Madam President, I would like for my colleagues to join me in congratulating Virgil I. Grissom High School in Huntsville, AL, which has been named a No Child Left Behind Blue Ribbon School of 2007. Blue Ribbon Schools are selected because they are showing dramatic achievement gains in working with students from disadvantaged backgrounds or they are in the top 10 percent of their State on State tests. This is a remarkable accomplishment, and I applaud the hard work principal B.T. Drake and the many hard-working faculty and staff members have done to receive this high honor. I know that the lives of students at these schools are being changed.●

TRIBUTE TO DR. KATHERINE MITCHELL

● Mr. SESSIONS. Madam President, I come today to honor one of the great educational leaders of our time: Dr. Katherine Mitchell of Alabama. Dr. Mitchell is nationally acclaimed for her work in developing the Alabama Reading Initiative, ARI. This scientifically based program has not only been of tremendous benefit to students and teachers in Alabama but also in many other States that have modeled their State reading initiatives after ours. I firmly believe that Dr. Mitchell's work will prove to be seen as resulting in the most dramatic improvements in student learning in the last 50 years. Recently, the National Association of Educational Progress, NAEP, test scores were released, showing Alabama to be No. 1 in reading improvement for the fourth grade. Between 2005 and 2007, Alabama's fourth graders made a significant gain of eight points in fourth grade reading. That is the highest gain in the Nation. I must also point out that a number of the States that are right behind Alabama in reading gains are States such as Massachusetts and Florida that have both modeled State reading initiatives after the Alabama Reading Initiative.

I have spoken with Secretary of Education Margaret Spellings many times about Dr. Mitchell's work and the great things happening in Alabama, and she is ecstatic about the innovative ways Dr. Mitchell and her fabulous team have changed education in Alabama and across the country. I am always impressed with Dr. Mitchell's enthusiasm for her work, and her strong desire to motivate and inspire educators wherever she goes. She is a rare and admirable person, and I applaud the many ways she has touched the lives of children and families around the world throughout her life.

It is important to say, and not inappropriate, that Dr. Mitchell is a woman of sincere and strong religious faith and that she has felt that her service is a calling by God. Such a conviction, it is plain to see, has given power to her insight for improving education. An active member of Frazer Memorial United Methodist Church, pastored by the wonderful John Ed Mathison, she is involved in so many good activities, while receiving inspiration that drives her work. I am sorry to say that Dr. Mitchell is retiring from her position at the Alabama State Department of Education, and I know that this will be a great loss for the State. However, I know Dr. Mitchell too well to ever think that she will be less busy in retirement—she has far too much energy and too much to offer. I look forward to hearing about Dr. Mitchell's ongoing contributions to our Nation with her expertise in education, and I am so thankful that Alabama's students, and America's students, will benefit for years to come from her investment in a program that teaches children how to read.

Thank you, Dr. Mitchell, for your service. Your shoes cannot be filled, I am sure of it, but I am also sure that the team you have so carefully trained will continue to carry on your vision with the same commitment and passion that you have so admirably displayed.●

MESSAGE FROM THE HOUSE

ENROLLED BILL SIGNED

At 9:33 a.m. a message from the House of Representatives, delivered by Ms. Niland, one of its reading clerks, announced that the Speaker has signed the following enrolled bill:

H.R. 5140. An act to provide economic stimulus through recovery rebates to individuals, incentives for business investment, and an increase in conforming and FHA loan limits.

The message was subsequently signed by the President pro tempore (Mr. BYRD).

At 11:16 a.m., a message from the House of Representatives, delivered by Ms. Niland, one of its reading clerks, announced that the House has passed the following bill, in which it requests the concurrence of the Senate:

H.R. 4848. An act to extend for one year parity in the application of certain limits to mental health benefits, and for other purposes.

The message also announced that the House has agreed to the following concurrent resolution, in which it requests the concurrence of the Senate:

H. Con. Res. 283. Concurrent resolution calling for a peaceful resolution to the current electoral crisis in Kenya.

The message further announced that the House agrees to the amendment of the Senate to the bill (H.R. 5140) to provide economic stimulus through recovery rebates to individuals, incentives for business investment, and an increase in conforming FHA loan limits.

ENROLLED BILL SIGNED

The message also announced that the Speaker has signed the following enrolled bill:

H.R. 3541. An act to amend the Do-not-call Implementation Act to eliminate the automatic removal of telephone numbers registered on the Federal ''do-not-call'' registry.

MEASURES REFERRED

The following bill was read the first and the second times by unanimous consent, and referred as indicated:

H.R. 4848. An act to extend for one year parity in the application of certain limits to mental health benefits, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Finance.

The following concurrent resolution was read, and referred as indicated:

H. Con. Res. 283. Concurrent resolution calling for a peaceful resolution to the current electoral crisis in Kenya; to the Committee on Foreign Relations.

MEASURES DISCHARGED

Pursuant to the order of May 27, 1988, the following measure was discharged from the Committee on Banking, Housing, and Urban Affairs, and placed on the calendar:

S. 2062. A bill to amend the Native American Housing Assistance and Self-Determination Act of 1996, to reauthorize that Act, and for other purposes.

MEASURES READ THE FIRST TIME

The following bills were read the first time:

S. 2616. A bill to authorize certain programs and activities in the Forest Service, the Department of the Interior, and the Department of Energy, and for other purposes.

S. 2619. A bill to protect innocent Americans from violent crime in national parks.

S. 2615. A bill to extend the Protect America Act of 2007 for 15 days.

EXECUTIVE AND OTHER COMMUNICATIONS

The following communications were laid before the Senate, together with accompanying papers, reports, and documents, and were referred as indicated:

EC–5023. A communication from the Congressional Review Coordinator, Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service, Department of Agriculture, transmitting, pursuant to law, the report of a rule entitled ''Wood Packaging Material; Treatment Modification'' (Docket No. APHIS–2006–0129) received on February 7, 2008; to the Committee on Agriculture, Nutrition, and Forestry.

EC–5024. A communication from the Secretary, Securities and Exchange Commission, transmitting, pursuant to law, the report of a rule entitled ''Electronic Filing and Revision of Form D'' (RIN3235–AJ87) received on February 7, 2008; to the Committee on Banking, Housing, and Urban Affairs.

EC–5025. A communication from the Secretary of Energy, transmitting, pursuant to law, a report detailing a plan for the Ultra-Deepwater and Unconventional Natural Gas and Other Petroleum Resources Research and Development Program; to the Committee on Energy and Natural Resources.

EC–5026. A communication from the Deputy Director, Defense Security Cooperation Agency, transmitting, pursuant to law, a report relative to services provided by certain full-time government employees during fiscal year 2007; to the Committee on Foreign Relations.