be so honored.

According to a report issued by the General Accounting Office, by the end of this fiscal year, all cleanup remedies will have been selected for over 1,100 sites. About 31,000 sites have been removed from the Superfund inventory of potential waste sites to help promote the economic redevelopment of these priorities. I think it is fair to say that Mr. Fields deserves part of the credit.

Mr. Fields' career at EPA is one of great distinction and is a model for Virginians interested in a life in public service. I am very proud to offer my support for Mr. Fields.

THANKS TO THE MAJORITY LEADER

Mr. BYRD. Mr. President, I thank the distinguished Republican leader for his willingness to have a session on tomorrow in order that I and other Senators might make speeches which we have not had an opportunity to give during the previous busy days of this week. But I thought it better, if it could be done, that we complete our speeches today and not cause the Senate to have to be in session on tomorrow.

I did want to thank the majority leader for his willingness to have the Senate come in.

Mr. President, I thank those who have stayed to listen, and may God bless all the Members of this body and all the staff people who work to help us to serve our constituents. May he continue to bless this great country, and may we as Americans never forget that this country has been a favorite in God's masterful design. God bless America.

I yield the floor.

ACCESS TO NETWORK STATIONS VIA SATELLITE TELEVISION

Mr. BYRD. Mr. President, I rise to urge a speedy resolution to the con-

ference the House- and Senate-passed versions of H.R. 1554, the Satellite Home Viewer Improvement Act. I hope that the conferees will meet soon, and that the Congress can take final action on this matter.

This is a much needed measure to enhance the satellite television industry's ability to compete with cable television. Currently, cable has a commanding 85 percent share of the multichannel video programming distribution market. Satellite serves only 12.1 percent of the market. The 1988 Satellite Home Viewer Act enacted in 1988 put in place certain impediments to satellite carriers being truly competitive with cable. This measure alleviates those roadblocks and will promote real competition. This is good news for consumers. Prices should come down, and the diversity of programming offered should increase.

The Senate version of H.R. 1554 would remove the 90-day waiting period for receipt of broadcast network signals that consumers currently face when switching from cable to satellite television reception. It would authorize satellite carriers to offer local television station broadcasts to their customers. This provision would go a long way toward leveling the playing field between cable and satellite television. One of the major deterrents to purchasing satellite television has been the inability to watch local broadcast programming. The bill also contains a "must carry" provision, meaning that all local stations must be carried by the satellite carriers by January 1, 2002.

But, Mr. President, the aspect of this legislation that my constituents are most immediately concerned about is their current access to distant network signals through their satellite television systems. As I drive through the mountains of West Virginia, I am awed by their beauty and majesty. West Virginia truly is an amazing state in which to live, sometimes described as "all ups and downs." Flattened out as you would a crumpled piece of paper, a topographic map of West Virginia would move up the ranks from one of the smaller states in the Union to one of the largest. This awe-inspiring geography presents unique challenges to my constituents. One of those challenges is the ability to receive over-the-air broadcast signals. Many of my constituents, through no fault of their own, are having those signals terminated. While they may live in an area that is supposed to get a signal from the local broadcast station, many times geography and other factors result in a picture that is not acceptable. Under current law, if a household should be able to receive broadcast network signals with an antenna, that household is ineligible to receive distant network signals from their satellite provider. This leaves many West Virginians with little recourse. Their street address or zip code indicates that they should be able to receive

local stations with a rooftop antenna, but the steep hillsides that form their backyards make that impossible.

In an effort to address this issue, under the Senate-passed version of H.R. 1554, customers who were receiving a distant network signal before July 11, 1998, would receive those signals until December 31, 1999. After that date, the affiliate network signals of customers residing within the Grade A contours, the areas closest to the broadcast station, would be cut off. This bill will allow satellite subscribers outside of the grade A contour, but within the grade B contour, to continue to receive their distant network signals after December 31, 1999, subject to an FCC rulemaking. I believe this is a fair way to deal with subscribers who, through no fault of their own, would otherwise have distant network signals terminated.

