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Senate

The Senate met at 10 a.m. and was called to order by the Honorable BILL NELSON, a Senator from the State of Florida.

PRAYER

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

Let us pray.

O God, our Father, You are our light and our salvation. Whom then shall we fear? We thank You for all of life's positive things. Help us to see them and to count them and to remember them, that our lives may flow in ceaseless praise.

Use our lawmakers. Control their minds that all of their thoughts will be guided by You. Shine Your light upon their path and strengthen them to walk according to Your will. Give them a sense of duty that they may leave nothing that they ought to do undone. Teach them to follow You, and lead them on the right path.

We pray in Your strong Name. Amen.

PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

The Honorable BILL NELSON 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 assistant legislative clerk read the following letter:

U.S. SENATE,
PRESIDENT PRO TEMPORE,
Washington, DC, April 22, 2008.

To the Senate:

Under the provisions of rule I, paragraph 3, of the Standing Rules of the Senate, I hereby appoint the Honorable BILL NELSON, a Senator from the State of Florida, to perform the duties of the Chair.

ROBERT C. BYRD,
President pro tempore.

Mr. NELSON of Florida 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, we will be in a period for the transaction of morning business for up to 1 hour, with the time controlled by the leaders or their designees and Senators permitted to speak for up to 10 minutes each. The Republicans will control the first half, and the majority will control the final half.

Following morning business, the Senate will resume consideration of the motion to proceed to S. 1315, the veterans' benefits bill. We are going to have that vote at noon today.

Today, the Senate will recess from 12:30 p.m. to 2:15 p.m., as we do every Tuesday, for our weekly caucus luncheons, and we will also recess from 3:30 p.m. to 4:30 p.m. for the unveiling of former Majority Leader Daschle's portrait.

Tomorrow, the Senate will be in recess from 11 a.m. to 12 noon for a Gold Medal ceremony in the Rotunda honoring Dr. DeBakey and from 4 p.m. to 5 p.m. tomorrow for a Senators-only briefing by Admiral Mullen, Chairman of the Joint Chiefs. That will take place in S–407.

VETERANS' BENEFITS ENHANCEMENT ACT

Mr. REID. Mr. President, yesterday I spoke on the floor indicating that I thought it was really too bad that the Republicans held up another bill, this one dealing with veterans health benefits. We have hundreds of thousands of veterans returning from Iraq. Twenty percent of them have severe problems as a result of post-traumatic stress syndrome, many of them caused by those terrifying explosions over there that occur all the time, around them and to them. We have 150,000 men and women now in Iraq serving our country bravely.

The veterans' benefits legislation was reported out of the committee 9 months ago, and we have been trying to get permission from the Republicans to bring it to the floor, and they have refused. It expands eligibility for traumatic injury insurance; extends eligibility for adapted housing for those who have been severely burned; it increases benefits for veterans pursuing apprenticeships or on-job training programs; and 80 other provisions that are very important. But we learned yesterday from the ranking member of the Veterans' Affairs Committee that the reason they have held this bill up and intend to continue holding it up is because this legislation restores veteran status to Filipino veterans who served under U.S. command during World War II.

This legislation is important. While our Republican friends are stalling for time, trying to maintain the status quo, our veterans—men and women, young and old—who served with distinction continue to wait for the support, care, and services they have earned. They are waiting for Congress to act.

As I have indicated, the Republicans have followed the lead of the ranking member of the committee and opposed the provision in the bill that provides pensions to Filipino veterans who fought by our side in World War II.

I say what I said yesterday: If you know nothing else about World War II, watch Tom Hanks' documentary of

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

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World War II, what went on in the Philippines. We depended on the Filipinos. They fought bravely, valiantly by our side. So I find this opposition baffling. With threats emerging from every corner of our complex world, America needs allies. We need to set an example that we stick by our friends. We should be sending a message to the world that we need you to stand with us. We cannot fight the global war on terror alone.

What kind of example does this set? What better message can we send to our global allies than we will honor the past service of men and women born on foreign soil who rallied around our flag and fought for our freedom?

My friend from North Carolina, distinguished Senator BURR, argues we should not be providing pensions for Filipino soldiers who served our country but who were not injured during World War II.

World War II was a different war from the war we are fighting now. In Iraq, everybody is fair game to the terrorists. It was not that way in World War II. Only 20 percent—one in five—served on front lines taking enemy fire. The other 80 percent provided support services and engaged in intelligence gathering. They transported and maintained equipment. They took care of the ammunition. They repaired combat vehicles. They were in the Quartermaster Corps making sure the uniforms and other equipment the soldiers needed got to where they were supposed to go. They cooked the food. They acted, as we know, as nurses. It cannot be argued those 80 percent were any less a part of that war. It cannot be argued that sacrifices do not count. It cannot be argued that these men and women are less entitled to the benefits of veteran status. This legislation would give them $300 a month. Don't they deserve that? Doesn't this country owe that to them?

I urge my Republican colleagues to break away from this foolishness and join us in providing a pension for the brave Filipino troops who stood with us, fought with us, and helped us win World War II. I hope the Republicans will support all components of this legislation. It is good legislation, but it should be known that I have reached out to Republicans on this issue on many occasions, with no takers.

As I said to Senator BURR on the floor yesterday, if he does not like this provision, why hold up the whole bill? We should have been on the bill Thursday night, Friday, Monday. It is Tuesday now. Offer an amendment. Say: I don't believe these people who were not front-line soldiers deserve anything. They are old. The average age is 84. They do not deserve anything. Let's strike that with an amendment.

Let's have a debate on it and vote on it, not hold up the whole bill. But that is what is being done. If a majority of the Senators vote for the amendment, the bill will be altered. That is how the legislative process is supposed to work. We should not have to invoke cloture on a motion to proceed simply to begin to legislate.

So I hope cloture will be invoked and, if it is, we do not have to use the postcloture 30 hours to sit around and do nothing. We should be able to start legislating on this bill. I am not even asking Republicans to support the bill at this point, just support allowing us to move to the bill so we can start legislating.

This is an example; almost 70 times in a little over a year, the Republicans have stopped us from moving legislation. Is it any wonder that today it is reported ''Bush's disapproval rating worst of any president in 70 years''? That is no surprise. Holding up legislation, even legislation with which they agree, hold us up, just to stall, to maintain the status quo. What is the status quo giving the American people? Nothing. And that is how they feel about President Bush. That is why we see this headline in today's paper.

RECOGNITION OF THE MINORITY LEADER

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

VETERANS' BENEFITS ENHANCEMENT ACT

Mr. MCCONNELL. Mr. President, of course the bill is not being held up, and of course the majority does not need permission from us to take up the bill. Today we will, in fact, vote on the cloture motion to proceed to the Veterans' Benefits Enhancement Act of 2007. It is my belief cloture should be invoked and will be invoked.

There is actually much to commend in this bill. It will improve the lives of our veterans by supplementing the level of assistance for disabled veterans for the purchase of automobiles and increasing assistance for those veterans who need to modify their homes to accommodate their disabilities.

I wish to recognize with admiration my colleague from North Carolina, the ranking member of the Committee on Veterans' Affairs, and thank him for his hard work on this bill. Yesterday, he made clear that he will offer a substitute that seeks to correct the one glaring flaw contained within S. 1315, a provision that would divert $221 million over the next 10 years to create a special pension for Filipino veterans of the Second World War living in the Philippines who have no service-connected disability. That money, of course, would be diverted at the expense of American veterans living in America. The Senator from North Carolina spoke eloquently about the fact that diverting these resources from our veterans returning from Iraq and Afghanistan represents misplaced priorities, and I agree with him.

My expectation is the Senate will have a healthy debate concerning this provision. Senators on my side of the aisle will have ample opportunity to amend the committee bill so we can have a bill that will pass with bipartisan support and be signed into law. It is my hope we can work together on this bill and produce another strong, bipartisan achievement for our veterans. I expect that to happen certainly in the very near future. We will have an opportunity in our conference at noon to discuss going forward, but we anticipate moving forward with the Burr amendment early in the process. I think we are going to be able to get a strong, bipartisan accomplishment in the very near future in the Senate.

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. The majority leader.

Mr. REID. Mr. President, I want the world to hear what the Republican leader just said: We are not holding up the bill. That simply is without any basis of fact. That is why we are going to vote at noon on being able to move to the bill. In years past, it was done automatically. Rarely did we have to file a motion to invoke cloture on the motion to proceed. It is Orwellian, what my friend just said. Of course they are holding up the bill. And we have asked other times to move to this legislation, as far back as November 2007.

So, Mr. President, I now ask unanimous consent that following morning business, we move to the bill, we vitiate the need to invoke cloture on the motion to proceed, that all germane amendments would be in order—and certainly what Senator BURR said he wanted to do would be totally germane. It is a striking provision.

I ask unanimous consent that following morning business, the Senate move to the bill that is before the Senate.

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. Is there objection?

Mr. MCCONNELL. Mr. President, reserving the right to object, I really think any observers will find all of this quite silly, really. We are going to discuss the measure at noon. Many in my conference are not on the Veterans' Affairs Committee and have not had an opportunity to hear from Senator BURR about this issue. Yesterday was a no-vote day. Members were not around. We are going to discuss the matter at noon.

I already indicated to my good friend the majority leader that we are going to be able to move forward, I think, with dispatch on this issue, and we are going to get a bipartisan accomplishment. No amount of trying to steamroll the minority into giving up its rights is going to work. Maybe that is one of the reasons this Congress has a lower approval than the President of the United States. My good friend the majority leader never misses an opportunity to talk about the President not being very popular. Every time in the future the majority leader wants to bring up the President's popularity, I will bring up the popularity of this new

majority which makes the President's popularity look really good.

What I think the American people would like for us to do is to quit this silly sparring back and forth, and finger-pointing, and legislate. We have a very good chance to begin this week with a strong bipartisan accomplishment, and I think we ought to get about it. As soon as lunch is out of the way and Senator BURR has had an opportunity to brief our Members on this measure, with which many of them are not yet familiar, we will sit down, as we always do, the majority leader and I, with smiles on our faces, and figure out how to go forward. And I think we will be able to get there in the relatively near future.

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. Is there objection?

Mr. MCCONNELL. I object.

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. Objection is heard.

Mr. REID. So that it is very clear, the statement of the Republican leader was untrue. He can talk all he wants about finger-pointing. All we want to do is legislate. That is what we want to do. And it would seem to me, as this legislation has been pending for 9 months—reported out of the committee 9 months ago—that since we are dealing with the veterans, the people for whom we want to do the very best we can because they deserve it, that in 9 months the Republican caucus would have been able to focus on veterans and health care and not wait until today, April 22—or whatever today is, 9 months after the legislation was reported out of the committee—to determine what is in the legislation. Senators need to be briefed on how to take care of our soldiers medically? I think that is without any foundation.

I will also say this, Mr. President: I feel very good about my job as a Senator. I am very grateful to the people of Nevada for allowing me to serve in the Senate. But I am never going to come to the floor and denigrate this body, as my Republican friend obviously wants to do. The rating of the Senate, over the history of the country, the rating of the Congress is tied to the President. If the President is unpopular, the Congress is unpopular, the city council is unpopular. If you have a popular President, everybody feels good about the Government itself. So I will never come to the Senate or anyplace else and denigrate my job and those of my 99 colleagues. I think we have important responsibilities, and I think we should live up to those in a manner that is best in keeping with the Senate tradition.

I came here this morning to state a fact. I want to legislate on behalf of the Senate on legislation dealing with the medical care of our veterans, and it is being held up by the Republicans. That is clear. That is what I said, and I stand on that.

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. The Republican leader.

Mr. MCCONNELL. At the risk of prolonging this a little longer, I don't think, at the end of the day, anybody in the country is going to believe we are obstructing this bill. This is a serious effort to legislate. Senator BURR has taken it very seriously. He has an important amendment to be offered, which will be offered later today. The Senate will have an opportunity to consider it.

Look, the way you get things done in the Senate is on a bipartisan basis, and the rules around here give the minority an opportunity to be involved. This is not the House of Representatives. I wish we had been able to get more done last year, but one of the reasons we didn't is because we had 34 Iraq votes. Some of my friends in the other conference told me last year that any week they weren't voting on Iraq was a bad week. We spent an awful lot of time on sense-of-the-Senate resolutions on Iraq last year.

Floor time is at a premium in the Senate, as the majority leader used to say repeatedly when he was the leader of the Democratic Party and in the minority. The Senate is not the House. Things don't move as speedily. Most observers of the Senate understand that. By Senate standards, this bill is going to move forward in relatively rapid order after the rights of the minority to offer amendments have been protected.

So I don't know what this little back and forth this morning is all about because I do think we are going to have an opportunity to get a bipartisan accomplishment in the very near future.

I yield the floor.

Mr. REID. What this is all about is the truth. That is what it is all about.

Senator DURBIN, assistant majority leader, on November 8, 2007, said this: This is Senator DURBIN speaking, Mr. President.

> I ask unanimous consent that the Senate may proceed to the consideration of calendar No. 336, S. 1315, at any time determined by the majority leader following consultation with the Republican leader; that when the bill is considered, the only amendments in order to the bill, other than the committee-reported amendment, be first-degree amendments that are relevant to the subject matter of the bill and that they be subject to relevant second-degree amendments; that upon disposition of all amendments, the committee-reported substitute amendment, as amended, if amended, be agreed to; the bill, as amended, be read the third time, passed, and the motion to reconsider be laid upon the table.

The Presiding Officer asked: Is there objection?

The Republican side: Objection.

The objections to this go back months. So what is this about today, the Republican leader says? It is about the truth. It is about the Republicans stalling everything that comes up—everything—and then to have the audacity to come to the floor and say: We are not stalling anything.

We should have been on this bill a long time ago.

And during the period of time the Republican leader complains we were having numerous Iraq votes, we were trying to change the course in Iraq, Mr. President, because it needed changing, and it still does.

We have been here I don't know how many seconds this morning, but every second we have been here we have been spending $5,000 in Iraq—$5,000 a second or $12 billion a month. During the period of time he complains about our offering amendments related to the war in Iraq, our troops were getting killed at the rate of more than one a day. Tens of thousands have been wounded. A third of them are missing eyes. Their minds aren't good. One-fifth of them have brain problems—injuries to their brains. We have more than 3,000 double amputees and thousands and thousands of single amputees. We have an obligation to the American people to talk about the war in Iraq, and we are going to continue to do that.

So we don't apologize to anyone for the votes we took on Iraq. The first many years of this war—a 6-year war now—the war went along with the Republican leadership in the House and the Senate doing nothing about the war except patting the President on the back. We have not done that. We have been critical of the operation of the war in Iraq, but we have done everything we can to support our troops. We were the first to call for more body armor for the troops. We were the first to call for up-arming the vehicles so they wouldn't be killed as easily in those vehicles. We have done everything we can to support the troops. We have done everything we can to change the course of the war in Iraq.

The President has not allowed us to change the course of the war in Iraq, and we are here today for the truth. The truth is, we are trying to legislate for the American people and change the status quo. The Republicans want to maintain the status quo.

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. The Republican leader.

Mr. MCCONNELL. Mr. President, with all due respect to my good friend, the majority leader, the American people are giving Congress such low approval ratings principally because of the rhetoric and the tone and the feeling that we can't accomplish anything.

I don't know why, on this particular Tuesday morning, at about the time we are going to go to a bill on which we could achieve an important bipartisan accomplishment, we want to engage in this kind of rancorous debate. We will have plenty of highly contentious issues to come before us. That is the nature of the legislative process. And certainly we have spirited debates in the Senate. But on the measure that we are about to go to later today, I think there will be very little difference of opinion, and at the end of the process we are likely to have a bipartisan accomplishment that we can all feel good about.

So I would hope we could improve our moods and attitudes this week as

we go forward and see if we can't accomplish something important for the veterans of our country.

I yield the floor.

RESERVATION OF LEADER TIME

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

MORNING BUSINESS

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. Under the previous order, the Senate will proceed to a period of morning business for up to 1 hour, with Senators permitted to speak 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 ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. The Senator from Texas.

IRAQ SUPPLEMENTAL

Mr. CORNYN. Mr. President, I, too, am confident that we will pass important legislation on a bipartisan basis this week to provide the benefits to veterans that they have earned and that they deserve, but we can't forget the unfinished business of this Congress last December when we wrapped up the fiscal year 2008 appropriations bill and we left a balance of more than $100 billion that the Department of Defense said it needed to fight the global war on terror.

In other words, it is important to support our veterans, but I would submit it is equally important to make sure we are supporting our troops currently in the fight and in harm's way, and this Congress has an unfortunate record of delaying that and playing political games with that money. It is time that should end.

In the Army alone, this shortfall amounts to $66 billion. As a result, the Army will run out of pay for Active Duty and National Guard soldiers in June unless Congress acts promptly.

At the same time, funding for extra vehicle armor, hospital construction and renovation, and new service vehicles will dry up. Our troops will not have the resources they need to carry out their mission unless we act soon to pass this emergency supplemental appropriation.

Provincial reconstruction teams will also run out of funding. These teams are an integral part of our strategy in Iraq and go a long way to fostering growth, freedom, and good ties to the Iraqi communities and ensuring we win the battle for hearts and minds as well.

We have also appropriated less than half of what the military leaders in Iraq tell us they need for the Commanders' Emergency Response Program, or CERP, which is essential for continued bottom-up reconciliation efforts. We should not hold this funding hostage to political gains, and it should not become a vessel for porkbarrel projects and bloated spending.

We should pass a clean emergency supplemental funding bill for our troops as soon as we possibly can, and I hope immediately following the passage of this legislation we are on today.

HONORING OUR ARMED FORCES

STAFF SERGEANT JUSTIN YOUNG

Mr. CORNYN. Mr. President, it is my honor to speak today about a young man whose courage and strength have earned him the Silver Star, and more importantly the respect and admiration of all those who have heard about his story.

SSG Justin Young was born in Mesquite, TX, just outside of Dallas. The son of John Young and Kathy Sutton, Justin was a swimmer for the Boerne High School Greyhounds. After graduating, he told his dad he needed to find his priorities and his focus in life. That level of maturity and insight is rare for someone so young, and it already tells you something about the character of Justin Young.

Justin decided what was best for him was to join the U.S. Army. I doubt anyone in this body would deny that the U.S. Army has a long and storied history of taking young men and women with strong character and transforming them into proven soldiers, and also into courageous leaders as well. Justin was no exception.

Just over a year ago, on March 24, Justin and the rest of the 82nd Airborne were conducting operations in Diyala Province in Iraq. As the squad leader with C Troop, Justin led his nine-soldier squad into a compound in Qubbah, Iraq, a location where known enemy fighters were entrenched.

Once inside the compound, Justin and his troops quickly encountered armed insurgents. Justin disarmed and detained a guard before pressing on. In the confusion of the initial entry, Sergeant Young was ambushed by a hidden fighter about 10 feet away. The enemy fired his AK–47 assault rifle, hitting Justin's rifle three times and striking Justin once in the chest. The force of these shots sprayed shrapnel up into Justin's neck and knocked him off his feet.

Injured, and with a broken weapon, Justin killed his attacker and got to his feet. Now, it is difficult for us here in the comfort of our Nation's Capitol to imagine what such a fight for one's life must be like. We can only try to imagine the chaos and confusion, the adrenaline, the pain, and the fear. You wouldn't blame anyone for pulling back after something like that. But, frankly, that is one thing that makes these young men and women so exceptional, and that is what makes them the U.S. Army.

Justin got up, took a confiscated enemy AK–47 and three magazines, and refusing medical attention, continued to lead his troops through 5 more days of fighting. That is, Mr. President, the kind of courage, strength, and selflessness that ought to leave all of us in awe.

Justin finished out his 15-month assignment in Iraq in August and came home, a hero to many—perhaps not the least of which being his father. Try as he might, his dad John simply could not put into words how proud he was and is of his son. After having dinner with Justin's unit at Fort Bragg, he said simply, ''He's unbelievable and so are his friends.'' Both Justin and his father would be quick to remind us that even though Justin received this medal, it is all the men and women serving in our military who deserve our admiration and respect.

John told me that while ''Justin was there for his buddies, they were there for him, too.'' Soldiers like Justin and his squadmates are a prime example of the great commitment all of our troops share, not only to each other but to our country as well. As such, they serve two of the most noble principles the world will ever know.

What is Justin doing now? Having found his focus and oriented his priorities, with an example of true courage and dedication, Justin reenlisted in the Army just before finishing his first tour. Despite his harrowing experience, Justin stood in the sands of Iraq and he raised his right hand and swore to continue his service to the defense of our great Nation. Recognizing his great courage and leadership, Justin is now training with the hopes of joining the special forces.

That is why I wanted to come to the floor today and honor Justin's exemplary service to our country. He is just one example of the bravery, courage, and strength of thousands of Texans, both past and present, who have served in the U.S. military.

I yield the floor.

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

SUPPLEMENTAL APPROPRIATIONS

Mr. KYL. Mr. President, I appreciate my colleague from Texas putting a personal face on this war. Our young men and women are making tremendous sacrifices. We here in the Congress should be willing to do our part to ensure they succeed in their mission. Hearing a story like Justin's simply confirms that we should redouble our efforts to fund what they need to carry out their mission.

The majority leader talked a little bit earlier about delays with the legislation that is currently pending before the Senate. It is going to take us 2 or 3 days, presumably, to complete this legislation that is currently pending—2 or 3 days. That is not a big delay in the Senate. But 14 months is a big delay, and that is the time since the President first asked for the supplemental

appropriations to help fund our troops fighting in Iraq and Afghanistan—14 months ago. That is a real delay. It is because I believe the majority party believed they could delay and delay and thereby apply pressure to accomplish one of two objectives—either put pressure on the administration to back off of the war effort or, knowing we are now really up against a funding crunch, put pressure on the President to accept a lot of unrelated spending, spending that has to do with our pet projects here at home. That is on the theory that the President would have to sign a bill because our troops are so desperate for the funding they need, even if that bill includes a lot of unrelated spending Members of Congress want for their folks back home. We should not submit to what I would refer to as legislative blackmail, to hold our troops hostage, in effect, for this domestic spending. Nothing else explains this 14-month delay.

