

lost; not one or two, but multiples of thousands.

Most recently in Galax, VA—otherwise known as the home of the “Old-Time Fiddlers Convention”—Webb Furniture Enterprises closed their doors due to international competition. This amendment will help those families—not just in Virginia but across this country. The proposal would direct the Department of Housing and Urban Development—HUD—to help through these tough times.

I understand no government loan or government assistance will substitute for a job. But there are ways we can assist in this regard. We ought to find ways to ease the stress and turmoil for people whose lives are unexpectedly thrown into transition after years of steady employment with a company that suddenly disappears.

While they are looking for jobs and getting retraining, people are worrying about their homes. Often the biggest financial investment in someone’s life is their home. They have a lot of equity built into that home. Again, while they are getting training and looking for another job, those mortgage payments are still there.

When I saw this sort of economic disaster hit Martinsville a few years ago, it struck me so much like a natural disaster as far as the devastation. But in many regards it is worse than a natural disaster because after a natural disaster there is a buildup. There is hope for the future. In an economic disaster with the loss of thousands of jobs, there is no clear rebuilding process.

The point is the Federal Government, in my view, ought to make similar assistance available to homeowners in economic disasters as is available when there is a natural disaster.

That is the rationale behind my amendment—the Homestead Preservation Act. This legislation will provide temporary mortgage assistance to displaced workers by helping them make ends meet during their search for a new job. Specifically, the Homestead Preservation Act authorizes HUD to administer a low-interest loan program at 4 percent for workers displaced due to international competition. The loan is for up to an amount of 12 monthly mortgage payments—only 12, 1 year—for home mortgage payments only. The program is authorized at \$10 million per year for 5 years. The loan would be paid off.

These are not grants. They are loans to be repaid over a period of 5 years. No payments, though, would be required until 6 months after the borrower has returned to work full time, or 1 year, whichever is applicable. The loan is available only for the cost of the monthly home mortgage payment, and covers only those workers displaced due to international competition. It requires individuals seeking to avail themselves of this loan program to be enrolled in job training or job assistance programs.

The Homestead Preservation Act provides temporary financial tools nec-

essary for displaced workers to get back on their feet and to succeed. It is logical and, in my view, a responsible response.

This measure garnered strong bipartisan support the last time it was considered by the Senate. I respectfully urge my colleagues to recognize the value Americans place on owning a home, and support this caring and needed initiative.

If no one has anything further to say about it, I urge adoption of this amendment.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Is there further debate on the amendment? If not, the question is on agreeing to the amendment.

The amendment (No. 3113) was agreed to.

Mr. ALLEN. Thank you, Mr. President.

Mr. BAUCUS. Mr. President, I move to reconsider the vote.

Mr. ALLEN. I move to lay that motion on the table.

The motion to lay on the table was agreed to.

REFORM

Mr. BAUCUS. Mr. President, there is another point that I would like to discuss with the chairman for the record, regarding a form of restitution that is often authorized for rebates in the case of regulated utility providers whose rates to consumers are regulated. Due to a change of circumstances or other factors, the rates that were charged for a particular period may be determined to be greater than should have been charged if all relevant factors had been known and properly accounted for. Due to the large number of customers and the relatively small amounts involved, the regulatory authority frequently permits the utility to adjust rates to provide compensatory rebates for all current customers. This avoids, for example, tracing former occupants of an address served by the utility or otherwise tracing former customers for relatively small amounts. It is my understanding that this type of procedure would qualify as restitution because substantially all the payments are directed to the actual parties that overpaid.

Mr. GRASSLEY. Yes, that is correct. Mr. BAUCUS. Mr. President, I suggest the absence of a quorum.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will call the roll.

The journal clerk proceeded to call the roll.

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

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

Mr. BAUCUS. Mr. President, we have once again had a productive day. I thank all Senators. We adopted several amendments. First is the overtime amendment, an issue which has occupied the Senate for some good amount of time. The Senate also adopted the amendment of the Senator from Maine, Ms. COLLINS, her manufacturing jobs

credit amendment. The Senate has also addressed the trade adjustment assistance amendment.

