

The agreement we have reached ensures that those who participate in the vaccination program will receive fair compensation if they suffer side effects from the vaccine. The compensation package is significantly more generous than the original proposal. Workers who are permanently and totally disabled will receive two thirds of their lost wages—three quarters if they have dependents—up to \$50,000 a year, with no lifetime cap on those benefits. Workers who are temporarily or partially disabled will receive the same benefit, but with a lifetime cap of \$262,100—the same cap as for firefighters and police officers. The children of anyone who dies as a result of vaccination will be eligible for the same benefits as those with permanent and total disability until they reach 18 years of age.

The intent of the bill is that these benefits should be exempt from taxation, as in other worker compensation programs, including the Public Safety Officers Benefit program. The intent is also that these benefits be indexed for inflation.

The benefits in this plan will go further than in the original plan in improving the health of those who are injured. Instead of limiting benefits to medical services and items needed only for immediate treatment of injury, the plan covers a wider range of medical needs including rehabilitative care and palliative care.

Our agreement also takes the important step of extending eligibility for compensation to all workers called upon to receive the vaccine. There are no deadlines to coerce persons into signing up for the program.

Thanks to the effective work of Senator MIKULSKI, the bill now includes strong provisions to make sure that the public has adequate information about the risks of vaccination, the voluntary nature of the program, and the availability of potential benefits and compensation. The bill also ensures voluntary screening for potential participants to identify health conditions that could put them at risk. Medical follow-ups will evaluate adverse health effects, and effective screening and counselling will reduce them.

So far, the vaccination plan is faltering. Only a small fraction of those who we rely on to protect us—the men and women in our hospitals and fire departments and police departments—have been willing to have smallpox vaccinations. They know the risks, and they worry that if they are injured or killed by the vaccine, they and their families will not be compensated adequately.

That is why it is so important to guarantee help for persons no longer able to work as a result of reactions to the smallpox vaccine, and to guarantee that their children have financial security as well.

Under certain circumstances, those who have been vaccinated can spread the virus used in the vaccine to others

and cause them to become ill. Recently, concerns about the safety of the vaccine were raised by two heart attack deaths among the 31,000 civilians who have been vaccinated, and one heart attack death among the 300,000 military personnel who have been vaccinated. Five other civilians suffered heart attacks that were not fatal. No one knows whether the heart attacks were the result of the vaccine—but they have added new concern about the vaccination.

This agreement is a major step forward. We still have far more to do to be fully prepared for bioterrorist attacks, but this agreement is a major step forward against what could well be the worst of all terrorist attacks, and I urge the Senate to approve it.

Mr. SUNUNU. Madam President, I ask unanimous consent that the bill be read the third time and passed, the motion to reconsider be laid upon the table, and that any statements relating to the bill be printed in the RECORD.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection, it is so ordered.

The bill (H.R. 1770) was read the third time and passed.

Mr. SUNUNU. Madam President, I suggest the absence of a quorum.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will call the roll.

The legislative clerk proceeded to call the roll.

Mr. SUNUNU. Madam President, I ask unanimous consent that the order for the quorum call be rescinded.

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Ms. MURKOWSKI). Without objection, it is so ordered.

EXECUTIVE SESSION

NOMINATIONS DISCHARGED

Mr. SUNUNU. Madam President, as in executive session, I ask unanimous consent that the HELP Committee be discharged from further consideration of the following nominations and that the Senate then proceed to their consideration: Thomas Meites, PN 479; Herbert Garten, PN 478; Florentino Subia, PN 75; Frank Strickland, PN 76; Robert Dieter, PN 79; and Michael McKay, PN 77.

I ask unanimous consent that the nominations be confirmed en bloc, the motions to reconsider be laid upon the table, the President be notified of the Senate's action, and that the Senate then resume legislative session.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection, it is so ordered.

The nominations considered and confirmed are as follows:

LEGAL SERVICES CORPORATION

Thomas R. Meites, of Illinois, to be a Member of the Board of Directors of the Legal Services Corporation for a term expiring July 13, 2004.

Herbert S. Garten, of Maryland, to be a Member of the Board of Directors of the Legal Services Corporation for a term expiring July 13, 2005.

Florentino Subia, of Texas, to be a Member of the Board of Directors of the Legal Services Corporation for a term expiring July 13, 2004.

Frank B. Strickland, of Georgia, to be a Member of the Board of Directors of the Legal Services Corporation for a term expiring July 13, 2004.

Robert J. Dieter, of Colorado, to be a Member of the Board of Directors of the Legal Services Corporation for a term expiring July 13, 2005.

Michael McKay, of Washington, to be a Member of the Board of Directors of the Legal Services Corporation for a term expiring July 13, 2004.

EXECUTIVE CALENDAR

Mr. SUNUNU. Madam President, I ask unanimous consent that the Senate consider the following nominations on today's executive calendar: Calendar Nos. 131, 133, 135, 136, 137, 138, 139, 140, 141, 142, 143, 144, 145, 146, 148, 149, 150, 151, 152, 153, 154, 155 and 156.

I ask unanimous consent that the nominations be confirmed en bloc, the motions to reconsider be laid upon the table, that the President be immediately notified of the Senate's action and the Senate then return to legislative session.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection, it is so ordered.

The nominations considered and confirmed en bloc are as follows:

VETERANS AFFAIRS

John W. Nicholson, of Virginia, to be Under Secretary of Veterans Affairs for Memorial Affairs.

ARMY

The following named officer for appointments as the Chief of the National Guard Bureau, and for appointment to the grade indicated under title 10, U.S.C., section 10502:

to be Lieutenant General

Maj. Gen. H. Steven Blum, 9926

DEPARTMENT OF STATE

Joseph LeBaron, of Oregon, a Career Member of the Senior Foreign Service, Class of Minister-Counselor, to be Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary of the United States of America to the Islamic Republic of Mauritania.

Reno L. Harnish, of California, a Career Member of the Senior Foreign Service, Class of Minister-Counselor, to be Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary of the United States of America to the Republic of Azerbaijan.

Heather M. Hodges, of Ohio, a Career Member of the Senior Foreign Service, Class of Minister-Counselor, to be Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary of the United States of America to the Republic of Moldova.

Gregory W. Engle, of Colorado, a Career Member of the Senior Foreign Service, Class of Minister-Counselor, to be Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary of the United States of America to the Togolese Republic.

Eric S. Edelman, of Virginia, a Career Member of the Senior Foreign Service, Class of Minister-Counselor, to be Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary of the United States of America to the Republic of Turkey.

Wayne E. Neill, of Nevada, a Career Member of the Senior Foreign Service, Class of Minister-Counselor, to be Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary of the