

the lead sponsor on the bill, has been working on this for over a decade, and versions of this bill passed through the Judiciary Committee in each of the last two Congresses. In 2003, it came within one vote of passage. Finally, because of the continuing work of both sides of the aisle, people came together to recognize the intent was right, the legislation at different points could be improved, it was improved, and then we had relatively quick passage of it. The House will be addressing the bill shortly. Then hopefully we can have a bill to the President of the United States to be signed into law for the benefit of the American people.

Also, at the beginning of last week, on Monday, we passed a resolution commending the Iraqi people on their January 30 elections. As we saw over the weekend, those elections were finalized and, in terms of the final reports, again, it is a great victory for freedom and liberty throughout the world. It was an extraordinary event, and it was fitting that we came together on this floor to celebrate and commend the process and the results in those elections.

It was in the midst of terrorist blasts and terrorist threats that 8 million Iraqi voters streamed to over 5,000 polling stations to express that influence, that power and dignity that comes with voting. The various pictures that we all saw of families bringing their sons and daughters so that they could witness this moment in history is something that captures us all.

As I mentioned, over the weekend the votes were tallied of the 8.5 million people voting. For the first time in decades the Iraqi people have been able to speak and to speak freely—and they were heard, as we saw with the outcome. It is a transformation that is fundamental. It is a fundamental transformation of power from the people, instead of over the people. This has renewed a sense of momentum and optimism and hope.

The process, as we see, continues to unfold with negotiations going on as to who will be part of the Presidential Council. Again, looking from afar, from where we sit it is very encouraging to see the various coalitions working with each other, Shiites working with the Sunnis and working with other minority parties, all working together to fashion this government. It is an exciting time for the Iraqi people and all who watch.

Jumping ahead, today we will, as I mentioned in my opening statement, vote on the nomination of Judge Michael Chertoff to lead the Department of Homeland Security. We have heard much about the judge, both in committee and then on the floor yesterday, and we will over the course of today. He has a long and distinguished career in public service and law enforcement. In the mid-1980s he was an assistant U.S. attorney alongside Rudy Giuliani. He aggressively prosecuted mob and political corruption cases. He then

went on to become New Jersey's U.S. attorney, where he oversaw high-profile and politically sensitive prosecutions in Jersey City, actually prosecuting the mayor of Jersey City, Mayor Gerald McCann, New York chief judge Sol Wachtler, and the kidnapers and killers of Exxon oil executive Sidney Reso. Fearless and scrupulous as a prosecutor, he became known not only for his legal brilliance but also for his skills as a manager and leader.

We all saw that take real meaning after 9/11. For the 20 hours after that worst ever attack on American soil, Judge Chertoff was central in directing our response. It was through his work as Chief of the Justice Department's Criminal Division that they traced the 9/11 killers back to al-Qaida, a central focus. We are indebted for all these things to his strong and unwavering leadership.

For the next 2 years Judge Chertoff was the key figure shaping our antiterrorism policies. His experience working directly with law enforcement, his expertise in homeland security policy, and his proven ability to lead in times of national crisis make him overwhelmingly qualified to direct our Homeland Security Department.

He earned unanimous approval in committee last week, with one member voting "present." I am confident that today Judge Chertoff, who has already been confirmed by this body three times, will receive overwhelming, strong bipartisan support. He is an outstanding candidate and we all look forward to working with him in his new capacity.

Another matter of security, a different type of security, which I hope we will be addressing this week—I mentioned it also a little earlier—is the Genetic Nondiscrimination Act. This is the security of information about us that can be used to give us health care security. It is a bill that many of us on the floor have been working on aggressively over the last 7, 8 years. The bill, the Genetic Nondiscrimination Act, is just that. The bill is designed to protect Americans from having valuable genetic health information abused or misused by others—for example, being used against them to get health insurance coverage or being used in some way to discriminate against them for a future job. This whole field of genetic testing and genetic information has blossomed, in part because of a wonderful public-private project that was over about a 10-year period called the Human Genome Project. This explosion of information has introduced these genetic tests that can have—and it is early, they are early—but they do have the potential for having great predictive value regarding what disease or illness you might have later in life, and would allow you to prevent that, to take preventive measures if that is the case.