We have already been told by the Secretary of Defense that it is critical that this supplemental funding be provided to the troops to prevent a slowdown in daily efforts in training and equipping, the halting of military operations and enabling us to replace lost or damaged equipment for ongoing operations. All of these are implicated by this delay.

General Petraeus, when he was back here, added another reason. He stressed the importance of this supplemental appropriations to further progress in Iraq. Here is what he said:

> The Commander's Emergency Response Program, the State Department's Quick Response Fund, and the USAID programs enable us to help Iraq deal with its challenges. To that end, I respectfully ask that you provide us by June the additional CERP funds requested in the supplemental. These funds have an enormous impact.

In other words, it is not just the funds to buy the equipment and support our troops for their mission there but also to enable our military to provide what is necessary to enable the Iraqi people and the Iraqi Government there to succeed.

All of these are reasons for acting with speed. Yet for 14 months Congress has delayed the supplemental funding.

The Director of the Office of Management and Budget, Jim Nussle, stated during his testimony last week to the Senate Appropriations Committee that if the supplemental request is not provided to the DOD by Memorial Day, then the Army and Marine Corps will be forced to take funding from other areas of their operations budget and will even have to start laying off civilians and contractor personnel. It will certainly force the Pentagon to use short-term expedients which are very costly. In other words, instead of having the ability to spread out their contracts over time, which is a much more economical way of acquiring services and equipment, the Pentagon is forced to pay a premium for short-term contracting, and it is forced to move funds from general accounts to support priority expenditures specifically related to the conflict in Iraq and Afghanistan. This is already adversely impacting the Department of Defense.

Clearly, military planners are leery of engaging in a new operation when they do not even know that the material assets they are going to need for that operation are going to be available or that what they have available today is not going to be replaced in the future because this supplemental funding has not been provided.

We have no more important obligation as Members of the Senate than funding our troops when they are in the middle of a battle. That is precisely the situation right now.

In fact, let me just quote something that was said just a couple of days ago by Ayman al-Zawahiri, currently the leader of al-Qaida. Here is what he said in a long audio message, among other things:

> Iraq today is now the most important arena in which our Muslim nation is waging the battle against the forces of the Crusader-Zionist campaign. Therefore, backing the Mujahidin in Iraq, led by the Islamic State of Iraq, is the most important task of the Islamic nation today.

We are in a war, and what Zawahiri said in one sense is right. This is the most important arena in which this conflict is currently playing itself out. We have a choice: to leave in defeat or to continue to assure victory.

We have sent our troops in harm's way to achieve their mission. They are accomplishing it. The surge General Petraeus has implemented is working. It is up to us to do our part in this effort. All we have to do is have a brief debate and a vote, and the vote is to send money the troops need to sustain their operation. We have known this now for 14 months, yet Congress continues to dither. Now we have run out of time.

There has been a suggestion that in this effort to fund our troops, we should combine all of the spending into one massive appropriations bill. It would be well over $100 billion. If all it does is fund the troops, then that is fine. But if it is used, as I said before, as a way for the majority to sneak through either unrequested defense spending or our favorite other domestic pet projects, that would be a grave injustice to our troops.

I note the distinguished chairman of one of the subcommittees in the House of Representatives on the Appropriations Committee has revealed that he is ready to move the particular bill here because he is going to use it as a way to add other items to the Pentagon, including additional Navy warships and the procurement of new C–17s and F–22 fighter planes beyond what the Defense Department has budgeted. Maybe those are good defense expenditures, maybe not, but the reality is that they should stand on their own two feet as part of a general authorization and appropriations process and not be put on the backs of this supplemental appropriations bill which is what is needed to fund our efforts in Iraq and Afghanistan.

Others have been looking at the supplemental as an opportunity to increase funding for their favorite nondefense programs. It has been suggested by members of the Senate Appropriations Committee last week that some $24 billion in nondefense spending might be added for that purpose.

As I said, Congress should not be extorted into supplying nonwar spending on this supplemental appropriations bill, the emergency bill to fund our war effort. Any effort to do that I suggest should be rejected—among other things, because we know the President has said he will veto a war supplemental funding bill that contains nonwar-related items or strings attached such as some kind of a timetable for troop withdrawal from Iraq. Knowing that is going to be vetoed, it would be irresponsible for the Congress to go ahead and send him a bill and take additional time to get the bill back and redo it in a way that will be not vetoed.

The bottom line is that we have to take care of our troops. We have to support them in the mission we have sent them to achieve. It is time that we get about that, and I urge my colleagues, when the war supplemental comes to this body—hopefully next week—to act with alacrity, we will pass it and not hold it hostage to our other spending priorities that do not relate to our efforts in Iraq and Afghanistan.

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. The Senator from Oklahoma.

Mr. COBURN. Mr. President, I wish to spend a minute talking about what a supplemental is because oftentimes the words we use up here do not have the clarity for the American public as to what they really mean. A supplemental appropriation is an appropriation that is outside the budget. What does that mean and what does that mean to the average taxpayer? That means all the money that is used to pay for the supplemental will be borrowed. It is not coming from taxes today. It does not fit inside the pay-go rules. It purely and simply is borrowed from our children.

I have significant problems with that. If you look back at our history, President Roosevelt cut 29 percent out of his favorite domestic programs during World War II. President Truman cut 26 percent out of domestic programs to pay for the Korean war. We routinely, year after year, charge the war to our children.

I raise the issue for two points. No. 1 is that is the way the President has chosen to do it, and I fault him as well as the Congress. But No. 2 is this great propensity of ''legislators'' who add everything including the kitchen sink to it because it is a free pass and it is outside the budget.

The last appropriations bill that we did that was a supplemental had $17

billion added to it that did not have anything to do with the war, didn't have anything to do with priorities in this country, didn't have anything to do with that other than adding things on because it was outside the budget so they could spend more inside the budget.

I am in my fourth year in the Senate. One of the things we have done ever since I have been here is try to root out waste, fraud, and abuse. There is no question right now that in the Federal budget—almost $3 trillion—over $300 billion right now that is in the appropriated programs and in the mandatory programs is lost to fraud, waste, and abuse. So we are going to be bringing a bill to the floor for $120 or $107 billion, plus probably another $10 or $15 billion that the porkers will add to it and oink all the way, and nobody is going to offer anything to offset it out of the fraud, waste, and abuse—the waste we have because we are not paying attention to the running of the Government. We hear this big debate about earmarks, the prerogative to make sure that we point to things. The fact is, the way you point out things is to do oversight on the waste, fraud, and abuse.

If you think this is not accurate, let me give you a list of where the waste is. There is $90 billion worth of fraud in Medicare right now, and there is $10 billion that we pay that we inherently pay wrongly. So that comes to over $100 billion in Medicare alone that should not be going out the door. We are not doing a thing about it. Nobody is going to offer an amendment. It will not even be judged as in order with the rules, to get rid of the fraud in Medicare. Medicaid is same thing—$30 billion in fraud, $15 billion in overpayments for people that we just made a mistake in paying. No, there is not going to be anything offered during the supplemental to fix that, so right there you have $125, $130 billion that would pay—just in fixing Medicare and Medicaid fraud.

There will not be a rule that will allow us to vote on that. There will not be a way for us to do it because that is hard work, and we do not want to do the hard work.

Social Security disability fraud, $2.5 billion; the governmentwide overpayments, improper payments, overpayments for other things, $15 billion. These are not my numbers, these are documented numbers by either the GAO, the Congressional Budget Office or the IGs; $8 billion that the Defense Department pays out for bonuses for companies that did not earn the bonus or performance awards.

There is not going to be anything in this to fix that. It is not even going to be made in order. And $4 billion that we are being defrauded on a crop insurance modernization program, where we allow for crop insurance a higher rate of return than any other casualty or insurance company could earn.

No bid contracts, $5 billion. U.N. contributions that are purely waste, that get defrauded and wasted, $2 billion. We buy $64 billion worth of IT projects a year, and at least 20 percent of it is wasted. That is another $12.8 billion.

Nobody is going to fix that on this. No, we are going to borrow the money from our children. So I raise the issue that we are going to pass a supplemental, and the games are going to be played on it like they are every year. People are going to add things that are not a priority; they are going to add them in—they are not in the budget—knowing they are going to go straight to the debt. Is it in our interest for us to consider, as we do the supplemental, what we are spending right now per American family on different things?

Let me spend a minute to outline that every American family is paying $8,668 for Medicare and Social Security every year; every American family is paying over $5,000 a year to defend this country; we are spending $3,752 for antipoverty programs every year; we are spending $2,000 a family for interest on the national debt, which is going to be higher next year because we are going to borrow all the supplemental and add that to our debt.

Federal employee retirement benefits cost every family in this country $1,000 a year—$1,000 a year for every family. Veterans' benefits, $750 per family; health research and regulations, $692; education, $578; highway mass transit, $455; unemployment benefits, $320; international affairs, $300.

We have a deficit that is going to be $800 billion this year. While Congress sits on its heels and has debates about legislating or not legislating, we are going to continue the same bad habits of not holding agencies accountable, not being transparent about what we are doing, and we are going to say we funded the war, but we are not going to make any of the hard choices about it.

When this bill comes to the floor, it is going to have $17 to $20 billion that does not have anything to do with the war but has everything to do with political directives outside the budget so we can spend more money.

Washington does not need a raise, it needs a cut. It is time for us to pay for the war by getting rid of the waste, fraud, and abuse in this Federal Government. Unfortunately, there is not the character or the courage in either the House or the Senate to take on that fight because it might impact political careers.

So as you listen to the debate when we come up with the supplemental, we need to fund our troops, there is no question about it, but we should not be funding our troops on the backs of our children. We should be funding our troops on the backs of us, and we ought to be doing that every time.

So I am going to do all in my power to try to offer amendments to offset the funds in this war supplemental. I know the rules will prohibit me from doing many of them. But I am not going to stop talking. I am not going to stop talking about the $350 billion that goes down the drain and steals the future and opportunity from our children.

That is exactly what we are going to be doing. And we are going to be smiling all the way through and patting ourselves on the back that we funded the war. But we did it on the backs of those who do not have the same opportunities we were given. We are going to steal those opportunities from the next two generations.

It is time for Congress to start doing its job. That means tough, rigorous oversight and staying within the budget guidelines and spending the money like it was ours, not like we had an unending credit card that never comes due.

I yield the floor.

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. The Senator from Maryland.

FAIR PAY RESTORATION ACT

Ms. MIKULSKI. Mr. President, thank you very much. I too wish to speak as in morning business.

All over America today, people are celebrating Earth Day. But we, the women of the Senate, have another day we are commemorating, it is called Pay Equity Day. That means women should get paid equal pay for equal or comparable work.

You are going see the women of the Senate dressed in red today. We are going to be on the Senate floor, we are going to be in our committees, and we are going to be doing our job. But we wear the color red with solidarity for women all over who say: We are red in the face because of the way women have been treated in terms of our pay.

Right now, in the year 2008, women still make less money per hour than men for the same or comparable job. If that was not hard enough about the business practices, we actually have a Supreme Court that agreed with discrimination.

So today we come to the floor with legislation that has been developed, on a bipartisan basis, to reverse a Supreme Court decision called the Ledbetter decision.

You have to hear this. Last May, the Supreme Court made an outrageous decision that said women cannot get equal pay for equal work if they do not do it within the first 180 days that a discrimination occurs. The decision was sexist, it was biased, and it did not understand the reality of women's lives or the reality of the workplace.

Their decision was a step backward for women, and it hit women right in the pocketbook. It violates the American concept of fairness and justice and equal treatment under the law.

Let me tell you about Lilly Ledbetter, who brought the case to the Supreme Court. I met her in the HELP Committee—the Health, Education, Labor Committee—when we were listening to the testimony about it. I listened to her story. This is a woman

now who is beyond middle-age, who has worked 19 years for the Goodyear Corporation.

Systematically, she was underpaid from the day she walked in that door. Not only did she get less pay for the work that she did, but she did not get comparable raises when the men got theirs.

What does that mean? Not only did she have less earnings in her work, though she worked as hard, received excellent ratings, and was promoted, but it also now will show up in her pension; she will get less Social Security and she will get less pension. So remember, when discrimination begins, it is compounded over a lifetime.

Now, Lilly Ledbetter is a real American. She fought the system on her own time and with great risk. She fought the discrimination and took it to the Equal Opportunity Commission, took it to the courts, and then took it all the way up to the Supreme Court. Along the way, she had to raise her own money to do this, while the big corporate interests at Goodyear had fat-cat, billable-hours lawyers against her.

She faced sexual harassment in the workplace because she dared to speak up and speak out. Well, Lilly Ledbetter would not give up. If she was the only case in America, it would be wrong, but this is a persistent pattern in the workplace. And also it has now been approved by the Supreme Court.

The Supreme Court said: Someone cannot sue their employer over unequal pay if that person does not file suit within 180 days after the pay was established.

Once again, the Supreme Court does not get it. How many women know the salary of their coworkers, especially in the first 6 months on the job? The reality of the workplace is that often people are forbidden to talk about their salaries. What if you were hired at an equal rate with your male counterpart, but he gets a raise every few months and you do not? The Supreme Court decision was outrageous. It was so bad that Justice Ruth Bader Ginsburg, God bless her, God bless Justice Ruth, she stood up and actually spoke from the bench to read her dissenting opinion.

That is unprecedented. Usually, they file it and let it go into the history books. But Justice Ginsburg wanted to put the world and this Congress on notice that we better act. Justice Ginsburg said in her dissenting opinion:

> In our view, the court does not comprehend or is indifferent to the insidious way in which women can be victims of pay discrimination.

She encouraged the Congress to fix it, and we will fix it. We will. Unfortunately, wage discrimination exists. Woman now earn 77 percent for every dollar our male counterpart makes. Women of color even get paid less. African-American women get paid 68 cents for every dollar a White man makes. That is almost a 40-percent difference.

The Supreme Court decision will make it almost impossible for women workers to close this wage gap and to get the remedy they deserve, and what they should get, under our doctrine of fairness, is equal pay for equal or comparable work.

From the bench, Justice Ginsburg did call on the Congress for action. She said, ''Correct the mistake.''

Well, when Justice Ruth speaks, and by the way, do we not miss our Justice Sandra Day O'Connor? Justice Alito wrote the primary assenting opinion. They told us the Court made a mistake and the Congress could fix it. Well, fix it we will. We will be soon voting on the legislative process in the bill itself to right this wrong. We will be voting on legislation that will correct this mistake.

This legislation was authored by our great Galahad in the Senate, Senator KENNEDY. He did it in consultation with we, the women in the Senate: Senator CLINTON, myself, Senator SNOWE, women on both sides of the aisle. He reached out to us. We reached out to the best legal thinking.

This bill will amend title VII of the Civil Rights Act of 1964. This bill will amend the Civil Rights Act of 1964, so the statute of limitations for an employee to file a wage discrimination suit runs from the date of the actual payment of the discriminatory wage, not from the hiring. So every time you get a paycheck, it will be an act of discrimination, which will reset the clock so you can file your case.

That means employees can sue employers based on each discriminating paycheck, and it does not limit the time a worker can get the remedy she deserves. This bill is about fairness, justice, and respect. Is it not time, is it not time? When we think about Lilly Ledbetter and all those wonderful women similar to her, a woman who worked for 19 years, she was not exactly sure when the disparity developed, she could not quite get to all that.

A jury found they had discriminated against her. They awarded her $400,000 in backpay. The Supreme Court took it away from her. Well, today, we are going to give it back to her. We are going to make sure she and her guts and her grit, in standing up for herself, has stood up for all women.

We who are the women of the Senate stand up as well, I believe also with the very good men who work with us. Men of quality never fear women who seek equality. We are doing that today. We believe in this country all people are created equal. We need to make sure it is in the Federal law books and in your personal checkbook.

All people are created equal in the Federal lawbook and in your personal checkbook. People should be judged by their skills, their competence, and by the job they do. Once you get that job because of your skills and talent, you should get equal pay for equal or comparable work.

Lilly Ledbetter was an honest and hard-working person for 19 years. She is entitled to every cent she worked for. Because Lilly Ledbetter stood up, we rise with her. We are going to correct the Supreme Court decision. We are going to pass this reform legislation that is called the Fair Pay Restoration Act. We ask the Presiding Officer to join with us today. For all of us who wear red, this is going to be a great victory.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Mr. TESTER). The Senator from Washington.

Mrs. MURRAY. Mr. President, I come to join my colleague from Maryland, the distinguished Senator MIKULSKI, who has always fought for women's rights because she knows that is what will make our country strong. I serve on the Health, Education, and Labor Committee with the Senator from Maryland. We saw Lilly Ledbetter come before our committee to speak about her experience in a factory where she was not given fair pay. Over time it went all the way to the Supreme Court, where she lost her right in her own lifetime to ever be compensated for the pay she lost because she wasn't treated fairly. She came before our committee, and she was such a woman of dignity and courage, not speaking for herself—anything we do on the floor won't help her personally—but speaking for all women who will come behind her for decades, to make sure they have the right to get equal pay when they are performing an equal job.

I thank Senator MIKULSKI for her leadership and urge our colleagues tomorrow to vote with us so we can go to the Lilly Ledbetter Fair Pay Act and once and for all assure that our daughters and future generations will have access to equal pay.

This Senate has a very proud history of working across the aisle to pass civil rights laws. Those historic laws ensure that all people have equal rights, regardless of race, religion, gender, or national origin. I am proud that they ensure that my daughter now has the right to work in the same jobs and achieve the same success as my son. But even though women are doing the same jobs as men and working as hard every day, they still are not equal on one important day. That is payday. On payday, women will take home 77 cents for every dollar paid to their male coworkers. That pay gap is even wider for African-American and Latino women. African-American women earn 67 cents on the dollar and Latino women earn 56 cents for every dollar a white man makes. I know some people out there say: That can't be true. It is true.

I rise on Equal Pay Day to recognize that we still have a lot of work to do to ensure fairness in society. Tomorrow is the day the Senate can go on record saying we in this country are going to stand behind the women and men and their children who rely on them to bring home a paycheck.

The pay gap that exists is true regardless of skill or education. It is so deeply engrained in society that many jobs dominated by women pay less than jobs dominated by men, even when the work they do is almost exactly the same. In my State of Washington, a woman with a college degree earns about $20,000 less than a man with the same education. According to a study by the American Association of University Women, the difference in pay starts as soon as that woman enters the workforce. That study found that within a year after graduating from college, a woman will already earn less than her male classmates in nearly every major. So that is a problem when one starts out. It is also a lifelong problem, because by the end of her career, a female worker will have lost an average of $250,000 in earnings.

It is just as important to make it clear that the pay gap is a problem for everyone. This disparity hurts millions of families. In almost 10 million households, mothers are the only breadwinners, and in many cases those women are also supporting parents and extended family members. In far too many of those households women have to struggle to pay for rent or heat or food or gas, especially today as prices are rising. Think of how much better off families would be if a woman were paid a wage equal to men, especially as the economic downturn grows worse and expenses rise.

If women and men made an equal wage, single working women would have 17 percent more income each and every year. Ensuring they earn a fair paycheck could cut the poverty rate in half. Wage disparity follows those women into retirement. Women today are twice as likely to live in poverty over the age of 65. Women are more dependent upon Social Security for a greater percentage of their retirement income. All of us are staring down the looming Social Security crisis. Think how much better off we would be if women could save a little more for retirement and contribute more to Social Security.

My colleagues and I should not have to be here talking about this today. I should not have to come to the floor in the year 2008 to make a case for equal pay. Not only is it a no-brainer, but fairness and equality are fundamental American values. We are not asking for special treatment. We are here because, despite all the work done to ensure equal rights, women haven't achieved equality. We are here because we run the risk that pay discrimination laws are growing weaker, not stronger, if we don't act.

As Senator MIKULSKI discussed, the Supreme Court last May took a big step backward with its decision on Ledbetter v. Goodyear. That decision went against Congress's intent and 40 years of EEOC practice. It made it almost impossible for workers who suffer pay discrimination to now seek justice.

Today on Equal Pay Day, we urge our colleagues to support legislation that would reverse that decision and ensure workers have a fair shot at fighting discrimination. The Ledbetter decision requires many workers to file a claim within 180 days after their employer discriminates against them, but it does not recognize that in many cases workers don't even know they have been discriminated against for years. It may take them much longer than 180 days to gather the proof. Frankly, for women in the workplace to be aggressive in finding out how much other people get paid in order to even file a case is very difficult. This sounds an awful lot like the Supreme Court is asking our workers to be mindreaders. That is unfair. It is not what Congress intended when we created that law in the first place.

The Ledbetter Fair Pay Act will allow workers to file a claim within 180 days of any discriminatory paycheck. It gives workers the ability to discover the facts and to challenge ongoing discrimination. Although the Ledbetter case involved gender discrimination, the decision applies to all kinds of discrimination, including religion, race, age, disability, and national origin.

Our Nation was founded on the principle that all of its citizens are created equal. We think they ought to be equal on payday as well. As a mother and grandmother, I want my children to live in a country where my daughter can earn as much as my son. Now is the time to ensure that that can be true by strengthening our pay discrimination laws. Now is the time to ensure the Senate's history of civil rights cannot be eroded.

Tomorrow is an important day for women and men. I urge my colleagues to vote with us to consider the Fair Pay Act.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Missouri.

