

have worked to do just that. They have inspired our youth, enriched our communities, and provided a moral support for millions.

Today, with over 2.6 million students enrolled in Catholic elementary and secondary schools, they are working as hard as ever to enhance the education of our youth.

On a personal level, Catholic schools have greatly influenced who I am today. It was at my alma mater, Ursuline Academy of New Orleans, that I sought my first elected office. As seventh grade class vice-president, I took to heart the Academy's motto of *serviam* and fully embraced the words of the founder of the Ursuline Sisters, St. Angela Merici that it is better "to serve than to be served." The promotion of educational excellence, the development of the whole person, community, and family, and the dedication to service are values that I am grateful Ursuline reinforced.

It is with these thoughts in mind that I offer my utmost congratulations and thanks to the Catholic schools, students, parents, and teachers across the Nation and specifically in Louisiana for the ongoing contributions they have made in the area of education. You have done remarkable work over the years, and I thank you for everything.

WORLD WETLANDS DAY

Ms. LANDRIEU. Mr. President, I come to the floor today on World Wetlands Day to acknowledge the proclamation by the Governor of our State that today, February 2, America's Wetlands Day in Louisiana. World Wetlands Day is a day that we join together with people around the world to bring public awareness to the benefits and values of wetlands as well as the severe challenges that confront them. February 2 of each year marks the date of the signing in 1971 of the Convention on Wetlands which provided a framework for national action and international cooperation toward the conservation and wise use of wetlands and their resources. Wetlands can be found in every country and are among the most productive ecosystems in the world.

Those of us from Louisiana bring a rather unique perspective to the subject of wetlands. You see, Louisiana's coast is really America's wetland. It is not a beach, but a vast landscape of wetlands. The landscape that extends along Louisiana's coast is one of the largest and most productive expanses of coastal wetlands in North America. It is the seventh largest delta on Earth, where the Mississippi River drains two-thirds of the United States. It is also one of the most productive environments in America—"working wetlands" as they are known to Louisianians—producing more seafood than any other State in the lower 48. It is the nursery ground for the Gulf of Mexico and habitat for the one of the

greatest flyways in the world for millions of waterfowl and migratory songbirds.

Louisiana's coastal wetlands provide storm protection for ports that carry nearly 500 million tons of waterborne commerce annually—the largest port system in the world by tonnage. That accounts for 21 percent of all waterborne commerce in the United States each year. In fact, four of the top ten largest ports in the United States are located in Louisiana.

These wetlands also offer protection from storm surge for 2 million people and a unique culture. However, what should be of fundamental interest to those of us here is the role these wetlands play in our Nation's energy security by not only protecting the Nation's critical energy infrastructure but also providing the energy supply that runs our daily lives.

Eighty percent of the Nation's offshore oil and gas supply, which is almost 30 percent of all the oil and gas consumed in this country, passes through these wetlands to be distributed to the rest of the Nation. There are more than 20,000 miles of pipelines in Federal offshore lands and thousands more inland that all make landfall on Louisiana's barrier islands and wetland shorelines. The barrier islands are the first line of defense against the combined wind and water forces of a hurricane, and they serve as anchor points for pipelines originating offshore.

Annual returns to the Federal Government of oil and gas receipts from production on the Outer Continental Shelf, OCS, average more than \$5 billion annually. No single area has contributed as much to the Federal treasury as the OCS. In fact, since 1953, the OCS has contributed \$140 billion to the U.S. Treasury.

Between 80 and 90 percent of that amount has come from offshore Louisiana. In 2003, almost \$6 billion in offshore revenues went into the Federal treasury, and more than \$5 billion, or 80 percent of that amount came from offshore Louisiana. Today the OCS supplies more than 25 percent of our Nation's natural gas production and more than 30 percent our domestic oil production, with the promise of more—expected to reach 40 percent by 2008. In fact, the OCS supplies more oil to our Nation than any other country including Saudi Arabia.

In addition to domestic production, Louisiana's coast is the land base for the Louisiana Offshore Oil Port, LOOP, America's only offshore oil port. LOOP handles about 15 percent of this country's foreign oil and is connected to more than 30 percent of the total refining capacity in the U.S. Much of the support infrastructure is located in the most rapidly deteriorating coastal areas. In addition to LOOP, one will find two storage sites for the Strategic Petroleum Reserve, SPR, and Henry Hub, one of the Nation's major natural gas distribution centers.