Right now, scientists tell us most Americans have about a half dozen potentially harmful genetic mutations.

That is a statement that will change a week from now, a month from now, a year from now, as we learn more and more about it, but the point of this bill is that people run the risk of losing their jobs or not being promoted or not being able to get an insurance policy based on getting this test which could be of so much benefit to them. We need to prevent it, and we need to do it now, instead of waiting until it becomes a huge problem in the future.

One study in 2003 found that 40 percent of people at risk for colon cancer refused to participate in a screening exam, many citing the fear that the results might in some way cause them to lose their health insurance. That means they don't get this test. If they don't get the test, they lose the potential benefit to their own health and health security in the future. The knowledge of genetic risk has the power to save lives. As we look at tests that are early, and they are just being proven—the tests for heart disease, Alzheimer's, Parkinson's, a host of other diseases—there is great hope in these genetic tests becoming a powerful tool. The legislation we are considering this week is intended to make sure genetic testing is used as a tool to help and not hurt. I hope we will be able to pass that bill so that medical science does deliver a meaningful solution and keeps America moving forward.

I yield the floor.

RESERVATION OF LEADER TIME

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. Under the previous order, the leader time is reserved.

MORNING BUSINESS

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. Under the previous order, there will now be a period for the transaction of morning business until the hour of 12:30 p.m. with the first 30 minutes under the control of the Democratic leader or his designee and the next 30 minutes under the control of the majority leader or his designee and the remainder of the time equally divided between the two leaders or their designee.

RECOGNITION OF THE ACTING MINORITY LEADER

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. The Senator from Illinois is recognized.

TSUNAMI ASSISTANCE—NEW MODEL FOR DEVELOPMENT

Mr. DURBIN. Mr. President, pursuant to that consent, I would like to be recognized to speak to an issue which the whole world has focused on over the last several weeks and months. Within a few weeks, the Senate is likely to vote to send hundreds of millions

of dollars in assistance to the nations that were devastated by the tsunami on December 26. We have seen the videotapes. We cannot forget them. Within a matter of minutes on that terrible day, whole families and villages were swept to sea. Schools, clinics, and hospitals were destroyed. Coastal cities were eliminated. What infrastructure there was in place was wiped out.

We are doing the right thing to come to the assistance of the victims of this disaster, one of the 10 most devastating natural disasters in recent history, but we should not overlook the fact there are many other challenges in this world. Millions have died in the Congo and the Sudan. Hundreds of thousands are still at risk. Preventable, treatable diseases kill millions more every year. Someone dies of AIDS every 10 seconds in this world. Someone new is infected every 6 seconds. Poverty kills. Bad water, hunger, poor sanitation kills; they are the weapons of economic injustice and economic disparity.

Nelson Mandela said recently:

Like slavery and apartheid, poverty is not natural. It is man-made and it can be overcome and eradicated by the actions of human beings.

Overcoming poverty is not just a gesture of charity; it is an act of justice. It is the protection of a fundamental human right, the right to dignity and a decent life. Our attention now focuses on the Indian Ocean, as it should. But let's not overlook the suffering in the world.

A number of years ago I went to Bangladesh. I went there to look at food programs. In the course of my visit, I met one of the most extraordinary people I ever had the pleasure to meet. His name was Muhammad Yunus. Muhammad Yunus, not that long ago in 1976, was an economics professor. Having taken a few economic courses—I remembered my professors—he would have blended in with the faculty of most universities.

He had an idea. It was an idea that was borne out of human experience. It involves basic economics. Dr. Yunus thought for a moment, what if we gave the poorest people on Earth a small sum of money, what would they do with it? Would they pay it back? They were two very basic questions. The issue came up because he saw in many of the poorest villages of Bangladesh people who were being exploited by those who would lend them money and charge them outrageous interest rates. He started something called Grameen Bank, which means the people's bank in their local language in 1976. The concept behind it was to give a very small loan to people who were very poor.