Mrs. MCCASKILL. Mr. President, I also rise to talk about Lilly Ledbetter and some practical realities regarding this issue. I had the honor of representing a number of people on discrimination cases during the time I practiced law in Kansas City. I represented people on age discrimination, race discrimination, and gender discrimination. I am familiar with the law before Ledbetter. The thing about this decision that is hardest for me is how unpractical it is. When I was a single mom with three small kids in a job with a lot of responsibility and long hours, I had to be very practical in the way I lived my life. Working women across this country are very practical people. They have to prioritize. They make multitasking a way of life.

I look at this decision from a practical standpoint. Here is what sticks in my craw. They are acting as if when you get a paycheck, immediately some switch is turned on in your head that says: My paycheck is discriminatory.

There is no way women in the workplace can look at their paycheck and immediately determine they have been discriminated against. They don't know what everybody else is making. If you are going to say that someone only has 180 days to file a complaint on discrimination from the date the decision is made to make that complaint, what you are saying is that everybody in the workplace, whether they are an elderly person, whether they are a minority, whether they are a woman, they are going to have to turn into a detective every time they get a paycheck. They are going to have to run around and interview their colleagues as to how much money they are making to make sure their paycheck is fair. That is dumb. That is just dumb.

First, you are not even supposed to talk about your paycheck in the workplace. In many places of employment, the boss says it is against policy to discuss with other people what their salary is or what your pay is. So what we are saying to the women and to the older workforce and to members of minorities is: Now you have to figure out what is in the head of your employer. And by the way, you have 6 months.

If I were an employer in America, I would say: Hey, talk about hurting productivity.

Instead, doesn't it make sense that we should be able to show a pattern of discrimination that is reflected in a series of paychecks? Of course, it does. Who has the best knowledge as to whether someone is being discriminated against? I will guarantee you, it is not the person receiving the check. I think about the cases I represented and what kind of incredibly high bar it would have been for each one of those individuals to figure out in 180 days whether their paycheck was fair.

It is funny how people around this place talk about activist judges. I have a feeling that when we debate this issue today and tomorrow, and as this vote occurs, we won't hear a word from the other side about activist judges. This was, in fact, a Supreme Court decision that radically changed the law as we knew it, as it has been practiced in this country, as it has, in fact, been embraced by this country. This Court, by the narrowest of margins, said 5 to 4 that they were going to upset all that law and make it very difficult for people in the workplace to have their day in the bright sunshine of justice.

I am tempted to call it an activist judiciary. They are out of control. We have to do something about the judiciary. Instead, what we need to do is what we have always done in our history. We have to correct it. By the way, that decision spoke to us in terms of asking us, in the dissent, to take the steps necessary to put the law back where it was before that fateful day last summer when the Supreme Court said to the people who have been discriminated against: We are going to make it really hard for you to hold your employer accountable.

This is not a twilight zone of liability for companies. This is a situation where all the damages that someone

can receive is just 2 years, regardless of how long the discrimination has gone on. Mr. President, 180 days is a very short period of time in terms of filing a complaint—much shorter than any other statute of limitations that is out there for any wrong anyone suffers in our country.

I think people need to remember how Lilly found out about this. The jury found in her favor. The EEOC found in her favor. The law was in her favor—until the Supreme Court overturned it.

How did she find out she was being discriminated against? She had been there all these years. She had started out on an even keel with the colleagues who were men. Someone slipped her an anonymous note. There is not a tote board somewhere she could have checked. Someone slipped her an anonymous note in the workplace and said: Hey, do you realize what is happening to you? You need to start asking some questions about what is happening to your pay.

This is not just about women. This is also about the older workforce. By the way, with the economy the way it is right now, under this administration, people are having to work longer. People who used to think they could retire at 62—forget about that—they are working into their late sixties, into their seventies. In fact, we have many Members in this body who are working hard every day who are well beyond their early seventies who are contributing on a daily basis to this place. Should those people be discriminated against because they are older? Should they have to figure out in 180 days that a younger colleague is making a bigger paycheck?

What about the minorities in this country? This is not just about women. This is about discrimination. We need to send a very clear signal to the rest of the country that we understand we have to fix this and we have to fix it quickly.

This is not a bunch of whining over something that is not important. That 22 cents in Missouri that a woman makes less than a man is important. It is important to pay for the gas. It is important to pay for the daycare. It is important in order to make the bills come out even.

In Missouri, the figure is that women earn 78 cents for every $1 earned by men. The median annual income for a man with a college degree in Missouri, from the years 2004 to 2006, was $59,000. For a woman with the same amount of education, it was $46,000. The American Association of University Women did that study in the State of Missouri.

We need to unite behind this legislation. This is not going to be onerous for employers out there. It is fair. It is just fair. It is what we pledge allegiance to every day in this room: equal justice for all. Let's make sure we fix this. Let's make sure we move and pass this bill and send it to the President. I will tell you what, if this President has the nerve to veto this bill, I know a lot of women in America who are going to wake up and get busy before November.

Thank you, Mr. President.

I suggest the absence of a quorum.

Mr. DURBIN. Mr. President, I would like to be recognized, if I could. I ask to speak in morning business.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Will the Senator withhold the suggestion?

Mrs. MCCASKILL. Yes.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Illinois.

VETERANS' BENEFITS ENHANCEMENT ACT

Mr. DURBIN. Mr. President, this morning on the floor of the Senate is a bill entitled the Veterans' Benefits Enhancement Act of 2007. Nine months ago, this bill came out of committee, and this bill is now on the floor and to be considered.

Back in November of last year, I asked for permission to bring this bill up for consideration in the Senate and have amendments. It is the orderly process of the Senate, a deliberative process: a debate—and one might expect that is what we do around here. But, sadly, at that point the Republican minority objected to bringing up the Veterans' Benefits Enhancement Act, even though it had passed out of the committee with an overwhelmingly positive vote.

What is included in this bill? A long list of important changes in the law, changes which will give to our veterans, especially those returning now disabled from combat, benefits they absolutely need: housing, education.

In addition, there is a provision in here which I support—was happy to join as a cosponsor—related to Filipino World War II veterans. I think it is long overdue that the U.S. Senate recognize the contribution made by so many Filipinos in World War II to the success of our war effort. They fought so gallantly and courageously and stood by our troops at a moment we desperately needed their help. Those who are not students of history may have forgotten or never read that our fight in the Philippines was a bitter, long, and tragic battle that ended well but only after great sacrifice by the Filipino people, by the Filipino soldiers, and by our American soldiers.

This provision in the bill related to veterans:

> would deem certain service before July 1, 1946, in the organized military forces of the Philippines and the Philippine Scouts as active military service for purposes of eligibility for veterans benefits.
>
> [It] would provide that the children of deceased or totally-disabled service-connected Filipino veterans who qualify for educational benefits would be paid at the same rate and under the same conditions as the children of other veterans.

Mr. President, this is long overdue.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Time for morning business is expired.

CONCLUSION OF MORNING BUSINESS

Mr. DURBIN. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent to speak for 10 minutes on the bill.

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

Mr. DURBIN. Mr. President, would the clerk report the motion to proceed to the bill at this point, or should I proceed?

The PRESIDING OFFICER. It is appropriate to close morning business and then report the motion to proceed.

Morning business is closed.

VETERANS' BENEFITS ENHANCEMENT ACT—MOTION TO PROCEED

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Under the previous order, the Senate will resume the motion to proceed to S. 1315, which the clerk will report.

The bill clerk read as follows:

> A motion to proceed to the bill (S. 1315) to amend title 38, United States Code, to enhance life insurance benefits for disabled veterans, and for other purposes.

Mr. DURBIN. Mr. President, I see Senator KLOBUCHAR on the floor. I think she was coming to speak in morning business, and I may have used the minute or two that was remaining for her. I wish to address the motion to proceed to the bill that is pending, but since she is on the floor, I would like to give her a chance to speak at this moment before I do. So I ask—if it meets with the approval of the Senator from North Carolina—unanimous consent that the Senator from Minnesota be recognized for——

Ms. KLOBUCHAR. Five minutes.

Mr. DURBIN. Five minutes, and that following her remarks, I be recognized for 10 minutes to speak on the pending motion to proceed.

Mr. BURR. Mr. President, reserving the right to object, and I do not plan on objecting, if the 5 minutes is to come out of the majority's time for the debate—which the time is split between now and 12 o'clock between the majority and minority—if Senator KLOBUCHAR's time comes out of the majority's time, fine.

Mr. DURBIN. Mr. President, it is my understanding Senator AKAKA wants to speak for up to 10 minutes. So I am trying to figure out—we have 38 minutes remaining before the vote, so that would allow 19 minutes per side. If Senator AKAKA needs 10 minutes, I would ask for 4 minutes and yield 5 minutes to Senator KLOBUCHAR, if that meets with the Senator's approval.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Is there objection?

The Chair hears none, and it is so ordered.

The Senator from Minnesota.

Ms. KLOBUCHAR. Mr. President, I say to my colleague from Illinois, thank you very much. I appreciate the time. If I go less than 5 minutes, I will give you back the rest of the time.

EQUAL PAY DAY

Mr. President, I am proud to join with my colleagues today, many of whom were here earlier—Senator MIKULSKI, Senator MURRAY, Senator BOXER, and Senator MCCASKILL—in support of Equal Pay Day.

In 1961, President John F. Kennedy appointed Eleanor Roosevelt as chairwoman of the President's Status on Women Commission.

In 1963, the Commission's findings enumerated rampant discrimination against women in the workplace: in hiring, in accommodations, and in pay. This was part of the larger catalyst to finally pass—that same year—the Equal Pay Act.

It is a sad reality that still, 88 years after the 19th amendment gave women equal voting power and 45 years after the passage of the Equal Pay Act, it takes women 16 months to earn what men can earn in 12 months. In other words, today, Equal Pay Day, marks the day it takes women to finally catch up to where men were back in January.

But Eleanor Roosevelt was a strong, wise woman, and she brought to that first Commission her personal philosophy that ''It's better to light a candle than to curse the darkness.'' That is why it is so important that the Senate take up the Lilly Ledbetter Fair Pay Act on the floor this week. We must light a candle to the pay discrimination women continue to experience across the country.

This important legislation will reverse a 2007 Supreme Court ruling—Ledbetter v. Goodyear—that significantly limited the rights of individuals to sue for gender-based pay discrimination.

The facts that gave rise to Lilly Ledbetter's case are all too common today. Lilly Ledbetter was a hard worker, working at Goodyear Tire as a manager for 20 years. When she started at Goodyear, all the employees at the manager level started at the same pay. She knew she was getting the same pay as the men did. But early in her tenure as manager, the company went to another system. Payment records were kept confidential, and Lilly did not think to ask what her colleagues were making. She did not think to look at her pay raise and ask if men in the department were getting the same. As the years passed by, the pay differential between what she made and what the male managers were making just kept getting bigger. She only found out about it from an anonymous note from a coworker.

At trial, she was able to prove discrimination. But the company appealed the jury's finding, and the Supreme Court, in a five-to-four decision, decided that Lilly filed her charge too late. Essentially, they read the law to say that she would have had to file it within 180 days of Goodyear making its first discriminatory decision.

Although this decision completely ignores the realities of the workplace—that employee records are kept confidential and that there is no way to know when it starts unless we require women to start the embarrassing practice of asking what men make—we can do what Eleanor Roosevelt says. We can bring the realities to the light. We cannot expect women to challenge practices they do not know are happening, and by passing this law we can start to give women those 4 months back—those extra months it takes to allow them to catch up to their male colleagues.

Mr. President, I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Illinois.

Mr. DURBIN. Mr. President, the Veterans' Benefits Enhancement Act passed out of the committee 9 months ago, and 6 months ago I came to the floor and asked that we consider it. I could not imagine there would be any delay in wanting to bring critical help to our veterans.

This legislation expands eligibility for traumatic injury insurance under the Servicemembers' Group Life Insurance Program. It extends housing benefits to individuals—veterans—with severe burns. It increases benefits for veterans in apprenticeship or on-job training programs. And it restores veteran status to Filipino veterans.

The bill had a positive vote coming out of committee, and the Republican minority objected, 6 months ago, to bringing it up. Then, last week, when we tried to bring up this bill to help the veterans again, the Republicans initiated a filibuster trying to stop us from bringing this bill forward.

This morning, the Republican leader explained it was because the Republicans need to sit down at noon and talk about the bill so they understand it. The bill has been out of committee for 9 months. It is very clear what is in this bill. There was no need for a filibuster—except for the fact that is the strategy of the Republican minority.

So far, the Republicans have filed, during this legislative session, 66 filibusters—and continue to file them—66 filibusters, including a filibuster against this veterans' benefits enhancement bill. They continue to file these filibusters in an effort to slow down or stop the Senate from considering legislation.

Last week, they wanted to stop a technical corrections bill that made corrections in spelling and grammar and a few references in a bill passed years ago. It took us a full week to pass a bill, which should have taken no time at all, because the Republicans slowed us down.

This week is even worse—that they would force a filibuster on a bill to help veterans. Why? Why in the world would they do that? From the beginning, we said if they had an objection to any provision in this bill, they could offer an amendment. I know the Senator from North Carolina objects to giving Filipino war veterans—who served next to American soldiers, risked their lives and died on behalf of Americans—they object to the idea of giving $300 a month to the 18,000 surviving Filipino World War II veterans who would be eligible. They object to it but will not come to the floor and just offer a motion to strike. No. They will filibuster to drag this out for days at a time. This is not fair. It is not fair to the veterans who wait on this important legislation. It certainly is not fair to the Filipino veterans.

You have to understand that during World War II, President Franklin Delano Roosevelt issued a military order calling to service the Commonwealth Army of the Philippines to stand next to American soldiers to fight and die. This entitled—many believe—those who served beside U.S. troops to some recognition from the United States of America. My goodness, how many more years will we wait? Those 470,000 Filipino veterans risked their lives to save American lives and their homeland and to fight for the same values we treasure, and we have put them off that long. A cloture motion was filed, forcing a vote today at noon.

I can tell you that the continued efforts by the Republican minority to stop and stall any efforts for change and progress is being noted by the American people. We only have 51 Democrats. It takes 60 votes to overcome a Republican filibuster, which means we need nine of them to join us. Maybe they will at noon. But the obvious question is, Why did we have to go through this? Why did we have to wait when there was an objection last November? Why did we have to face a filibuster? It is critical to pass the Veterans Benefits Enhancement Act and do what is right for our veterans and the Filipinos who stood beside our troops and fought in World War II.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from North Carolina is recognized.

Mr. BURR. Mr. President, let me say this. It is disingenuous to come to the floor and suggest that I, or any Member of the minority, have stood in the way. I have stood in the way when the conditions to move forward were such that it diluted the minority's ability to represent its Members but, more importantly, the American people, and to limit us in the time of debate and in the amount of amendments. Yes, sir, it was not offered to have a full and open debate. We are in the process—and, as I said, I urge my Members to vote for cloture. I am sorry we have to have the vote, but that is the only thing that assures us the ability to have the time to debate these issues.

I think what you will find is how much we are all in agreement, which is 98 percent, and there is 2 percent on which we have a difference. I respect the chairman and other Members who believe a special pension should be set up for Filipino veterans who live in the Philippines and have no service-connected injury. But I disagree with that as a priority over our guys.

So I plan to offer an amendment that I have never had an opportunity to

offer which embraces 98 percent of what the chairman has in his bill, but it elects to prioritize our soldiers in enhanced benefits over the $221 million that is now devoted to Filipino veterans who live in the Philippines and have no service-connected injury.

I believe it is time for us to stand up for our guys versus that select group to whom there was never a promise made.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Hawaii is recognized.

Mr. AKAKA. Mr. President, I again urge my colleagues to vote for cloture and express their support for consideration of S. 1315, the proposed ''Veterans' Benefits Enhancement Act of 2007.'' This comprehensive bill, reported by the Committee on Veterans' Affairs, would improve benefits and services for veterans, both young and old. We should be debating and voting on this bill now. It has been on the calendar since last August.

It is well past time for this body to address and resolve the differences of opinion on provisions in this bill—so active duty service members, veterans, and their survivors can receive improvements to benefits for which they may be entitled without further delay.

Mr. President, I respect the fact that Members have different points of view on parts of this bill, but I do not understand why there is an unwillingness to debate.

As I noted yesterday, for seven months, all I have asked for is debate on this bill. I reached out in October, November, and December of last year, in an effort to come to an agreement to hold that debate. This session, my efforts to reach a time agreement or to negotiate, including in February after the committee's ranking member introduced an alternate bill to S. 1315, have been rejected time and time again.

Mr. President, I am disappointed that members of the minority have continually stood in the way of veterans receiving the enhanced benefits they deserve. I am discouraged that they have not been willing to engage in debate—the business of the Senate. This is not the way that we should be conducting business on behalf of those who have served under the U.S. flag.

A number of things were mentioned yesterday by my colleague, the committee's ranking member, which seem to demonstrate significant confusion about the process that has brought us here.

For example, the ranking member spoke of being asked to agree to no amendments and limited debate time. That is simply not true. What I asked for was an agreement to limit amendments to the bill to only those that relate to the bill. After identifying such amendments, we would then seek to define the time needed to debate these amendments. This represents the way the Senate most often gets its business done and certainly is the process that the Veterans' Affairs Committee follows on those occasions when there is a need for floor debate.

It may be that my colleague does not believe there should be any limitation on amendments to this bill.

If there is no limitation on what amendments can be offered during debate of this bill, I anticipate that other Senators will bring forward a significant number of amendments. Some will be based on measures considered by the committee and not adopted. Some will be based on measures that were debated by the committee and included in other bills now pending on the calendar. Some will represent issues not yet considered by the committee and thus not subjected to the hearing and debate process. And lastly, I am certain that a number of amendments will represent issues not under this committee's jurisdiction.

That does not appear to me to be a desirable way to get our business done. However, if that is the ranking member's preference, let him say so.

Another misleading statement made by the ranking member was his suggestion that the committee was not willing to talk about changes to the bill. That statement cannot refer to the actual committee process last year—where the provision relating to Filipino veterans was noticed—and an amendment was offered—and debated.

After the bill was reported, I clearly expressed my willingness—on multiple occasions—to reach a compromise on the pension provision. As I noted yesterday, the only debate raised in the committee was on the amount of the pension for Filipino World War II veterans, not on eliminating the pension entirely.

The provision prevailed in committee. Now the ranking member offers one option: to give these elderly Filipino veterans nothing. That is not a compromise.

I am ready to debate the core issue—but I am not prepared to abandon a provision that I believe is right.

I believe it is the moral obligation of this Nation to provide for those Filipino veterans—who fought under the U.S. flag during World War II. We must act to ensure that these veterans are not left to live out their twilight years without acknowledgment that their service during World War II is valued. I am not going to abandon them without a fight.

Mr. President, I ask my colleagues to agree to begin the process of debating this bill. If cloture on the motion to proceed is achieved, I hope that the ranking member will join me and our party leaders to craft a workable agreement that allows for a full debate on this bill—and on his amendment to it—along with any other amendments to provisions in the bill. Once this bill is disposed of, our committee will be in a position to bring forward other bills, including whatever bills we report out of committee later this year.

I look forward to a spirited and in-depth debate on this bill. This is a debate we could have had two months ago or even late last year. Let us not waste any more time. Let us work together to join the issues and have the Senate do its business. I ask my colleagues to join in voting for cloture.

I yield back the remainder of my time.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from North Carolina is recognized.

Mr. BURR. Mr. President, I have a deep respect for my chairman and friend, Senator AKAKA. I think the Senator has suggested that over the course of the last half year we have had some disagreements. I don't expect him to know everything that has been communicated to staff or that my staff communicated to his staff.

The reality is that we are here today, and we each respect each other. We are both honored to serve in the Senate. We both have the same responsibility to the same people—and that is the American taxpayers—to make sure we are fiscally responsible but, more importantly, that we are prudent, that we prioritize things where they are needed the most.

At noon today we will have a cloture vote on the motion to proceed to S. 1315. For one, I have mixed feelings about where we are in the process. I share the frustrations of Chairman AKAKA. The proud tradition of the Senate committee on Veterans' Affairs has been to write laws that improve benefits and services for our veterans. Those laws typically enjoy bipartisan support. As a result, the committee's bills have almost always passed by unanimous consent. In fact, I asked the Senate Library to confirm that for me.

Since 1990, there have been only two rollcall votes on bills reported from the Committee on Veterans' Affairs: the first in the 102d Congress which cleared by a vote of 99 to 0; the second was in the 105th Congress and cleared by a vote of 98 to 0. There were no amendments that received rollcall votes on either of those bills.

This tells me that Republicans and Democrats have always been able to reach a compromise on committee bills out of the Veterans' Affairs Committee. There has been no need for floor debate or rollcall votes when it comes to the veterans bills. The norm is to find a common agreement before moving forward, even on policy issues with which one side or the other may not agree.

This has changed during this Congress with the unprecedented vote on cloture that we will have today. The chairman, in the spirit of our relationship, sent me a letter on, I believe, the 10th of the month requesting that we work on this. The next day, the majority leader of the Senate filed cloture. I am not sure how quickly I am supposed to jump through the hoop for him, but I didn't do it fast enough. I say that with the knowledge that the chairman and I both have that we are not in charge. We don't always make the decisions on the course the Senate will follow.

Let me briefly outline for my colleagues the key disagreement that has held up this bill for so long; namely, the provision that seeks to use $221 million over the next 10 years to create a special pension for Filipino veterans who have no war injuries, are not U.S. citizens, and who reside in the Philippines.

There are four groups of Filipino veterans. Here is a chart. There are the old scouts, who enlisted in the U.S. Army. They are veterans of the U.S. Army through and through. You see in the benefits that is exactly what is displayed. We have the Commonwealth Army of the Philippines, Recognized Guerilla Forces, and new Filipino Scouts, individuals committed to the Armed Forces of the Philippines and, yes, at times were under U.S. command.