Port Fourchon, which supports 75 percent of the deepwater production in the Gulf, is the geographic and economic center of offshore drilling efforts along the Louisiana Coast. This port, and much of the Nation's energy supply, is connected to the mainland by a 17-mile stretch of two-lane highway—LA 1—that is inundated by flooding in relatively mild storms and is vulnerable to being washed out completely.

The oil and gas produced offshore Louisiana moves through a maze of pipelines that crisscross our State delivering energy to other regions of the country. In order to preserve this supply, Louisiana must be able to continue to host this production. Unfortunately, the very coastal wetlands that support the critical infrastructure necessary to deliver the energy are washing away at an alarming rate leaving pipelines and other energy infrastructure vulnerable to the whims of Mother Nature.

When Hurricane Ivan struck back in September, it should have been a wake-up call to us all. Although the storm did not directly hit Louisiana, its impact on prices and supply continues to be felt today. Four months later, a percentage of oil and gas production in the Gulf of Mexico remains offline as a result of the storm, directly contributing to higher oil and gas prices in our country. One can only imagine what the impact would have been to supply and prices had Ivan cut a more Western path in the Gulf.

Louisiana is losing its coastal land at the staggering rate of 25 square miles a year. That is square miles, not acres. That is a football field every 30 minutes. We lost more than 1,900 square miles in the past 70 years, and the U.S. Geological Survey predicts we will lose another 1,000 if decisive action is not taken now to save it. The effects of natural processes like subsidence and storms combined with the unintended consequences of Federal actions like the leveeing of the Mississippi River and impacts from offshore oil and gas exploration and development have led to an ecosystem on the verge of collapse.

With the loss of barrier islands and wetlands over the next 50 years, New Orleans will lose its wetland buffer that now protects it from many effects of flooding. Hurricanes will pose the greatest threat, since New Orleans sits on a sloping continental shelf that makes it extremely vulnerable to storm surges.

More than 2 million people in inland south Louisiana will be subject to more severe and frequent flooding than ever before. Coastal communities will become shore-front towns, and the economic and cultural costs of relocation are estimated in the billions of dollars.

Louisiana takes pride in its role as the country's most crucial energy provider. Ours is a State rich in natural resources. However, given the contribution my State makes to the Nation, it is time for all of us to consider what

the effects will be should we continue on our present track and ignore the problem. The fate of the country's energy supply and infrastructure are just one example of what is at stake.

There are increasing signs that people around the country understand the seriousness of the situation. In a poll released today, 90 percent of the respondents said it was important to fund national efforts to restore Louisiana's wetlands in and around New Orleans as a means to limit the damage that a direct hit from a hurricane would cause to the area. It is now long past time for the Federal Government to step up and invest in a State that gives so much to the rest of the country.

RULES OF PROCEDURE—COMMITTEE ON ARMED SERVICES

Mr. WARNER. Mr. President, the Committee on Armed Services met today and adopted its rules for the 109th Congress. In accordance with the Standing Rules of the Senate, I ask unanimous consent that these rules be printed in the RECORD.

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

RULES OF PROCEDURE OF THE COMMITTEE ON ARMED SERVICES

1. *Regular Meeting Day.*—The Committee shall meet at least once a month when Congress is in session. The regular meeting days of the Committee shall be Tuesday and Thursday, unless the Chairman, after consultation with the Ranking Minority Member, directs otherwise.

2. *Additional Meetings.*—The Chairman, after consultation with the Ranking Minority Member, may call such additional meetings as he deems necessary.

3. *Special Meetings.*—Special meetings of the Committee may be called by a majority of the members of the Committee in accordance with paragraph 3 of Rule XXVI of the Standing Rules of the Senate.

