

is beginning to show some signs of success?

I believe we all know the sensible answer to that question.

We must not yield.

Mr. President, I suggest the absence of a quorum.

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Mr. MENENDEZ). The clerk will call the roll. The legislative clerk proceeded to call the roll.

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 President, I ask unanimous consent that the order for the quorum call be rescinded.

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

#### FREE INTERNET ACCESS

Mr. STEVENS. Mr. President, since its inception, the Internet has provided a powerful economic boost to our Nation, especially in rural areas. It has become an important everyday tool for millions of Americans, a valuable educational resource, and a powerful mechanism for communication.

To ensure the Internet's benefits are available to as many people as possible, Congress should reduce obstacles to broadband access. One way to accomplish this goal is to prevent taxes from being imposed on Internet access, because such taxes will only drive up the overall cost of the use of the Internet.

The Internet Tax Freedom Act, first passed by Congress in 1998, established a moratorium on State and local governments' ability to tax Internet access. Extended in 2004, that moratorium will expire on November 1—less than 2 months from today. Legislation has been introduced in both the House and Senate to extend the Internet tax moratorium. I have been supportive of such legislation and expressed support when the Senate Commerce Committee explored the issue at a hearing on May 23 of this year.

Our chairman, Senator INOUE, has been very supportive of the concept of keeping taxes off the Internet.

Tremendous investment, growth, and innovation in broadband deployment has occurred since the moratorium was first adopted. In order for this progress to continue, Congress should extend the Internet tax moratorium before it expires this fall.

If it is not extended by November 1, more states could take the opportunity to quickly pass laws and impose new taxes on the Internet. Such taxes would only serve to expand the digital divide between those who can afford broadband access and those who cannot.

The Internet has allowed States such as Alaska to compete on a more level playing field. Alaskans are now able to market their goods to customers in the lower 48 and around the world, which is especially beneficial for small businesses located in remote areas. Improved broadband access has also eliminated distance barriers for education and medicine, providing rural areas with a higher quality of life.

Faster, cheaper Internet access also helps drive America's economic engine and creates new jobs. Continued broadband deployment will help ensure America keeps this competitive edge. Without it, our Nation will fall behind in the global economy. If discriminatory taxes are imposed on Internet access, our country will face a real danger, and the rest of the world will no longer look to the United States for Internet innovations.

The date the Internet tax moratorium is set to expire—November 1—is fast approaching. It is my hope Congress will act to extend this important moratorium before that deadline arrives.

While the expiration of the Internet tax moratorium is the most pressing broadband issue before Congress right now, several more issues should also be addressed to encourage greater broadband deployment and availability in this country. First and foremost, universal service should be updated so that rural America has the same broadband opportunities as the rest of America. This will require the work of both Congress and the Federal Communications Commission.

Additionally, the Government should try to stay away from doing things that would reverse the recent policy trends of encouraging broadband deployment through free market principles.

I sincerely hope that the Congress will act to extend this moratorium in a prompt fashion.

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

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

The Senator from Pennsylvania is recognized.

#### 9/11 REMEMBRANCES IN PENNSYLVANIA

Mr. CASEY. Mr. President, I rise for a few moments to do something that I had hoped to do yesterday but didn't have the opportunity in the midst of our hearings on Iraq and so much else going on. I don't want to miss the opportunity to commend so many people in Somerset County in Pennsylvania, who, on two occasions—Monday night and, of course, yesterday—were observing the 9/11 remembrances.

In the case of the Monday night event I attended at the Somerset Alliance Church in Somerset, PA, I wanted to commend them for so much. There are several groups—I will not mention names—such as the National Park Service, of course, that helped bring that event together, as well as doing so much other work at the crash site; the families of Flight 93, the Flight 93 Advisory Commission, the Flight 93 Me-

morial Task Force, and so many others too numerous to name.

On Monday night, the service I attended was a night of grief, a night of gratitude, and I think a night of renewal. There was grief in the obvious sense that we still grieve for those who perished heroically on September 11, 2001, at every site—in this case in Shanksville, Somerset County, PA. Certainly, it was a night to grieve.

It was also a night to express gratitude in two ways at least: One, gratitude for those who gave their lives heroically so that the plane crashed in Pennsylvania instead of coming here to destroy the Capitol or some other part of our Government, and where more lives might have been lost, as well as, I think, to express gratitude to those brave Americans on that plane, but also to express the gratitude of the people who came after that tragedy in Somerset County, where the families, in particular, wanted to use this Monday night ceremony to thank the people of Somerset County. So many people have provided some measure of comfort over all these 6 years to the families who loved and lost. So I think it was also a night for gratitude.

Finally, it was a night to express our shared feeling of renewal, renewing not just our commitment to take care of those families and to do all we can to help them, but also our collective renewal to continue the fight for the ages—the fight against terrorism all across our country and across the world. So it was a night to renew our commitment to that basic shared promise that we make to each other that we will never stop fighting against terrorism, and we will be ever vigilant against this threat to all of America and, indeed, to the world.

I wanted to pay tribute to those in Somerset County who came together this past Monday night for a ceremony entitled "The Spirit of Community: A Service of Remembrance for the Passengers and Crew of Flight 93." I thank, in particular, the families for paying tribute to those in the community of Somerset County who have helped them.

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

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Mrs. MCCASKILL). Without objection, it is so ordered.

#### EASTERN CONGO

Mr. BROWNBACK. Madam President, I rise to speak on a situation now developing to which I hope my colleagues will pay some attention. If we get involved at an early phase, it may be something we can head off rather than have it develop full scale. And I will