The important thing to notice is our disagreement is with the pension for nonservice-connected disability and the death pension for survivors. It is the $221 million that is suggested to create a special pension for 13,000 individuals whom I do not dislike. I do not want any Member of this Congress to think in any way that I devalue what they did. But I have researched this in history, which we will get into over this debate, that Congress never intended for something such as this to be extended.

I, again, have profound respect for the World War II service of Filipino veterans. Their contribution to victory in the Pacific is a matter of historical record. We honor them—I honor them—their service, their sacrifice. We have good friends in the Philippines. But the issue at hand is not the merit of the service rendered by Filipino veterans. The issue is whether creating a special pension for them in the Philippines is responsive to the following questions:

Is it the right priority in time of war when the needs of our men and women serving in Iraq and Afghanistan are so great?

Two, is it appropriate policy, given the purpose of VA pensions and the vast differences in the United States and Filipino economies?

And last, is it fair to U.S. pension recipients from whom this money is taken to pay for this special pension in the Philippines?

Let me ask that another chart be put up because I think it is absolutely crucial that we understand exactly what we are talking about in a $300, or $221 million, special pension.

For a U.S. veteran, if they qualify for a special pension, we are going to get their annual stipend to $11,181, which is 17 percent of U.S. median income. We are going to take American veterans slightly above the poverty level. If it is a married veteran couple, we are going to get them to $14,643, which is 22 percent of the median income in the United States and slightly above the level of poverty. Special pensions were designed to make sure a veteran was out of poverty. We were not putting them into the middle class in the United States, but we were getting them out of poverty because that was the right thing to do. If it is a surviving spouse in the United States, they get a payment of $7,498, which is 11 percent of the median income in the United States.

Today in the Philippines, the Filipino Government provides $120 a month pension for these 13,000 individuals Senator AKAKA is targeting. I am not taking into account the $120 a month that the Philippine Government is providing for each one of these 13,000. But if they are a single veteran in the Philippines with the stipend that Senator AKAKA's bill has, we will provide $3,600 a year, which will be 87 percent of the median income of the Philippine economy. If you add in to that number the $120, we see they far exceed the median income of the middle class of the Philippines. If, in fact, it is a married couple, the stipend from the United States in a special pension for a Filipino living in the Philippines with no service-connected injury is $4,500, 108 percent of the median income of a Philippine family; in the case of a surviving spouse, $2,400, or 58 percent of the median income.

It is important to understand that the VA pension is designed for veterans who have no service-related injuries and who are poor, according to the U.S. definition of poverty. The maximum VA pension payable to a U.S. veteran puts them 10 percent above the poverty threshold and 17 percent of median income.

The Philippine Government, as I said, already provides a monthly pension to Philippine veterans, putting them at roughly 400 percent over poverty with the $120 pension that the Philippine Government provides, and 35 percent of the average income of the household. Adding an additional VA pension on top, as considered in S. 1315, would put a single Filipino veteran at roughly 1,400 percent over the Philippine poverty level.

What are we talking about in simplistic terms? We are going to allow a U.S. veteran to get slightly over the poverty level. The percentage was 10 percent. But we are going to create a special pension for Filipinos who live in the Philippines and have no service-connected disability that is going to make their percentage over poverty 1,400 percent when U.S. veterans are at 10 percent over the poverty line and 21 percent above the average household income.

A VA pension benefit is not designed to put a veteran in the middle class. It certainly does not in the United States. I do not believe it is our responsibility to do it in the Philippines, and I do not believe in this time of war that it is a priority of this country.

It is meant to ensure that no wartime veterans suffer the indignity of poverty, whether you are in the Philippines or whether you are in the United States. We have defined that in the United States as 10 percent above the poverty line.

I can argue that is not good enough, but I can certainly make the case that going to 1,400 percent above the poverty line is not right. It is not the right policy, and it is certainly not the right priority. Creating any new pension benefits for Filipinos in an effort to rectify what some call an injustice would only serve to create a new injustice for U.S.-based veterans because of an enormous discrepancy in the two Nations' economies.

As I said, I have deep respect for Senator AKAKA. We will have a spirited debate, I am convinced, over the next 2 days, 3 days—whatever our leadership decides. That is where it gets out of our hands. I am willing to do it. I have done my homework. I am willing to get into the 1946 Senate hearings when the Senate debated an act where they took benefits away because they researched it to find out if we promised veterans' benefits be extended. And the court's interpretation was they extended it and, quite frankly, the Congress in 1946 legislatively took those benefits away that the court had awarded.

I have Senate hearings from 1948. And in the 1990s, I have the Clinton administration that came to this body and lobbied that this was not the right thing to do; they were not supportive of it. I am willing to share that information with all our colleagues, and over the next couple of days, I think everybody will get a great history lesson on what happened with our decisions and who has testified since 1944 to the Senate about this issue.

I do not expect any American who listens to be less than educated on whether this is the right move or the wrong move. But I also believe my colleagues will recognize the fact if we are establishing 10 percent above poverty for U.S. veterans and we are down here talking about a special pension to individuals who live in the Philippines who have no service-connected injury that is going to be 1,400 percent over poverty, this is the wrong thing for the Senate to do.

Mr. President, I am going to yield to my good friend and former ranking member of the committee. But I do want to say before I yield to him, I urge my colleagues to vote in favor of the cloture motion. I want to proceed. I want to debate this issue. I want to make sure every Member of the Senate has an opportunity to hear the full breadth of what has happened since 1946, and I am prepared to do exactly that.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Idaho.

Mr. CRAIG. Mr. President, I understand we are under a unanimous consent agreement for a vote at 12 o'clock?

The PRESIDING OFFICER. That is correct.

Mr. CRAIG. Mr. President, I will be brief, only to amplify what Senator

BURR spoke to clearly and, I hope, understandably. First and foremost, understand that my relationship with the chairman of Veterans' Affairs Committee, DANNY AKAKA, is a personal one and one of great affection. Here is a man today attempting to do the right thing and probably, in all fairness, is leading with his heart, and that I respect greatly.

There is no question, there remain in the Philippines 13,000 veterans who fought gallantly to save their island from Japanese domination and fought with us and under our flag to do just that. They deserve to be compensated, and they have been compensated.

Immediately following the war, the United States Government put $620 million into the repairs of the Philippines. In today's dollars, that is $6.7 billion.

Then we left a VA hospital in place so that these veterans could receive first-class health care. And we did and they do and it is still there and it is still operating.

Then we added $22 million—and that is worth $196 million in today's dollars—for equipment and construction. America did its part then, and it does its part today. The question is what is reasonable and right compensation.

I stepped down as ranking member on the Veterans' Affairs Committee last September. In doing so, I was well aware of this bill, and the chairman knew at that time that I agreed with 99.9 percent of it. It is a good bill. It is an important bill for America's veterans, and it ought to be passed.

At that time, I thought I offered what was a reasonable compromise; that we would reduce the level of the proposed increase in compensation to nonservice-connected Filipino veterans living in the Philippines; that we would not lift them to the standard to which Senator BURR has just spoken; that they would deserve some help. The chairman had found an offset in a court ruling that took money away from our veterans, and it was sitting there.

I would have much preferred rewriting the law and reinstating that money to our veterans to abrogate the court decision, but we did not do that. So I offered a compromise at that time. It was roundly rejected by the committee. It simply did not fit where the chairman wanted to go. Therefore, from that point forward, I opposed the bill. It is a matter of fiscal responsibility. It is a near quarter of a billion dollars over the next 10 years, and it does exactly what the ranking member, Senator BURR, spoke to. It lifts these Filipino veterans above their poverty line into a middle-class status in Filipino society. Well, that is OK; none of us should deny that. But we don't do that for our veterans who live here. If you are a Filipino veteran living here legally, you get full compensation as a veteran living in this country.

We do tie a benefit to a poverty level and a cost-of-living standard, and we always have. I certainly wish we could do more, but this budget is nearing $100 billion. The overall VA budget is nearing $100 billion. Four years ago, 11 percent; 3 years ago, 12 percent; 2 years ago, 13 percent; last year, an 18-percent increase. No budget in America, other than defense, has increased that much. And why are we doing it? Because collectively this Senate and this Congress have always believed in fair and responsible compensation to America's veterans—America's veterans.

We also try to compensate those who support us and work in our behalf as the veterans of the Filipino society did what is right and what is reasonable.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator's time has expired.

Mr. CRAIG. Mr. President, I believe what the Senator has offered in this Senate bill that is on the floor, S. 1315, is too much. There is a middle ground. I offered it once, and it was rejected. I hope we can revisit that as a reasonable amendment when we get to the amendment process.

I thank my colleagues, Senator AKAKA and Senator BURR, for their work on this legislation. It is good legislation. With a little fine-tuning, then it will be fair, and we ought to support it.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Hawaii.

Mr. AKAKA. Mr. President, I commend my ranking member and former ranking member for their comments. I look forward to a good debate. I thank them for joining in asking for Senators to vote for cloture.

CLOTURE MOTION

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Under the previous order and pursuant to rule XXII, the Chair lays before the Senate the pending cloture motion, which the clerk will state.

The assistant legislative clerk read as follows:

CLOTURE MOTION

We, the undersigned Senators, in accordance with the provisions of rule XXII of the Standing Rules of the Senate, hereby move to bring to a close debate on the motion to proceed to Calendar No. 336, S. 1315, the Veterans' Benefits Enhancement Act.

Harry Reid, Daniel K. Akaka, Barbara Boxer, Patty Murray, Byron L. Dorgan, Edward M. Kennedy, Christopher J. Dodd, Benjamin L. Cardin, Patrick J. Leahy, Bernard Sanders, Sherrod Brown, Amy Klobuchar, Richard Durbin, Ken Salazar, Sheldon Whitehouse, Max Baucus, Daniel K. Inouye.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. By unanimous consent, the mandatory quorum call has been waived.

The question is, Is it the sense of the Senate that debate on the motion to proceed to S. 1315, a bill to amend title 38, United States Code, to enhance life insurance benefits for disabled veterans, and for other purposes, shall be brought to a close?

The yeas and nays are mandatory under the rule.

The clerk will call the roll.

The assistant legislative clerk called the roll.

Mr. DURBIN. I announce that the Senator from New York (Mrs. CLINTON), the Senator from Louisiana (Ms. LANDRIEU), and the Senator from Illinois (Mr. OBAMA) are necessarily absent.

Mr. KYL. The following Senators are necessarily absent: the Senator from New Mexico (Mr. DOMENICI), the Senator from Arizona (Mr. MCCAIN), and the Senator from Louisiana (Mr. VITTER).

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Are there any other Senators in the Chamber desiring to vote?

The yeas and nays resulted—yeas 94, nays 0, as follows:

[Rollcall Vote No. 109 Leg.]

YEAS—94

Akaka	Dole	Menendez
Alexander	Dorgan	Mikulski
Allard	Durbin	Murkowski
Barrasso	Ensign	Murray
Baucus	Enzi	Nelson (FL)
Bayh	Feingold	Nelson (NE)
Bennett	Feinstein	Pryor
Biden	Graham	Reed
Bingaman	Grassley	Reid
Bond	Gregg	Roberts
Boxer	Hagel	Rockefeller
Brown	Harkin	Salazar
Brownback	Hatch	Sanders
Bunning	Hutchison	Schumer
Burr	Inhofe	Sessions
Byrd	Inouye	Shelby
Cantwell	Isakson	Smith
Cardin	Johnson	Snowe
Carper	Kennedy	Specter
Casey	Kerry	Stabenow
Chambliss	Klobuchar	Stevens
Coburn	Kohl	Sununu
Cochran	Kyl	Tester
Coleman	Lautenberg	Thune
Collins	Leahy	Voinovich
Conrad	Levin	Warner
Corker	Lieberman	Webb
Cornyn	Lincoln	Whitehouse
Craig	Lugar	Wicker
Crapo	Martinez	Wyden
DeMint	McCaskill	
Dodd	McConnell	

NOT VOTING—6

Clinton	Landrieu	Obama
Domenici	McCain	Vitter

The PRESIDING OFFICER. On this vote, the yeas are 94, the nays are zero. Three-fifths of the Senators duly chosen and sworn having voted in the affirmative, the motion is agreed to.

Mr. REID. Mr. President, I move to reconsider the vote.

Mr. CONRAD. I move to lay that motion on the table.

The motion to lay on the table was agreed to.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Illinois is recognized.

Mr. DURBIN. Mr. President, would the Chair advise me, was the last vote 94 to nothing?

The PRESIDING OFFICER. That is correct.

Mr. DURBIN. I would like to say to the Chair and to all those following this debate, we wasted 4 days of the Senate's time, 4 days to come to a bill for veterans' benefits. We tried to bring this bill up last November. The Republicans objected. We tried to bring it up last Thursday, and they started a filibuster so we had to burn off 4 or 5 days.

Mr. DORGAN. Mr. President, the Senate is not in order.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senate will be in order.

Mr. DURBIN. We had to burn off 4 or 5 days of doing nothing because of another Republican filibuster. So far in this Congress the Republicans have initiated now 67 filibusters. The record in the Congress before this Republican minority was 57 filibusters over a 2-year period of time. They have now broken that record by 10, and we still have 8 months to go this year.

We are wasting more time. When I ask the Republicans why did you filibuster a bill for veterans' benefits, they said because when we have lunch today, we want to talk it over.

This bill was reported by the veterans committee 9 months ago. How many veterans have been created in 9 months? How many more have needed job training, health care benefits, and housing, and now our Republican minority wants to talk it over?

If we are going to do the people's business in this Chamber, this filibuster mentality on the Republican side has to come to an end. There are critically important issues. Wouldn't it be great if we had finished the veterans health bill last Thursday and could have started debating today the cost of gasoline across America; the impact of high diesel fuel prices on truckers; what the jet fuel costs are doing to the airline industry? But no, another Republican filibuster, the 67th filibuster in this session.

I hope the people of the United States understand what the problem is. To break a filibuster, it takes 60 votes. There are only 51 Democrats. The voters of America will have their chance to vote in November.

Mr. DORGAN. Will the Senator yield for a question?

Mr. DURBIN. I yield for a question.

Mr. DORGAN. Isn't it the case the vote we had is on the motion to proceed? This is not on the issue, this is on the motion to proceed to an issue? So we have a filibuster on the question of shall we proceed. Time after time after time, isn't it the case that even on motions to proceed, we discover the other side demands 60 votes, then demands to have the full 30 hours elapse after the vote has taken place? This one was, I think, 94 to zero. There was a requirement that we go to a motion to proceed—94 to zero—so it was not controversial, it was a matter of bleeding time. It makes no sense, with all that we have to do.

Mr. DURBIN. Through the Chair I say in response to the Senator: That is exactly the case. I would like to make a unanimous consent request that we go to the bill immediately and entertain germane amendments to the bill. Let's start this bill right now. Let's get this done for the veterans. I ask unanimous consent.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Is there objection?

Mr. HATCH. Mr. President, I object.

Mrs. HUTCHISON. Parliamentary inquiry, Mr. President? I would like to ask the Senator from Illinois if germane amendments include a substitute amendment? I have heard the debate, or at least the statements of the two Senators. But the issue is not going to the bill. We have not filibustered the motion to proceed. It was unanimous. The question is are the minority rights going to be recognized? Will we be able to offer amendments, germane amendments, substitutes?

I would like to know, before we proceed further to the bill, if we are going to be able to have enough amendments so the minority rights are protected.

That would be my question.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Objection is heard.

Mr. DURBIN. Would the Chair identify the Senator who objected to the unanimous consent request to move to the bill immediately and consider all germane amendments?

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Utah.

Mr. HATCH. I happened to be here for the vote. You know, this is a game that has been played by both sides, last year and this year too. The majority calls up a bill, they generally file cloture. And, frankly, that does not mean there is a filibuster. As you can easily see, the vote was basically unanimous to going ahead with the bill.

What bothers me is that time after time we have had situations where we were not able to even offer amendments, even a limited number of amendments. But generally we get to that point around here because we have to. And it is the only right the minority has. So that is one reason that occasionally the minority will require cloture.

But there is also too much of this filing cloture by the majority the minute the bill comes up. That, of course, is a game, frankly, with no intention on our side to filibuster the bill or stop the bill.

So these high numbers that are said are mythical, to be honest with you. And, frankly, I hope someday we can realize that this is a legislative body where both sides have certain rights and that one side cannot roll over the other side without at least giving them an opportunity to file amendments.

Frankly, the other side, the majority side, has been able to win on amendments anyway in many cases. I think to stand and say that the Republicans are causing all of this mixup is not quite as accurate, as I think the record will show.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Wisconsin.

Mr. KOHL. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent to speak as in morning business.

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

INTERNATIONAL FOOD ASSISTANCE

Mr. KOHL. Last year, the World Health Organization reported that 25,000 people died every day from hunger-related causes. Let me repeat that number: 25,000 people who died every day last year.

The World Health Organization further reported that of that 25,000 people who died, 18,000 were children. That means that in the time it took me to say that last sentence, a child somewhere in the world has died. It also means before I finish this sentence, another child will have died from hunger. For lack of food, a child dies every 4.8 seconds.

As grim as these facts are, things have grown worse, much worse. We are witnessing what could be called a perfect storm of world hunger. The world's supply of food is down, food demand is up, the climate is changing, and crops are failing.

Food production resources are shifting every day to energy production, food costs are skyrocketing, and, indeed, entire societies are falling apart as a result. This is not another round of appeals for humanitarian food assistance. There is something new and very troubling occurring.

One of the greatest responsibilities of Government is to assure people the basic necessities of life. When that assurance fails, governments fail with it, and an already insecure world moves that much closer to chaos. The most basic need, of course, is the need for food. However, in recent events around the globe, 33 countries have experienced riots and violence because of a failed food supply, including countries in this hemisphere. In the face of hunger, order breaks down, and reason is lost. People are painfully realizing that food production is not keeping up with food demand, and this is a recipe for global disaster.

Last month, the Director of the World Food Program, Joesette Sheeran, wrote to President Bush on the immediate need for increased food assistance due to rising food and related costs. I met with Director Sheeran last week and got a firsthand appraisal of the dire situation.

Rising food and transportation costs have created a $750 million hole in the World Food Program budget which had assumed that the U.S. contribution this year would include a pending $350 million supplemental request for PL 480.

Unless this Congress acts, thousands of people will die, and an increasing number of societies and nations will be at risk. This is indeed a world crisis.

Last week, OMB Director Nussle appeared before the Senate Appropriations Committee, and when asked to state whether he thought there was a need to provide food assistance above the President's request of $350 million, he declined. He dodged the question.

There is no way to dodge this problem. This is a problem of world security. This is a problem of U.S. security and our place in the world. We must and we will respond.

As chairman of the Appropriations Subcommittee on Agriculture, I take the issue of international food assistance very seriously. Although the President's supplemental request of $350 million was predictable—after all, he has requested the exact same amount for 3 years in a row—it is totally blind as to what is happening in the world. It is therefore very dangerous.

If the United States wants to maintain its role as a world leader, there is no better way to do that than to step forward now, take full account of what is happening, and take meaningful steps to stop the suffering, to stop the

hunger, stop the dying. In fact, it is time to be a leader.

So I will continue to work for food funding assistance at a level that does not turn a blind eye to the suffering in the world, nor the danger to the world community. So I ask other Senators to join me in stating support to fight this perfect storm of world hunger and to support action to do something about it.

Mrs. BOXER. Mr. President, tomorrow we will have a vote to proceed——

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator has an order to recess.

Mrs. BOXER. I ask unanimous consent to speak for up to 6 minutes as in morning business.

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

Mrs. BOXER. Mr. President, I thank you all for indulging me.

FAIR PAY ACT

Tomorrow we will have a vote to proceed to the Lilly Ledbetter Fair Pay Restoration Act. Four of my Democratic female colleagues spoke on this earlier today—four or five. I wanted to add my voice to their voices because, as I stand on the floor of the Senate some 45 years after passage of the Equal Pay Act, it is unfortunate that workers throughout the Nation will suffer pay discrimination based on gender, race, religion, national origin, disability, and age. They still suffer this.

We still have a long way to go on equal pay for equal work. It stuns some people to learn that women still earn 23 percent less than men, and the pay disparity is still so great that it takes a woman 16 months to earn what a man earns in 12 months.

In 2006, an average college-educated woman working full time earned $15,000 less than a college-educated male. According to the American Association of University Women, working families lose $200 billion in income per year due to the wage gap.

This is an important point because so many women now work. We know this. So families are struggling to make ends meet with higher gas prices, higher college tuition, higher food prices, higher health care, all of that. We know there is not an easy solution that will eliminate all pay discrimination, but the bill we hope to go to tomorrow, the Equal Pay Restoration Act, will ensure that when an employer discriminates based on gender or race or any other factor, the employee can take his or her case to court.

There was a very bad decision that was made by the Supreme Court which reversed decades of legal precedent, and this was the Ledbetter decision. With its decision, the Court imposed a serious obstacle for equality, equal pay, by requiring workers to file a pay discrimination claim within 180 days of when their employer first starts discriminating.

Now, that is an impossible standard to meet. You really do not know when that moment occurs. What was important about this decision is it threw out the law that had always worked well and would have protected people such as Lilly Ledbetter from discrimination.

Her story is not unfamiliar to many female employees. She was a female, she was a manager at an Alabama Goodyear Tire plant when she discovered, after 19 years of service, that she was earning 20 to 40 percent less than her male counterparts for doing the exact same job.

It took her a long time to ferret this information out. As Justice Ginsburg noted in her dissenting opinion, the pay discrepancy between Ledbetter and her 15 male counterparts was stark. In 1997, her last year of employment at Goodyear, after 19 years of service she earned $5,600 less than her lowest paid male coworkers, and she earned over $18,000 less than her highest paid male coworkers.

