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Senate

The Senate met at 10 a.m. and was called to order by the Honorable JON TESTER, a Senator from the State of Montana.

PRAYER

The Chaplain, Dr. Barry C. Black, offered the following prayer:

Let us pray.

Almighty God, we come to You in weakness and seek Your strength. Without Your presence, life's challenges overwhelm. Lift our burdens and fill our life with Your joy.

Strengthen our lawmakers. Use their talents and abilities to make a positive difference in our world. Empower them with Your providential care to find creative paths that will bring this Nation to a desired destination. Inspire their minds with insight and wisdom, their hearts with resiliency and courage, and their bodies with vigor and vitality. May your peace flow into them, calming their spirits, directing their dispositions, and controlling all they say and do.

We pray in Your great Name. Amen.

PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

The Honorable JON TESTER led the Pledge of Allegiance, as follows:

I pledge allegiance to the Flag of the United States of America, and to the Republic for which it stands, one nation under God, indivisible, with liberty and justice for all.

APPOINTMENT OF ACTING PRESIDENT PRO TEMPORE

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will please read a communication to the Senate from the President pro tempore (Mr. BYRD).

The legislative clerk read the following letter:

U.S. SENATE,
PRESIDENT PRO TEMPORE,
Washington, DC, April 15, 2008.

To the Senate:

Under the provisions of rule I, section 3, of the Standing Rules of the Senate, I hereby

appoint the Honorable JON TESTER, a Senator from the State of Montana, to perform the duties of the Chair.

ROBERT C. BYRD,
President pro tempore.

Mr. TESTER thereupon assumed the chair as Acting President pro tempore.

RECOGNITION OF THE MAJORITY LEADER

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. The majority leader is recognized.

SCHEDULE

Mr. REID. Mr. President, following my remarks and those of Senator MCCONNELL, the Senate will be in a period of morning business for 1 hour, with Senators allowed to speak therein for up to 10 minutes each, with the time equally divided between the two leaders or their designees.

ORDER OF PROCEDURE

I ask unanimous consent that the first 30 minutes be given to the Republicans and the final 30 minutes to the majority.

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

Mr. REID. Mr. President, following that time, the Senate will resume consideration of H.R. 1195.

I ask unanimous consent that the Senate recess from 12:30 until 2:15 p.m. today to allow for the weekly caucus luncheons.

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

Mr. REID. I thank the Chair.

RECOGNITION OF THE REPUBLICAN LEADER

THE ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. The Republican leader is recognized.

POPE BENEDICT XVI'S VISIT TO THE UNITED STATES

Mr. MCCONNELL. Mr. President, this week we welcome his Holiness, Pope Benedict XVI, for his first visit to America as Pope.

Here in Washington, Pope Benedict will meet the President at the White House, marking only the second time in America's history that a pontiff has visited the White House. He will offer Mass at the newly opened Nationals Park, and deliver an address at Catholic University.

Pope Benedict will then travel to New York, where he will address the United Nations, visit Ground Zero, site of the devastating 9/11 terrorist attacks, and say Mass at Yankee Stadium.

During his visit, the Pope will also champion a brotherhood of faith between the religions, by meeting with leaders from the Buddhist, Muslim, Hindu, Jewish, and other faiths.

The Pope's visit observes some important anniversaries. Wednesday, April 16, will be his 81st birthday, and Saturday, the 19th, will mark the third anniversary of his election as Pope.

His visit also coincides with the 200th anniversary of four of the oldest dioceses in the United States, one of which was established in my own State of Kentucky. Two hundred years ago this month, Pope Pius VII carved the Diocese of Bardstown from one of the oldest dioceses in the New World.

The territory of the Bardstown Diocese once covered a giant swath of land, including what are now the States of Kentucky, Tennessee, Ohio, Indiana, Illinois, Michigan, Iowa, Wisconsin, Missouri, and half of Arkansas.

The Bardstown Diocese was established alongside the dioceses of Boston, Philadelphia, and New York. Its seat was eventually moved to Louisville, KY, and made an archdiocese. But its place in the history of American Catholicism continues to be a point of pride across Kentucky.

• This "bullet" symbol identifies statements or insertions which are not spoken by a Member of the Senate on the floor.



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Kentuckians celebrate this bicentennial throughout the year at the St. Thomas Church, considered the "Cradle of Catholicism" in the Bluegrass State and still located in Bardstown. A two-story log house that stands on St. Thomas' property is the oldest structure related to the Catholic faith in our region of the United States.

Built in 1795 by Thomas and Ann Howard, the property was willed to the church by Mr. Howard in 1810, and it became the first home of the St. Thomas Seminary, the first seminary west of the Alleghenies. It later served as the residence of Bishop Benedict Joseph Flaget, first bishop of the Bardstown Diocese.

Bishop Flaget and others who worked to establish the Bardstown Diocese were pioneers of the land as well as of the spirit. Kentucky was the western frontier of the young United States at that time, and frontier life posed many hardships.

Yet Bishop Flaget successfully made his work and presence felt throughout the diocese, and the St. Thomas Church still cites his influence today, two centuries later.

The resolve and faith displayed by the founders of that Bardstown Diocese are the same resolve and faith that have enabled so many other Catholic missionaries to attract more than 1 billion adherents to the Catholic faith.

As the Bishop of Rome, the Pope's leadership inspires millions with confidence that mankind can find God's will amidst the chaos of this world.

Yet, for all the obvious affection people show him, Pope Benedict would be the first to recognize that he is merely "a simple, humble laborer in the vineyard of the Lord."

We are honored by his visit. And in Bardstown, Washington or elsewhere, we welcome Pope Benedict VXI to bring his labors to America.

Mr. President, I yield the floor.

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. The majority leader is recognized.

PAPAL VISIT

Mr. REID. Mr. President, tomorrow the President has invited a number of people to the White House to greet the Pope on the south lawn. That will be at 10 o'clock in the morning. We are going to be in session and have a regular session tomorrow. We will make sure there are no votes between 10 and 11.

On Thursday, for the Mass, for those Members of the Catholic faith, and others who wish to attend the Mass at the baseball stadium, we are not going to come in until 12:45. That will allow people to go to the Mass and give them time to come to the Capitol. We will start legislating at 12:45 on Thursday. Hopefully, we will complete some legislation at that time. Hopefully, we will be on the technical corrections bill or another piece of legislation.

JACKIE ROBINSON

Mr. MCCONNELL. Mr. President, Jackie Robinson broke baseball's color barrier on this day in 1947. He immediately made his mark on the field and off the field, winning the Rookie of the Year Award in 1947 and suffering painful indignities from fans and opposing players with both patience and grace.

As a young man growing up in Louisville, I always took pride in the fact that Pee Wee Reese, a graduate of my high school, had become a Major Leaguer and even the captain of his team, the Brooklyn Dodgers. But I was even more proud of the fact that Pee Wee walked over to Jackie one day when the taunts were especially tough, put his arm on Jackie's back, and sent a message to the fans that Jackie Robinson was no different than anyone else they came to root for that day.

Reflecting on Jackie's courage, a baseball commentator said this week that it is remarkable to note that in all the photographs from those years, Jackie always seemed to be smiling, despite the jeers and taunts and the hatred.

We honor Jackie Robinson today for his courage and his example and for accelerating the march toward equality for all Americans.

TAX DAY

Mr. MCCONNELL. Mr. President, most Americans view April 15 as a sort of national anti-holiday, when they are forced to take a hard look at how much of their money goes into a Washington spending machine instead of their children's education or their gas tank.

It is worth noting that most people don't dread tax day as much as they used to; as much as they did before Republican policies significantly reduced the share of the family budget that goes from taxpayer wallets to the Treasury Department.

According to a recent Gallup poll, 43 percent of middle income earners say they are paying too much in taxes—43 percent, but still far fewer than the 59 percent who thought they were being overtaxed 7 years ago.

The reason for the drop-off isn't too hard to figure out: The reason a lot fewer people think their tax burden is too high is that their tax burden is a lot lower than it was 6 years ago.

Married couples and families with children have benefited from tax credits, tens of millions of Americans have benefited from tax cuts on dividends and capital gains, including more than 250,000 people in Kentucky.

And that is why it's critical that middle class Americans understand the path that Democrats are headed down.

At a time when the economy is slowing and Americans are paying record prices for food, gas, and healthcare, our Democrat friends are preparing the largest tax hike in U.S. history—nearly three times larger than the previous record.

We saw the plan last month in a budget that only one Democrat in the Senate voted against, a blueprint that raises taxes on middle class families by \$2,300 a year.

Our friends won't admit this is a tax hike; they won't say they're raising taxes; they plan to do it quietly, by letting all the recently enacted tax cuts and credits that Americans have benefited from over the past several years expire.

If you ask about it, they will tell you these tax cuts were only for the rich anyway.

Don't listen to them—unless, of course, you think 43 million American families with children who will pay thousands more in taxes under the Democrat budget are rich, and should be taxed more; or that all 18 million seniors who will pay thousands more in taxes under the Democrat budget are rich and should be taxed more; or that every owner of the 27 million small businesses in the U.S. who will have to pay \$4,100 more in taxes under the Democrat budget are rich and should be taxed more.

Under the budget that every Democrat in the Senate but one voted for last month, taxes will go up on anyone who makes more than \$34,000. Are these people rich? Should they pay more in taxes?

The first-year teacher in Louisville who makes \$35,982—is he or she rich? Does he or she need to be taxed more? I will bet they don't think so.

How about the veteran teacher with a Ph.D. who maxes out at \$73,418—is he or she rich? Does he or she need to be taxed more? I will bet they don't think so.

Our Democrat friends have their own answer to these questions: they voted for an amendment last month that extends tax breaks on married couples and children.

The problem, of course, is that they voted for a similar amendment last year, and then they didn't do a thing about it. They had no intention of making it into law.

So if past experience is any indication of future events, our friends won't act on the amendment this year either. They cast a vote that's intended to appeal to working families, but their record shows they won't follow through by actually doing anything about it.

As Americans struggle to pay the bills and millions worry about falling home values and whether they will even be able to keep their homes, they should be able to expect more from Congress than political cover votes and class warfare rhetoric.

All the recently enacted tax cuts will soon expire. These cuts have helped tens of millions of American families and seniors. These folks should know what is coming. And Democrats in Washington should relent on their plans to return to the bad old days when 60 percent of them thought their tax bills were too high.

That is the road our friends on the other side are taking us down. They

have shown us the blueprint. It certainly was not written with working families in mind.

I yield the floor.

RESERVATION OF LEADER TIME

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

MORNING BUSINESS

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. Under the previous order, there will now be a period of morning business for up to 1 hour, with Senators permitted to speak therein for up to 10 minutes each, with the time equally divided and controlled between the two leaders or their designees, with the Republicans controlling the first half and the majority controlling the final half.

The Senator from Missouri is recognized.

TAX DAY

Mr. BOND. Mr. President, today millions of Americans are reminded about Ben Franklin's poignant observation: Nothing is certain but death and taxes.

Today families across the Nation are being forced to tighten their belts as the Federal Government takes more and more of their hard-earned money. For working families, the tax bill that comes due every April 15 is often a tremendous burden. In fact, the average American pays more in taxes than it spends on food, shelter, clothing, and transportation combined.

For American families, tax day is a real eye opener. This year, families will work the first 113 days of the year to pay their Federal, State, and local taxes. Unfortunately, this year tax day has come around when families are facing spiking energy, housing, and health care costs, runaway college tuition, and high rising prices for consumer goods.

While the Senate has acted to help these families in the short term, the stimulus and housing relief bills, a long-term fix is a long way off and badly needed. We should support long-term economic growth policies that lower taxes, create more jobs, and grow our American economy.

Our distinguished minority leader, the Senator from Kentucky, Mr. MCCONNELL, has outlined the dangers of going back to a high-tax era. We all know that the tax reductions adopted by Congress in 2003 which gave relief for capital gains taxes encouraged more small businesses to invest, gave them the resources to grow, and small businesses are the dynamic engine of this country.

That tax relief provided some 8.4 million new jobs. But as Senator MCCONNELL said, my friends on the other side of the aisle have proposed a budget that includes the largest tax increase in American history and would raise

taxes on every American taxpayer by doing nothing, intentionally doing nothing.

The plan of the Democrats raises taxes on the average American family by \$2,300 a year. A \$2,300 increase in taxes will be a devastating hit to American families. For families in Missouri and across the Nation, this is \$2,300 they will no longer be able to use to buy groceries, put gas in their car, pay tuition, or purchase prescription drugs. And, as Senator MCCONNELL pointed out, there will be an even larger tax increase on small businesses—small businesses that we expect to create the new jobs we will continue to need as our economy and technology evolves.

Unfortunately, not only are taxes getting higher, they are getting more complicated. According to the President's panel on tax reform, there have been more than 14,000 changes to the Tax Code since 1986. With all of these changes, it is no wonder that the average time burden for all taxpayers filing a 1040 is 30 hours, and now more than 6 in 10 Americans hire someone to help prepare their returns every year.

So in addition to taking 113 days in wages, the Federal Government requires you to spend an initial day and even more money to hire a professional to make sense of what you owe. It is a daunting task for anyone, particularly if they have a family and business activities to make sense of what they owe.

In January, I introduced a radical solution, and I think the time has come for a radical solution to bring some common sense to this process. My bill, the Fair and Simple Tax Act, will simplify the Tax Code and help American families keep more of their paychecks. It will get rid of the AMT and the double calculations middle-income taxpayers must make. It will eliminate higher tax rates, get rid of the myriad targeted reductions, credit givebacks, phase-ins, phase-outs, and other special interest provisions.

The Fair and Simple Tax Act will provide a simpler, lower, flat income tax option, as well as offer historic tax relief for families and businesses to create jobs for American workers.

This bill will reduce the tax rate on families and the employers who create jobs, make permanent existing tax relief, keep current deductions for home mortgage interest and charitable deductions, but give Americans more control over their health care by providing tax relief to individuals and families who do not now have access to employer-provided health care.

Also, my bill will eliminate the death tax which is a significant burden for farmers and small businesses.

The best fiscal policy is economic growth, job creation, and keeping taxes low for middle-class families. And the best economic or fiscal policy is also the best social policy. There is no better policy than assuring a good-paying job for hard-working Americans.

The last thing our economy needs right now is a tax increase, which is what Americans will receive when the 2001 and 2003 tax cuts expire. And you know what will happen. It will not only be a tax increase on individual families; by increasing significantly taxes on small business, it is going to curb job growth, it is going to cut the ability of people to find a job.

Let me be clear. Unless we stop this looming tax hike, which would be the largest in history, more than 2 million Missouri families will face higher tax bills. My bill would prevent the family-budget-killing tax hikes. My bill would simplify the tax rate for millions of Americans. My bill would mean tax relief and real money back into the pockets of American families.

Let's get real about taxes and bring back some common sense to a Tax Code that is too complex, too confusing, and too costly. This plan will give American taxpayers what they need: a fairer system that puts more of their own money back in their pocketbooks and takes off their back the hassle of April 15.

I ask for the support of my colleagues in bringing a radical but simple commonsense reform to our Tax Code.

Mr. President, I yield the floor.

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. The Senator from Wyoming.

Mr. BARRASSO. Mr. President, 20 years ago today, Senator Malcolm Wallop of Wyoming came to the Senate floor to speak about the tax burden Americans face. He came to the floor because it was April 15, tax day. He came to extend his sympathies to the many, as he called it, "frustrated taxpayers who were probably at this minute," he said, "sweating bullets over a form 1040 while gnawing through yet another pencil."

He spoke 2 years after Congress enacted the landmark 1986 tax reform bill, legislation intended to reform and simplify the Code and make the chaos of past April 15s mere memories. That legislation did not reform the Tax Code, and it fell far short of tax simplification.

Senator Wallop voted against final passage, and he knew that history would be on his side.

The same day, he introduced into the CONGRESSIONAL RECORD a 1988 guest editorial from the Casper Star Tribune, a newspaper in Wyoming. The editorial reflected the sentiments similar to those expressed by Senator Wallop. Less than 2 years after enactment of that 1986 law, tax reform and simplification spawned 2,704 changes in the Internal Revenue Code, 42 new regulations, 65 announcements, 32 revenue rulings, and 48 new tax forms.

The changes were so complicated that in a nationwide study of 50 tax preparers who were given hypothetical identical pieces of information about what a family would do in trying to figure out their taxes, none of the 50 tax preparers came out with the same

result in terms of how much that family would owe. The system was that complicated.

Senator Wallop said that guest editorial summed up the feelings of taxpayers across the Nation. The author of that guest editorial submitted 20 years ago today into the CONGRESSIONAL RECORD was a Wyoming physician named JOHN BARRASSO. That is right, the current occupant of Senator Wallop's Wyoming Senate seat.

The reform envisioned by Congress failed miserably to achieve its desired result. Today, Americans continue the painful experience of frantically attempting to complete their tax returns and write their checks to the Government before the clock strikes midnight.

The Tax Code is even longer today, 6,000 pages and over 2.8 million words, and it is growing. Provisions within the Code regularly expire, and then they are extended on an irregular basis. The IRS estimates that the average amount of time an American taxpayer is going to take to fill out their tax returns in this year is over 30 hours. More than 6 in 10 Americans hire someone to help prepare their returns for them. Hundreds of billions of dollars are spent annually trying to comply with our complicated tax laws.

Many post offices across America will be staying open until midnight tonight. Why? To give taxpayers one last shot to meet the deadline.

It is no wonder that more than 10 million Americans will request an extension this year. The future does not look much better for American taxpayers, both in terms of tax simplification and in terms of tax relief.

Americans work day in and day out to pay for Washington programs that they would not wish on their worst enemy. In too many families, one parent works to put food on the table and the other parent works to pay for the Washington bureaucracy.

The Government is too big. It spends too much. Americans get it. Americans have to balance their own budgets. They have to balance their own checkbooks. The Government should do the same. And the Government should do it the same way that American families do it—by controlling spending.

The current tax system is a mess, it is too complicated, it is antigrowth, and it discourages additional investment in America. The American taxpayer rightfully deserves a system that is simple. The American taxpayer deserves a system that provides certainty. The American taxpayer deserves a system that encourages success and innovation, and the American taxpayer deserves a system that is based on what is in their best interests and not the best interests of Government.

Have you ever wondered why tax day is April 15 and not, say, 6 months later, October 15? Imagine, if you will, if tax day were right before election day. Then the voices of the taxpayers would

register loudly and clearly. Maybe this is the solution necessary to ensure that people, not the Government, come first because, after all, the money belongs to the people, the hard-working people of Wyoming and every other State in this country, not to the Government. It is the people's money; it is not the Government's money.

The American taxpayer deserves better, the American taxpayer deserves tax simplification, the American taxpayer deserves tax relief, and the American taxpayer deserves action.

Change the system? Well, it is not an easy undertaking but a necessary one. Four criteria are necessary to make the effective change. It must be fair so people pay their fair share. It must be simple so people can quickly file their own returns. It must be uniform. No matter who you are, the system must be applied equally to every taxpayer. And, No. 4, it must be consistent. Changing the system every year is not good for the economy and is not good for taxpayers.

During his floor speech on April 15, 1988, 20 years ago today, Wyoming Senator Malcolm Wallop said that his vote against the tax reform conference report, as he said, "was one of the best things I have done since I have been in the Senate." He was right on target. His words have survived the test of time. Let us hope that 20 more years—20 more years—do not pass before we get it right.

I yield the floor.

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. The Senator from Texas.

Mr. CORNYN. Mr. President, how much more time remains for business on our side?

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. Fourteen and a half minutes.

Mr. CORNYN. I thank the Chair.

Mr. President, recently, I noted a story in the Wall Street Journal that preceded the primary date of March 4 in Texas, and Ohio as well. Not to pick on our friends in Ohio by any means, but I was interested to see the story discussed of why it is jobs and people were leaving Ohio and why people were moving to Texas. We have had 3 million people move to Texas since 2000.

Basically, the journalist said it boiled down to three things: He said, No. 1, Texas is a State that believes in free trade. We believe NAFTA, the North American Free Trade Agreement, has actually increased jobs in our State and in the United States by creating jobs for those goods that are manufactured here and then sold in Canada and Mexico.

No. 2, the article pointed out Texas is a right-to-work State. In other words, you don't have to join a labor union in order to get a job. You can if you want to, but you are not required to do so as a condition of employment.

No. 3, this article pointed out Texas did not have a State income tax, and I assure you we never will. The people in my State like government as small as possible. They like to keep taxes low,

and they realize the decisions we have made in our State have made it a conducive environment for job creators to move to our State to create opportunity for people to move there, to get a job, to raise their family, and to seek to achieve their dreams.

Today, we are talking about tax day for the Federal taxpayer, and I think we ought to learn something from the lessons we have found demonstrated in places such as Texas, where we have kept taxes low. Having lower tax rates is perhaps the best stimulus package you could ever pass. We have passed a couple stimulus packages so far this year. First, the bipartisan package, which will result in a check being written to many taxpayers that they will receive in the next few weeks, and then we also passed a housing bill last week. But I submit the best stimulus we could pass is by keeping taxes low.

This first chart I have demonstrates an uncomfortable fact, and that is the American taxpayer has to work until April 23 of this year in order to pay their taxes. In other words, here we are on April 15, and taxpayers still have another few days, another week or so to work to pay their tax bill before they can begin to work for themselves and for their families and for their small business.

This is another revealing chart, I think, because it points out how many days of the year an individual works, or the average taxpayer works, to pay for essentials such as housing, which is very much a part of our agenda recently because of the housing crunch; health care, health care costs are a significant portion of every family's budget, and the average taxpayer works 50 days a year to pay for their health care; food, equating to 35 days; and transportation, 29 days. As you can see, to pay Federal taxes, an individual has to work 74 days; to pay the State, local, and other taxes, it is another 39 days.

Particularly at a time when the economy is not doing as well as we would like, Congress seems to be acting inconsistently, first of all, in passing a stimulus package which is sending checks to taxpayers because we are worried taxpayers don't have enough money to spend to help stimulate the economy. Yet at the same time, both the House of Representatives and this body passed a budget that raises taxes, imposing almost \$2,400 more in taxes onto my constituents in Texas.

Now, it may not seem like a lot of money to some here in Washington, but I can assure you that to many of my constituents, this is real money and money they would prefer to have to invest in their businesses and spend according to their own desires rather than to have Uncle Sam tap them for an additional \$2,400.

I would also note this has an antistimulus effect—raising taxes—and is inconsistent with what we are doing with regard to trying to get more money in the hands of the American

people to help us boost and stimulate the economy. To turn around and impose an additional almost \$2,400 per person in taxes is inconsistent, to say the least, and is antistimulus.

The Heritage Foundation has estimated that if in fact this tax increase goes into effect—the one contemplated by the 2009 budget—more than 70,000 Texans will likely lose their jobs because the budget assumes higher taxes, which will harm job creation and reduce economic output.

I know there is a lot of revisionist history in Washington about what the last 5 or 6 years has been like in terms of the economy, but the fact of the matter is the economy has been very good, by and large. At least 8 million constituents of mine in Texas benefitted from the tax relief we have passed since 2001. I would note, roughly, that same number of new jobs was created across the country—roughly 9 million new jobs—since the tax relief we passed in 2003. In 2007, at least 6.9 million Texans benefitted from the new low 10-percent tax bracket created back in 2001, and more than 2 million Texas families used the \$1,000 child tax credit, all of which are timed to expire in 2011, unless Congress acts to make that tax relief permanent.

If there is one thing we could do that would have the surest impact of bolstering the economy, giving people more money to spend as they see fit, it would be to make the tax relief permanent—the relief that was made temporary back in 2001 and 2003. The dividends and the capital gains reductions we passed in 2003 will also expire as well. These, of course, most often impact people when they buy and sell things they own—when they buy stock in their retirement plans, the dividends tax relief in particular. We are going to see that increase dramatically, unless Congress acts to stop the antistimulative effect I mentioned a moment ago.

Today, of course, as I said, is an important day for every American, but it is certainly not a day for celebrating. This is not a holiday for most Americans. Today is a day of observance that is mandated by the Federal Government and an observance which is universally dreaded by the American people—tax day. One of the biggest reasons people hate tax day is because it reminds them of the complex, incomprehensible system through which a faraway agency, known as the Internal Revenue Service, sends them a pile of forms they have to navigate to figure out how much they owe the Federal Government.

They may ask: Do I get a W-2 or a W-4? Can I fill out the 1040EZ or should I get the schedule D form? Do I fill out the 1099 miscellaneous and the 1099 dividend form? What is form 5498 for or 1065 or 4562?

Well, you get my point, hopefully. Our tax laws continue to proliferate and become increasingly complex and increasingly incomprehensible to most

Americans. That is why so much money is spent by average Americans getting someone else to help them figure out how to comply with the law. The only thing going down is our comprehension and our understanding of the tax system; all other costs associated with this unnecessarily complex and impenetrable system are going up.

Families and entrepreneurs, as I said, spend a lot of money—billions of dollars—and thousands of hours each year trying to figure out how to do the right thing and how to comply with the Internal Revenue Code. In fact, they will spend more than 6 billion hours complying with the Federal income Tax Code, with an estimated compliance cost of more than \$265 billion. This has more than doubled since the mid-1990s. Estimates are it will continue to increase at an even faster rate.

Every year, the National Taxpayer Advocate highlights this complexity in one way or another as one of the top 10 problems taxpayers face. We know the Tax Code is full of special interest loopholes and that with each year the American taxpayer spends more and more time and more and more money to try to figure out how to comply with its burdensome provisions. Taxpayers, as I indicate, are working longer each year to pay for Government—a total of 113 days this year. I think most American taxpayers, if you asked them the question: Do you like the system as it exists now or would you like tax reform, something simpler, flatter or fairer? they would say: Whatever our Tax Code, whether it be a flat tax, a sales tax or an income tax, it should be based on three fundamental ideas: simplicity, fairness, and transparency.

I have to tell you our Tax Code does not, as currently written, meet any of those three requirements—of simplicity, fairness or transparency. I think these simple standards ought to guide us in reforming and simplifying the income tax code. I have heard several proposals made in the last couple days. Senator WYDEN, from Oregon, has talked about a flat tax he has proposed. Senator ALEXANDER, from Tennessee, likewise has proposed a tax return you could fill out in one page. Wouldn't that be great, to have a single page, something so easy to understand you could send in a single sheet of paper and know you have complied with your obligations to pay and report your income taxes due?

While comprehensive tax reform may not be right around the corner, the last thing we should do is to raise taxes on families and entrepreneurs by letting the tax relief passed by Congress in 2001 and 2003 expire. I have already talked about the budget and its impact on people in my State, but the budget passed last month would now require 27 million small businesses all across the country to owe an additional \$4,100. That is, if, in fact, the revenue projections in that budget are kept, 43 million families will owe an extra \$2,300 each, and 18 million seniors will each owe an additional \$2,200.

Amazingly, these tax hikes and increased Federal spending come weeks, as I pointed out, after Congress actually voted to send money back to the taxpayers in order to get them to spend it so it would stimulate the economy. We did this at the same time we are raising taxes and basically taking that same money away and more. If we agree that putting more money in the pockets of the American people is the best way to stimulate the economy, why are we still looking to take more money from them during tax season?

One of the most effective tools for combating this and wasteful spending, in general, is more information, and I think a proposal I made yesterday, which I would talk like to talk briefly about, will actually help us hold the Federal Government more accountable for the money it spends and give the American taxpayers more information so they can make sure their voice is heard when it comes to tax policy and how much money we take out of their pockets in order to fund the Federal Government.

Yesterday, I introduced a bill called the Federal Spending and Taxpayer Accessibility Act of 2008. This bill creates an online earmark tracking system taxpayers can use free of charge to search for earmarks by recipient, appropriations bill, State, and Member in real time during the appropriations process. This legislation also directs the IRS to provide each taxpayer with a concise and easy-to-read personal record of the amount of taxes they have already paid, as well as a projection of the taxes they will owe into the future, up until the time they retire. If this sounds familiar, that is because the Social Security Administration sends a similar statement of Social Security taxes paid and how much you can expect, upon retirement, to receive in benefits. I think it can play an important role when taxpayers are planning their future, to provide them with a better idea of how much they will owe in the future so they can take that into account.

These statements would provide taxpayers with a reminder of how much our Government is spending and give them even more reason to keep track of how their money is spent, along with the political accountability that would flow from that. This legislation would also build on the Federal Funding Accountability and Transparency Act of 2006, which created a one-stop, searchable Web site for all Federal contracts and grants. This legislation would expand the Web site by including the expenditures of all Federal agencies, including salaries, rent, supplies, and transportation. I know not every American is going to be interested in that level of detail, but I think it is important it be made available to everyone who is interested and particularly for the press who can report on it and let the American people know what the facts are.

On this tax day, I urge our colleagues in the Senate to take a new stand

against growing Government, growing spending, and growing taxes.

I yield the floor.

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. The majority whip is recognized.

DELAYING TACTICS IN THE SENATE

Mr. DURBIN. Mr. President, I am going to yield to the majority leader when he comes to the floor, which could be momentarily. But I would like to, if I may, in morning business, address an issue which I think goes to the heart and soul of what the Senate is all about. One hundred men and women come together in this Senate, two from each State, to be part of a rich tradition in the history of this country, part of a national debate about the issues that are timely and important. It is an opportunity for the American people, through us, to have a voice and actually speak to these issues.

Unfortunately, time and again, this voice has been silenced, delayed by tactics from the minority side of the aisle.

I see the majority leader is here. I am going to yield to him at this point. I know he wanted to make the opening statement in morning business.

I yield to the majority leader.

FILIBUSTERS AND DELAYS IN THE SENATE

Mr. REID. Mr. President, I extend my appreciation to my good friend, the senior Senator from the State of Illinois.

Today is April 15. It is a big, red-letter day for people because it is the last day to file your income tax returns. As we send in our taxes—and some, as will happen tonight, will wait in line to file their tax returns—it is a good time to give thought to the economic state of our families and our economy, generally.

Since President Bush took office, the cost of gasoline has gone up more than 100 percent, more than doubled. The cost of home heating has skyrocketed. The price we pay for groceries has never been higher.

The head of the World Bank said, 3 days ago, that 31 countries will be in desperate need of food within a matter of months, and there could be riots in those countries. We are very fortunate in America, we don't have a shortage of food. But people are having trouble paying for the food they would like to eat. The same is true for health care, for prescription drugs—for college tuition. At the University of Nevada, we have a new law school. I was happy to see in the latest rankings it came out ranked 78th—a new law school ranked 78th in the Nation. That is remarkable. They have done such a good job.

But they also announced they are going to double the tuition at that new small law school—double the tuition. The cost of going to State institutions is going up. Why? Because the economies of our States are so desperately

bad. In the State of Nevada, because of the downturn in the economy, the Governor, with the State legislature, has had to cut almost \$1 billion in programs that are there in the State—road construction, new buildings, new programs—and cutting some of the old programs. Of course, they have a program to let prisoners out of our prisons more quickly, not because it is good for the people of the State of Nevada but because they are desperate for money.

We are paying record prices for nearly everything. Yet the average household income has dropped. American families are earning less and paying more. The Republican answer, for 7 years, has been to slash taxes for the ultrawealthy, to side with big business, oil companies, utility companies, and let the little guy fend for himself.

We have worked hard, as the Democratic Party—first in the minority, now in the majority—to cut taxes for the middle class, to end the dependence on oil that keeps our gas and heating bills sky high, to make health care and college tuition more affordable for families. We have now tried for days to quickly pass a highway bill that takes care of some of the problems we had in the massive bill we had before. There are corrections we would like to make on that. Last Thursday evening, the distinguished assistant leader was on the floor, as was the assistant leader for the Republicans. We talked about: Why are we having another filibuster on this? My friend, the junior Senator from Arizona, said: Oh, there will be no filibuster on this, everything is going fine—words to that effect. We had to vote last night to invoke cloture, and rather than being able to legislate on the bill, we are talking on the bill, stalling, wasting time.

We could have started on this legislation Thursday night. We could have legislated all day yesterday and all day today. But, no, we are not going to be able to do that. We are going to use the full 30 hours.

This is a number—it is probably higher than this, but let's assume this is right. The last time we came out and said there were 70-plus filibusters, they came out and said: Oh, no, not that many, not that many. So say 65, for purposes of this discussion.

In the history of this country previously—and I am going to use leader time, not morning business time, Mr. President, during my presentation.

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. The Senator has that right.

Mr. REID. Mr. President, in the entire history of the country, no matter what has been going on in this country—and we have been through some difficult times—the most filibusters we ever had were 61 or 62 during a 2-year period of time, during an entire Congress. But now, in the first year of this Congress, they broke that record—stalling, slowing things down so we cannot legislate the people's business. That is because they are protecting the status quo.

Can you imagine filibustering a bill that is correcting technical mistakes made by the two Houses in passing this legislation previously? They are filibustering that—commas, semicolons, dotting an "i," crossing a "t," that is what we are doing, that is what this legislation is all about, technical corrections—supported by the ranking member, Senator INHOFE, and the chairman, Senator BOXER. They are filibustering this, making us use all the time.

Some may ask why they are doing this. The main reason is they are protecting the status quo. Time after time, Republicans seemed intent on obstruction only for obstruction's sake. They pursued this course on legislative matters large and small. It doesn't have to be, as they have done many times, stopping us from moving forward on matters relating to Iraq—many times. Let's consider that a big issue. But let's consider what we are doing today a small issue—technical corrections on a bill.

Look what is going on in the country today. Look what is going on in the world today. We listen to the news or find it in the newspaper. Today in Iraq—scores of people killed in Iraq. Bombs here, bombs there, two American soldiers killed in Iraq yesterday. We have learned 2.7 million people are displaced in Iraq. That is Iraqis. The population is only 25 million people to begin with and 2.7 million of them are wandering around trying to find a place to live in Iraq. About 3 million have left the country. They have blocked us from doing anything about that.

We had General Petraeus talk about what is going on in Iraq. He didn't answer the question: Are we any safer now than we were before this Iraq war started, before the surge started? No answer to that. When are we going to get our troops home? No answer to that. They have even gone forward on tactics delaying matters on legislation they ultimately came to support—stalling for time.

The most unfortunate aspect of Republican strategy is real people suffer because of it. Why do I say that? There are a lot of things we need to do as a country. We have, now, a big merger that took place making big business even bigger. Delta Airlines has joined with Northwest. They will have 75,000 or 80,000 employees. Now there is talk of United joining with other companies. We have heard Southwest Airlines—they were flying airplanes that were in bad shape, but they did it anyway.

We have learned in recent weeks the Federal Aviation Agency is protecting the airlines and not the consumer. We have a bill we need to do, FAA reauthorization. We need to do that bill. We would like to bring up that bill, but we cannot because we are being stalled on a technical corrections bill—only stalling for time.

Veterans health care—Senator AKAKA has asked for months: Why

can't I bring up my bill? Every time, I say to him: Senator AKAKA, we are doing our best, but they stalled us on this and they stalled us on that. That is something we want to do this work period, as we do the FAA legislation.

There is an important piece of legislation—genetic nondiscrimination. A lot of things are happening in medicine. We have the ability to look at people and find out what their genes are going to forecast for the future. But we don't want, as a result of advances in medical care and treatment in this regard, to have someone who may be prone to getting some disease 10 or 15 years from now be discriminated against in the workplace. This is an important piece of legislation, and it is being held up; we can't get to that.

Flood insurance—we want to be able to do this. It is important to the American people. We hear a lot about the Federal Emergency Management Agency. What they deal with more than anything else—more than earthquakes, tornadoes, fires—is floods. Flooding is the most devastating natural disaster we have every year in America, and we want to do something to have the flood insurance program in this country mean something. We saw the never-ending litigation in Louisiana and Mississippi and Alabama as a result of Katrina. One of the reasons for that litigation is the legislation was not clear. It was not good legislation. We need to change that.

Food safety? My friend from Illinois has been working for a long time to do something about food safety—what can we do to make it better, so that when you go to a fast-food restaurant, you don't get salmonella; if you get a steak, it is OK. Has it been inspected? We have not been able to legislate in that regard.

It is disheartening to recognize and realize what we are not able to do, as a result of the Republicans wanting to maintain the status quo. Why can't we go through this piece of legislation, let Senator BOXER move forward on completing it, and then go to one of the other matters. There are a lot of other matters we need go to. I have only mentioned a few of them.

When I go home, people ask: Why aren't you getting more done? I tell them the Republicans are stalling, they want the status quo. Here is a perfect illustration, I say to my friends who have asked that question. Why are we being asked to waste valuable Senate time—that is all we have is time—valuable Senate time on something that is so unnecessary. We are waiting here. We came in at 10. The Republicans say we can't go to the bill; they want to go to their caucus and discuss what they want to do on the technical corrections bill.

I hope that my friends on the other side of the aisle, the Republicans, would let us start legislating. After we passed the stimulus bill for housing, I thought we could enter into a program where we would start doing that. I do

not know what they could talk about in their caucus about how difficult this particular technical corrections bill is. I said we are not going to fill the tree, which means they can offer amendments. Let them offer amendments. We invite them to offer amendments. But let's move forward on this legislation.

The Republican filibusters of this Congress, 65, is recordbreaking. They should be proud of that. We invoked cloture on more than 65 of those issues. We are still counting. Today is one of those counts that continue. I am very disappointed that we are being stalled again on something as insignificant as a technical corrections bill on highways.

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. The Senator from Illinois.

Mr. DURBIN. Mr. President, will you alert me when I have spoken 10 minutes in morning business.

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. The Senator will be notified.

Mr. DURBIN. A filibuster is a way to stop the Senate from acting. A filibuster is an effort to make sure the Senate does nothing. You saw the movie with Jimmy Stewart, "Mr. Smith Goes to Washington." He took to the floor as a freshman Senator and stood there speaking in a filibuster until he collapsed in physical exhaustion.

Well, it does not quite happen that way anymore. What happens, of course, is someone says: I am going to stop the Senate, and you are going to have to come up with 60 votes to stop me.

Well, Democrats have 51 votes in this current Senate; the Republicans have 49. So anytime we want to move forward with a piece of legislation to which a Republican Senator objects, we need their help to stop a filibuster. They know that.

So their strategy this year has been to slow us down to a crawl so nothing happens and to make sure when something comes up that they think might be a delicate vote for them to face, they start a filibuster. Then we cannot come up with 60 votes, and we move on to something else.

The net result of this filibuster strategy from the Republican side of the aisle is that critically important issues, such as the ones mentioned by the majority leader, cannot be addressed in the Senate. The House passes important and timely legislation and sends it over, and the Republican strategy on this side is to stop anything from happening.

Look at the issues we are facing in this country. The Senator from California is here. She is the chairman of the Environment and Public Works Committee, and this committee is considering critical legislation on the question of global warming. This is important for us as a nation. It is important for our planet. And we know when this critical legislation which has now been reported from her committee comes to the floor, we will face a string of filibusters.

That is part and parcel now of the procedure in the Senate. But you say: Well, wait a minute. That is a big issue. Global warming is a controversial issue with some. You expect some political controversy. Right?

Well, accepting that argument, I then have to ask you: Why were we involved in a filibuster until last night by the Republicans on the bill before us today? This is a technical corrections bill. When we passed the highway bill, the Federal highway bill years ago, it was a huge bill affecting the entire United States of America. Then, as we combed through it, word for word, line for line, page for page, we found there were technicalities that needed to be changed: punctuation, references to a road instead of a trail. You find them in here. They go on for hundreds of pages.

But they are technical in nature; it is not a big policy debate. This kind of bill usually passes in the Congress by a voice vote late at night and no one notices. It is housekeeping. That is ordinarily what we do when we try to catch up and make sure everything is done just right.

Senator BOXER has worked long and hard to bring it out of her committee and bring it to the Senate floor, and the Republicans initiated a filibuster against the technical corrections bill. That is like having a resolution to salute motherhood and having them initiate a filibuster. Where is the controversy? There is no controversy in this bill. If they want to offer amendments, we said on this side: If they are germane amendments to the bill, have at it. That is what the Senate is all about, after all.

But the Republican strategy of filibusters, as indicated by this chart, in the history of Congress, the minority party has initiated no more than 57 filibusters in any 2-year period of time. That is the record, 57 in 2 years.

So far in this Congress, we are barely a few months into the second year. The minority party, the Republicans, has initiated 65 filibusters, and we are still counting.

You say to yourself: Well, they must have been some pretty controversial issues they had to filibuster. A technical corrections bill? So why do they filibuster? So that we burn the clock and eat up days so we cannot address the issues that are even more important to this country.

Would it not be great for us as a Senate to consider and debate a national energy policy to bring down the price of gasoline in the United States? No way. The Republicans insist on filibustering a bill that focuses on punctuation. Would it not be timely for us to consider the cost of health insurance to businesses and families across America and find a way to make it more affordable and accessible? No way. The Republicans want to debate a bill which changes the word "trail" to "road" and filibuster it.

That is the reality. And time and again when we have brought up issues,

the Republicans have initiated a filibuster in this Congress. You cannot read this; I can barely read it. It is a list of the Republican filibusters so far in this Congress, 65 and still counting.

Let me give you a couple of examples, if I can, of the egregious Republican filibusters in this Congress. We had a bill to implement the 9/11 Commission Report to fight terrorism in America—filibustered by the Republicans.

We had a bill authorizing the intelligence agencies to make America safer—filibustered by the Republicans.

We had a bill for court security so that judges and their families would be safe when they are at work or at home—filibustered by the Republicans.

We had a water resources bill to deal with the infrastructure of America and create good-paying jobs right here at home—filibustered by the Republicans.

The Clean Energy Act, an effort to use renewable, sustainable energy to reduce pollution and stimulate the needs of our economy—filibustered by the Republicans.

The CHIP reauthorization bill, a bill for health insurance for poor children across America, not poor enough to qualify for Medicaid, not lucky enough to have health insurance—filibustered by the Republicans.

The economic stimulus package to get this country out of the recession and moving—filibustered by the Republicans.

A Consumer Products Safety Commission overall to stop toys with lead-based paint from coming into this country from China—filibustered by the Republicans.

GOP used to stand for Grand Old Party. That is what the Republicans called their party, the Grand Old Party. But when it comes to the Republicans in the Senate, GOP stands for "Graveyard of Progress." They want to stop this Senate from making any progress on critical issues for this country. They want to run out the clock by filibustering a technical corrections bill.

There is only one remedy for this. It comes in November. The American people will have a chance to speak then. They can initiate a filibuster which the Republicans will hear. They can speak long and loudly and clearly that it is time for change in this Senate. The old ways of Washington dominated by special interest groups really hidebound to the partisanship that will not even let us bring up these technical correction issues has to change.

Voters in this country have the last word in November to elect agents of change, people who will make a difference for improving this country.

I yield the floor.

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. The Senator from New York.

Mr. SCHUMER. Mr. President, I ask that you notify me when I have gone 10 minutes in morning business.

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. The Senator will be so notified.

Mr. SCHUMER. Mr. President, I, too, rise in strong support of the transportation technical corrections bill. First, I commend my friend and colleague, Senator BOXER, on her hard work and leadership in putting in these corrections.

I thank Leader REID for his determination to get this act through the body. Yet it seems our colleagues across the aisle will stop at nothing to obstruct our efforts which will improve the lives of working Americans who struggle to make ends meet and filibuster a comma, filibuster an exclamation point, filibuster the name change of a road to a way.

What is going on here? What is going on? Well, I have two points I would like to make. But first I ask my colleagues across the aisle, is there any topic that you will not filibuster? If you will filibuster a technical corrections bill, name changes, punctuation changes, corrections in terms of where the miles were supposed to be and where they are, what will you not filibuster?

Now, let's talk about two things. First, this bill is a win-win for the American people. We are entering a recession. We all know we need to prime the pump. Many of us believe we should have a large public works spending program. But the question is, Should we pay for it or should we not?

But in the SAFETEA-LU bill, this technical corrections bill, the money is already allocated. It cannot be spent because of some nonpolitical small error in the drafting. So this bill makes those corrections and hundreds of projects can sally forth and employ people with no particular cost to the Federal Government. Who could object to that? Do my colleagues want to tell the construction workers and those who have little diners and lunch places and restaurants where construction workers eat, and those who supply the construction industry: Heck with all of you, we are filibustering.

So on the merits it makes no sense to block this bill—on the merits. I have to say this to our minority leader: I know there are probably Members on his side who say: I want something else. I do not want to let this bill go through. There is a larger obligation. If we let every single Member of the other side of the aisle paralyze this body, then we are doing America a disservice.

I would plead with the minority leader to tell his individual Members: You do not have—each one of you does not have veto power over anything, particularly something as trivial as this.

So why is this happening? That is the second point I wanted to address. I will tell you why. The other side is basically paralyzed. They have no program for America. They have no agenda for America. They do not know what to say except the old nostrums that were rejected years and years ago. They cannot say yes and so they try to show some kind of position. They just say no. That is what is going on here. It is the internal problem on the other

side of the aisle, the hard right versus the right, versus the mainstream versus the moderates. They are all in a knot, and they cannot come to an agreement on anything, even a technical corrections bill that everyone has agreed to on the substance.

So the only thing that can unify them is a two-letter word: N-o.

Well, let me say that to allow any single Member to obstruct this bill is not living up to what the Senate is all about. It is not living up to what America is all about. It is not living up to what democracy is all about. Our leader has not said you cannot amend. Our leader has not said you cannot debate. I know there are a few Members on the other side of the aisle who believe there may be changes made. Let them debate it and let's vote.

But, no, the answer is only no. It has not been only on this bill. My friend and colleague from Illinois went through a long list of bills that are even more consequential than this one. Now, this one is not inconsequential. The changes are inconsequential, but the results are consequential. Again, it will employ thousands of people and release millions of dollars that have already been paid for to do worthy projects.

That, nobody disputes. But instead we have 65 filibusters already; 57 is the record—65 and going up. The filibuster used to be used on issues of major importance. It is now being used for everything, even the changing of punctuation and spelling, misspellings. Why? Because the only thing that unifies the other side is the word "no."

Well, the American people, come November 2008, are going to say "no" to the other side.

They are going to say: No more of this obstruction. We are going to give our side the number of votes we need to move forward, because 50 votes is not enough. Sixty is the need. This temporary refuge in the word "no" of a false unity will only be temporary.

I yield the floor.

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. The Senator from Washington.