We have a number of major amendments pending. In the morning, we hope to have debate on Senator DORGAN’s runaway plant amendment which is already pending. Senator GRAHAM of Florida has an amendment already offered, as well as Senator BREAUX’s repatriation amendment. We hope to vote early in the afternoon on all those pending amendments.

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

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

MORNING BUSINESS

Mr. MCCONNELL. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the Senate now proceed to a period for morning business with Senators permitted to speak for up to 10 minutes each.

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

BURMA’S ICON STILL NEEDS HELP

Mr. MCCONNELL. Mr. President, if my colleagues doubt that the pen is mightier than the sword, they need to take 5 minutes to read Rena Pederson’s May 2 Dallas Morning News column entitled “Burma’s Icon Still Needs World’s Help.”

When it comes to continued repression in Burma, and a largely muted world response, Ms. Pederson hits a bullseye.

She is right to demand the U.S. Congress to expeditiously renew sanctions against Burma, which I fully expect us to do over the next few weeks, and to take the United Nations to task for its weak and tepid response to the State Peace and Development Council’s, SPDC, recalcitrance to implement U.N. General Assembly and Commission for Human Rights resolutions.

I share Ms. Pederson’s disbelief that the U.N. Security Council has yet to bring the Burmese crisis up for debate and sanction. We already know that Burma poses an immediate and grave threat to its neighbors, whether through refugees fleeing persecution, the spread of HIV/AIDS or the proliferation of illicit narcotics.

Unfortunately, the U.N.’s misguided “wait and see” approach serves to further exacerbate a regional crisis that is a direct result of these undesirable Burmese exports and that neighboring countries, out of political expediency, refuse to face. Thailand, China, India and other regional neighbors can only bury their heads in the sand for so long.

As three Burmese were recently sentenced to death for merely talking to

the International Labor Organization, a U.N. agency, one would think that the Secretary-General would have publicly and forcefully condemned these sentences as means to defend both the Burmese victims and the integrity of his own agency. It is not too late for such an expression.

Further, Ms. Pederson's concerns with U.N. envoy Ismail Razali's business dealings with the SPDC comes at time when the corrupt "oil for food" program in Iraq is under investigation. It is only fair to ask if principles are similarly being discarded in Burma for the sake of personal profit.

I suspect that the closer we get to the May 17 constitutional convention, the louder the din from the SPDC and its advocates in Thailand will become on "progress" being made in Burma. I have little hope that the convention will serve as a catalyst for anything but an attempt by the SPDC to bestow legitimacy upon itself and its abusive rule. The director of the Burma Fund, Zaw Oo catalogued these concerns superbly in an opinion piece entitled "Don't Help Burma's Generals" in the May 6 issue of the *Far Eastern Economic Review*.

My message to Daw Aung San Suu Kyi and the National League for Democracy could not be more clear: you are in a position of strength because of the principled stand you continue to make in support of the struggle for freedom in Burma. The people of Burma should know that America stands with them and will continue to do so until democracy and justice triumphs in Burma.

I ask unanimous consent that a copy of Ms. Pederson and Mr. Zaw Oo's articles be printed in the RECORD following my remarks.

There being no objection, the material was ordered to be printed in the RECORD, as follows:

DON'T HELP BURMA'S GENERALS
(By Zaw Oo)

As I write this, the Burmese military junta called the State Peace and Development Council, or SPDC, is expected to soon free pro-democracy leaders Aung San Suu Kyi and Tin Oo. But it will do this solely for ulterior reasons. The SPDC is seeking some measure of international credibility. Releasing Suu Kyi will get Asean off its back. Next, by also pretending to seek a road map towards some form of "disciplined" democracy, the SPDC gives Asean the cover to accept Rangoon's chairmanship of the group in 2006. But in a vicious circle, the SPDC is strong-arming the democratic opposition by using any legitimacy it gains abroad to force the opposition into accepting its road map—which will only strengthen its position as a regime. The generals don't plan to retire from politics any time soon.

The SPDC is rushing to implement its seven-point road map towards "democracy" by reconvening on May 17 a national convention to prepare a new constitution. The original convention was aborted in 1996 after the SPDC expelled the National League for Democracy for complaining that the convention was being manipulated. The new convention will just as likely be manipulated. First, holding the meeting in a remote town called Mhawbi is meant to isolate and in-

timidate opposition delegates. Moreover, the convention commission will be made up only of SPDC officials, who will completely control the agenda and procedures. The junta could also use its notorious military rule, "Order 5/96," to suppress those who oppose its wishes. Certainly, that was what it did the last time around.