Evidence submitted at her trial showed that Mrs. Ledbetter was denied raises, despite receiving performance awards, and in some cases female supervisors at the plant were paid less than the male employees they supervised.

So when Ms. Ledbetter discovered this, she took Goodyear to court, and the jury awarded her full damages. But the company, Goodyear, appealed the jury's decision.

In 2007 the Supreme Court made this very bad decision and said she could not sue for back pay despite—and with which they agreed—the overwhelming evidence that her employer had intentionally discriminated against her because of her gender.

But, they said, it took Lilly Ledbetter longer than 6 months to determine she had been a victim of years of pay discrimination. So, in other words, because it took her more than 6 months to figure this out, she was denied any kind of help.

It does take a significant amount of time in many cases for the truth to be known. Here in the Capitol, if you work for the Government, everybody's pay is on record. And you can see it; it is a public document. But in a private sector plant there may be no way to find out.

As Justice Ginsburg pointed out: Compensation disparities are often hidden from sight for a number of reasons. Many employers do not publish their employees' salaries, and other employees are not anxious to discuss what they earn. So this controversial decision is having serious impacts.

In the 10 months since the decision was handed down, the Ledbetter precedent has been cited 207 times by Federal district courts and courts of appeal. So it means, it seems to me from what I gather, from that statistic alone, many people are being denied equal treatment under the law: equal pay, equal treatment.

So what does the bill do that we want to go to, we Democrats on Wednesday, tomorrow? It simply restores the law to what it was in almost every State in the country before the Ledbetter case was decided. It does so by helping to eliminate the unreasonable barrier created by the Supreme Court and allows workers to file a pay discrimination claim within 180 days of each discriminatory paycheck. That was the law before Ledbetter.

The Ledbetter decision was a giant step backward in the fight for equal opportunity and equal rights. Goodyear engaged in chronic discrimination against female employees, but because of the Ledbetter decision, the Court must treat intentional ongoing pay discrimination as lawful conduct.

Employers who can conceal their pay discrimination for 180 days can continue this practice, and there is no redress. We must ask ourselves: Is this the standard that Congress should be proud of? Is this the kind of standard that we should support, where somebody is treated in an unfair fashion, is paid less than somebody else simply because of their gender?

It is not right. It seems to me, if we are going to have fairness and justice in America today, the least we can do is overturn the Ledbetter decision. Justice Ginsburg told us: ''Congress, the ball is in your court.''

That is why I am so pleased that Senator REID is bringing this opportunity before us tomorrow. Today, as we reflect upon the importance of fairness and equity to our society with a celebration of Equal Pay Day, we must restore this important protection and return the law to its meaning. I hope tomorrow when we get a chance to move to this bill our colleagues will all vote aye because what is fair is fair and what is wrong is wrong. We need to fix this problem. Equal pay for equal work is a value that we should hold dear.

RECESS

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Under the previous order, the Senate stands in recess until 2:15 p.m.

Thereupon, the Senate, at 12:45 p.m., recessed until 2:16 p.m. and reassembled when called to order by the Presiding Officer (Mr. DURBIN).

VETERANS' BENEFITS ENHANCEMENT ACT—MOTION TO PROCEED—Continued

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

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will call the roll.

The bill clerk proceeded to call the roll.

Mr. DURBIN. I ask unanimous consent that the order for the quorum call be rescinded.

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

Mr. DURBIN. I ask unanimous consent to speak as in morning business.

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

DIVER HEROES OF THE CHICAGO FIRE DEPARTMENT

Mr. DURBIN. Mr. President, I ask a few minutes of the Senate's time to

tell you about four men and a little boy.

Last Friday, Stanko Bojanovic decided to take advantage of a warm, breezy spring afternoon to enjoy a walk with his 2-year-old grandson along Lake Michigan near Belmont Harbor in downtown Chicago.

Mr. Bojanovic was sitting on a park bench at Belmont Harbor with his grandson nearby strapped in a stroller at his side, when a strong gust of wind blew up. Witnesses said the wind sent soda cans sailing by. That wind also pushed the stroller into the harbor with the little boy still strapped in.

Mr. Bojanovic, the grandfather, immediately jumped into the harbor. Passersby saw him bobbing in the water, clinging to the side of the breakwall, and pleaded with him to try to swim to a nearby rescue ladder but the grandfather refused. In broken English, he kept yelling, ''Boy! Boy!''

Those standing nearby grabbed their cell phones and called 9–1–1.

At the moment the call came in, a helicopter carrying Chicago Fire Department divers Brian Otto and Bill Davis was lifting off from nearby Midway Airport, where they had stopped for fuel. The men were already in scuba gear for a drill. Four minutes later, their helicopter landed at the harbor.

At almost the same moment, another crew of a dozen Chicago Fire Department rescue divers were finishing an underwater training exercise at a pool not far from the harbor. They changed into scuba gear and arrived at the harbor just seconds after the helicopter.

Divers Brian Otto, Bill Davis, Cedric Collins, and Bob Skwarek dove into the water near where the grandfather had pointed. There was zero visibility in the murky water so they searched in a grid pattern, feeling their way along the harbor's rocks.

Diver Cedric Collins told a Chicago Sun Times reporter that he prayed, ''Let me find him.''

Less than 3 minutes after the firefighters arrived, diver Brian Otto spotted the little boy's hair waving in the water.

As he tried to lift the toddler, Otto realized that the boy was still strapped into his stroller. He was going to have to lift the little boy and his stroller 10 feet to the water's surface.

Otto, who has a little 4-year-old son of his own, told the Sun Times: ''You see this kid underwater, and you're a firefighter, you're a rescue diver, but you're also a father. I held nothing back.'' He told himself: ''No matter what, we're going to get to the surface. And we're doing it now.'' He lifted the little boy, stroller and all, to paramedics waiting on the pier.

Three minutes passed between the time the firefighters arrived and the time they pulled the little boy, Lazar Ognjenovich from the water. His body was pale blue and icy cold. It is estimated that he was under water for 15 minutes.

Today, little Lazar Ognjenovich remains in critical condition at Children's Hospital in Chicago.

Medical researchers not involved in the case say there is reason to hope. They note that toddlers are sometimes able to survive long periods underwater better than adults and point to a Utah girl who was submerged in water for 66 minutes in 1986. Two years later, when an article about her appeared in a medical journal, she had made a full recovery.

Lazar's grandmother said Sunday that the little boy is showing signs of improvement. She notes that last Saturday—the day after his rescue—was ''Lazarus Saturday,'' a special holiday for Serbian children. She told a Sun Times reporter that she believes God was watching over her grandson.

As for the brave men who rescued the little boy—Brian Otto, Bill Davis, Cedric Collins and Bob Skwarek, members of the Chicago Fire Department's Air Sea Rescue Unit and Scuba Team 687—they were all back at work the next day.

In a story in this morning's Sun Times, Bob Skwarek said that rescue divers train for moments like the one they experienced last Friday. Still, he said, ''You really do feel 10 feet tall'' after a rescue.

Bill Davis and Cedric Collins have both been with the Chicago Fire Department for 9 years and with the scuba team for about a year and a half. Brian Otto has been with the department for 18 years and a diver for 3½ years. And Bob Skwarek has been with the fire department for 28 years and a diver for about 2½ years.

They come from the neighborhoods of North and South Chicago: Mount Greenwood, Hegewisch, Roseland and Gage Park.

They have won praise from Chicago Fire Commissioner Ray Orozco and from people all over that great city who have read or heard about their heroism. They deserve every word of that praise.

In his great book Working, Studs Terkel, the legendary Chicago writer, and a great friend interviewed all kinds of everyday working people about their jobs.

Many of the jobs involved risk and backbreaking labor. Some of the people Studs spoke to disliked the work they did.

He also spoke to a firefighter, who said he liked his work very much because you can actually see what a firefighter produces. You see the results of firefighters' work and sacrifice in homes saved, families rescued. And sometimes you see the results of their heroism in little boys pulled miraculously from the waters of Lake Michigan.

On 9/11, we all received a poignant and painful reminder that the real heroes very often are not famous. Most are known only to their families and friends and the people with whom they work.

Many times since 9/11, we seem to have forgotten that basic truth.

Last Friday at Belmont Harbor, four firefighters from the great City of Chicago reminded us.

I ask that this Senate join me in saluting their courage and the courage of all the working men and women in this country who take risks and make sacrifices to rescue others, literally and figuratively. They are truly American heroes.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Massachusetts.

EQUAL PAY DAY

Mr. KENNEDY. Mr. President, I thank our majority leader and our leadership for scheduling a vote on what is known as the Ledbetter legislation tomorrow. We expect that we will have that vote tomorrow evening sometime. I think it is important that the membership understand that we will. It is appropriate today that we have a number of our colleagues speak about the importance of this legislation because today is Equal Pay Day. It has been designated Equal Pay Day. It has been Equal Pay Day for a number of years.

What do we mean by Equal Pay Day? We mean equal pay for equal work. That has been a goal of this country going back actually to 1963, when we passed the Equal Pay Act. At that time, the disparity between men and women for doing the same job was 60 cents to the dollar that the men were getting. We have seen that figure close over time, now to 77 cents, but still there is a disparity. As long as we have had a disparity, it has been and is wrong.

As a country, we have tried to remove forms of discrimination, bigotry, and prejudice that have existed in our society, and the bigotry and prejudice that exist in terms of pay has been there for some time. Since 1963, the Congress has taken action not only on pay for women but in terms of other groups as well. It has made progress in making sure that African Americans are not going to feel a disparity. We did that in 1964 with Title 7 of the Civil Rights Act under President Johnson. Look at the Senate vote, the ultimate vote, 73 to 27. Republicans and Democrats alike said—the Civil Rights Act was primarily focused on public accommodations provisions but also had another very important provision—we will not permit a disparity and discrimination on the basis of race, national origin, gender, or religion in terms of pay. African Americans and other workers were going to be able to get equal pay.

Then, we have the age discrimination. We said, under President Johnson, if individuals are going to be able to do the job, and they happen to be older but yet they have the competency and the skills and they are going to be able to do an equal job, we are going to make sure they are not going to be discriminated against. We have said women will not be discriminated against, minorities will not be discriminated against, and people will not be discriminated against by age.

In 1973, we said: Well, what about those who have some disability? We

said we are not going to discriminate against those people either. Maybe they have a mental or a physical disability, but if they are able to do the job, and they are qualified to do the job, they ought to get paid for doing the job. That is what we said. We saw that vote was a voice vote, under President Nixon, supported by the administration.

Then, we had later provisions: the Americans with Disabilities Act, which was enacted to provide greater kinds of protections for the disabled; additional civil rights protections; and others; the Civil Rights Restoration Act. So the sum total, since 1963, has been a constant drumbeat, a constant march, a constant statement by the Congress and by the administrations by, as we have seen, Democrats and Republicans alike, that said: When it comes to equal pay, it is going to be equal pay for women and for men, it is going to be equal pay for people with disabilities, older workers, African-American workers, Hispanic workers, and others. This chart shows the various groups that, under the EEOC'd laws, have found out they have been discriminated against.

This chart shows, as of a year ago, in 2007, the EEOC had received more than 7,000 pay discrimination claims. Here it is for disability cases—as I mentioned earlier, we passed the Americans with Disabilities Act—and for national origin cases—we have protections for that group, those people who come from different kinds of ethnic backgrounds—for age, race, and gender discrimination as well.

We see that with regard to race, there have been 2,300 claims; with regard to gender, there have been some 2,400 claims. There are the cases for those with disabilities and the national origin cases. These are cases that were brought because we passed laws over the period of 40 years that said: If you are going to work, and work hard, in the United States of America, and you are going to do effectively the same job as someone else, you should be paid the same. We have not solved all the problems of comparability in this legislation. That is another issue which is enormously important and one we should address, and I hope we will address, in this Congress because it is extremely important. All we are trying to do is deal with the pieces of legislation that I have mentioned and restore a remedy. We can have a right and, as all of us understand, a right is not worth very much if we do not have a remedy. That is what this legislation is all about: to give a remedy to victims of pay discrimination, like Lilly Ledbetter. The remedy is that when workers are given unfair pay for doing effectively comparable work, that they are entitled as a matter of right and a matter of law to fair compensation.

It is interesting, in the dissent in the Ledbetter case, the dissent asks for congressional action. We are giving congressional action. That is why I am going to be interested in the arguments of those who are opposed to it. Here a Justice of the Supreme Court invites the Congress to take the action. We are taking the action. What we are effectively doing is restoring the law to what it was prior to the Supreme Court decision—nothing more than that.

I will review what exactly this law does here. What this legislation, the Ledbetter legislation, does, is it reverses the Supreme Court's unfair Ledbetter decision. It holds employers accountable for ongoing discrimination. As we pointed out, the Supreme Court held that Lilly Ledbetter should have known she was being discriminated against by her employer on pay, even though the employer controlled the books, controlled all the documents and was not sharing that information with the employees. Nonetheless, the Supreme Court said: Well, she should have found out in any event. If she did not, it is tough luck on her. Tough luck on you. Tough luck on you. Imagine, the Supreme Court of the United States, after all of the legislation and all of the congressional intent in the last 40 years, saying: Tough on you.

So the employer holds it in a safe, and Lilly Ledbetter cannot find it. Tough on her. Doesn't have a remedy. Too bad. Go ahead and continue to discriminate. In the United States of America, after what we have gone through in terms of civil rights—the battle to knock down the walls of discrimination over the period of these last 40 years? Tough on you.

Is that what we have come to? Is that what the Supreme Court is saying to a hard-working mother who has worked hard, tried to provide for her children, has demonstrated and won award after award for good performance? Tough on you. You could not find it in that sacred safe of the employer. Too bad. You lost your remedies. Too bad.

That is what this is all about. What we are doing is restoring congressional intent.

So what this legislation does not do: It does not encourage workers to delay the filing of claims. It does not eliminate the statute of limitations in the pay cases. It does not increase the litigation. We have the CBO's analysis. I have referred to it. It does not create new grounds for filing lawsuits. We answered all of these arguments. This is what it does not do. We have given the answers. They are not just my answers, they are the answers of the CBO's independent review.

What we are basically doing, and the reason why we are doing it, is to effectively restore the law to what it was previously. As this chart indicates: the lighter green being what the law was previously—that is what we are returning it to—the darker green being what the law was as interpreted by the EEOC, and the orange were the dissenting states. So this is going back to the previous rule.

This would be right to do at any time, but it is particularly important now. The reason it is particularly important now is because of the kind of economic conditions we are facing in this country at this time, where families are being squeezed. Working families are being squeezed. The middle class is being squeezed. In that squeeze, no one is getting squeezed harder than the women in our society, particularly working women. Their participation pension and retirement plans is falling. Look at what has happened to women's participation in pensions over the last 6 or 7 years. It has dropped, I think, close to 10 percent. We are finding out that their rates of unemployment are increasing faster than the unemployment figures in terms of men. Their savings are down. Women's savings are down. So they have a greater difficulty in dealing with the economic reversals we are facing at the present time. They have more home foreclosures because their savings have been down. So they are under an incredible squeeze.

This chart is an example of how adult women are seeing a sharper rise in their unemployment rate. Their rate is going up 21 percent as compared to 15 percent for men. On earnings, women's earnings are falling faster than men's. So their earnings are going down faster. We are finding out that their unemployment is going up faster and their earnings are going down faster.

If you take what happens to different women within the general group, look at women's net worth. Unmarried women have $13,000 less in net savings than unmarried men. Here it is, the difference, as shown on this chart. So in this time of recession and economic stress, these issues become much more acute. This is the right answer at any time, but it is particularly something that can be done now that can make a difference to these working women—something that can be done now: restore a right. That is what this is basically all about.

As I mentioned, this is targeted on women, but the application is across the board. It affects other groups in our society. It affects African Americans and Hispanics, and they have been hard hit by the economic downturn. If pay is discriminatory against African Americans and Hispanics—and we saw the pie chart, which shows it is, with thousands of claims every single year—they are going to be denied the remedy. This legislation applies to women. It applies to minorities. It applies to people discriminated against because of their religion. It applies to the disabled. It applies to older workers. Otherwise, they are going to get shortchanged. They are facing the economic realities in a much harsher way now.

We have an opportunity to do something about it. The House of Representatives has done something about it. Tomorrow we can do something about it. Show me something, anything, any piece of legislation that can have a better, more positive impact in terms of the income of working women than this vote tomorrow. That is what it is about.

Finally, let me give you these figures to demonstrate what this meant to Lilly Ledbetter. This is a reflection of what was actually in the Court's decision. She was making $44,000 a year. She received $5,600 less than the lowest paid male coworker during her last year at Goodyear. The highest paid male coworker was getting $62,000. She had the qualifications and was doing the job the same as her colleague who got $62,000. The lowest paid male worker—whose skills were much less than Lilly Ledbetter's—was still getting paid more. You cannot get it any clearer than this chart about what the facts are. These are not facts I am making up. These are the facts accepted by the courts, not questioned by the Supreme Court. There it is.

The most powerful is listening to Lilly Ledbetter herself. She has testified. Anyone who is interested ought to read her testimony, and can read through the hearings in our committee about this. She explains it in great detail: how she first heard about it, and how she was treated, and what the Supreme Court decided. She has taken a double whammy because not only has she suffered, and will not recover her wages. We have a 2-year limitation on back pay—you can only recover in terms of the 2 years. Her retirement was based upon what she earned and so that has also been lost during this period of time. That was lost, will be lost, continues to be lost. Imagine that. Imagine the unfairness of that. We are not addressing that. We are not dealing with that. We should be, but we are not. That is basically and fundamentally wrong.

I mentioned earlier the CBO. The Congressional Budget Office agrees that the Fair Pay Restoration Act will not increase the litigation. The Fair Pay Restoration Act will not establish a new cause of action for claims in pay discrimination. CBO experts said the bill would not significantly affect the number of filings with the Equal Employment Opportunity Commission. What they are basically saying is, what this will do is it will have the law enforced and people will pay attention to it.

Many employers are, obviously, good employers, and are playing by the rules. But not all of them are. Those who are not playing by the rules should not be able to exploit people in the workplace on the basis of their gender, race, national origin, religion, disabilities or age.

Finally, we have seen—and I have shown this chart previously of the various groups that support this legislation. These are only some of the groups. I have included a more complete list in the RECORD. We have the groups representing the disabilities community, the American Association of People with Disabilities; elderly people, the AARP feels very strongly about the discrimination against the elderly; the NAACP, for the obvious reasons, not only because of discrimination on the basis of race, but all the forms of discrimination they continue to fight and oppose. We have the auto workers, who see prejudice and discrimination and who are fighting for full rights and equality. We have the National Congress of Black Women and the Religious Action Center, because of the moral issues raised by this. And we have the U.S. Women's Chamber of Commerce.

We will have an opportunity to address this and speak more about it. I cannot think of an issue where it is more an issue of fundamental fairness. Americans try to understand some of the complex issues about which we deal here. They are not always easy to understand and to catch and find their way through. Probably one of the great mysteries is the ERISA law, which was put in by our old friend Jacob Javits. An amusing aspect of that was when Jacob Javits passed on to his eternal reward, he took all the knowledge about ERISA with him. All of us find complexities in trying to deal with that. It has important implications in terms of health and the job market.

This is simple. Everyone gets it. The American people understand it, because it is about fairness. If there is one issue Americans understand, it is fairness. They believe that when somebody works, they ought to be adequately paid. Americans don't believe one person ought to be paid a different rate for doing the same job as another person. They don't believe that because their skin is a different color, or because of gender, or because of disability, or because of sexual orientation they should be paid less. They don't believe it. If the person is qualified to do the job, and does the job, they ought to get equal pay. This Senate has gone on record time and time and time and time again over the last 40 years, by overwhelming votes, against pay discrimination. We have our chance tomorrow to restate that commitment. I hope the vote will be overwhelmingly in favor.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Maine is recognized.

Ms. COLLINS. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that I be permitted to proceed for 15 minutes as in morning business.

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

HIGH ENERGY PRICES

Ms. COLLINS. Mr. President, our Nation faces record high energy prices, affecting almost every aspect of daily life. The price of gasoline, home heating oil, and diesel is creating tremendous hardships for American families, for truckdrivers, and for small businesses. High energy prices are a major cause of the current economic downturn.

It is clear we need a dramatic change in our energy policy to protect ourselves from rapid increases in oil prices, without sacrificing our environment for future generations. We must rally around a national effort to achieve energy independence for our economic, environmental, and national security.

I have recommended that we establish a national goal of energy independence by the year 2020. I don't know if we can get all the way to energy independence by that year, but I do know if we do not establish a goal, if we do not strive to achieve energy independence by a date certain, we will never get there. I believe that had our country embraced this goal in the 1970s, when we were reacting to the embargo, we would be nearly at energy independence right now.

I am proposing today a 10-point plan to get us started on this important effort. It is a plan that includes both actions that we can take in the short run to help mitigate the impact of high prices, as well as actions to achieve energy independence in the long term.

Many causes appear to be responsible for the skyrocketing increase in oil prices: the timing of Government purchases for the Strategic Petroleum Reserve; speculative trading on futures markets; increased global demand for crude oil; instability in the Middle East, Mexico, and Venezuela; supply decisions of the OPEC cartel; insufficient U.S. refining capacity; and the declining value of the dollar.

We will always use oil for part of our energy needs, but we need to decrease our reliance on foreign oil and be smarter about managing our supplies. It is appropriate that Senator LEVIN is in the chair as I discuss the first step that I believe we should take right now to help curb the increase in oil prices.