Mrs. MURRAY. Mr. President, I come to the floor, along with the majority leader and my colleagues, to express our extreme frustration with what the minority, the Republicans are doing to block basic bills from getting through the Senate. We are trying to move to debate and offer amendments on a basic bill that needs to be done, called a technical corrections bill for transportation projects, changing minor things in the law so it can move forward. Normally this bill is done late at night; everyone agrees to it; there is no objection; it moves on; it takes only a few hours of time. It has gone through a lot of work in committee, which Senator BOXER chairs. They have done all their homework. It has passed on a bipartisan basis, and it was approved by the Senate late last night as a procedural move. But we are here today, spending hours and hours with no ability to move forward, no ability to offer

amendments, no ability to pass it, because the Republican minority has decided to filibuster this bill.

I go home every week, 2,500 miles away from here to the State of Washington. People come up to me and say: What are we going to do about the rising cost of health care? What are we going to do about the fact that fewer and fewer doctors are seeing seniors going into Medicare? What are we going to do about veterans waiting in line to get the care they have been promised? What are we going to do about the housing crisis? What are we going to do about Iraq and the President's request for \$109 billion more? In Washington, Boeing workers come up to me and say: What are we going to do about a procurement process that has allowed our military to send \$40 billion to a European-owned company, our tax dollars, at a time when our economy is struggling, to a European-owned company to start producing the backbone of our military, our air tankers? What are we going to do about that?

These are issues that we as Democrats want to bring to the floor and have major debates on, move legislation forward. They will take time. There is disagreement. Growing up in Washington State, when somebody said there is a filibuster, I assumed it was a major argument of the day. We would rush to find out what it was about and see which Senators were arguing which way and wonder in what direction this would change our country in the future.

We are a long way from that today. The filibuster is now being used as a delaying tactic so we won't get to those critical pieces of legislation, those critical debates we ought to be having in the Senate.

Republicans have engaged in an historic, record-setting level of obstruction over the last 14 months. They haven't filibustered the bills themselves, but they have filibustered motions to proceed to basic bills that we need to pass to keep Government running. They have delayed us from moving forward even after voting in favor of these bills. That is where we find ourselves today. Once again, Republicans have decided to keep us from moving forward simply to delay progress. They don't oppose the legislation. In fact, after filing cloture on the motion to proceed last Thursday and waiting the obligatory 30 hours, last night the Senate voted, and 93 Senators wanted to move this legislation forward. So why are we sitting here today delaying 30 more hours before Senators can even start to offer amendments, if they so choose, so that we can then move the bill to final passage, unless, of course, we have to file a motion to end debate and get to another filibuster of 30 hours, which will take a lot more time.

We have seen this before. It is about delaying. It is about not allowing America to move forward. It is about not allowing progress. The word "filibuster"

gets thrown around a lot here. People think of "Mr. Smith Goes to Washington" and the movie appears in their head. That is the most celebrated version of a filibuster. But there are all kinds of filibusters. We have learned that firsthand, because at the core a filibuster is any procedural move to delay the Senate. Any one Senator has the power to delay us. The majority and the minority have the power to talk to Members and say: This is important to enough of us that we need to move past those objections and begin to move this forward. We need to work toward an agreement so we can move forward.

Time and time again we have seen people use delays on motions to proceed, and then the Senate has to wait 30 hours, 30 long hours with people such as me sitting out here talking on the floor on miscellaneous subjects until we can finally get through 30 hours so we can then be on the floor for hours waiting for Senators to offer amendments. That kind of delay has forced this Senate in this Congress for over a year now into weeks and weeks and weeks of wasted time. No wonder the American people think nothing is getting done in Washington. We are seeing delay after delay. Believe me, we are all frustrated that we cannot get to those important topics of the day, to be able to have perhaps a real filibuster on a real issue that is important, that would change the direction of this country. That is what a filibuster ought to be about. But here we have to file cloture on the motion to proceed to basic bills. We have had to file procedural motions on whether to follow the 9/11 Commission recommendations, which then passed 97 to nothing, once we got through all of those hours of waiting around. On the intelligence authorization bill, we had to file a motion to proceed to the bill, had to wait the 30 hours, and then the vote was 94 to 3. So a couple of Senators forced an entire Senate to wait 30 hours and not get anything done. Bill after bill I could list a desire on the part of the minority to delay progress.

What we are seeing is Republicans who are united for obstruction on issue after issue. Month after month, Republicans have put delay before debate, procedure above progress, and obstruction before solutions.

The American people, certainly in my State of Washington, want us to move forward and deal with the issues critical to their families. They are struggling today with the economy. They are worried about their ability to retire. They are worried about being able to send their kids to college. Certainly, our men and women who have gone to fight the war in Iraq are coming home and facing delays. Yet we can't get a veterans bill up on this floor because of the delays we are seeing.

Here we are today, waiting around to vote on a technical corrections bill to a transportation bill that ought to take a few minutes.

It is a sad day in the United States. I hope our colleagues will talk to their leaders and say: We need to move on. It is time to get the business of this country done. That is our job.

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

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

The legislative clerk proceeded to call the roll.

Mrs. BOXER. 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.

Mrs. BOXER. Mr. President, could the Chair tell me what the current state of the parliamentary situation is right now?

CONCLUSION OF MORNING BUSINESS

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. Morning business is closed.

HIGHWAY TECHNICAL CORRECTIONS ACT OF 2007—MOTION TO PROCEED

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. Under the previous order, the Senate will resume consideration of the motion to proceed to H.R. 1195, which the clerk will report.

The legislative clerk read as follows:

Motion to proceed to consideration of Calendar No. 608, a bill (H.R. 1195) to amend the Safe, Accountable, Flexible, Efficient Transportation Equity Act: A Legacy for Users, to make technical corrections, and for other purposes.

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

Mrs. BOXER. Mr. President, I am very hopeful we can move this bill. When my kids were a little younger, they used to say: Mom, it is a no-brainer.

This is a no-brainer. This is something we need to do. We passed a very important bill several years ago that funds our highways and our transit. As often happens—because the years pass and the studies take place and you find there were errors in such a big bill that encompasses so many programs—there were certain very important transportation projects, highway projects that got stymied because of a technical problem. We also had one account that was oversubscribed and we need to make some fixes there because that particular account funds research into the state of our bridges, our highways, our transit systems, and we all know with bridges collapsing in America today, we can't short ourselves on the funding. We need to find out exactly what is the state of our fiscal infrastructure.

In a great economy, you can't move people and you can't move goods without a transportation infrastructure. That means roads that are not falling

apart, bridges that are not falling apart, transit systems that work. Especially in this time of more awareness of being efficient, energy efficient, all of this works together as we look at global warming and the best ways to combat that.

This is a very simple bill. Why are we standing here without actually voting on a few amendments that we know some of my Republican friends have? It is because there is a move by some Republican Senators to slow us down, slow down our work. My colleagues heard about it previous to my taking the floor today. Several colleagues talked about the unprecedented number of filibusters.

But I have to say on the bright side, this is a bill that Senator INHOFE and I have worked very closely on. We agree on it. It is bipartisan in nature. There are a couple of colleagues who don't like a couple of things in here. We will deal with that. We will deal with it, but let's get moving. It seems a shame to have the Presiding Officer sitting in the chair in front of an empty Chamber while the time clicks away and we can't get anything done on a technical corrections bill.

I might say everyone is quite aware that we are in an economic slowdown. I look at this bill as a little bit of a ministimulus package, because it will unleash about \$1 billion for very important projects already approved. It will unleash those funds. For every billion dollars, tens of thousands of new jobs are created in the construction industry. We have a very long list of people supporting us on this bill. Again, I call on my friends and colleagues on the other side of the aisle who for some reason are holding up this bill: Please. We are willing to have votes on your objections in the form of an amendment. We are willing to work with you. We want to get this bill done. The American people need this bill done. There is no reason to get it caught up in other political arguments and questions.

I hope I can come out here in short order with the news that my Republican friends have decided to let us go to the amendment process so we can move forward and complete our work on this bill.

At this point I yield the floor and note the absence of a quorum.

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

The legislative clerk proceeded to call the roll.

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. The Senator from Massachusetts.

Mr. KENNEDY. 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.

CONGRATULATING BOSTON COLLEGE MEN'S ICE HOCKEY TEAM

Mr. KENNEDY. Mr. President, I welcome this opportunity to congratulate

Boston College Eagles men's ice hockey team on their Division I National Championship and to offer a Senate resolution with my colleague from Massachusetts, Senator KERRY, to recognize the team's extraordinary accomplishment.

This past Saturday, in Denver, Boston College defeated the University of Notre Dame four goals to one to claim their third national championship and their second since 2001. For the Eagles and their legion of supporters, known as the "Super Fans," this victory marks the culmination of years of hard work in which they reached the Frozen Four's championship game in 3 consecutive years. Junior Nathan Gerbe was named the Frozen Four's Most Outstanding Player.

Led by head coach Jerry York, Nathan Gerbe, captain Mike Brennan, and assistant captains Matt Greene and Dan Bertram, the Eagles compiled an impressive overall record of 24 wins, 11 losses, and 8 ties during the 2007 to 2008 season, which also included Boston College's 14th victory in the historic Beanpot Championship.

With their work ethic and dedication, the Eagles have made the entire Boston College community and all of us in New England proud. We congratulate the entire team, its coaches, and fans.

We also thank Father William P. Leahy, president of Boston College, who has proved that you can foster a collegiate environment in which both academic and athletic excellence are the order of the day. The team deserves great credit for its extraordinary achievement, and I urge my colleagues in the Senate to approve this resolution.

Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that an article from the Boston Globe be printed in the RECORD.

There being no objection, the material was ordered to be printed in the RECORD, as follows:

[From the Boston Globe, Apr. 14, 2008]

AT BC, A MOMENT TO SAVOR

(By Nancy Marrapese-Burrell)

DENVER.—When Boston College won its NCAA championship in 2001, Bobby Allen was one of the team captains. So it seemed fitting that it was Allen who gave the 2007-08 Eagles a crucial pep talk last week just prior to their departure for the Mile High City and this year's Frozen Four.

In essence, Allen told the players to live in the moment, to revel in the joy of the event and remember that hockey is a labor of love.

The team took that message to heart. After beating Notre Dame, 4-1, in the title game Saturday night at the Pepsi Center, the seniors in particular felt the weight of the world lifted off their shoulders. They were the ones who most acutely realized it was their last chance after two consecutive failed attempts at the crown. Senior center Dan Bertram said they were determined it wasn't going to elude them a third time.

"I think [the experience factor] helped us a lot," said Bertram. "I know with our senior class here, we were all pretty tight. We didn't know exactly what the feeling was like to be on the other side and we sure as heck didn't want to have that this year. Everyone else really saw the passion from our

captain [Mike Brennan] all the way down and you can't say enough about just this feeling and the achievement."

When Allen and his teammates were celebrating their victory, John Muse was only 12 years old. The Falmouth native, who backstopped the Eagles in all 44 games this season, allowed only two goals in the Frozen Four, one each to North Dakota and Notre Dame.

"He's been unbelievable," said Bertram. "I think everyone is going to know who John Muse is now. We're so proud of him and we had so much confidence in him. That's a hard thing, to come in as a freshman, and the whole year he has played solid, consistent hockey. The way he played in the Frozen Four is unbelievable. These guys are lucky to have him for another three years."

While Muse was keeping out goals in his end, neither the Fighting Sioux nor the Fighting Irish could do a thing about junior left wing Nathan Gerbe, who tallied 4 points in each game (five goals, three assists) on the way to being named the tournament's most outstanding player. It's as if Gerbe was playing on an entirely different stage than anyone else. All they could do was watch.

"In our eyes, he's the best player in the country," said Bertram. "To show up in the biggest games, I think that's the best [praise] someone can give you. He's a big-game player. To lead this team and score those big goals, he's going to be a great player at the national level, too, but it's just so nice to experience and play with him here and just see that talent first-hand. He's a game-breaker and if you give him some chances and loosen up a little bit, he's going to make you pay. The last two games, he was unbelievable."

The seniors provided strong leadership throughout the season, which was not always very smooth. There were winless streaks, injuries, and player dismissals. But the steady upperclassmen helped right the ship for the stretch run and none allowed themselves to get too excited until practically the final seconds ticked off the clock.

"I wasn't exhaling until I looked up with six seconds left and said, 'All right, I don't think they can score three goals with six seconds left,'" said Bertram. "It's almost surreal when you're sitting there and kind of watching the clock go down, 30 seconds at a time. I guess when it got to 1:30 [left] and I'm thinking, 'This is really in out of reach now.' Six seconds was the only time I was like, 'OK, start enjoying it a little bit.'"

Senior Matt Greene said in his 22 years of living, the feeling of accomplishment is unmatched.

"I can't say this is the best feeling I'll ever feel, but this certainly is the highlight of my life so far," he said.

Greene acknowledged, however, it hadn't quite hit him that although the seniors went out on the ultimate high, his collegiate career is over.

"I've got a couple more weeks to stick around the BC campus," said Greene. "It's the last time I'll stare across and give [Andrew] Orpik a wink or maybe throw a tape ball at [Brian Gibbons] or maybe a little bit of ice at [Kyle Kucharski]. That's all a part of being a team."

"Hockey is a special sport because you grow in relationships more than I think in any other sport. We deeply mean what we say and it's going to hit me for sure."

Bertram said as devastated as they were to lose in the two title games prior to this one, that's how incredible the feeling is to win.

"You never want to lose," said Bertram. "It's nice as senior, you're remembered for your last game. There is no better feeling than leaving Boston College, which has been so good to us, on top and winning. It's something I'll never forget and it's something forever I will be proud of."

The Eagles will hold an autograph session at Conte Forum at 5:30 this afternoon, followed by a victory celebration at 6:15 p.m.

Mr. KENNEDY. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the Senate proceed to the immediate consideration of S. Res. 514 submitted earlier today.

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. The clerk will report the resolution by title.

The assistant legislative clerk read as follows:

A resolution (S. Res. 514) congratulating the Boston College men's ice hockey team on winning the 2008 National Collegiate Athletic Association Division I National Ice Hockey Championship.

There being no objection, the Senate proceeded to consider the resolution.

Mr. KENNEDY. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the resolution be agreed to, the preamble be agreed to, the motions to consider be laid upon the table, and any statements be printed in the RECORD without intervening action or debate.

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

The resolution (S. Res. 514) was agreed to.

The preamble was agreed to.

The resolution, with its preamble, reads as follows:

S. RES. 514

Whereas, on Saturday, April 12, 2008, the Boston College men's ice hockey team (referred to in this preamble as the "Eagles") won the 2008 National Collegiate Athletic Association (NCAA) Division I National Ice Hockey Championship by defeating the University of Notre Dame men's ice hockey team by the score of 4 to 1 in the final game of the Frozen Four;

Whereas the University of Notre Dame men's ice hockey team deserves great respect for reaching the Frozen Four for the first time in the team's history and then advancing to the National Championship game;

Whereas the victory for Boston College marked the Eagles' third national hockey championship, after the team's first championship win in 1949 and its second championship win in 2001;

Whereas the Eagles earned the number 1 seed in the NCAA hockey tournament with an impressive overall record of 24 wins, 11 losses, and 8 ties during the 2007–2008 season;

Whereas the Eagles were led by junior Nathan Gerbe, the Nation's leading scorer in men's college ice hockey, who came in second for the Hobey Baker Memorial Award, with 35 goals and 32 assists during the season;

Whereas the Eagles have made the National Championship game in each of the past 3 years, demonstrating extraordinary teamwork and dedication;

Whereas the remarkable 2007–2008 season also included a memorable victory for the Eagles in the historic Beanpot Championship in February 2008, earning Boston College its 14th Beanpot Championship;

Whereas Boston College "Super Fans" traveled great distances all year and gave the Eagles strong support throughout their championship season; and

Whereas Boston College and its student athletes are well known for their commitment to both athletic and academic excellence, ranking sixth nationally among NCAA Division I schools in the graduation rate of student athletes: Now, therefore, be it

Resolved, That the Senate—

(1) congratulates—

(A) the Boston College men's ice hockey team for winning the 2008 National Collegiate Athletic Association Division I National Ice Hockey Championship; and

(B) the players, coaching staff, faculty and staff of the university, student body, and fans whose determination, strong work ethic, drive, and support made the 2007–2008 championship season possible;

(2) congratulates the University of Notre Dame men's ice hockey team for its success in the 2007–2008 season and for reaching the Frozen Four for the first time in the team's history; and

(3) directs the Secretary of the Senate to transmit an enrolled copy of this resolution to—

(A) Boston College President Father William P. Leahy, S.J.;

(B) Boston College Athletic Director Gene DeFilippo; and

(C) Boston College Head Coach Jerry York.

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

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

The assistant legislative clerk proceeded to call the roll.

Mr. KENNEDY. 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.

RECESS

Mr. KENNEDY. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the Senate stand in recess until 2:15 p.m. this afternoon.

There being no objection, the Senate, at 12:24 p.m., recessed until 2:15 p.m. and reassembled when called to order by the Presiding Officer (Mr. CARPER).

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from California is recognized.

HIGHWAY TECHNICAL CORRECTIONS ACT OF 2007—MOTION TO PROCEED—Continued

Mrs. BOXER. Mr. President, I am very hopeful that our Republican friends had a good meeting about this SAFETEA-LU technical corrections bill and that they decided to work with us to get this job done. This, as we say, is definitely not rocket science. It is a bill that is going to correct some mistakes we made in this enormous highway transportation bill that was passed several years ago. It is going to make very important corrections so the Department of Transportation can proceed to investigate the status of our highways, our bridges, and our transit systems.

The bottom line is, as we get ready for our next highway bill—and, Mr. President, you are such a key player on our committee. You know this as well as I do. We see bridges collapsing. We need to know the extent of the problems we are facing.

Because of a problem in the bill, the account that we need to fund these investigations and studies is oversub-

scribed, which is a fancy way of saying we need to figure out another way to complete our work. That is taken care of in this bill.

We need colleagues to help us. We are not adding one dime to the spending on transportation systems and highways. All we are doing is making technical corrections to make sure some of the projects that have been stymied—let's say because the environmental report came in and said we can't do alternative 1, we have to do alternative 2, and alternative 2 was not authorized—will be allowed to move forward.

I did a press conference today with both management and labor of the building trades. The construction workers are hurting out there. We know we are in a recession. This is a mini-economic stimulus bill. We are not suggesting it is a cure-all by any means. It is a small bill, but it will unleash \$1 billion across this great Nation of ours. When you unleash \$1 billion of spending, what it means is tens of thousands of workers will get jobs. They are doing important projects—fixing bridges, fixing roads, building transit systems—all the good work that makes our Nation work.

I am here. It is about 2:20 in the afternoon. We have been on the floor of the Senate since early Monday. Frankly, this bill could have been done in an hour or two. We are very willing to take the few amendments there are and work with the authors of those amendments. We may have to have just an up-or-down vote because, frankly, we are not going to entertain anything that changes the law. This is just a technical corrections bill. But if there are things we can do to accommodate our colleagues, we are happy to do them.

When I say "we," I not only mean the Democratic members of the committee but the Republican members of the committee. Senator INHOFE has been working very closely with me, and we feel very good about our work together. We managed to get our WRDA bill through, the Water Resources Development Act, in 7 months after it languished 7 years. We can do it on this too. On that we had to override the President's veto. The President sent us a little note that he doesn't love this bill; there is one thing he doesn't like. The fact is, the one thing he doesn't like was signed off on by Republicans and Democrats on the Banking Committee. It has to do with how we prioritize transit projects. The desire of the committee to put this in the bill is a reiteration of SAFETEA-LU. It really doesn't change anything, it just stresses it. The President does not like it, but I am hopeful he is not going to veto. He didn't say he is going to veto. He just said he didn't appreciate the guidance we are giving him. We don't believe it is a veto threat. We believe we can get this to his desk.

Think about how good we will feel to know that people who are hurting can get jobs right now—that is really what

it is about right now—and, frankly, companies that are hurting can get contracts.

Again, this is a no brainer, for want of a better term. This is something we should do. We should do it quickly. I stand by ready, willing, and able to get this work done.

I do not see anyone else on the Senate floor wishing to speak. Mr. President, I will be back when I have to be back.

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

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will call the roll.

The assistant legislative clerk proceeded to call the roll.

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

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

Mr. REID. Mr. President, here we are. It is 2:15, 2:20. The caucus has ended for the Republicans, and there is still no decision on the momentous decision on whether we can legislate on a technical corrections bill. It is too bad that we cannot move forward; we have so much to do in this body to meet the needs of the American people. We need to do something about the reauthorization of the Federal Aviation Agency. We have an equal pay issue we have to deal with. We have a veterans health matter we have to deal with. We have to deal with a long list of legislation, and we are being stopped from doing that today. We were stopped from doing it yesterday. We were stopped from doing it on Thursday.

I want to be spread on the record that this obstructionism of the Republicans has been carried to a fine art. They are doing a great job. They are basically obstructing everything, stalling for time to maintain the status quo. We have had 7-plus years of this administration which has brought this country down, not up. We have an economy that is staggering. We have a housing crisis like we have rarely seen—maybe during the Great Depression but not since then. We have a war that is costing us \$5,000 a second, and the Republicans want to maintain the status quo.

The only thing they talk about is let's have the Bush tax cuts go on a little bit longer. Let's do tort reform. It is no longer a serious debate on legislation. It is a serious debate on how to keep attention away from the failed Presidency of George Bush.

We can have a vote at 11:30 tonight, approximately. It takes a majority vote. That is all it takes to move forward on this legislation. Until then we can do nothing. We cannot legislate until the 30 hours is used. In the 65 or 70 filibusters they have conducted in the Senate—my math is not good enough instantaneously to tell you how many hours we have eaten up on days like this just doing nothing, just letting the statutory 30 hours run out—but during that period of time we real-

ly can't do anything. They know that. But I believe the American people will recognize in November what has happened in the Senate.

I suggest the absence of a quorum.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will call the roll.

The assistant legislative clerk proceeded to call the roll.

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

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

Mr. ALLARD. I ask unanimous consent that I speak as in morning business.

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

TAX REFORM

Mr. ALLARD. Mr. President, I rise today to talk about an issue that is very important to the hard-working men and women of our great country; that is, tax reform. I believe the Federal tax burden is excessive and overly intrusive. Reform of the IRS and the current tax system is long overdue.

If our Democratic colleagues have their way, the Tax Code will continue to be excessive and overly intrusive. In recent years it has become abundantly clear to me that we have lost sight of the fact that the fundamental purpose of our tax system is to raise revenues to fund our Government.

In its current application, the U.S. tax system distorts the economic decisions of families, of businesses, leading to an inefficient allocation of resources and hindering economic growth.

Our tax system has become unstable and unpredictable. Frequent changes to the Tax Code have caused volatility that is harmful to the economy and creates additional compliance costs. The tax system was originally intended to be an efficient and simple system designed to raise revenues for our national defense, social programs, and vital Government services. However, the current tax system is now so complex that approximately \$150 billion is spent each year by taxpayers and the Federal Government to make sure that taxes are tallied and paid correctly. This is an enormous expense and a waste of resources. At present, the United States has instituted a tax system that thwarts basic economic decisions, punishes wise and productive investments, and rewards those who work less and borrow more.

As it stands, the quagmire that is our existing Tax Code penalizes savings, contributes to the ever-increasing cost of health insurance, and undermines our global competitiveness. More disturbing is the fact that Americans spend more than 3.5 billion hours doing their taxes, which is the equivalent of hiring almost 2 million new IRS employees; more than 20 times the agency's current workforce, I might add.

On average, Americans spend the equivalent of more than half of one work week; that is, 26 hours, on their taxes each year, not to mention the

amount of time they work to pay the taxes themselves. At the end of the day, despite our lengthy codified tax law, there is no evidence to suggest that Americans know how much they should be paying in taxes in any given year or why.

Our Tax Code should aspire to be clear and transparent, rather than multifarious and convoluted. Everyone should be able to have a basic understanding of the Tax Code, knowing how and why they are taxed. The Tax Code's constant phase-ins and phase-outs are a nuisance at best and a negative force, at worst, in the daily economic lives of American families and businesses.

Moreover, taxpayers with the same incomes, family situation, and other key characteristics often face different tax burdens. This differing treatment creates a perception of unfairness in the Tax Code and has left many Americans discouraged.

At present, how much or little taxpayers pay in taxes is sometimes dependent on where they happen to live and the choices made by their employers.

In 1986, President Ronald Reagan, a true visionary in this area, signed the Tax Reform Act of 1986 which reduced top marginal individual rates from 50 percent to 28 percent, increased the standard deduction, and reduced the top corporate tax from 50 percent to 34 percent. In doing so, this reform act simplified the Tax Code, broadening the income tax base, allowing for lower marginal rates, and curtailing the use of individual tax shelters.

While the 1986 act was a step in the right direction, unfortunately, it did not produce a long-lasting transformation of our tax system. Today, our tax system bears little resemblance to the simple low-rate system promised by the 1986 reform. This is due to constant tweaking over the years. More than 100 different acts of Congress have made nearly 15,000 changes to the Tax Code.

Public opinion polls indicate that Americans believe taxpayers should not have to pay more than one-fourth of their income to the Government. The current Tax Code hardly reflects this perspective. Depending on the level of income, the amount of deductions, and the type of family, one's income can be taxed at 25 percent, 28 percent, 33 percent, or 35 percent.

I support broad-based tax reform and a simplified tax system. It is my belief that any reform to the current tax system should benefit the middle class. The vast majority of taxpayers are the middle class, and they have borne the burden of the current system.

While I was a member of the Colorado Legislature, we implemented a 5-percent flat tax for Colorado. I believe we should take a similar approach on the Federal level. While I would be willing to consider a flat tax or a sales tax or other plans on the Federal level, it is important that any replacement

plan be simple and fair. The replacement system must provide tax relief for working Americans. It must protect the rights of taxpayers and reduce our collection abuse. But most importantly, a new system must eliminate the bias against savings and investment and against economic growth and job creation.

No one can deny that our Tax Code is in dire need of reform. Its complexity, lack of clarity, unfairness, and disproportionate influence on behavior has caused great frustration. Our current Tax Code has been shaped by goals other than simplicity, by intentions other than helping the taxpayer plan ahead, and by objectives other than expanding our economy. Not only has it failed to keep pace with our economy, frequent changes have made it unstable and unpredictable. Years of hodgepodge Government interference and ad hoc meddling have left our Tax Code in shambles. While we cannot change the past, we can learn valuable lessons from the same and remedy our mistakes.

If we do not take steps to immediately simplify and reform the Tax Code, it will become more complex, more unfair, and less conducive to our economy's future growth.

Small reforms are not enough. A total overhaul of the existing system is the only chance we have of righting this wrong and getting our economy and our deficit back on track.

Raising taxes is not an option. Our Democratic colleagues seem to believe that raising taxes or doing nothing about taxes is the best policy. Just last month, Democrats proposed raising taxes on the average American family by \$2,300 per year. Earlier this year, Democrats passed a proposal calling for the largest tax hike in history. If Democrats continue down this path of tax increases and a do-nothing tax policy, more and more American families will suffer.

It is important to point out that to do nothing on the Tax Code means a tax increase is going to happen within the next several years. A do-nothing policy on taxes will allow for the expiration of several key tax provisions. It will further the reach of the AMT, the alternative minimum tax. We will see a tax increase of more than \$1.2 trillion over the next 10 years.

At a time of economic uncertainty, raising taxes and taking money out of the pockets of the American people should not be the goal of the Congress. We must act now. We have a responsibility to our constituents and the Nation to resolve the predicament the current tax system has put us in. If we do not act sooner rather than later in reforming our tax system, it will continue to become more complex and cumbersome.

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

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will call the roll.

The assistant legislative clerk proceeded to call the roll.

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

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

Mr. DEMINT. Mr. President, I want to take a few minutes to speak on the transportation technical corrections bill, which we will be discussing this week. Later on I will offer a motion to recommit, with some considerations I would like to address now.

A lot of us were part of moving this through Congress. It is an important transportation bill, when roads and bridges are in desperate need of funding for repairs and widening.

There were over 6000 politically directed earmarks in the original highway bill. Now, the corrections bill involves 500 of those earmarks. I thought we should talk about the bill and what this means, as far as transportation in the United States.

First, I want to thank Senators BOXER and INHOFE for all of the work they have done on transparency on this legislation. While I strongly believe we should put an end to the practice of earmarking, if the Senate is going to earmark, it must do it in a transparent manner. I believe the chairwoman and ranking member have set an example for all committees in providing information in a way that people can look at it and debate it. It is all right for us to disagree on whether we like earmarks. In this case, we can do it with full disclosure of what is actually in the bill.

The American people deserve to know how their elected representatives are spending their money, and the way this bill handles earmark disclosure helps us do just that. The Senators from California and Oklahoma have disclosed the sponsor, the recipient, and the purpose of the earmarks in this bill, in addition to letters disclosing that the sponsors have no financial interests in the particular earmark. I was also pleased to see that disclosures were made in a timely manner so we could review them before we began consideration of the legislation. They have gone beyond the requirements of the Senate rules, and I applaud them for their commitment to transparency. I hope the other committees are equally committed to transparency.

My colleagues have suggested on the floor that this bill is needed so States can move forward with planning and construction of authorized projects from the last highway reauthorization bill. As with all large bills, there were typos and other errors in this bill, and the technical corrections bill we are discussing this week was designed to correct those technical errors and problems. I think that is something, obviously, we need oftentimes to do with most of our legislation. But instead of correcting the errors from the last reauthorization bill, the committee decided to rewrite public law and add contract authority as well as add to spending levels for certain

projects, essentially adding new earmarks to the bill.

The President's statement of administrative policy regarding this technical corrections bill contains strong language critical of this legislation, and let me quote some from that SAP.

The administration notes with strong concern that the majority of the bill is devoted to earmarks. The bill modifies hundreds of earmarks from a bill that passed in 2005, effectively creating new earmarks, including a stand-alone section that would provide mandatory funding for magnetically levitating rail. The effort through H.R. 1195 to modify these earmarks from an authorization that passed only three years ago is a further reflection of those inefficiencies. Therefore, the Administration urges that these provisions be removed from the bill.

That is effectively what my motion will address when we offer it later in the week.

Again quoting from the administration's position on this bill:

The administration urges Congress to restrict the bill to true technical changes. For example, in addition to those noted above, both the Senate-proposed substitute and the underlying bill contain substantive changes to statutory provisions regarding waiver procedures for Buy America requirements that should be removed from the bill because they are not technical corrections. In addition, section 104 of the substitute would repeal section 111(d) of title 23 of the U.S. Code, which allows idling reduction facilities at public rest areas in Interstate rights-of-way. This provision is a policy change, not a technical amendment. Repealing this section of the U.S. Code would eliminate a beneficial initiative first proposed by this administration.

We have heard for the past months, and will continue to hear today, that Members of Congress know what is best in their districts—know better than some unelected Federal bureaucrat. If a Member of Congress knows what is best for their district, then why are we debating a 138-page so-called technical corrections package? I suppose some of these are drafting errors, and I do not deny there should always be room for some error in the legislative process. But page after page of corrections does not speak well for our whole earmarking process.

The 1982 highway bill had only 10 earmarks. That number rose to 538 in 1991, and 1,800 in 1998. The SAFETEA-LU highway authorization bill we are talking about today contained an inexcusable 6,000 earmarks, at a cost of well over \$20 billion and now nearly 500 changes in the technical corrections package. A 2007 report by the Department of Transportation Office of Inspector General, requested by Senator TOM COBURN, found that DOT earmarks have increased in number by 1,150 percent from 1996 to 2005—an incredible increase—and, as we can see, a number that has been very difficult for us to manage effectively here in the Congress.

This administration has projected that the highway trust fund will have a negative balance of \$3.2 billion by 2009 if we continue on the path of outspending the receipts in this account.

So piling on the additional authorization levels to projects in this technical corrections bill will only further deplete the highway account and cause the highway trust fund to be bankrupt sooner than projected.

I know the case has been made that this technical corrections bill does not increase the overall amount, but as we went back through this and found numerous earmarks that were no longer needed or even wanted, instead of moving that money to savings, we moved it to earmarks, and new earmarks, and to add to additional earmarks at a time when we need to be trying to save money to overcome the projected deficit. Congress needs to take a timeout and examine the country's infrastructure priorities instead of relying solely on Members of Congress transportation earmarks.

Of most concern is that many of the earmarks requested and funded in highway authorization bills are neither the most effective nor efficient use of funds. Many of them, such as an earmark for renovating the Apollo Theater, have nothing to do with transportation. Senators and House Members have picked particular projects for funding that they know will result in their gaining political support. They will get more votes in their reelection campaigns for bringing home the bacon, but funding will be redirected from highway projects where it is most needed.

This is why I have proposed this motion to recommit, that will send this bill back to the committee and require that the bill be reported back to the Senate with an amendment that eliminates any provision in the bill that increases spending for earmarks that are contained in the SAFETEA bill. Increasing spending for existing earmarks is simply not a technical correction, and such provisions do not belong in this legislation, that is intended to only correct the technical aspects of the bill.

Here are a few examples of provisions in this bill that are not technical corrections but are actually inserting new earmarks into law or significantly increasing funding for existing earmarks.

Page 18 amends an earmark in current law that provides \$800,000 for an intersection project in Pennsylvania by striking the \$800,000 designation and increasing the earmark to \$2.4 million. That is not a technical correction.

On page 19, we amend an earmark in current law that provides Federal funds for widening two blocks of Poplar Street from Park Avenue to 13th Street in Williamson County, IL, by striking that description and inserting the following new earmark, which is to construct a connector road from Rushing Drive north to Grand Avenue in Williamson County. It is not a technical correction. It is a new project and it is the elimination of another one.

Page 22 amends an earmark in current law that provides \$800,000 to widen State Road 80 in Henderson County,

FL, by striking the \$800,000 figure and inserting \$1.6 million. We double the earmark amount.

Page 29 amends an earmark in current law that provides \$2.7 million for upgrades to an interchange in Pennsylvania by striking the \$2.7 million amount and increasing the earmark to \$3.2 million.

Page 35 amend a New York earmark in current law that provides \$4 million for Miller Highway improvements by striking the existing earmark and inserting the following new earmark: pedestrian paths, stairs, seating, landscaping, lighting, and other transportation enhancement activities along Riverside Boulevard and at Riverside Park South. This is not a technical correction, and it is one of the reasons we are not rebuilding and improving and maintaining bridges in America, because we are focused on things that are not basic infrastructure.

Pages 63 and 64 amend a New York earmark in current law that provides \$500,000 for design and construction of an access road to Plattsburgh International Airport by striking this description and inserting the following new earmark: preparation, demolition, disposal, and site restoration of Alert Facility on Access Road, Plattsburgh International Airport.

So we found we didn't need the money in one area, but we found a new area, instead of saving it, as we apparently need to do to keep the Highway Trust Fund on the path of solvency.

The most glaring example of a non-technical correction made by this bill is the MAGLEV section, which provides \$90 million over 2 years in mandatory spending for a MAGLEV rail project from Nevada to California. Under current law, this project was simply between two cities in Nevada, but this technical corrections bill paves the way for extending this project all the way to California and leaves the Federal Government on the hook for paying the price tag.

How will this project expand Federal spending? Well, first, it jams all the funding into the last 2 years, which increases the baseline from \$30 million in 2009 to \$45 million. The way we fund things here is based on year-to-year baselines. It turns the funding from an authorization to direct spending. In the original bill, it allows the funding of a project. Now it requires the funding of a project. It extends the Federal project from Primm, NV, to Anaheim, CA, and it involves the Federal Government in a dubious construction project that will create an unwanted transportation mode, the cost of which will likely expand considerably.

Along this same route, a private company has raised billions of dollars to build a high-speed rail corridor from Nevada to California without any taxpayer money. Our role in Government should be to make the private sector work, not to replace it and to compete with it with taxpayer dollars.

In addition to increasing Federal funding, this provision inserts the Gov-

ernment into a business that appears to need no propping up from taxpayers. Press reports indicate that the MAGLEV route is nearly identical, as I mentioned before, to a completely privately financed rail project, which is estimated to cost between \$3 billion and \$5 billion. This legislation would use taxpayer dollars to fund a government project that is in direct competition with an existing privately funded effort.

The Government does not need to be replacing private sector involvement. In 2005, the Los Angeles Times had this to say about MAGLEV:

The long-running debate over MAGLEV trains is a battle between faith and reason. They have to rely on faith because there is very little evidence of the practicality of these systems. Only one commercial high-speed MAGLEV train exists, covering a 19-mile stretch from Shanghai to Pudong International Airport. Why spend so much money, especially if it's from taxpayers, when you might get more bang for the buck out of cheaper alternatives? That the Primm line has gotten this far is a tribute to the power and determination of the Senate Majority Leader, who undoubtedly sees MAGLEV as promising a new transportation system for pork.

The Associated Press also reported a few weeks ago that the country of Germany has canceled its initiative to build a MAGLEV link to the Munich airport, citing escalating costs. Germany's transportation minister told reporters that it was "not possible to finance the project" since the cost had more than doubled.

I guess anything is possible when it is taxpayer money, but, clearly, building an unproven experimental project, where private money is already accomplishing the same thing, does not make very much sense. In this transportation bill, not only will this experimental rail provision eventually cost billions in Federal funding and insert the Government into the private market, where it doesn't belong, it would most likely also be bad for consumers. According to my last check on the Internet, the nonstop flights from Los Angeles to Las Vegas are 1 hour 10 minutes and cost only \$118 for a round trip. That is \$59 each way.

I ask my colleagues how much these MAGLEV trips will cost. Are we absolutely certain it will cost less than \$59 each way? If not, why would not consumers fly?

I would hazard a guess here that if we were asking Members of the Senate to invest their own personal money in this project, not one would reach for their wallet. But this is taxpayers' money we are spending on something none of us would do as individuals.

Even the administration has weighed in on this provision stating that the bill modifies hundreds of earmarks from a bill that passed in 2005, effectively creating new earmarks, including a stand-alone section that would provide mandatory funding for magnetic levitating rail. The administration urges these provisions be removed from the bill.

We are not talking about technical corrections. These provisions increase funding for existing earmarks and create new earmarks. Proponents of this legislation will argue that the bill spends no new Federal dollars and, in fact, even saves taxpayers a few million dollars. While that is true, the bill accomplishes this by rescinding funds left in the Treasury that were never used by a few earmarks previously authorized by Congress. However, it is clear to me that this bill is just another way for Congress to create new earmarks, increase spending for existing earmarks without actually appearing to be doing just that.

In addition, by shifting existing funding from one earmark to be used for a completely new earmark, this bill also creates new projects which now rely on the Federal Government to continue their funding in the future. In the long run, this legislation encourages wasteful Washington spending through the broken process of earmarking.

Here is an example of a true technical correction included in this legislation. On page 24 of the bill, there is a provision that would strike the word "country" and insert the word "county" in an earmark for "New County road on Whidbey Island" in Washington State. The current law refers to this road as "New Country Road," which was a mistake, and this bill would correct that error by inserting the word "county." Clearly, this is a true technical correction and represents the spirit of what this bill was intended to accomplish, which is to correct technical errors contained in current law.

Another argument we hear is that earmarking Federal tax dollars is our "constitutional obligation." Our colleague, Dr. Coburn, wrote an excellent article entitled "Founders vs. Pork" addressing this bogus claim. I will not read the article in its entirety, but I commend it to all my colleagues. It contains some excellent quotations which I will share.

Thomas Jefferson, in a 1796 letter to James Madison regarding federally funded local projects, said that "[O]ther revenues will soon be called into their aid, and it will be the source of eternal scramble among the members, who can get the most money wasted in their State; and they will always get the most who are the meanest."

In a 1792 letter to Alexander Hamilton conveying what he believed to be the public's perception of government, George Washington cited worries about the "increase in the mass of the debt," which had "furnished effectual means of corrupting such a portion of the legislature, as turns the balance between the honest voters[.]" Hamilton, who famously clashed with Jefferson and Madison on fiscal matters, responded that "[e]very session the question whether the annual provision should be continued, would be an occasion of pernicious caballing and corrupt bargaining."

The importance of transparency in Government operations was also recognized by Jefferson. In 1808, he wrote:

The same prudence, which, in private life, would forbid our paying our money for unexplained projects, forbids it in the disposition of public moneys.

As I said before, I doubt very seriously any Member of this Senate would invest their own money in an unproven technology over a route where there is already going to be private competition.

Jefferson also astutely recognized that large amounts of spending would inevitably lead to outside efforts to redirect that money. He wrote in 1801 about the need "to reform the waste of public money, and thus drive away the vultures who prey upon it[.]"

George Washington noted in 1792 that no mischief is "so afflicting and fatal to every honest hope, as the corruption of the legislature."

Congressional approval ratings, as we all know, are now at record lows because taxpayers do not believe we are being honest or open about how we spend their money.

One might argue that earmarking is a simpler system. There is really no meddling by bureaucrats, no cost-benefit analysis, no hearing just a big pie that is sliced up into pieces of varying sizes, with the senior Members getting the biggest slice. But this is no way to run a government or a country.

This bill proves that the so-called simplicity of the system is not all it is cracked up to be. One of the changes in this bill involves removing an earmark that was not even wanted but was secretly put into a bill after the bill had already passed. Now, that is the sort of technical correction we should be passing right now. Why did it take so long to identify an earmark that was not wanted or needed? Fortunately, in this bill, we could remove it. Senator COBURN has an amendment that will force an investigation of this bizarre process by which an earmark finds its way into a bill that already has passed. I look forward to the findings. I encourage my colleagues to support it.

I applaud the committee for providing earmark disclosure, more earmark disclosure than we have seen out of most committees. Senators BOXER and INHOFE are to be commended for their effort they have made to comply with the letter and the spirit of the law. As I said, I hope all the committees will follow example. However, this bill does not have a committee report. In that sense, Senators have been denied the tools we customarily rely on to decipher massive catchall bills such as this. For example, without the "changes in existing Law" document, which is contained in all committee reports, we are theoretically supposed to go through each earmark and try to figure out what it is amending. Since it is almost certain that few Members will actually do this beyond projects they inserted in the bill personally, the bill is largely a series of meaningless

paragraphs. For example, section 105 of the bill is 63 pages containing 386 earmarks. These earmarks contain such illuminating descriptions as "In item number 753 by striking \$2,700,000 and inserting \$3,200,000." That is all we know unless we go back to the original bill to figure it out. The earmark description for this one simply says it is from BILL SHUSTER and gives the SAFETEA-LU section it amends. Even with the list of earmark descriptions, one has no idea what this amendment does without going to the underlying bill. When you look at the law, you see that it has to do with "Widening of Rt. 22 and SR 26 in Huntingdon. Upgrades to the interchange at U.S. Rt. 22 and SR 26." I still have no idea why this project needs a \$500,000 plus-up, but at least I have a general idea what the project is. But, again, I do not expect that any of my colleagues actually looked up this earmark.

This bill highlights the fact that this is a terrible way to write legislation, where we all decide the different projects we want and force them in a single bill. This bill demonstrates to me and the American people that earmarking is out of control and that the process is inefficient.

We are spending time on the Senate floor to pass 138 pages of "fixes" to mistakes and errors relating to existing earmarks. I say to my colleagues, we have much more pressing needs that deserve our time and attention, such as providing health insurance to the millions of uninsured across this Nation, making health care more affordable, and passing the FISA reauthorization bill to protect our homeland. Instead, we are spending precious time fixing earmarks—hardly a high priority with taxpayers who are disgusted with the way their hard-earned tax dollars are being wasted now.

I urge my colleagues to support this amendment. Again, it does not strike any earmarks that are in law. It allows all the technical corrections that are included in this bill, but it simply says we would eliminate any new earmarks in this bill and any increases in existing earmarks. I think that is what a technical corrections bill should be.

Mr. President, I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Maryland.

Mr. CARDIN. Mr. President, I intend to speak for a few minutes on behalf of the committee in response to the comments made by the Senator from South Carolina. I ask unanimous consent that the Senator from Georgia then be recognized for up to 5 minutes to talk as in morning business and then followed by the Senator from North Dakota.

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

Mr. CARDIN. Mr. President, I first thank my colleague from South Carolina for acknowledging that the process that was used on this technical corrections bill was a very open process, one in which all the changes were open for

public review and scrutiny, well identified, and a process in which any Member or any person could evaluate the merits or demerits of what we were attempting to do.

Second, let me point out that this is a technical corrections bill—and I am going to respond to one of the projects specifically that the Senator from South Carolina has talked about—but that it is a normal process when we pass a large bill to go through a technical corrections process in order to correct mistakes that were made or clarify or, as priorities change, to deal with the regions to make sure the Federal programs are properly targeted to the needs. This is a technical corrections bill.

Third, let me point out that the regions have come to us to ask for clarifications or modifications of projects within the area, not increasing the costs. I thank the Senator from South Carolina for pointing out that this legislation does not increase costs; in fact, it will save some money. I appreciate him pointing that out.

So we are in agreement on all those points. We are going to save money. It corrects mistakes that were made, and it deals with regional priorities that have been requested of us, consistent with prior authorizations of Congress.

I point out one project, and that is the maglev project. I do not want to debate the merits or demerits of the maglev project because I do not think that would be appropriate on a technical corrections bill. But where the Senator from South Carolina is incorrect is that this is a technical correction of prior actions of Congress. It provides contract authority. That is what we intended to do in the SAFETEA-LU Act. So this is not anything new in maglev. The areas that are involved were the same areas that were previously identified. It does not expand the project and makes technical corrections as far as contract authority.

What the Senator from South Carolina is debating is the merits of maglev, and this is the wrong bill on which to debate that. By the Senator's own admission, this is a technical corrections bill, and we should just be talking about whether the language is what was intended by Congress in its previous actions, and clearly it was, to make sure we do it right based on previous actions.

I hope the Senator from South Carolina will heed his own advice; that is, let's make the technical corrections bill deal with those types of issues. And I am afraid his amendment would not. As now explained to us, he wants to eliminate some of these projects, and that is not the purpose of a technical corrections bill. I can understand Members being concerned about that approach. I am proud of the work of the committee. The committee did identify those—and it is relatively few when you consider how many authorizations are in the SAFETEA-LU Act—to clar-

ify and, in some cases, to make typo corrections and things such as that.

