

in a timely and responsible way and provide the necessary information so that approach decisions can be made about the Environmental Protection Agency's rule-making standards applying to the studies human dosing and their toxic effects.

RETIREMENT OF ROBERT ABBEY

Mr. REID. Mr. President, I rise today on the occasion of his retirement, to honor the 27 years of public service of Robert V. Abbey of Reno, NV. Bob hails originally from Mississippi. He was born in Clarksdale and earned his Bachelors Degree in Resource Management at the University of Southern Mississippi. Over the past 8 years, I am proud to say he has become a Nevadan.

Bob began his public service working for the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers. Later he moved to the Bureau of Land Management where he has distinguished himself as a dedicated land manager, visionary leader, and exceptional citizen.

Bob's early career at BLM included tours of duty as a budget analyst in Washington D.C.; assistant district manager in Yuma, AZ, district manager in Jackson, MS; and associate and acting state director in Colorado. Since the fall of 1997, Bob has served as the Nevada State director of the BLM. His job may very well be the toughest in Nevada and perhaps in the ranks of the BLM; in any case, it is among the most important for both.

Although his address has changed many times during his career, his commitment to public lands and public service has never wavered. The West and Nevada are better for it.

Today, Bob Abbey leads a staff of 750 employees who manage 48 million acres of public land in Nevada. He has led the Nevada BLM during an exciting and historic time. Increased public land use, record population growth, evolving management mandates and shrinking budgets represent just a few of the challenges facing the Nevada BLM. Bob Abbey has handled every difficulty with grace and vision.

During his tenure, Bob directed the implementation of the Southern Nevada Public Lands Management Act. This is no small task given that Clark County, NV leads the Nation in sustained growth and development and ever increasing recreational use of public lands.

Bob and his staff also helped me and the other members of the Nevada Congressional Delegation in the development of the Clark and Lincoln County land bills. These bills were among the most significant public lands legislation in the 107th and 108th Congresses, respectively, and Bob's leadership helped make them possible.

Bob's motto that we have more in common than our differences has set the tone for the best working relationships between Federal land managers and Nevadans in my memory. He has inspired his employees to solve prob-

lems, take pride in their work, and serve the public with distinction. The results serve as testament to his character, courage, and conviction.

At the end of next week, Bob Abbey will retire from Federal service with a remarkable record of achievements. But perhaps his greatest contribution as a land manager will come to fruition while he is enjoying his retirement with his wife Linda.

After wildfires devastated vast swaths of rangeland in Nevada and other Western States in 1999 and 2000, Bob played a key role in crafting a blueprint for rangeland and ecosystem restoration in the West. The so-called Great Basin Restoration Initiative is a grand vision and roadmap for healing the landscape in Nevada. Unfortunately, to date, the BLM and Department of Interior have yet to match Bob's vision with appropriate funding. It is my hope that this is a temporary delay and that one day soon, a thriving Great Basin ecosystem will serve as the enduring legacy of Bob Abbey's public service.

Although I regret that Bob Abbey is retiring, I know I speak for thousands of Nevadans when I thank him for his exemplary public service and wish him well with his future endeavors. We know Bob has made Nevada and our Nation a better place.

TRIBUTE TO CARLOS A. GARCIA

Mr. REID. Mr. President, it is with great pleasure that I say farewell to one of Clark County's most effective and innovative superintendents, Carlos A. Garcia.

I have worked with Carlos for several years and have had the pleasure of seeing first-hand his work as superintendent of Clark County schools, the fifth largest school district in the Nation.

I believe that one of the reasons he has acclimated so well to Clark County, and Las Vegas in particular, is because he grew up in Los Angeles. After graduating from high school in L.A., he earned bachelor's and master's degrees from Claremont College and an administrative credential in educational administration from California State University.

He developed experience as a teacher and principal in California. After several years, including serving as principal at a National Blue Ribbon School, he eventually became the superintendent of the Fresno Unified School District. When Carlos Garcia arrived in Clark County, he began to reorganize. He divided the county into regions; he began to address achievements and accountability; and he championed the cause of educating Nevada's young people to parents, teachers, business leaders and lawmakers.

It has been my pleasure to participate in different events and discussions with Carlos. We sat around a table with the other 16 superintendents in Nevada to discuss the No Child Left Behind

Act. As a result of his organization and participation, I was able to come back to Washington with a clear idea of what Nevada's school districts needed. His leadership of the superintendents was impressive, and the mutual respect was apparent.