I am a strong supporter of local broadcasters, and I believe that they perform an important function for local communities. The local news and emergency services broadcasters provide are invaluable and should be protected. While I understand the concerns expressed by local broadcasters, I am not convinced that the grandfathering provision included in the Senate bill will constitute significant harm to their livelihoods.

I urge the conferees to complete action so that Congress can quickly enact this legislation to provide relief to the many people throughout West Virginia and the Nation.

I apologize to all officers, Senators's aides and Members of the staff for the late hour, but I think that is perhaps better than being in session tomorrow.

INDEPENDENCE DAY

Mr. BYRD. Mr. President, I take this time to call the attention of our colleagues and our viewing audience to the forthcoming Independence Day, July 4.

What is July 4 all about? The Declaration of Independence in U.S. history was a document that proclaimed the freedom of the Thirteen Colonies from British rule. It was the first formal pronouncement by an organized body of people of the right to govern by choice.

On July 2, 1776, the Second Continental Congress, meeting in Philadelphia, approved Richard Henry Lee's motion for independence, and on July 4—which later came to be celebrated as Independence Day—it approved the declaration. Signing of the declaration took place over the course of several months, beginning August 2. Ultimately, the signatories numbered 56.

The Declaration of Independence, written primarily by Thomas Jefferson, and modeled largely on the theories of John Locke, have affirmed the national rights of man and the doctrine of government by contract, which Congress insisted had been repeatedly violated by King George III.

Specific grievances were listed in support of the contention that the Colonies had the right and the duty to revoke. The declaration was paid little attention to at the time, but it proved influential in the 19th century, and in the United States has enjoyed an esteem second only to the Federal Constitution.

Mr. President, all across the United States and in U.S. embassies around the world, lawns are being mowed and outdoor furniture is being hosed off as Americans prepare to celebrate our biggest open air holiday, Independence Day. The fireworks stands have been doing brisk business selling everything from smoky uncoiling snakes to dazzling sparklers to rockets and fountains that shriek and pop as they dispense multicolored bursts of flame and sparks.

The one great constant in our national lexicon, it seems, is the Fourth of July. With some variations in the side dishes, the core menu reliably consists of juicy hamburgers and crisp-skinned hotdogs slathered in ketchup and mustard, served with creamy potato and macaroni salads, potato chips, onions, sweet corn on the cob dripping with butter, and icy, icy, icy, icy watermelon wedges that provide the ammunition for seed spitting contests. How great it is.

Whether eating with friends or family at a picnic site, in one's backyard, or tailgate style, the feasts are followed by games to fill the endless wait until the skies darken and become a fitting backdrop for the big show of the day—the fireworks displays.

The sight of fireworks, those great blossoming stars of sparks that burst and then fall like rain from the sky, never fails to remind me of the words of the Star Spangled Banner, written by Francis Scott Key after witnessing the artillery bombardment of Fort Mchenry during the War of 1812: “. . . and the rockets red glare, the bombs bursting in air, gave proof through the night that our flag was still there. . . .” Francis Scott Key was being held by the British, having sailed out to their fleet, staged off Baltimore, in an attempt to free a local doctor taken hostage earlier. The British officers did finally agree to free the doctor, but decided that Key and his companions had seen too much to be released before the attack began.

The beauty and excitement of the fireworks that many of us will see this weekend, therefore, evoke for me the great battles that were fought to make our Nation free and to defend her from harm in those dangerous early years of the republic. It is when I see fireworks that I most fully appreciate the great risks hazarded by our forefathers when they declared independence from the Crown. They risked everything—their lives, their fortunes, their lands, their families, their sacred honor.

I recall Nathan Hale, who responded to the call of George Washington, the commander of the armies at Valley

Forge. George Washington wanted someone to volunteer to go behind the British lines and draw pictures of the breastworks and bring them back to him, George Washington. It was a dangerous undertaking. It meant risking one's life. And so Nathan Hale, who was a schoolteacher, volunteered. He went behind the British lines. He succeeded in what he had gone there to do, but the night before he planned to return to the American lines he was discovered and the papers were discovered on him, and the next morning he was brought before the scaffold. The British officer, whose name was Cunningham, and who denied Nathan Hale's last wish, his wish for a Bible, said to him: Have you anything to say?

