

may be occasional at age 9, but total dependence is normally established upon reaching the teen years. Most boys affected survive into their twenties, with relatively few surviving beyond 30 years of age.

I have heard from the parents and grandparents of a little boy in Arkansas who has DMD. His name is Austin and his family is desperately hoping for a cure so they don't have to watch their son and grandson lose his ability to walk. While we are far from finding a cure for DMD, I am hopeful that language that Senator FRIST has graciously worked with me to include in the children's health bill will help Austin and the thousands of other young boys suffering from DMD. Specifically, the Act authorizes the Secretary of Health and Human Services to expand and increase coordination of the activities by the National Institutes of Health with respect to research on muscular dystrophies, including DMD.

In conclusion, we are about to pass incredibly important legislation to address a myriad of children's health issues, including childhood cancer and Duchenne Muscular Dystrophy. Efforts to improve the quality and length of life for millions of children are valuable beyond measure, and I encourage all of my colleagues to work together with me to raise awareness about these devastating diseases and the need to find treatments and cures for the children they affect.

THE INTERCOUNTRY ADOPTION ACT OF 2000

Ms. LANDRIEU. Mr. President, it may only be September, but it sure feels like Christmas. For seven years, adoption advocates in the United States and throughout the world have waited for the moment that came late yesterday. In fact, it marked the second time this week that history has been made in these chambers. On Tuesday, this body voted to extend permanent normal trade relations to China and yesterday, we voted to ratify the Hague Convention on Protection of Children and Cooperation in Respect of International Adoption. In doing so, we have joined the international community in, for the first time, recognizing that the "child for the full, harmonious development of his or her personality, should grow up in a family." For the hundreds of thousands of children growing up on the streets and in institutions throughout the world, yesterday's vote marked the hope of a better tomorrow.

I would like to begin my remarks by thanking Chairman HELMS for his extraordinary leadership in passing this historic legislation. There is no doubt in my mind that we would not be celebrating this important moment were it not for him. In the two years since we stood together on this floor and introduced this legislation, he has worked tirelessly to ensure that each of the bill's provisions were aimed at pro-

tecting adopted children and their families. I would also like to thank Senator BIDEN, Senator BROWNBACK, Senator KENNEDY, Senator ABRAHAM, Representative GILMAN, Representative GEJDESON, Representative SMITH and Representative CAMP for their work in moving this bill forward.

I would also like to commend the adoption community at large. In my opinion, this effort is a shining example of what can be accomplished if people are willing to compromise for the greater good. I have said it before and I believe it rings true here, adoption brings people, whether they are Republican, Democrat, conservative, liberal, American, Russian or Chinese, together. United by the belief that all children deserve to grow in the love of a permanent family. Adoption breaks down barriers and helps build families.

Last year international adoption helped 15,744 children to realize their dream of having a family of their own. Not a day goes by when I do not receive a letter or a picture from one of these families telling me what incredible joy adoption has brought to their lives. Not long ago, I attended the naturalization ceremony for about 100 of these families. I distinctly remember looking into the crowd, at the tiny faces of these little ambassadors from Moldova, India, China, Kazakhstan, Russia, Korea, Romania, and thinking that there is no better example of the new era of globalization. With inventions like the Internet, geographic barriers will no longer stand in the way of children finding families. Today, it is possible for a couple from a small town like New Iberia, Louisiana to be connected with a waiting child in Irkutsk, Russia. There is no such thing as an unwanted child, just unfound families. We share a collective responsibility to find a home for every child in the world and with yesterday's vote, we acknowledged that we are willing to share in that responsibility.

As the largest receiving country, we have the opportunity to use this legislation and the system it creates to construct an international framework designed to protect the children and families involved in the adoption process. It is time for us to take action to eliminate some of the fraud, abuse and greed that can corrupt the adoption process. Joined by their commitment to protecting the rights of the child, Hague countries can now enjoy the comfort of knowing that each and every adoption will be performed in accordance with the established standards. Adoptive parents can rest easier knowing that there is somewhere they can turn with questions and concerns.

As an adoption advocate and adoptive mother, it has been a very exciting week. In addition to passing this treaty, the House just passed the H.R. 2883, the Adopted Orphans Citizenship Act. This bill grants automatic citizenship for children who are adopted. Unlike a child born to a United States citizen, adopted children are not conferred

automatic citizenship by virtue of their adoption. Instead, they must go through a long, complex and costly naturalization process. This is not only unnecessary its unfair. Adopted children should have the same rights as birth children and laws which unfairly discriminate between the two need to be changed. I urge my colleagues to act quickly to pass this legislation.

Yes, Mr. President, it has been a very good week for children in need of homes. Yesterday, President Clinton awarded the second installment of the adoption incentive payments to states who had increased their number of adoptions out of foster care. 46,000 children in foster care found homes through adoption last year. That is a 65 percent increase since 1996.

Although I am excited by the progress we have made, I am still driven by the vision of the children in institutions abroad and the knowledge that over 500,000 children in this country are caught in the foster care drift. We have accomplished a lot, but much remains to be done.

THE VERY BAD DEBT BOXSCORE

Mr. HELMS. Mr. President, at the close of business yesterday, Wednesday, September 20, 2000, the Federal debt stood at \$5,660,515,052,511.42, five trillion, six hundred sixty billion, five hundred fifteen million, fifty-two thousand, five hundred eleven dollars and forty-two cents.

One year ago, September 20, 1999, the Federal debt stood at \$5,630,759,000,000, five trillion, six hundred thirty billion, seven hundred fifty-nine million.

Five years ago, September 20, 1995, the Federal debt stood at \$4,967,473,000,000, four trillion, nine hundred sixty-seven billion, four hundred seventy-three million.

Ten years ago, September 20, 1990, the Federal debt stood at \$3,214,168,000,000, three trillion, two hundred fourteen billion, one hundred sixty-eight million.

Fifteen years ago, September 20, 1985, the Federal debt stood at \$1,823,102,000,000, one trillion, eight hundred twenty-three billion, one hundred two million, which reflects a debt increase of almost \$4 trillion—\$3,837,413,052,511.42, three trillion, eight hundred thirty-seven billion, four hundred thirteen million, fifty-two thousand, five hundred eleven dollars and forty-two cents, during the past 15 years.

ADDITIONAL STATEMENTS

NATIONAL BIBLE WEEK

• Mr. BURNS. Mr. President, I am honored to serve as one of this year's congressional co-chairs for National Bible Week, sponsored by the National Bible Association. This observance occurs during the week of November 19–26, 2000, the week during which Thanksgiving Day occurs. This is appropriate