Together, Carlos and I welcomed 60 new teachers from the Teach for America program. As a result of this venture, I am a cosponsor of legislation that will ensure that recruiting, training, and supporting this teacher corps will be supported by the Congress. When it comes to our school children and teachers, he always has a plan and always looks toward the future.

Now, Carlos has a new future to plan: his own. I am sorry that I cannot be there to shake his hand. Thank you, Carlos, for being dedicated to providing the children of Clark County with a first-rate public education. All the best to you.

POTENTIAL SUPREME COURT VACANCY

Mr. REID. Mr. President, as the Senate prepares to adjourn for the July 4 recess, one of the most noteworthy developments is an event that has not occurred. Despite widespread speculation, there have been no announced retirements from the United States Supreme Court.

We are all aware that Chief Justice Rehnquist has faced health challenges. I am impressed with his courage and fortitude.

Many feared he would not be able to attend the January inauguration to administer the oath of office to President Bush. But there he was, braving the cold to perform his constitutional duty. Many thought he would retire from the Court long before the end of the Supreme Court term. But there he was last Monday, presiding over the Court's final session, and announcing an important First Amendment decision in which he had authored the majority opinion.

I was not a member of the Senate when William Rehnquist was nominated as an Associate Justice in 1971 or when he was promoted to be Chief Justice in 1986. He was not unanimously confirmed to either position. But the Chief Justice has won many new admirers in the Senate in recent years. We appreciate the dignity and clarity with which he has led the Federal judiciary for almost 20 years. I know I speak for all of my colleagues in commending Chief Justice Rehnquist for his tremendous service to the Court and to the country. I hope he stays on the bench for years to come.

Whenever the Chief Justice or any of the Associate Justices decide to retire, I hope and expect that the President will take seriously the "Advice" part of "Advice and Consent." This is not just about the Supreme Court. The President should seek the advice of the Senate regarding all nominees. But consultation regarding a Supreme Court vacancy is especially important.

The Court is of paramount importance in the life of the Nation. These justices deal with complex legal issues that affect the lives of all Americans. It is the final guardian of our rights and liberties.

There is a long tradition of Presidents consulting with the Senate before a Supreme Court nomination occurs.

In 1869, President Grant appointed Edwin Stanton to the Supreme Court in response to a petition from Senators and House members.

In 1932, President Hoover gave Senator William Borah a list of the candidates he was considering to replace Justice Oliver Wendell Holmes. Borah persuaded Hoover to move the name that was on the bottom of the list to the top. That candidate, Benjamin Cardozo, was confirmed unanimously.

In his autobiography, Senator HATCH takes credit for convincing President Clinton not to send the Senate potentially controversial nominees and instead to nominate individuals with broad bipartisan support. Both of President Clinton's nominees, Ruth Bader Ginsburg and Stephen Breyer, were easily confirmed with Senator HATCH's support.

Last week, 44 Senators sent President Bush a letter urging him to use the advice and consent process to unite the country behind a consensus nominee. This built on the bipartisan agreement that averted the nuclear option earlier this year. At least two of the signers of that agreement, Senators NELSON of Nebraska and SALAZAR of Colorado have separately written to the President to urge consultation. A third signer, Senator PRYOR, spoke about the importance of consultation on the Senate floor last week.

Consultation with the Senate is not an end in itself. The purpose of consultation is to help the President arrive at a consensus choice for the Court, a nominee like Sandra Day O'Connor who will bring the country together, not tear it apart.

Meaningful consultation will ensure judges who are fair and independent and who are committed to protecting individual rights and freedoms.

Meaningful consultation will ensure that the President's judicial nominees are highly qualified men and women whose views are within the broad constitutional mainstream.

And meaningful consultation will help us avoid a divisive episode like we saw over the nuclear option. There are too many important issues facing this country to waste the Senate's time fighting over radical extremist judges.

I recently had the opportunity to meet with the White House Counsel, Harriet Miers. Ms. Miers made clear that the White House is not yet prepared to engage in formal consultation with us regarding a possible Supreme Court vacancy because there have been no announced retirements from the Court. I respect that position.

When a vacancy does arise, the President should obtain the views of Senate

Democrats about individuals under consideration for appointment to the Court, consistent with the advice and consent clause of the Constitution.

