

area of major focus for me has been on making sure the radios work, making sure that police and fire and homeland security and the State departments can all communicate. We have addressed that and passed funding efforts to be able to focus on that.

In addition, we have, as I mentioned earlier, focused on our veterans. It is shameful that we have not seen the resources put forth to support our veterans as they have been coming home from Iraq and Afghanistan, as well as our older veterans from other wars.

We, as Democrats, have made that a top priority. I am very proud of that. I know in meeting with veterans organizations that they have worked closely with us. And for the first time—for the first time—those veterans organizations have been listened to and have been a part of the process. We are funding the needed services in health care, rehabilitation, other areas, at the level that our veterans organizations have indicated we should be funding them.

So we have veterans as a top priority. We are seeing changes. We have also addressed what happened at Walter Reed through the Wounded Warrior Act. I am so proud that my colleague, the senior Senator from Michigan, has led that effort to be able to focus on wounded warriors and those who get caught between the military system and the VA system.

I will just mention a couple of other things because I could go on for a long time. There is a lot we have been getting done. Despite 52 filibusters and counting, there is a lot that we have been getting done, from ethics and lobbying reform, to help with the gulf coast revitalization, folks down in New Orleans and Mississippi, those areas that have been so devastated; reinvestment in our bridges and infrastructure; and our continuing effort to fight to change the direction in Iraq and to focus on counterterrorism and those things that will keep us safe.

We have held the President accountable. The Attorney General position has changed because the political efforts going on in the Attorney General's Office were brought forward and publicized. The light of day was shone. In fact, the Attorney General was forced to step down because of the questions and bringing to light what was happening in that department.

So there is a whole range of areas of accountability where tough questions have been asked about war profiteering, about other areas where we need to change the priorities of this Government to reflect what Americans are concerned about.

People work too hard for their money. They want to know that public services work. They want to know that we are fiscally responsible. They want to know that we are focused on the things that directly affect them and their families. We have a great country. I am very proud to be part of a majority that understands what is happening in this country today; that we

are in a fight for our way of life in a global economy.

We want this to be a race up, through education, innovation, fair trade laws, changing the way we fund health care, supporting our businesses that want to stay in the United States and do business here and employ here. We do not want a race to the bottom, a strategy that has been used by this President and the former Congress, saying: If you only work for less, we can be competitive. If you only lose your health care and lose your pension, we can be competitive. We do not care about safety standards. We let lead toys in or we let toothpaste in or dog food in because we are not worried about our trade laws. Somehow we can be competitive if we lose our standard of living.

We do not buy that. This caucus does not buy that. This Democratic Senate and House is fighting for our American way of life. We have placed the priorities of the middle-class Americans at the top of the list. They have had to wait too long for that to happen. And despite over and over again, filibuster after filibuster after filibuster to slow things down, with the determination, the tenacity of our Senate majority leader, and the support of our Members, we are getting results. We are getting results every day for middle-class Americans.

We will not lose our focus. I do not care if there are another 50 filibusters or if there are another 100 filibusters, we are going to keep focused on those things that have created the American dream, that have created the greatest country in the world.

We are going to make sure middle-class Americans know we are here fighting for those things they care about for their families.

I yield the floor.

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. The junior Senator from Tennessee.

TRIBUTE TO BENJAMIN HOOKS

Mr. CORKER. Mr. President, I rise today to honor an exceptional Tennessean and a pioneer in the civil rights movement. Benjamin Hooks was born in Memphis, TN, in 1925, the fifth of seven children by Robert and Bessie Hooks.

He grew up in a loving family who taught him to succeed in both education and life. After high school, Dr. Hooks began his higher education by taking pre-law classes at LeMoyné College in Memphis. Prior to finishing his degree, he was drafted into the Army, honorably serving our country in World War II. When he returned home, he went to graduate school at Howard University and afterwards received a law degree from DePaul University in Chicago.

As Dr. Hooks went through life and excelled in various endeavors, there was one experience that greatly molded the future direction of his life: being born into and growing up in the

scourge of racial segregation. After Dr. Hooks graduated college, he returned home and vowed to do his part to end racial segregation.