It is vitally important to move this bill forward so we can move forward on vital transportation projects that affect every one of our States. I urge our colleagues to support the committee and support the process, the very open and fair and transparent process that was used by the committee in developing the changes that are in this legislation.

Mr. President, I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Georgia.

JACKIE ROBINSON

Mr. CHAMBLISS. Mr. President, I rise today to commemorate a seminal moment in our Nation's history. On this day in 1947, Jackie Robinson broke the color barrier to Major League Baseball after years of segregation.

Jack Roosevelt Robinson was born in 1919 to a family of sharecroppers in Cairo, GA. Cairo, the home of the syrup makers, is a small town in south Georgia located about 35 miles from my hometown of Moultrie.

As you can imagine, Jackie was very talented and did extremely well at sports. At UCLA, Jackie became the first athlete to win varsity letters in four sports—football, basketball, baseball, and track. He was even named All-American in football.

Jackie enlisted in the U.S. Army in World War II, and following his discharge in 1944, he played the season in the Negro Baseball League and a couple of years in minor league ball.

In 1947, following Jackie's outstanding performance in the minor leagues, Brooklyn Dodgers vice president Branch Rickey decided it was time to integrate Major League Baseball, which had not had an African-American player since 1889. When Jackie first donned a Brooklyn Dodgers uniform, he led the way to the integration of professional athletics in America.

In his first year, he hit 12 home runs and helped the Dodgers win the National League pennant. That year, Robinson led the National League in stolen bases and was also selected Rookie of the Year. Robinson succeeded in putting racial conflict and prejudice aside to show the world what a talented individual he was. His success in the major leagues opened the door for other African-American players.

Jackie Robinson himself became a vocal champion for African-American athletes, civil rights and other social and political causes. After baseball, Robinson became active in business and continued working as an activist for social change. He was the first African-American inducted into the baseball Hall of Fame and, in 1997, his number was retired by Major League Baseball.

I can recall, as a small boy, being a Brooklyn Dodgers fan. The main reason was because my older brother was a New York Yankees fan and the perennial World Series game was between

the Dodgers and the Yankees, so it was a natural rivalry that my brother and I have. I have very vivid memories of watching Jackie Robinson play ball on TV and having great admiration and respect for him as an athlete. It was Jackie Robinson who paved the way for so many great athletes today.

Little did he know, back then in 1947, that he would be followed by the likes of Larry Doby, Willie Mays, and my good friend, Hank Aaron. But what a great inspiration he has been for all of America. Today, I honor the man who stood boldly against those who resisted racial equality, and I acknowledge the profound influence of one man's life on the American culture. Jackie Robinson's life and legacy will be remembered as one of great importance in American history.

I will yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Mrs. MCCASKILL). The Senator from North Dakota is recognized.

Mr. DORGAN. Madam President, if people are by any chance watching the proceedings of the Senate this afternoon, they may wonder what on Earth is happening or more likely what is not happening. It has become customary, when we try to do business in the Senate in recent months, that we discover there is a filibuster that requires a cloture motion to be filed on almost anything. On the Senate floor today, as I understand it, we are on a 30-hour postcloture period on a motion to proceed to a technical corrections bill. That is almost unbelievable to me.

It is not unusual. We have had 65 filibusters in this Congress. Why would someone require a cloture motion to be filed in order to break a filibuster on a motion to proceed to a technical corrections bill? The only conceivable reason to do that is to stop the Senate from doing anything. I guess those who have been doing this in the minority party have been pretty successful.

Today is tax day, April 15. One might ask, if we were not doing this—standing around and gnashing our teeth and wiping our brow, wondering why we can't move this—what would we be doing? If we didn't have a minority that insists on a motion to proceed, a filibuster, a cloture motion and 30 hours postcloture, what would we be doing?

We would probably be doing some worthwhile things. It is not that the underlying bill is not worthwhile, it is. It should be done quickly and easily. It is a technical corrections bill. But what, for example, could we do?

I thought, because it is April 15, a day a lot of people recognize as a day of obligation to pay their taxes, I would mention perhaps a few of the things we could be doing on the floor of the Senate if we had a bit of cooperation and if we could get the minority party to agree—and in every one of these cases, certainly we could not. But let me describe what we might do, just on the Tax Code.

The Government Accountability Office found that 59 of the 100 largest

publicly-traded Federal contractors—that is companies that did work for the Federal Government in 2001—had established hundreds of subsidiaries located in offshore tax havens to avoid paying taxes to the United States of America. They want all the benefits you can get from being a contractor for the Government, but they do not want to pay taxes to this country.

I discovered this some long while ago. It actually comes from an enterprising reporter named Dave Evans with Bloomberg News. I mention that because it is important. He discovered that in this building in the Cayman Islands, a 5-story white building on Church Street, there are 12,748 corporations that call it home. They are not there. It is their post office mailing address for the purpose of saying they are in the Cayman Islands to avoid paying U.S. taxes.

If we were not spending our time at parade rest, or posing as potted plants because the minority doesn't want to move ahead on anything, not even a motion to proceed on a technical corrections bill, are there other things we can do? We could solve this, couldn't we? We could say: If you are going to run your income through a subsidiary in a tax-haven country to avoid your obligation to the United States, maybe you don't need to contract with the Federal Government. Maybe you don't need to get the Federal Government's business. Or perhaps on tax day, we might say we will close this tax loophole—just like that. If you are not doing substantive business in a tax-haven country, we will not recognize you as having gone to a tax-haven country, and you will pay taxes as if you never left our country.

If we were not seeing all these interminable delays, perhaps we would pass legislation that I have offered previously, and that is to say to American companies: If you shut your manufacturing plant, fire your workers and move your operations overseas, you are not going to get a tax break anymore. Someone might say: Do they get a tax break for that? They sure do. Let me give an example. I assume that almost everyone has ridden in a Radio Flyer Little Red Wagon. It was made for 110 years in Illinois, in Chicago, IL. Radio Flyer Little Red Wagon was created by an immigrant who came here and created a big business.

The thing is, after 110 years the Radio Flyer Little Red Wagons are not manufactured here. They are all gone. They are in China. Every Radio Flyer Little Red Wagon is now manufactured in China. By the way, the company got a tax break to move the jobs to China.

I have spoken often on the floor about Huffy bicycles—20 percent of the American bicycle market and made in Ohio by workers who were earning \$11 an hour plus benefits. Not any more. They all got fired in Ohio and all these jobs were moved to Shenzhen, China. Huffy bicycles are made by people who work 12 to 14 hours a day, 7 days a week, for 30 cents an hour.

Do you know what the workers at Huffy bicycle did the last day of work, as their plants were closed down? As they pulled out of their parking spaces, the workers left a pair of empty shoes where their car used to park. It was their poignant way to say: You can move our jobs to China, but you are not going to fill our shoes. This company received a tax break for moving jobs to China.

Fruit of the Loom underwear—everybody knows about Fruit of the Loom underwear. You remember, they used to do commercials with the dancing grapes. I don't know who would dress up as a grape and dance, but I guess they got paid to do that, so you have commercials of dancing grapes advertising Fruit of the Loom underwear. The problem is, there is no Fruit of the Loom underwear made in America anymore because they all went offshore to be produced and the company got a tax break to do it. Why? Because this specific company did that? No, because companies that shut down their American manufacturing plants and move their jobs overseas get a tax break from this country. It is the most pernicious thing I have ever seen. I tried four times to correct it on the floor of the Senate. I ask people to look up the votes and see who is standing up for American jobs and American workers.

Perhaps we could do that on tax day, maybe fix that problem and say: At the very least, let's stop subsidizing, through the Tax Code, the shipping of American jobs overseas.

Here is another thing we could probably do if the minority weren't requiring cloture motions and engaging in 65 filibusters, which take up dead time.

I should point out for anybody watching or listening, nothing can be done during this period. We are in a 30-hour postcloture period on a motion to proceed—not even on the bill, on a motion to proceed to a technical corrections bill. So this 30 hours is dead time, designed by the minority because they do not want us to do anything we probably could do on this tax day.

We have a Tax Code that allows almost unbelievable tax breaks to some companies. This happens to be a streetcar in Germany owned by an American company. Why? Because they are experts in streetcars in Germany? No, because they get big tax breaks when they do this.

This is a sewer system in Germany. Wachovia Bank, a U.S. company, was buying sewer systems in Germany. Think of that—do you think it is because they are experts in sewer systems? No. Do you think they wanted to buy a sewer system and move it to America? No, not at all. They want to buy sewer systems in Europe so they can avoid taxes in the United States, because if you buy a sewer system from a European city and you now own it, you can actually depreciate it and then lease it back to the city and everybody makes money—except the American taxpayers and the Federal Government

loses money. Maybe, since it is tax day, we could shut down this tax scam, although the President has threatened to veto legislation that shuts down these kind of tax scams, for reasons I don't understand.

But we could try. We could decide, you know, if working folks pay taxes, maybe everybody else can pay taxes. Perhaps we can pass a piece of legislation that says those on Wall Street who are getting what is called carried interest, some of the wealthiest people in the United States, should pay a higher income tax rate than 15 percent. Almost everybody pays a higher income tax rate than 15 percent, but those who are making the biggest money on Wall Street in the form of what is called carried interest, they are laughing all the way to the bank. They get a 15-percent tax rate. Perhaps we could change that.

Perhaps another thing we could do this afternoon, if we were not forced to 30 hours of dead time, is we could deal with what the Internal Revenue Service is doing by farming out tax collections that need to be made—these are people who owe taxes—to debt collection agencies in the private sector. This is going to be hard for anybody to believe or understand, but here is what they have done. This administration is so anxious to privatize and farm out everything, they have gone into the Internal Revenue Service and said let's farm out these collections of taxes owed, so they have contracted with a couple of companies. The problem is that this privatization program lost \$50 million in its first year and is expected to lose more this year.

The IRS's private revenue collection target for the current fiscal year was \$88 million. But they now project that the program will collect only \$23 million. After excluding commissions, ongoing operational costs and capital investments, the IRS will still be \$31 million in red this year.

It is unbelievable. How can the Internal Revenue Service contract with a company that is going to lose money collecting taxes? I have a piece of legislation that says stop it. Maybe we could work on that and pass that legislation today—see if we could find some deep reservoir of common sense. The National Taxpayer Advocate who works at the IRS has said: Had that money been spent for collectors at the IRS, they would have raised \$1.4 billion. Instead, they invested \$71 million to use private collectors and returned just \$32 million in 2007. So they missed it by about \$1.368 billion. Isn't that incredible?

Does anybody care? Apparently not. We are in 30 hours dead time on a motion to proceed to a technical corrections bill, guaranteeing nothing can be done on the floor of the Senate.

There are a couple of other things we might consider when we are thinking what could we do this afternoon in this dead time.

This is a photograph of Mr. Efriam Diveroli. He is the chief executive officer of a firm that received \$300 million in U.S. Army contracts. He's 22 years old. His dad actually started a shell company back in the 1990s, and then he took it over. He said he was the only employee, except it lists a vice president. The vice president is a massage therapist. He is 25 years old.

So here we have a 22-year-old chief executive officer and a 25-year-old massage therapist running a company in Miami. They got \$300 million from the U.S. Department of Defense to provide ammunition to the Afghan fighters.

Let me describe where they are. They are in this building. No, they do not own this building; they are in a little part of this building with an unmarked door. So you have a 22-year-old and a 25-year-old massage therapist working out of an unmarked office in Miami, FL; Miami Beach, FL, and they are supposed to, with \$300 million, provide ammunition to the Afghan fighters on behalf of the U.S. Defense Department.

Here is a picture of the ammunition. Some of it is ammunition from China from the 1960s. You can see what it looks like. And the Afghan fighters were saying: Wait a second. What are you sending us? Bullets that do not fire? Now, I must say, the New York Times deserves some real credit. Three people wrote this story. The New York Times, I can tell from the story, they traveled around the world to get the details.

Now, we did not do it. We should have. We should have done it in something called a Truman committee. The bipartisan Truman committee was created in the Second World War, run by Harry Truman. By the way, it started with \$15,000 and has saved the American taxpayer \$15 billion going after waste, fraud, and abuse in defense contracting.

Three times we have voted on a Truman committee in the Congress, and three times it has been turned back by the minority.

Now, I will come later and give a longer presentation about defense contracting and the most unbelievable waste, fraud, and abuse in the history of this country. But we do not need more than the picture of the president of this company who got \$300 million.

The question I started with today is, What could we be doing in 30 hours of dead time, if the minority had not required that there be a cloture petition and had not effectively filibustered on a motion to proceed to a bill that is going to get overwhelming support? I do not understand it.

Finally, we probably could do something about the price of oil or gasoline while we are on the Senate floor during this dead time if we were not prevented by the minority, vetoed by a President's threatened veto pen.

Oil and gas. Well, look, today is Tuesday, and oil is at \$113 a barrel. Some are going to the bank with a big smile on their face, particularly the

large major integrated oil companies because they are making a massive amount of profit. Then other people are wondering: Do I have enough in my gas tank to be able to drive to work tomorrow? How am I going to do that?

So while all of this is going on today, the Federal Government is putting 70,000 barrels of sweet, light crude oil underground in the Strategic Reserve. And they are going to do it every single day all year long, 70,000 barrels a day, stuck underground.

Now, the Strategic Reserve is a decent idea. It is 97 percent filled. Why on Earth would we, when oil has hit \$113 a barrel, continue, through this Bush and Cheney administration, to put oil underground and thereby put upward pressure on gasoline prices and oil prices? It makes no sense at all.

So, perhaps, were the dead time not required by the minority, we could work on that, or perhaps with respect to the price of gasoline and oil, we could work on increasing the margin requirements for those who are speculating in the futures markets.

The commodities futures market, especially for oil, is an unbelievable carnival of speculation. Do you know that when you buy stocks, there is a 50 percent margin requirement. But if you want to buy oil, God bless you, it is only 5 to 7 percent. You want to control 100,000 barrels of oil tomorrow, \$7,000 will do that. That is the margin. So, as a result, you have unbelievable speculation in these markets driving up the price well above that which the fundamentals of oil supply and demand would justify.

Perhaps we can do something about saying to the exchanges: There must be increased margin requirements to stop this speculation hurting our country. It is driving up the price of oil, driving up the price of gasoline in a manner that is completely unjustified. Stop the speculation, stop putting 70,000 barrels of sweet light crude underground every day. Maybe those would be two things we could do when we are required to file cloture petitions to stop a filibuster on issues such as a motion to proceed.

I mean it is unbelievable to me that we find ourselves in this position. There is so much to do, and it is such important work. Yet here we find ourselves with the American people looking in on the Senate and wondering: What on Earth are they doing?

Well, what we are doing is what we are required to do by the rules when one side decides it wants the Senate to stand at parade rest almost all the time.

We have such big challenges in our country. I have mentioned energy. I have mentioned the fiscal policy. I have mentioned health care. We have such big challenges that ought to be our agenda. This country deserves better, and our agenda is, in my judgment, something on which the American people expect us to make progress. They do not expect us to see every single

day, in every way, a filibuster on the floor of the Senate, even on motions to proceed. That is the last thing this American public should expect from a Congress that ought to come to work ready to go to work on issues that really matter in peoples' lives every single day.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Vermont.

MIDDLE CLASS AMERICA

Mr. SANDERS. Madam President, I commend my friend from North Dakota. He is exactly right. The middle class in our country is in deep trouble. Some would argue the middle class is collapsing. And the people of our country are looking to Washington, to us, to get something done. What they are finding is a filibuster on a corrections bill and inaction in every single area that faces working people in our country.

A couple of weeks ago in Vermont we held several town meetings on the economy. I invited Vermonters to respond to our Web site about what the collapse of the middle class means to them personally. I think it is one thing for those of us to give a speech, to use huge numbers, to talk in an extravagant way; it is another thing to hear directly from people in terms of what is going on in their lives.

What I promised that I would do, and continue to do, is read some of these very poignant e-mails I received, mostly from Vermonters, some from other parts of the country, where people are simply saying: Look, this is what is going on in my life today. I thought I was in the middle class, but I no longer am.

So what I want to do is read a few of the e-mails that I received, to put what we are debating and discussing in a very personal tone, in the real words of real Americans. This is the collapse of the middle class as described by ordinary people.

We received an e-mail from an older couple in the State of Vermont. This is what they wrote. The woman writes:

My husband and I are retired and 65. We would like to have worked longer, but because of injuries caused at work and the closing of our factory to go to Canada, we chose to retire early. Now with oil prices the way they are, we cannot afford to heat our home unless my husband cuts and splits wood, which is a real hardship as he has had his back fused and should not be working most of the day to keep up with the wood. Not only that, he has to get up two to three times each night to keep the fire going.

We also have a 2003 car that we only get to drive to get groceries or go to the doctor or to visit my mother in the nursing home 3 miles away. It now costs us \$80 a month to go nowhere. We have 42,000 miles on a 5-year-old car. I have Medicare but I cannot afford prescription coverage unless I take my money out of an annuity, which is supposed to cover the house payments when my husband's pension is gone. We also only eat two meals a day to conserve.

This is a 65-year-old couple in the State of Vermont in the year 2008, and I suspect this story is being told all over America.

Here is another story about a woman who lives in our largest county, Chittenden County. She writes:

First of all, I am a single mother of a 16-year-old daughter. I own a condominium. I have worked at the hospital for 16 years and make a very good salary, in the high \$40,000 range. I own a 2005 Honda Civic. I filled up my gas tank yesterday, and it cost me almost \$43. That was at \$3.22 a gallon. If prices stay at that level, it will cost me \$160 per month to fill up my gas tank. A year ago, it would cost me approximately \$80 per month. I now have to decide what errands I really need to run and what things I can do over the phone or the Internet.

But the other issue is, if I use my cell phone too much during the month, my bill will increase and that will cost me more money. I feel as though I am between a rock and a hard place no matter how hard I try to adjust my budget for the month. I am watching my purchases in the grocery store and department stores more closely because of increased prices.

I am not sure that can I afford to take a summer vacation this year. I usually take a day off during my daughter's spring vacation so we can go shopping in New Hampshire somewhere. I have already cancelled those plans for this year.

I am hoping that I can take a few days off this summer to go to Maine. We will see how the gas prices are this summer, but I hear it is going to get worse. Not much hope for someone on a tight budget.

Here we have somebody who asks nothing more than to be able to take a few days off with her daughter to go shopping. Somebody who works very hard cannot even do that because the price of gas is soaring.

Here is another e-mail that comes from a woman living in a small town in Vermont. This is what she writes:

Yesterday I paid for our latest home heating fuel delivery, \$1,100. I also paid my \$2,000 plus credit card balance much of which bought gas and groceries for the month. My husband and I are very nervous about what will happen to us when we are old.

Although we have three jobs between us, and participate in a 403(B) retirement plan, we have not saved enough for a realistic post-work life if we survive to our life expectancy. As we approach the traditional retirement age, we are slowly paying off our daughter's college tuition loan and trying to keep our heads above water. We have always lived frugally. We buy used cars and store-brand groceries, recycle everything, walk or carpool when possible, and plastic our windows each fall. Even so, if and when our son decides to attend college, we will be in deep debt at age 65. P.S. Please do not use my name. I live in a small town and this is so embarrassing.

Well, it is not embarrassing. That is the story being told from one end of this country to the other. People who thought that after working their entire lives, they would be able to retire with a little bit of security and a little bit of dignity are now wondering, in fact, if they will be able to survive at all.

After working your whole life and being frugal, you should not have to retire in debt dependent upon a credit card.

The e-mails we receive from people who are young, middle age and old, each in its own way is a work of poetry because it comes from people's hearts.

It is poignant. It is true. This is what a younger person from Vermont writes:

I am 23 years old. I have about \$33K of education debt + \$12K of credit card debt and only make about \$26K a year + benefits. I barely make enough to support myself and whenever unexpected expenses come up I end up having to use credit to cover them. I feel like I will never catch up and now everything is getting even more expensive; it seems hopeless. Meanwhile I listen to the news and how the rich are getting richer and it is making me hate this country. I am not an economics expert but I know that things could be done differently to help people like me who work hard and get little in return instead of rewarding those who have the ability to use their money to make more money.

We heard Senator DORGAN talk about huge tax breaks that go to some of the wealthiest people, people who don't pay their taxes because they move to the Cayman Islands and set up phony front offices. This writer, who may not have a PhD. in economics, hit it right on the head. This young man and these old people are the people we should start worrying about, not the wealthiest people who are having it very good.

Let me talk briefly about a woman. This is another piece of reality. She writes:

As a couple with one child, earning about \$55000/year, we have been able to eat out a bit, buy groceries and health insurance, contribute to our retirement funds and live a relatively comfortable life financially. We've never accumulated a lot of savings, but our bills were always paid on time and we never had any interest on our credit card.

Over the last year, even though we've tightened our belts (not eating out much, watching purchases at the grocery store, not buying "extras" like a new TV, repairing the washer instead of buying a new one . . .), and we find ourselves with over \$7000 of credit card debt and trying to figure out how to pay for braces for our son!

I work 50 hours per week to help earn extra money to catch up, but that also takes a toll on the family life—not spending those 10 hours at home with my husband and son makes a big difference for all of us. My husband hasn't had a raise in 3 years, and his employer is looking to cut out any extra benefits they can to lower their expenses, which will increase ours!

Here is a woman who has to work longer hours in order to try to catch up, and she can't spend time with her husband and son, which is what her life is about. How many millions of people are in the same boat?

What is not usually talked about on the floor of the Senate is the fact that here in the United States, our people work longer hours than do the people of any other industrialized country. Not talked about terribly often is that to make ends meet now, in the vast majority of middle-class life, you need both the husband and the wife working long hours. Despite those two incomes, people have less disposable income today than 30 years ago in a one-income family. But when you talk about the collapse of the middle class, one of the manifestations of much of it is that people have to claw and scratch and work so hard that their family lives deteriorate. In this case, a woman cannot even spend the time she would like with her son and husband.

Here are a few more e-mails. This comes from a veteran from the State of Vermont:

The real killer is the price of heating fuel. Up here in northern Vermont we need heat in the winter. With a Military Pension I make too much to get any assistance. We got a 2.8% pension increase in January, and the price of heating fuel has increased by about 50%. We have to cut back on food in order to stay warm. Thank you.

Somebody trying to live on a military pension that goes up 2.8 percent, the price of home heating fuel soars, not making it.

This is another short e-mail we received:

The company I work for has just announced a "raise freeze" which means not even a cost of living increase can be expected this year . . . this will be tough for us, as we were counting on at least a cost of living increase in a year where the cost of living has surely increased, be it groceries, fuel, wood, gasoline, etc!

Let me finish by reading an e-mail from another young Vermonter:

As a graduating law student I am particularly concerned with the potential reduction of jobs available to me. I am leaving school with a great amount of debt in student loans and credit cards and entering the uncertain job market.

I currently pay a tremendous amount of money in rent. I would like to work in poverty law but those jobs only pay about 36,000 so it is unlikely going to happen.

Here is an example of a young man who goes to law school, wants to work in poverty law, but because his debts are so high and the interest rate on that debt is so high, he no longer has a choice of careers. This is happening to young people all over the country.

The middle class in America is collapsing. Poverty is increasing. The gap between the very wealthy and everybody else is growing wider. Today we have by far the most unequal distribution of wealth and income of any major country on Earth. We are the only major country on this planet without a national health care program. The cost of college education is very high, while the oil companies make huge profits. Our people cannot afford to fill up their gas tanks.

As Senator DORGAN said, the time is long overdue for this Congress to start focusing on the real issues facing ordinary Americans. The time is now for us to develop the courage to stand up to the big money interests, the 35,000 lobbyists who surround us every day, the big campaign contributors who want benefits for the wealthy and the powerful. We have an obligation to stand up for the middle class. I hope we can begin doing that as soon as possible.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Iowa.

TAX FILING DAY

Mr. GRASSLEY. Madam President, my colleagues on this side of the aisle have spoken today about tax issues because today is the day for filing income tax. I think it is appropriate that we remind each other about a lot of tax

issues that are very important that we have to decide this year, next year, and the following, or we are going to have the biggest tax increase in the history of the country. We are taking the opportunity on April 15 to talk about those.

When I was chairman of the Senate Finance Committee, I worked to get through a narrowly divided Senate the biggest tax cut in a generation. We reduced income tax rates for individual taxpayers. We created the first ever 10-percent bracket for lower income workers so they didn't have to pay as much tax as they would at the 15-percent bracket on their first dollars earned. We reduced the marriage penalty because we don't think one ought to pay more taxes because they are married. We created a deduction for college tuition. We also passed a deduction for schoolteachers buying supplies for their classrooms. I could go on with a lot of other provisions in those tax bills, but they have all had good economic consequences. We ought to consider that they should not sunset.

Now I and others are at work to make sure this tax relief is extended. If it is allowed to expire, Americans will be hit with the biggest tax increase in history. That is one thing. But it is quite another thing that this is going to happen without a vote of Congress. In other words, on that magic date of sunset, we go back to levels of taxation as they were before January 1, 2001, and we automatically, without a vote of Congress, end up with the biggest tax increase in the history of the country.

People say: Well, we are going to continue existing tax law. They need to be intellectually honest and tell people that when they are doing that, they are going to allow the biggest tax increase in the history of the country.

We can intervene. We need to intervene. It is my goal to intervene. The last thing families need, the last thing small businesses need, the last thing investors need is a tax increase. But that is what will happen this year and in 2010, if Congress doesn't act.

Last week the Senate demonstrated support for extending current law tax relief without offsets, when it voted on energy tax incentives, things that are meant to make the United States more energy efficient and less dependent upon foreign sources of energy. That same approach demonstrated last week, extending current tax law relief without offsets, should rightfully apply to other expiring tax provisions, including the research and development tax credit and the individual tax provisions I have already mentioned. I will be working hard to see that that does happen so taxpayers don't get hit with even higher taxes. I learned a long time ago that you can't raise taxes high enough to satisfy the appetite of Congress to spend money.

Stopping the tax increases that people say we are not voting for, we are only allowing present law, which means the biggest tax increase in the

history of the country will happen without a vote of the people, we can do something about it. We ought to do something about it. Stopping these tax increases ought to be a major goal. Maybe taxes should not be lowered. Nobody is talking about lowering taxes. But we ought to keep the present level of taxation, because it has been good for the economy. It has been good for the taxpayers, because we do not see a revolt going on by taxpayers as we have seen in recent years in the Congress.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The assistant majority leader.

Mr. DURBIN. What business is pending before the Senate?

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senate is under cloture on the motion to proceed to H.R. 1195, surface transportation technical corrections.

Mr. DURBIN. Madam President, under cloture, what it means of course is we are doing nothing—good speeches on important topics, but we are not considering legislation. We are not debating a bill. We are killing time, which turns out to be the major occupation of the Senate for the last year and a half. Why? Because the minority party, the Republican Party, has a strategy. It is a strategy of using filibusters to slow down or stop any bill from passing in the Senate. Today we are seeing that strategy in the extreme.

The bill pending before the Senate is H.R. 1195. In the annals of legislative history in the Senate, this will not go down as a great piece of legislation. This is not a bill that was worked on for years by Senators and their staffs, conceived with grand ideas to change this great country. This is a bill which by and large changes punctuation in the Federal highway bill, a bill we passed several years ago. Then when we carefully read it afterwards, we said: We got some of this wrong. This should not have been "trail." It should have read "road." This section you referred to wasn't exactly accurate. It is another section.

So we created a technical corrections bill, a bill that cleaned up the Federal highway bill. This technical corrections bill is now being filibustered by the Republican side of the aisle. They want to stop us from voting on a technical corrections bill. They want to delay our consideration of even this housekeeping bill. You ask yourself why. Frankly, because they don't want us to take up legislation of even greater importance. This is an important bill. Don't get me wrong. By cleaning up the old Federal highway bill, we can move forward on highway projects. We can spend a billion dollars creating good-paying jobs right here in the United States, 4 to 500 different projects across our country, 40,000 new jobs. That is good. But these were all destined to occur. We are just making sure the language is clear enough to move forward.

We are really not generating a lot of controversy and debate, are we, about this bill? Two or three little amendments we could take care of in a matter of an hour, that is about it. But what has happened is that the Republican minority is trying to stop the majority party—the Democratic Party—from considering and passing important legislation.

In the history of the U.S. Senate—this grand body, this deliberative body—in the history of this institution, the record number of filibusters in any 2-year period of time was 57, until the Republican minority decided to take on this strategy. So far, last year and the first few months of this year, there have been 65 Republican filibusters this Congress, and still counting. They have broken a record. Who cares? Well, I think a lot of people should care.

We heard the Senator from Vermont a few minutes ago. He talked about his genuine concern about working people in his State. He talked about the impact of this economy on average working families. He talked about the impact of gasoline prices, \$3.50 a gallon and higher. He talked about the impact of food costs going up on families all across America, the cost of health insurance, the cost of college education, the cost of daycare for kids. He talked about the fact that the majority of families have not seen an increase in real income over the last 7 years of this administration. He feels, as I do, that this Senate should be dealing with that issue. What is keeping us from doing so? The filibusters from the Republican side of the aisle: 65 and still counting, a record number of filibusters.

So Senator MCCONNELL, who is the Republican minority leader in the Senate, was asked a question at a press conference today. The reporter said to Senator MCCONNELL about his Republican caucus:

Are you and the caucus prepared now to start slowing down work on the floor and legislation in response?

He answers:

Well, we are on the highway technical corrections bill. It is open for amendments. We were discussing various amendments at our lunch earlier and I assume amendments are going to be offered and dealt with.

That was his answer, and unfortunately it is wrong. We are not considering amendments to this bill because we are still under cloture on the motion to proceed that doesn't expire until 11:30 p.m. tonight.

So if Senator MCCONNELL really wants us to consider amendments to this bill and get it finished, he needs to walk out on the floor and agree to a unanimous consent to move to this bill immediately and consider it. Then his statement to the press this afternoon will be accurate. But until he does, it is not accurate. We are stuck, stuck on cloture, stuck, as we have been time and again by this Republican minority. I, for one, believe they have pushed it to the extreme—a filibuster on a technical corrections bill.

Can you think of anything else, Madam President, we might be considering? Well, how about the policy on the war in Iraq, a war that claimed 2 American lives yesterday, a war that has taken over 4,025 of our best and bravest, that has injured more than 30,000, that has cost this country over \$700 billion, that continues to cost us \$10 billion to \$15 billion a month; a war that claims the lives of our soldiers, ruins the morale of many troops who refuse to reenlist; a war that has stretched our military to a breaking point. Is that worth a few minutes of debate here on the floor of the Senate, the policy of this country toward the war in Iraq?

How about the war in Afghanistan? A war that was designed to go after those responsible for 9/11, to capture Osama bin Laden; a war which is stalled because we have dedicated so many resources to Iraq; a war which we must win so that al-Qaida and the Taliban do not resume their control over this poor country; a war which sadly has not resulted in the capture of Osama bin Laden more than 6 years after the terrible tragedies of 9/11. Is that worth a few hours on the floor, maybe a resolution, maybe a discussion about policy? I think it is, but we can't get to it because Republican filibusters are stopping us.

Maybe we should spend a few moments talking about our dependence on foreign oil and what we can do to bring down gasoline prices across America; how we can work on a bipartisan basis to find renewable, sustainable sources of energy that fuel our economy without killing our environment. Is that worth a little debate here on the floor of the Senate? Most Americans think it is an important issue but, sadly, we are stuck with a Republican filibuster again. Maybe we could spend some time bringing the bill out of the Committee on the Environment, the cap and trade bill, a bipartisan bill by Senator WARNER, a Republican of Virginia, Senator LIEBERMAN, an independent Democrat of Connecticut. Maybe we could bring that to the floor and talk about a way to clean up this world's environment so our kids have a fighting chance to have a planet they can live on, so that we can devise with American ingenuity a system using our free market to make this a cleaner planet. Is that worth a few hours of debate on the floor?

Debate on the Children's Health Insurance Program that the President has vetoed not once but twice, a program to extend health insurance coverage to some children in America who are not poor enough to qualify for Medicaid and not lucky enough to have parents with health insurance, is that worth a few hours of debate on the floor? I think it is.

Those issues and so many others are the ones the American people expect us to be talking about right here in Washington. But instead we have a bill, with grammar and punctuation, trying to

clean up a Federal highway bill of several years ago, that is being filibustered by the Republican side of the aisle. This is shameful. It is such a waste of time in this great institution, but it is a specifically designed strategy by the Republicans to slow down the business of the Senate and to stop us from considering critically important legislation for America.

I would say to Senator MCCONNELL, who said that we are on the highway technical corrections bill and it is open for amendments, it will be open for amendments when Senator MCCONNELL comes to the floor and gives us his consent to stop the filibuster and to give us a chance to pass this bill, as we should have last week, and move on to more important legislation—legislation the American people ask us to consider. Sixty-five Republican filibusters this Congress and still counting. The Grand Old Party, the Republican Party, the GOP now has a new name. It is no longer the GOP, Grand Old Party. From the Republicans in the Senate, we have learned that it is the Graveyard of Progress. That is their idea of their role in the Senate. Any proposal for change, any proposal for progress, they want to kill. This graveyard is going to speak back to them in November.

I think the American people have had it with the obstructionism, the slow-downs, and the obstacles we are seeing here in Washington. The voters get their chance in November. I hope they will join us. I hope they will send more Senators to Washington who are prepared to not only debate but vote for change, Senators who are willing to say: Put an end to these mind-numbing filibusters and get down to work. Roll up your sleeves and do something to make life better for working families. Do something about this energy crisis. Make this planet a safer place for our kids to live on. Be responsible when it comes to spending, and start bringing the American soldiers home. That is what we should be doing. Instead, we are stuck in another Republican filibuster.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Ohio is recognized.

Mr. BROWN. Madam President, today is tax day. People all across America are heading to the post office to get that all-important "April 15" postmark. OK, not everybody waits until the last minute, but there are enough procrastinators among us that this is sort of a rite of spring. The first week in Washington brings the cherry blossoms. The 15th of the month brings long lines near midnight in front of the main post office just a few blocks from the floor of the Senate.

For some taxpayers, 2007 was a very good year. Huge fortunes were made on Wall Street by people who correctly bet against the housing market, and some of those of the very wealthiest people were given huge tax breaks that the middle class never saw. But for the

people who live in all of those homes, those homes that Wall Street people were betting against in some sense, 2007 was a very tough year. The home ownership rate has actually fallen over the past 6 years, both nationally by a slight amount and close to 2 percent in the Midwest. What is extraordinary about this fact is that it came during a period of the lowest interest rates since the Eisenhower administration. With the economy expanding, with interest rates at record lows, home ownership should have expanded. Instead, it shrunk.

The reason is another trend that has received too little notice by the Nation's newspapers and the Nation's media: economic growth, simply put, has not benefited most Americans. Instead, income and wealth are more and more flowing to the most affluent in our country. The middle class, meanwhile, must work harder and longer to try to maintain its standard of living. Real wages have been in decline for the past several years. The only way a lot of families have kept up is, first, the entry of more women into the workplace—women in greater numbers; second, workers in this country working longer and longer hours, overtime if they can get it, two jobs, sometimes even three jobs; and third, the only way families have kept up is by taking on more and more debt. The third strategy can be a recipe for disaster; sooner or later, the bills come due. You can't borrow your way very long to a decent standard of living.

Economic security begins with economic opportunity. That means good-paying jobs. It means the kind of training that enables workers to diversify their skills and take on new challenges. It means high-quality primary, secondary, and, yes, higher education.

Our Nation is the wealthiest in the world. Overall economic growth has been strong. Working families should be thriving. By and large, they are not. Working families are struggling to find and maintain good-paying jobs to keep their health benefits, to keep their pension benefits if they have them, and those benefits, those health and pension benefits, are being scaled back. It costs more and more, as people painfully know every day, to fill the gas tank. People are borrowing in record amounts just to cover day-to-day costs. So many Ohioans from Galion to Galipolis are struggling.

The Center for American Progress looked at some key statistics over the past 5 years and found that the average job growth is one-fifth the rate of previous business cycles. The average job growth is one-fifth—20 percent—the rate of previous business cycles. Wages have been flat. Only 28 percent of middle-class families have the financial resources to sustain themselves through a period of unemployment. The average family took on debt equal to 126 percent of disposable income just to manage its day-to-day expenses.

Having witnessed the weakest economic expansion in modern history—in

other words, the growth in our economy, the expansion in our economy was weaker than the expansion of the economy at any time in recent history—we now find ourselves in a recession once again. So we didn't have very strong growth when things were supposedly good—when profits were up, when there was economic growth—but it wasn't spread around very well. Now we find ourselves in a recession once again. We have had three straight months of job losses. Consumer confidence in Lima and in Zanesville and all over my State is understandably shaken.

Our Nation cannot afford to take these statistics in stride, just hoping that the precarious financial position of working families is a temporary phenomenon linked to the ebbs and flows of our economy, because it is not. Our economy as a whole is losing ground. As our trade deficit skyrockets, energy and health care costs spiral upward, good-paying jobs are too often shipped overseas, and our Federal deficit climbs higher and higher and higher. Yet, when Congress tries to address any of these problems, we find ourselves faced with filibusters, one after another after another, as well as veto threats. When we tried to react to the Housing crisis last fall, Republicans objected. When we tried to tackle the topic in February, the Republicans objected and we faced a filibuster. Even today, the President threatens to veto the bill passed by the Senate. Sixty-five filibusters, as Senator DURBIN and others have said, 65 filibusters—more filibusters already in the year and 3 months this Senate has been in session than in any 2-year period in the history of the U.S. Senate. Sixty-five filibusters. It means we haven't been able to do what we ought to do in education, on health care, on infrastructure, and, most importantly, on the war in Iraq.

Today, as an example, we are simply trying to pass a technical corrections bill to a highway bill. Yet our Republican colleagues are filibustering and slow walking the legislation once again. Sixty-five filibusters.

We spend \$3 billion a week in Iraq, with no questions asked. Halliburton can rob us blind, but we avert our gaze. But to try to build a road, a bridge, or some other public works in the United States, and you will meet with filibusters, delays, and obstructionism by the Republicans. In other words, taxpayers are paying \$3 billion and building hundreds of water systems in Iraq—spending that money with Halliburton and Bechtel—and the money goes to these contractors instead of that money coming back to local businesses and building water and sewer systems in Defiance, Findlay, Bryan, Napoleon, and Perrysburg, OH—places that are being squeezed and are not able to afford the reconstruction of the water and sewer systems they need.

We should be doing a lot more construction and a lot less obstruction. Our roads and bridges, in too many

cases, are falling apart. If my colleagues don't like a project, they can make their case and offer an amendment instead of the obstructionism, instead of blocking these issues, instead of their 65 filibusters.

The American people are tired of this kind of delay. Their taxes should pay for a government that will work on their behalf, rather than only on behalf of the wealthiest and most powerful people in this country.

We cannot continue down a path that undermines the middle class. We cannot just hope for real economic recovery. You simply cannot get there from here.

Mrs. BOXER. Will the Senator yield to me for a question?

Mr. BROWN. Yes.

Mrs. BOXER. I thank my friend for that, because this bill before us is a job producer. There is tremendous support for it. I wanted to make sure my friend was aware—because I have to ask him a question—of the support we have. The thing is, when you unleash a billion dollars for 500 projects, which have been tied up for technical reasons, it is going to create jobs. I ask my friend if he was aware of the broad support we have. I will read the list of organizations supporting this technical corrections bill, which will free up some 500 highway projects: American Association of Highway and Transportation Officials, which is the departments of transportation for all 50 States; American Highway Users Alliance; American Public Transit Association, which is the transit systems; American Road and Transportation Builders Association, which is more than 5,000 members of the transportation construction industry; Associated General Contractors, which is more than 32,000 contractors, service providers, and suppliers; Council of University Transportation Centers, which is more than 30 university transportation centers from across the country; National Stone, Sand and Gravel Association, the companies producing more than 92 percent of crushed stone and 75 percent of the sand and gravel used in the United States annually; National Asphalt and Pavement Association, which is more than 1,100 companies that produce and pave with asphalt.

The point is, when we do this work, in many ways we are creating a bit of a stimulus. These are the companies and the workers who are suffering right now because of the economic downturn. Before my friend leaves, I wanted to thank him and also ask him if he was aware of the strong support for this bill.

Mr. BROWN. Yes, there is strong support. I appreciate the comments of the Senator from California. There is strong support for this bill, but not just in those groups. I had in my office building trades people from Mansfield, Lima, Cleveland, Dayton, and Columbus. They were talking about the kinds of jobs—good-paying jobs—in our State on road crews, such as the operating

engineers and laborers and all kinds of workers that are paid decent wages. It is a stimulus, as the Senator says. It injects money into our economy immediately. These are ready-to-go projects. We need to fund them so we can work immediately to create these jobs, which will spin off and create other jobs.

But it is the same old story. We have had 65 filibusters from Republicans to stop us from moving forward on everything from health care, to education, to ending the war in Iraq, to jobs programs such as this. This is the best kind of jobs and economic development program. Not only will it create jobs immediately, but it makes it much easier for economic development and for people to bring new business into communities because the infrastructure is more modern.

Mrs. BOXER. I want to ask something else. The Senator is not on the committee of jurisdiction, but I know he is interested to hear this. We correct a real problem in this bill. The organization that does the evaluation of our Nation's bridges, highways, and all of our byways, has run out of funds. The funds they had have been oversubscribed. What we do, without adding any new funds, is enable them to get funding and to continue their work, as we get ready for the next highway bill, which is coming to us next year.

I wanted to make sure my friend was aware that, as we get ready for the new highway bill, we need to know the condition of our highways. We have seen collapsing bridges. That is another reason it is so important. I am very hopeful that by this evening we are going to see some relenting. I have been on the floor since Monday morning. I don't mind that, but it is wasting time, truth be known. We can have a few amendments and we can wrap this up. My colleagues can go back home and say we have done something.

I want to specifically know if my colleague was aware of this particular account that funds the investigation of the state of our infrastructure—that they have run out of money, and that we fix that in this bill?

Mr. BROWN. I thank the Senator for this information and for all she is doing.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Mr. SALAZAR). The Senator from Florida is recognized.

PAPAL VISIT

Mr. MARTINEZ. Mr. President, I am delighted that the Senator from Colorado is in the chair.

I will begin by simply extending a word of welcome to the Holy Father, who, a few minutes ago, landed in our country for his historic visit. I feel tremendously honored that I will have the opportunity to see his arrival ceremony at the White House tomorrow and, of course, then to be with him and, I presume, with the President as we celebrate Mass with him at Nationals Park. It is a momentous and historic occasion.

I know I speak for many of us as I say the Holy Father is welcome to the United States. We are delighted he is here. We hope his message of spiritual renewal, hope, and peace is one that will resonate with the American people.

COLOMBIAN FREE TRADE AGREEMENT

Mr. President, the Colombian free trade agreement is of great importance to me personally. It is something that I believe requires the attention of this Congress, and it is something whose time has come for us to act and make a determination.

There has been a great deal of attention focused on the future prospects of this trade agreement with Colombia. The core question is whether we think people in the United States should be able to effectively compete in Colombia. What is at stake is whether we want to create jobs here in the United States, create additional wealth in the United States, and export more goods and services to Colombia.

The fact is that a free trade agreement with Colombia benefits all of the stakeholders involved. It is good for the United States, it is good for Colombia, but it also is good for the Western Hemisphere.

The United States would reap immediate benefits of a free trade agreement with Colombia in our level of exports—one of the strongest and more positive areas of our economy today.

I know the Senator from Ohio was just speaking about the economic hard times in our country. I know and respect him greatly. I am not sure he agrees this is a good agreement for us to sign. But what better way is there of improving economic circumstances than to export and sell more of our goods to a country that wants to be our friend and our partner.

By leveling the playing field and eliminating the tariffs on products we export to Colombia, this agreement would benefit those responsible for the \$8.6 billion in merchandise the United States exported to Colombia last year.

Currently, more than 9,000 United States companies export products to Colombia. Of those, 8,000 are small and medium-sized firms. In the absence of a free trade agreement, these firms must pay up to 35 percent when sending their goods to Colombia. On the other side of the equation, more than 90 percent of imports from Colombia coming into the United States arrive here duty free.

This agreement will immediately eliminate tariffs on more than 80 percent of American exports of industrial and consumer goods, and then reaching up to 100 percent over time.

This is an agreement that will bring more business to American firms, and it will bring higher demand for products from farmers in Louisiana, machinery manufacturing workers in Alabama, transportation equipment providers in Illinois, and electronics makers in California.

My own State of Florida—home to what we think of as the “gateway to

the Americas” in Miami—was responsible for \$2.1 billion in exports to Colombia in 2007, the second largest export total in the Nation.

The free trade agreement would benefit the more than 28,500 companies in my State that provided products in areas such as computers and electronics, machinery manufacturing, and transportation equipment.

The trade agreement makes sense economically, but also from a national security standpoint, it strengthens our relationship with a key Latin American ally and demonstrates our commitment to supporting nations who choose their leaders through free and fair democratic elections and who support the rule of law.

In fact, the U.S. Southern Command, which oversees our forces in Central and South America, sees the Colombian free trade agreement as a critical component of our Nation’s Latin American policy.

A few days ago, I saw Admiral Stavridis, head of the Southern Command, who was testifying before the Senate Armed Services Committee. I asked Admiral Stavridis whether he felt the Colombian free trade agreement was an important component of our overall policy for the region and whether it would add to our ability to increase U.S. influence and security in the area. He wholeheartedly agreed.

Recently, a group of SouthCom military leaders, including GEN Peter Pace, expressed their support of the agreement in an open letter to Congress.

These officials know of the diplomatic opportunities this trade agreement represents, especially given their unique perspective on the current climate in Central and South America.

In their letter, they affirm that passing this agreement “will build upon [Colombia’s] recent advances to enhance the long-term prospects for peace, stability, and development in Colombia.”

They also argue that it is in our “national interest to help Colombia along the road toward democratic consolidation and economic development.”

Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent to have this letter printed in the RECORD.

There being no objection, the material was ordered to be printed in the RECORD, as follows:

OPEN LETTER TO CONGRESS FROM FORMER COMMANDERS OF THE U.S. SOUTHERN COMMAND SUPPORTING THE U.S.-COLOMBIA TRADE PROMOTION AGREEMENT

We are writing to urge your support for the U.S.-Colombia Trade Promotion Agreement. This vital agreement will advance U.S. interests in Colombia, a strategically located country that is arguably our closest ally in Latin America. It will also underscore our deep commitment to stability and growth in the strategically important Andean region, which depends on Colombia’s continued progress as a resilient and democratic society.