4. *Open Meetings.*—Each meeting of the Committee, or any subcommittee thereof, including meetings to conduct hearings, shall be open to the public, except that a meeting or series of meetings by the Committee or a subcommittee thereof on the same subject for a period of no more than fourteen (14) calendar days may be closed to the public on a motion made and seconded to go into closed session to discuss only whether the matters enumerated below in clauses (a) through (f) would require the meeting to be closed, followed immediately by a record vote in open session by a majority of the members of the Committee or subcommittee when it is determined that the matters to be discussed or the testimony to be taken at such meeting or meetings—

(a) will disclose matters necessary to be kept secret in the interests of national defense or the confidential conduct of the foreign relations of the United States;

(b) will relate solely to matters of Committee staff personnel or internal staff management or procedure;

(c) will tend to charge an individual with a crime or misconduct, to disgrace or injure the professional standing of an individual, or otherwise to expose an individual to public contempt or obloquy or will represent a clearly unwarranted invasion of the privacy of an individual;

(d) will disclose the identity of any informer or law enforcement agent or will dis-

close any information relating to the investigation or prosecution of a criminal offense that is required to be kept secret in the interests of effective law enforcement;

(e) will disclose information relating to the trade secrets or financial or commercial information pertaining specifically to a given person if—

(1) an Act of Congress requires the information to be kept confidential by Government officers and employees; or

(2) the information has been obtained by the Government on a confidential basis, other than through an application by such person for a specific Government financial or other benefit, and is required to be kept secret in order to prevent undue injury to the competitive position of such person; or

(f) may divulge matters required to be kept confidential under other provisions of law or Government regulations.

5. *Presiding Officer.*—The Chairman shall preside at all meetings and hearings of the Committee except that in his absence the Ranking Majority Member present at the meeting or hearing shall preside unless by majority vote the Committee provides otherwise.

6. *Quorum.*—(a) A majority of the members of the Committee are required to be actually present to report a matter or measure from the Committee. (See Standing Rules of the Senate 26.7(a)(1).

(b) Except as provided in subsections (a) and (c), and other than for the conduct of hearings, eight members of the Committee, including one member of the minority party; or a majority of the members of the Committee, shall constitute a quorum for the transaction of such business as may be considered by the Committee.

(c) Three members of the Committee, one of whom shall be a member of the minority party, shall constitute a quorum for the purpose of taking sworn testimony, unless otherwise ordered by a majority of the full Committee.

(d) Proxy votes may not be considered for the purpose of establishing a quorum.

7. *Proxy Voting.*—Proxy voting shall be allowed on all measures and matters before the Committee. The vote by proxy of any member of the Committee may be counted for the purpose of reporting any measure or matter to the Senate if the absent member casting such vote has been informed of the matter on which the member is being recorded and has affirmatively requested that he or she be so recorded. Proxy must be given in writing.

8. *Announcement of Votes.*—The results of all roll call votes taken in any meeting of the Committee on any measure, or amendment thereto, shall be announced in the Committee report, unless previously announced by the Committee. The announcement shall include a tabulation of the votes cast in favor and votes cast in opposition to each such measure and amendment by each member of the Committee who was present at such meeting. The Chairman, after consultation with the Ranking Minority Member, may hold open a roll call vote on any measure or matter which is before the Committee until no later than midnight of the day on which the Committee votes on such measure or matter.

9. *Subpoenas.*—Subpoenas for attendance of witnesses and for the production of memoranda, documents, records, and the like may be issued, after consultation with the Ranking Minority Member, by the Chairman or any other member designated by the Chairman, but only when authorized by a majority of the members of the Committee. The subpoena shall briefly state the matter to which the witness is expected to testify or the documents to be produced.

10. *Hearings.*—(a) Public notice shall be given of the date, place, and subject matter

of any hearing to be held by the Committee, or any subcommittee thereof, at least 1 week in advance of such hearing, unless the Committee or subcommittee determines that good cause exists for beginning such hearings at an earlier time.

(b) Hearings may be initiated only by the specified authorization of the Committee or subcommittee.

(c) Hearings shall be held only in the District of Columbia unless specifically authorized to be held elsewhere by a majority vote of the Committee or subcommittee conducting such hearings.

(d) The Chairman of the Committee or subcommittee shall consult with the Ranking Minority Member thereof before naming witnesses for a hearing.

(e) Witnesses appearing before the Committee shall file with the clerk of the Committee a written statement of their proposed testimony prior to the hearing at which they are to appear unless the Chairman and the Ranking Minority Member determine that there is good cause not to file such a statement. Witnesses testifying on behalf of the Administration shall furnish an additional 50 copies of their statement to the Committee. All statements must be received by the Committee at least 48 hours (not including weekends or holidays) before the hearing.