Initially, he fought the fight by becoming one of the first African-American lawyers in Tennessee. It was during this time he met and married Ms. Frances Dancy. Frances was a school teacher and guidance counselor. Eventually, her career took a different path, and she became her husband's assistant, adviser, and traveling companion. They had one daughter together, Patricia Hooks Gray.

As Dr. Hooks continued to practice law, he was called to fight for civil rights from another forum, the ministry. In 1956, he was ordained a Baptist minister and began to preach regularly at the Middle Baptist Church in Memphis, TN. It was there he joined Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr.'s Southern Christian Leadership Conference and became a pioneer in the NAACP-sponsored restaurant sit-ins and other boycotts.

Through these efforts, he became a respected voice in the community and in the State. In 1965, Gov. Frank Clement appointed him to become the first African-American criminal court judge in Tennessee history.

His efforts as a preacher, judge, and civil rights pioneer eventually led Hooks to Washington, DC, to become the first African-American appointee to the Federal Communications Commission. There he continued the civil rights fight by addressing numerous minority representation issues in the communications industry.

In 1976, he was elected as the executive director of the NAACP, where he led that organization for more than 15 years. As a director, he helped to increase membership and fundraising efforts, as well as plan for the organization's future for 17 years.

He also broadened the scope of the NAACP by exploring national issues such as energy, the environment, the criminal justice system, welfare, and national health insurance.

Throughout his work as a civil rights advocate, he has received numerous awards, including the Humanitarian Award from the National Conference of Christians and Jews, and the Freedom Award from the National Civil Rights Museum.

The University of Memphis created the Benjamin L. Hooks Institute for Social Change, honoring Benjamin Hooks. The Hooks Institute works to advance understanding of the civil rights movement through teaching, research, and community programs and put an emphasis on social movements, race relations, strong communities, public education, effective public participation, and social and economic justice.

On Monday, I am pleased that Dr. Hooks will receive one more honor, one of the highest civilian awards: the Presidential Medal of Freedom. This medal is given to individuals who have

made an especially meritorious contribution to society.

Dr. Hooks is a living example of that type of person. His life is an example that even while facing adversity through hard work, you can accomplish revolutionary change. His legacy will not only continue in our State but also throughout our Nation.

So it is only fitting that through this award he once again joins the ranks of other civil rights pioneers such as Martin Luther King, Jr., Clarence M. Mitchell, Leon Howard Sullivan, and Roy Wilkins.

It is an honor and a privilege to serve in the Senate on behalf of Tennesseans such as Dr. Hooks, who have exemplified the great courage that has not only positively affected our State but our country as well.

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. BROWN. Madam President, I ask unanimous consent that the order for the quorum call be rescinded.

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Ms. KLOBUCHAR). Without objection, it is so ordered.

CONSUMER PRODUCT SAFETY

Mr. BROWN. Madam President, I thank the Presiding Officer, the Senator from Minnesota, for the work she has done on the issue I will talk about today—consumer product safety.

This year, our Nation has witnessed recall after recall after recall of contaminated products—toys, vitamins, pet food, tires, the list goes on and on. Our fundamentally flawed trade policy, mixed with an indifferent—or worse—consumer protection agency, has eroded nearly 40 years of safety standards in our Nation. In the past, until the last few years, our safety standards assured parents they could trust that their children's toys were lead free.

We are now trying to strengthen the Consumer Protection Safety Commission. I am a cosponsor of the legislation authored by Senator PRYOR that will help strengthen that agency—the agency charged with keeping our families safe from contaminated products—whether it is toys or other products.

Earlier this week, however, a New York Times story revealed that the CPSC Acting Chairwoman, Nancy Nord, is actively working against these improvements, lobbying Congress to kill this bill. That is shameful.

This morning's Washington Post revealed that, in addition to fighting agency improvements, Chairwoman Nord has enjoyed trips across the country and around the world, paid for by the very toy companies she is responsible for regulating. That is outrageous.

These were trips paid for by the toy industry, the industry that is now under scrutiny for cutting corners—

cutting corners that earn big profits for industry CEOs and sends toxic toys into our children's bedrooms.

Parents have the right to trust that their children's toys are safe. Every American has the right to trust that their Government is doing its job to keep us safe. Sadly, that does not appear to be the case with the CPSC.