Colombia’s transformation over the past decade is a triumph of brave and principled

Colombians. It is also a remarkable achievement of bipartisan U.S. foreign policy. Violence has fallen to its lowest level in a generation, and 45,000 fighters have been demobilized as the country’s narco-guerrilla groups have lost legitimacy. While drug-trafficking poses a continuing threat, Colombia’s leaders have eliminated two-thirds of its opium production, and more than 500 traffickers have been extradited during the Uribe administration—by far the most extraditions from any country to the United States.

Colombia’s economic resurgence has been a critical factor in its recent progress. Robust investment has boosted economic growth and development. The creation of new jobs has provided tens of thousands of Colombians with long-term alternatives to narcotic trafficking or illegal emigration.

The U.S.-Colombia Trade Promotion Agreement will build upon these recent advances to enhance the long-term prospects for peace, stability, and development in Colombia. Providing new incentives for investment and job creation, this landmark accord will help ensure that Colombia stays on the path of economic openness, the rule of law, and transparency.

It is in our national interest to help Colombia progress along the road toward democratic consolidation and economic development. This trade agreement will advance U.S. security and economic interests by forging a deeper partnership.

Finally, approving this agreement will meet our duty to stand shoulder-to-shoulder with Colombians as they have stood by the United States as friends and allies. For all of these reasons, we strongly urge Congress to approve the U.S.-Colombia Trade Promotion Agreement.

Sincerely,

GENERAL JAMES T. HILL,
*Commander in Chief,
United States Southern
Command 2002–
2004.*

GENERAL BARRY
MCCAFFREY,
*Commander in Chief,
U.S. Southern Com-
mand 1994–1996.*

GENERAL PETER PACE,
*Commander in Chief,
U.S. Southern Com-
mand 2000–2001.*

GENERAL CHARLES E.
WILHELM,
*Commander in Chief,
U.S. Southern Com-
mand 1997–2000.*

GENERAL GEORGE
JOUWAN,
*Commander in Chief,
U.S. Southern Com-
mand 1990–1993.*

Mr. MARTINEZ. Mr. President, Colombia remains one of our strongest allies within the region. It is the strategic center of Latin America, of all of the Andean countries. Geographically, it is in a precise and important spot in the region. It is a country of 40 million people. It is a very significant country.

Fostering this important relationship holds strategic importance to advancing our security and economic interests in South America and also with the Colombian Government. Colombia’s Congress voted twice in favor of passing this trade agreement.

It would honor the commitment we made when signing the agreement last year and would provide greater stability and security to the Colombian

people as their quality of life continues to improve. I know some critics of the trade agreement point to some of the violence against labor organizers that has occurred over the years as the reason not to ratify.

In doing so, I believe they fail to recognize the progress that has occurred in Colombia in recent years. Colombia has had a violent history. I can recall in younger days when I used to travel to Colombia frequently. It was not only a beautiful and wonderful country, but you were perfectly free to go throughout the country. Over the years, the violence brought upon the people of Colombia by FARC, or the Revolutionary Armed Forces of Colombia, has wreaked havoc on that country. It was to the point where the violence was incredible.

Six years ago, as President Alvaro Uribe delivered his inaugural address, mortar shells landed near the Presidential palace in Bogota and killed 14 people and wounded another 40. That was the level violence had reached in this country.

These events and crimes against labor organizers were common prior to when President Uribe came into office in 2002. Since that time, violence has dramatically decreased in Colombia, and the Colombian Government's presence is being felt in cities and towns across the nation.

Let me point out that one death of an innocent civilian or one death of a union leader or union organizer is one death too many. Colombia has seen more than its share of violence.

I point to this chart which I believe is accurate in pointing out the actual figures when it comes to union leader violence. Notice the high point in 2001. This is before President Uribe was President. Then he comes into the Presidency and look at the dramatic drop since his Presidency down to where it is today. This is not just violence against union leaders. President Uribe has been effective in pacifying the country.

The violence against unionists has declined 86 percent during his time in office from 2002 to 2007. The reason for this decline is President Uribe's attention and response to concerns over these attacks. The President established an independent prosecutor unit and created a special program to protect labor activists. They can actually seek protection from the Government and be provided with armored vehicles, with protection for union halls, and personal protection for them as they go about the country.

There has been significant progress in other areas of Colombia as well, which is improving the lives of the Colombian people.

It is astonishing to see homicides are down 40 percent, kidnappings are down 83 percent, and terrorist attacks are down 76 percent. This is as a result of what, in fact, has been a very successful partnership. One of those moments of bipartisan agreement that the Presi-

dent and I so often yearn for in this Congress started under President Clinton with support from the Republicans, continued under President Bush with support from Democrats.

We had Plan Colombia. This has been a way of helping the Colombian Government and the Colombian people to continue to strengthen their democracy. President Uribe was elected to office with over 60 percent of the Colombian vote, and he is a democratically elected leader who is fighting an insurgent group that seeks to destroy his Government and democracy in Colombia by means of violence.

When we stand with President Uribe, when we stand with the duly constituted Government elected by the people of Colombia, we are standing on the side of those who respect democracy, freedom, and human rights.

When we talk about the kidnappings, these kidnappings have now been limited to poor peasants, although that has been part of it, but it has also included Government officials. Miss Betancourt, who has gained international notoriety because of efforts by the French Government to free her, was a Presidential candidate in the midst of a Presidential campaign when she was kidnapped. Also, members of the Congress of Colombia, businesspeople—they have shown no mercy. Today it is rumored they maintain about 700 kidnapped victims with them in the jungles of Colombia. Colombia's Foreign Minister is someone who was a victim of kidnapping who escaped 5 years ago, maybe more, from the jungles of Colombia and has regained his freedom.

Public school enrollment in Colombia has increased 92 percent. The child mortality rate has decreased dramatically as the Government turned its focus to human rights and also living conditions. The number of tourists visiting Colombia has doubled in the last 5 years.

Colombia is on the rise. Colombians enjoy a better quality of life because they have been living in a country that is more peaceful. For that, I think the Colombian people are very grateful to the United States. There is no country in the region that is more pro-U.S., that is more pro-American, and so much wants to interact and work with us. Enhancing that relationship will continue to bring prosperity at a time when Colombians continue to face destabilizing forces of terrorism.

There is a second aspect of Plan Colombia. It is not just about building the Colombian military, as important as that is. There is a second phase. It is about people, it is about job generation, job creation. That is why it is important to enter into this free-trade agreement so that U.S. investment dollars might flow to Colombia and increase jobs in Colombia as we increase jobs in America as well.

One of the most prominent narcoterrorist organizations operating within their borders is the FARC. ELN is another one. FARC is an organiza-

tion that supports a brand of terrorism much like al-Qaida.

FARC's greatest enemy is stability, the same sort of political and economic stability provided by trade agreements such as these.

They oppose the democratically elected Government, and they would love nothing more than to return Colombia to the days of corruption, chaos, murder, and mayhem. It would be unwise to abandon this vital alliance in the face of a difficult time for them.

A trade agreement with the United States would deal a blow to those attempting to hinder Colombia's growth, to those who offer a misguided vision of the future of the region to those who hear their cry.

The fact is, there is a battle of ideas going on in the hemisphere, and this battle of ideas is one we cannot shrink from but must engage. By entering into this agreement, we would join a growing list of partners in the region that have demonstrated commitment to human rights, free and fair elections, and strengthening trade relations with us.

We have a very strong partnership. NAFTA, I must confess I find it a little difficult to understand how NAFTA, which has created jobs all over America, could be faulted for jobs going to China. And I cannot believe, on a serious note, those who seek to be the President of our country would walk away from that trade agreement. The fact is, this trade agreement is one that would enhance and advance the interests of the United States.

I do not believe in a country that would be afraid to compete with those abroad. I believe in the America that is proud and strong and can compete with anyone in the world. We cannot just shelter within our shores. We cannot just retreat to fortress America. Those days are gone. We created the global trade we live in today and to retreat from that would be a misguided mistake.

Over the weekend, both the New York Times and the L.A. Times ran pieces urging Congress to ratify this important and historic trade agreement. According to the New York Times, "rejecting or putting on ice the trade agreement would reduce the United States' credibility and leverage in Colombia and beyond."

And the L.A. Times characterized the House's decision to halt the vote by stating "it wasn't about the U.S. economy and it wasn't about Colombia. It was politics."

I don't want to dwell on that issue because I believe the best way for this to take place is for us to continue to work together in a bipartisan fashion to try to bring about an agreement that would be good for America, good for the region, good for Colombia, good for the United States, good for our people, good for their people. This is the kind of trade agreement that is a win-win.

I was talking about NAFTA. We then moved to Central America and the Dominican Republic, and we have CAFTA. That trade agreement is creating and generating jobs in that region. We have a free-trade agreement with Peru and Panama, and if Colombia joins in, that would create a powerful, mighty trade alliance creating and generating jobs and exports from the United States to this region.

I was meeting this morning with a gentleman who is hoping to be the next Ambassador of the United States to Honduras. I asked him how has CAFTA impacted our relationship with Honduras. He said there has been several billion dollars a year of trade between us and Honduras, and it had increased U.S. exports to Honduras by 18 percent. That is good for America. That is good for American jobs.

So I hope calmer voices will prevail. It would give us a chance to vote on this important trade agreement. It was signed by Colombia and the United States well over a year ago. There is never a perfect time for these agreements. I believe the votes are there. I believe it is time to allow the votes to take place instead of utilizing procedural maneuvers that, at the end of the day, are not particularly democratic.

Mr. President, I hope we can move forward to consider this agreement, to study the elements of it, to see the merits of it. It goes beyond stating the obvious: that this is something that not only would help economically, but it would also be a tremendous boost to our relationship in this region of the world that all too often feels forgotten, that all too often feels our eyes are focused elsewhere in the world, but are always our closest neighbors, are always our people who each and every day signify more and more to us.

A great many people of Colombian heritage live in the State of Florida and in other States of our country. They are great contributors to the American experiment. I am proud to have them among my constituents. I know in the southern part of my State, this is a big, important issue. It is one whose time has come. I hope the Speaker will reconsider. I hope we will move forward with this important trade agreement.

Mr. President, I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Minnesota.

Ms. KLOBUCHAR. Mr. President, I rise in support of passing the bill that is on the Senate floor; that is, the SAFETEA-LU technical corrections bill. When we look at the bill that is of the magnitude of the SAFETEA-LU bill and its extraordinary importance in our economy, there are bound to be some drafting errors and issues. I am glad we are taking the time to correct these errors so we can continue to strengthen our national infrastructure and our economy.

As a member of the Environment and Public Works Committee, I applaud Senator BOXER's leadership in getting

this bill to the floor. This bill is a step in the right direction as this Congress focuses more and more attention on our national infrastructure.

I urge all of my colleagues to support this bill, as well as future efforts, to strengthen our national infrastructure.

The Presiding Officer, being a Senator from Colorado, knows and I know there is a new economy in the future. It is the energy economy. But if we are going to move forward the next century's economy, we cannot be stuck in the last century's transportation system.

I believe when you invest in infrastructure, you invest in the American economy. Rebuilding Main Street means revitalizing Main Street. The Federal Highway Administration estimates that for every \$1 billion of Federal highway investment, it creates over 30,000 jobs. So when we rebuild our roads, we strengthen our economy.

As you know, a bridge collapsed one day in the middle of Minnesota. It was something no one could ever believe would happen in the middle of our major Interstate Highway System.

As I said that day, a bridge should not fall down in the middle of America, especially not an eight-lane interstate highway, especially not one of the most heavily traveled bridges in our State, and especially not at rush hour in the heart of a major metropolitan area, and especially not in my front yard. As you know, Mr. President, as you have seen, the area of that bridge was only 8 blocks from my house.

Unfortunately, it has taken a disaster of this magnitude to put the issue of infrastructure investment squarely on the national agenda, and it is long overdue.

The sudden failure and collapse of the I-35W bridge has raised many questions about the condition and safety of our roads and bridges. In fact, we just had a bridge that was similarly designed shut down in St. Cloud, MN, about an hour and a half away from the bridge that collapsed. It was designed by the same designer, with the same problem with the bent gussets. The investigation is still going on into the exact cause and triggering events that led to the collapse of the I-35W bridge.

The fact a bridge closed down so near, and the State of Minnesota decided to replace that bridge rather than repair it, shows this is not an isolated incident. Critical investment in the maintenance and construction of our Nation's transportation is imperative. Strengthening and maintaining our national infrastructure must be a national priority.

At the moment, our priorities are not in the right place. We spend \$12 billion a month in Iraq, with no end in sight, but our bridges fall down in the middle of America. We have tax cuts for the top 1 percent, but it is getting harder and harder for the middle class to get by. We need to better prioritize our national spending.

Our robust, well-maintained, up-to-date highway system is vital to the

continued expansion of our economy. It is, in fact, an essential driver of our economic prosperity. As President Kennedy once said:

Building a road or highway isn't pretty. But it's something that our economy needs to have.

And nowhere is this truer than in rural America.

In Minnesota, the relationship between highways and the economy is most obvious in our rural areas. Transportation is absolutely essential to their viability and to their vitality. Rural Minnesota is now in the midst of an economic revival that promises to grow even stronger. We are seeing this all over America with the energy revolution, whether it is wind or solar or geothermal or whether it is ethanol or biodiesel.

As our Nation demands greater energy independence and security, the rural parts of our country are poised to benefit enormously with the further development of home-grown energy. I believe we need to be prepared to maximize the opportunities offered by this renewable energy revolution. It is only beginning to emerge, but it promises major economic and technological changes for our country.

Already the development of wind farms and ethanol plants has rejuvenated many rural areas in our State. We are third in the country when it comes to wind energy. But at the same time, these wonderful new energies are placing new demands on our transportation infrastructure. Here is one example: Demand for ethanol has increased dramatically. This Congress has pushed it. We are now with corn ethanol, but we know we will also expand into cellulosic, switchgrass, prairie grass, and other forms of biomass. For the first 6 months of 2007, ethanol production in the United States totaled nearly 3 billion gallons—32 percent higher than the same period last year.

Currently, there are 128 ethanol plants nationwide, with total annual production capacity nearing close to 7 billion gallons. An additional 85 plants are under construction. As we know, this is just the beginning. We look at places such as Brazil, which are completely energy independent because of what they have done with sugarcane. We know corn isn't the only answer. We will expand into other kinds of ethanol. But we do know this is going to place demands—demands we want to have—on our Nation's transportation infrastructure.

Total ethanol production in the United States is projected to exceed 13 billion gallons per year by early 2009, if not sooner. What does that mean in terms of transportation? Well, this means an average square mile of land in southern Minnesota, which now generates the equivalent of 80 loaded semitrucks per year, could soon produce double that—160 loads of grain per year. As more homegrown energy is produced, rural roads and bridges will have greater demands placed on them, as will rural rail.

I have had members of my own State of Minnesota—constituents—come up and show me these old rail ties that are breaking down. I have seen myself the bridges that are in need of shoulders. I have seen the highways that are in need of repair. Some of our roads in Minnesota are in such disrepair they have actually been letting them go to dirt. We are going the opposite because they do not have the money to repair them.

The ethanol plant in Benson, MN, now has over 525 fully loaded semis hauling either corn, ethanol or other forms of biodiesel from their plant every week. This is a 45-million gallon ethanol facility. Their production falls around the middle of Minnesota's 16 ethanol plants.

SMI Hydraulics is a company in rural southwestern Minnesota that manufactures the bases for the wind towers you see all across southern Minnesota. I have visited the company. They basically started in a barn, and they are building these huge wind towers. The heavy trucks that bring the steel to the company put an understandable heavy burden on the roads they travel and are putting their durability to the test.

The U.S. Department of Agriculture estimates truck freight in rural America is going to double—double—by the year 2020. The continuing trend toward greater reliance on trucking to support these industries raises concern about the wear and tear on rural roads and bridges. Many of these roads and bridges were built before this trend was evident. Whoever thought they would be carrying this huge wind tunnel? No one ever thought it would happen, but it does. They were not designed for this type of traffic.

Much of the rural road network in the United States was constructed during an era of slower travel and lighter vehicles. Current traffic, which is heavier and wider, has accelerated the rate of deterioration and made these types of roads less serviceable. In many important grain-producing States, such as Minnesota, more than 40 percent of the major highway system is rated as being in less than fair condition. Our transportation systems need to support the development of these industries, so we need to look at the full spectrum of transportation options.

I truly appreciate Senator BOXER's leadership, looking not just at truck travel, not just at roads but also at mass transportation and other ways we can transport our goods to market. With more than half our State of Minnesota's total population now living in the seven-county Twin Cities metro area, the need for more transportation options has become very clear to all of us.

It is not just about the rural areas in our State. Increasing traffic congestion has become a major threat to Minnesota's quality of life and our prosperity, costing precious time and money for both commuters and busi-

nesses. There is enormous support in our State for something called Northstar rail, which would bring people basically from the Twin Cities to the area of St. Cloud—Big Lake, to be exact. St. Cloud is the area I explained where the bridge had been closed because of safety concerns. And if you drive that 94 Interstate right now, I can tell you, you waste so much time sitting in traffic you practically feel sick to your stomach if you are there in rush hour.

We need that mass transit, and legislators and people who were originally completely opposed to this project are now standing up in front of the line because they know how important it is for their constituents. This is a case where I have to tell you the constituents were there before the elected officials and led the way to try to get this Northstar rail in. And because of the Federal help, it is now getting built.

The bottom line for any business is you lose money when your people and your products get stuck in traffic, and you also lose the ability to attract top-notch, talented workers if they must contend with aggravating and time-consuming traffic jams. To combat this threat, we must commit to broadening our transportation options, developing the right mix of multimodal solutions to serve our emerging needs, while maintaining our existing systems and highways. This mix, of course, includes not just rail but rapid bus transit, high-occupancy toll lanes, and anything we can do to try to move the people to the places they need to go.

Our Nation has faced this challenge before, a half century ago, and we succeeded in building a new modern transportation system for a new modern economy. At the heart of it all was the interstate highway system. In his 1963 memoir, "Mandate for Change 1953–1956," President Eisenhower famously said this of transportation:

More than any single action by the government since the end of the war, this one would change the face of America. Its impact on the American economy—the jobs it would produce in manufacturing and construction, the rural areas it would open up—was beyond calculation.

He was right. It is our responsibility to restore Eisenhower's vision of a transportation infrastructure that works for all of America. I can tell you this firsthand, from my heart, having seen what happens when you don't invest as you are supposed to; having seen a major bridge fall down one day in the middle of America; having seen the promise in the rural parts of our State of the new energy revolution but then hearing how they can't get their goods to market because they have a bunch of single-road highways, when they have trucks that are trying to bring wind towers in, when they are trying to be part of the solution to this energy crisis.

It is our responsibility to restore that vision that Eisenhower had—to build this transportation infrastruc-

ture in our country. That is why I am so proud to support Senator BOXER and her work on this bill, and I hope our colleagues will support this bill and that we get this bill passed for the good of America.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from California.

Mrs. BOXER. Mr. President, I am sitting here and listening to Senator KLOBUCHAR, and I am so proud of her work on the committee that I am fortunate enough to chair, the Environment and Public Works Committee. This committee is so interesting because we do everything from global warming legislation, protecting endangered species, to rebuilding the infrastructure of our Nation on the public works side.

It is kind of an interesting divide, because when it comes to rebuilding the infrastructure, we have more bipartisan support right now than for protecting the environment; where Senator WARNER, on global warming, has frankly been our hero on the other side of the aisle, joining with us. But on the infrastructure, Senator INHOFE and I have worked very closely together, and with the help of members of the committee, such as Senator KLOBUCHAR, we are making progress.

Before the good Senator leaves the floor, I wanted to make sure she was aware of something in this bill that is so crucial and is very much apropos to her reminding us about the bridge collapse in Minnesota. We fix an oversight in SAFETEA-LU that resulted in a particular account being oversubscribed. That account was the surface transportation research development and deployment account.

Now, what does that do? It is a very fancy name. Basically, that particular account funds research into the status of our infrastructure. It takes a look at our infrastructure, and it tells us what we need to do to keep up. Do we need to reinforce our bridges, for example. That is one of the aspects they look at. The appraisal of our highways. How do we fund transit? What is the physical condition of our roads? How do they operate? What is their performance level? It is so crucial that we have the information.

My colleague from Minnesota wrote the carbon registry bill that is part of our global warming bill because she knows that before you can solve global warming, you need to know how much carbon and other greenhouse gases are in the atmosphere. We can't write a new bill in 2009 unless we know the status of our roads, our freeways, our bridges, and our highways. So that is why this bill is so important.

We have been here for 2 full days now. I have been ready, willing, and able to take any and all amendments. We have said the bill is closed. We are not adding anything new because we want to keep this bill the exact same cost as the SAFETEA-LU bill. We are not adding anything. We are, in essence, making technical corrections to

make sure we don't stymie a billion dollars' worth of projects, which is going to create tens of thousands of new jobs, and we are going to free up the frozen level of this research because they can't research anymore. They can't do any more research on the state of our infrastructure. We want to unfreeze that.

So here we are for 2 days, standing on our feet begging our Republican friends not to filibuster this bill. What is the point? Everybody wants this bill, except maybe one Senator who doesn't like one provision in it. We had the vote to proceed. I think it was 93 to 1. So everyone wants this bill. This bill doesn't add any new spending, it unleashes a billion dollars of important projects. That is why we have extraordinary support—and I don't have the chart here—from all our construction trades people, the management side, the labor union side, the worker side. We have it all. We have the heads of all the transit agencies across the country. They all want this bill. It is very impressive.

Oh, good, we have it back. I will show it one more time, because when you hear who is backing us—and they are not backing us quietly, they are on the phones, they are calling Members and saying: Let this bill go.

When my kids were young, they would call something a no-brainer. That is what this bill is, a no-brainer. This bill makes eminent sense.

Here is the list: The American Association of Highway and Transportation Officials—from all 50 States—support us; the American Highway Users Alliance—millions of highway users; the American Public Transit Association—transit systems from across the country; American Road and Transportation Builders—that is more than 5,000 members of the transportation construction industry; Associated General Contractors—that is 32,000 contractors; Council of University Transportation Centers—more than 30 university transportation centers from across the country; The National Stone, Sand and Gravel Association—these are the companies that produce more than 92 percent of crushed stone and 75 percent of sand and gravel used in the United States annually; and the National Asphalt and Pavement Association—more than 1,100 companies.

These are the folks who are suffering right now. These are the folks who have gotten caught in this recession we are in. These are the folks who are calling Senators and saying: Please, let this bill go.

Senator BOXER supports it, Senator INHOFE supports it, Senator KLOBUCHAR supports it, Senator BAUCUS supports it, Senator ISAKSON supports it. I could list members from our committee—almost all. As I said, we had a vote of 93 to 1 to proceed to this bill.

Calling all Republican friends: Please, please, please, relent. Please, let's get going. People are counting on you. They need the work. They need

the jobs. Our country needs the infrastructure built. This doesn't cost a penny more. These are funds that are sitting in the trust fund.

Ms. KLOBUCHAR. Will the Senator yield for a question?

Mrs. BOXER. Yes, I will be glad to yield to my colleague.

Ms. KLOBUCHAR. I ask the Senator, how long has she been trying to get this bill through? I know she has been waiting. I know it has been months.

Mrs. BOXER. The House passed it 1 year ago, and we passed it in the committee in June 2007. This is not something that—this has been around. We have been asking Senator REID. He wanted to bring it up, but it is getting caught up in other matters. It has been a long time.

Ms. KLOBUCHAR. It seems to me, when there is so much bipartisan support, the other side of the aisle would try to advance this bill. I know in our State we have had this tragedy. They see this not only as you talk about it—as a way to figure out, do an analysis of what we really need to meet our transportation needs but they also need it as investment. As you know, we were unable, on the stimulus package, to get some of the things we wanted on the Democratic side, so we did get the check in the mail to people. But long after those rebate checks are cashed, we need a long-term investment strategy in this country that invests in jobs.

I thank Senator BOXER for bringing up that piece of the bill. I was very focused on the nuts and bolts on the roads, the wear and tear on the roads that we all think about when driving on the highway, but we also have to think about this as an investment strategy. I thank her for bringing out that important point.

Mrs. BOXER. I am happy to do it, I say to my friend, and I am glad she asked me when we passed this bill out of committee—June 2007. June 2008 is fast upon us. The House also passed it a year ago.

This is a long time in coming. You are so right, we all talk about the need to make sure there are good jobs for people. This is a ministimulus package right here. There are 500 important projects that will move forward. This means real jobs, real jobs in the U.S. of A. When you are building a road here, you are building a road here. This is important.

It is unusual to see all of these folks team up together. We had a press conference this morning, management and labor together saying: Please, here is an opportunity.

There is nothing negative to say about this bill, as far as I am concerned. You may have one or two projects you wouldn't vote for, but the fact is they have come from the Members of Congress who know their districts and know their States.

I was very glad Senator DEMINT called and said he was pleased with the way we did our disclosure under the new ethics rule, that our committee

had set the standard. I was very happy to hear from him about that. He said we did it right, we made it public. Everybody signed on to whatever project they requested—very open, very transparent, very necessary. This is a very necessary bill.

I guess I am talking to colleagues who may be in their offices and I am saying, especially to my Republican friends, come join us. Let's do something good for the people. This is very important for your States. You have the American Association of State Highway and Transportation Officials—that's the department of transportation for all 50 States—calling on us to act. There is no reason to hold this up. We are wasting precious minutes. We are wasting precious hours. We are wasting precious days. We have a lot of other work to get done.

My goodness, I don't understand filibustering this bill which, again, is within the budget. It doesn't add a penny more than we were supposed to spend. I am a little perplexed as to why we are sitting here at 10 to 6 at night and we can't get anybody to come here to offer an amendment. But I am ever hopeful, because it is my nature, that people will realize, as they go back to their offices and see their phone messages from all these people, that this is real. This is real. We need to get it done.

Mr. President, I suggest the absence of a quorum. I will be back as soon as I have some news to share with colleagues.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will call the roll.

The legislative clerk proceeded to call the roll.

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

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Mr. MENENDEZ). Without objection, it is so ordered.

Mr. WHITEHOUSE. Mr. President, the matter before the Senate now that is currently being blocked by the minority is a bill that would permit work to proceed on hundreds of highway and transportation infrastructure projects, creating tens of thousands of construction jobs, and pouring \$1 billion into our economy. This is timely legislation to repair our roads and bridges now, while our economy needs the work. Yet this bill is stalled in this body because Republicans in the Senate will not allow it to move forward.

Unfortunately, we have seen this movie too many times. The minority has engaged in no less than 65 filibusters in this Congress—an astounding number that lays bare the minority's lack of interest in solving the real problems America faces. What a record—65 filibusters, the most ever. That is what the minority has to contribute to the problems America is facing.

A number of our Republican colleagues have come to the floor of the Senate to speak today, but we have

heard very little in the way of substantive or reasonable objections to the highway bill. Instead, what we have heard is a lot of talk about taxes. Of course taxes are on the minds of many Americans today. It is, after all, April 15, filing day, the deadline for Federal and State tax returns to be filed. Today, we should remember that the work of Government does not just cost money, it costs our money. For that reason, we should ask how this Government is spending our hard-earned money and whether the priorities reflected in the Federal Government's spending are truly the right priorities for our people and for our time.

These are difficult days. Today, families throughout my State of Rhode Island and all across this country are reading their bank statements, opening their bills, reading their local newspapers, and finding that the looming downturn in the economy leaves them struggling to make ends meet. Everywhere we look, prices are rising, from the groceries that feed our families to the gasoline that fuels our cars. Every day, more Americans face the disaster of foreclosure. Every day, more Americans face the nightmare of catastrophic health care bills.

In these days of insecurity, the people of this country are looking for answers, for solutions, for a new direction. Democrats in the Senate are working overtime to provide that new direction. We passed an economic stimulus package, legislation to address the housing crisis, and a budget plan to put our Government back on the path to surplus and cut taxes for middle-class families. We know we need a change of course and, most particularly, a change of leadership in the White House to get our country back on track.

But Senate Republicans today are making it clear that they do not agree. Instead of putting working families first, instead of getting our infrastructure repaired, they want to protect the massive Bush tax cuts for the wealthiest Americans, a fiscally irresponsible policy that has left our country trillions of dollars in debt. Instead of a budget that focuses Federal Government spending on our children and our veterans, Republicans want to stick us with the status quo, pouring hundreds of billions of dollars into an endless war in Iraq without spending a dime here at home to fix the problems that face American families.

Senate Democrats support tax cuts for middle-class families, including targeted help for families with children or seeking to adopt a child. Indeed, the budget resolution this year would provide those tax cuts in a fiscally responsible way, without digging our country deeper into debt. But President Bush and his Republican allies in the Senate want to extend the extravagant portions of the 2001 to 2003 Bush tax breaks that are weighted heavily toward the wealthiest Americans.

Mr. President, 71 percent of the value of the tax cuts in 2009 will go to the

wealthiest fifth of Americans, and 28 percent of the value of the tax cuts goes to the top 1 percent, a group whose incomes average around \$1.5 million a year—clearly people who are hurting and need a lot of help from our Government right now. Almost nothing at all goes to the lowest earning fifth, families who earn \$15,000 a year or less. This is the George Bush idea of fair tax policy.

The President's insistence on forcing through these cuts without making up for the lost revenue, to defer that pain to later generations—to our children, to our grandchildren—was not only cowardly leadership, it left our budget in precarious straits. The Bush tax cuts of 2001 and 2003 cost a staggering \$1.9 trillion, and they account for 25 percent of the \$7.7 trillion Bush Debt. The \$7.7 trillion Bush Debt is the difference between the nonpartisan Congressional Budget Office projections as President Clinton left office compared to the budgetary nightmare George Bush created—\$7.7 trillion.

I am from Rhode Island. One trillion dollars is an unthinkable amount of money in a small State such as Rhode Island. I do not know what \$7.7 trillion is. So I have tried to scale it for myself. I have here in my hand a simple penny. A simple penny. If this simple penny were \$1 billion—now, even in Rhode Island \$1 billion is big money—if this simple penny were \$1 billion, \$7.7 trillion is a stack of these simple billion-dollar pennies that is 39 feet high, takes us right to the top of this room with a simple penny being a full billion dollars.

It is an astonishing burden for this country to have to bear. It is the responsibility of George Bush and the Republicans, and we have to get serious about it. But are the Senate Republicans willing to get serious about it? No. If they have their way, the wealthiest Americans will continue to profit to the tune of trillions of borrowed dollars while those most in need receive virtually nothing. According to the Center on Budget and Policy Priorities, the poorest Americans—the lowest 20 percent of income earners would receive less than 0.5 percent of the value of extending Bush tax cuts between 2009 and 2018. The top 20 percent, on the other hand, would receive a staggering 74 percent of the value, a total of nearly \$4 trillion over that 10-year period.

And, of course, this is Bush tax policy, so the higher the income, the greater the benefit. Close to \$1.2 trillion in Bush tax cuts would accrue to the top 1 percent of American households. Households with annual incomes of more than \$1 million a year, those alone receive \$834 billion, \$834 billion in extended Bush tax cuts.

The reckless fixation on tax cuts for our wealthiest folks that the Bush administration has pursued is driving us to a bad place, to a divided America with two economies, a gilded economy for the wealthy, and a worried struggle for everyone else. That is not good for

America. In fact, that is not America. But this does not seem to bother our Republican friends. They have hitched their wagons to the big winners in the gilded economy: the oil companies, the pharmaceutical companies, the billionaires. The two economies, well, that is fine with them so long as their friends are winning. But that is not good for America.

In fact, that is not America, not the one we know. The tool they have used over and over and over is the filibuster. With a \$7.7 trillion Bush Debt foundering us, with families across the country in their home States, everyone struggling, you would think they would want their role to be more productive than being the biggest filibusters in American history. You would think they would want a more productive record and legacy than that. But, no, they want to dig a \$7.7 trillion hole and then filibuster the folks who are trying to get America out of it. It is so clear that Senate Republicans would prefer to engage in overheated and overhyped tax rhetoric than they would roll up their sleeves, sit down, and get to work on legislation solving the real problems working Americans are facing across our country each day.

I will tell you, it is clear and it is disappointing.

I yield the floor, and 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. REID. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the order for the quorum call be rescinded.

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

Mr. REID. Mr. President, the record has been made clear today. We wish we had been doing some legislating. We have not been. I have had a number of conversations with my distinguished counterpart, Senator MCCONNELL.

Senator MCCONNELL, following the caucus he had with his Senators, as I have with mine every Tuesday, my understanding is a concern was raised in the caucus about the number of judges who have been or not been approved by the Senate in these last few months.

As you know, one day last week we approved five judges, one circuit court judge and four district court judges. We thought that was a step in the right direction. What are we going to do the rest of this year? You know, there is a Thurmond doctrine that says: After June, we will have to take a real close look at judges in a Presidential election year.

June is fast approaching. I believe that is the time set forth in the Thurmond doctrine. So today Senator MCCONNELL and I in our conversations talked about all of the various judges who could be brought up, should be brought up, may be brought up, and we went over the different circuits and talked in some detail.

Following my first conversation with Senator MCCONNELL, I called the Judiciary Chairman, Senator LEAHY. He

and I have a wonderful relationship. He defends me on the floor, I defend him on the floor. Our wives are friends. He is a good person. I think the world of him. So I called him so there would be no misunderstanding. He came over to my office following the telephone conversation. And after the telephone conversation I called Senator MCCONNELL. Senator LEAHY came to my office and we visited again about the judges. We believe we need to make more progress on judges.

As we have said before, we do not want the minority to be treated the way we were treated during the Clinton years. We have done a pretty good job. At this time we have probably approved 90 percent of President Bush's judges, lots and lots of judges, well over 100 judges we have approved.

The Republican leader asked me: What can you do before our Memorial Day recess? What I have told him is we are going to do our utmost, we are not going to talk about district court judges, we are going to approve district court judges, the exact number of which I do not know, and Senator LEAHY and I are going to do everything we can to approve three circuit court judges by Memorial Day.

I would like to be able to guarantee that. I cannot guarantee it. A lot of things happen in the Senate. But I am going to do my very best. I want to live up to what I am saying here on the floor right now. Senator LEAHY knows I am here speaking before the American people today and to Senator MCCONNELL. So we are going to do our very best to approve three circuit court judges by Memorial Day. That is about the best I can do. Which ones, I have told Senator MCCONNELL. There are a number of alternatives we can have. He knows some by name, I know them by name. I do not want and I do not choose to go over them name by name at this time. But we have a number to choose from to get to those three. I will do the best I can, working with Senator LEAHY and the Judiciary Committee. And when I say "bring to the floor," that means confirm the judges.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Republican leader.

Mr. MCCONNELL. Mr. President, my good friend, the majority leader, and I, I think at the beginning of this conference—and I believe this is a correct characterization of where we were; I am sure he can disabuse me of the notion if it is not a direct characterization of where we were—we felt at the very least, President Bush, with regard to circuit court nominees, should be treated as well as President Reagan, President Bush 41, and President Clinton were treated in the last 2 years of their Presidencies.

Each of those Presidents found themselves with the following dilemma: The Senate was in the control of the opposing party, so there was a certain symmetry to this President. George W. Bush ends up the last 2 years of his Presidency similarly situated to Presi-

dent Reagan, President Bush 41, and President Clinton. The average number of circuit court judges approved for all of those Presidents was 17. President Clinton was on the low end of that at 15.

As of today, April 15, we have approved in this Congress seven circuit judges. Except for last week, there had not been one since last September. I am sure the majority leader would agree with me that we are running dramatically behind. We know there is an election coming up in the fall.

The majority leader mentioned the so-called Thurmond rule which at some point here will probably be implemented, indicating there will not be any circuit judges approved.

We currently have before the committee two judges, one from North Carolina and one from South Carolina. The one from North Carolina has a unanimously well qualified from the American Bar Association and has previously been confirmed to his current position as a district court judge by the Senate. The blue slips are back on both of these judges. We anticipate there will be a nominee from Virginia who will have blue slips returned and, in the near future, two nominees from the State of Michigan whose blue slips will be returned. As we all know, in Michigan there are two Democratic Senators and in Virginia there is one Democratic Senator and one Republican. In South Carolina and North Carolina, there are two Republican Senators. The chairman of the Judiciary Committee has made it clear he is not likely, almost certainly not likely, to move a nominee from a State for which there are no blue slips. So we have blue slips in on North and South Carolina, and both nominees have been waiting for quite some time. So there are nominations ready to go.

What I have said is there is a great interest on my side in seeing three circuit court nominees confirmed by the Senate before the Memorial Day recess. The majority leader has indicated he is comfortable with that. We have not picked the candidates, but let me suggest it would be unfair to discriminate against a State which has two Republican Senators with blue slips in and has had nominees pending for quite some time in favor of nominees only recently with blue slips in or only recently nominated. The principle should be the same regardless of whether a State is represented by two Republicans, two Democrats or one Republican and one Democrat. If the blue slips are in, the blue slips are in. If the nominee is otherwise qualified and noncontroversial, I would hope, I say to my good friend, the majority leader, he would share my view that we should not discriminate against a nominee from a State with two Republican Senators, the nominees having been pending for quite some time, in favor of recent nominees who happen to be from States with two Democratic Senators or one Democratic and one Republican

Senator. I wonder if my friend, the majority leader, has any observation about that.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The majority leader.

Mr. REID. Mr. President, we have a number of places from which the Judiciary Committee can move matters to the floor. We have North Carolina, South Carolina, Rhode Island, Maryland. We have Pennsylvania. The Pennsylvania situation, we have a Democrat and a Republican there. As I recall the judge's name, the nominee there is a man by the name of Pratter. We have someone from Virginia. We have, as of today, two from Maryland. We have a wide range to choose from. I say to my friend from Kentucky, no, it should not be because you have two from the same party from one State and they are not our party, that should not cause them not to have their nominee approved. As I indicated last week when we got into a discussion about this, we should measure the quality of the nominees, not the quantity. We are today talking about the quantity of nominees. But we also have to be concerned about the quality of these nominees. We should confirm capable, mainstream nominees who are the product of bipartisan cooperation. With this committee, to get something out of the committee, it has to be bipartisan. I guess it doesn't have to be, but that is the way we would like it.

So we have done a pretty good job. Last year, we had a very controversial judge. One of the Senators on the Judiciary Committee decided she would vote with the minority. As a result of that, a controversial judge was reported to the floor and ultimately approved. So we are working very hard to arrive at three judges by the time of our break, which is 5 weeks from now, I believe. I said when I got this job, that if the nominations of judges are important to my friend, the Republican leader, they are important to me. I have some knowledge of difficulties with judges on the floor, having survived, as the Democratic leader, the so-called nuclear option. So I understand how people feel strongly about judges. Democrats feel strongly about them. Republicans feel strongly about them. When Senator Lott was majority leader, he said words to the effect: Why should we worry about them in the Senate? People don't care about judges. This is something that is just within the Senate.

I, personally, don't feel that way. I feel these men and women who have lifetime appointments are extremely important and that we should—even though Senator Lott might be right, maybe people outside Washington don't care about judges, I care about judges. The Republican leader cares about judges. I will try my best to get three judges approved by the Senate before the Memorial Day recess.

Mr. MCCONNELL. Mr. President, the only thing I would add with regard to my earlier comments, just picking, for

example, the North Carolina judge, the Fourth Circuit is a judicial emergency. The chairman of the Judiciary Committee has set forward some standards. His first standard: If a vacancy is deemed to be a judicial emergency, it should be addressed quickly. That is the chairman of the Judiciary Committee. In the case of the Fourth Circuit, it has been declared a judicial emergency. It is one-third vacant. The nominee from North Carolina, to pick an example, is not controversial, has a unanimously well qualified from the ABA. The blue slips are back from both North Carolina Senators. My only point to my good friend, the majority leader, was it would seem not to be fair, when you have a nominee pending for a long time who is not controversial, upon which the blue slips have been returned, where there are two Republican Senators, for that nominee to be in effect moved to the back of the bus while you handle nominees nominated more recently from a State with two Democratic Senators or a State with one Democrat and one Republican Senator.

What I am pleading for is a sense of fairness. I believe in the case of both North Carolina and South Carolina, with the judicial emergency existing on the Fourth Circuit, you could make a strong case that they should be dealt with first under the standards of the chairman of the Judiciary Committee. But in particular I cite the nominee from North Carolina because he has been declared noncontroversial, had the unanimous ABA approval rating, and has been pending for hundreds of days. I don't know why we couldn't meet the goal the majority leader has set out of doing three circuit court nominees before Memorial Day. There is no reason not to. There are enough ready to be dealt with who don't require additional paperwork.

So I guess my question of the majority leader is, What is his view as to the likelihood that we would get three circuit judges confirmed before the Memorial Day recess?

Mr. REID. Mr. President, first of all, Chairman LEAHY understands. If there is an emergency in a circuit, he understands the importance of doing something about that. He has expressed that publicly and privately. Also, in this overall process, let's make sure we understand, there are vacancies out there in the circuit courts that we have no nominees for. We are waiting for them. I say to my friend, as I have said before, I am going to do everything to work with the Judiciary Committee. Senator LEAHY said he would do that too. I think we can say we would work very hard to make sure there are no holdovers. That is, if somebody is reported out, we will do our very best to make sure they don't waste that week on that. I am going to do what I can to fulfill what I have said. I will do everything within my power to get three judges approved to our circuits before the Memorial Day recess.

Who knows, we may even get lucky and get more than that. We have a number of people from whom to choose. Maybe the President can send us down a few more names on some of those vacancies that are there now. I don't know what more I can say than to say what I have said. I have to work with the committee, within the rules they have, and do the best I can.

Mr. MCCONNELL. Mr. President, I guess the only thing I would add, would the majority leader agree with me on the following principle: That a circuit judge from a State with two Republican Senators, who is completely qualified and upon which two blue slips have already been returned and have been pending for a long time, does the majority leader share my view that those type nominees from States with two Republican Senators should not be discriminated against in trying to meet our responsibility? We have only confirmed seven circuit judges throughout this Congress. We are a long way from coming anywhere close to what President Clinton got at 15.

Mr. REID. Mr. President, I hope the record will reflect the smile on my face because the fact is, we had, for years, two Democratic Senators from a State and those nominees of President Clinton weren't even given a hearing. More than 60 weren't even given a hearing. They were pocket vetoed, for lack of a better description. So, yes, I think if you have two Senators from the same party, they should not be discriminated against. I mentioned their names. Their names are Matthews and Conrad. I have spoken to Senator LEAHY. The first time I talked to him was today. Of course, we will take a look at those.

Mr. MCCONNELL. Well, I certainly understand what the intention of the majority leader is. We will need to discuss this further, I guess privately. I certainly understand his intention. I know he is a person who operates in good faith. I trust him. We have had a good relationship over the last period during which we have been in our respective positions. I guess the calculation I have to make, at some point, is what is the likelihood of this occurring, because there is a deep-seated unrest on our side related to this low number of circuit court judges. I think that is understandable. It is a paltry number in comparison to how President Reagan, President Bush, and President Clinton were handled in a similar situation. But I understand the representations my good friend, the majority leader, has made as far as he is prepared to go today. We will continue to discuss the matter.

Mr. REID. Mr. President, the only thing I would say, my good friend asked the odds. I am from Las Vegas. I don't bet. I hope they are good odds. I am going to do everything I can to live up to what I have said this last 5 or 10 minutes.

Mrs. BOXER. Will the Senator yield, my leader yield to me for a question?

Mr. REID. Surely.

Mrs. BOXER. I was pleased to see this dialog back and forth. Because, frankly, I have been wondering, as chairman of the Environment Committee, what was going on. We have a very straightforward bill on the floor. I didn't understand. We have a few amendments. We are very happy to deal with them. We have every group in the country, every construction group, management, labor, everyone, we have every State asking us to do this bill. I didn't understand, frankly, why we were waiting around. I wonder, I ask my leader—and I would be delighted to hear from the Republican leader as well, given this colloquy you had back and forth—and I know the Senator from Nevada as well as anyone here. When he gives his word like this and says: I am going to do everything I can, listen, I think that is as good as it gets around here. I am hopeful, and I would ask my leader to tell me and the Republican leader as well, Senator INHOFE is here, I am here, we are very anxious to move our bill forward, 500 transportation projects, not one penny of added spending; it will unleash a billion dollars' worth of jobs, I am wondering whether you could let us know tonight what are the chances that we are going to be able to move forward.

Mr. REID. I say to my friend, I wish we had moved to this bill Thursday night, legislated yesterday and today. We haven't done that.

HIGHWAY TECHNICAL CORRECTIONS ACT OF 2007

Mr. REID. Mr. President, I now ask unanimous consent that all postcloture time be yielded back, the motion to proceed be agreed to, and the motion to reconsider be laid upon the table, and that the Senate now proceed to the consideration of H.R. 1195.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Is there objection?

Without objection, it is so ordered.

The clerk will report.

The legislative clerk read as follows:

A bill (H.R. 1195) to amend the Safe, Accountable, Flexible, Efficient Transportation Equity Act: A Legacy for Users, to make technical corrections, and for other purposes.

The Senate proceeded to consider the bill, which had been reported from the Committee on Environment and Public Works, with an amendment to strike all after the enacting clause and insert in lieu thereof the following:

SECTION 1. SHORT TITLE.

This Act may be cited as the "Highway Technical Corrections Act of 2007".

SEC. 2. SURFACE TRANSPORTATION TECHNICAL CORRECTIONS.

(a) CORRECTION OF INTERNAL REFERENCES IN DISADVANTAGED BUSINESS ENTERPRISES.—Paragraphs (3)(A) and (5) of section 1101(b) of the Safe, Accountable, Flexible, Efficient Transportation Equity Act: A Legacy for Users (119 Stat. 1156) are amended by striking "paragraph (1)" each place it appears and inserting "paragraph (2)".

(b) CORRECTION OF DISTRIBUTION OF OBLIGATION AUTHORITY.—Section 1102(c)(5) of the Safe,

Accountable, Flexible, Efficient Transportation Equity Act: A Legacy for Users (119 Stat. 1158) is amended by striking “among the States”.