(f) Confidential testimony taken or confidential material presented in a closed hearing of the Committee or subcommittee or any report of the proceedings of such hearing shall not be made public in whole or in part or by way of summary unless authorized by a majority vote of the Committee or subcommittee.

(g) Any witness summoned to give testimony or evidence at a public or closed hearing of the Committee or subcommittee may be accompanied by counsel of his own choosing who shall be permitted at all times during such hearing to advise such witness of his legal rights.

(h) Witnesses providing unsworn testimony to the Committee may be given a transcript of such testimony for the purpose of making minor grammatical corrections. Such witnesses will not, however, be permitted to alter the substance of their testimony. Any question involving such corrections shall be decided by the Chairman.

11. *Nominations.*—Unless otherwise ordered by the Committee, nominations referred to the Committee shall be held for at least seven (7) days before being voted on by the Committee. Each member of the Committee shall be furnished a copy of all nominations referred to the Committee.

12. *Real Property Transactions.*—Each member of the Committee shall be furnished with a copy of the proposals of the Secretaries of the Army, Navy, and Air Force, submitted pursuant to 10 U.S.C. 2662 and with a copy of the proposals of the Director of the Federal Emergency Management Agency, submitted pursuant to 50 U.S.C. App. 2285, regarding the proposed acquisition or disposition of property of an estimated price or rental of more than \$50,000. Any member of the Committee objecting to or requesting information on a proposed acquisition or disposal shall communicate his objection or request to the Chairman of the Committee within thirty (30) days from the date of submission.

13. *Legislative Calendar.*—(a) The clerk of the Committee shall keep a printed calendar for the information of each Committee member showing the bills introduced and referred to the Committee and the status of such bills. Such calendar shall be revised from time to time to show pertinent changes in such bills, the current status thereof, and new bills introduced and referred to the Committee. A copy of each new revision shall be furnished to each member of the Committee.

(b) Unless otherwise ordered, measures referred to the Committee shall be referred by the clerk of the Committee to the appropriate department or agency of the Government for reports thereon.

14. Except as otherwise specified herein, the Standing Rules of the Senate shall govern the actions of the Committee. Each subcommittee of the Committee is part of the Committee, and is therefore subject to the Committee's rules so far as applicable.

15. *Powers and Duties of Subcommittees.*—Each subcommittee is authorized to meet, hold hearings, receive evidence, and report to the full Committee on all matters referred to it. Subcommittee chairmen, after consultation with Ranking Minority Members of the subcommittees, shall set dates for hearings and meetings of their respective subcommittees after consultation with the Chairman and other subcommittee chairmen with a view toward avoiding simultaneous scheduling of full Committee and subcommittee meetings or hearings whenever possible.

ACKNOWLEDGING STARTUP OF THE IDAHO NATIONAL LABORATORY

Mr. CRAPO. Mr. President, I rise today to acknowledge a new beginning with significance not only for the State of Idaho, but for the entire Nation. I am speaking of the February 1, 2005, formal launch of the new Idaho National Laboratory.

At the direction of the administration, the Idaho National Engineering and Environmental Laboratory and the Argonne National Laboratory-West, two esteemed research facilities that have served this country so well for over 55 years, are being combined to pursue even greater research and development heights as a single, cohesive enterprise. The new laboratory in Idaho has an unmatched foundation on which to pursue its Department of Energy-assigned vision of international nuclear leadership for the 21st century, compelling contributions in national and homeland security technology development, and execution of a broad supporting science and technology portfolio.

Idaho is the place where the first usable amount of electricity from nuclear energy was generated. It is where the propulsion system for the first nuclear-powered submarine was developed. And it is where 52 mostly first-of-their-kind, nuclear reactors were designed and constructed. Looking ahead, it is clearly a place well-qualified to implement the technology-based components of the national energy policy our Nation needs and that I hope this body will act on this year.

The new Idaho National Laboratory is being managed by a team that draws expertise from companies and academic institutions across the Nation. The Battelle Energy Alliance is led by Battelle Memorial Institute of Ohio. Its partners include BWX Technologies of Virginia, Washington Group International of Idaho, the Electric Power Research Institute of California and a Massachusetts Institute of Technology led national consortium of universities

including North Carolina State University, Ohio State University, Oregon State University, the University of New Mexico, and Idaho's three research universities—Boise State University, Idaho State University, and the University of Idaho.