Well, there at the foot of the scaffold, Nathan Hale could see the rough-hewn wooden coffin in which his body would soon lie. He said, “I only regret that I have but one life to lose for my country.” Think of that. “I only regret that I have but one life to lose for my country.”

That is the kind of patriot who gave this country its independence, and many of us can't even give our country one vote on election day. What a pitiful example we sometimes set as a people on election day when we don't bother to go to the polls. Whether we are Democrats or Republicans or Independents, we should owe that much, that much to our country and to the memory of Nathan Hale.

I talk to our young pages here and sometimes I borrow a history book from those who are here when they are attending school. I want to see what kind of history books they are reading in this day and time. When I was talking with these young pages a few days ago, I said, Who was Nathan Hale? Who here knows, who can tell me about Nathan Hale?

Well, sorrowfully, many of the history books today don't even mention Nathan Hale's name. Those are not history books. They are social science textbooks. Nathan Hale; and so he said, “I only regret that I have but one life to lose for my country.”

Those men and women risked everything, as I say—their lives, their fortunes, their lands, their families, their sacred honor, even the populations in the States they represented—when they boldly inked their names on the Declaration of Independence.

In the percussive thuds and whistling screams of today's fireworks I can hear—Can you hear?—the distant thunder of cannons and the crack of flintlocks as the first major land battle of the Revolutionary War was pitched at Point Pleasant, West Virginia. When I see the great fireworks displays put on here in the Nation's capital, I see the shadows of the Capitol dome consumed in flames, as it was in August 1814. If I look out on the wide Potomac dotted with pleasure craft bobbing gently at anchor as still more people enjoy the fireworks, I can easily imagine General George Washington and his ragged

Army struggling to cross the Delaware River for their daring Christmas day raid in the bitter cold of December 1776. And when I catch the scent of black powder drifting by as the night sky grows cloudy with the smoke from the explosions, I get the tingling sensation of fear and nerves that must have accompanied every soldier awaiting advancing Redcoats at Lexington and Concord.

What courage and what bravery were displayed by the people of this fledgling Nation, when first they undertook to break away from Great Britain. What great good fortune I, and everyone else who is listening, have, to be able to enjoy the fruits of their boldness, their courage, their willingness to give their lives. From coast to coast this weekend, we are able to freely gather, to celebrate, to rejoice, and, yes, to watch fireworks in a peaceful imitation of those perilous days over twenty decades ago. In this great land and its marvelously balanced Constitution, we have inherited a treasure beyond price. It is a treasure that we honor with our service and which we defend with our blood if need be.

So, while I enjoy the parades and picnics and fireworks of this happy holiday, I will also be offering my thanks to all those through the years who are responsible for struggling and winning the battles to secure our more perfect union, that we might be free to pursue health, happiness, and the blessings of liberty. My thanks also go to those men and women who today guard our freedom and who offer hope to others who fear the loss of their liberty, their lives, and their families.

I thank Nathan Hale who died on September 22, 1776, and who willingly would have died many times for his country.

We are a great and prosperous nation. We ought to thank God for his watchfulness over us, for the blessings he has showered upon our great country from its beginning, even before the Republic was instituted.

Just this week we have learned anew how prosperous we are, as the administration heralded new long-term estimates that paint a very bright economic picture of rising surpluses and falling debt. I must confess I am pretty wary of economic estimates. That is a science even far less exact than weather forecasting or even, it seems, astrology. It does seem clear that for the near term, at least, we may expect a small on-budget surplus that was not previously anticipated. I urge that we Senators support an effort to designate a substantial portion of these newly found resources to the Department of Veterans Affairs in order to support veterans health care. I have talked to my good friend and colleague, Mr. STEVENS, the chairman of the Appropriations Committee, and we are in agreement. But the fact that we are in agreement does not mean that the matter is settled. We have a tough uphill battle before us.