The administration's decision to fill the Strategic Petroleum Reserve when oil prices are at all-time highs defies common sense. As the Presiding Officer is well aware, the Strategic Petroleum Reserve is an emergency stockpile of oil that already contains some 700 million barrels. In 2005, the Presiding Officer, Senator CARL LEVIN of Michigan, and I joined forces on a bipartisan amendment that directed the Department of Energy to better manage the Strategic Petroleum Reserve by requiring the Department to avoid purchases when prices are high.

There are two reasons why that should be done. First, the Federal Government should not be removing oil from the marketplace at a time when there is a lot of pressure on supplies, as there is right now.

Second, it makes absolutely no sense for the Department of Energy to be buying oil at the height of the market. That is a bad deal for us as taxpayers. Unfortunately, I don't believe the Department of Energy is abiding by the Levin-Collins law. We questioned the Department at a recent hearing before the Permanent Subcommittee on Investigations, and there was no indication that the kind of analysis the law requires is being done. So I have called upon the President to stop filling the reserve until prices drop. It simply

does not make sense for the administration to be making purchases right now.

The Energy Information Administration has estimated that the impact on gas prices of these purchases for the Strategic Petroleum Reserve is between 4 and 5 cents a gallon. Other experts believe it is considerably higher than that. At the hearing I mentioned, one energy expert said:

> DOE's actions added between 5 and 20 percent to the price of oil.

The Department of Energy should stop purchasing oil for the Strategic Petroleum Reserve, and it should stop immediately. There is simply no compelling homeland security or national security reason for these purchases to be made now.

No. 2, we need to extend Federal regulation to the oil futures markets. Excessive speculation on futures markets is likely another factor pushing up oil prices. Unfortunately, there is a lack of publicly available data to track the effect of speculation on prices, and manipulation can go undetected on certain electronic markets that are unregulated. Experts testifying before our Investigations Subcommittee all agreed that greater transparency and better reporting of trades could help prevent abuses such as were documented in the natural gas markets in 2006. One of the experts testified that he believed the current high oil prices are inflated by as much as 100 percent—driven by excessive speculation. Other experts think it is not that high. But shouldn't we know and the Commodity Futures Trading Commission, which oversees the trading of agricultural commodities on the futures markets and also oversees the regulation of the energy futures markets as well? That would not prevent these markets from performing their important risk-hedging functions, but it would allow regulators to spot and act quickly upon evidence of deliberate attempts to distort prices and excessive speculation.

No. 3, we should curtail the tax breaks for major oil industry companies and, instead, redirect those funds to consumers and to alternative energy.

With net profits of a single oil company reaching almost $10 billion in a single quarter, we simply should not expect taxpayers who are struggling to pay their energy bills to continue to subsidize the oil industry. Congress should act to repeal the needless tax breaks for big oil companies and instead use those billions of dollars to fund the remaining proposals that will move us toward energy independence.

During consideration of this year's budget resolution, the Senator from Michigan and I joined forces again to provide for the rescission of needless tax breaks for major oil companies. Our proposal would redirect the revenue to support renewable energy and energy efficiency initiatives. Our amendment was accepted as part of the Senate budget resolution. We need to build on that momentum and quickly take up legislation to enact this proposal once and for all.

The fourth step we can take in the short-term: One program with an immediate impact is the Low-Income Home Energy Assistance Program, better known as the LIHEAP program. It is the Federal grant program that provides vital funding to help our low-income and elderly citizens meet their home energy needs. Nationwide, over the last 4 years, the number of households receiving assistance under this program increased by 26 percent, but during that period, Federal funding increased by only 10 percent. So the obvious result is that, at a time of record high prices, the average benefit under the LIHEAP program actually dropped.

We need to fully fund this program. I tell my colleagues that while it is a glorious spring here in Washington, Maine and many other States are still struggling with temperatures that drop into the thirties at night. We need to fully fund the LIHEAP program at the authorized level of $5.1 billion. And for the long term, we should also restructure this program to make it more flexible so that States can take a reasonable approach to low-income energy issues and better balance energy bill assistance so we can provide some grants to winterize the homes of those who qualify for low-income heating assistance.

No. 5—and now I am getting into the long-term aspects of this plan—we need to improve energy efficiency.

Let me discuss the six steps toward the goal of energy independence. First is to make more efficient use of the energy to heat and power our homes, our offices, and our buildings.

I have introduced a comprehensive energy bill that would double funding for the Department of Energy's weatherization program. On average, weatherizing a home reduces heating bills by 31 percent, and overall energy bills by $358 per year.

The legislation would also provide predictable funding for the valuable Energy Star Program, which helps consumers buy energy-efficient appliances. It would extend the renewable energy tax credit through 2011 and the residential investment tax credit for solar and energy-efficient buildings through 2012.

It also includes an energy efficiency performance standard for utilities that would help them improve their efficiency. According to the Alliance to Save Energy, an energy efficient performance standard for utilities could save consumers $64 billion and avoid the need to build 400 powerplants, preventing 320 million metric tons of carbon dioxide emissions. Making buildings, appliances, and utilities more energy efficient would dramatically reduce our use of oil and save money for consumers at the same time.

No. 6, we need to implement a renewable electricity standard. Another component in my 10-point energy plan would revamp the way we produce electricity in this country. We need a national renewable electricity standard that would require the utilities to generate at least 15 percent of their electricity from environmentally sound, renewable energy sources by the year 2020. This would move us away from a reliance on coal and natural gas for electricity and diversify our energy supply to provide more price stability.

(Mr. SANDERS assumed the Chair.)

Ms. COLLINS. There are 28 States, including Maine, that already have a renewable electricity standard. We should follow their lead and establish a national renewable electricity standard.

I do wish to say, in enacting a standard, we need to make sure the benefits of renewable electricity reach rural areas, and that means building adequate transmission capabilities.

I know the new Presiding Officer, the Senator from Vermont, is also very committed to this goal.

No. 7, we should invest in cellulosic ethanol and renewable fuels. I want to distinguish between cellulosic ethanol versus corn-based ethanol. We have oversubsidized corn-based ethanol. It is causing tremendous distortions. It is causing shortages in food supplies. It is driving up the cost.

I have talked with a baker in Lewiston, ME, who cannot buy rye flour anymore because it has been displaced by farmers switching to grow corn. That is not what I am talking about. I am talking about the very promising development of cellulosic ethanol which could be made, for example, from switchgrass and from wood chips, waste wood, for example. That is why I am proposing to expand tax credits for cellulosic biomass. At the same time, those fuels have a much smaller life cycle environmental footprint than does corn-based ethanol and traditional fuels.

We can do so much in this area. I am proud researchers at the University of Maine have been at the forefront of developing commercially viable technologies to produce ethanol from cellulosic sources.

In addition to cellulosic ethanol, my 10-point energy plan calls for the expansion of other sources of clean renewable energy. During the height of the oil crisis in the 1970s, many Maine families turned to wood as an affordable way to heat their homes. With oil prices soaring, wood is once again the fuel of choice for an increasing number of consumers.

Unfortunately, many of the wood stoves that were purchased three decades ago are outdated, they are inefficient, they waste fuel, and they contribute to air pollution. The good news is the new style wood stoves emit 70 percent fewer emissions, and they produce as much energy with 30 percent less wood. This is a real breakthrough that allows consumers to get more energy out of their wood stoves and also to reduce the air pollution from wood stoves. In fact, I saw a demonstration where you could not see any

emissions at all coming from these new clean-burning wood stoves because there is a second burn of the emissions so they are far more efficient.

Unfortunately, making that change from an old dirty, inefficient wood stove to a modern, clean, and safer wood stove or a wood pellet stove is expensive. That is especially difficult for many families today. That is why I have introduced legislation to provide a tax credit so consumers can afford to trade in to these better wood stoves, and I am delighted the authors of the housing bill we recently passed agreed to include, at my behest and at the urging of others, a $300 tax credit for consumers who purchase these new clean-burning wood or pellet stoves.

Wood is a renewable resource and its increased use for home heating is inevitable in these times of high oil prices. We now have the technology that makes their use better for the environment and for human health, as well as safer and more affordable.

No. 8, we need to promote tidal, geothermal, solar, and wind energy. Other clean renewable energy sources include the tide in our oceans and the moderate temperatures that can be tapped under our land.

The U.S. wave and tidal energy resource potential that could reasonably be harnessed is about 10 percent of national energy demands. We have to put all these sources together and look at the broader comprehensive picture.

Once again, I am very proud that a consortium of the University of Maine, the Maine Maritime Academy, and industry is poised to become a key test bed for improved tidal energy devices.

It still is more costly than traditional electricity production, and that is why we need to provide some tax incentives to spur this kind of alternative development in tidal, geothermal, solar, and wood energy.

No. 9, we need to improve vehicle efficiency and alternatives to gasoline. We must provide more efficient transportation options. Last year, we took a giant step forward because Congress enacted, and the President signed into law, a long overdue increase in fuel economy standards for automobiles, SUVs, and light trucks that will save a million barrels of oil a day. That is a great start, but we can do even more.

The amount of gasoline used in transportation amounts to 9.2 million barrels of oil a day. That is almost half our national consumption of 20 million barrels of oil each day. Currently, we import about 12 million barrels of oil a day. So if we reduce the consumption of oil products for transportation purposes, it goes a long way toward reducing our reliance on foreign oil and decreasing overall energy prices, or at least stabilizing them for consumers.

Flex-fuel vehicles and plug-in hybrid vehicles can help us meet the challenge of energy independence and lower prices. We should extend the existing tax credits for alternative fuel vehicles and consider providing a tax credit for consumers who modify their existing vehicles to be flex-fuel capable.

We need to put more money into research, into plug-in hybrid vehicles, and expand the tax credits in that area as well.

Plug-in hybrids hold great promise. If all the new vehicles that are added to the American fleet for the next 10 years were plug-in hybrids, an additional 80 billion gallons of gasoline could be saved each year. That translates into almost 2 billion barrels of oil. It is significant. It cannot happen overnight, but let's put in place the policy that will help us get there.

We also must do more to help existing vehicles be more energy efficient. The Energy bill I have introduced would direct the Department of Transportation to create a national tire fuel efficiency program that would include tire testing and labeling, energy-efficient tire promotions through incentives and information, and the creation of minimum fuel economy standards for tires. That makes a difference as well.

Heavy-duty vehicles also deserve our attention. They move our economy. The Energy bill I have introduced would help keep them on the move while helping to reduce both fuel consumption and emissions. It would require the Department of Transportation to develop a testing and assessment program to determine what is feasible to improve the efficiency of heavy-duty vehicles and then develop appropriate fuel economy standards.

Additionally, we should provide a Federal tax credit for the purchase of idling-reduction technology for heavy vehicles, such as big trucks. That could save a trucker almost $1,600 in fuel costs and $2,000 in maintenance costs each year. It seems almost every week I read or hear or talk with another trucker in Maine who has gone out of business because of the cost of diesel. Think if through these policies we could help those truckers save that kind of money in fuel costs and maintenance each year. It would make the difference for many truckers between staying in business or being forced out of business.

Finally, the 10th point of my plan involves public transportation. Public transportation is difficult in a State such as the Presiding Officer's and mine. There are only three cities in Maine that have regular public transportation. But it is important for the overall goal nationally of energy independence that we focus on public transportation for those areas where it is feasible.

It is one of the most efficient ways we can get more passenger miles per gallon of gasoline. The energy legislation I have introduced would promote the development of the use of public transportation by subsidizing fares, encouraging employers to assist their employees with fares, as we do in the Senate, where we subsidize the employees who use the subway, and by authorizing funding to build energy-efficient and environmentally friendly modes of transportation, such as clean buses and light rail.

The bill would direct the Department of Transportation to designate 20 transit-oriented developmental corridors in urban areas by the year 2015 and 50 by the year 2025. These corridors could be developed with the aid of grants to State and local governments to construct or improve facilities for motorized transit, bicycles, and pedestrians. We have to look at everything.

In these times of high energy prices, when American families are struggling with the costs of filling their gas tanks and heating their homes, we must act in the short term to provide them some relief, and we must embrace fervently a national effort to achieve energy independence.

This Nation has demonstrated time and time again throughout our history our ability to rise to the challenge. I remember when President Kennedy, in the 1960s, challenged our Nation to be the first to land a man on the Moon and how everyone rallied toward that challenge and we achieved the goal that the President set forth for us. Let's now establish another goal and embrace it as fervently. Let's establish the goal of energy independence by the year 2020. It is vital to our economic, our environmental, and our national security. If we embrace this goal, Mr. President, I am confident we can achieve it.

Mr. President, I thank the Chair, 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. DURBIN. 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. DURBIN. Mr. President, I am glad Senator AKAKA from Hawaii is on the Senate floor. As chairman of the Veterans' Affairs Committee, he has done terrific work on this bill. S. 1315 was reported out of committee 9 months ago—9 months ago. Senator AKAKA has worked on a bipartisan basis to come up with a new set of benefits for our veterans, benefits that are long overdue to help those veterans who are returning from war and faced with serious medical challenges—to help them with housing, with education, and job training, and to right a wrong.

Since World War II, we have realized those Filipinos who fought next to our soldiers in that war have not been treated fairly, and I want to thank Senator AKAKA and Senator INOUYE for their leadership in making certain the Filipinos who were there when we needed them in World War II have a chance in this bill to receive at least some benefit for that service.

There were some 470,000 who originally served. There may be only 20,000

left. Time has taken its toll. But for those remaining veterans, we owe them a debt of gratitude, and we should compensate them for service rendered on behalf of the United States. President Franklin Roosevelt called on the Army of the Philippines to stand with us, and they did. They fought and many were wounded. Some died in the process. If the United States is going to be known as a country that remembers its friends, we should remember our friends in the Philippines.

This provision is opposed by the Republican side—maybe not all, but some, and they object to it. They will have a chance to debate that, and I hope we can draw a conclusion soon and move this bill forward.

It is unfortunate that this bill, as important as it is for the veterans of the United States, has been subjected to a filibuster by the Republicans. They have done everything they can to stop this bill from coming to the floor. You would think that something as basic as veterans' benefits would be bipartisan. It certainly was in the committee. It should be on the floor of the Senate.

Last Thursday, Senator HARRY REID, the Democratic majority leader, tried to call up this bill, and he was told no; that he would have to file cloture. To put that in common terms, it means we would have to wait—wait over the weekend, not finish the bill last week—and have a vote, which we had earlier today. The vote was at 12 o'clock, a vote which the Republicans insisted on before going to the bill. The final total on that vote was 94 to nothing. There wasn't a single Senator of either political party who voted against proceeding to this bill.

So all we did was delay this bill for another 4 or 5 days, and we find ourselves at this very moment in the same position. The Republicans refuse to come forward and offer a plan for considering amendments under the bill. The time may come, and I hope it doesn't, when we face another cloture motion, another effort to stop this, a delay tactic from the Republican side of the aisle.

Last week, the Republicans used this delay tactic to stop a technical corrections bill, a bill which just cleaned up some mistaken language—poor grammar, poor spelling—in a bill passed years ago, and a bill that was important because it related to highway and bridge projects and that created good-paying jobs in the United States. The Republicans filibustered that bill. It went on for days and days and days. We thought, well, when it comes to a veterans bill, they are not going to use that filibuster again. But they did.

To date, the Republicans have engaged in 67 filibusters during this session of Congress. They have broken the record. I guess it is a source of pride within their Republican conference. The previous record was 57 filibusters over a 2-year period. They have broken that record in 16 months with 67 filibusters. Each and every time they engage in these delaying and stalling tactics, it is an effort to stop legislation that would move us forward either in creating jobs, which are important for an economy that is facing a recession, or creating veterans' benefits for the thousands of veterans who expect and need a helping hand.

The Republicans continue to use this strategy. I don't know, perhaps someone has inspired them to do this, but I wish they would think twice. This country's veterans and their families expect us to work in a bipartisan way to try to help them. We have many times. But in this bill, in this critically important bill on veterans' benefits, the Republicans have thrown every obstacle in our path that they can legally under the rules of the Senate. That still leaves us with a major responsibility. We owe it to the veterans to get this job done.

I am glad Senator AKAKA is here, keeping his lonely vigil on the Senate floor. I know in a minute we are going to recess and come back in about an hour, but I thank him for his leadership on this important bill. I am hopeful after the break we can come back to the floor and finally find an accommodation and agreement on both sides of the aisle.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Hawaii is recognized.

Mr. AKAKA. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that during today's session, all time during any previous recess and any upcoming recess be charged postcloture.

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

RECESS

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Under the previous order, the Senate stands in recess until 4:30 p.m.

Thereupon, the Senate, at 3:30 p.m., recessed until 4:31 p.m. and reassembled when called to order by the Presiding Officer (Mr. KERRY).

VETERANS' BENEFITS ENHANCEMENT ACT—MOTION TO PROCEED—Continued

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Florida is recognized.

TRIBUTE TO JOHN LITTLE

Mr. MARTINEZ. Mr. President, I am honored today to pay tribute to an outstanding member of my staff. When I was elected to the Senate, one of the first things I had to do was to select and hire a chief of staff. It didn't take long for me to find John Little. He came to work for me in December 2004, even before I was sworn in as a Senator.

When I first met John, he was legislative director for the junior Senator from Alabama, my colleague JEFF SESSIONS. I asked JEFF if it would be all right if I approached John and hired away a key member of his staff. He was very gracious, and he told me that although he would be hard to replace, he thought it would be a great opportunity for John and wanted to make sure he didn't stand in his way in any way.

One of the reasons I came to Washington was to be engaged in the issues of the day and try to find solutions to the problems facing Floridians and all Americans. Having spent my entire public career in the executive side of Government, I didn't know the inner workings of the Congress and looked for someone with that skill and knowledge. John Little brought that legislative experience from day one to my office and has been an invaluable member of my staff and someone I have relied on and counted on every single day I have been in the Senate.

John's experience on the Hill started when he was a very young lawyer, fresh from passing the bar and eager to work in Government. He worked his way up from being a young staffer writing legislative correspondence to becoming a legislative aide handling policy in the areas of education and health care. John had the respect of his peers and would eventually become legislative director. He is known in the Hill community for being bright, aggressive, conservative and even-keeled. He knows the implications of both large and small shifts in public policy and the impact they might have on families and communities. He brought to the people of Florida a great amount of knowledge and experience and was a problem solver when we had problems we faced.

Through his work and in getting to know John personally, I have come to admire him greatly for his strength of character, a trait I greatly admire in him. In the face of challenges, John courageously rose to meet those challenges. He never wavered in his love of this institution or his love of this country, and he has served the people of Florida and the Senate, an institution that I know he loves, very well.

Over these last few years, John has demonstrated tireless dedication and loyalty to me and the people of Florida. We have successfully turned back attempts to breach Florida's ban on offshore drilling. We have sought and secured funds for restoring the Everglades. We have fought to ensure Florida's military people and bases have the resources they need to perform their duties. Throughout these and other achievements, John has remained humble and committed to ensuring the policies we have pursued were in the best interests of the people of Florida.

For those who know the life of a chief of staff for a Senator, it is not glamorous. The hours are long, the issues are complex and innumerable, and you rarely have the opportunity for an uninterrupted weekend. For these reasons, John has accepted a position in the private sector—a great opportunity for John. This speaks to his skill and knowledge as one of the great

qualities he possesses as chief of staff in the Senate. I am sad to see him go, but I am confident he will continue to find ways to serve the public good. He will be missed.

I thank him for his service, and I wish him all the best in all his endeavors. John is truly a friend. I will miss my personal day-to-day contact with him, but he is someone with whom I hope to have a lasting, lifelong relationship.

I yield the floor.

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

TONY BLAIR

Mr. STEVENS. Madam President, last evening I had the honor of attending a dinner of the Atlantic Council, and at that dinner they honored the former Prime Minister of Great Britain, the Right Honorable Tony Blair. I want to quote from his speech, and I ask unanimous consent to have his whole speech printed in the RECORD after my remarks.

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

(See exhibit 1.)

Mr. STEVENS. He said this:

The transatlantic alliance is, of course, a product of historical connection, culture, language and tradition. But most of all it is an alliance of belief, of shared values, of a common outlook not just about nations and their common interest but about humanity and its common destiny. Out of the travails of the twentieth century, the alliance drew its history and its strength. In the fight against fascism, and communism, it confronted and defeated totalitarian ideology. Millions of our citizens died for the victory. Through their sacrifice, we gained our freedom.

More than that, we came to a profound understanding about what it is to be free. We realized through the pain and suffering, the difference between deferring to those in power and deciding who they are; between the rule of law and the caprice of dictatorship; between the right to speak out and the silence of the fearful.

Now with those twentieth century battles over, it is tempting to think that this alliance has served its purpose. But here is the important point about it. It was never, and is not now, an alliance only of interests. It was and is an alliance of conviction. We, in the West, don't own the idea of freedom. We didn't fight for it because of the happenstance of birth in Europe or America. It is there, in the DNA of humankind. It is universal in nature and appeal. We developed it, but we didn't invent it.

Now is the time to stand up for it. If we want our values to govern the twenty-first century, we must combine hard and soft power. We must show unhesitating resolution in the face of threats to our security; and we must show that our values are indeed universal, that they encompass not only freedom but justice, and not for us alone but for the world as a whole. We must show these values are global. And build alliances accordingly, starting with the renewal of our own. And we need to do it with energy and urgency. In the Middle East this is time critical. We must act now.

Two things I now perceive more clearly than in office. The first is: the fundamental shift of the centre of gravity, politically and economically, to the East, to China and of course India, but more broadly to the Middle and Far Eastern nations.

This evening I will focus elsewhere, but suffice it to say that we are still, in the West, not in the state of comprehension or analysis we need to be, fully to grasp this shift. China and India together will over the coming decades industrialize on a scale, and at a pace, the world has never seen before. In China especially, the implications are huge. Whatever the present controversies, a strong strategic relationship with it is vital; as it is with India. We are so much better able to fashion the terms of such a relationship if we do it in unison. That alone would justify and re-justify our alliance.

