

OLYMPIA SNOWE and Senator JEFF BINGAMAN to finish the job we started last year and fulfill our country's commitment. Honoring our commitment to active duty personnel, military retirees, and veterans is of special importance to me for a number of reasons. My oldest son, Brooks, currently serves in the Army and tells me firsthand how broken promises impact the morale of active duty personnel and their families.

Finally, an issue that needs to be addressed this year is concurrent receipt. I find it indefensible that our government forces men and women who fought for our country and are disabled as a result of it to choose between retirement pay and disability compensation. This nickel-and-diming of our country's heroes must stop, and I recently joined Senator HARRY REID in introducing the Retired Pay Restoration Act of 2001, S. 170. I am hopeful that we will be able to continue on the progress made last year on Concurrent Receipt and finally make this long-overdue correction for 437,000 disabled veterans nationwide.

Veterans are our country's heroes, and their selfless actions will inspire generations of Americans yet to come. Our country must honor its commitments to veterans, not only because it's the right thing to do, but also because it's the smart thing to do. I consider myself fortunate to live in our democracy, and I am filled with a sense of patriotism each day as I travel to work and see the United States Capitol come into view. In this city that is filled with monuments to the heroism of our Founding Fathers and the men and women who have served to protect our freedoms, I pledge that I will continue to fight to make veterans issues a priority in Congress.

PRESIDENT BUSH'S NEW JERSEY VISIT

Mr. CORZINE. Mr. President, yesterday, I joined with my distinguished colleague from New Jersey, Senator TORICELLI, in welcoming the President of the United States to our State of New Jersey.

I was very pleased that the President decided to visit our State, and out of respect for him I decided to go to New Jersey to welcome him personally. In my view, it is critical that members of both parties work together in a positive and constructive way to address our Nation's problems. Although the President and I disagree on a number of issues, I sincerely want to cooperate with him wherever possible to help the people of New Jersey and all Americans, and I appreciated the chance to spend some time with him.

Unfortunately, because I was in New Jersey with the President, I missed a vote on the motion to table the Wyden amendment, No. 78. This amendment would have made nondischargeable certain debts arising from the exchange of electric energy in response to the re-

cent crisis in California. If I had been present, I would have voted "aye" on the motion to table. Like Senator FEINSTEIN, I am concerned that by interjecting ourselves into this issue and giving a priority to certain creditors, we could trigger a rush to bankruptcy court that could force California utilities into bankruptcy.

NATIONAL GUARD AND RESERVES TAX CREDIT

Mr. JOHNSON. Mr. President, last week I met with South Dakota National Guard Adjutant General Phil Killey and a group of about 30 men and women from the South Dakota Guard and Reserves. Almost every community in our state benefits from the work of these Guardsmen and Reservists. For example, Guard units helped clean up the debris from last August's windstorm that hit Spearfish and Mitchell. Guard units in Aberdeen and Brookings spearheaded city-wide clean up efforts, and soldiers in Brookings even sponsored underprivileged children during the holiday season. The Guard also was instrumental in fighting the Jasper fire in the Black Hills last summer. The list goes on. From Aberdeen to Yankton, the Guard and Reserves are active members of the South Dakota community.

In addition to the support the Guard and Reserves give to South Dakota, they have also supported overseas operations including those in Central America, the Middle East, Europe, and Asia. The South Dakota Air Guard is currently preparing for its mission later this year, where it will patrol the "No-Fly Zone" in Iraq.

Most South Dakotans know at least one of the 4,500 current members of the South Dakota Guard and Reserves or the thousands of former Guardsmen and Reservists. Sometimes, the connection is even more direct. Before joining the Army, my oldest son was a member of the South Dakota Army Guard in Yankton.

General Killey reported that South Dakota ranks third in the nation in the readiness of its Guard and Reserve units. South Dakota's units are also tops in the nation in the quality of its new recruits. I commend the South Dakota Guard and Reserves for their continued excellence. National rankings only confirm the quality that has come to be expected of the Guard and Reserve of a great state.

However, recruiting and keeping the best of the best in the South Dakota National Guard and Reserves is becoming more of a challenge as our military's operations tempo has remained high while the number of active duty military forces has decreased. This tempo places significant pressure on members of the reserve component and those who employ them as they experience greater training and participation demands. That is why I am joining Senator MIKE DEWINE in introducing targeted tax relief for Guardsmen, Reservists, and those who employ them.

The legislation, called the Reserve Component Tax Assistance Act, will allow Guardsmen and Reservists to claim deductions for travel, meals, and lodging when they travel away from home and remain overnight to attend National Guard and Reserve meetings. A significant portion of the Guard and Reserve in South Dakota must travel at least 40 miles for training and meetings.

The second part of this legislation gives their employers a tax credit when the Reservists and Guardsmen are called up for a contingency operation. Often, these men and women will be gone months in support of overseas military efforts, leaving employers in a difficult position. This year the Air Guard will be deployed to Iraq, and members of the Army National Guard will be deployed to Bosnia next year. Our bipartisan legislation helps to minimize the economic impact by giving a maximum tax credit per employee of \$2000. Each employer would be eligible for a maximum credit of \$7500. This credit will help an estimated 1,100 to 1,300 businesses in our state who employ Guardsmen and Reservists.

Our legislation provides much needed tax relief to Guardsmen and Reservists, and the employers who support them, and I will continue to do all I can to support our National Guard and Reserves.

ADDITIONAL STATEMENTS

NATIONAL GIRL SCOUT WEEK

• Mrs. CARNAHAN. Mr. President, this week marks the 89th anniversary of the founding of the Girl Scouts of America. What began with a single troop of 12 girls in 1912 has grown into a 3.6 million member organization. Missouri alone has nearly 100,000 members. Over the last 89 years Girl Scouts of America has helped to instill in countless girls strong values, a social conscience, and the conviction of their own potential and self-worth.

Earlier this week, I cosponsored a resolution to designate this week as National Girl Scout Week. I thank my colleagues for unanimously passing that resolution. The Girl Scouts of America has become a national institution. The organization has held a Congressional charter for more than 50 years, and spread to nearly every city in the nation. Girl Scouts learn to be, as the Girl Scout Law says, "considerate, caring, courageous and strong." They develop a strong sense of community responsibility along with a sense of self-worth. These girls serve as role models in their communities and become tomorrow's leaders.

Community service is a bedrock principal of the Girl Scouts. Every year, each troop conducts a service project to assist their community. The Girl Scout Council of Greater St. Louis is about to start their annual April Showers project. Every year they collect and