Veterans health care, a promise of lifetime care made to everyone who serves faithfully and well in the defense of our Nation, faces a funding crisis that threatens the quality and continuity of the health care that these men and women have come to depend upon. Veterans service organizations and others knowledgeable about the needs of America's veterans have pointed out that the fiscal year 2000 budget request for veterans health care is far below what is needed to meet demand and to allow the Veterans Administration to respond to new requirements levied by Congress. The budget resolution conference report adopted by the Congress earlier this year made a commitment to provide additional funds for veterans health care, but a budget resolution is a nonbinding document. Platitudes, good intentions, and fireworks do not pay doctor's bills. The funding caps passed by Congress have left the Appropriations Committee hamstrung, unable to provide more funding for this and other worthy causes. But now, if additional surpluses not associated with Social Security become available, I believe that we should try hard to honor our commitment made in the budget resolution, and honor our debt to the veterans who, in the spirit of those patriots of the Revolution, dared much, risked much, and sacrificed much that we might enjoy the blessings of freedom. They treasure our country and honor it with their service and their blood. I feel certain that my colleagues share with me a commitment to our Nation's veterans that is stronger and deeper than any allegiance to an arbitrary budget figure or cap that is based on a very different set of economic assumptions.

Mr. President, I have been fortunate to have traveled across the globe. I have seen many other lovely and ancient places, from Rome to Cairo to London to Tokyo to Moscow to that great crossroads of east and west that is Istanbul. I met warm and charming people in all these places and more. But, like Americans who will gather in far flung outposts around the globe next Monday to toast their homeland, and on Sunday to fly that flag in front of our homes, I am always glad to come home. No spot on earth calls to me like the mountains of my home, West Virginia, where the ground rises to meet my feet and the trees spread dappled umbrellas to shade me from the Sun; where glittering rivulets of clear, cold water flash like gems set in a verdant tapestry of ferns; and where birdsongs chime the hours away. In a gentle eternal symphony, raindrops hitting leaves provide the timpani and wind through the tossing branches serves as strings. The woodwind notes of mourning doves gently welcome the Sun each morning and whippoorwills pipe its setting in the evening. It is music for the heart as well as for the ears.

Nowhere are the people more dear to me than in West Virginia, where church doors are always ready to welcome the traveler and where in grocery stores there are clerks who still greet me by name and ask about my family. West Virginians are a proud people, proud of their heritage, proud of their home State. Wherever you may find them around the world—and I have found them in Afghanistan, in India, all across the globe—they are always proud to proclaim themselves Mountaineers.

I close with a favorite poem of mine by Henry van Dyke, "America for Me":

'Tis fine to see the Old World, and travel up
and down
Among the famous palaces and cities of re-
nown,
To admire the crumbly castles and the stat-
ues of the kings,—
But now I think I've had enough of anti-
quated things.
So it's home again, and home again, America
for me!
My heart is turning home again, and there I
long to be,
In the land of youth and freedom beyond the
ocean bars,
Where the air is full of sunlight and the flag
is full of stars.
Oh, London is a man's town, there's power in
the air;
And Paris is a woman's town, with flowers in
her hair;
And it's sweet to dream in Venice, and it's
great to study in Rome
But when it comes to living there is just no
place like home.
I like the German fir-woods, in green battal-
ions drilled;
I like the gardens of Versailles with flashing
fountains filled;
But, oh, to take your hand, my dear, and
ramble for a day
In the friendly western woodland where Na-
ture has her way!
I know that Europe's wonderful, yet some-
thing seems to lack:
The Past is too much with her, and the peo-
ple looking back.
But the glory of the Present is to make the
Future free,—
We love our land for what she is and what
she is to be.
Oh, it's home again, and home again, Amer-
ica for me!
I want a ship that's westward bound to
plough the rolling sea,
To the blessed Land of Room Enough beyond
the ocean bars,
Where the air is full of sunlight and the flag
is full of stars.