Now, 29 years later, as I stand in the Senate, Dr. Yunus's theory of microcredit and the Grameen Bank grew from a class project to a world-wide phenomenon. Today, there are 80 million families in the world who are benefiting from Dr. Yunus's concept of microcredit. We estimate some 400 million people will benefit; 98 percent of

them are women. These are people who are part of a quiet revolution. I have seen it firsthand. Their lives have been transformed. They have enough money to feed their children, to buy basic tools, maybe to buy a goat for milk, perhaps to buy a sewing machine—basic things that transform their lives.

They pay the money back. They pay it back so others in the village can borrow money, as well. The average loan for many of Dr. Yunus's clients in Bangladesh is \$9. With \$9, many people go from being a beggar to a businessperson. He actually decided that because Bangladesh did not have a telephone system that he would buy cell phones and he would loan money to people so they could purchase them. Go to the remote villages and there sit 10 women holding a cell phone. With these cell phones, they go to their villages, they sell them minutes on the phone, and they make a living. They are the Grameen Telephone Company, the telephone women who borrowed enough money to buy a cell phone and now make a living with that cell phone. Incidentally, they charge their cell phones with a solar-powered generator. They are thinking ahead. This type of thing is happening all over the world.

The reason I raise it is because when Dr. Yunus came to see me 2 weeks ago here in Washington we talked about the tsunami. He said there is so much that needs to be done there. They need to rebuild communities. They need to rebuild lives, but do not overlook the fact that the ocean, as it came in, swept away the schools and the teachers with it. Now the surviving children who are there are in camps trying to survive instead of thinking about thriving, going to school and giving back.

Dr. Yunus said to me, this man who comes up with amazing, simple ideas: Senator, why don't we create a tsunami scholars program? Why aren't we focusing on these children and their education? It is so simple and so obvious: To rebuild the schools, to bring in trained teachers so these kids have a chance but to take it a step beyond. What if we said across this world that we would challenge all colleges and universities to take two students from the tsunami area, students who would qualify to come to school, but to give these kids a chance at an education so they could go home and rebuild those villages and rebuild those nations?

Another challenge from Dr. Yunus, very basic, from a man who understands poverty at the most basic level. We are working on that now. We think we can put together a proposal that the United States can help to lead the world into considering.

The devastation of the tsunami took only a few minutes. It will take years to overcome. If we do the right things, we can rebuild those societies in the right way. The people living there are going to know a lot about us in the process. They will know that some of

what they have been told about the United States is not true. Some who want them to be terrorists and to hate the United States will have a hard time explaining how the United States came to the assistance of these poor people after the tsunami and how we stood by them and their children in their education afterwards.

It is a small thing. It is important. It helps explain who we are. Tsunami scholarships are one example of how we can make certain we do not abandon the victims of this disaster after the headlines are gone. It is important we show this to the world, especially to the Muslim world, of what the American character is made.

I want to give these children of Indonesia, Thailand, Sri Lanka, India, and elsewhere a chance at an education that will not only transform their lives but allow them to go back and transform their countries.

The poet, Lord Byron, advised: Be thou the rainbow to the storms of life.

The peoples of the Indian Ocean have seen the storms. Let us be the rainbow that follows. Education is the most valuable tool you can put in the hands of anyone, particularly a child. As the children of the tsunami grow, let's make sure their opportunities for education are not constrained by misfortune or geography.

I yield the floor and suggest the absence of a quorum.

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. The clerk will call the roll.

The bill clerk proceeded to call the roll.

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

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. Without objection, it is so ordered.

Mr. ALLARD. Mr. President, I understand we are in Republican-allocated time on morning business.

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. The Senator is correct.

SUPPLEMENTAL APPROPRIATIONS

Mr. ALLARD. Mr. President, for the last 4 years, the United States has been locked in combat with the forces of terror. These extremists do not understand freedom and are trying even to this very day to spread their message of hate and oppression. America did not fire the first shot. Those killed on September 11 were innocent and did not deserve to die. They should be with us today. The forces of terror remain determined to defeat our Nation. They believe the United States will abandon Iraq and Afghanistan. They question our will to fight. They doubt our courage and our fortitude. They are wrong.

Our Nation has stepped up to fight and has never looked back. Under President Bush's leadership, our country has taken the battle to the enemy. As the President said in his State of the Union Address:

Our country is still the target of terrorists who want to kill many and intimidate us all,