

The Senate Republican High Tech Task Force remains focused on securing final passage of important priorities such as: final passage of the JOBS Bill that includes international tax reform, extension of the R&D Tax Credit and the Invest in the USA Act; preserving broad-based employee stock option plans that are threatened by FASB; class action reform to stop frivolous lawsuits that stifle innovation and drive up costs for consumers; bringing an end to patent fee diversion that harms the ability of U.S. innovators to bring their exciting products to market. Four-year delays to obtain patents hurt innovation; final passage of the Internet Tax Moratorium legislation to keep state, local, and federal tax collectors from driving up the cost of Internet access; final passage of the Spectrum Relocation Bill which will provide additional spectrum for the wireless revolution and has the potential to yield more than \$500 billion in economic and consumer benefits over the next decade, spur \$50 billion or more in capital investment, and create thousands of American jobs.

These priorities are critical to our country's continued leadership in the world, and we are redoubling our efforts to see these issues through to signature by the President. We are more committed than ever to ensuring that American workers are getting the best education in order to become the innovators of the future. And yet there are new issues arising each day. Members of the task force will be intimately involved with rewriting the Telecommunications Act of 1996. Issues such as the regulatory treatment of voice over internet protocol and hastening the availability of spectrum for next-generation wireless broadband, along with many others, will be added to our list of priorities for the coming session of Congress.

In conclusion, we have accomplished much over the past year on many technology issues. The Senate Republican High Tech Task Force has been an effective voice for technology on Capitol Hill. Our members are leaders on every major technology issue and are fighting to protect American innovation. While we have been very successful in pursuing our policy platform, technology is ever-changing. We will work diligently to ensure that we stay ahead of the curve and, if nothing else, help keep government out of the way to allow American innovators and entrepreneurs to bring the latest and greatest to the doorsteps of all Americans.

#### EMPLOYMENT OPPORTUNITIES FOR NATIVE PEOPLE

Ms. MURKOWSKI. Mr. President, when troubles befall our Nation, whether it is a hurricane in Florida, a tornado in Oklahoma, or an earthquake in my State of Alaska, America turns to the Federal Emergency Management Agency, FEMA, to help it recover.

FEMA, in turn, relies upon some 4,000 part time, temporary employees called disaster assistance employees to help it meet the heightened workload demands. These disaster reservists, who live in all corners of our Nation, are organized into cadres and are pressed into service when their services are needed.

The Federal Government transports these individuals from their home to the disaster site, houses them, pays a Federal civil service wage for their services and returns them home at Federal expense when their services are no longer needed.

In the native villages of my home State and in native communities across the Nation, the level of unemployment is unacceptably high. Native people are often left with the choice of relocating to urban areas where jobs are in greater supply, leaving their native culture behind or remaining in their communities where jobs are scarce.

I suspect that native people who live in the rural villages of Alaska will find the opportunity for intermittent employment with FEMA desirable. Employment such as that offered by FEMA in the Disaster Assistance Employee cadres allows my native people to participate in the cash economy without completely losing their ties with the traditional subsistence culture in their villages. I expect the same is true for native people who live on our Indian reservations and native Hawaiians.

Last evening, joined by Senator INOUE and Senator STEVENS, I offered an amendment to H.R. 4567, the Homeland Security Appropriations Bill on this subject. This amendment encourages the Secretary of Homeland Security to make an effort to improve the representation of American Indians, Alaska natives and native Hawaiians in the Disaster Assistance Employee cadres by actively recruiting in our native communities. The amendment was adopted by unanimous consent last evening, and I want to thank my colleagues for supporting it.

I hope that this amendment will serve its intended purpose, which is to encourage FEMA to be proactive in identifying opportunities to reduce unemployment among our qualified and motivated native workforce, and I hope that this lesson will not be lost on the other Federal agencies.

As thousands of native people from across our Nation descend on Washington next week for the opening of the National Museum of the American Indian, it is fitting that our Federal Government renew its commitment to provide native people, many of whom reside in the remotest parts of our Nation, with access to Federal employment opportunities. Last night the Senate did just that, and I am grateful to my colleagues for their support of my amendment.

#### TENTH ANNIVERSARY OF THE PASSAGE OF THE VIOLENCE AGAINST WOMEN ACT

Ms. LANDRIEU. Mr. President, today I rise to commemorate the tenth anniversary of the passage of the Violence Against Women Act, VAWA. One of the most prominent woman Latin American writers, Isabel Allende, once said, "How can one not speak about war, poverty, and inequality when people who suffer from these afflictions don't have a voice to speak?" Ten years ago today, this body rose up and spoke for a group in our society that is frequently left voiceless.

The number of women in the United States who have been murdered by an intimate partner is greater than the number of soldiers killed during the Vietnam War. In 1996 alone, over 30 percent of all female murder victims in the United States were slain by their husbands or boyfriends. These women who lost their lives in the war of domestic violence that plagues our country began to have a voice because of the passage of VAWA.

Today, there are roughly 143.4 million women in the United States. Of this population, it is predicted that almost 28.7 million, or 20 percent, will be raped during their lifetime, and one-third will be physically or sexually abused. Battery is the single greatest cause of injury to women in the United States, accounting for more emergency room visits than all other injuries combined. Yet, with these sobering statistics there are three times more shelters for neglected animals than there are shelters for battered women.

Jane Addams said, "Action indeed is the sole medium of expression for ethics." Ten years ago on this day, the United States Congress acted to ensure that all women who are victims of violence receive the protection and support they need and deserve. However, there is still more work to be done. Domestic violence is a problem that continues to afflict our country.

It is estimated that family violence costs our Nation from \$5 to \$10 billion annually in medical expenses, police and court costs, shelters, foster care, sick leave, absenteeism, and non-productivity. Remarkably, the VAWA domestic violence programs have helped to save money, while saving lives. The original VAWA that was authorized 10 years ago saved taxpayers at least \$14.8 billion in net averted social costs. This year, as we move through the appropriations process, I ask all of my colleagues to remember the millions of innocent women in this country who have been the victims of violence and the effects that violence has had, not only on them, but also on their families and our society.

Mr. LAUTENBERG. Mr. President, I rise to commemorate an important event in this country's history. Today marks the tenth anniversary of the passage of Violence Against Women Act. I am proud that I was an original cosponsor of that bill which has done so much to reduce domestic violence.