Now, Chairwoman Nord claims her agency simply doesn't have the resources to do the job right. She claims the legislation now working its way through Congress would overburden her agency. Why then, one must ask, did Chairwoman Nord fail to ask for more money when she met with the Appropriations Committee earlier this year? The 2008 budget she defended before Congress doesn't even account for inflation. It leaves this agency less well equipped to prevent harm to children and to the rest of us. She stood up before the House Financial Services Appropriations Subcommittee and defended this budget, never once asserting the need for additional resources.

What better opportunity could Chairwoman Nord have had to improve her agency? What better opportunity could she have had to protect our families? But she failed.

The CPSC budget is half what it was when it was created in the 1970s—in the days when most toys and consumer products were made in this country. We imported last year \$288 billion worth of products from China, tens of billions of dollars of products and toys from China and other countries that don't have a regulatory system or a Consumer Product Safety Commission or a system in place to protect consumers.

During this time, the CPSC staff dwindled from nearly 1,000 to 420. We must increase funding and staff to the CPSC. We need to increase coordination between the CPSC and Customs officials. We must give the CPSC the authority to examine and approve other nations' regulatory systems before imports from those countries show up in our children's bedrooms.

We need a leader at the CPSC who supports these goals. It is clear that Chairwoman Nord does not. She has been given the responsibility of doing everything in her power to keep our families safe and our children safe. Instead, Chairwoman Nord supports an abysmal agency budget request, is actively working against efforts to strengthen her agency, and takes trips funded by manufacturers.

Chairwoman Nancy Nord should step down. It is time to put a chairperson in place who is not satisfied with: We are doing the best we can.

We need a chairperson who fights for the authority and the resources the CPSC needs to do the job it is supposed to do—protect our families.

We need real leadership at the CPSC—leadership that doesn't side with manufacturers over consumer safety, leadership that stands up to industry pressure, leadership that puts our children and our families first.

RECOGNIZING THE 60TH ANNIVERSARY OF THE AIR FORCE AND NELLIS AIR FORCE BASE

Mr. REID. Madam President, I rise today to commemorate the 60th anniversary of the U.S. Air Force. As you are well aware, the Air Force was created by the National Security Act of 1947, the very same law that established the Department of Defense, the National Security Council, and the Central Intelligence Agency.

Like many of my colleagues in this distinguished Chamber, I represent a State with a rich history of involvement with and support for the U.S. Air Force. Less than 6 months after the Air Force was officially founded on September 18, 1947, the Las Vegas Air Force Base was reactivated to host a pilot training wing. With the onset of the Korean war, its mission changed from an advanced single-engine school to one of training jet fighter pilots for the then Far East Air Forces. And thus began a long tradition of air combat training programs held at this site that has earned this Air Force base the proud nickname "Home of the Fighter Pilot."

No single airman in Nevada history exemplified the meaning behind this slogan more than LT William H. Nellis. Born in Santa Rita, NM, in 1916, as a young man Lieutenant Nellis moved to my hometown of Searchlight, Nevada, where his father—like so many other respectable Nevadans—worked as a hard rock miner. When World War II began, Lieutenant Nellis was already married with 2 children, but this passionate young man knew he could not remain uninvolved in America's effort to rid the world of foreign oppression. After seeing a newsreel about the Army Air Corps, the precursor to the U.S. Air Force, he decided to enlist.

During the course of his valiant service, Lieutenant Nellis flew 69 missions over Europe and was shot down twice, surviving each crash and making his way back to Allied lines. Unwavering in his patriotism, he continued to volunteer to fly, doing what he saw as his duty for the great cause. Sadly, Lieutenant Nellis' last flight would come on December 27, 1944. During the Battle of the Bulge, an engagement that would cost the lives of nearly 20,000 Americans, Lieutenant Nellis was killed in action while flying with the 513th Fighter Squadron, 406 Fighter Group over Bastogne.

To honor this great Nevadan and a true American hero, the Las Vegas Air Force Base was renamed in his honor on May 20, 1950. Ever since, Nellis Air Force Base has been a stalwart of Nevada's military infrastructure and has provided U.S. airmen with the very best aerial combat training in the world.

As the pinnacle of advanced air combat aviation training, Nellis Air Force Base has provided invaluable service to the United States and its efforts in the global war on terror. The mission statement at Nellis sums it up best,