This is a challenge of diplomacy and statesmanship of one kind.

The other challenge arises from the security threat that occupied so much of the last years of my premiership. Today, as we meet, our armed forces face the prospect of a continuing campaign in Afghanistan and Iraq. I hope one thing unites us all. Whatever the debate about the decisions that brought us to these countries, there should be no debate about the magnificent and sustained heroism of our armed forces. British and American troops and the forces of other allied nations deserve our full support and our gratitude.

But this struggle is not limited to those fields of conflict. Out in the Middle East, it is there in the activities of Hezbollah in Lebanon, of Hamas in Palestine; it is played out in the street of Arab opinion every day. It has spread across the world. More than a score of nations have suffered terror attacks in the last year, still more have foiled them. They do not include only the usual list, but Thailand, Nigeria, China itself.

In the Middle East, the ideology that drives the extremism is not abating. The Annual Arab Public Opinion survey published last week was not striking simply for its specific findings but for its overall picture. The basic ideological thrust of the extremists has an impact way beyond the small number of those prepared to engage in terror. In sum, it shows an alarming number of people who buy the view that Islam is under attack from the West; the leaders to support are those like Nasrallah and Ahmadinejad who are perceived to take on the West; and there is a contrast between Governments and their people that is stark.

The extremism is a tiny minority activity; the ideas, prejudices and sentiments that drive it, are not. The truth is that the roots of this global ideology are deep, far deeper than I first thought in the aftermath of September 11.

I believe the eventual outcome is not in doubt. But it is possible, dangerously, to underestimate the size of this challenge. And it is possible completely to misunderstand its origins.

This global ideology is based on a total perversion of the true faith of Islam. Its revolutionary rhetoric and attachment to so-called liberation movements is a sham designed to hide its profoundly reactionary and regressive character. It is totalitarian in nature and compromising with it will lead not to peace but to a ratcheting up of demands, none of which are remotely tolerable.

But it plays cleverly on the insecurities and uncertainty deep within Islam. It speaks to a sense that the reason for its problems is not to be found within, but as victims of outside aggression.

So today the issue hangs in the balance. The Middle East is without doubt a region in transition; but in which direction will it travel?

Like it or not, we are part of the struggle. Drawn into it, Europe and America must hold together and hold firm. Not simply for our own sake, but for that of our allies within Islam. If we do not show heart, why should they?

If they don't see our resolve, how much more fragile is theirs?

So how is this battle won?

We have to recognize that though the circumstances and conflicts of the twentieth century are very different from ours, nonetheless, one thing remains true in any time and for all time: That if under attack, there is no choice but to defend, with a vigour, determination and will, superior to those attacking us. Our opponents today think we lack this will. Indeed they are counting on it. They think that if they make the struggle long enough and savage enough, we will eventually lose heart, and our will fade. They are fanatics but they have, unfortunately, the dedication that accompanies fanaticism.

We cannot permit this to happen. Where we are confronted, we confront. We stand up. And we do so for as long as it takes. This ideology now has a nation, Iran, that seeks to put itself at the head of extreme Islam. They need to know what we say, we mean and, if necessary, will do. If we exhibit this attitude, peace is more likely; because they will not miscalculate or misread our character. But if they think us weak, they will fight all the harder and risk all the more.

They need to see our belief. We should not apologize for our values, but wear them with pride, proclaim their virtues loudly; show confidence; ridicule the notion that when people choose freedom this is somehow provocation to terror; and do so together, one alliance.

This struggle did not begin on September 11th 2001. It isn't the fault of President Bush, of Israel, or of Western policy. The idea that we suppress Muslims in the West is utterly absurd. There is more religious freedom for Islam in London than in many Muslim countries.

Madam President, I found his statement very convincing. I urge Senators to read it.

EXHIBIT 1

SPEECH BY THE RIGHT HONORABLE TONY BLAIR

The transatlantic alliance is, of course, a product of historical connection, culture, language and tradition. But most of all it is an alliance of belief, of shared values, of a common outlook not just about nations and their common interest but about humanity and its common destiny. Out of the travails of the twentieth century, the alliance drew its history and its strength. In the fight against fascism, and communism, it confronted and defeated totalitarian ideology. Millions of our citizens died for the victory. Through their sacrifice, we gained our freedom.

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century, we must combine hard and soft power. We must show unhesitating resolution in the face of threats to our security; and we must show that our values are indeed universal, that they encompass not only freedom but justice, and not for us alone but for the world as a whole. We must show these values are global. And build alliances accordingly, starting with the renewal of our own. And we need to do it with energy and urgency. In the Middle East this is time critical. We must act now.

Two things I now perceive more clearly than in office. The first is: the fundamental shift of the centre of gravity, politically and economically, to the East; to China and of course India, but more broadly to the Middle and Far Eastern nations.

This evening I will focus elsewhere, but suffice it to say that we are still, in the West, not in the state of comprehension or analysis we need to be, fully to grasp this shift. China and India together will over the coming decades industrialise on a scale, and at a pace, the world has never seen before. In China especially, the implications are huge. Whatever the present controversies, a strong strategic relationship with it is vital; as it is with India. We are so much better able to fashion the terms of such a relationship if we do it in unison. That alone would justify and re-justify our alliance.

This is a challenge of diplomacy and statesmanship of one kind.

The other challenge arises from the security threat that occupied so much of the last years of my premiership. Today, as we meet, our armed forces face the prospect of a continuing campaign in Afghanistan and Iraq. I hope one thing unites us all. Whatever the debate about the decisions that brought us to these countries, there should be no debate about the magnificent and sustained heroism of our armed forces. British and American troops and the forces of other allied nations deserve our full support and our gratitude.

But this struggle is not limited to those fields of conflict. Out in the Middle East, it is there in the activities of Hezbollah in Lebanon, of Hamas in Palestine; it is played out in the street of Arab opinion every day. It has spread across the world. More than a score of nations have suffered terror attacks in the last year, still more have foiled them. They do not include only the usual list, but Thailand, Nigeria, China itself.

In the Middle East, the ideology that drives the extremism is not abating. The Annual Arab Public Opinion survey published last week was not striking simply for its specific findings—but for its overall picture. The basic ideological thrust of the extremists has an impact way beyond the small number of those prepared to engage in terror. In sum, it shows an alarming number of people who buy the view that Islam is under attack from the West; the leaders to support are those like Nasrallah and Ahmadinejad who are perceived to take on the West; and there is a contrast between Governments and their people that is stark.

The extremism is a tiny minority activity; the ideas, prejudices and sentiments that drive it, are not. The truth is that the roots of this global ideology are deep, far deeper than I first thought in the aftermath of September 11.

I believe the eventual outcome is not in doubt. But it is possible, dangerously, to underestimate the size of this challenge. And it is possible completely to misunderstand its origins.

This global ideology is based on a total perversion of the true faith of Islam. Its revolutionary rhetoric and attachment to so-called liberation movements is a sham designed to hide its profoundly reactionary and regressive character. It is totalitarian in nature and compromising with it will lead not to peace but to a ratcheting up of demands, none of which are remotely tolerable.

But it plays cleverly on the insecurities and uncertainty deep within Islam. It speaks to a sense that the reason for its problems is not to be found within, but as victims of outside aggression.

So today the issue hangs in the balance. The Middle East is without doubt a region in transition; but in which direction will it travel?

Like it or not, we are part of the struggle. Drawn into it, Europe and America must hold together and hold firm. Not simply for our own sake, but for that of our allies within Islam. If we do not show heart, why should they?

If they don't see our resolve, how much more fragile is theirs?

So how is this battle won?

We have to recognise that though the circumstances and conflicts of the twentieth century are very different from ours, nonetheless, one thing remains true in any time and for all time: that if under attack, there is no choice but to defend, with a vigour, determination and will, superior to those attacking us. Our opponents today think we lack this will. Indeed they are counting on it. They think that if they make the struggle long enough and savage enough, we will eventually lose heart, and our will fade. They are fanatics but they have, unfortunately, the dedication that accompanies fanaticism.

We cannot permit this to happen. Where we are confronted, we confront. We stand up. And we do so for as long as it takes. This ideology now has a nation, Iran, that seeks to put itself at the head of extreme Islam. They need to know what we say, we mean and, if necessary, will do.

If we exhibit this attitude, peace is more likely; because they will not miscalculate or misread our character. But if they think us weak, they will fight all the harder and risk all the more.

They need to see our belief. We should not apologise for our values, but wear them with pride, proclaim their virtues loudly; show confidence; ridicule the notion that when people choose freedom this is somehow provocation to terror; and do so together, one alliance.

This struggle did not begin on September 11th, 2001. It isn't the fault of George Bush, of Israel, or of Western policy. The idea that we suppress Muslims in the West is utterly absurd. There is more religious freedom for Islam in London than in many Muslim countries.

You can argue about the rights and wrongs of the military invasion of Iraq or Afghanistan, but to allow for a single instant that this action justifies not simply terrorism but the idea that the West is innately hostile to Islam, only has to be contemplated, rationally, momentarily, for its nonsense to be manifest. We get rid of two brutal dictatorships; put in place a U.N. led democratic process; plus billions of dollars in aid: Where exactly is the hostility to Islam? And the only reason our troops are forced to stay is because of terror attacks carried out by this ideology in defiance of the democratically expressed wishes of the Muslim people of both countries.

And if it is hard and bloody, how bizarre to blame the allied forces, there under a U.N. mandate and who are trying to keep the peace, rather than those using terror to disturb it.

Yet this paradigm that it is 'our' fault that this terror threat is with us, has infiltrated a large part of Middle Eastern public opinion and actually influences significantly a large part of our own. It has to be taken on.

And here is the good news. The same poll shows most Muslims want peace. Most support a two-state solution in Israel and Palestine. The modern minded rulers of the successful Arab economies are also admired. People in Iran don't hate America even if its leader does. Go beneath the surface and there are allies out in the region and within Islam; people who believe strongly in their faith, but know that the twenty-first century is not about civilisations in combat but in alliance. In other words people are open to persuasion.

And here is the point. To win this struggle, we must be prepared to confront; but we must also be prepared to persuade.

This is a battle that can take a military or security form. But it can't be won by military or security means alone. It is a baffle of ideas. To win, we must persuade people of what we stand for and why; and we must do so in a way that answers their concerns as well as our own.

We believe in freedom and democracy. We also believe in justice. We believe in equality. We believe in a fair chance for all, in opportunity that goes beyond an elite and stretches down into the core of society. That, after all, is the American dream; free not just in politics but free to achieve, to fulfil your ambition by your own efforts and hard work, to make something of yourself, to give your children a better start than you had.

To win this battle, we must demonstrate these values too. That is why the Middle East peace process matters. It is the litmus test of our sincerity. We should not in any way dilute our commitment to Israel's security. We simply have to show equal commitment to justice for the Palestinians.

In the coming months, we have a chance to put it on a path to peace. It will require Israel to do more to lift the burden of occupation and give the Palestinians a sense that a state is possible. It will require the Palestinians to do more to get the robust capability on security to give the Israelis a sense that a state is possible. It will require a different and better strategy for Gaza. And it will require a relentless, insistent focus on the issues, from the U.S. and the international community, macro- and micro-managing it as necessary, to get the job done. President Bush and Secretary Rice have made that commitment. This can be done. It has to be done. It is not optional. It is mandatory for success.

The origin of this extremism does not lie in this dispute; but a major part of defeating it, lies in its resolution.

Then, wider than this, we have to work with the modern and moderate voices within Islam to help them counter the extremism and show how faith in Islam is supremely consistent with engagement in the twenty first century, economically, politically, and culturally. There is a vast amount of toil and time and energy to be expended in building bridges, educating each other about the other, creating the civic and social networks of reconciliation.

I would go further still.

In Africa, we have a cause of justice which cries out to be pursued; one that is, at the same time, a moral imperative and a strategic investment; one that needs the attention of East and West. In climate change, we have an issue that demonstrates that justice is also part of the compact of responsibility between this generation and those of the future.

My argument is therefore this. The struggle can be won. But it can only be won by a strategy big enough and comprehensive enough to remove the roots as well as the branches. The battle will, in the end, be won within Islam. But only if we show that our values are theirs also.

The problem with so much of Western politics is that the argument is posed as one between the advocates of hard power and soft power, when the reality is, we need both.

This is where America and Europe, united, should act. America has to reach out. Europe has to stand up. Not a single one of the global challenges facing us today is more easily capable of solution, if we are apart; if we let the small irritants obscure the fundamental verities; if we allow ourselves to be assailed by doubt about the value of our partnership, rather than affirm, albeit self-critically, its strengths.

We need now a powerful revival of our alliance. In the world so rapidly changing around us, we cannot take a narrow view of our interests or a short-sighted view of our destiny. We can't afford to take fright at these changes and go back into isolationism. We can't avoid the challenges. But we can master them. Together.

The transatlantic partnership was never just the foundation of our security. It was the foundation of our way of life. It was forged in experience of the most bitter and anguished kind.

Out of it came a new Europe, a new world order, a new consensus as to how life should be lived.

Today times are different. Every era is different. What is necessary is to distinguish between what endures for one time and what endures for all time.

In our history, we discovered the values that endure. We learnt what really matters and what is worth fighting for.

And we learnt it together.

Today, the challenge to those values is different. But it is no less real. Our propensity to avow those values will shape the way the twenty first century is governed. Will these values become, as they should be, universal values, open over time to all human beings everywhere; or will they be falsely seen as the product of a bygone age? That is the question. It is fundamental. It is urgent. It is our duty to answer it.

Mr. STEVENS. I wish to address another matter, as I have a moment. I understand there is no time limit now; is that correct?

The PRESIDING OFFICER. That is correct.

Mr. STEVENS. Madam President, before the Senate now is a bill, the Veterans' Benefits Enhancement Act of 2007. It is a very important piece of legislation. It would expand a series of benefits to our veterans, including traumatic injury insurance, adapted housing grants, and burial allowances. As a veteran, I am delighted this bill is here, and I am pleased the Senate has invoked cloture so we may debate it and find a way to reach an accommodation on it with those who may find some fault with it or some matter they may wish to try to change.

What I wish to address is the provisions for the Filipino veterans legislation. In this part of this bill, as far as I am concerned, we are talking about honor, the honor of the United States. In 1941, on July 26, President Franklin Roosevelt ordered all military forces of the Philippines into the service of the United States to fight the Japanese. They were a province of the United States at that time. They were not an independent nation right then. The President had the power to do that. He, in fact, conscripted all men 18 years of age and over into their military. He took them all, and they fought, they fought hard, they fought almost to the death as, really, I think any American knows who knows about the Long March and Corregidor and what it meant in terms of the time these people delayed the Japanese so we could find a way to rearm this Nation and find a way to eventually overthrow the threats of tyranny that existed as manifested in the attack of Japan on December 7, 1941.

After the war, these people were recognized as veterans by our U.S. Veterans' Administration. All of the Filipinos who went into the services were entitled to full VA benefits. In 1946, Congress changed that. They said that those veterans who came to the United States would get full benefits of being in the military service but those who stayed in the Philippines would not.

I think to deal with this you have to think about the fact that there were 470,000 Filipino World War II veterans still alive after the war. Millions died. Millions died in defense of our country. Yet here, today, there are 18,000 veterans still alive.

My distinguished friend from Hawaii, who is chairman of our Defense Subcommittee, and I went to the Philippines recently and visited with some of them. I am the oldest Member of the Senate on my side. My good friend is, I think, the second oldest on his side of the Senate. We found ourselves junior to these people who are still there. Those men who fought over there, who are still with us now, are very much in need of our help. They deserve what this bill would give them.

This benefit that this bill would extend to them is one-third the amount they would have received had they come to this country. That is what was intended to give them in the first place—one-third—taking into account really the cost of living and various other aspects of their life in the Philippines. They would get the benefits, one-third of the amount they would receive if they came to this country. If they came to this country, they would have been entitled to the veterans' benefits, to the GI bill, to all of the other benefits we gave the veterans after World War II.

Do you know why Congress gave that to those veterans? Because there were too many men seeking a job. They had to take the 16 million of us who survived and spread us out over the economy. They did so by giving us benefits—training as a pilot, we could build our own home and get the money to do that, we could go to school through the GI bill. These people thought they had that right, too, but Congress cut it off in 1946.

These people, who are the survivors now of that almost half-million people who survived as veterans, Filipino veterans of World War II, and who stayed in that country, those 18,000, have asked us for help, to finally be recognized once again for what they did.

The cost is really minimal. The Senate will hear all kinds of estimates on the amount. But 18,000 people—the youngest age involved is 82. They are just not going to be with us that long. Anyone who gives you some estimate of billions of dollars that it is going to cost to take care of these people and give them what they were entitled to long ago—I think it is overestimating it.

Again, I come back to my point. It is a matter of honor, the honor of the United States is at stake.

These people put on our uniform, wore our uniform, fought with our comrades, almost to the death, all the way to Corregidor, and the survivors were denied what they should have had.

If they came to the United States, they had the right to become citizens automatically. But if they stayed with their families and tried to reconstruct their country, we denied them that right, even though by staying at home they would have gotten one-third. If they got to come over here and be citizens they would have the benefits. There were no GI bills over there. If they came over here as citizens, became citizens, they had the full range of benefits.

Now, I do not get excited too many times on this floor. This one, this bill, excites me. There are very few of us left from World War II. When I came to the Senate, almost every person who was a Member had served in World War II. There are five of us left now. I hope the Senate will listen to the five of us because we are united. We say this is a wrong that has to be rectified. We urge the Senate not to change this bill, to support the bill that has been introduced by the distinguished Senator from Hawaii and his colleague with my cosponsorship.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from New Jersey is recognized.

Mr. MENENDEZ. Madam President, I understand my distinguished colleague from Alabama has a colloquy with Senator MARTINEZ for 5 minutes or so. I ask unanimous consent that I be recognized after the Senator from Alabama.

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

The Senator from Alabama.

TRIBUTE TO JOHN LITTLE

Mr. SESSIONS. Madam President, I thank my colleague, Senator MENENDEZ, for his courtesy. I will adhere to that timeframe. I ask to be notified in 4 minutes.

I would express my appreciation to Senator STEVENS for his service to his country during World War II, and Senator INOUYE, our decorated World War II veteran himself. Both served in harm's way for their country. We do value their opinions on so many important issues.

John Little, a native of my hometown of Mobile, AL, a product of UMS High School, a good high school in Mobile, graduated from Southern Methodist University with a BA in history,

got his juris doctorate from Cumberland School of Law in Birmingham, AL, a fine law school.

He interviewed and then joined my staff 9 months into my term, just as I had come to Washington. We hired John, and we told him he would have to start at the bottom. And he did. He handled judiciary issues and correspondence with constituents back home. But within a year, using his excellent writing and research, it was obvious he was destined to take on more responsibility.

John had great talent, and we made him our legislative counsel and gave him the responsibility of several issues, including education, labor, drug caucus work, welfare, and campaign finance reform.

In 2000, John was promoted to legislative assistant and counsel and he dove right into the largest issues of our time, at that point the Elementary and Secondary Education Act debate. We were dealing with a very important issue in education, in particular, the special ed or IDEA reform, the need to create a thoughtful, disciplined standard and reform for students and teachers in the classroom. It was a big problem. We were hearing a lot about it. John spent countless hours of work on this project as my legislative assistant and helped foster the strong reform that eventually would be accepted in the IDEA reform bill which was signed into law that is affecting positively every school in America today.

After 2 years spent on education, labor, and welfare and judiciary issues, I promoted him to my deputy legislative director and counsel. His portfolio grew on a whole host of issues. He also became a key point man in my office on nominations issues.

So after the departure in 2003 of my legislative director, John was the obvious choice to take over and manage the day-to-day legislative operations of my office. He and I spent countless hours together working on IDEA reform and other issues that were so important.

He spearheaded my efforts to promote our plans for a strong national defense, lower taxes, less regulation, and the thoughtful application of commonsense conservative values to promote and pass good public policy.

After the elections of 2004, a new Senator, my good friend and colleague from Florida, Mr. MEL MARTINEZ, heard of the outstanding work of my young legislative director and counsel. I suppose he heard about that because he called me to ask if he could interview him. And I certainly agreed to that.

I think he sought out John's leadership, know-how, interpersonal skills, and a command of the inner workings of the Senate, and he eventually asked if he could bring John on as his chief of staff.

Although I would lose a strong counselor and a legislative leader and friend, my loss was indeed Senator MARTINEZ's gain. So it has been for the past 3 years that John has been at the helm with Senator MARTINEZ as his chief of staff.

He will leave the Senate family now but will be taking on another important challenge in the corporate world. I know John Little well and the values and high ideals he holds dear. He truly loves the Senate and respects her traditions. He loves America. The Senate was a better place with him here.

Thank you, John, for your friendship, your strong personal support, and your service to the Senate and our great country. It has been a pleasure and an honor to work with you. We wish you every success in your chosen endeavors.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from New Jersey.

FAIR PAY RESTORATION ACT

Mr. MENENDEZ. Madam President, I am here today to stand up for equal pay for women. Now, that is something we have been working toward for a long time, but we are still falling short of the goal.

For decades we have come together across party lines to help men and women earn the same wage for the same work. The Senate voted overwhelming for equal pay when President Kennedy was in office. We gave our support to the Civil Rights Act under President Johnson. We renewed that support during President Reagan's term and during the term of the first President Bush.

So we have had this history of supporting this proposal, this rule of law, under both Democratic and Republican Presidents. Even after all the progress we have made, we still have a long way to go. But last year, five conservative Supreme Court Justices threw a roadblock against fair pay for women.