(c) CORRECTION OF FEDERAL LANDS HIGHWAYS.—Section 1119 of the Safe, Accountable, Flexible, Efficient Transportation Equity Act: A Legacy for Users (119 Stat. 1190) is amended by striking subsection (m) and inserting the following:

“(m) FOREST HIGHWAYS.—Of the amounts made available for public lands highways under section 1101—

“(1) not more than \$20,000,000 for each fiscal year may be used for the maintenance of forest highways;

“(2) not more than \$1,000,000 for each fiscal year may be used for signage identifying public hunting and fishing access; and

“(3) not more than \$10,000,000 for each fiscal year shall be used by the Secretary of Agriculture to pay the costs of facilitating the passage of aquatic species beneath forest roads (as defined in section 101(a) of title 23, United States Code), including the costs of constructing, maintaining, replacing, and removing culverts and bridges, as appropriate.”.

(d) CORRECTION OF DESCRIPTION OF NATIONAL CORRIDOR INFRASTRUCTURE IMPROVEMENT PROJECT.—Item number 1 of the table contained in section 1302(e) of the Safe, Accountable, Flexible, Efficient Transportation Equity Act: A Legacy for Users (119 Stat. 1205) is amended in the State column by inserting “LA,” after “TX.”.

(e) CORRECTION OF INFRASTRUCTURE FINANCE SECTION.—Section 1602(d)(1) of the Safe, Accountable, Flexible, Efficient Transportation Equity Act: A Legacy for Users (119 Stat. 1247) is amended by striking “through 189 as sections 601 through 609, respectively” and inserting “through 190 as sections 601 through 610, respectively”.

(f) CORRECTION OF PROJECT FEDERAL SHARE.—Section 1964(a) of the Safe, Accountable, Flexible, Efficient Transportation Equity Act: A Legacy for Users (119 Stat. 1519) is amended—

(1) by striking “only for the States of Alaska, Montana, Nevada, North Dakota, Oregon, and South Dakota,”; and

(2) by striking “section 120(b)” and inserting “section 120”.

(g) TRANSPORTATION SYSTEMS MANAGEMENT AND OPERATIONS DEFINED.—Section 101(a) of title 23, United States Code, is amended by adding at the end the following:

“(39) TRANSPORTATION SYSTEMS MANAGEMENT AND OPERATIONS.—

“(A) IN GENERAL.—The term ‘transportation systems management and operations’ means an integrated program to optimize the performance of existing infrastructure through the implementation of multimodal and intermodal, cross-jurisdictional systems, services, and projects designed to preserve capacity and improve security, safety, and reliability of the transportation system.

“(B) INCLUSIONS.—The term ‘transportation systems management and operations’ includes—

“(i) regional operations collaboration and coordination activities between transportation and public safety agencies; and

“(ii) improvements to the transportation system, such as traffic detection and surveillance, arterial management, freeway management, demand management, work zone management, emergency management, electronic toll collection, automated enforcement, traffic incident management, roadway weather management, traveler information services, commercial vehicle operations, traffic control, freight management, and coordination of highway, rail, transit, bicycle, and pedestrian operations.”.

(h) CORRECTION OF REFERENCE IN APPORTIONMENT OF HIGHWAY SAFETY IMPROVEMENT PROGRAM FUNDS.—Effective October 1, 2006, section 104(b)(5)(A)(iii) of title 23, United States Code, is amended by striking “the Federal-aid system”

each place it appears and inserting “Federal-aid highways”.

(i) CORRECTION OF AMENDMENT TO ADVANCE CONSTRUCTION.—Section 115 of title 23, United States Code, is amended by redesignating subsection (d) as subsection (c).

(j) CORRECTION OF HIGH PRIORITY PROJECTS.—Section 117 of title 23, United States Code, is amended—

(1) by redesignating subsections (d) through (h) as subsections (e) through (i), respectively;

(2) by redesignating the second subsection (c) (relating to Federal share) as subsection (d);

(3) in subsection (a)(2)(A) by inserting “(112 Stat. 257)” after “21st Century”; and

(4) in subsection (a)(2)(B)—

(A) by striking “subsection (b)” and inserting “subsection (c)”;

(B) by striking “SAFETEA-LU” and inserting “Safe, Accountable, Flexible, Efficient Transportation Equity Act: A Legacy for Users (119 Stat. 1256)”.

(k) CORRECTION OF TRANSFER OF UNUSED PROTECTIVE-DEVICE FUNDS TO OTHER HIGHWAY SAFETY IMPROVEMENT PROGRAM PROJECTS.—Section 130(e)(2) of title 23, United States Code, is amended by striking “purposes under this subsection” and inserting “highway safety improvement program purposes”.

(l) METROPOLITAN TRANSPORTATION PLANNING.—Section 134 of title 23, United States Code, is amended—

(1) in subsection (f)(3)(C)(ii) by striking subclause (II) and inserting the following:

“(II) FUNDING.—In addition to funds made available to the metropolitan planning organization for the Lake Tahoe region under other provisions of this title and chapter 53 of title 49, prior to an allocation under section 202 of this title, the Secretary shall set aside ½ of 1 percent of funds authorized to be appropriated to carry out that section, which shall be provided to the Tahoe Metropolitan Planning Organization to carry out the transportation planning process, including the environmental review of transportation projects to complete environmental documentation for the Lake Tahoe region under the Tahoe Regional Planning Compact as consented to in Public Law 96-551 (94 Stat. 3233) and this subparagraph.”;

(2) in subsection (j)(3)(D) by inserting “or the identified phase” after “the project” each place it appears; and

(3) in subsection (k)(2) by striking “a metropolitan planning area serving”.

(m) CORRECTION OF HIGHWAY BRIDGE PROGRAM.—

(1) IN GENERAL.—Section 144 of title 23, United States Code, is amended—

(A) in the section heading by striking “**replacement and rehabilitation**”;

(B) in subsections (b), (c)(1), and (e) by striking “Federal-aid system” each place it appears and inserting “Federal-aid highway”;

(C) in subsections (c)(2) and (o) by striking “the Federal-aid system” each place it appears and inserting “Federal-aid highways”;

(D) in the heading to paragraph (4) of subsection (d) by inserting “SYSTEMATIC” before “PREVENTIVE”;

(E) in subsection (e) by striking “off-system bridges” each place it appears and inserting “bridges not on Federal-aid highways”;

(F) by striking subsection (f);

(G) by redesignating subsections (g) through (s) as subsections (f) through (r), respectively;

(H) in subsection (f) (as redesignated by subparagraph (G))—

(i) in paragraph (1)(A)—

(I) in clause (vi), by inserting “, except that any unobligated or unexpended funds remaining upon completion of the project under this clause shall be transferred to and used to carry out the project described in clause (vii)” after “Vermont”; and

(II) in clause (viii), by inserting “and corridor” after “bridge”; and

(ii) in paragraph (2), by striking the paragraph heading and inserting “BRIDGES NOT ON FEDERAL-AID HIGHWAYS”;

(I) in subsection (m) (as redesignated by subparagraph (G)) by striking the subsection heading and inserting “PROGRAM FOR BRIDGES NOT ON FEDERAL-AID HIGHWAYS”; and

(J) in subsection (n)(4)(B) (as redesignated by subparagraph (G)) by striking “State highway agency” and inserting “State transportation department”.

(2) CONFORMING AMENDMENTS.—

(A) METROPOLITAN PLANNING.—Section 104(f)(1) of title 23, United States Code, is amended by striking “replacement and rehabilitation”.

(B) EQUITY BONUS PROGRAM.—Subsections (a)(2)(C) and (b)(2)(C) of section 105 of title 23, United States Code, are amended by striking “replacement and rehabilitation” each place it appears.

(C) ANALYSIS.—The analysis for chapter 1 of title 23, United States Code, is amended in the item relating to section 144 by striking “replacement and rehabilitation”.

(n) CORRECTION OF NATIONAL SCENIC BYWAYS PROGRAM COVERAGE.—Section 162 of title 23, United States Code, is amended—

(1) in subsection (a)(3)(B) by striking “a National Scenic Byway under subparagraph (A)” and inserting “a National Scenic Byway, an All-American Road, or one of America’s Byways under paragraph (1)”;

(2) in subsection (c)(3) by striking “or All-American Road” each place it appears and inserting “All-American Road, or one of America’s Byways”.

(o) CORRECTION OF REFERENCE IN TOLL PROVISION.—Section 166(b)(5)(C) of title 23, United States Code, is amended by striking “paragraph (3)” and inserting “paragraph (4)”.

(p) CORRECTION OF RECREATIONAL TRAILS PROGRAM APPORTIONMENT EXCEPTIONS.—Section 206(d)(3)(A) of title 23, United States Code, is amended by striking “(B), (C), and (D)” and inserting “(B) and (C)”.

(q) CORRECTION OF INFRASTRUCTURE FINANCE.—Section 601(a)(3) of title 23, United States Code, is amended by inserting “bbb minus, BBBB (low),” after “Baa3,”.

(r) CORRECTION OF MISCELLANEOUS TYPOGRAPHICAL ERRORS.—

(1) Section 1401 of the Safe, Accountable, Flexible, Efficient Transportation Equity Act: A Legacy for Users (119 Stat. 1226) is amended by redesignating subsections (d) and (e) as subsections (c) and (d), respectively.

(2) Section 1404(e) of such Act (119 Stat. 1229) is amended by inserting “tribal,” after “local,”.

(3) Section 10211(b)(2) of such Act (119 Stat. 1937) is amended by striking “plan administer” and inserting “plan and administer”.

(4) Section 10212(a) of such Act (119 Stat. 1937) is amended—

(A) by inserting “equity bonus,” after “minimum guarantee,”;

(B) by striking “freight intermodal connectors” and inserting “railway-highway crossings”;

(C) by striking “high risk rural road,”; and

(D) by inserting after “highway safety improvement programs” the following: “(and separately the set aside for the high risk rural road program)”.

SEC. 3. MAGLEV.

(a) FUNDING.—Section 1101(a)(18) of the Safe, Accountable, Flexible, Efficient Transportation Equity Act: A Legacy for Users (119 Stat. 1155) is amended by striking subparagraphs (A) and (B) and inserting the following:

“(A) \$20,000,000 for fiscal year 2007; and

“(B) \$35,000,000 for each of fiscal years 2008 and 2009.”.

(b) CONTRACT AUTHORITY.—Section 1307 of the Safe, Accountable, Flexible, Efficient Transportation Equity Act: A Legacy for Users (119 Stat. 1217) is amended by adding at the end the following:

“(e) CONTRACT AUTHORITY.—Funds authorized under section 1101(a)(18) shall be available

for obligation in the same manner as if the funds were apportioned under chapter 1 of title 23, United States Code; except that the funds shall not be transferable and shall remain available until expended, and the Federal share of the cost of a project to be carried out with such funds shall be 80 percent.”.

SEC. 4. PROJECTS OF NATIONAL AND REGIONAL SIGNIFICANCE.

The table contained in section 1301(m) of the Safe, Accountable, Flexible, Efficient Transportation Equity Act: A Legacy for Users (119 Stat. 1203) is amended—

(1) in item number 19 by striking the project description and inserting “Regional rail expansion and transportation infrastructure in the vicinity of Santa Teresa, New Mexico”; and

(2) in item number 22 by striking the project description and inserting “Redesign and reconstruction of interchanges 298 and 299 of I-80 and accompanying improvements to any other public roads in the vicinity, Monroe County”.

SEC. 5. IDLING REDUCTION FACILITIES.

Section 111 of title 23, United States Code, is amended by striking subsection (d).

SEC. 6. PROJECT AUTHORIZATIONS.

(a) IN GENERAL.—The table contained in section 1702 of the Safe, Accountable, Flexible, Efficient Transportation Equity Act: A Legacy for Users (119 Stat. 1256) is amended—

(1) in item number 3688 by striking “road” and inserting “trail”;

(2) in item number 3691 by striking the project description and inserting “Hoonah roads”;

(3) in item number 3695 by striking “in Soldotna” and inserting “in the Kenai River corridor”;

(4) in item number 3699 by striking “to improve fish habitat”;

(5) in item number 3700 by inserting “and ferry facilities” after “a ferry”;

(6) in item number 3703 by inserting “or other roads” after “Cape Blossom Road”;

(7) in item number 3704 by striking “Fairbanks” and inserting “Alaska Highway”;

(8) in item number 3705 by striking “in Cook Inlet for the Westside development/Williamsport-Pile Bay Road” and inserting “for development of the Williamsport-Pile Bay Road corridor”;

(9) in item number 3828 by striking “\$2,000,000” and inserting “\$11,000,000”;

(10) by striking item number 3829;

(11) by striking item number 3832;

(12) in item number 3861 by striking the project description and inserting “Creation of a greenway path along the Naugatuck River in Waterbury”;

(13) in item number 3883 by striking the project description and inserting “Wilmington Riverfront Access and Street Grid Redesign”;

(14) in item number 3892 by striking “\$5,000,000” and inserting “\$8,800,000”;

(15) in item number 3894 by striking “\$5,000,000” and inserting “\$1,200,000”;

(16) in item number 3909 by striking the project description and inserting “S.R. 281, the Avalon Boulevard Expansion Project from Interstate 10 to U.S. Highway 91”;

(17) in item number 3911 by striking the project description and inserting “Construct a new bridge at Indian Street, Martin County”;

(18) in item number 3916 by striking the project description and inserting “City of Hollywood for U.S. 1/Federal Highway, north of Young Circle”;

(19) in item number 3937 by striking the project description and inserting “Kingsland bypass from CR 61 to I-95, Camden County”;

(20) in item number 3945 by striking “CR 293 to CS 5231” and inserting “SR 371 to SR 400”;

(21) in item number 3965 by striking “transportation projects” and inserting “and air quality projects”;

(22) in item number 3986 by striking the project description and inserting “Extension of Sugarloaf Parkway, Guinnett County”;

(23) in item number 3999 by striking “Bridges” and inserting “Bridge and Corridor”;

(24) in item number 4003 by striking the project description and inserting “City of Council Bluffs and Pottawattamie County East Beltway Roadway and Connectors Project”;

(25) in item number 4043 by striking “MP 9.3, Segment I, II, and III” and inserting “Milepost 24.3”;

(26) in item number 4050 by striking the project description and inserting “Preconstruction and construction activities of U.S. 51 between the Assumption Bypass and Vandalia”;

(27) in item number 4058 by striking the project description and inserting “For improvements to the road between Brighton and Bunker Hill in Macoupin County”;

(28) in item numbers 4062 and 4084 by striking the project descriptions and inserting “Preconstruction, construction, and related research and studies of I-290 Cap the Ike project in the village of Oak Park”;

(29) in item number 4089 by inserting “and parking facility/entrance improvements serving the Museum of Science and Industry” after “Lakeshore Drive”;

(30) in item number 4103 by inserting “and adjacent to the” before “Shawnee”;

(31) in item number 4110 by striking the project description and inserting “For improvements to the road between Brighton and Bunker Hill in Macoupin County”;

(32) in item number 4120 by striking the project description and amount and inserting “Upgrade 146th Street to Improve I-69 Access” and “\$800,000”, respectively;

(33) in item number 4125 by striking “\$250,000” and inserting “\$1,650,000”;

(34) by striking item number 4170;

(35) by striking item number 4179;

(36) in item number 4185 by striking the project description and inserting “Replace the Clinton Street Bridge spanning St. Mary’s River in downtown Fort Wayne”;

(37) in item number 4299 by striking the project description and inserting “Improve U.S. 40, MD 715 interchange and other roadways in the vicinity of Aberdeen Proving Ground to support BRAC-related growth”;

(38) in item number 4313 by striking “Maryland Avenue” and all that follows through “Rd. corridor” and inserting “intermodal access and pedestrian safety improvements”;

(39) in item number 4315 by striking “stormwater mitigation project” and inserting “environmental preservation project”;

(40) in item number 4318 by striking the project description and inserting “Planning, design, and construction of improvements to the highway systems connecting to Lewiston and Auburn downtowns”;

(41) in item number 4323 by striking the project description and inserting “MaineDOT Acadia intermodal passenger and maintenance facility”;

(42) in item number 4338 by striking the project description and inserting “Construct 1 or more grade-separated crossings of I-75, and make associated improvements to improve local and regional east-west mobility between Mileposts 279 and 282”;

(43) in item number 4355 by striking the project description and inserting “Design, engineering, ROW acquisition, construction, and construction engineering for the reconstruction of TH 95, from 12th Avenue to CSAH 13, including bridge and approaches, ramps, intersecting roadways, signals, turn lanes, and multiuse trail, North Branch”;

(44) in item number 4357 by striking the project description and inserting “Design, construct, ROW, and expand TH 241 and CSAH 35 and associated streets in the City of St. Michael”;

(45) in item number 4360 by striking the project description and inserting “Planning, design, and construction for Twin Cities Bioscience Corridor in St. Paul”;

(46) in item number 4362 by striking the project description and inserting “I-494/U.S. 169

interchange reconstruction including U.S. 169/Valley View Road interchange, Twin Cities Metropolitan Area”;

(47) in item number 4365 by striking the project description and inserting “34th Street realignment and 34th Street and I-94 interchange, including retention and reconstruction of the SE Main Avenue/CSAH 52 interchange ramps at I-94, and other transportation improvements for the city of Moorhead, including the SE Main Avenue GSI and Moorhead Comprehensive Rail Safety Program”;

(48) in item number 4369 by striking the project description and inserting “Construction of 8th Street North, Stearns C.R. 120 to TH 15 in St. Cloud”;

(49) in item number 4371 by striking the project description and inserting “Construction and ROW of TH 241, CSAH 35 and associated streets in the City of St. Michael”;

(50) in item number 4411 by striking “Southaven” and inserting “DeSoto County”;

(51) in item number 4424 by striking the project description and inserting “U.S. 93 Evaro to Polson transportation improvement projects”;

(52) in item number 4428 by striking the project description and inserting “U.S. 76 improvements”;

(53) in item number 4457 by striking the project description and inserting “Construct an interchange at an existing grade separation at SR 1602 (Old Stantonsburg Rd.) and U.S. 264 Bypass in Wilson County”;

(54) in item number 4461 by striking the project description and inserting “Transportation and related improvements at Queens University of Charlotte, including the Queens Science Center and the Marion Diehl Center, Charlotte”;

(55) in item number 4507 by striking the project description and inserting “Design, right-of-way and construction of Highway 35 between Norfolk and South Sioux City, including an interchange at milepost 1 on U.S. I-129”;

(56) in item number 4555 by inserting “Canal Street and” after “Reconstruction of”;

(57) in item number 4565 by striking the project description and inserting “Railroad Construction and Acquisition, Ely and White Pine County”;

(58) in item number 4588 by inserting “Private Parking and” before “Transportation”;

(59) in item number 4596 by striking the project description and inserting “Transportation center, Corning”;

(60) in item number 4610, by striking the project description and inserting “Demolition, site restoration, and hazardous material abatement of Alert Facility at Plattsburgh International Airport”;

(61) in item number 4649 by striking the project description and inserting “Fairfield County, OH U.S. 33 and old U.S. 33 safety improvements and related construction, city of Lancaster and surrounding areas”;

(62) in item number 4651 by striking “for the transfer of rail to truck for the intermodal” and inserting “, and construction of an intermodal freight”;

(63) in item number 4691 by striking the project description and inserting “Transportation improvements to Idabel Industrial Park Rail Spur, Idabel”;

(64) in item number 4722 by striking the project description and inserting “Highway, traffic, pedestrian, and riverfront improvements, Pittsburgh”;

(65) in item number 4749 by striking “study” and inserting “improvements”;

(66) in item number 4821 by striking “highway grade crossing project, Clearfield and Clinton Counties” and inserting “Project for highway grade crossings and other purposes relating to the Project in Cambria, Centre, Clearfield, Clinton, Indiana, and Jefferson Counties”;

(67) in item number 4838 by striking “study” and inserting “improvements”;

(68) in item number 4839 by striking “fuel-celled” and inserting “fueled”;

(69) in item number 4866 by striking "\$11,000,000" and inserting "\$9,400,000";

(70) by inserting after item number 4866 the following:

"4866A	RI	Repair and restore railroad bridge in Westeryly	\$1,600,000";
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(71) in item number 4892 by striking the project description and inserting "Construct a 4-lane highway between maverick Junction and the Nebraska border";

(72) in item number 4915 by striking the project description and inserting "For projects of highest priority, as determined by the South Dakota DOT";

(73) in item number 4916 by striking "\$1,000,000" and inserting "\$328,000";

(74) in item number 4924 by striking "\$3,450,000" and inserting "\$4,122,000";

(75) in item number 4927 by striking the project description and inserting "Construction and Improvements to the College Street Corridor, Great Smoky Mountain Heritage Highway Cultural and Visitors Center in Maryville";

(76) in item number 4960 by inserting "of which \$50,000 shall be used for a street paving project, Calhoun" after "County";

(77) in item number 4974 by striking "Sevier County";

(78) in item number 5008 by inserting "Kane Creek Boulevard" after "500 West";

(79) in item numbers 5011 and 5033 by striking "200 South Interchange" each place it appears and inserting "400 South Interchange";

(80) in item number 5021, by striking "Pine View Dam,";

(81) in item number 5026 by striking the project description and inserting "Roadway improvements on Washington Fields Road/300 East, Washington";

(82) in item number 5027 by inserting "and roadway improvements" after "safety project";

(83) in item number 5028 by inserting "and roadway improvements" after "lighting";

(84) in item number 5029 by inserting "and roadway improvements" after "lights";

(85) in number 5032 by striking the project description and inserting "Expand Redhills Parkway, St. George";

(86) in item number 5132 by striking the project description and inserting "St. Croix River crossing project, Wisconsin State Highway 64, St. Croix County, Wisconsin, to Minnesota State Highway 36, Washington County"; and

(87) in item number 5161 by striking the project description and inserting "Raleigh Street Extension Project in Martinsburg".

(b) TRANSFER OF PROJECT FUNDS.—The Secretary of Transportation shall transfer to the Commandant of the Coast Guard amounts made available to carry out the project described in item number 4985 of the table contained in section 1702 of the Safe, Accountable, Flexible, Efficient Transportation Equity Act: A Legacy for Users (119 Stat. 1447) to carry out that project, in accordance with the Act of June 21, 1940 (commonly known as the "Truman-Hobbs Act") (33 U.S.C. 511 et seq.).

(c) UNUSED OBLIGATION AUTHORITY.—Notwithstanding any other provision of law, unused obligation authority made available for an item in section 1702 of the Safe, Accountable, Flexible, Efficient Transportation Equity Act: A Legacy for Users (119 Stat. 1256) that is repealed, or authorized funding for such an item that is reduced, by this section shall be made available—

(1) for an item in section 1702 of that Act that is added or increased by this section and that is in the same State as the item for which obligation authority or funding is repealed or reduced;

(2) in an amount proportional to the amount of obligation authority or funding that is so repealed or reduced; and

(3) individually for projects numbered 1 through 3676 pursuant to section 1102(c)(4)(A) of that Act (119 Stat. 1158).

(d) ADDITIONAL DISCRETIONARY USE OF SURFACE TRANSPORTATION PROGRAM FUNDS.—Of the funds apportioned to each State under section 104(b)(3) of title 23, United States Code, a State may expend for each of fiscal years 2007 through 2009 not more than \$1,000,000 for the following activities:

(1) Participation in the Joint Operation Center for Fuel Compliance established under section 143(b)(4)(H) of title 23, United States Code, within the Department of the Treasury, including the funding of additional positions for motor fuel tax enforcement officers and other staff dedicated on a full-time basis to participation in the activities of the Center.

(2) Development, operation, and maintenance of electronic filing systems to coordinate data exchange with the Internal Revenue Service by States that impose a tax on the removal of taxable fuel from any refinery and on the removal of taxable fuel from any terminal.

(3) Development, operation, and maintenance of electronic single point of filing in conjunction with the Internal Revenue Service by States that impose a tax on the removal of taxable fuel from any refinery and on the removal of taxable fuel from any terminal.

(4) Development, operation, and maintenance of a certification system by a State of any fuel sold to a State or local government (as defined in section 4221(d)(4) of the Internal Revenue Code of 1986) for the exclusive use of the State or local government or sold to a qualified volunteer fire department (as defined in section 150(e)(2) of such Code) for its exclusive use.

(5) Development, operation, and maintenance of a certification system by a State of any fuel sold to a nonprofit educational organization (as defined in section 4221(d)(5) of such Code) that includes verification of the good standing of the organization in the State in which the organization is providing educational services.

SEC. 7. CORRECTION OF INTERSTATE DESIGNATION.

(a) TREATMENT.—Section 1908(a) of the Safe, Accountable, Flexible, Efficient Transportation Equity Act: A Legacy for Users (119 Stat. 1469) is amended by striking paragraph (3).

(b) NATIONAL HIGHWAY SYSTEM.—Section 1908(b) of the Safe, Accountable, Flexible, Efficient Transportation Equity Act: A Legacy for Users (119 Stat. 1470) is amended by striking "from the Arkansas State line" and inserting "from Interstate Route 540".

SEC. 8. FUTURE OF SURFACE TRANSPORTATION SYSTEM.

Section 1909(b) of the Safe, Accountable, Flexible, Efficient Transportation Equity Act: A Legacy for Users (119 Stat. 1471) is amended—

(1) in the matter preceding subparagraph (A) of paragraph (9) by striking "July 1, 2007" and inserting "December 31, 2007";

(2) in paragraph (11)(C) by striking "the Administrator of the Federal Highway Administration" and inserting "the Secretary";

(3) in paragraph (11)(D)(i) by striking "on a reimbursable basis,";

(4) in paragraph (15) by striking "\$1,400,000 for each of fiscal years 2006 and 2007" and inserting "\$1,400,000 for fiscal year 2006 and \$3,400,000 for fiscal year 2007";

(5) by redesignating paragraphs (14), (15), (16), and (17) as paragraphs (15), (16), (17), and (18), respectively; and

(6) by inserting after paragraph (13) the following:

"(14) LIMITATIONS.—
 "(A) FUNDS.—Funds made available to carry out this section may be expended only to support the activities of the Commission.

"(B) DATA, ANALYSES, AND REPORTS.—No data, analysis, report, or other document prepared for the Commission to fulfill the duties of the Commission may be provided to, or shared with, any other commission or task force until the data, analysis, report, or document has been made available to the public."

SEC. 9. BUDGET JUSTIFICATION.

Section 1926 of the Safe, Accountable, Flexible, Efficient Transportation Equity Act: A Legacy for Users (49 U.S.C. 301 note; 119 Stat. 1483) is amended by striking "The Department" and inserting "Notwithstanding any other provision of law, the Department".

SEC. 10. BUY AMERICA.

Section 1928 of the Safe, Accountable, Flexible, Efficient Transportation Equity Act: A Legacy for Users (119 Stat. 1484) is amended—

(1) by redesignating paragraphs (2) through (5) as paragraphs (3) through (6), respectively; and

(2) by inserting after paragraph (1) the following:

"(2) the current application by the Federal Highway Administration of the Buy America test as applied only to components or parts of a bridge project and not the entire bridge project is inconsistent with this sense of Congress;"

SEC. 11. TRANSPORTATION IMPROVEMENTS.

The table contained in section 1934(c) of the Safe, Accountable, Flexible, Efficient Transportation Equity Act: A Legacy for Users (119 Stat. 1486) is amended—

(1) in item number 12 by striking "Yukon River" and inserting "Kuskokwim River";

(2) in item number 18 by striking "Engineering and Construction in Merced County" and inserting "and safety improvements/realignment of SR 165 project study report and environmental studies in Merced and Stanislaus Counties";

(3) in item number 38 by striking the project description and inserting "Relocation of the Newark Train Station";

(4) in item number 57 by striking the project description and inserting "Kingsland bypass from CR 61 to I-95, Camden County";

(5) in item number 114—
 (A) by striking "IA-32"; and

(B) by inserting "SW" after "Construct";

(6) in item number 122 by striking the project description and inserting "Design, right-of-way, and construction of the SW Arterial and connections to U.S. 20, Dubuque County";

(7) in item number 130 by striking the project description and inserting "Improvements and rehabilitation to rail and bridges on the Appanoose County Community Railroad";

(8) in item number 133 by striking "IA-32";

(9) in item number 138 by striking the project description and inserting "West Spencer Beltway Project";

(10) in item number 142 by striking "MP 9.3, Segment I, II, and III" and inserting "Milepost 24.3";

(11) in item number 161 by striking "Bridge replacement on Johnson Drive and Nall Ave." and inserting "Construction improvements";

(12) in item number 182 by striking the project description and inserting "Improve U.S. 40, M.D. 715 interchange, and other roadways in the vicinity of Aberdeen Proving Ground to support BRAC-related growth";

(13) in item number 198 by striking the project description and inserting "Construct 1 or more grade separated crossings of I-75 and make associated improvements to improve local and regional east-west mobility between Mileposts 279 and 282";

(14) in item number 201 by striking the project description and inserting "Alger County, paving a portion of H-58 from Buck Hill to a point located 4,000 feet east of the Hurricane River";

(15) in item number 238 by striking the project description and inserting "Develop and construct the St. Mary water project road and bridge infrastructure, including a new bridge and approaches across St. Mary River, stabilization and improvements to United States Route 89, and road/canal from Siphon Bridge to Spider Lake, on the condition that \$2,500,000 of the amount made available to carry out this item may be made available to the Bureau of Reclamation for use for the Swift Current Creek and Boulder Creek bank and bed stabilization project in the Lower St. Mary Lake drainage";

(16) in item number 329 by inserting “, Tulsa” after “technology”;

(17) in item number 358 by striking “fuel-celled” and inserting “fueled”;

(18) in item number 374 by striking the project description and inserting “Construct a 4-lane highway between Maverick Junction and the Nebraska border”; and

(19) in item number 402 by striking “from 2 to 5 lanes and improve alignment within rights-of-way in St. George” and inserting “, St. George”.

SEC. 12. HIGHWAY RESEARCH FUNDING.

(a) F-SHRP FUNDING.—Notwithstanding any other provision of law, for each of fiscal years 2007 through 2009, at any time at which an apportionment is made of the sums authorized to be appropriated for the surface transportation program, the congestion mitigation and air quality improvement program, the National Highway System, the Interstate maintenance program, the bridge program, or the highway safety improvement program, the Secretary of Transportation shall—

(1) deduct from each apportionment an amount not to exceed 0.205 percent of the apportionment; and

(2) transfer or otherwise make that amount available to carry out section 510 of title 23, United States Code.

(b) CONFORMING AMENDMENTS.—

(1) FUNDING.—Section 5101 of the Safe, Accountable, Flexible, Efficient Transportation Equity Act: A Legacy for Users (119 Stat. 1779) is amended—

(A) in subsection (a)(1) by striking “509, and 510” and inserting “and 509”;

(B) in subsection (a)(4) by striking “\$69,700,000” and all that follows through “2009” and inserting “\$40,400,000 for fiscal year 2005, \$69,700,000 for fiscal year 2006, \$76,400,000 for each of fiscal years 2007 and 2008, and \$78,900,000 for fiscal year 2009”; and

(C) in subsection (b) by inserting “or, in the case of funds appropriated by subsection (a) to carry out section 5201, 5202, or 5203, 80 percent” after “50 percent”.

(2) FUTURE STRATEGIC HIGHWAY RESEARCH PROGRAM.—Section 5210 of the Safe, Accountable, Flexible, Efficient Transportation Equity Act: A Legacy for Users (119 Stat. 1804) is amended—

(A) by striking subsection (c); and

(B) by redesignating subsection (d) as subsection (c).

(c) CONTRACT AUTHORITY.—Funds made available under this section shall be available for obligation in the same manner as if the funds were apportioned under chapter 1 of title 23, United States Code, except that the Federal share shall be determined under section 510(f) of that title.

(d) APPLICABILITY OF OBLIGATION LIMITATION.—Funds made available under this section shall be subject to any limitation on obligations for Federal-aid highways and highway safety construction programs under section 1102 the Safe, Accountable, Flexible, Efficient Transportation Equity Act: A Legacy for Users (23 U.S.C. 104 note; 119 Stat. 1157) or any other Act.

(e) EQUITY BONUS FORMULA.—Notwithstanding any other provision of law, in allocating funds for the equity bonus program under section 105 of title 23, United States Code, for each of fiscal years 2007 through 2009, the Secretary of Transportation shall make the required calculations under that section as if this section had not been enacted.

(f) FUNDING FOR RESEARCH ACTIVITIES.—Of the amount made available by section 5101(a)(1) of the Safe, Accountable, Flexible, Efficient Transportation Equity Act: A Legacy for Users (119 Stat. 1779)—

(1) at least \$1,000,000 shall be made available for each of fiscal years 2007 through 2009 to carry out section 502(h) of title 23, United States Code; and

(2) at least \$4,900,000 shall be made available for each of fiscal years 2007 through 2009 to carry out section 502(i) of that title.

(g) TECHNICAL AMENDMENTS.—

(1) SURFACE TRANSPORTATION RESEARCH.—Section 502 of title 23, United States Code, is amended by striking the first subsection (h), relating to infrastructure investment needs reports beginning with the report for January 31, 1999.

(2) ADVANCED TRAVEL FORECASTING PROCEDURES PROGRAM.—Section 5512(a)(2) of the Safe, Accountable, Flexible, Efficient Transportation Equity Act: A Legacy for Users (119 Stat. 1829) is amended by striking “PROGRAM APPRECIATION.—” and inserting “PROGRAM APPLICATION.—”.

(3) UNIVERSITY TRANSPORTATION RESEARCH.—Section 5506 of title 49, United States Code, is amended—

(A) in subsection (i)—

(i) by striking “In order to” and inserting the following:

“(1) IN GENERAL.—In order to”; and

(ii) by adding at the end the following:

“(2) SPECIAL RULE.—Nothing in paragraph (1) requires a nonprofit institution of higher learning designated as a Tier II university transportation center to maintain total expenditures as described in paragraph (1) in excess of the amount of the grant awarded to the institution.”; and

(B) in subsection (k)(3) by striking “The Secretary” and all that follows through “to carry out this section” and inserting “For each of fiscal years 2007 through 2009, the Secretary shall expend not more than 1.5 percent of amounts made available to carry out this section”.

SEC. 13. RESCISSION.

Section 10212 of the Safe, Accountable, Flexible, Efficient Transportation Equity Act: A Legacy for Users (as amended by section 1302 of the Pension Protection Act of 2006 (Public Law 109–280)) (119 Stat. 1937; 120 Stat. 780) is amended by striking “\$8,593,000,000” each place it appears and inserting “\$8,710,000,000”.

SEC. 14. TEA-21 TECHNICAL CORRECTIONS.

(a) IN GENERAL.—Section 1108(f)(1) of the Transportation Equity Act for the 21st Century (23 U.S.C. 133 note; 112 Stat. 141) is amended by striking “2003” and inserting “2009”.

(b) BEARTOOTH HIGHWAY, WYOMING AND MONTANA.—Item number 1646 of the table contained in section 1602 of the Transportation Equity Act for the 21st Century (112 Stat. 317) is amended in the project description by striking “and construction” and inserting “reconstruction, maintenance (including routine and preventive maintenance), snow removal, and pavement preservation”.

SEC. 15. HIGH PRIORITY CORRIDOR AND INNOVATIVE PROJECT TECHNICAL CORRECTIONS.

(a) HIGH PRIORITY CORRIDORS.—Section 1105(e) of the Intermodal Surface Transportation Efficiency Act of 1991 (105 Stat. 2032; 119 Stat. 1212) is amended—

(1) in paragraph (63) by striking “and United States Routes 1, 3, 9, 17, and 46,” and inserting “United States Routes 1, 9, and 46, and State Routes 3 and 17,”; and

(2) in paragraph (64)—

(A) by striking “United States Route 42” and inserting “State Route 42”; and

(B) by striking “Interstate Route 676” and inserting “Interstate Routes 76 and 676”.

(b) INNOVATIVE PROJECTS.—The table contained in section 1107(b) of the Intermodal Surface Transportation Efficiency Act of 1991 (105 Stat. 2048(b)) is amended in item number 89, in the matter under the column with the heading “INNOVATIVE PROJECTS”, by inserting “and contiguous counties” after “Michigan”.

SEC. 16. DEFINITION OF REPEAT INTOXICATED DRIVER LAW.

Section 164(a)(5) of title 23, United States Code, is amended by striking subparagraphs (A) and (B) and inserting the following:

“(A) receive—

“(i) a driver’s license suspension for not less than 1 year; or

“(ii) a combination of suspension of all driving privileges for the first 45 days of the suspension period followed by a reinstatement of limited driving privileges for the purpose of getting to and from work, school, or an alcohol treatment program if an ignition interlock device is installed on each of the motor vehicles owned or operated, or both, by the individual;

“(B) be subject to the impoundment or immobilization of, or the installation of an ignition interlock system on, each motor vehicle owned or operated (or both) by the individual.”.

SEC. 17. RESEARCH TECHNICAL CORRECTION.

Section 5506(e)(5)(C) of title 49, United States Code, is amended by striking “\$2,225,000” and inserting “\$2,250,000”.

SEC. 18. EFFECTIVE DATE.

(a) IN GENERAL.—Except as otherwise provided in this Act (including subsection (b)), this Act and the amendments made by this Act take effect on the date of enactment of this Act.

(b) EXCEPTION.—

(1) IN GENERAL.—The amendments made by this Act (other than the amendments made by sections 4, 6, and 11) to the Safe, Accountable, Flexible, Efficient Transportation Equity Act: A Legacy for Users (Public Law 109–59; 119 Stat. 1144) shall—

(A) take effect as of the date of enactment of that Act; and

(B) be treated as being included in that Act as of that date.

(2) EFFECT OF AMENDMENTS.—Each provision of the Safe, Accountable, Flexible, Efficient Transportation Equity Act: A Legacy for Users (Public Law 109–59; 119 Stat. 1144) (including the amendments made by that Act) (as in effect on the day before the date of enactment of this Act) that is amended by this Act (other than sections 4, 6, and 11) shall be treated as not being enacted.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from California is recognized.

Mrs. BOXER. Mr. President, I am very pleased we are on this bill. Senator INHOFE and I haven’t wasted the time. We have been talking with our colleagues. I think for the interest of all Members, at this point we don’t expect any votes tonight, but we certainly do hope in every way possible that we will start disposing of the amendments in the morning. We will be here about 10:30. We urge our colleagues to come down and offer their amendments. We will debate them, we will have our votes on them, and we will get something done for the American people.

I yield the floor at this time.

I see my ranking member and I am delighted he is here.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Oklahoma is recognized.

Mr. INHOFE. Mr. President, I thank the chairman of the committee. This is something we have spent a long time on. I think it is very important for all of us on both sides of the aisle to understand that what we are considering here is not the transportation reauthorization bill of 2005. That was done. That is history. That is behind us. A technical corrections bill is common with every bill, every major piece of legislation that comes along. Sometimes in the case—I will go ahead and say in my case of Oklahoma, we had a major project that was about a \$200,000 project in Durant, OK in which, according to our transportation commissioner and the Transportation Department of Oklahoma, that same amount

of money could be better spent doing the same project but at another location. Well, that takes a technical change. There is no difference.

I say to all of my good friends, there is no one who is more conservative than I am by all ratings in my last 22 years in both the House and the Senate. There are no new projects. There is no new spending. The amount of money that was authorized is the same amount of money that is authorized at the present time in the technical corrections bill. So it is not somehow getting some kind of an earmark or something else in it.

I have often said that of all of the systems we use in Washington to accomplish things, probably the transportation system is the best. I don't know of anyone who complains about paying into the highway trust fund when they get gasoline. They want to be sure it is going to go to building highways, repairing bridges. But what we do in the State of Oklahoma is we have eight transportation districts, eight transportation commissioners, all geographically located. They make recommendations. What I do with a transportation bill is I leave it up to them to make the determination as to where that goes. The States are making those decisions. The highway trust fund—there are some States where the money doesn't go straight into transportation. They have been robbing balances of the highway trust fund for as long as I know. We have corrected that problem in the State of Oklahoma. Instead of having it go to other causes, it goes to correcting the crisis we are in right now.

I wish to say that for those of us who are conservatives, this is something that works well. If there is any function of government that needs to be addressed and has to be addressed at the Federal level, it is our roads and highways. We have States such as Montana, big States that have very few people. You still have to get across them. You have the congested eastern States that have the opposite situation. That is why way back in the Eisenhower administration they decided to go in together and create this system we still have today. It is one that has worked fairly well. I don't want people out there to think this is something that has a bunch of projects and a bunch of earmarks in it. It doesn't. This is something we spent 2 or 3 years intensively working on prior to its passage in 2005. Now we want to make these corrections to make sure the rest of the projects get done.

Here is the dilemma we have right now. We have a lot of projects—*not* nearly enough but a lot of projects—that we authorized in 2005. If we don't have technical corrections, we are up against the wall now where we can't get anything more done, and we have given our word to people all throughout the country that we are going to improve bridges, we are going to try to save lives, and it has virtually stopped

because we have certain corrections that need to be made.

What we dealt with on that very large, what was it, \$286 billion over the period of 2005 through 2009, which is a lot of money, that doesn't do anything more—it doesn't even maintain what we already have. We don't even have a lot of new stuff in there. There is not a person in America who doesn't know we have a crisis. Some of these Members of this committee or this body, if you don't think it is a crisis, call your wife at home, or your husband, and they will tell you it is a crisis. It is worse every year. It is not something that we can make a decision today and all come to our good senses and get it done and it will be done tomorrow. It is a long lead time. It is a complicated process. But it is one of the things that has worked well.

I know there are a lot of people who want to satisfy some constituency that says you are spending too much money. You tell that constituency to go out and drive in the traffic for a while and see what kind of serious problems we have.

I have often said—and I have followed this myself—we all in this body have different priorities. That is what makes it a representative body. I have often said we need to, No. 1, take care of our Nation's security, have a military that can defend our country; No. 2, take care of the infrastructure we have and move forward with that; and No. 3, which is kind of a pet thing with me, and I think everyone who has previously been a mayor of a major city—unfunded mandates is another area that I feel this governing body should be paying attention to. But we have a bill. We have a bill that is working now. We are improving highways. We are adding lanes. But we have come to a stop. I think anyone who tries to keep this from becoming a reality doesn't want to address a serious problem we are faced with.

No one else is going to do it for us. The States can't do it. It has to be done by the Federal Government. We passed a bill. We are going to be coming up against another bill next year when this runs out in 2009. We are going to be reauthorizing for the next 5 years or 7 years or maybe even longer. But this has to be done and we need to get it done now.

We do have several amendments. I understand the concern of the Senator from South Carolina who has made his statements, and he has done so very eloquently. Frankly, I agree with almost everything he says. The only thing I disagree with is that this bill isn't creating new projects, isn't spending new money. We need, in his State as well as my State and in all 50 States, to get on with this. I hope people realize these are not new projects; it is not an increase in spending. It doesn't spend at all; it is an authorization bill.

Another amendment that is going to be pending is that of my good friend

Senator BOND from Missouri. He has a special concern, and I encourage him to come down to the floor to bring it up, debate it, and let's vote on it and get that done. Then my junior Senator has a concern over something that is a process that happened—it didn't even happen here, but it happened in the other body. Now, I agree with him, it is something that was egregious and needs to be investigated. I think it should be. I think there are a lot of different ways of doing it. I want to join hands with him and get this done.

So we, to my knowledge, only have those three things that are out there that are holding this up. I would invite those three authors to come down. I think while we are not going to be having votes tonight, we can start debating these tonight, and tomorrow morning we could actually vote on some of these. But I agree with the chairman of the committee, Senator BOXER, and the majority and the minority leaders in this body that we need to get it done. We are not going to get it done until we get the amendments down here, debate them, and decide what is the will of this body. That is what we are supposed to be doing for a living around here. That is what happens.

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

THE PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will call the roll.

The assistant legislative clerk proceeded to call the roll.

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

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

MORNING BUSINESS

MR. BROWN. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the Senate proceed to a period of morning business, with Senators permitted to speak therein for up to 10 minutes each.

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

COLOMBIA FREE TRADE AGREEMENT

MR. BROWN. Mr. President, earlier this month, President Bush sent up another trade agreement to the House of Representatives. This agreement is a bilateral trade agreement with Colombia. He calls it a "free trade agreement," a term we use around here—I am not sure why, except that it sounds good, because these trade agreements generally are—I don't have it in front of me, but it was too thick to bind in its original printing. It is about seven or eight hundred pages.

NAFTA, the North American Free Trade Agreement—which the Presiding Officer opposed 15 years ago, as I did—was even longer than that. The way they sell these agreements is they say we are eliminating the tariffs on the trade relationship between—in this case it is Colombia, and Colombia still

has tariffs on American goods. We have eliminated tariffs on Colombian goods. If we were to pass a real free trade agreement, it would be three, four, five, six pages long and eliminate the tariff schedule, making a real free trade agreement.

These are not free trade agreements the President sends us, nor are they free trade agreements that Presidents in the past sent. They are hundreds and hundreds of pages of protectionism, pages outlining protections for the drug companies, protections for the energy companies, for financial services companies, banks and others, and protections for the pharmaceutical industry. That is what these supposed free trade agreements are.

It is interesting that those of us who oppose these "free trade agreements" because they don't protect our communities, frankly, are called "protectionists." If we are going to write these agreements and build in protections for the drug companies, the oil industry, and the other energy companies, the financial services companies, the banks, and the insurance companies, we also should build in protections for our workers in New Jersey and in Ohio, protections for our communities in Lima, and Mansfield, and Tiffin, OH, protections for food safety, and build in protections for consumer product safety.

But that is not what they do. What is most curious about these agreements that the President has sent up—in this case the most recent is Colombia—it reminds me of the old Einstein saying that the definition of insanity is doing the same thing over and over and over again and expecting a different outcome.

We have seen, in almost 15-plus years in the House of Representatives, and now in the Senate—and it is roughly the same period of the Presiding Officer—we have seen our trade deficit go from \$38 billion in 1992, to in excess of \$800 billion last year. It is hard to know exactly what that means. A \$38 billion deficit—that means we buy \$38 billion more in this country than we sell to other countries. It is \$800 billion more that we buy in this country than we sell to other countries. That is a huge amount of dollars, obviously.