The competition for managing the lab brought out the highest caliber of teams. With the Battelle Energy Alliance, we have a truly extraordinary national team, committed to collaborating broadly to ensure our collective interests in energy security, homeland security and economic security are well served by the new Idaho National Laboratory.

LIEUTENANT COLONEL GABRIEL PATRICIO

Mr. KENNEDY. Mr. President, I welcome this opportunity to pay tribute to Lieutenant Colonel Gabriel R. Patricio, who is concluding a 24-year career of dedication and excellence in the United States Marines. At the Marine Corps Systems Command in Quantico, VA in recent years, he has had a leading role in modernizing combat clothing and equipment to make troops faster, more efficient, lighter and safer in battle. Colonel Patricio's talents have produced the most significant upgrade in individual clothing and combat equipment for Marines in more than 50 years.

Colonel Patricio's ability to think outside-the-box served him well in finding better ways to solve old problems. His innovative ideas have reduced the time it takes to move a product from concept to the field; so that life-saving equipment is being made available to Marines more quickly. As an example, he reached across the services to the Army's Research and Development Center in Natick, MA to take advantage of their cutting-edge technology, which is now saving lives in Iraq.

Most recently, Colonel Patricio spearheaded an initiative to develop and field a state-of-the-art, on-the-move water purification and hydration system. Under his leadership, Systems Command and two private companies pooled their resources and expertise to create a pen-sized device that troops are now using to make local water clean and drinkable.

Colonel Patricio has successfully managed programs to develop and field other products to enhance the safety and performance of our troops in Iraq and elsewhere, including new, lightweight and more protective body armor; new protection for the face and eyes; lightweight helmets; improved load-bearing backpacks; hot weather, lightweight "Jungle/Desert" boots; high performance lightweight and heavyweight Polartec fleece clothing; and specialized mountain and cold-weather clothing, including gloves, boots and jackets.

Colonel Patricio has served the Marines, and the Nation well. I congratulate

him on his many outstanding contributions, and I wish him a long and happy and healthy retirement.

DARFUR

Mr. FEINGOLD. Mr. President, the United Nations' Commission of Inquiry on the crisis in Darfur reported to the Security Council on Monday of this week. Like every credible account of what has happened in Darfur, the report makes for grim reading. The Commission pointed to the "killing of civilians, torture, enforced disappearances, destruction of villages, rape and other forms of sexual violence" in its discussion of the violations of international law that have occurred in the area, and also found that there may have been Sudanese Government officials and others who acted "with genocidal intent."

This report stands in stark contrast to the positive news that emerged from Sudan last month, when a comprehensive agreement to end the decades-long, devastating north-south civil war was signed. I welcomed that agreement, and I hope it is successful. But the truth is that I have little confidence in the Government of Sudan, and I see no reason to believe that a north-south peace agreement will awaken that government to its responsibility to protect all of its citizens. Just days after the historic peace agreement was signed, I visited the refugee camps of eastern Chad and spoke to Sudanese citizens who had fled Darfur. They spoke of their desperate need for basic security back at home, and they are right. Consistent reports indicate that the violence in Darfur has continued. The Commission of Inquiry's recent report serves to remind all of us, Mr. President, that tragedy persists in Sudan, and the world has not done enough to stop it.

Much of the attention surrounding this report, Mr. President, has focused on the Commission's recommendation that the International Criminal Court, or ICC, take up the Darfur issue with the intention of trying those responsible for atrocities.

Just as the question of whether or not to use the word "genocide" was, for some time, a debate that distracted attention from the need to take meaningful action to bring security to the people of Darfur, I fear that a new issue—the question of whether or not the crimes committed in Darfur should be taken up by the International Criminal Court—may soon dominate the debate.

Mr. President, the administration is implacably opposed to the ICC. Frankly, this is a subject on which the President and I share some common ground. I have not supported joining the ICC as it stands. I want more protection for our troops to ensure that they will not be targets of unjust and politically motivated prosecutions.

But I do believe that it was a mistake to walk off in a huff as the ICC was taking shape. It is hard to protect