The junta's hand-picked delegates are expected to ram through 104 constitutional principles laid down in 1996 before the last convention was scrapped. Those principles include setting aside 25% of parliamentary seats for the military, indirect election of the president through an electoral college, the requirement that presidential candidates have military experience, and total autonomy for the military. They are a comprehensive list of military prerogatives that make a mockery of any modern notion of constitutionality. Thus, through a "guided" convention, the SPDC's road map will lead to a "disciplined" political form: a constitutional military autocracy.

Clearly, the SPDC's version of "reform" will continue to be a disaster for Burmese. Its vision of democracy with dual power centres in the form of a military commander-in-chief and the president could easily become unstable because of the intermittent power struggles that emerge within the military. Its economic model won't bolster investors' faith. (Even the Chinese have become frustrated with Burma's appalling economic policies.) Dreams of Thai industrialists relocating manufacturing plants to Burma will remain just that: fantasies. And the continuing gross neglect of Burma's social capital and a likely failure to stem the lucrative drug trade will export instability from Burma to its neighbours.

A year ago, at a gathering in Bangkok of like-minded individuals from 10 countries, there was the promise of a start to building an effective regional strategy towards Burma. The gathering, called the Bangkok Process, could have sent a clear signal to the SPDC that its intentions were unacceptable. Sadly, the meeting chose to build on the earlier constructive-engagement policy. Still, the damage could have been minimized if the process had crafted a larger international strategy by inviting the participation of the United States, and provided the United Nations a stronger mandate to mediate and enforce a democratic settlement in Burma.

Today, only a democratic breakthrough can stop the looming confrontations in Burma. Suu Kyi has been consistent in offering a reasonable role for military leaders in jointly transforming Burma into a democratic country. In 1990, the Burmese military organized an election and supervised it; the NLD won but the military refused to honour the results. Now is the time finally to resolve this impasse. The key is to assist negotiations in Burma for implementing this as-yet unrealized national mandate in a way that provides shared responsibility between the NLD, the military and ethnic leaders. Compromise is needed to allow for a sharing of power and responsibility in managing a democratic transition. All this is clear. But what would not be helpful is for Burma's neighbours to help efforts by the SPDC to strengthen and prolong its rule. This would not be in the interest of anyone in Asia, let alone Burma.

[From the *Dallas Morning News*, May 2, 2004]

BURMA'S ICON STILL NEEDS WORLD'S HELP
(By Rena Pederson)

Back in 1995, Madeleine Albright went to Burma to visit Aung San Suu Kyi, who was being held under arrest. Though jailed in her own home, the Nobel Peace Prize winner showed her respect for visiting secretary of

state in a touching way. She scrubbed the walls and floor of her house by hand and washed and ironed the curtains by herself.

It is a good bet that few Nobel laureates have had to do the same.

But, then, there is no one quite like Ms. Suu Kyi, the brilliant Oxford graduate who continues to risk her life to bring democracy to Burma.

Last week, Ms. Albright returned the favor. She joined Republican Sen. John McCain of Arizona in calling for a renewal of American sanctions on the Burmese junta because the murderous generals are keeping Ms. Suu Kyi under heavy guard in her house yet again.

Fourteen Nobel literature laureates—including Gunter Grass and Toni Morrison—recently joined Vaclav Havel, former president of the Czech Republic, in calling for the release of Ms. Suu Kyi and other imprisoned writers in Burma.

Like Ms. Albright, Mr. Havel has been inspired by Ms. Suu Kyi's astounding courage and has been pressing for her release for more than a decade. What is little known is that he was considered the shoo-in for the Nobel Peace Prize in 1991 after the "Velvet Revolution" in Czechoslovakia, but he threw his support to Ms. Suu Kyi and forfeited his own chances. Hers, he explained, was the greater example.

What we need is similar gallantry from Congress, which should waste no time extending economic sanctions. What we need is similar courage from the United Nations, which has stood by while the Burmese generals slyly have made a fool of Secretary-General Kofi Annan by reneging time and again on promises of reform.