That \$800 billion—it was boiled down by the first President Bush, who said that a billion dollar trade surplus, or deficit, translated into 13,000 jobs. So if you have a trade surplus—in other words, if you are selling more than you are buying as a nation, a billion dollars, according to President Bush the first, would add up to about 13,000 new jobs—net gain of jobs in your country. But if you have \$1 billion deficit, it means it is a 13,000 net job loss in your country. We have not a billion dollar trade deficit but an \$800 billion one. Do the math. What does that mean in lost jobs? It means an awful lot of lost manufacturing jobs in my State, from Cleveland, to Dayton, to Lima, to Canton, to Kent, to Ravenna, to all over

our State. It means a lot of other lost jobs, not just manufacturing jobs. When American Standard shuts down in Tiffin, and when a company shuts down in Bucyrus, or in Ashland, it means fewer firefighters, fewer schoolteachers, fewer restaurant workers, fewer realtors, and fewer people who serve those jobs—those people who had the manufacturing jobs.

So it is pretty clear that the trade agreements, in addition to other damage they have done, clearly—when you have a trade deficit that goes from \$38 billion to \$800 billion in a decade and a half, they have done significant damage to our country and, most importantly, to our communities and our families.

I will close on something specifically unique to the Colombia trade agreement. We know that in Colombia they have had a significant number of murders committed against union activists. I heard a Member of the House say today there were more union activists—organizing union leaders—murdered in Colombia than anywhere in the rest of the world combined.

Although President Uribe of Colombia says union violence has come down and his spokespeople in this body say the same, the fact is that union murders, deaths of union activists in the first 3 months of 2008 are almost twice what they were in 2007. Adding insult to injury, we have seen fewer and fewer convictions. Only about 3 percent of these murders have resulted in convictions of the people who have been guilty of the murders. To add even further insult to this whole issue, the American Government, the State Department has said the paramilitary vigilantes who are allied often with the Uribe Government who have killed the union activists are classified by our State Department as terrorists. We, in essence, are supporting the Uribe Government that is allied with paramilitary vigilantes who are called terrorists by our own Government.

I don't quite see why we would want to reward that Government. I want President Uribe to succeed. I think he has done decent works. But I don't think we should reward him with a trade agreement and lose the leverage we have to try to get the activist murder rate down and also so that the people have the opportunity to join unions in Colombia. Fewer than 5 percent of the Colombian workforce is unionized. That is the lowest or second lowest in the Western Hemisphere.

They are not doing what they need to do to bring working families into the middle class, as we have seen in our country. The reason we have a prosperous Zanesville and a prosperous Springfield, OH, in part is because of people's ability to join a union and bargain collectively for better wages, health care, and pensions.

In the country of Colombia, they do not have those opportunities. For us to put the imprimatur of the U.S. on a free-trade agreement for that social

structure and government to me makes little sense.

The House of Representatives delayed the bill for several months. If it gets to this body, I am hopeful Members will do the right thing and say to President Bush: It is not time to do a trade agreement. This trade policy in our country has failed. It is not working for our country, it is not working for our national security, it is not working for our communities, it is not working for our families, and it is not working to build the middle class in this society the way we should.

I yield the floor.

TRIBUTE TO CLARENCE W. DUPNIK

Mr. REID. Mr. President, I rise today to pay tribute to one of America's finest, Clarence W. Dupnik, Sheriff of Pima County, AZ, who celebrates 50 years of law enforcement service to his community this year.

Clarence Dupnik is known as a man of action, integrity, and innovation. These skills have been invaluable to his 50 years of service to Arizona, and the Nation.

Sheriff Dupnik began his career in law enforcement in 1958 as a patrol officer with the city of Tucson Police Department, TPD. He held various positions within the Tucson Police Department, rising to major in charge of field operations by the time he retired from the TPD in January 1977. From there, he was appointed chief deputy sheriff of Pima County Sheriff's Department, and later appointed Pima County Sheriff in 1980.

Since 1980, Clarence Dupnik has been elected to seven consecutive terms of office as Pima County Sheriff, a position in which he remains today. Clarence Dupnik's many years of service to Pima County represent a remarkable achievement and a great responsibility.

During his tenure as sheriff, the population of Pima County has nearly doubled in size. Today it claims almost 400,000 residents, making it the second-highest populated county in Arizona. In addition, Pima County shares 123 miles of border with the nation of Mexico. These characteristics have brought on special challenges, which Sheriff Dupnik met head on, with an admirable commitment to crime reduction.

Over the last three decades, Sheriff Dupnik has been instrumental to the reduction of the per capita crime rate in Pima County. He has fought criminal enterprises, drug trafficking organizations, and gangs. He also worked with former U.S. Surgeon General Richard Carmona to improve law enforcement capabilities by integrating special weapons and tactics with emergency medical assistance. Additionally, he had the foresight to deploy 350 new mobile data computers in all Sheriff's patrol vehicles—both patrol and unmarked—before most other departments in Arizona. Sheriff Dupnik also participated in the Joint Terrorism Task Force and served on the Executive Committee of the FBI.

Using his many years of law enforcement experience and leadership skills, Clarence Dupnik has worked hard to improve and give back to his community in any way he can. He introduced Drug Abuse Resistance Education, DARE, and School Resource Officer programs in Pima County schools. In addition, Sheriff Dupnik instituted a countywide community policing program, created the Multi-agency Narcotic Investigations Unit, and established the Command Group of the Arizona Alliance Planning Committee. In addition, he founded and chairs a drug-prevention group called Arizona for a Drug-Free Workplace.

The dedication and service of Clarence Dupnik during his 50-year law enforcement career is truly commendable. I thank Sheriff Dupnik for his many years of service and wish him further success in the years to come. I know that these years of public service have sacrificed time from his family and I would like to take this moment to also thank and acknowledge his wife Susie and their family. With Sheriff Dupnik's great example in mind, I hope that we can all work together to reduce crime in our Nation.

HONORING DR. JAMES HANSEN

Mr. REID. Mr. President, I rise today to recognize Dr. James Hansen upon receiving the Desert Research Institute's Nevada Medal for 2008.

This award, which will be formally presented to Dr. Hansen in Reno tonight and in Las Vegas on April 17, was established 20 years ago by the Desert Research Institute, DRI, to recognize outstanding achievements in science and engineering. DRI is a world leader in the study of environmental sciences, and Dr. Hansen should be proud to receive such an honor.

Dr. Hansen directs the NASA Goddard Institute for Space Studies, and is an adjunct professor of Earth sciences at Columbia University's Earth Institute. He received his bachelor's degree from the University of Iowa in 1963, followed by his master's in 1965, and his Ph.D. in 1967. He was elected to the National Academy of Sciences in 1995, and has received numerous awards throughout his illustrious career.

Dr. Hansen has spent decades researching climate change, and his work has broadened public knowledge about accelerating changes in the climate due to global warming. He has linked human-produced emissions to an overall increase in global temperature and called for international cooperation to address the issue. Dr. Hansen highlights the dangerous path we tread if we fail to reduce our reliance on fossil fuels. At the same time, he has outlined the steps that need to be taken in order to reverse the course of global warming and stabilize our climate.

I am proud to honor Dr. James Hansen and his many achievements. The contributions that he has made to the scientific community are truly invaluable.

I applaud his efforts and wish him the best in his future endeavors.

TREATING VICTIMS OF STROKE MORE EFFECTIVELY

Mr. KENNEDY. Mr. President, a recent article in the Washington Post highlights the serious additional harm that is being done to victims of stroke each and every day by our failure to get them as quickly as possible to hospitals or other treatment centers qualified to provide the timely, appropriate care that can make all the difference between recovery and permanent disability or death.

Not all hospitals have this capability, and Massachusetts and a handful of other States have begun implementing systems to make better quality care available and to inform the public and emergency medical services of the location of the nearest facility capable of providing such care. What is needed most, however, is national leadership to make prompt and quality care for stroke victims a reality throughout this country.

I believe our colleagues in the Senate and House will be interested in this important article, and I ask unanimous consent to have it printed in the RECORD.

There being no objection, the material was ordered to be printed in the RECORD, as follows:

[From the Washington Post, Apr. 1, 2008]

NEW RULES ON STROKE

CARE CENTER NETWORKS MAY SAVE LIVES

(By Alicia Ault)

In the event of a stroke, time is brain—meaning the more quickly you recognize the problem and get proper medical treatment, the more likely you are to survive and minimize neurological damage. Increasingly, experts are concluding that means getting to the right hospital, and fast.

According to the American Stroke Association and many neurologists, the right facility is one that has been designated by a state agency or the Joint Commission (which accredits hospitals for quality and safety) as having the appropriate medical staff, the ability to quickly administer such diagnostic tests as computed tomography, and a potentially lifesaving drug, tissue plasminogen activator (TPA), which dissolves clots.

In some states, including Maryland, you don't have to worry about which hospital might be best. Ambulance crews who suspect a stroke are required to seek out a designated stroke center, unless the nearest one is an unreasonable distance away.

Now health officials in Virginia and the District say they are considering similar plans.

In March, Virginia Gov. Timothy M. Kaine signed a bill requiring local health officials to rush stroke patients to Joint Commission-certified primary stroke centers. Even though that law has not yet taken effect, emergency medical technicians typically route patients to stroke centers, said Paul Sharpe, trauma and critical care coordinator for Virginia's Office of Emergency Medical Services.

In Washington, Michael Williams, medical director of Fire and Emergency Medical Services, said he soon will issue a protocol requiring transport of suspected stroke pa-

tients to Joint Commission-certified stroke centers. That rule should take effect within a month or so.

Until those changes take place, Virginia and District residents might be wise to know the signs of stroke. If they suspect they're having a stroke, they then, directly or through a family member acting on their behalf, might ask to be taken to a specialized stroke center.

About 780,000 Americans have a stroke each year. The vast majority of strokes, 87 percent, are ischemic, caused by a clot that cuts off blood supply to the brain, according to the American Heart Association.

TPA, when given within three hours of the onset of a stroke, can increase the chances of a full neurologic recovery by at least 25 percent, said Robert Bass, executive director of the Maryland Institute for Emergency Medical Services Systems, or MIEMSS. But the drug's associated risks, which include major bleeding in the brain, make it even more crucial to get care at the right facility, Bass said.

Finding a hospital that specializes in stroke care is even more important at a time when most are having trouble finding specialists to "take call"—that is, to see patients at the hospital.

There are no hard numbers on the shortage, but the American College of Emergency Physicians reported in 2006 that three-quarters of emergency departments nationwide had problems finding specialists such as neurosurgeons to take call. The shortage was especially acute in orthopedics, plastic surgery and neurosurgery.

Being seen by a neurology specialist doesn't guarantee a good stroke outcome. But it is crucial to have a physician trained in stroke care, said Lee Schwamm, vice chairman of the neurology department and director of acute stroke services at Massachusetts General Hospital in Boston.

"Many people assume that stroke can be and is treated by anyone," he said, which simply isn't true.

Massachusetts was the first state to create a stroke care system, in 2004, partly because of the problem of getting on-call specialists. Under the plan, designated hospitals agree to have the appropriate diagnostics and staff (including neurologists on duty or available through telemedicine) and the ability to give TPA within three hours. They also agree to report on the quality of care.

In mid-2005, the state began requiring ambulances to take patients to stroke centers. Within a year, the number of stroke patients receiving TPA increased by 20 percent, Schwamm said. Now the goal is to increase the number of patients who get to the hospital in time, he added. Sixty-eight of the state's 72 hospitals have been designated as stroke centers by the Massachusetts health department.

Several states have followed Massachusetts's lead, including Maryland (in 2007), New York, New Jersey and Florida.

Maryland hospitals that apply for the stroke center designation are evaluated by a state inspection team. Hospitals can also be certified by the Joint Commission.

The nonprofit commission began certifying stroke centers in 2003. So far, 455 hospitals nationwide have received that designation.

Twenty-eight hospitals have received Maryland's five-year stroke center certification. These hospitals can evaluate stroke patients, give the initial treatment and, in most cases, admit patients directly to a special stroke unit in the hospital, Bass said. Since the program's establishment, the number of patients receiving clot-busting therapy has increased 20-fold, said John Young, stroke system coordinator for MIEMSS.

Like the District, Virginia does not have its own stroke center certification process.

Certification isn't a guarantee of superior care, said Ralph Sacco, chairman of the American Stroke Association's Stroke Advisory Committee and chairman of neurology at the Miller School of Medicine at the University of Miami. But it's an indicator that the hospital has the infrastructure in place—and the commitment—to deliver high-quality treatment, he and Schwamm agreed.

What should you do if you think you or a loved one are having a stroke?

The keys to a good outcome, Schwamm said, are knowing the warning signs, calling 911 immediately and getting to a primary stroke center.

He and others say they hope that every state adopts a system to require transport to those centers. It could be a lifesaving trip.

FIRST ANNIVERSARY OF THE VIRGINIA TECH TRAGEDY

Mr. LEAHY. Mr. President, tomorrow, April 16, 2008, marks the first anniversary of the horrific incident at Virginia Tech that resulted in the tragic deaths of 32 students and faculty members and serious injuries to many other innocent victims. Our hearts go out to the victims' families as they mourn their loved ones who tragically lost their lives before their time. Our sympathies also go out to the survivors of this terrible incident, as well as the entire Virginia Tech community, whose resilient spirit and courage in the face of tragedy over the past year have been truly remarkable.

We cannot reverse the senseless violence of one year ago, nor can we repair all of the damage that the heinous acts of one very disturbed young man caused for an entire community. But one thing we can do to honor the victims and their families is ensure that our schools, colleges, and universities have the support and resources they need to protect our children.

Regrettably, 1 year after the tragic events at Virginia Tech, little has been done at the national level to address the dangers our students continue to face. Over the past 12 months, we have continued to see threatening conduct and, too often, deadly acts of violence involving students of all ages. Only yesterday we learned that several colleges were shut down as officials assessed graffiti messages threatening violence on campus. School lockdowns are becoming all too common in our communities.

A string of tragedies in just 1 week's time this past February reminded us once again that our students face more than merely threatening violent conduct. Between February 8 and February 14, at least four incidents at schools and colleges resulted in death or serious injury to students of all ages.

On February 8, a female student killed two other students, and then herself, inside a classroom on the campus of Louisiana Technical College in Baton Rouge. Three days later, a student at Mitchell High School in Memphis, TN, was left in critical condition after a violent incident in the school's cafeteria. A day later, a 15-year-old boy

at E.O. Green Junior High in Oxnard, CA, was critically wounded by a classmate. He was later declared brain dead.

Then, on February 14, tragedy struck at Northern Illinois University. A former student opened fire in a geology class, killing 5 students and wounding 16, before killing himself. As hundreds of mourners remembered one of the Northern Illinois University victims at a funeral service, more than 1,000 Virginia Tech students—many of the same students who will grieve tomorrow for their lost friends, classmates, and professors—gathered in solidarity for a candlelight vigil in Blacksburg, VA.

Eight months ago, the Senate Judiciary Committee took a step to make our schools and college campuses safer when it reported the School Safety and Law Enforcement Improvement Act of 2007, S. 2084. Regrettably, the Senate has failed to take up and pass that bill to improve school safety. The 1-year anniversary of the Virginia Tech incident reminds us why this comprehensive legislation should be considered and passed without further delay.

In originating the bill more than 8 months ago, the Judiciary Committee showed deference to Gov. Tim Kaine and the task forces at work in Virginia and sought to complement their work and recommendations. Working with several Senators, including Senators BOXER, REED, SPECTER, FEINGOLD, SCHUMER, and DURBIN, the committee originated this bill and reported it at the start of the 2007 academic year in the hope that Congress would adopt these critical school safety improvements last fall. We worked hard to get it done.

The incidents at E.O. Green Junior High, Mitchell High School, Louisiana Technical College, and Northern Illinois University are just a few of the tragic events that have claimed lives or resulted in serious injuries to students since the Virginia Tech tragedy. In the time since this bill was reported out of the Judiciary Committee, we have seen tragic deaths at Delaware State University and the University of Memphis and grievous injuries sustained by students and teachers at SuccessTech Academy in Cleveland, OH. And there have been numerous lockdowns nationwide as a result of threatening conduct in our schools, including recent lockdowns at Fern Creek High School in Louisville, KY, and St. Peter's College in Jersey City, NY.

The School Safety and Law Enforcement Improvement Act would address the problem of violence in our schools in several ways. The bill authorizes Federal assistance for programs to improve the safety and security of our schools and institutions of higher education, provides equitable benefits to law enforcement serving those institutions, including bulletproof vests, and funds pilot programs to develop cutting-edge prevention and intervention programs for our schools. The bill also clarifies and strengthens two existing

statutes—the Terrorist Hoax Improvements Act and the Law Enforcement Officers Safety Act—which are designed to improve public safety.

Specifically, the bill would improve the safety and security of students both at the elementary and secondary school level and on college and university campuses. The K-12 improvements are drawn from a bill that Senator BOXER introduced right after the Virginia Tech tragedy, and I want to thank Senator BOXER for her hard work on this issue. The improvements include increased funding for much needed infrastructure changes to improve security as well as the establishment of hotlines and tip-lines, which will enable students to report potentially dangerous situations to school administrators before they occur.

To address the new realities of campus safety in the wake of Virginia Tech and more recent college incidents, the bill also creates a matching grant program for campus safety and security to be administered out of the COPS Office of the Department of Justice.

The grant program would allow institutions of higher education to apply, for the first time, directly for Federal funds to make school safety and security improvements. The program is authorized to be appropriated at \$50 million for the next 2 fiscal years. While this amounts to just \$3 per student each year, it will enable schools to more effectively respond to dangerous situations on campus.

The bill would also make sworn law enforcement officers who work for private institutions of higher education and rail carriers eligible for death and disability benefits and for funds administered under the Byrne Grant Program and the Bulletproof Vest Partnership Grant Program. Providing this equitable treatment is in the best interest of our Nation's educators and students and will serve to place the support of the Federal Government behind the dedicated law enforcement officers who serve and protect private colleges and universities nationwide. The leadership of Senator JACK REED has been vital in this area.

The bill also helps law enforcement by making improvements to the Law Enforcement Officers Safety Act of 2003, LEOSA. These amendments to existing law will streamline the system by which qualified retired and active officers can be certified under LEOSA. It serves us all when we permit qualified officers, with a demonstrated commitment to law enforcement and no adverse employment history, to protect themselves, their families, and their fellow citizens wherever those officers may be.

The bill focuses on prevention as well, by incorporating the PRECAUTION Act at the request of Senators FEINGOLD and SPECTER. This provision authorizes grants to develop prevention and intervention programs for our schools.

Finally, the bill incorporates the Terrorist Hoax Improvements Act of

2007, at the request of Senator KENNEDY.

The Virginia Tech Review Panel—a body commissioned by Governor Kaine to study the Virginia Tech tragedy—has issued its findings based on a 4-month investigation of the incident and its aftermath. This bill would adopt a number of recommendations from the Review Panel aimed at improving school safety.

We must not miss this opportunity to implement these initiatives nationwide and to take concrete steps to ensure the safety of our kids. The Senate should move forward and act. I hope those who are holding up this legislation will reconsider their position today as we prepare to remember and to honor those who so tragically lost their lives, and those who had their lives changed forever, in the most deadly incident on a college campus in our Nation's history.

The Senate should move forward to invest in the safety of our students and to better support law enforcement officers across the country by considering and passing the School Safety and Law Enforcement Improvement Act of 2007.

CAPITAL AREA DISTRICT LIBRARY 10TH ANNIVERSARY

Mr. LEVIN. Mr. President, since the first library society was formed in Detroit in 1817, libraries have played a central role in the cultural and economic development of the people of Michigan. Nearly 200 years after that first foray into book-sharing, libraries have spread across our State. Today I would like to take a moment to recognize the Capital Area District Library in Ingham County, which is celebrating a decade of enriching the Lansing area, and in doing so has continued the long history of libraries making important contributions to our State.

The Capital Area District Library system plays a significant role in the early stages of learning for children in Lansing, and provides important resources for continuing education for adults. The 13 libraries and the book mobile are places where all are welcome to access and pursue a wealth of information. Patrons can work on their own, in organized programs, or with the assistance of the highly effective library staff, who are focused on promoting learning and enjoyment.

The resources available through the Capital Area District Library also play a critical role in economic development. Considering that more than half of all American households do not have computers or Internet access, the Capital Area District Library resources are more important than ever to connect our citizens to technology and information in this rapidly changing world.

Thomas Jefferson once wrote to John Adams, "I cannot live without books." Books and education were a bedrock of life for our Nation's Founding Fathers and of our democracy; books and education and new learning resources that

the Founding Fathers could not have imagined must be readily available to citizens across the country. The Capital Area District Library continues to fulfill this need in Lansing and Ingham County, and has done so for 10 years with remarkable effectiveness. I congratulate all who have worked so hard on this venture, and extend my deepest appreciation for their service to the citizens of our State.

IRS PRIVATE DEBT COLLECTION ACTIVITIES

Mr. CARDIN. Mr. President, today is April 15, the day when millions of Americans are hurrying to file their income tax forms to meet the midnight deadline. Many of my colleagues have spoken today about the need to make more effective and responsible use of Federal tax dollars, and I agree that we must do so. One place to start is with the IRS's own private debt collection program.

Today, the Washington Post reported that the Internal Revenue Service's use of private debt collection agencies is expected to cost taxpayers more than \$37 million this year. Throughout our Nation's history, the Federal Government had always assumed responsibility for tax collection. But in 2004, through legislation that I opposed, Congress gave the IRS authority to use private debt collection companies to collect undisputed tax debts of less than \$25,000. The companies also would receive a 25-percent commission on all receipts. Although the stated goal was to improve the efficiency of tax collections, it is clear that this plan is not working.

In fact, even before Congress adopted this approach, former IRS Commissioner Charles Rossotti estimated, in a 2002 report to the IRS Oversight Board, that if Congress were to appropriate an additional \$296 million to hire more compliance employees, the agency could collect an additional \$9.47 billion. In other words, every dollar spent on collection would net \$31. But rather than increase the number of IRS employees, Congress ignored Commissioner Rossotti's advice and instead spent scarce taxpayer funds to privatize IRS functions, with dismal results.

In March 2008, Nina Olson, the National Taxpayer Advocate, reported to Congress that the program actually is losing money. Testifying before the House Ways and Means Committee, Ms. Olson said that the IRS is losing at least \$81 million a year by using private debt collection companies. The IRS spent \$71 million to start the program and it spends \$7.65 million annually to operate it, plus on average \$4.6 million in commissions that are paid to the private collectors. Despite using aggressive tactics, the companies have collected only \$49 million, little more than half of what it has cost the IRS to implement the program. By contrast, Ms. Olson testified, and I quote, "if the

program did not exist and the IRS instead allocated \$7.65 million in appropriated funds to its automated collection system, ACS, function, the return on investment would be vastly greater. IRS data shows that the average return on investment for the ACS program is about 20:1, which would mean that an expenditure of \$7.65 million would generate annual revenue of \$153 million." Ms. Olson then recommended that the private debt collection initiative be terminated. I concur.

The privatization initiative is also putting millions of Americans' personal information at risk. I do not believe that Americans want private collection agencies to have access to their sensitive, personal information that should only be reserved for the Federal Government and the qualified, trained, accountable personnel who work at the IRS.

The Ways and Means Committee recently considered legislation that would repeal the IRS's authority to use private debt collection agencies. The Taxpayer Assistance and Simplification Act was reported out of committee in a bipartisan vote. My distinguished colleague from North Dakota has introduced similar legislation that would prohibit the IRS from using private debt collection companies, and I am pleased to be an original cosponsor of that bill.

The private debt collection program also has generated considerable confusion among taxpayers. Under the rules of the program, collectors cannot say they are working for the IRS or that they are calling about a tax matter without first receiving proof of a taxpayer's identity. This has led to numerous complaints from consumers who have received calls from collectors, pressing them to provide Social Security numbers and other personal information without first identifying the purpose of the call. Citizens are justifiably fearful of being scammed, and so they refuse to provide the companies with any information. By any measure, this program is not working.

Mr. President, the private debt collection experiment has failed. Tax collection is a fundamental responsibility of Government, and Congress should provide the IRS with the staff and other resources needed to fulfill this responsibility, not enrich private companies at the expense of American taxpayers. Today on April 15—Tax Day—millions of Americans are rushing to file their taxes before the midnight deadline. Many are writing checks to the IRS, and so it is an appropriate time to reconsider the millions of dollars they are spending on the private debt collection program. It is time for this body to pass Senator DORGAN's bill and end this inefficient use of taxpayer dollars.

HONORING OUR MILITARY

Mr. NELSON of Nebraska. Mr. President, I rise today to honor the courage

and selflessness of the men and women serving so bravely in America's military and, in particular, to acknowledge those from my home State of Nebraska. Last week, the testimony of GEN David Petraeus and Ambassador Ryan Crocker before the Senate on the situation in Iraq reminded everyone of the personal sacrifices of the men and women and their families who are serving their country in support of Operations Iraqi Freedom and Enduring Freedom.

The United States is engaged in a protracted war for the first time since the end of the military draft 35 years ago. The strains of this prolonged engagement in Iraq and Afghanistan are underscored by the burdens placed on our service members and their families. The voluntary nature of our military accentuates these burdens, being borne by a relative few. This present situation is unique compared to America's past military engagements. World Wars I and II and the conflicts in Korea and Vietnam relied on conscription; consequently, the effects of these wars were felt by a broad number of ordinary Americans. Today, the current wars in Iraq and Afghanistan have placed our soldiers and military families in an extraordinary situation.

I have visited Iraq four times and Afghanistan twice since the commencement of Operations Iraqi Freedom and Enduring Freedom and have met with countless soldiers and their families. Each of these visits and meetings has further elevated my personal gratitude and appreciation of these men and women, and consequently, these soldiers and their families are constantly at the forefront of my thoughts. Last week, a news story described the battle of Sadr City, a district in Baghdad, Iraq, and featured a young man whom I had watched grow up in Nebraska. This news story evoked those same feelings of deep gratitude and immense pride.

The soldier featured in the story was Army CPT Logan Veath, of Chadron, NE. I had last seen Captain Veath 5 months ago at a reunion of the Big Red Battalion, the University of Nebraska's Reserve Officers' Training Corps, ROTC, unit, of which he was a member while attending our shared alma mater. I had first met Captain Veath when he was 16 years old, and we reminisced at that reunion of our past experiences together. Captain Veath was dressed in cowboy attire—because that is exactly what he is in Nebraska. In fact, I almost didn't recognize him in the news story from Iraq, as he had a Kevlar helmet on his head instead of his usual cowboy hat.

Captain Veath's entire family was also at the reunion, and they provided a brief glimpse into how a family copes with a loved one who is called upon to serve tours of duty lasting from 12 to 15 months. Captain Veath is unique in that this is his sixth tour of duty serving in Iraq or Afghanistan. Less than 1 percent of Army service members have

been deployed six times; this speaks to Captain Veath's remarkable dedication and selflessness.

That day was a vivid reminder of our American soldiers, who must leave their loved ones in order to serve in battles nearly 7,000 miles away from their homes. Today, I offer my most sincere appreciation and gratitude to soldiers such as Army CPT Logan Veath. We must never forget these brave men and women, who have valiantly and selflessly served their country, together with their families, who provide them with immeasurable support. Their honor in service must remain a source of inspiration for us all.

ADDITIONAL STATEMENTS

HONORING JENNIFER JOY WILSON

• Mr. INHOFE. Mr. President, today I wish to honor Jennifer Joy Wilson. For the past decade, Ms. Wilson has served first as the head of the National Stone Association, and then after the merger of two similar groups, as the president and CEO of the National Stone, Sand & Gravel Association, NSSGA. Based in Alexandria, VA, NSSGA is the world's largest mining association by product volume. Its member companies represent more than 90 percent of the crushed stone and 70 percent of the sand and gravel produced annually in the United States and approximately 118,000 working men and women in the aggregates industry. During 2006, a total of about 2.95 billion metric tons of crushed stone, sand and gravel, valued at \$21 billion, were produced and sold in the United States.

This year Ms. Wilson has been given the distinguished honor of being selected as AggMan of the Year by Aggregates Manager magazine, one of the construction aggregates industry's leading trade publications.

During her tenure, the NSSGA led an effort to improve employee safety in the aggregate industry by developing new safety procedures, called Part 46, for the U.S. Mine Safety & Health Administration, MSHA. The joint industry-labor effort produced a proposal "that would apply better to our industry and provide managers and workers with effective means to prevent accidents and fatalities." By all accounts, Part 46 has shown remarkable success in reducing employee injuries.

On February 11, 2003, an alliance between NSSGA and MSHA was announced. Signed at the NSSGA's Centennial Convention in Orlando, FL, the agreement calls for the two bodies to work closely together on the promotion of safe working conditions, the development of effective miner training programs, and the expansion of the mine safety and health outreach and communication. "For the first time ever, MSHA and an industry association have jointly agreed to adopt safety and health performance goals with objective measures," then MSHA Ad-

ministrator Dave Lauriski said during that meeting. "This alone is unprecedented . . . NSSGA is again showing its leadership."

On the environmental front, Ms. Wilson led the industry in investing in a study "righting an assumption we just didn't believe was right." Through the efforts of the association and its members, it was determined that the aggregates industry is not a major emitter of PM-10—a particular type of air pollutant. The final regulations reflected the investment by the industry in recognizing that aggregate operations are not a major source of coarse particulate matter.

Considering almost half of all crushed stone, sand and gravel produced in the United States is used for building the Nation's transportation infrastructure, Ms. Wilson has led her members in establishing a strong grassroots presence connecting the industry's workforce with their elected officials while increasing their activity on Capitol Hill. Leveraging the association's resources, Ms. Wilson has also worked closely with industry coalitions to advocate for sound and sensible transportation policies.

Ms. Wilson has also worked to raise awareness of the public, legislators, and of regulators at all levels to the immeasurably important role aggregates play in maintaining America's high quality of life. She calls this effort "romancing the stone" which includes her leadership in establishing The Rocks gallery at the Smithsonian's National Museum of Natural History and creating a permanent endowment to support the gallery, all totaling more than \$3.1 million.

Many people have been able to take credit for industry accomplishments, but selection as AggMan of the Year denotes something not everyone can lay claim to—respect of one's peers. For this reason I stand here today to take a moment and congratulate a woman who has done so much for America and the good people in the aggregates industry all the while earning their respect. •

RECOGNIZING NORTH SEATTLE COMMUNITY COLLEGE

• Mrs. MURRAY. Mr. President, I wish today to recognize the North Seattle Community College, in my home State of Washington, as a local leader in sustainability practices. The work of North Seattle Community College, and especially of the North Seattle Community College Sustainability Committee, has made significant contributions to raising awareness of sustainability issues in everyday life on the campus.

Created in 2005, the North Seattle Community College Sustainability Committee holds regular meetings to coordinate sustainability practices with faculty, staff, administrators, students, and interested local residents.

This committee has helped to create and implement an impressive list of community-wide activities including: sustainability curriculum, courses, and service learning opportunities; a Web site with useful resources; and an annual Earth Day celebration.

The North Seattle Community College Sustainability Committee also helped incorporate new resource management practices into campus operations and expanded the campus trail system. By providing these services, the North Seattle Community College Sustainability Committee has done a wonderful job of engaging students, teachers, and local citizens.

I believe that in order to truly embrace the opportunities and challenges of tomorrow, the youth of our Nation must have access to programs that foster stewardship and long-term commitment to community awareness. Washington State is fortunate to have schools like North Seattle Community College, which is a natural arena for the kind of innovation our Nation needs in order to embrace new environmentally friendly practices. Green programs and activities are critical to the development of environmentally aware citizens. I was proud to introduce the Higher Education Sustainability Act to help provide resources for college and universities to implement sustainability programs, and my hope is that schools like North Seattle Community College will continue to serve as great role models for other colleges around the Nation as they work on sustainability issues.

It is inspiring to see that the issue of sustainability is bringing people together, and I am proud North Seattle Community College is empowering the entire campus to work on positive solutions. I am sure North Seattle Community College will continue to be successful in inspiring change and providing continued leadership on this important issue.●

● Ms. CANTWELL. Mr. President, with Earth Day just a week away, I wish to recognize the steps colleges and universities in my State are taking to increase public awareness about the effect our daily actions have on the environment. Specifically, I would like to applaud the commitment North Seattle Community College has made to incorporate sustainable practices into everyday life at the college and local level.

Sustainability, the simple idea that we can meet the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs is a concept that is relevant to our lives now more than ever. Today, our reliance on fossil fuels is not only exacerbating economic woes, it is driving too many of our foreign policy decisions and fueling the detrimental forces of climate change. It is time we shift our focus to sustainable practices that encourage a cleaner environment, healthier communities, a stronger economy, and most importantly, national security.

My home State of Washington has always been a leader when it comes to environmental sustainability. For 75 years we have been on the cutting edge of utilizing natural resources to create sustainable, clean emissions power. I think that Washingtonians, living next door to some of the most pristine river valleys and snowcapped peaks in the world, realize how unfair it would be if our great-grandchildren couldn't do the same.

Furthering our State's environmentally conscious tradition, in the spring of 2005, North Seattle Community College president Dr. Ron LaFayette put NSCC on track to be a leader in the sustainability movement by creating a standing advisory Sustainable Committee to address issues of sustainability at the school.

The committee, made up of faculty, staff, administrators, students, and interested citizenry, began meeting regularly in 2006. Since then, it has spearheaded NSCC's efforts to become a local and national model for sustainability practices.

The Sustainability Committee created and has begun to implement goals that include creating and developing a fact sheet, Web site, and other information-sharing methodology; creating and coordinating curriculum around sustainability issues. This includes developing new stand-alone courses, integrated studies programs, service learning and distance learning opportunities; furthering the development of a campus trail system, including a walking trail and an interpretive nature trail; incorporating sustainable practices into campus operations—including food service, waste management, and resource usage; and sponsoring the annual Earth Week celebration. In 2007, this festival included guest speakers and over 35 vendors including educational institutions, environmental nonprofits, and neighborhood businesses.

I am personally encouraged by the attention North Seattle Community College and other Washington State schools have given to advancing sustainable practices in our schools and communities. I hope more institutions of higher education will follow suit in years to come.●

MESSAGES FROM THE PRESIDENT

Messages from the President of the United States were communicated to the Senate by Mr. Williams, one of his secretaries.

EXECUTIVE MESSAGES REFERRED

As in executive session the Presiding Officer laid before the Senate messages from the President of the United States submitting sundry nominations and a withdrawal which were referred to the appropriate committees.

(The nominations received today are printed at the end of the Senate proceedings.)

MESSAGE FROM THE HOUSE

At 4:53 p.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 bills, in which it requests the concurrence of the Senate:

H.R. 3548. An act to enhance citizen access to Government information and services by establishing plain language as the standard style for Government documents issued to the public, and for other purposes.

H.R. 4881. An act to prohibit the awarding of a contract or grant in excess of the simplified acquisition threshold unless the prospective contractor or grantee certifies in writing to the agency awarding the contract or grant that the contractor or grantee has no seriously delinquent tax debts, and for other purposes.

MEASURES REFERRED

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

H.R. 4881. An act to prohibit the awarding of a contract or grant in excess of the simplified acquisition threshold unless the prospective contractor or grantee certifies in writing to the agency awarding the contractor grant that the contractor or grantee has no seriously delinquent tax debts, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs.

REPORTS OF COMMITTEES

The following reports of committees were submitted:

By Mr. BIDEN, from the Committee on Foreign Relations, with an amendment in the nature of a substitute:

S. 2731. A bill to authorize appropriations for fiscal years 2009 through 2013 to provide assistance to foreign countries to combat HIV/AIDS, tuberculosis, and malaria, and for other purposes (Rept. No. 110-325).

INTRODUCTION OF BILLS AND JOINT RESOLUTIONS

The following bills and joint resolutions were introduced, read the first and second times by unanimous consent, and referred as indicated:

By Mr. BINGAMAN (for himself and Mr. SMITH):

S. 2855. A bill to amend the Internal Revenue Code of 1986 to adjust the dollar amounts used to calculate the credit for the elderly and the permanently disabled for inflation since 1985; to the Committee on Finance.

By Mr. ALEXANDER:

S. 2856. A bill to amend the Internal Revenue Code of 1986 to provide taxpayers a flat tax alternative to the current income tax system; to the Committee on Finance.

By Mr. SALAZAR (for himself and Mr. ALLARD):

S. 2857. A bill to amend title 10, United States Code, to provide for the distribution of a share of certain mineral revenues, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Armed Services.

By Ms. MIKULSKI (for herself, Ms. STABENOW, Mr. SMITH, and Mr. INOUE):

S. 2858. A bill to establish the Social Work Reinvestment Commission to provide independent counsel to Congress and the Secretary of Health and Human Services on policy issues associated with recruitment, retention, research, and reinvestment in the profession of social work, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Health, Education, Labor, and Pensions.

By Mr. WEBB (for himself and Mr. WARNER):

S. 2859. A bill to amend the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act of 1974 to clarify limits on disclosure of student health records, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Health, Education, Labor, and Pensions.

By Mr. CASEY (for himself and Mr. MARTINEZ):

S. 2860. A bill to diminish predatory lending by enhancing appraisal quality and standards, to improve appraisal oversight, to ensure mortgage appraiser independence, to provide for enhanced remedies and enforcement, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Banking, Housing, and Urban Affairs.

By Mr. SCHUMER (for himself and Mr. AKAKA):

S. 2861. A bill to amend the Internal Revenue Code of 1986 to prohibit the imposition of a separate fee for electronic filing of returns and statements for individuals, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Finance.

By Mr. REID (for Mrs. CLINTON):

S. 2862. A bill to provide for National Science Foundation and National Aeronautics and Space Administration utilization of the Arecibo Observatory; to the Committee on Health, Education, Labor, and Pensions.

By Mr. VITTER:

S. 2863. A bill to amend the Internal Revenue Code of 1986 to provide a Federal income tax credit for certain stem cell research expenditures; to the Committee on Finance.

By Mr. AKAKA:

S. 2864. A bill to amend title 38, United States Code, to include improvement in quality of life in the objectives of training and rehabilitation for veterans with service-connected disabilities, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Veterans' Affairs.

By Ms. SNOWE (for herself, Mr. REED, Mr. KERRY, Mr. LIEBERMAN, Mr. WHITEHOUSE, Ms. COLLINS, and Mr. KENNEDY):

S. 2865. A bill to permit qualified withdrawals from a capital construction fund account under chapter 535 of title 46, United States Code, for gear or equipment required for fishery conservation or safety of life at sea without regard to the minimum cost requirement established by regulation; to the Committee on Finance.

By Mr. REID (for Mrs. CLINTON):

S. 2866. A bill to require greater disclosure of senior corporate officer compensation, to empower shareholders and investors to protect themselves from fraud, to limit conflicts of interest in determining senior corporate officer compensation, to ensure integrity in Federal contracting, to close corporate tax loopholes utilized to subsidize senior corporate officer compensation, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Finance.

By Mr. BINGAMAN (for himself and Mrs. HUTCHISON):

S. 2867. A bill to authorize additional resources to identify and eliminate illicit sources of firearms smuggled into Mexico for use by violent drug trafficking organizations, and for other purposes; to the Committee on the Judiciary.

SUBMISSION OF CONCURRENT AND SENATE RESOLUTIONS

The following concurrent resolutions and Senate resolutions were read, and referred (or acted upon), as indicated:

By Mr. KENNEDY (for himself and Mr. KERRY):

S. Res. 514. A resolution congratulating the Boston College men's ice hockey team on winning the 2008 National Collegiate Athletic Association Division I National Ice Hockey Championship; considered and agreed to.

By Mr. WHITEHOUSE (for himself, Mr. REED, Mr. BIDEN, and Mr. CORNYN):

S. Res. 515. A resolution commemorating the life and work of Dith Pran; to the Committee on the Judiciary.

By Mr. LUGAR (for himself, Mr. BIDEN, Mr. KERRY, Mr. FEINGOLD, and Mr. CASEY):

S. Res. 516. A resolution solemnly commemorating the 25th anniversary of the tragic April 1983 bombing of the United States Embassy in Beirut and remembering those who lost their lives and those who were injured; considered and agreed to.

ADDITIONAL COSPONSORS

S. 186

At the request of Mr. SPECTER, the name of the Senator from North Carolina (Mrs. DOLE) was added as a cosponsor of S. 186, a bill to provide appropriate protection to attorney-client privileged communications and attorney work product.

S. 267

At the request of Mr. BINGAMAN, the name of the Senator from Montana (Mr. TESTER) was added as a cosponsor of S. 267, a bill to amend the Omnibus Crime Control and Safe Streets Act of 1968 to clarify that territories and Indian tribes are eligible to receive grants for confronting the use of methamphetamine.

S. 268

At the request of Ms. CANTWELL, the name of the Senator from Montana (Mr. TESTER) was added as a cosponsor of S. 268, a bill to designate the Ice Age Floods National Geologic Trail, and for other purposes.

S. 358

At the request of Ms. SNOWE, the names of the Senator from Rhode Island (Mr. WHITEHOUSE) and the Senator from New York (Mr. SCHUMER) were added as cosponsors of S. 358, a bill to prohibit discrimination on the basis of genetic information with respect to health insurance and employment.

S. 582

At the request of Mr. SMITH, the name of the Senator from Washington (Mrs. MURRAY) was added as a cosponsor of S. 582, a bill to amend the Internal Revenue Code of 1986 to classify automatic fire sprinkler systems as 5-year property for purposes of depreciation.

S. 638

At the request of Mr. ROBERTS, the name of the Senator from Mississippi (Mr. WICKER) was added as a cosponsor of S. 638, a bill to amend the Internal

Revenue Code of 1986 to provide for collegiate housing and infrastructure grants.

S. 678

At the request of Mrs. BOXER, the name of the Senator from Florida (Mr. NELSON) was added as a cosponsor of S. 678, a bill to amend title 49, United States Code, to ensure air passengers have access to necessary services while on a grounded air carrier and are not unnecessarily held on a grounded air carrier before or after a flight, and for other purposes.

S. 777

At the request of Mr. CRAIG, the name of the Senator from Alaska (Ms. MURKOWSKI) was added as a cosponsor of S. 777, a bill to repeal the imposition of withholding on certain payments made to vendors by government entities.

S. 970

At the request of Mr. SMITH, the name of the Senator from Mississippi (Mr. WICKER) was added as a cosponsor of S. 970, a bill to impose sanctions on Iran and on other countries for assisting Iran in developing a nuclear program, and for other purposes.

S. 1010

At the request of Mr. SMITH, the name of the Senator from Nebraska (Mr. NELSON) was added as a cosponsor of S. 1010, a bill to amend the Internal Revenue Code of 1986 to encourage guaranteed lifetime income payments from annuities and similar payments of life insurance proceeds at dates later than death by excluding from income a portion of such payments.

S. 1120

At the request of Mr. HARKIN, the name of the Senator from Connecticut (Mr. DODD) was added as a cosponsor of S. 1120, a bill to amend the Public Health Service Act to provide grants for the training of graduate medical residents in preventive medicine and public health.

S. 1390

At the request of Mr. THUNE, his name was added as a cosponsor of S. 1390, a bill to provide for the issuance of a "forever stamp" to honor the sacrifices of the brave men and women of the armed forces who have been awarded the Purple Heart.

S. 1483

At the request of Mr. ROCKEFELLER, the name of the Senator from Massachusetts (Mr. KERRY) was added as a cosponsor of S. 1483, a bill to create a new incentive fund that will encourage States to adopt the 21st Century Skills Framework.

S. 1512

At the request of Mrs. BOXER, the name of the Senator from Pennsylvania (Mr. CASEY) was added as a cosponsor of S. 1512, a bill to amend part E of title IV of the Social Security Act to expand Federal eligibility for children in foster care who have attained age 18.

S. 1638

At the request of Mr. LEAHY, the name of the Senator from Georgia (Mr.

ISAKSON) was added as a cosponsor of S. 1638, a bill to adjust the salaries of Federal justices and judges, and for other purposes.

S. 1711

At the request of Mr. BIDEN, the name of the Senator from Illinois (Mr. DURBIN) was added as a cosponsor of S. 1711, a bill to target cocaine kingpins and address sentencing disparity between crack and powder cocaine.

S. 1926

At the request of Mr. DODD, the name of the Senator from Maine (Ms. SNOWE) was added as a cosponsor of S. 1926, a bill to establish the National Infrastructure Bank to provide funding for qualified infrastructure projects, and for other purposes.

S. 2021

At the request of Mr. WYDEN, the name of the Senator from New York (Mrs. CLINTON) was added as a cosponsor of S. 2021, a bill to provide \$50,000,000,000 in new transportation infrastructure funding through bonding to empower States and local governments to complete significant infrastructure projects across all modes of transportation, including roads, bridges, rail and transit systems, ports, and inland waterways, and for other purposes.

S. 2035

At the request of Mr. SPECTER, the name of the Senator from North Carolina (Mrs. DOLE) was added as a cosponsor of S. 2035, a bill to maintain the free flow of information to the public by providing conditions for the federally compelled disclosure of information by certain persons connected with the news media.

S. 2310

At the request of Mr. MARTINEZ, his name was added as a cosponsor of S. 2310, a bill to establish a National Catastrophic Risks Consortium and a National Homeowners' Insurance Stabilization Program, and for other purposes.

S. 2368

At the request of Mr. PRYOR, the name of the Senator from Louisiana (Mr. VITTER) was added as a cosponsor of S. 2368, a bill to provide immigration reform by securing America's borders, clarifying and enforcing existing laws, and enabling a practical employer verification program.

S. 2399

At the request of Mr. MENENDEZ, the names of the Senator from New York (Mr. SCHUMER) and the Senator from New York (Mrs. CLINTON) were added as cosponsors of S. 2399, a bill to expand and improve housing counseling services by increasing financial education and counseling services available to homeowners and prospective homebuyers in financial turmoil or who seek credit or other personal financial assistance, and for other purposes.

S. 2485

At the request of Mr. TESTER, the name of the Senator from Mississippi

(Mr. WICKER) was added as a cosponsor of S. 2485, a bill to amend the Public Health Service Act to provide for the participation of physical therapists in the National Health Service Corps Loan Repayment Program, and for other purposes.

