

NOMINATIONS

TOMMY G. THOMPSON TO BE SECRETARY OF
HEALTH AND HUMAN SERVICES

Mr. CONRAD. Mr. President, I supported Governor Tommy G. Thompson's nomination to be Secretary of Health and Human Services (HHS) because he is a proven leader in reforming welfare, health care, and other important social policies.

As the steward of the Department of Health and Human Services, he will be involved in managing more than 300 separate programs and the largest budget of any cabinet agency, more than \$400 billion per year. In this position, it is my hope that he will make providing affordable, universal prescription drug coverage to every Medicare beneficiary, and reforming the Medicare program to ensure its long-term fiscal solvency at the top of his agenda.

Also, I would hope that under his leadership, HHS will take an active role in working to address continued funding and access shortfalls in the rural health care system, particularly as they relate to Medicare reform. This is especially important in my state of North Dakota, where health care providers are struggling to offer quality services to seniors living in rural areas. In addition, we know that Governor Thompson has fought hard to expand health care coverage for low-income parents and children in the state of Wisconsin. It is my hope that he will continue this effort at the federal level, with a firm commitment to retaining a strong federal role in important programs such as Medicaid and the State-Children's Health Insurance Program.

I look forward to working with Governor Thompson in the coming years to improve health care and income security for all Americans.

CONFIRMATION OF MEL MARTINEZ

Mr. CONRAD. Mr. President, I supported Mel Martinez as Secretary of the Department of Housing and Urban Development. I believe that Mr. Martinez will contribute both his knowledge of housing policy and personal experience toward increasing home ownership among all Americans. During his confirmation hearing, Mr. Martinez said that he knows the value of home ownership, because he has witnessed its great power throughout his entire life. It is true that the foundation of community involvement and prosperity is built upon home ownership, which is a critical element of the American Dream.

I am pleased that Mr. Martinez has voiced his support for the President's proposal to provide \$1.7 billion in tax credits over five years to build and renovate single-family homes in poor communities and to allocate another \$1 billion in tax credits to assist up to 650,000 families attain their dreams of becoming homeowners.

Having emigrated to the United States at the age of 15 and successfully

risen to the post of Chairman of Orange County, Florida, Mr. Martinez has proved his mettle and displayed his commitment to public service. I look forward to working with Mr. Martinez in his capacity as our nation's newest Secretary of Housing and Urban Development.

NORMAN MINETA TO BE SECRETARY OF
TRANSPORTATION

Mr. CONRAD. Mr. President, I was very pleased to support the nomination of Norman Mineta to be Secretary of Transportation.

Mr. Mineta has had a long and distinguished career in public service. Most recently, he served with distinction as Secretary of Commerce. Before that, he served for many years in the House of Representatives, where he rose to become Chairman of the Transportation Committee. With that background, Mr. Mineta could not be better prepared for the challenges he will face.

One of this country's great competitive advantages in the global economy has been our transportation infrastructure, which allows us to move raw materials to processing plants and finished products to markets around the world with great efficiency. However, our infrastructure is starting to show its age. Our roads and airports, in particular, are increasingly congested, and delays are costing our economy tens of billions of dollars annually. In recent years, the Congress has dramatically increased our national commitment to highway and airport funding to make sure our infrastructure is up to the standards and challenges of the twenty-first century. Our next Secretary of Transportation will have the important task of implementing these legislative initiatives as well as helping to negotiate the next highway bill.

As he takes on these challenges, I hope Secretary Mineta will keep in mind some of the concerns of primarily rural states like North Dakota. In my state, Essential Air Service is critically important to preserving air service to mid-size communities and helping to foster economic development in those communities. More generally, federal funding is essential to maintaining the hundreds of miles of highways that bridge the distances between population centers. Finally, I had the opportunity to talk with Mr. Mineta the other day about the unique situation in the Devils Lake region in my state and the need to come up with an innovative solution that will maintain the road network in the face of continued flooding of Devils Lake.

I look forward to working with Secretary Mineta on these many issues and wish him well in his new position.

FH CHARITABLE CONTRIBUTIONS

Mrs. HUTCHISON. Mr. President, later today I plan to introduce legislation that will be a very important part of our tax bill and also part of the effort to encourage people to give more

to charitable institutions. This bill was passed by Congress last session, and it was vetoed by the President. Senator DURBIN and I are going to reintroduce it. It is the IRA charity rollover bill.

It will allow simply anyone 59½ or older to take money from their IRA that they find they do not need for the lifestyle in which they wish to live in retirement and give it directly to charity without having to pay taxes on it. This will give more money to the charity, it will allow that person to choose where his or her money will go, and it will certainly continue to encourage people to save for their retirement security. It will also give them flexibility, an option, if they have saved in good faith and find they now can be more generous and would like to help the charity of their choice.

The charity IRA rollover bill will be introduced by Senator DURBIN and myself this afternoon. I am very pleased it also is going to be part of President Bush's tax package. Now I know that when we pass this bill, it will be signed by the President.

TRIBUTE TO ALAN CRANSTON

Mr. CLELAND. Mr. President, for the information of all Senators, I am being joined by former Senator Alan Simpson and my distinguished colleagues, Senators BOXER, FEINSTEIN, KENNEDY and ROCKEFELLER, in sponsoring a Memorial Tribute to our former colleague and my dear friend, Alan Cranston, who passed away on New Year's Eve 2000. The tribute will be held on Tuesday, February 6, 2001, at 2 p.m. in Room 902 of the Hart Building. I invite and encourage all Senators to join us for this celebration of Alan's life of service to the people of our country.

BUDGET SCOREKEEPING REPORT

Mr. DOMENICI. Mr. President, I hereby submit to the Senate the budget scorekeeping report prepared by the Congressional Budget Office under Section 308(b) and in aid of Section 311 of the Congressional Budget Act of 1974, as amended. This report meets the requirements for Senate scorekeeping of Section 5 of S. Con. Res. 32, the First Concurrent Resolution on the Budget for 1986.

This report shows the effects of congressional action on the 2001 budget through January 24, 2001. The estimates of budget authority, outlays, and revenues are consistent with the technical and economic assumptions of the 2001 Concurrent Resolution on the Budget (H. Con. Res. 290).

The estimates show that current level spending is above the budget resolution by \$33.9 billion in budget authority and by \$21.8 billion in outlays. Current level is \$14.1 billion above the revenue floor in 2001.

This is my first report for fiscal year 2001, and my first report for the first session of the 107th Congress.