If Mr. Annan doesn't have enough problems with corruption in the "oil for food" scandal in Iraq (which may include payoffs to his son), his credibility is going to be damaged even more when people start investigating his see-no-evil attitude toward the Burmese regime.

Some of the tough questions that need to be asked include: Why did Mr. Annan send an envoy to handle the Burma crisis who was doing business deals with the regime? Mr. Annan's envoy, Razali Ismail, has a contract to provide microchips for Burmese passports. Amazingly, Mr. Annan has ruled that the sweetheart deal isn't a conflict of interest because Mr. Ismail was only a "part-time" envoy.

That's the diplomatic equivalent of passing the canapés. Pray tell, why doesn't Mr. Annan bring the Burmese crisis up before the Security Council? why has he merely purred that the junta may allow democracy in 2006?

While Mr. Annan blinks and purrs, the horrific crimes of the Burmese dictators continue without relief. Reports of war crimes continue to seep out of Burma: The rape and torture of women. The destruction of villages. Forced relocations. The laying of new land mines. The murder of Muslim minorities.

To make matters even more disturbing, the *Far Eastern Economic Review* has reported that North Korea may be selling missiles or nuclear technology to Burma. A Christian cemetery near the Rangoon Airport reportedly was bulldozed last fall to make way for the missile base.

It isn't a good time to keep passing the canapés.

As Sen. Kay Bailey Hutchison put it last week, "The brutal tactics adopted by Burma's military rulers are reprehensible. The Free World must be unequivocal in demanding the junta release Aung San Suu Kyi and change its ways."

There was a slight flutter of hope last week that the Burmese generals might be edging toward a transition because they allowed the reopening of the headquarters of

the National League for Democracy, Ms. Suu Kyi's political party. They also released a few party leaders from prison.

But 1,300 remain in prison, and the top two leaders, Ms. Suu Kyi and Tin Oo, remain under house arrest.

The junta's recent charm efforts couldn't mask the fact that behind the scenes, the generals slapped life sentences on 11 league members who are in prison. That is tantamount to a death sentence in the grim Burmese gulag. The nine weren't allowed to speak in their own defense. Their only crime was witnessing an attack on Ms. Suu Kyi by government thugs last May 30.

Even if Ms. Suu Kyi is released, she may be in greater danger outside her home if the junta imposes a constitution at gunpoint that leaves it in power. Congress must keep sanctions in place until there's certifiable change. As Margaret Thatcher would say, this is no time to go wobbly.

CENTENNIAL OF WASHOE COUNTY PUBLIC LIBRARY

Mr. REID. Mr. President, we all understand that books are one of the greatest things ever created by human beings. Books bring the world within our reach, and they open the door of knowledge. Our Nation long ago recognized the importance of books and reading. That is why we developed a system of universal education, where every child would have an opportunity to learn how to read. And that is why we have public libraries. One hundred years ago this month, on May 31, 1904, the city of Reno, NV opened its first public library. The building was constructed on donated land, with a gift of \$15,000 from Andrew Carnegie. Mr. Carnegie believed so strongly in public libraries that he built more than 1600 of them around the world. That original library served the city of Reno for 26 years. But as the town grew and the popularity of the library increased, more space was needed. In 1930, the Reno Public library moved into the old State building in Powning Park. It also became affiliated at that time with Washoe County. Two years later, the county also opened a library in the nearby city of Sparks.

After World War II, as Washoe County began to experience more growth, the library system expanded to keep up with the demand. Under the leadership of Portia Hawley Griswold, the first library "bookmobile" hit the road in the late 1950s, bringing books to remote areas of the county. A new main branch opened in downtown Reno in 1966, thanks to a gift from the Max C. Fleischmann Foundation.

As the library system added more new locations throughout the 1970s and 1980s, it also employed new innovations. A Senior Center library made books more accessible to retirees, with volunteers delivering books to the homebound. The Gerlach High School branch launched a partnership between the county and the local school system. The Sierra View library was the first to open in a shopping center. Today, the Washoe County library system has branches in 12 locations, plus a

mobile library. Citizens can also use the library's Internet branch to look for books and conduct research for school assignments, business projects, or simply to satisfy their curiosity. Last year the people of Washoe County visited the library system 1.4 million times and checked out almost 2 million items. As it has for the last 100 years, the public library is meeting the needs of the people of Reno NV, and Washoe County. It puts books and knowledge within the reach of every citizen.