S. 2498

At the request of Mr. BINGAMAN, the names of the Senator from North Dakota (Mr. CONRAD), the Senator from Illinois (Mr. DURBIN), the Senator from Nevada (Mr. REID), the Senator from Nebraska (Mr. NELSON), the Senator from Massachusetts (Mr. KENNEDY), the Senator from California (Mrs. BOXER), the Senator from Minnesota (Ms. KLOBUCHAR), the Senator from Vermont (Mr. SANDERS), the Senator from Maryland (Ms. MIKULSKI), the Senator from Washington (Mrs. MURRAY), the Senator from Michigan (Ms. STABENOW), the Senator from Montana (Mr. TESTER), the Senator from Arkansas (Mr. PRYOR), the Senator from Wisconsin (Mr. KOHL), the Senator from Hawaii (Mr. AKAKA), the Senator from New Jersey (Mr. LAUTENBERG), the Senator from Hawaii (Mr. INOUE), the Senator from California (Mrs. FEINSTEIN), the Senator from Michigan (Mr. LEVIN), the Senator from North Dakota (Mr. DORGAN), the Senator from Arkansas (Mrs. LINCOLN), the Senator from Ohio (Mr. BROWN), the Senator from Vermont (Mr. LEAHY), the Senator from Rhode Island (Mr. REED), the Senator from Iowa (Mr. HARKIN), the Senator from Maryland (Mr. CARDIN), the Senator from New York (Mr. SCHUMER), the Senator from Oregon (Mr. WYDEN), the Senator from West Virginia (Mr. ROCKEFELLER), the Senator from Indiana (Mr. BAYH), the Senator from Washington (Ms. CANTWELL), the Senator from South Dakota (Mr. JOHNSON) and the Senator from Wisconsin (Mr. FEINGOLD) were added as cosponsors of S. 2498, a bill to authorize the minting of a coin to commemorate the 400th anniversary of the founding of Santa Fe, New Mexico, to occur in 2010.

S. 2505

At the request of Ms. CANTWELL, the names of the Senator from Michigan (Ms. STABENOW) and the Senator from New Hampshire (Mr. GREGG) were added as cosponsors of S. 2505, a bill to allow employees of a commercial passenger airline carrier who receive payments in a bankruptcy proceeding to roll over such payments into an individual retirement plan, and for other purposes.

S. 2510

At the request of Ms. LANDRIEU, the name of the Senator from New Jersey (Mr. MENENDEZ) was added as a cosponsor of S. 2510, a bill to amend the Public Health Service Act to provide revised standards for quality assurance in screening and evaluation of gynecologic cytology preparations, and for other purposes.

S. 2598

At the request of Mr. DORGAN, the name of the Senator from Colorado

(Mr. SALAZAR) was added as a cosponsor of S. 2598, a bill to increase the supply and lower the cost of petroleum by temporarily suspending the acquisition of petroleum for the Strategic Petroleum Reserve.

S. 2631

At the request of Mr. MCCONNELL, the name of the Senator from Utah (Mr. HATCH) was added as a cosponsor of S. 2631, a bill to award a congressional gold medal to Daw Aung San Suu Kyi in recognition of her courageous and unwavering commitment to peace, nonviolence, human rights, and democracy in Burma.

S. 2668

At the request of Mr. KERRY, the name of the Senator from New Hampshire (Mr. SUNUNU) was added as a cosponsor of S. 2668, a bill to amend the Internal Revenue Code of 1986 to remove cell phones from listed property under section 280F.

S. 2674

At the request of Mr. BURR, the name of the Senator from New Mexico (Mr. DOMENICI) was added as a cosponsor of S. 2674, a bill to amend titles 10 and 38, United States Code, to improve and enhance procedures for the retirement of members of the Armed Forces for disability and to improve and enhance authorities for the rating and compensation of service-connected disabilities in veterans, and for other purposes.

S. 2681

At the request of Mr. INHOFE, the names of the Senator from Utah (Mr. BENNETT), the Senator from Wisconsin (Mr. FEINGOLD), the Senator from Montana (Mr. TESTER), the Senator from Oregon (Mr. WYDEN), the Senator from Connecticut (Mr. LIEBERMAN) and the Senator from Kentucky (Mr. BUNNING) were added as cosponsors of S. 2681, a bill to require the issuance of medals to recognize the dedication and valor of Native American code talkers.

S. 2747

At the request of Mr. JOHNSON, the name of the Senator from Montana (Mr. TESTER) was added as a cosponsor of S. 2747, a bill to grant a Federal charter to the National American Indian Veterans, Incorporated.

S. 2756

At the request of Mr. BIDEN, the names of the Senator from Missouri (Mrs. MCCASKILL) and the Senator from Georgia (Mr. ISAKSON) were added as cosponsors of S. 2756, a bill to amend the National Child Protection Act of 1993 to establish a permanent background check system.

S. 2758

At the request of Ms. MURKOWSKI, the names of the Senator from Hawaii (Mr. INOUE), the Senator from Idaho (Mr. CRAIG) and the Senator from Kansas (Mr. ROBERTS) were added as cosponsors of S. 2758, a bill to authorize the exploration, leasing, development, production, and economically feasible and prudent transportation of oil and gas in and from the Coastal Plain in Alaska.

S. 2760

At the request of Mr. LEAHY, the name of the Senator from Iowa (Mr. GRASSLEY) was added as a cosponsor of S. 2760, a bill to amend title 10, United States Code, to enhance the national defense through empowerment of the National Guard, enhancement of the functions of the National Guard Bureau, and improvement of Federal-State military coordination in domestic emergency response, and for other purposes.

S. 2771

At the request of Ms. LANDRIEU, the names of the Senator from New York (Mrs. CLINTON) and the Senator from Illinois (Mr. OBAMA) were added as cosponsors of S. 2771, a bill to require the president to call a White House Conference on Children and Youth in 2010.

S. 2775

At the request of Mr. KERRY, the names of the Senator from Illinois (Mr. DURBIN) and the Senator from Vermont (Mr. LEAHY) were added as cosponsors of S. 2775, a bill to amend the Internal Revenue Code of 1986 and the Social Security Act to treat certain domestically controlled foreign persons performing services under contract with the United States Government as American employers for purposes of certain employment taxes and benefits.

S. 2785

At the request of Ms. STABENOW, the names of the Senator from Montana (Mr. TESTER) and the Senator from South Dakota (Mr. THUNE) were added as cosponsors of S. 2785, a bill to amend title XVIII of the Security Act to preserve access to physicians' services under the Medicare program.

S. 2819

At the request of Mr. ROCKEFELLER, the names of the Senator from Maryland (Ms. MIKULSKI) and the Senator from Michigan (Ms. STABENOW) were added as cosponsors of S. 2819, a bill to preserve access to Medicaid and the State Children's Health Insurance Program during an economic downturn, and for other purposes.

S. 2839

At the request of Mr. CORNYN, the names of the Senator from Tennessee (Mr. ALEXANDER) and the Senator from New Hampshire (Mr. SUNUNU) were added as cosponsors of S. 2839, a bill to provide emergency relief for United States businesses and industries currently employing temporary foreign workers and for other purposes.

S. 2840

At the request of Mr. SCHUMER, the name of the Senator from New Jersey (Mr. MENENDEZ) was added as a cosponsor of S. 2840, a bill to establish a liaison with the Federal Bureau of Investigation in United States Citizenship and Immigration Services to expedite naturalization applications filed by members of the Armed Forces and to establish a deadline for processing such applications.

S. 2844

At the request of Mr. LAUTENBERG, the name of the Senator from Massa-

chusetts (Mr. KERRY) was added as a cosponsor of S. 2844, a bill to amend the Federal Water Pollution Control Act to modify provisions relating to beach monitoring, and for other purposes.

S. RES. 500

At the request of Mr. KENNEDY, the name of the Senator from Illinois (Mr. OBAMA) was added as a cosponsor of S. Res. 500, a resolution honoring military children during "National Month of the Military Child".

S. RES. 506

At the request of Mr. NELSON of Nebraska, the names of the Senator from Maine (Ms. COLLINS) and the Senator from Minnesota (Mr. COLEMAN) were added as cosponsors of S. Res. 506, a resolution expressing the sense of the Senate that funding provided by the United States to the Government of Iraq in the future for reconstruction and training for security forces be provided as a loan to the Government of Iraq.

S. RES. 513

At the request of Mrs. DOLE, her name was added as a cosponsor of S. Res. 513, a resolution congratulating the Army Reserve on its centennial, which will be formally celebrated on April 23, 2008, and commemorating the historic contributions of its veterans and continuing contributions of its soldiers to the vital national security interests and homeland defense missions of the United States.

STATEMENTS ON INTRODUCED BILLS AND JOINT RESOLUTIONS

By Ms. MIKULSKI (for herself, Ms. STABENOW, Mr. SMITH, and Mr. INOUE):

S. 2858. A bill to establish the Social Work Reinvestment Commission to provide independent counsel to Congress and the Secretary of Health and Human Services on policy issues associated with recruitment, retention, research, and reinvestment in the profession of social work, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Health, Education, Labor, and Pensions.

Ms. MIKULSKI. Mr. President, in honor of World Social Work Day, I rise today to introduce the Dorothy I. Height and Whitney M. Young, Jr. Social Work Reinvestment Act. I am proud to sponsor this legislation that will improve the shortage of social workers as we move into an era of unprecedented healthcare and social service needs. Social workers play a critical role combating the social problems facing our Nation. We must have the workforce in place to make sure that our returning soldiers have access to mental health services, our elderly maintain their independence in the communities they live in, and abused children are placed in safe homes. This bill reinvests in social workers by providing grants to social workers, reviewing the current social workforce challenges, and determining how this shortage will affect the communities

social workers serve. I am honored to introduce this bill named after two social visionaries, Dorothy I. Height and Whitney M. Young. Dorothy Height, a pioneer of the civil rights movement, like me began her career as a case worker and continued to fight for social justice. Whitney Young, another trailblazer of the civil rights movement, also began his career transforming our social landscape as a social worker. He helped create President Johnson's War on Poverty and has served as President of the National Association of Social Workers. Congressman TOWNS introduced the companion bill in the House of Representatives last month.

As a social worker, I understand the critical role social workers place in the overall care of our populations. Social workers can be found in every facet of community life—in hospitals, mental health clinics, senior centers, and private agencies that serve individuals and families in need. Social workers are there to help struggling students, returning soldiers, and chronically ill. Oftentimes, social workers are the only available option for mental health care in rural and underserved urban areas. The number of adults over the age of 65 will double by the year 2030 and social workers will be at the forefront of providing compassionate care to this burgeoning community. Yet there will not be enough social workers to meet these needs. Today 30,000 social workers specialize in gerontology, but we will need 70,000 of these social workers by 2010. I want to make sure that when the aging tsunami hits us, we have the workforce in place to care for our aging family members, the Alzheimer patients, the disabled.

This bill is about reinvesting in social work. It provides grants that invest in social work education, research, and training. These grants will fund community based programs of excellence and provide scholarships to train the next generation of social workers. The bill also addresses how to recruit and retain new social workers, research the impact of social services, and foster ways to improve social workplace safety. This bill establishes a national coordination center that will allow social education, advocacy and research institutions to collaborate and work together. It will facilitate gathering and distributing social work research to make the most effective use of the information we have on how social work service can improve our social fabric. This bill also gives social work the attention it deserves. It creates a media campaign that will promote social work, and recognizes March as Social Work Awareness Month.

As a social worker, I have been on the frontlines of helping people cope with issues in their everyday lives. I started off fighting for abused children, making sure they were placed in safe homes. Today I am a social worker with power. I am proud to continue to fight every day for the long range

needs of the Nation, on the floor of the United States Senate and as the Chairwoman of the Aging Subcommittee of the Health, Education, Labor and Pensions Committee.

I believe that social work is full of great opportunities, both to serve and to lead. Social work is about putting our values into action. Social workers are our best and brightest, our most committed and compassionate. They are at the frontlines of providing care, often putting themselves in dangerous and violent situations. Social workers have the ability to provide psychological, emotional, and social support—quite simply, the ability to change lives. That is why we must reinvest in social work—we must recruit, retain and research. I think we can do better by our Nation's troops, seniors, and children, by making sure we have the social workforce in place to meet their needs. I'm fighting to make sure we do.

The Dorothy I. Height and Whitney M. Young, Jr. Social Work Reinvestment Act is strongly supported by the National Association of Social Workers and the Institute for the Advancement of Social Work Research. I want to thank Senators STABENOW, SMITH, and INOUE for their cosponsorship of this bill.

I look forward to working with my colleagues to enact this important piece of legislation.

Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that letters of support be printed in the RECORD.

There being no objection, the material was ordered to be placed in the RECORD, as follows:

NATIONAL ASSOCIATION OF
SOCIAL WORKERS,
Washington, DC.

We, the undersigned professional social work organizations, join with the National Association of Social Workers (NASW) in showing our full support for the Dorothy I. Height and Whitney M. Young, Jr. Social Work Reinvestment Act. Social workers provide indispensable services in nearly every community nationwide and to millions of Americans including aging baby boomers, wounded veterans, former prisoners, at-risk students, abused and neglected children, and those diagnosed with cancer, serious mental illness, and those with HIV and AIDS. These essential services have a positive impact on the mental, social, and psychosocial functioning of clients across the country. While professional social workers are more necessary today than at any other time in our history, they are also facing barriers that challenge the profession including insurmountable education debt, insufficient salaries, and serious safety concerns.

The Dorothy I. Height and Whitney M. Young, Jr. Social Work Reinvestment Act takes important steps to ensure the future viability of the social work profession. The legislation explores the many successful efforts already undertaken by our nation's social workers, while examining the persistent challenges to these efforts. A Social Work Reinvestment Commission will provide a comprehensive analysis of current workforce trends and develop long-term recommendations and strategies to maximize the ability of America's social workers to serve their clients with expertise and care. Demonstration programs will be funded in the areas of

workplace improvements, research, education and training, and community-based programs of excellence. This investment will be returned many times over both in support for effective social service solutions and in direct services to client populations.

The Dorothy I. Height and Whitney M. Young, Jr. Social Work Reinvestment Act is a commitment to ensure that social workers can provide indispensable services for years to come. The future of the profession depends on the measures that are taken toward reinvestment today. We thank Senator Mikulski for her dedication to and leadership of the social work profession and urge every member of the Senate to show their support for professional social workers as well as the individuals, groups, and communities they serve.

Sincerely,

Action Network for Social Work Education and Research, Association of Baccalaureate Social Work Program Directors, Association of Oncology Social Work, Clinical Social Work Association, Council on Social Work Education, Group for the Advancement of Doctoral Education in Social Work, Institute for the Advancement of Social Work Research, National Association of Deans and Directors of Schools of Social Work, Social Welfare Action Alliance, Society for Social Work and Research.

INSTITUTE FOR THE ADVANCEMENT
OF SOCIAL WORK RESEARCH,
Washington, DC, April 12, 2008.

Hon. BARBARA MIKULSKI,
U.S. Senate, Senate Office Building, Washington, DC.

DEAR SENATOR MIKULSKI: As the Institute for the Advancement of Social Work Research (IASWR) celebrates its 15th anniversary, this is an important opportunity to recognize the strides that have been made in knowledge development and research infrastructure development in social work over the past decade and one half. However, the growing demands for social work services, the focus on implementation of evidence-based practices, and the need to address both recruitment and retention of professional social workers, requires that there be enhanced federal investments in the social work profession. As the number of children in foster care rises, as our population ages, as school drop-out rates increase, and as deployed soldiers and returning veterans require expanded access to health, mental health and social services, the need for professional social workers at all levels of practice and in all fields of practice has never been greater.

IASWR would like to thank you for standing with your profession in introducing the Dorothy I. Height/Whitney M. Young Social Work Reinvestment Act in the Senate. This Act is one important step in addressing workplace and workforce issues faced by social workers. It will also provide discretionary grants to implement best practice models in social agencies and it provides incentive programs to attract the next generation of social work practitioners and social work researchers. Of particular importance will be the Social Work Reinvestment Commission that will examine critical issues and potential solutions facing the profession today.

As a social worker, I know that you recognize the challenges faced by the social work profession, including low salaries, high caseloads, lack of access to the latest technology to facilitate service delivery, shrinking availability of services, and concerns about safety. The Social Work Reinvestment Act begins to address these concerns.

Thank you for all of your leadership and commitment to social work and to the mil-

lions of vulnerable individuals, families and communities that we work with daily. IASWR and the social work research community stands ready to work with you. If you have questions or need additional information, please do not hesitate to contact me.

Sincerely,

JOAN LEVY ZLOTNIK,
Executive Director.

Mr. SMITH. Mr. President, I rise today, on World Social Work Day, to introduce the Dorothy I. Height and Whitney M. Young, Jr. Social Work Reinvestment Act. I am pleased to be joined by my colleagues Senator BARBARA MIKULSKI and Senator DEBBIE STABENOW in supporting this important legislation to help ensure the sustainability of the social work field. I look forward to continuing our collaboration on this bill and other efforts to support the tremendous work of our nation's social workers as they ensure the safety and welfare of our citizens in need of guidance and protection.

Social workers in America face an array of issues that impact their ability to stay in the profession. We know that as the U.S. population increases and ages, caseworkers' caseloads continue to increase, causing greater pressure to perform with ever decreasing resources. Further, relatively low wages make it difficult for social workers to stay in their profession long-term. These are just a few of the many challenges they face. Those in the social work field need our support in creating innovative ways to keep them in the profession they love and therefore help the people in our communities who need their expertise and compassion.

Unfortunately, my home State of Oregon is not immune to these problems. We all know of the wonderful work that social workers do to protect children from abuse and neglect. Particularly in parts of Oregon where Methamphetamine abuse has caused widespread suffering, social workers have risen to the occasion to ensure children get the help that they need. However, less recognized is the work that they do on behalf of our elderly. About 13 percent of Oregon's population is persons over the age of 65, which is above the national average of about 12.4 percent. This number is expected to increase dramatically in coming years as our population continues to age, our seniors live longer and we see more of our elderly with multiple chronic conditions. Many of these elderly will depend on the help and guidance of social workers to ensure their well being.

I encourage all of my colleagues to join me, Senator MIKULSKI and Senator STABENOW in championing this legislation to support the needs of our social workers. I look forward to its swift passage.

By Mr. WEBB (for himself and
Mr. WARNER):

S. 2859. A bill to amend the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act of 1974 to clarify limits on disclosure of student health records, and for other

purposes; to the Committee on Health, Education, Labor, and Pensions.

Mr. WEBB. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the text of the bill be printed in the RECORD.

There being no objection, the text of the bill was ordered to be printed in the RECORD, as follows:

S. 2859

Be it enacted by the Senate and House of Representatives of the United States of America in Congress assembled,

SECTION 1. SHORT TITLE.

This Act may be cited as the “Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act Amendments of 2008”.

SEC. 2. FINDINGS.

Congress finds the following:

(1) Federal authorities charged with examining the tragic shootings at Virginia Tech in April 2007 found that confusion and overly-restrictive interpretations of Federal privacy laws, State medical confidentiality laws, and regulations unnecessarily impede the effective transfer of information that could prove useful in averting tragedies. Some school administrators are unaware of exceptions to Federal privacy laws that could allow relevant information about a student’s mental health to be appropriately shared.

(2) The purpose of this Act is to eliminate ambiguity in Federal education privacy law to ensure that the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act of 1974 (FERPA) is not interpreted as prohibiting information sharing between on-campus and off-campus health care providers when both are involved in treating a student. Such “consults” are generally permitted by State medical confidentiality law, and FERPA should not be interpreted as posing an additional obstacle. The Virginia Tech Review Panel recommended that changes to “FERPA should explicitly explain how it applies to medical records held for treatment purposes”. The panel reported that misinterpretation of how student treatment records are handled under FERPA as the main source of confusion. FERPA protects the privacy of both student education records and student treatment records from being disclosed generally.

(3) The Virginia Tech Review Panel recommended that Federal privacy laws should be amended to include “safe harbor” provisions that would insulate a person or organization from the loss of Federal education funding for making a disclosure with a good faith belief that the disclosure was necessary to protect the health or safety of a student or member of the public at large. The Commission further recommended that the Federal Educational Rights and Privacy Act of 1974 (FERPA) be amended to clarify the ability of educational institutions to disclose information in emergency situations and to facilitate treatment of students at off-campus facilities.

(4) Mental disorders frequently begin during youth. Research supported by the National Institute of Mental Health found that half of all lifetime cases of mental illness begin by age 14; three quarters have begun by age 24.

(5) In 2004, the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention reported 4,316 suicides among young adults aged 15-24, making it the third leading cause of death in this age group. There were an additional 5,074 suicides among those aged 25-34, making it the second leading cause of death in this age group.

(6) Depression, mental illness, and suicide are problems on college campuses. In 2006, 44 percent of college students reported feeling so depressed it was difficult to func-

tion and 9 percent seriously considered suicide, according to a 2006 national survey conducted by the American College Health Association.

(7) While most people in the United States with a mental disorder eventually seek treatment, a National Institute of Mental Health study found pervasive and lengthy delays in getting treatment, with the median delay across disorders being nearly a decade. Over a 12-month period, 60 percent of those with a mental disorder got no treatment at all.

(8) A 2006 survey sponsored by the American College Counseling Association found that 9 percent of enrolled students sought counseling last year and 92 percent of counseling center directors reported an increase in the number of students with severe psychological disorders.

(9) Recent events, including the campus shootings at the Virginia Tech and Northern Illinois universities, have further highlighted the deadly problems of mental illness and violence in American schools. The Northern Illinois shooting resulted in 6 deaths while the Virginia Tech killings left 32 people dead, making it the most lethal school shooting in United States history.

SEC. 3. STUDENT HEALTH RECORDS.

The Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act of 1974 (20 U.S.C. 1232g) is amended by adding at the end the following:

“(k) CONSULTATION WITH OFF CAMPUS MEDICAL PROFESSIONALS.—Nothing in this section shall prohibit a physician, psychiatrist, psychologist, or other recognized healthcare professional or paraprofessional acting in the individual’s professional or paraprofessional capacity, or assisting in that capacity, from consulting with or disclosing records described in subsection (a)(4)(B)(iv) with respect to a student, to a physician, psychiatrist, psychologist, or other recognized healthcare professional or paraprofessional acting in the individual’s professional or paraprofessional capacity, or assisting in that capacity, outside the educational agency or institution in connection with the provision of treatment to the student.”

SEC. 4. SAFE HARBOR PROVISION.

The Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act of 1974 (20 U.S.C. 1232g) is amended in subsection (f) by adding at the end the following: “The release by an educational agency or institution of education records or personally identifiable information contained in such records in the good faith belief that such release is necessary to protect against a potential threat to the health or safety of the student or other persons, shall not be deemed a failure to comply with this section regardless of whether it is subsequently determined that the specified conditions for such release did not exist.”

SEC. 5. EMERGENCY EXCEPTION AMENDMENT.

The Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act of 1974 (20 U.S.C. 1232g) is amended in subsection (b)(1)(I) by striking “is necessary” and all that follows and inserting “is necessary, according to the good faith belief of the educational agency or institution or persons to whom such disclosure is made, to protect against a potential threat to the health or safety of the student or other persons; and”.

By Mr. AKAKA:

S. 2864. A bill to amend title 38, United States Code, to include improvement in quality of life in the objectives of training and rehabilitation for veterans with service-connected disabilities, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Veterans’ Affairs.

Mr. AKAKA. Mr. President, I am introducing today the proposed Training and Rehabilitation for Disabled Veterans Enhancement Act of 2008. This measure would make two small but, I believe, necessary changes in the Department of Veterans’ Affairs program of Independent Living services conducted under the authority of chapter 31 of title 38, United States Code.

VA’s IL Program was first established in 1980 by Public Law 96-466, the Veterans Rehabilitation and Education Amendments of 1980. Initially, that law provided for the establishment of a 4-year pilot program designed to provide independent living services for severely disabled veterans for whom the achievement of a vocational goal was not reasonably feasible. The number of veterans who could be accepted annually into the pilot program was capped at 500. In 1986, the program was extended through 1989 and then, in 1989, it was made in Public Law 101-237, the Veterans’ Benefits Amendments of 1989. In 2001, the 500 annual cap on enrollees was increased to 2,500.

The measure I am introducing would remove any cap on the number of enrollees in any year. In earlier years, as a pilot project, the cap may have been appropriate in order to give VA an opportunity to manage the program in the most effective manner possible and in 2001, it made sense to increase that cap in light of the increased demand and need for the program.

Now, however, it makes sense to lift the cap altogether. This is especially so since this important program is designed to meet the needs of the most severely service-connected disabled veterans and more and more of those returning from combat have suffered the kind of devastating injuries that may make employment not reasonably feasible for extended periods of time.

The VA’s Inspector General found, in a report issued in December of last year, that “the effect of the statutory cap has been to delay IL services to severely disabled veterans.” This delay happens because VA has developed a procedure that holds veterans in a planning and evaluation stage when the statutory cap may be in danger of being exceeded.

The bill I am introducing today would eliminate the cap entirely as recommended by VA’s IG. It would also make the program mandatory rather than a discretionary pilot effort and would include improvement in quality of life an objective of training and rehabilitation for veterans with service-connected disability who are participating in programs of IL services. For these veterans—with respect to whom it has been determined that employment is not a present, reasonably feasible option but one that may be feasible in the future—it seems appropriate to look not only at future employment prospects but also toward improving the individual’s quality of

life. Such an approach may very well lead to bettering an individual's chances of rehabilitation and future employment.

Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the text of the bill be printed in the RECORD.

There being no objection, the text of the bill was ordered to be placed in the RECORD, as follows:

S. 2864

Be it enacted by the Senate and House of Representatives of the United States of America in Congress assembled,

SECTION 1. SHORT TITLE.

This Act may be cited as the "Training and Rehabilitation for Disabled Veterans Enhancement Act of 2008".

SEC. 2. INCLUSION OF IMPROVEMENT IN QUALITY OF LIFE AS OBJECTIVE OF TRAINING AND REHABILITATION FOR VETERANS WITH SERVICE-CONNECTED DISABILITIES.

(a) INCLUSION IN SERVICES AND ASSISTANCE UNDER TRAINING AND REHABILITATION.—Section 3104(a)(15) of title 38, United States Code, is amended by inserting before the period at the end the following: "and to improve a veteran's quality of life".

(b) INDEPENDENT LIVING SERVICES AND ASSISTANCE.—

(1) ENTITLEMENT OF CERTAIN VETERANS.—Section 3109 of such title is amended by inserting before the period at the end the following: "and to improve such veteran's quality of life".

(2) PROGRAM OF SERVICES AND ASSISTANCE.—Section 3120 of such title is amended—

(A) in subsection (a), by striking "may" and inserting "shall"; and

(B) in subsection (d), by inserting before the period at the end of the first sentence the following: "and to improve such veteran's quality of life".

SEC. 3. REPEAL OF LIMITATION ON NUMBER OF VETERANS ENROLLED IN PROGRAMS OF INDEPENDENT LIVING SERVICES AND ASSISTANCE.

Section 3120 of title 38, United States Code, as amended by section 2 of this Act, is further amended—

(1) by striking subsection (e); and
(2) by redesignating subsection (f) as subsection (e).

By Ms. SNOWE (for herself, Mr. REED, Mr. KERRY, Mr. LIEBERMAN, Mr. WHITEHOUSE, Ms. COLLINS, and Mr. KENNEDY):

S. 2865. A bill to permit qualified withdrawals from a capital construction fund account under chapter 535 of title 46, United States Code, for gear or equipment required for fishery conservation or safety of life at sea without regard to the minimum cost requirement established by regulation; to the Committee on Finance.

Ms. SNOWE. Mr. President, I rise today to introduce the Fisheries Capital Construction Fund Enhancement Act of 2008. This bill will help alleviate the potentially devastating economic impacts of recent regulations on the lobster industry issued by the National Marine Fisheries Service, and simultaneously encourage conservation in our Nation's fisheries and enhance the safety of the men and women who make their living at America's most dangerous profession.

On October 5, 2007, the National Marine Fisheries Service, or NMFS, issued

new regulations that will require "fixed gear" fishermen along the Atlantic Seaboard, including lobstermen, to use sinking groundline to connect their traps in large areas of the Gulf of Maine beginning next fall. The rules are intended to prevent entanglements of endangered whales in fishing gear. By NMFS's own estimates, this rule will impose annual costs of approximately \$14 million on our fisheries, over 90 percent of which will be borne by the lobster industry. But a report issued by the Government Accountability Office in August 2007 found the agency's economic analysis to be insufficient, and that it could not estimate the extent to which these costly measures would protect whales. While we must protect our endangered species, it is senseless to impose ineffective measures on an already struggling industry.

These regulations are particularly concerning given the additional hardships our fishing communities currently face, especially down east where lobster plays an integral role in the regional economy. The groundfish industry, once the lifeblood of this region, is now virtually non-existent, with just one active permit remaining east of Penobscot Bay. Lobster has been the lone bright spot in recent years, with annual landings throughout the state in the neighborhood of \$300 million. Unfortunately, early returns for 2007 have declined by more than 20 percent from the record highs of 2005 and 2006, and with fuel and bait prices at record highs, the harvest numbers already are leading to tightening budgets and dwindling profits. The bottom line is that it is no exaggeration to say that these rules could put many lobstermen out of business. The effect on fishing families, and even on entire fishing communities, could be devastating.

Furthermore, these rules bring additional safety concerns to the lobster industry. Many offshore areas in Maine have extremely rocky sea floors. Sinking rope vastly increases the likelihood that the line will chaff and snag, wearing the rope to the point that it can suddenly snap, or pulling the boat's rail towards the waterline where it can more easily be swamped and capsized by a large wave.

Passage of this bill would be a step toward alleviating the economic and safety impacts of these rules by opening fishermen's individually held Capital Construction Funds, or CCF's, to purchases of fishing gear required to meet conservation measures required within a fishery or for purchase of equipment to increase the safety of life at sea. Currently, fishermen can deposit a portion of their pre-tax income into a CCF, and that money can then be withdrawn for purchase or reconstruction of fishing boats. Expanding the qualified withdrawals from these accounts would reduce the safety and economic impacts of these and other fishing regulations. Furthermore, this bill would provide an additional outlet for the \$221 million currently held in

CCF's nationwide, limiting the expansion of fishing capacity and enhancing conservation efforts by reducing incentives to buy or upgrade existing vessels.

Our fisheries are the only remaining commercial wild capture industries in the Nation; fishermen are the last commercial hunters. As such, they must strike a unique balance between plying their trade and protecting the resource and the environment that supports it. The Nation's managers thus strive to balance the two parallel goals of sustaining our fish stocks and the viability of our fishing industries. The bill I introduce today will help achieve that balance by making fishing gear required for conservation or safety purposes more affordable for America's hard-working fishermen.

I want to thank my colleagues, Senators REED, KERRY, LIEBERMAN, WHITEHOUSE, COLLINS, and KENNEDY for co-sponsoring this legislation.

Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the text of the bill be printed in the RECORD.

There being no objection, the text of the bill was ordered to be printed in the RECORD, as follows:

S. 2865

Be it enacted by the Senate and House of Representatives of the United States of America in Congress assembled,

SECTION 1. SHORT TITLE.

This Act may be cited as the "Fisheries Capital Construction Fund Enhancement Act of 2008".

SECTION 2. CERTAIN QUALIFIED CAPITAL CONSTRUCTION FUND WITHDRAWALS.

Section 53509 of title 46, United States Code, is amended—

(1) by striking "or" after the semicolon in paragraph (1) of subsection (a);

(2) by redesignating paragraph (2) of subsection (a) as paragraph (3);

(3) by inserting after paragraph (1) of subsection (a) the following:

"(2) the acquisition of gear or equipment required for safety of life at sea or to comply with conservation measures within a fishery; or"; and

(4) by inserting after "withdrawal." in subsection (c) the following: "The minimum cost requirements established by such regulations (50 C.F.R. 259.31) shall not apply to a withdrawal described in subsection (a)(2)."

By Mr. BINGAMAN (for himself and Mrs. HUTCHISON):

S. 2867. A bill to authorize additional resources to identify and eliminate illicit sources of firearms smuggled into Mexico for use by violent drug trafficking organizations, and for other purposes; to the Committee on the Judiciary.

Mr. BINGAMAN. Mr. President, I rise today to introduce the Southwest Border Violence Reduction Act. This legislation is aimed at addressing the drug-related violence that has plagued parts of Mexico and ensuring that we dedicate the resources necessary to stop the flow of weapons that help fuel this violence.

In the Mexican state of Chihuahua, which shares a border with New Mexico, there have been over 200 killings

since the beginning of 2008, an increase of about 100 percent over the previous year. This violence, which is mostly perpetrated by international drug trafficking organizations, impacts the well-being and safety of communities on both sides of the U.S.-Mexico border.

Recently it was reported that the entire police force in Palomas, a Mexican town just across the border from Columbus, New Mexico, resigned after repeated threats from drug traffickers. The Chief of Police fled to the United States to seek asylum. On another recent occasion, the Columbus Port of Entry was shut down after there were several killings nearby. As a result, American school children who commute back and forth over the border had to receive a police escort. And just yesterday, the Department of State renewed a travel advisory warning of the ongoing violence.

I have met with Mexico's Ambassador, Foreign Minister, and Attorney General to raise serious concerns about the level of violence in the region and to discuss ways to address this problem. I am pleased that the Government of Mexico understands the gravity of this situation and I appreciate Mexico's response in sending 2,000 troops to Chihuahua to bring it under control. However, both Mexican and U.S. law enforcement officials have stressed the need to more aggressively target the criminal enterprises that are supplying weapons to drug cartels. According to ATF, about 90 percent of the firearms recovered in Mexico are trafficked from the United States because high-powered weapons are much easier to purchase in the U.S. than in Mexico.

The drug cartels operating along the border smuggle illegal narcotics into the United States and use revenue derived from the drug trade to purchase the firearms they need to maintain control over drug trafficking routes. According to ATF, about 90 percent of the firearms recovered in Mexico originate from sources within the United States because high-powered weapons, such as M-50s, are much easier to purchase in the United States than in Mexico. The ability to fight drug traffickers is significantly hampered by the fact that these violent groups use smuggled weapons to assassinate military and police officials, murder rival members of drug organizations, and kill innocent civilians.

In order to reduce violence in the region and disrupt the drug trade, it is essential that we aggressively work to prevent drug trafficking organizations operating in Mexico from obtaining these weapons. This effort requires that additional resources be allocated to target weapons trafficking networks supplying these arms and enhanced international cooperation in tracing the sources of weapons seized in Mexico.

To this end, the legislation I am introducing today would authorize additional resources to expand a successful

ATF initiative, Project Gunrunner, which is aimed at combating arms smuggling. The bill would also increase the training and support of Mexican law enforcement in investigating firearms trafficking cases.

Specifically, the legislation would enable ATF to hire, train, and deploy an additional 80 special agents to establish and support seven more Project Gunrunner Teams that are solely devoted to disrupting firearm trafficking organizations smuggling weapons into Mexico. The bill also would make it possible for ATF to place at least 12 additional special agents in Mexico to support Mexican law enforcement in tracing seized firearms. Two Special Agents could be assigned to U.S. Consulates throughout the border region, Guadalajara, Chihuahua, Matamoros, Hermosillo, Tijuana, and Mazatlan, in conjunction with existing DEA offices. Funds would cover salaries, protective and investigative equipment, and other costs associated with maintaining a foreign presence. And lastly, the legislation would significantly increase ATF efforts to assist and train Mexican law enforcement officers with weapons trafficking investigations. The bill authorizes \$24.5 million for each fiscal year 2009 and 2010 to implement this Act.

I strongly believe that it is essential that the U.S. enhance its efforts to stop the flow of weapons being trafficked into Mexico, and I hope my colleagues will join me in this effort.

SUBMITTED RESOLUTIONS

SENATE RESOLUTION 514—CONGRATULATING THE BOSTON COLLEGE MEN'S ICE HOCKEY TEAM ON WINNING THE 2008 NATIONAL COLLEGIATE ATHLETIC ASSOCIATION DIVISION I NATIONAL ICE HOCKEY CHAMPIONSHIP

Mr. KENNEDY (for himself and Mr. KERRY) submitted the following resolution; which was considered and agreed to:

S. RES. 514

Whereas, on Saturday, April 12, 2008, the Boston College men's ice hockey team (referred to in this preamble as the "Eagles") won the 2008 National Collegiate Athletic Association (NCAA) Division I National Ice Hockey Championship by defeating the University of Notre Dame men's ice hockey team by the score of 4 to 1 in the final game of the Frozen Four;

Whereas the University of Notre Dame men's ice hockey team deserves great respect for reaching the Frozen Four for the first time in the team's history and then advancing to the National Championship game;

Whereas the victory for Boston College marked the Eagles' third national hockey championship, after the team's first championship win in 1949 and its second championship win in 2001;

Whereas the Eagles earned the number 1 seed in the NCAA hockey tournament with an impressive overall record of 24 wins, 11 losses, and 8 ties during the 2007-2008 season;

Whereas the Eagles were led by junior Nathan Gerbe, the Nation's leading scorer in

men's college ice hockey, who came in second for the Hobey Baker Memorial Award, with 35 goals and 32 assists during the season;

Whereas the Eagles have made the National Championship game in each of the past 3 years, demonstrating extraordinary teamwork and dedication;

Whereas the remarkable 2007-2008 season also included a memorable victory for the Eagles in the historic Beanpot Championship in February 2008, earning Boston College its 14th Beanpot Championship;

Whereas Boston College "Super Fans" traveled great distances all year and gave the Eagles strong support throughout their championship season; and

Whereas Boston College and its student athletes are well known for their commitment to both athletic and academic excellence, ranking sixth nationally among NCAA Division I schools in the graduation rate of student athletes: Now, therefore, be it

Resolved, That the Senate—

(1) congratulate—

(A) the Boston College men's ice hockey team for winning the 2008 National Collegiate Athletic Association Division I National Ice Hockey Championship; and

(B) the players, coaching staff, faculty and staff of the university, student body, and fans whose determination, strong work ethic, drive, and support made the 2007-2008 championship season possible;

(2) congratulate the University of Notre Dame men's ice hockey team for its success in the 2007-2008 season and for reaching the Frozen Four for the first time in the team's history; and

(3) directs the Secretary of the Senate to transmit an enrolled copy of this resolution to—

(A) Boston College President Father William P. Leahy, S.J.;

(B) Boston College Athletic Director Gene DeFilippo; and

(C) Boston College Head Coach Jerry York.

SENATE RESOLUTION 515—COMMEMORATING THE LIFE AND WORK OF DITH PRAN

Mr. WHITEHOUSE (for himself, Mr. REED, Mr. BIDEN, and Mr. CORNYN) submitted the following resolution, which was referred to the Committee on the Judiciary:

S. RES. 515

Whereas, between 1975 and 1979, Dith Pran dedicated his life and journalistic career to preventing genocide by exposing the atrocities perpetrated by the Khmer Rouge regime in his native Cambodia;

Whereas Dith Pran, the subject of the Academy Award-winning film "The Killing Fields", survived the genocide in Cambodia in which up to 2,000,000 men, women, and children, including most of Dith Pran's extended family, were killed by the Khmer Rouge;

Whereas Dith Pran assisted many of his fellow journalists who were covering the impending takeover of Cambodia by the Khmer Rouge to escape unharmed from the country when the capital of Cambodia, Phnom Penh, fell to the Khmer Rouge in 1975;

Whereas Dith Pran was subsequently imprisoned by the Khmer Rouge, and for 4 years endured forced labor, beatings, and unconscionable conditions of human suffering;

Whereas, in 1979, Dith Pran escaped from forced labor past the Khmer Rouge's "killing fields", a term Mr. Dith created to describe the mass graveyards he saw on his 40-mile journey to a refugee camp in Thailand;

Whereas Dith Pran, in the words of New York Times Executive Editor Bill Keller,

“reminds us of a special category of journalistic heroism, the local partner, the stringer, the interpreter, the driver, the fixer, who knows the ropes, who makes your work possible, who often becomes your friend, who may save your life, who shares little of the glory, and who risks so much more than you do”;

Whereas Dith Pran moved to New York in 1980 and devoted the remainder of his life and journalistic career to advocating against genocide and for human rights worldwide;

Whereas Dith Pran educated people around the world about the horrors of genocide in general, and the genocide in Cambodia in particular, through his creation of the Dith Pran Holocaust Awareness Project;

Whereas, in 1985, Dith Pran was appointed a United Nations Goodwill Ambassador by the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees;

Whereas Dith Pran lost his battle with cancer on March 30, 2008, leaving behind a world that better understands the tragedy of the genocide in Cambodia and the need to prevent future genocides, largely due to his compelling story, reporting, and advocacy;

Whereas Dith Pran said, “Part of my life is saving life. I don’t consider myself a politician or a hero. I’m a messenger. If Cambodia is to survive, she needs many voices.”; and

Whereas the example of Dith Pran should endure for generations: Now, therefore, be it

Resolved, That it is the sense of the Senate that—

(1) Dith Pran is a modern day hero and an exemplar of what it means to be a citizen of the United States and a citizen of the world;

(2) the United States owes a debt of gratitude to Dith Pran for his tireless work to prevent genocide and violations of fundamental human rights; and

(3) teachers throughout the United States should spread Dith Pran’s message by educating their students about his life, the genocide in Cambodia, and the collective responsibility of all people to prevent modern-day atrocities and human rights abuses.

SENATE RESOLUTION 516—SOLEMNLY COMMEMORATING THE 25TH ANNIVERSARY OF THE TRAGIC APRIL 1983 BOMBING OF THE UNITED STATES EMBASSY IN BEIRUT AND REMEMBERING THOSE WHO LOST THEIR LIVES AND THOSE WHO WERE INJURED

Mr. LUGAR (for himself, Mr. BIDEN, Mr. KERRY, Mr. FEINGOLD, and Mr. CASEY) submitted the following resolution; which was considered and agreed to:

S. RES. 516

Whereas, on April 18, 1983, terrorists detonated a bomb at the United States Embassy in Beirut, Lebanon, killing 63 people, including 42 American and Lebanese Embassy staff;

Whereas the bombing injured many other people, including 35 Embassy staff;

Whereas President Ronald Reagan denounced the “vicious terrorist bombing” as a “cowardly act”; and

Whereas the April 18, 1983 attack was at the time the deadliest attack against a United States diplomatic mission in history, but was followed by other terrorist attacks against Americans in Beirut including the bombing of the United States Marines barracks in Beirut on October 23, 1983, which killed 241 members of the United States Armed Forces, the bombing of the United States Embassy annex in Beirut on September 20, 1984, which killed 12 people, including 9 Embassy staff, and the bombing of

a United States Embassy vehicle on January 15, 2008, which injured 2 Lebanese employees of the Embassy and killed 3 Lebanese passers by: Now, therefore, be it

Resolved, That the Senate, on the 25th anniversary of the April 18, 1983, bombing of the United States Embassy in Beirut, Lebanon—

(1) remembers the victims of the bombing;

(2) joins family and friends in mourning the American and Lebanese victims who lost their lives in this tragic bombing;

(3) condemns all terrorist acts that deliberately target the innocent; and

(4) reiterates its strong support for the people of Lebanon and their Government as they seek to build a better future free from the threat of terrorist violence.

AMENDMENTS SUBMITTED AND PROPOSED

SA 4527. Ms. LANDRIEU submitted an amendment intended to be proposed by her to the bill H.R. 1195, to amend the Safe, Accountable, Flexible, Efficient Transportation Equity Act: A Legacy for Users to make technical corrections, and for other purposes; which was ordered to lie on the table.

SA 4528. Mrs. LINCOLN (for herself and Mr. PRYOR) submitted an amendment intended to be proposed by her to the bill H.R. 1195, supra; which was ordered to lie on the table.

TEXT OF AMENDMENTS

SA 4527. Ms. LANDRIEU submitted an amendment intended to be proposed by her to the bill H.R. 1195, to amend the Safe, Accountable, Flexible, Efficient Transportation Equity Act: A Legacy for Users to make technical corrections, and for other purposes; which was ordered to lie on the table; as follows:

On page 97, between lines 2 and 3, insert the following:

(1) in item number 273, by striking the project description and inserting “Improvements to on/off ramp system from I-10 to Ryan Street (LA 385), including installation of an exit ramp for eastbound traffic on I-10, incorporating, as necessary, portions of Front Street and Ann Street, and including repair and realignment of Lakeshore Drive, and to include the expansion of Contraband Bayou Bridge”;

SA 4528. Mrs. LINCOLN (for herself and Mr. PRYOR) submitted an amendment intended to be proposed by her to the bill H.R. 1195, to amend the Safe, Accountable, Flexible, Efficient Transportation Equity Act: A Legacy for Users to make technical corrections, and for other purposes; which was ordered to lie on the table; as follows:

On page 78, strike lines 3 and 4 and insert the following:

(386) in item number 3735 by striking the project description and inserting “Widening existing Highway 226, including a bypass of Cash and a new connection to Highway 49”;

NOTICE OF HEARING

COMMITTEE ON ENERGY AND NATURAL RESOURCES

Mr. BINGAMAN. Mr. President, I would like to announce for the information of the Senate and the public

that a hearing has been scheduled before the Subcommittee on National Parks. The hearing will be held on Wednesday, April 23, 2008, at 3:00 p.m., in room SD-366 of the Dirksen Senate Office Building.

The purpose of the hearing is to receive testimony on the following bills: S. 662, to authorize the Secretary of the Interior to conduct a special resource study to evaluate resources at the Harriet Beecher Stowe House in Brunswick, Maine, to determine the suitability and feasibility of establishing the site as a unit of the National Park System, and for other purposes; S. 827, to establish the Freedom’s Way National Heritage Area in the States of Massachusetts and New Hampshire, and for other purposes; S. 923 and H.R. 1528, to amend the National Trails System Act to designate the New England National Scenic Trail, and for other purposes; S. 956, to establish the Land Between the Rivers National Heritage Area in the State of Illinois, and for other purposes; S. 2073, to amend the National Trails System Act relating to the statute of limitations that applies to certain claims; S. 2513, to modify the boundary of the Minute Man National Historical Park, and for other purposes; S. 2604, to establish the Baltimore National Heritage Area in the State of Maryland, and for other purposes; S. 2804, to adjust the boundary of the Everglades National Park, and for other purposes; H.R. 53, to authorize the Secretary of the Interior to enter into a long-term lease with the Government of the United States Virgin Islands to provide land on the island of Saint John, Virgin Islands, for the establishment of a school, and for other purposes; and H.R. 1483 (Subtitles C, D, and F of title II, title III, section 4006 of title IV, and titles V and VI only), to amend the Omnibus Parks and Public Lands Management Act of 1996 to extend the authorization for certain national heritage areas, and for other purposes.