Let me be clear: real consultation does not consist of the White House asking Senators for the names of individuals we think should be considered for appointment to the Court. I am happy to provide such names, but that is not enough. Meaningful consultation under the advice and consent clause means that the President presents the names of individuals he is seriously considering and seeks our views on those candidates.

And of course the nomination of a candidate is just the beginning of the Senate process. There will be comprehensive hearings in the Senate Judiciary Committee, and a thorough debate in the full Senate. Any advice that Senators provide to the President in advance of a nomination is of course subject to review in light of information that comes out during the confirmation process.

As the President considers the range of individuals who might be considered for the Court, I hope he will not limit his search to sitting Federal judges. History demonstrates the value of considering individuals who have achieved prominence in civic life outside of the judiciary. In this century, such diverse figures as former President William Howard Taft, Alabama Senator Hugo Black, and California Governor Earl Warren have served with distinction on the Court.

The Senate may be especially fertile ground for finding a Supreme Court justice. Including Justice Black, some 14 Senators in American history have served on the Court. A current or former Senator would bring an important perspective to the Court's understanding of legislative history, and the need to strike a balance between the will of the majority and the rights of the minority in our society.

I have discussed publicly a number of current Senators who I believe are worthy of the President's consideration. Each of these Senators possesses relevant legal experience and enjoys the respect and admiration of fellow Senators.

Above all, I urge the President to work with the Senate at the appropriate time to identify a consensus nominee who can unite the country. With our country at war and our economy facing challenges, we don't have time for controversial, confrontational judicial nominations. We need cooperation and consensus.

Our Founding Fathers were brilliant to give the executive and the legislative branch shared responsibility for choosing members of the judicial branch. When properly executed, this division of labor ensures that our judges will be independent, and our rights will be protected.

HONORING MERITORIOUS UNIT COMMENDATION TO PORTSMOUTH NAVAL SHIPYARD

Ms. SNOWE. Mr. President, I rise today to honor the best naval nuclear shipyard in America, the Portsmouth Naval Shipyard in Kittery, ME

Today, RADM Anthony W. Lengerich visited the shipyard to celebrate the Meritorious Unit Commendation presented to Naval Shipyard Portsmouth by Chief of Naval Operations Vernon E. Clark on May 12, 2005.

The Commendation in part reads as follows:

The personnel of Portsmouth Naval Shipyard and tenant activities consistently and superbly performed their mission while establishing a phenomenal record of cost, schedule, quality, and safety performance. The Shipyard embraced the One-Shipyard Initiative and is leading the transformation of our Navy's nuclear ship maintenance base through innovation . . . Portsmouth Naval Shipyard personnel established new performance levels for submarine maintenance, modernization, and overhaul work . . . The Shipyard completed six major submarine availabilities . . . (and) reduced injuries by more than 50 percent . . . Naval Shipyard Portsmouth's extraordinary performance is translating into increased U.S. Submarine Fleet readiness. By their unrelenting determination, perseverance, and steadfast devotion to duty, the officers, enlisted personnel, and civilian employees of Naval Shipyard Portsmouth reflected credit upon themselves and upheld the highest traditions of the United States Naval Service.

Today, at the ceremony marking this exceptional recognition, Admiral Lengerich told the men and women of Portsmouth Naval Shipyard:

The Navy and the country need you to continue doing what has earned you your reputation for professionalism and patriotism. I'm talking about your work ethic, your enthusiasm, your attention to detail, your willingness to apply diligence in everything you do.

Those of us in the Maine and New Hampshire delegations couldn't agree more.

This is a shipyard that delivered six ships in a row a collective 60 weeks early, that saves \$82 million over the Navy's other shipyards for each submarine refueling, and \$26 million for each major overhaul, that is the Navy's only "Star" Site for safety, that exports its innovation and best practices to other shipyards.

Portsmouth Naval Shipyard has been in existence for 205 years. And while much has changed over the past two centuries, what has not changed is the shipyard workers' commitment to excellence, and the sense of each and every person there that they are contributing their own chapter to the remarkable story of Portsmouth—and to them we extend our most profound appreciation.

From its earliest days, producing wooden "ships of the line" to its time as a Navy command during the War of 1812 to its production of 133 submarines, including a record 31 in 1944, the yard has not only been a fixture on the New England seacoast, it has been