This centennial of success calls for a celebration. So a gala birthday party for the Washoe County library system will be held on May 21.

Please join me in congratulating Library Director Nancy Cummings and the trustees of the Washoe County library system—Chairman Bud Fujii, Lucille Adin, June Burton, Paul Theiner and Paul Davis. Along with the Washoe County Commission, the Friends of the Washoe County Library, and the Washoe County Library Foundation, they have continued to advance the worthy goal that Andrew Carnegie embraced a century ago.

LOCAL LAW ENFORCEMENT ACT OF 2003

Mr. SMITH. Mr. President, I rise today to speak about the need for hate crimes legislation. On May 1, 2003, Senator KENNEDY and I introduced the Local Law Enforcement Enhancement Act, a bill that would add new categories to current hate crimes law, sending a signal that violence of any kind is unacceptable in our society.

Two men harassed a white lesbian in Colorado as she left a 7-11 store; one of them yelled an obscenity and called her a "faggot." The victim got into her own pickup truck and drove away, but the offenders followed her and eventually drove her off the road. When she got out of her car, the two men assaulted her sexually and beat her unconscious. A detective who later interviewed the victim about the incident was verbally abusive, calling her a "liar" when she said she could not provide a detailed description of her attackers.

I believe that Government's first duty is to defend its citizens, to defend them against the harms that come out of hate. The Local Law Enforcement Enhancement Act is a symbol that can become substance. I believe that by passing this legislation and changing current law, we can change hearts and minds as well.

MALTREATMENT OF IRAQI PRISONERS

Mr. BYRD. Mr. President, the American people know about the strong and honorable character of the American soldier. Over the last 228 years, the United States Army has rightly earned the reputation of a professional fighting force that is courageous in battle and benevolent in peace.

The United States Army has had centuries to earn the respect of the American people. The White House expected our military to earn the trust of the Iraqi people in only months. Despite the outstanding service of countless thousands of our troops, the shameful and disgusting abuse of Iraqi prisoners at the hands of U.S. soldiers is a tragedy that must be corrected immediately.

The photographic evidence that Iraqi prisoners have been humiliated, abused, and mistreated is absolutely shocking. One can hardly ponder the technicalities of the Geneva Conventions when the most basic rules of human decency have been violated. The disgust expressed by many Americans has been amplified a thousand times by outraged Muslims around the world.

How long might it be before Osama bin Laden uses these incidents to whip up anti-American sentiment in other corners of the world? After the bloodiest month of the occupation of Iraq, this is news our Nation can ill afford.

It is not clear at this point who should be held to account for this stain upon the reputation of our armed forces. No one has stepped forward to take responsibility for the conditions in Iraqi prisons. Instead, fingers are being pointed in every direction. Soldiers are blaming superior officers, and generals are blaming subordinates. Others blame our intelligence services, which blame contractors, who blame others still. Some military leaders claim that this is an isolated incident, others make ominous claims about patterns of abuses. With whom does this buck stop?

The Armed Services Committee today had a closed-door briefing from three Army Generals. No civilian official of the Department of Defense appeared at the briefing, nor did any member of the Joint Chiefs of Staff. I did not attend that briefing. Secret, closed door meetings on a subject of such enormous import smack of damage control and cover-up—and that is the last impression the Senate should be conveying. We must ensure that Congress accedes to no ground rules in its investigations that could further taint this deplorable situation.

The time for public hearings on prisons run by the U.S. Armed Forces is now. We must leave no room for charges that investigations are being glossed over, pushed aside, sat on, or ignored. I have written to the chairman and ranking member of the Armed Services Committee to urge them to call public hearings with Secretary of Defense Donald Rumsfeld, Director of Central Intelligence George Tenet, and Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff General Richard Myers. The Armed Services Committee should also seek testimony from outside experts on the laws of war and humanitarian affairs, such as the International Committee for the Red Cross, Human Rights Watch, and scholars of international law.