Because of the limited time available for the hearing, witnesses may testify by invitation only. However, those wishing to submit written testimony for the hearing record should send it to the Committee on Energy and Natural Resources, United States Senate, Washington, DC 20510-6150, or by email to rachel.pasternack@energy.senate.gov.

For further information, please contact David Brooks or Rachel Pasternack.

AUTHORITY FOR COMMITTEES TO MEET

COMMITTEE ON BANKING, HOUSING, AND URBAN AFFAIRS

Mr. KENNEDY. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the Committee on Banking, Housing, and Urban Affairs be authorized to meet during the Session of the Senate on April 15, 2008, at 10 a.m., to conduct a

hearing entitled "Turmoil in U.S. Credit Markets: Impact on the Cost and Availability of Student Loans."

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

COMMITTEE ON HEALTH, EDUCATION, LABOR,
AND PENSIONS

Mr. KENNEDY. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the Committee on Health, Education, Labor, and Pensions be authorized to meet, during the session of the Senate, to conduct a hearing entitled "Ending Abuses and Improving Working Conditions for Tomato Workers" on Tuesday, April 15, 2008. The hearing will commence at 10 a.m. in room 430 of the Dirksen Senate Office Building.

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

COMMITTEE ON FINANCE

Mr. KENNEDY. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the Committee on Finance be authorized to meet during the session of the Senate on Tuesday, April 15, 2008, at 10 a.m., in 215 Dirksen Senate Office Building, to hear testimony on "Tax: Fundamentals in Advance of Reform".

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

COMMITTEE ON FOREIGN RELATIONS

Mr. KENNEDY. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the Committee on Foreign Relations be authorized to meet during the session of the Senate on Tuesday, April 15, 2008, at 2:30 p.m. to hold a hearing on law of war treaties.

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

COMMITTEE ON HOMELAND SECURITY AND
GOVERNMENTAL AFFAIRS

Mr. KENNEDY. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the Committee on Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs be authorized to meet during the session of the Senate on Tuesday, April 15, 2008, at 10 a.m. to conduct a hearing entitled, "Nuclear Terrorism: Confronting the Challenges of the Day After."

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

COMMITTEE ON HOMELAND SECURITY AND
GOVERNMENTAL AFFAIRS

Mr. KENNEDY. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the Committee on Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs be authorized to meet during the session of the Senate on Tuesday, April 15, 2008, at 3:15 p.m. to conduct a hearing entitled "Census in Peril: Getting the 2010 Decennial Back on Track, Part II."

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

SELECT COMMITTEE ON INTELLIGENCE

Mr. KENNEDY. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the Select Committee on Intelligence be authorized to meet during the session of the Senate on April 15, 2008, at 2:30 p.m. to hold a closed hearing.

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

SUBCOMMITTEE ON PUBLIC LANDS AND FORESTS

Mr. KENNEDY. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the Sub-

committee on Public Lands and Forests, be authorized to meet during the session of the Senate to conduct a hearing on Tuesday, April 15, 2008, at 2:30 p.m., in room SD366 of the Dirksen Senate Office Building.

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

SUBCOMMITTEE ON TRANSPORTATION SAFETY,
INFRASTRUCTURE SECURITY, AND WATER
QUALITY

Mr. KENNEDY. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the Committee on Environment and Public Works, Subcommittee on Transportation Safety, Infrastructure Security, and Water Quality be authorized to meet during the session of the Senate on Tuesday, April 15, 2008 at 3 p.m. in room 406 of the Dirksen Senate Office Building to hold a hearing entitled, "Pharmaceuticals in the Nation's Water: Assessing Potential Risks and Actions to Address the Issue."

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

PRIVILEGES OF THE FLOOR

Mr. DORGAN. Madam President, I ask unanimous consent that Maria Kate Dowling, a detailee of Senator KENNEDY's HELP Committee staff, be granted the privilege of the floor for the duration of the Ledbetter Fair Pay Restoration Act.

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

COMMEMORATING THE 25TH ANNI- VERSARY OF THE APRIL 1983 BOMBING OF THE UNITED STATES EMBASSY IN BEIRUT

Mr. BROWN. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the Senate proceed to the consideration of S. Res. 516, which was submitted earlier today.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will report the resolution by title.

The assistant legislative clerk read as follows:

A resolution (S. Res. 516) solemnly commemorating the 25th anniversary of the tragic April 1983 bombing of the United States Embassy in Beirut and remembering those who lost their lives and those who were injured.

There being no objection, the Senate proceeded to consider the resolution.

Mr. LUGAR. Mr. President, I rise to commemorate the 25th anniversary of the tragic April 1983 bombing of the U.S. Embassy in Beirut. As we speak, thousands of State Department employees are living and working abroad, promoting U.S. interests and building stronger relations with foreign governments and their peoples. While their work is always important, it is also sometimes dangerous. The 25th anniversary of the April 18, 1983, bombing of the U.S. embassy in Beirut reminds us of this fact. On that sad day, the lives of 63 people, including 42 Americans and Lebanese members of the Embassy staff, were tragically taken. In addi-

tion to those who lost their lives, many others were injured, including 35 embassy personnel.

On April 18th, 2008, the State Department will host a commemoration ceremony. Senior U.S. Government officials will join Ambassador Robert Dillon, the U.S. Ambassador to Lebanon at the time of the bombing, and over 100 family members of the victims to remember their sacrifice. The U.S. Senate also joins in honoring the service of those who died, mourning their death, and condemning all terrorist acts that deliberately target the innocent. We also reiterate our unwavering support for the people of Lebanon and their government as they seek to build a better future free from the threat of terrorist violence.

Mr. BROWN. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the resolution be agreed to, the preamble be agreed to, and the motions to reconsider be laid upon the table.

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

The resolution (S. Res. 516) was agreed to.

The preamble was agreed to.

The resolution, with its preamble, reads as follows:

S. RES. 516

Whereas, on April 18, 1983, terrorists detonated a bomb at the United States Embassy in Beirut, Lebanon, killing 63 people, including 42 American and Lebanese Embassy staff;

Whereas the bombing injured many other people, including 35 Embassy staff;

Whereas President Ronald Reagan denounced the "vicious terrorist bombing" as a "cowardly act"; and

Whereas the April 18, 1983 attack was at the time the deadliest attack against a United States diplomatic mission in history, but was followed by other terrorist attacks against Americans in Beirut including the bombing of the United States Marines barracks in Beirut on October 23, 1983, which killed 241 members of the United States Armed Forces, the bombing of the United States Embassy annex in Beirut on September 20, 1984, which killed 12 people, including 9 Embassy staff, and the bombing of a United States Embassy vehicle on January 15, 2008, which injured 2 Lebanese employees of the Embassy and killed 3 Lebanese passers by: Now, therefore, be it

Resolved, That the Senate, on the 25th anniversary of the April 18, 1983, bombing of the United States Embassy in Beirut, Lebanon—

- (1) remembers the victims of the bombing;
- (2) joins family and friends in mourning the American and Lebanese victims who lost their lives in this tragic bombing;
- (3) condemns all terrorist acts that deliberately target the innocent; and
- (4) reiterates its strong support for the people of Lebanon and their Government as they seek to build a better future free from the threat of terrorist violence.

ORDERS FOR WEDNESDAY, APRIL 16, 2008

Mr. BROWN. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that when the Senate completes its business today, it stand adjourned until 9:30 a.m. tomorrow, Wednesday, April 16; that following the prayer and the pledge, the

Journal of proceedings be approved to date, the morning hour be deemed expired, the time for the two leaders be reserved for use later in the day, and the Senate then proceed to a period of morning business for up to 60 minutes, with Senators permitted to speak for up to 10 minutes each and the time equally divided and controlled between the two leaders or their designees, with the majority controlling the first half and the Republicans controlling the final half; that following morning business, the Senate resume consideration of H.R. 1195, the highway technical corrections bill.

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

ADJOURNMENT UNTIL 9:30 A.M. TOMORROW

Mr. BROWN. Mr. President, if there is no further business to come before the Senate, I ask unanimous consent that it stand adjourned under the previous order.

There being no objection, the Senate, at 7:05 p.m., adjourned until Wednesday, April 16, 2008, at 9:30 a.m.

NOMINATIONS

Executive nominations received by the Senate:

DEPARTMENT OF JUSTICE

MICHELE M. LEONHART, OF CALIFORNIA, TO BE ADMINISTRATOR OF DRUG ENFORCEMENT, VICE KAREN P. TANDY, RESIGNED.

THE JUDICIARY

STEPHEN JOSEPH MURPHY III, OF MICHIGAN, TO BE UNITED STATES DISTRICT JUDGE FOR THE EASTERN DISTRICT OF MICHIGAN, VICE PATRICK J. DUGGAN, RETIRED.

HELENE N. WHITE, OF MICHIGAN, TO BE UNITED STATES CIRCUIT JUDGE FOR THE SIXTH CIRCUIT, VICE SUSAN BIEKE NEILSON, DECEASED.

IN THE COAST GUARD

THE FOLLOWING NAMED INDIVIDUAL FOR APPOINTMENT AS A PERMANENT COMMISSIONED REGULAR OFFICER IN THE UNITED STATES COAST GUARD IN THE GRADE INDICATED UNDER TITLE 14, U.S.C., SECTION 211:

To be lieutenant

TREVOR M. HARE

THE FOLLOWING NAMED INDIVIDUAL FOR APPOINTMENT AS A PERMANENT COMMISSIONED REGULAR OFFICER IN THE UNITED STATES COAST GUARD IN THE GRADE INDICATED UNDER TITLE 14, U.S.C., SECTION 211:

To be lieutenant commander

SUSAN M. MAITRE

FOREIGN SERVICE

THE FOLLOWING-NAMED PERSONS OF THE AGENCIES INDICATED FOR APPOINTMENT AS FOREIGN SERVICE OFFICERS OF THE CLASSES STATED.

FOR APPOINTMENT AS FOREIGN SERVICE OFFICER OF CLASS ONE, CONSULAR OFFICER AND SECRETARY IN THE DIPLOMATIC SERVICE OF THE UNITED STATES OF AMERICA:

DEPARTMENT OF STATE

CRAIG LEWIS CLOUD, OF FLORIDA

FOR APPOINTMENT AS FOREIGN SERVICE OFFICER OF CLASS TWO, CONSULAR OFFICER AND SECRETARY IN THE DIPLOMATIC SERVICE OF THE UNITED STATES OF AMERICA:

DEPARTMENT OF STATE

JOHN CHARLES DOCKERY, OF TEXAS
MARY-KATHARINE RANKIN, OF TEXAS
ERICA KEEN THOMAS, OF MARYLAND
MARIKA RICHTER ZADVA, OF CALIFORNIA

FOR APPOINTMENT AS FOREIGN SERVICE OFFICER OF CLASS THREE, CONSULAR OFFICER AND SECRETARY IN THE DIPLOMATIC SERVICE OF THE UNITED STATES OF AMERICA:

DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE

RACHEL BICKFORD, OF NEW HAMPSHIRE
FREDERICK H. GILES, OF THE DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA
CYNTHIA M. GUVEN, OF VIRGINIA
ERIK W. HANSEN, OF VIRGINIA
RACHEL HODGETTS NELSON, OF CALIFORNIA

DEPARTMENT OF STATE

KIM FELICIA DUBOIS, OF FLORIDA
IRVIN HICKS, JR., OF MARYLAND
SARA K. HODGSON, OF MISSOURI
JEFFREY SCOTT WALDO, OF WYOMING

FOR APPOINTMENT AS FOREIGN SERVICE OFFICER OF CLASS FOUR, CONSULAR OFFICER AND SECRETARY IN THE DIPLOMATIC SERVICE OF THE UNITED STATES OF AMERICA:

DEPARTMENT OF STATE

MIRIAM LAILA AWAD, OF TEXAS
JARED BANKS, OF MARYLAND
ANNE WHITE BENJAMINSON, OF TEXAS
JOHN C. BERGEMANN, OF VIRGINIA
TIMOTHY DAVID BIRNER, OF MISSOURI
RUSSELL K. BROOKS, OF NEW JERSEY
NEDA A. BROWN, OF TENNESSEE
FREDERICK E. N. BRUST, OF NEW YORK
ANIA BURCZYNSKA CANAVAN, OF WASHINGTON
BENJAMIN CADE CANAVAN, OF FLORIDA
ANAMIKA CHAKRAVORTY, OF CALIFORNIA
AKUNNA E. COOK, OF MARYLAND
PETER J. COVINGTON, OF CALIFORNIA
MARIO CRIFO, OF TEXAS
JENNIFER J. DANOVER, OF MINNESOTA
JACQUELINE SAMARA DELEY, OF CALIFORNIA
BRIAN E. DENVER, OF VIRGINIA
VITO DIPAOLA, OF GEORGIA
ROBERT F. DOUGHTEN, OF MONTANA
LINDA A. FENTON, OF KANSAS
CYRIL M. FERENCHAK, OF FLORIDA
JOSHUA FISCHER, OF IDAHO
DOUGLAS A. FISK, OF NEW MEXICO
ERIC GREGORY FLAXMAN, OF TEXAS
MARILYN R. GAYTON, OF CALIFORNIA
ALEXANDER C. GAZIS, OF NEW YORK
YVONNE MARIE GONZALES, OF CALIFORNIA
KATHERINE A. GREELEY, OF CALIFORNIA
CHRISTOPHER JAMES HARRIS, OF VIRGINIA
LAUREN HOLT HANSEN, OF CALIFORNIA
CHRISTOPHER DREW HOSTER, OF OHIO
KAREN W. HSIAO, OF UTAH
RODNEY MAX HUNTER, OF INDIANA
PAUL I. JUKIC, OF CONNECTICUT
HEATHER E. KALMBACH, OF PENNSYLVANIA
YOLANDA V. KERNEY, OF THE DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA
KRISTIN LOUISE KNEEDLER, OF FLORIDA
DANIEL D. KOSKI, OF TEXAS
BRIAN KRESSIN, OF THE DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA
SRINIVAS RAO KULKARNI, OF TEXAS
LAUREN MARCUS LADENSON, OF WASHINGTON
JILL MARY LARSON, OF MINNESOTA
LOWELL DALE LAWTON, OF NEVADA
ANDREW T. LEE, OF CALIFORNIA
EDWARD PAUL LUCHESSI, OF CALIFORNIA
LORA OMAN LUND, OF VIRGINIA
TODD HARRY LUNDGREN, OF WASHINGTON
ANDREW T. MACDONALD, OF TEXAS
ERIK J. MAGDANZ, OF CALIFORNIA
LATRANDA SHONTELL MARTIN, OF GEORGIA
MARIELLE HALLER MARTIN, OF INDIANA
MICHAEL J. MCKEOWN, OF TEXAS
TAWNIE A. MCNEIL, OF CALIFORNIA
ELISE MICHELLE MELLINGER, OF HAWAII
DENNY J. MEREDITH III, OF MISSOURI
KIMBERLY A. MORALES, OF PENNSYLVANIA
GREGORY LANE NAARDEN, OF TEXAS
LONG T. NGUYEN, OF CALIFORNIA
SUE ELLEN KRISTINE OSTREM, OF NEW JERSEY
MELINDA M. PAVEK, OF WYOMING
RAIMONDS PAVLOVSKIS, OF NEW YORK
JEAN L. PIERRE-LOUIS, OF FLORIDA
KRISTYNA L. RABASSA, OF MICHIGAN
ANNA RADIVILOVA, OF FLORIDA
CHRISTIAN WILLIAM REDMER, OF TENNESSEE
DOVAS A. SAULYS, OF ILLINOIS
MORDICA MICHELLE SIMPSON, OF FLORIDA
MATTHEW ANDERS SINGER, OF VIRGINIA
ROBIN DIANE SOLOMON, OF TEXAS
JOHN C. TAYLOR, OF WYOMING
YODCHIVAN DEW TIANTAWACH, OF OREGON
MATTHEW A. TOLLIVER, OF VIRGINIA
JESSICA MARIE TORRES, OF FLORIDA
ERIC RICHARD TURNER, OF VIRGINIA
ANDREW JOSEPH VADEN, OF TEXAS
JENNIFER R. VAN TRUMP, OF CALIFORNIA
PATRICK H. VENTRELL, OF COLORADO
RAJEEV M. WADHWANI, OF NEW JERSEY
JENNIFER D. WASHELESKI, OF THE DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA
CARL THOMAS WATSON, OF NEW YORK
GINA M. WERTH, OF NEVADA
DIANNE KAYE WEST, OF SOUTH DAKOTA
ALEXANDER WHITTINGTON, OF TEXAS
SARA S. YUN, OF VIRGINIA

THE FOLLOWING-NAMED MEMBERS OF THE FOREIGN SERVICE TO BE CONSULAR OFFICERS AND SECRETARIES IN THE DIPLOMATIC SERVICE OF THE UNITED STATES OF AMERICA:

DEPARTMENT OF COMMERCE

TERESA HOWES, OF MICHIGAN
WILLIAM KUTSON, OF MARYLAND

JESSE LAPIERRE, OF VIRGINIA

DEPARTMENT OF STATE

CAROLYN LEE AKER, OF VIRGINIA
JEEMES LEE AKERS, OF MARYLAND
EUNJOO A. ALAM, OF VIRGINIA
PAUL R. ALLEN, OF VIRGINIA
ERIK M. ANDERSON, OF NEW HAMPSHIRE
SHRI A. ARORA, OF THE DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA
RICHARD A. BAKEWELL, OF VIRGINIA
BENJAMIN BARRY, OF THE DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA
TRACY BECKER, OF VIRGINIA
STEVEN TERRY BENFELL, OF VIRGINIA
ROBERT C. BLACKSTONE, OF MARYLAND
JEREMY M. BLUM, OF FLORIDA
MELANIE LYNETTE BONNER, OF MISSISSIPPI
SARAH E. BOSWELL, OF VIRGINIA
BRUCE M. BOURBEAU, OF VIRGINIA
CARRIE BRAMAN, OF VIRGINIA
JOSEPH C. BRISTOL, OF WASHINGTON
HEATHER WINN BROMAN, OF VIRGINIA
BRUCE T. BROOKS, OF VIRGINIA
SUSAN A. BROWN, OF VIRGINIA
PETER EGILL EGGERZ BROWNFELD, OF VIRGINIA
STEPHEN C. BURGIN, OF VIRGINIA
EDWARD C. BURLESON, OF TEXAS
LEWIS W. BURNS III, OF NORTH CAROLINA
GINA M. CABRERA-PARRAJ, OF VIRGINIA
PAULINA CARRASCO, OF VIRGINIA
CHRISTINA JEANNE CAVALLO, OF VIRGINIA
TODD M. CISZ, OF VIRGINIA
LAWRENCE HUSTON CLIFTON, OF VIRGINIA
TALYON J. COLEMAN, OF MINNESOTA
STACIE LEIGH CONSTANTINE, OF VIRGINIA
SARAH B. CROCKETT, OF VIRGINIA
KELIA EILEEN CUMMINS, OF NEW YORK
RICHARD E. DALEY, OF FLORIDA
ANNE BARBER DAVIS, OF VIRGINIA
ANN MARIE DEAL, OF MASSACHUSETTS
NATHAN L. DIETRICH, OF VIRGINIA
STEVEN J. DUBÉ, OF ILLINOIS
KONSTANTIN DUBROVSKY, OF VIRGINIA
QUINTON L. DUFFY, OF COLORADO
J. COE ECONOMOU, OF NEW YORK
CHARLES WILLIAM ELLIOT III, OF VIRGINIA
MARY M. ENNIS, OF VIRGINIA
AMANDA M. EVANS, OF MARYLAND
HEATHER CARLIN FABRIKANT, OF THE DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA
PHILLIP FANTOZZI, OF VIRGINIA
KATHRYNN RAE FESTA, OF VIRGINIA
HENRY DOUGLAS FLACH, OF VIRGINIA
COLLIN J. FLYNN, OF THE DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA
MATTHEW D. FRANKE, OF THE DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA
DAVID CHARLES GAMBLA, OF VIRGINIA
ANDREW M. GHOBRIEL, OF VIRGINIA
ACQUANIA V. GIBBS, OF MARYLAND
RENEE P. GOFF, OF VIRGINIA
ANN DELONG GREENBERG, OF VIRGINIA
LONI MARIA GREENBERG, OF MARYLAND
MICHAEL THOMAS HACKETT, OF CONNECTICUT
MAXWELL J. HAMILTON, OF LOUISIANA
J. MICHAEL HARVEY, OF WASHINGTON
CHARLES E. HAVENER, OF MARYLAND
ROBERT B. HAWKINS III, OF CALIFORNIA
ANDREW WILLIAM HAY, OF THE DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA
ROBERT ARMSTRONG HELWIG III, OF VIRGINIA
JOHN BRIAN HERICKHOFF, OF VIRGINIA
MICHAEL J. HESSLER, OF VIRGINIA
MICHEL C. HO, OF VIRGINIA
COURTNEY ANNE HOMAN-JONES, OF MARYLAND
HEATHER S. HONAKER, OF VIRGINIA
DAVID MAURICE JONES, OF ILLINOIS
KRISTIN MICHELLE HOOPER, OF VIRGINIA
PHILLIP ANDREW HOOPER, OF VIRGINIA
DAVID C. HORENGIC, OF VIRGINIA
CHARLES C. HULL, OF MARYLAND
OMAR KAMAL JABBOUR, OF VIRGINIA
ALEXANDER J. JARZ, OF VIRGINIA
BRENDAN H. JOHNSON, OF VIRGINIA
JEFFREY M. JORDAN, OF MARYLAND
KEITH P. JORDAN, OF VIRGINIA
NICKOLAS A. JORJANI, OF VIRGINIA
ROBERT WARREN KACHUR, OF VIRGINIA
STEPAN KARAKESISOGLU, OF MARYLAND
KATHERINE MICHELLE KELLEY, OF MARYLAND
MICHAEL JAMES KELLY, OF MARYLAND
SUSAN KOPP KEYACK, OF PENNSYLVANIA
DONG-SUNG KIM, OF MARYLAND
THANH C. KIM, OF TEXAS
CARINA DEEA KLEIN, OF NEW YORK
GEORGE E. KRAMER, OF VIRGINIA
KRIS S. KUMAR, OF VIRGINIA
JONATHAN P. LALLEY, OF VIRGINIA
SCOTT D. LANDSMAN, OF ILLINOIS
JOSEPH AARON LARSON, OF VIRGINIA
ELLISON S. LASKOWSKI, OF THE DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA
JEFFREY DEAN LASSETER, OF VIRGINIA
DARLENE M. LIAO, OF VIRGINIA
LEAH CHRISTINE LIOTT, OF MARYLAND
KENDRICK M. LIU, OF CALIFORNIA
LIANA M. LUM, OF MARYLAND
AYO W. LYNN, OF VIRGINIA
PATRICK S. LYON, OF MARYLAND
ERIN NICHOLE MARKLEY, OF MISSOURI
NICHOLAS FRANCIS VAZQUEZ MATHEW, OF VIRGINIA
KEITH A. MCCOY, OF VIRGINIA
REID B. MCCOY, OF TEXAS
N. DEAN MESERVY, OF MARYLAND
FAITH MCCARTHY MEYERS, OF VIRGINIA
CHRISTOPHER C. MILLER, OF VIRGINIA

MARK R. MINEO, OF FLORIDA
MARLA ANNE MONTEVALDO, OF VIRGINIA
WILLIAM L. MORRIS III, OF VIRGINIA
GILBERT GEORGE MORTON, OF NEW YORK
KALPANA MURTHY, OF WASHINGTON
JASON ZIMPRICH NADON-RZASA, OF VIRGINIA
TODD R. NEIMAN, OF ILLINOIS
KEVIN D. NELSON, OF THE DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA
CHRISTOPHER R. NEWMAN, OF VIRGINIA
RUTH NEWMAN, OF COLORADO
RICHARD F. NICHOLAS, OF VIRGINIA
CHARLOTTE SULLIVAN NUANES, OF THE DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA
BRIAN O'BEIRNE, OF THE DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA
NICOLE L. O'BRIEN, OF VIRGINIA
KERRI ANN OLSEN, OF VIRGINIA
MATTHEW RYAN PACKER, OF THE DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA
TAMMY B. PALTCHIKOV, OF ALABAMA
ELEANOR B. PEARSON, OF VIRGINIA
CHARLES STEPHEN PENNYPACKER, OF VIRGINIA
LAUREN E. PETERS, OF THE DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA
SHANE M. PETERSEN, OF VIRGINIA
KRISTA PICA, OF VIRGINIA
JEREMY B. PINNER, OF VIRGINIA
ESTHER A. PIZARRO, OF VIRGINIA
JAMES PLASMAN, OF ILLINOIS
LOUIS S. POLLARD, OF VIRGINIA
PAMELA ROSS DIEPFENDERFER PONTIUS, OF THE DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA
CARTER JAMES POTTS, OF VIRGINIA
CYNTHIA ZUNIGA PRASZCZALEK, OF MARYLAND
CLAIRE V. QUIRKE, OF THE DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA
PRASHANTH RAJAN, OF THE DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA
NAYBONG L. RANDORF, OF VIRGINIA
GREGORY N. RANKIN, OF THE DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA
JAMES E. REESE, OF PENNSYLVANIA
JAMIE ROANE, OF VIRGINIA
ROSELLEN ALBANO ROBERT, OF VIRGINIA
MICHAEL A. ROBERTS, OF VIRGINIA
OLGA B. ROMANOVA, OF NEW YORK
IVAN F. RUIZ, OF VIRGINIA
ROBERT RUSCHENBERG, OF CALIFORNIA
ALEXANDER THEODORE RYAN, OF PENNSYLVANIA
BRIGITTA J. SAJIC, OF VIRGINIA
TANYA YUKI SALSETH, OF CALIFORNIA
ROCCO C. SANTORO, OF MARYLAND
BRANDE HANNAH SASSMAN, OF VIRGINIA
CRAIG G. SCHMAUS, OF VIRGINIA
ANDREW HUBBARD SCHUT, OF THE DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA
ANDREW C. SCHWARTZ, OF MARYLAND
ANDREW CRAWFORD SCHWARTZ, OF VIRGINIA
JOE L. SEPULVEDA, OF VIRGINIA
MELISSA K. SHOEMAKER, OF VIRGINIA
ASHLI C. SIMPSON, OF TEXAS
EILEEN SIMPSON, OF VIRGINIA
JONATHAN M. SMALLRIDGE, OF THE DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA
NOLAN G. SMASH, OF MARYLAND
GREGORY MICHAEL SMITH, OF VIRGINIA
JASON A. SMITH, OF VIRGINIA
ROBERT THOMAS SMITH, OF VIRGINIA
STEPHANIE P. SMITH, OF VIRGINIA
RAVINDRA MOHAN SRIVASTAVA, OF COLORADO
JOHN W. STABLES, OF TEXAS
NATASHA N. STITH, OF VIRGINIA
ROBERT J. STOLZ, OF VIRGINIA
LIAM L. SULLIVAN, OF NEW HAMPSHIRE
MATTHEW JOSEPH SULLIVAN, OF VIRGINIA
MEREDITH JILL SUMPTER, OF VIRGINIA
ELIZABETH TANG SWEET, OF NEW JERSEY
TRISHA ANN TAINO, OF VIRGINIA
LISA Y. TAM, OF VIRGINIA
CONSTANTINO THEOHARATOS, OF ARIZONA
ERIC J. THEUS, OF VIRGINIA
BOBBI C. THOMAS-TAGAI, OF TEXAS
PATTY ANN TRUGLIO, OF VIRGINIA
DAVID COLIN TURNBULL, OF NEW YORK
ANDREW UTZ, OF VIRGINIA
PETER P. VELASCO, OF THE DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA
JILLIAN MARIE WALKER, OF VIRGINIA
ERIKA A. H. WANAMAKER, OF VIRGINIA
JUSTIN T. WARNICK, OF VIRGINIA
SHAWNTAE WHITE, OF OHIO
MICHELLE A. WHITEMAN, OF MARYLAND
CURT WHITTAKER, OF OREGON
ARIC C. WILLIAMS, OF VIRGINIA
GEORGE THOMAS WOOD IV, OF VIRGINIA
JEFFREY TODD WORKMAN, OF MARYLAND
JARED M. YANCEY, OF VIRGINIA
MARA YAUERBAUM, OF VIRGINIA
MICHAEL B. YORKE, OF VIRGINIA
KIRA L. ZAPORSKI, OF WISCONSIN

SECRETARIES IN THE DIPLOMATIC SERVICE OF THE UNITED STATES OF AMERICA:

DENISE G. MANNING, OF VIRGINIA

THE FOLLOWING-NAMED CAREER MEMBERS OF THE SENIOR FOREIGN SERVICE OF THE DEPARTMENT OF STATE FOR PROMOTION IN THE SENIOR FOREIGN SERVICE TO THE CLASSES INDICATED:

CAREER MEMBERS OF THE SENIOR FOREIGN SERVICE OF THE UNITED STATES OF AMERICA, CLASS OF MINISTER COUNSELOR, EFFECTIVE JANUARY 6, 2008:

ROBERT A. ECKERT, OF FLORIDA
KIMBERLY K. OTTWELL, OF ARIZONA

IN THE AIR FORCE

THE FOLLOWING NAMED OFFICER FOR APPOINTMENT TO THE GRADE INDICATED IN THE UNITED STATES AIR FORCE TO THE GRADE INDICATED WHILE ASSIGNED TO A POSITION OF IMPORTANCE AND RESPONSIBILITY UNDER TITLE 10, U.S.C., SECTION 601:

TO BE LIEUTENANT GENERAL

MAJ. GEN. DANA T. ATKINS

THE FOLLOWING NAMED OFFICER FOR APPOINTMENT TO THE GRADE INDICATED IN THE UNITED STATES AIR FORCE TO THE GRADE INDICATED WHILE ASSIGNED TO A POSITION OF IMPORTANCE AND RESPONSIBILITY UNDER TITLE 10, U.S.C., SECTION 601:

To be lieutenant general

MAJ. GEN. MARK D. SHACKELFORD
IN THE ARMY

THE FOLLOWING NAMED OFFICER FOR APPOINTMENT TO THE GRADE INDICATED IN THE UNITED STATES ARMY TO THE GRADE INDICATED WHILE ASSIGNED TO A POSITION OF IMPORTANCE AND RESPONSIBILITY UNDER TITLE 10, U.S.C., SECTION 601:

To be lieutenant general

MAJ. GEN. FRANK G. HELMICK

THE FOLLOWING NAMED OFFICER FOR APPOINTMENT TO THE GRADE INDICATED IN THE UNITED STATES ARMY TO THE GRADE INDICATED WHILE ASSIGNED TO A POSITION OF IMPORTANCE AND RESPONSIBILITY UNDER TITLE 10, U.S.C., SECTION 601:

To be lieutenant general

BRIG. GEN. JOHN F. MULHOLLAND, JR.

THE FOLLOWING NAMED OFFICER FOR APPOINTMENT TO THE GRADE INDICATED IN THE UNITED STATES ARMY UNDER TITLE 10, U.S.C. SECTION 624:

To be major

KENNETH D. SMITH

THE FOLLOWING NAMED OFFICER FOR APPOINTMENT TO THE GRADE INDICATED IN THE UNITED STATES ARMY UNDER TITLE 10, U.S.C. SECTION 624:

To be lieutenant colonel

JOHN M. HOPPMANN

THE FOLLOWING NAMED OFFICERS FOR APPOINTMENT TO THE GRADE INDICATED IN THE UNITED STATES ARMY JUDGE ADVOCATE GENERAL'S CORPS UNDER TITLE 10, U.S.C., SECTIONS 624 AND 3064:

To be lieutenant colonel

AMY M. BAJUS
SHANE E. BARTEE
JOSEPH B. BERGER III
LOUIS A. BIRDSONG
PAULETTE V. BURTON
ERIK L. CHRISTIANSEN
DAVID T. CLUXTON
STEVEN P. CULLEN
GAIL A. CURLEY
KATHRYN A. DONNELLY
GREGG A. ENGLER
KVASI L. HAWKS
MICHAEL K. HERRING
JONATHAN HOWARD
JOHN T. HYATT
IAN R. IVERSON
MELVIN C. JENKS
CARL A. JOHNSON
NICHOLAS F. LANCASTER
JEFFERY D. LIPPERT
DONALD G. LOBEDA, JR.
JOSEPH M. MASTERSON
DAVID E. MENDELSON
MATTHEW M. MILLER
PHILIP C. MITCHELL
SUSAN E. MITCHELL
JOHN C. MOORE
MICHAEL E. MUELLER
CHARLES C. POCHÉ
LUIS O. RODRIGUEZ
JOHN T. ROTHWELL
MICHELLE L. RYAN
KENNETH W. SHAHAN
WILLIAM D. SMOOT III
SUSAN B. SUTHERLAND
KURT A. TAKUSHI
JAMES L. VARLEY
ROBERT P. VASQUEZ

IN THE MARINE CORPS

THE FOLLOWING NAMED OFFICERS FOR APPOINTMENT TO THE GRADE INDICATED IN THE UNITED STATES MARINE CORPS UNDER TITLE 10, U.S.C. SECTION 624:

To be lieutenant colonel

DAVID G. MCCULLOH
ROBERT E. SAWYER
PAUL W. VOSS

IN THE NAVY

THE FOLLOWING NAMED OFFICER FOR APPOINTMENT TO THE GRADE INDICATED IN THE UNITED STATES NAVY RESERVE UNDER TITLE 10, U.S.C., SECTION 12203:

To be captain

ADAM J. COGHAN

THE FOLLOWING NAMED OFFICER FOR APPOINTMENT TO THE GRADE INDICATED IN THE UNITED STATES NAVY RESERVE UNDER TITLE 10, U.S.C., SECTION 12203:

To be captain

JOHN E. PASCH III

THE FOLLOWING NAMED OFFICERS FOR APPOINTMENT TO THE GRADE INDICATED IN THE UNITED STATES NAVY RESERVE UNDER TITLE 10, U.S.C., SECTION 12203:

To be captain

RICHARD C. BOEHM

MICHAEL D. CONGER

THE FOLLOWING NAMED OFFICERS FOR APPOINTMENT TO THE GRADE INDICATED IN THE UNITED STATES NAVY RESERVE UNDER TITLE 10, U.S.C., SECTION 12203:

To be captain

JAMES R. DUNWORTH
BRUCE A. HORTON
ROBERT K. LANSDEN
FRANCIS J. MCCABE II
NEIL R. REILLY
CHARLES A. ROZHON, JR.
MICHAEL A. SANO

THE FOLLOWING NAMED OFFICERS FOR APPOINTMENT TO THE GRADE INDICATED IN THE UNITED STATES NAVY RESERVE UNDER TITLE 10, U.S.C., SECTION 12203:

To be captain

WILLIAM K. DAVIS
ROBERT T. DURAND
THOMAS R. GRESBACK
JON C. LUNDBERG
TERRANCE L. SHANNON
KATHLEEN R. WRIGHT

THE FOLLOWING NAMED OFFICERS FOR APPOINTMENT TO THE GRADE INDICATED IN THE UNITED STATES NAVY RESERVE UNDER TITLE 10, U.S.C., SECTION 12203:

To be captain

KATHLEEN GROMILOVITZ
JOHN F. LANDRY
JAMES M. MANCHER

THE FOLLOWING NAMED OFFICERS FOR APPOINTMENT TO THE GRADE INDICATED IN THE UNITED STATES NAVY RESERVE UNDER TITLE 10, U.S.C., SECTION 12203:

To be captain

THOMAS E. FOLLO
JOHN M. PIETKIEWICZ
SARAH M. STANDARD

THE FOLLOWING NAMED OFFICERS FOR APPOINTMENT TO THE GRADE INDICATED IN THE UNITED STATES NAVY RESERVE UNDER TITLE 10, U.S.C., SECTION 12203:

To be captain

DAVID J. HARACH
WILLIAM T. LITTLE
MARK D. MAXWELL
PATRICK R. MULCAHY

THE FOLLOWING NAMED OFFICERS FOR APPOINTMENT TO THE GRADE INDICATED IN THE UNITED STATES NAVY RESERVE UNDER TITLE 10, U.S.C., SECTION 12203:

To be captain

DONALD R. BURNS
MICHAEL D. COOK
RANDALL J. GEIS
DEAN C. HALVORSON
WILLIAM R. LARAY
WILLIAM D. MICHAEL

THE FOLLOWING NAMED OFFICERS FOR APPOINTMENT TO THE GRADE INDICATED IN THE UNITED STATES NAVY RESERVE UNDER TITLE 10, U.S.C., SECTION 12203:

To be captain

ROBERT J. BARTON II
MICHAEL P. CARTER
STEPHEN M. DEBRUYNKOP
DOUGLAS S. FARNCOMB
CHARLES A. GUNZEL
THOMAS L. MORGAN
ANTHONY NICKENS
LYNN J. PETERSEN
ROBERT A. UHLIG
CHRISTOPHER M. WAALER

THE FOLLOWING NAMED OFFICERS FOR APPOINTMENT TO THE GRADE INDICATED IN THE UNITED STATES NAVY RESERVE UNDER TITLE 10, U.S.C., SECTION 12203:

To be captain

DREW G. FLAVELL
ERIC W. JOHNSON
SCOTT A. LANGLEY
TONYA Y. W. PRINGLE
TODD A. ROSE
JOSEPH P. WAITE
PAUL F. WECKMAN

THE FOLLOWING NAMED OFFICERS FOR APPOINTMENT TO THE GRADE INDICATED IN THE UNITED STATES NAVY RESERVE UNDER TITLE 10, U.S.C., SECTION 12203:

To be captain

TERI J. BARBER
MARY K. CAFFREY
SHARON S. DOXEY
VALERIE L. EICHENLAUB
STEPHEN D. KIBBEY
PATRICIA A. LEOPARD
ROBERTA E. SYBA
LORI A. YOST

THE FOLLOWING NAMED OFFICERS FOR APPOINTMENT TO THE GRADE INDICATED IN THE UNITED STATES NAVY RESERVE UNDER TITLE 10, U.S.C., SECTION 12203:

To be captain

ERIC B. ANDERSON
MARLIN C. ANTHONY

WILLIAM L. BACH
 JAY S. BOWMAN
 SYBIL V. BRADLEY
 MICHAEL L. ELLIOTT
 CARLOS E. FLANAGAN
 DONALD M. GORDNIER
 TED C. GRAHAM
 KEVIN O. HENDRICKS
 ANDREW E. HOPKINS
 RANDOLPH B. JOHNSON
 JON C. KREITZ
 WILLIAM J. LEAR, JR.
 PAUL G. MATTINGLY II
 CHRISTOPHER S. MOORE
 SAMUEL L. TATE
 STEVEN D. VINCENT
 GEORGE N. WHITBRED IV

THE FOLLOWING NAMED OFFICERS FOR APPOINTMENT TO THE GRADE INDICATED IN THE UNITED STATES NAVY RESERVE UNDER TITLE 10, U.S.C., SECTION 12203:

To be captain

CLAYTON R. ALLEN
 AYAD N. ALSAIGH
 DOUGLAS J. ANDERSON
 SAMUEL W. ASBURY
 KELLY J. BALTZ
 JOHN H. BARNET, JR.
 MICHAEL D. BELL
 MATTHEW C. BINSFIELD
 DANIEL J. BURQUE
 ANDREW P. CAMPBELL
 PAMELA K. L. CAREL
 WESLEY J. CARPENTER
 DOUGLAS R. CARROLL
 STEPHAN J. CASSIDY
 GREGG T. CLARK
 MICHAEL W. CLARK
 RICHARD G. COLBURN
 MARTIN R. COSTA
 GEORGE M. COX
 RONALD A. CRADDOCK
 JOHN W. CRAIG
 OWEN J. CURLEY
 RODNEY P. DEWALT
 DAVID P. DIPESA
 MATTHEW S. DOYLE
 CRAIG R. DUGAN
 MICHAEL R. DUNNE
 MICHAEL S. EKLUND
 DAVID C. ENGLEHART
 ROBERT J. FINKELSTON
 JEFFREY C. FLUMIGNAN
 ADRIANANTHONY GARCIA
 LEONARD A. GESHAN, JR.
 SHANE A. GRAY
 GERALD E. GREEN, JR.
 MICHAEL L. HARRIS
 DAVID W. HEGLAR
 JOSEPH J. HORVATH
 CHRISTOPHER K. HYDER
 GUY D. V. JACKSON
 WILLIAM S. JOHNSON
 DANIEL T. KELLY
 GEORGE A. KENYON, JR.
 MICHAEL KIRKPATRICK
 JAMES P. KITZMILLER
 RUDOLPH KLICEK, JR.
 LEIGH L. KOJIRO
 JOSEPH G. LAMACK II
 JOSEPH C. LAULETTA, JR.
 STEVEN E. LEAHY
 PAUL D. LEBRASSEUR
 CLAUDE P. R. LIM
 JAMES S. LITTLE
 ALEXANDER R. LOVETT

MARK D. LOWMAN
 WILLIAM F. LUSSIER
 SCOT T. LYNN
 MICHAEL A. MALOWNEY
 KEVIN L. MARLOWE
 DONATO B. MASSAOY III
 STEPHEN MASI
 ALISON S. MCCRARY
 TODD R. MCKINLEY
 ANTHONY MCKINNEY
 EDWARD MEANY
 JAMES J. MEHAIL
 JOHN E. MENDEL
 DOMINIC J. MEOLI
 KEVIN P. MONAGLE
 WALLACE F. MOORE
 KEITH E. MORAN
 ARIEL C. NAGALES
 MICHAEL S. NEWMAN
 DAVID P. ODEA, JR.
 MATTHEW P. OKEEFE
 DONALD S. PAGEL, JR.
 DAVID J. POPOVICH
 GREGORY J. RALSTIN
 RANDALL K. REID
 PAUL D. REINHART
 MARK J. RETZLOFF
 ALLAN D. RISLEY
 JEFFREY M. ROGALINER
 DANIEL R. ROMAN
 MARCO F. ROMANI
 BRIAN S. RUSSELL
 DAVID M. SALUTO
 ANTHONY J. SANNICOLAS
 STEVEN A. SCHELLBERG
 DAN S. SCHINDLER
 KENNETH A. SCHROEDER
 ROBERT E. SECHRIEST
 GERALD A. SHERMAN
 KRISTI L. SIDEBOTTOM
 THOMAS J. SKUBIC
 ANDE A. SMITH
 LANCE A. SNIDER
 CRAIG S. SOER
 DAVID V. SPEARS
 MICHAEL A. STEWART
 VINCENT L. TISEO
 JESS H. UMPHENOUR
 WARREN K. VANEMAN
 FRANK T. WALLACE
 DAVID H. WEEKS
 CURTIS A. WOLD
 ERIC F. ZANIN

THE FOLLOWING NAMED OFFICERS FOR APPOINTMENT TO THE GRADE INDICATED IN THE UNITED STATES NAVY RESERVE UNDER TITLE 10, U.S.C., SECTION 12203:

To be captain

TAMMY M. BAKER
 KATHLEEN BOEHMER
 DAVID H. BULFORD
 ROBIN K. CLEMENTS
 CHARLES M. CONWAY III
 TIMOTHY W. CROY
 RALPH L. DEFALCO
 DAVID J. DORAN
 GEORGE C. DRISCOLL
 MARY S. ELLIS
 BRUCE D. GARROTT
 GREGORY K. HAYES
 WILLIAM R. HUNT
 MARK A. KENNEY
 LINDA K. KNIGHT
 JOHN H. LAGORIO, JR.
 DREW F. LIEB
 EVAN C. LOVE

SAMUEL J. MANDELL
 JOHN A. MANNARINO
 KATHRYN L. MAURER
 BRIAN C. POEHLER
 ROBERT D. POWELL
 CLYDE E. ROYSTON
 ERIC S. SCHNEIDER
 LUCY A. SIMONIAN
 JOHN D. TODD
 SUSAN D. TOTH
 SCOTT A. WOODWORTH
 LEONARD A. ZIMMERMANN I

THE FOLLOWING NAMED INDIVIDUALS FOR APPOINTMENT IN THE GRADE INDICATED IN THE UNITED STATES NAVY UNDER TITLE 10, U.S.C., SECTION 531:

To be lieutenant commander

SAMUEL G. ESPRITU
 MILLER J. KERR
 PAUL G. SCANLAN

THE FOLLOWING NAMED OFFICERS FOR TEMPORARY APPOINTMENT TO THE GRADE INDICATED IN THE UNITED STATES NAVY UNDER TITLE 10, U.S.C., SECTION 5721:

To be lieutenant commander

TERRY L. BUCKMAN
 ROBERT D. CARTER, JR.
 CHRISTOPHER C. COFFEY
 KENNY J. COMEAUX
 GEORGE R. EBARB
 CHAD A. FELLA
 WILLIAM D. FRANCIS
 JOHN T. GREEN
 JELANI K. HALE
 JEFFREY P. HARVEY
 ROBERT A. HEELY, JR.
 TIMOTHY KNAPP
 BRIAN J. LADIEU
 DAVID C. LEIKER
 TERRY P. MCNAMARA
 ERIC A. NICHOLSON
 JASON P. PATTERSON
 DAVID A. PFAEFFLIN
 ANGEL F. RODRIGUEZ
 KENNETH M. ROMAN
 ANTHONY M. ROMERO
 CHAD J. ROUM
 JOHN W. RYAN
 KENNETH A. SABOL
 KENNETH D. SAUNDERS
 TIMOTHY J. SHIVOK
 CHAD B. STEINBRECHER
 GREGORY L. TAYLOR
 RITCHIE L. TAYLOR
 FRANCIS J. WALTER III
 THOMAS M. WILLIAMS

WITHDRAWAL

Executive Message transmitted by the President to the Senate on April 15, 2008 withdrawing from further Senate consideration the following nomination:

STEPHEN JOSEPH MURPHY III, OF MICHIGAN, TO BE UNITED STATES CIRCUIT JUDGE FOR THE SIXTH CIRCUIT. VICE SUSAN BIEKE NEILSON, DECEASED, WHICH WAS SENT TO THE SENATE ON MARCH 19, 2007.