Here is what happened. A woman named Lilly Ledbetter was one of only a few supervisors at a tire plant. She worked 12-hour shifts and constantly had to endure insults from her male bosses just because she was a woman doing what was thought to be a man's job.

It was not until late in her career that she discovered her company was cheating her, paying her up to 40 percent less—40 percent less—than her male colleagues earned doing the same exact job.

Lilly filed a claim, and a jury awarded her full benefits, full damages. But the Supreme Court said she was entitled to nothing—to nothing—simply because she did not discover the pay discrimination early enough.

According to the Court, in the narrow 5 to 4 decision, if you do not discover that you are being discriminated against right after your employer starts doing it, you might have to suffer the consequences for your entire career, and not only for your career of being shortchanged fair pay for what, in fact, you were doing equal to anybody else, man or woman on that company's agenda, but at the same time having a consequence as it relates to your pension and your benefits and your Social Security because all of those were factored by the income you make.

So when your income is discriminated against, even though you are doing the same job as anyone else in the company in that category, not only do you not receive the income during your working life, but you have a consequence for the rest of your life, in your retirement.

It is a discrimination that keeps on discriminating. Today we have a chance to change that, to make things right. Discrimination is discrimination no matter when it happens. If someone breaks the law, they should be held accountable for it.

This body must make it clear that women should be treated the same as men. We must make it undeniably clear that every worker should be paid fairly for their labor. We must proclaim in a unified voice the same types of voices that have previously held together in this body almost unanimously: that discrimination will not be accepted in the workplace, discrimination will not be tolerated in America.

The idea behind the Fair Pay Restoration Act is simple. It would restate the rule that the clock for filing a wage discrimination claim starts running from the day a worker receives a discriminatory paycheck, not the day the employer first decides to discriminate. This is, in essence, what the law was before the Court decision. It was the law of the land for a long time. All we simply say is, the Court is wrong. And even one of the Justices from the bench in a dissenting opinion said: ''This is something that Congress needs to change.''

If a female worker sees her wages are continuously falling behind those of her male counterparts, she should be able to challenge her employer, even if the original decision to discriminate was made years ago. As long as the discrimination continues, the right of a worker to challenge it should continue as well.

This does not only benefit women, it helps all in our country if they are getting cheated in their paycheck on account of their age, or their race, a disability, their national origin, or what religion they belong to.

Now, as usual, there are those who are trying to defend the status quo and scare us into believing that this law would cause a flood of litigation and undercut corporations' bottom lines. Unfortunately for them, history is not on their side in terms of those false fears.

We know this legislation is workable and fair because it was the law of the land for decades, for decades before the Supreme Court made its ruling. All this bill would do is make the law what it was before it was widely interpreted to be only 1 year ago. We simply want to return the standard to be able to protect an individual at the workplace from discrimination simply as the law was for decades before.

And this is not exposing companies to unlimited damages either. The fact is, liability is still limited to 2 years of back pay following the standard set in the Civil Rights Act of 1964.

We will hear a lot of goblins here, but the reality is the legislation we are considering as it was limits a company's liability to 2 years of back pay. Now, some of my colleagues on the other side of the aisle will ask why workers often cannot file their claim within 180 days from the first instance of discrimination.

Well, there are good reasons. There are good reasons for that. To begin with, many workers have difficulty comparing their salaries to coworkers, with many businesses actually prohibiting it, prohibiting an employee from making or attempting to make these comparisons.

Why would a company be concerned about the comparisons among people doing the same job within the context of a company? Why? What is it that they have to fear? What is it they have to hide? Even if a worker sees their pay is lower than their coworkers, they may not recognize it was a result of discrimination.

If a worker does recognize it as discrimination, they often have to wait to contact the EEOC or decide not to due to feeling ashamed or, more often, they fear retaliation by their company, and that is a real fear.

They fear the consequences of rocking the boat and figure a job in which they are discriminated against is better than being fired and having no job at all. Certainly, in this economy today, an economy that does not work for working families, those who are fortunate enough to have a job have to think about that extra burden of raising their voice against discrimination because they might, in fact, lose a job. So when people ask: Why can't they within 180 days go ahead and file their complaints, it is because it simply doesn't always work that way. I would ask those who raise the question: What happened during the decades of the standard of the law that existed? No one raised those concerns then.

Here is what it comes down to. If you vote against this bill, you are going on record and telling an entire nation you want to make it harder for a woman to get paid the same as a man for the same work. It is not about working less. It is not about having a privileged role. It is about being able to achieve pay for doing the same exact job, with all the pressures, all the challenges, all the skills anyone else would have, male or female.

These are challenging economic times, and the challenges are especially tough for women. For every dollar a man gets paid, women get paid 77 cents. Women's earnings have fallen six times as much as men as our economy began sliding toward a recession last year. The truth is, the glass ceiling might be a little higher than it was, but it is still there.

I don't want my daughter, who is fortunate to have gone to a great university, graduated, incredibly smart, to realize less in her power to earn simply because she is a woman compared to those with whom she is competing. Yet if we let the law stand the way it is, that very well can be institutionalized as something that may happen.

It is our responsibility as legislators, as Americans, as human beings to make sure this country holds the same promise for women as it does for men and that in the future our daughters have the same opportunities as our sons. Restoring a woman's opportunity to fight for fair pay is a big part of that. It has to be part of a broader strategy to get our economy back on track. We have to bring down the cost of health care, create green-collar jobs, and help workers get the training and education they need to succeed in a global environment in which intellect is the greatest asset the Nation is going to have, a world that has been transformed, where the boundaries of mankind have largely been erased in the pursuit of human capital so an engineer's report is created in India and sent back to the United States for a fraction of the cost, a radiologist's report is done in Pakistan and read in a local hospital by your doctor for a fraction of cost or, if you have a problem with your credit card, as I recently did, you end up in a call center in South Africa. The reality is that for the delivery of services created by an individual, we are globally challenged. For America to continue to be the leader economically, it needs to be at the apex of the curve of intellect, the most highly educated generation of Americans we have ever had.

Even as we move toward achieving those educational goals, what is it worth if my daughter graduates from Harvard but still makes 77 cents on the dollar that a man makes? It is fundamentally wrong. If we are going to prosper as a nation, that prosperity must be shared. I have said it before and it is as true as it ever was: Only a society with no second-class citizens can be a first-class society. Today it is time to act on that principle. It is time to vote for fair pay and ease the way to prosperity and justice for all. That is our choice. That is our opportunity. That is the responsibility of the Senate.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Mr. SALAZAR). The Senator from Hawaii.

Mr. INOUYE. Mr. President, when the Spanish-American War ended in 1898, the Philippines became a possession of the United States. It became a colony of the United States. We hate to use that word because we frown upon colonial powers, but we became a colonial power. As such, we exercised complete power over the people of the Philippines. Legally, we could arrest them. We could do anything we wanted. However, in 1934, we decided the status should change a little bit, and they became a commonwealth; however, not citizens of the United States.

Then in July of 1941, when war clouds began to appear in the Asia-Pacific area and the Japanese were invading other countries, the President of the United States issued an order forming the Commonwealth Army of the Philippines. The Commonwealth Army of the Philippines had 470 members. They were all Filipinos. They were assured, if combat should come about and they participated, they would be granted American citizenship, if they so desired. And they would receive all the benefits veterans of the United States would receive.

Well, December 7, 1941, became history. Two weeks later, the Congress passed a bill making it a very formal order of the day that if a Filipino came forward and volunteered to serve in the uniform of the United States and pledged to stand in harm's way on our behalf, at the end of the conflict, they would be granted citizenship, if they so desired, and receive all the benefits Americans received.

The Japanese invaded the Philippines. There were two great battles, the battle of Corregidor and the battle of Bataan. The battle of Bataan has been made part of the history of this Nation. We have seen countless movies on the Bataan Death March, one of the better known death marches in our history. In that death march, there were 75,000 prisoners of war. Of that number, 54,000 arrived at the prisoner of war camp; 15,000 died on that march. The distance wasn't too long. It was 75 miles. But they were given no medicine, no food, no water, and 15,000 died on the way. Six thousand escaped to become guerillas. Of the movies I have seen which show Americans being bayonetted, Americans being shot on the march, you never saw a Filipino on the march. Yet the record will show that of the 75,000 who participated in the death march, 15,000 were Americans and 60,000 were Filipinos.

Most of those who died before arriving at the prison camp were Filipinos. Strangely also, though they spent much time on the frontlines attacking Japanese, carrying out heroic acts, they received no medals, no Purple Hearts, no Bronze Stars, no Silver Stars, and no DSCs. They were serving under American command.

Well, we were victorious. But before we were victorious, General MacArthur left the Philippines and said: ''I shall return.'' The men whom he left in the Philippines were Filipinos. They had the job of harassing the Japanese, keeping them occupied so they wouldn't be moving to other areas to cause havoc. The casualties mounted in the thousands. Thousands died in our defense.

So what happens? Surrender terms are signed on the USS *Missouri*, and law and order is restored in the Philippines. Happy day. About a month and a half later, Washington sent one man

to serve in the Embassy, to take applications of those men who wanted to become citizens of the United States. But a month later, we called him back. That promise we made, if you want to become a citizen, you had to do it in some office in the United States, not in the Philippines. That is why they sent that man down there to represent us. When that man left Manila and returned to Washington, there was no one to take applications.

Then in mid-February of 1946, the Congress, our predecessors, passed a bill repealing that law they passed in December of 1941. They repealed it.

It is a matter of honor, as Senator STEVENS pointed out. Here was a promise, a solemn promise on the part of Americans. And by congressional action, we break that promise.

Here we have a bill before us that will restore this honor. It will say to the Filipinos, since your cost of living is not as great as ours, your pension will be one-third of ours. Well, one can say that is better than nothing. But if they want to become citizens, they can do it in Manila or in Honolulu or anywhere else.

There are 18,000 who want to become citizens. There are many others waiting. But as Senator STEVENS pointed out, the youngest surviving Filipino veteran is 82 years old.

As I speak, men are dying. By the time we consider this measure and pass it, there will be hundreds more who will die.

It is not a matter of money. It is a matter of honor. It is the American thing to do. If we make a solemn promise, we should be prepared to keep it. In this case, they were willing to stand in harm's way for us. The least we can do is to recognize this and to salute them as fellow Americans.

I yield the floor.

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

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will call the roll.

The legislative clerk proceeded to call the roll.

Mr. BURR. 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. BURR. Mr. President, I have deep respect for Senator INOUYE, who just spoke. He is passionate. There is no American who can look at Senator INOUYE and not see an American war hero. He has committed so much, and his perspective on history is important for all of us to recognize. Before him, Senator STEVENS spoke, one of the foundations of the U.S. Senate. I find myself troubled to some degree that I am at odds with both of them on this issue.

I want Senator INOUYE to know how much I respect him and how much research I have done on this issue, and I will try to make my case for why I do not think this is a priority but to do it in the most respectful way I possibly can to individuals, such as Senator INOUYE, who have so much invested not just in their knowledge but in the commitment and sacrifices they have made.

Mr. President, we started debating S. 1315 earlier today. Where I ended off in that earlier debate was pointing out to my colleagues and the country how this special pension, a special pension we intend to provide to a very small group of Filipino veterans who were not enlisted in the U.S. Armed Forces but were under control of U.S. forces and command of U.S. forces—I just want to point this out to everybody: Currently, the Filipino Government provides a $120-per-month pension to this select group of individuals. That pension puts every veteran at 400 percent over the poverty line in the Philippines. What S. 1315 attempts to do is to create a new special pension funded by the American taxpayers that would take the average income of this select group of Filipino veterans to 1,400 percent above the poverty line in the Philippines.

Now, let me put that in direct comparison to the United States. We have special pensions in the United States that apply to our veterans because we believe it is important to say no veteran should live in poverty. Our commitment is such that it is roughly over $10,000 a year. Let me compute what that $10,000 means relative to the poverty line. It means they are 10 percent above the poverty line in the United States.

So with all due respect to my colleagues, I am supposed to come down here on behalf of my constituents, my taxpayers, my veterans, suggesting there is equity in providing a 1,400-percent pension stipend for Filipino veterans over the poverty level but only 10 percent for U.S. veterans? Well, I cannot do that. That is why I am at odds with some of the people whom I really love and respect in this institution.

As I said earlier today, I have done a tremendous amount of research on this issue because so many people have suggested with a high degree of certainty there was a promise that was made. Well, I cannot find that promise. According to information provided at a 1998 congressional hearing, the Department of the Army examined its holdings on GEN Douglas MacArthur and President Franklin Roosevelt and ''found no reference by either of these wartime leaders to postwar benefits for Filipino veterans.''

Now, I am going to ask that another chart be put up that displays the difference in Filipino veterans because I think most would believe there is one target we are after. What you see here is four different groups. You see Old Scouts. These are the Filipino soldiers who signed up with the U.S. Army, and they served side by side in the U.S. Army. Today, they receive every benefit, except for those living in the Philippines and outside of the United States. And medical care is only provided at a clinic that the VA has in the Philippines. Every other benefit they get. They are getting pensions. They are getting death pensions for their survivors. They are getting burial benefits. They are getting everything because they were part of the U.S. Armed Forces, even though they are Filipino.

The other three categories you see: the Commonwealth Army of the Philippines, recognized guerilla forces, New Philippine Scouts—yes, they were under the command of U.S. forces. Everybody in the Pacific was under U.S. force command. But they actually enlisted in the Filipino forces. We never solicited them. They could have joined the U.S. Army. They chose not to.

The reality is that just about every benefit, except for two, was extended to even the three groups that are the Filipino veterans. The two glaring exceptions are pensions for nonservice-related disabilities—nonservice-connected disabilities—and the death pension for survivors.

So what I want everybody to understand is, in a bill that totals over $900 million—that, I might add, we are funding. We are offsetting it because a court ruling took this away from U.S. veterans. We took money away in benefits from U.S. veterans. We are now using this $900 million the courts extracted to say we are going to enhance the benefits for our veterans here at home. As a matter of fact, over $300 million of it is life insurance changes we are making. And, yes, our veterans are benefiting from it. But $100 million of that $900 million is going in this category to beef up our commitment to Filipino veterans. But there is $221 million that is going to create a special pension, a pension for those Filipino troops who served as part of the Filipino military who were commanded by U.S. forces and never injured in combat. Let me say that again: Filipinos who live in the Philippines who were under U.S. command who served in the Filipino Army and have no service-connected disability.

This is not about disabilities. This is about a windfall. This is about a windfall that exceeds what our standard is here for our veterans, which is 10 percent above poverty, and currently the Filipino veterans are over 400 percent above poverty; and some in this institution suggest that the right thing for us to do is to raise their pension to 1,400 percent over the poverty level in the Philippines.

Some might say: Was it Congress's intent to grant full VA benefits to Filipino veterans? It is important to note that it was a 1942 VA legal opinion which concluded that Filipino veterans had served ''in the active military or naval service of the United States'' and on that basis were eligible for VA benefits.

Senator Carl Hayden, chairman of the subcommittee on appropriations, had this to say about the VA's legal determination regarding Philippine Army veterans during committee proceedings on March 25, 1946:

There is nothing to indicate that there was any discussion of the meaning of that term, probably because it is generally well recognized and has been used in many statutes having to do with members or former members of the American armed forces. It would normally be construed to include persons regularly enlisted or inducted in the regular manner in the military and naval service of the United States.

I go on:

But no one could be found who would assert that it was ever the clear intention of Congress that such benefits as are granted under . . . the GI bill of rights—should be extended to the soldiers of the Philippine Army. There is nothing in the text of any of the laws enacted by Congress for the benefit of veterans to indicate such intent.

This is our colleague in 1946.

I go on:

It is certainly unthinkable that the Congress would extend the normal meaning of the term to cover the large number of Filipinos to whom it has been suggested that the Servicemen's Readjustment Act of 1940 applies, at a cost running into billions of dollars, aside from other considerations, without some reference to it either in the debates in Congress or in the committee reports.

Now, I am quoting from the history of our congressional hearings, of our Senate hearings, in 1946, from the chairman of the subcommittee on appropriations.

Again, we have the Department of the Army examining the records of GEN Douglas MacArthur. We have the Department of the Army examining the papers of Franklin Roosevelt. They find no references by either of these wartime leaders to postwar benefits guaranteed to Filipinos. We have the records of the congressional hearing, and Senator Carl Hayden says: I have looked. There is nothing that suggests that this promise was ever made. Yet individuals come to the floor and they make this claim.

Now, I am convinced that—we are dealing with something 50 years later—it is very possible that memories are not exactly the same, that one person's recollection may be different today than it was in 1942 or 1944 or 1946. All the basis we have is to go back in history, to look at the documents, to see what the commitments were, and, more importantly, to try to get inside the heads of our colleagues then, to understand: If it was not in the letter of the law, what was the intent? Senator Hayden makes it very clear: It is not only not the letter of the law, it is not the intent of the Congress of the United States.

Now, what factors influenced Congress's decision to limit certain VA benefits to Filipino veterans in what is known as the Rescissions Act of 1946?

You see, in the United States we have the rule of law. When the courts determined, under their understanding, this set of benefits would apply, Congress actually passed legislation to rescind what the courts had awarded.

Again, quoting Senator Hayden:

The GI bill of rights is intended to benefit an American who served in the armed forces and who, upon discharge from the service, returns to civil life in the United States, where American standards of living prevail. . . . Whenever any part of the GI bill of rights is extended to Filipino veterans, the cost of living in the Philippines and other economic factors must be given careful consideration.

Let me go back to the chart I referenced. That is all we are applying. That is the only standard I am asking my colleagues to look at: that when we apply what sounds in the United States like a meager amount—$120 a month—what we are talking about is 400 percent over the poverty level. When we talk about increasing by $300 a month the pension, what we are doing is we are taking potentially a Filipino veteran who is already 400 percent over poverty, or more—assuming they have no other income—and we are putting them at 1,400 percent over poverty, which puts them way above the middle class of the Philippines. This is a tremendous windfall when you look at it from the standpoint of the size of the Philippine economy.

Mr. President, in total, S. 1315 proposes about $900 million worth of spending over 10 years. I will ask that a chart be put up so everybody can see what S. 1315 does. I think many have construed that I am opposed to S. 1315. I am the ranking member. I only have one piece I am opposed to. I have been accused of holding the bill up since last August. I have tried to negotiate this one piece since last August. What you see there is the Filipino piece, which is No. 1 on the list—$332 million out of $900 million. The actual pension issue is $221 million. There is the term life insurance program, $326 million for our kids; the State approving agencies, $60 million; mortgage life insurance, $51 million. You can go down the list. It is $909 million worth of benefits. I am only addressing a small sliver. It is a quarter of it in dollars, but it is a small piece. I am for everything else.

If you take the Filipino special pension out, today I will propose to pass it under unanimous consent. I made the offer to the majority leader yesterday. This chart lists all of the provisions of S. 1315, from the most expensive provision to the least expensive provision. Again, you can see that the Filipino piece is the most expensive provision in S. 1315.

During a time of tight budgets, and when multiple commissions have recommended that Congress focus our resources to improve the benefits of our U.S. returning combat veterans, it is plain wrong to put the needs of Filipino veterans, with no service-related injuries, who are residing in the Philippines, ahead of our own service-injured men and women returning from war. I am not sure it is defensible to suggest that we are going to institute that special pension, which means we are not going to divert that $221 million to our men and women.

I will have a substitute amendment tomorrow. The only change in my substitute amendment is that it keeps intact everything but the special pension. It diverts the special pension and it enhances the ability for housing upgrades for our disabled troops to be made from $50,000 to $55,000. It provides additional grants for disabled veterans who need upgrades to their vehicles that they drive; it will up the special grants by $1,000. We are going to address additional burial benefits. We are going to address some discrepancies in education benefits for our Guard and Reserve. We are using the $221 million solely to divert it to our veterans.

Each of us has met with veterans organizations and constituents who have asked us to address the needs that exist in the veterans community, particularly the needs of soldiers, sailors, airmen, and marines who are defending us in the war on terror. The distinguished majority leader touched on this very point last Friday. Frankly, after reading his comments, I was hopeful he might support the amendment I am offering, the substitute amendment. On Friday, he talked about the number of Americans who died in Iraq. He talked about those who are coming home with physical and mental wounds. He made the following statement:

At the height of this war, with soldiers being wounded every day and soldiers coming home from Iraq every day, we can't even get a bill to deal with their health to the Senate floor.

All I have ever asked for is a fair opportunity to amend the bill and a fair length of time to debate the bill. The majority leader has to make decisions as to whether he files cloture motions. He has filed 67 of them, because 67 times they tried to short the minority on our ability to exercise the rights we have as the minority, which are not many.

But 67 times it has been done, so 67 times he filed a cloture motion. That is part of leading; I am sorry.

But don't suggest that the No. 1 thing that you are for is our guys, when $221 million of this is going to set up a new special pension fund for Filipinos, who live in the Philippines, with no service-connected disability. It is disingenuous.

There is consensus in this body for everything else in S. 1315, except for one provision. We have tried for months to negotiate that one provision. For my colleagues who want to know why this bill has been at a standstill, it is because we have been trying to shift the money to our kids—our children and our grandchildren. At the committee markup last June, Senator CRAIG put forward an amendment to redirect the Filipino pension fund to other priorities. It was rejected on a straight party-line vote—another rarity in the Veterans' Committee. We don't have party-line votes in the Veterans' Committee. For some reason, this year we have now had them.

In December, shortly after the Dole-Shalala disability commission recommended we improve a host of benefits for war-injured veterans, I offered

another proposal to redirect the spending on pensions for Filipinos to higher priorities. It too was rejected. Any claim that there has not been an attempt to try to negotiate what is in this bill is ludicrous. I put that proposal in the form of a bill, S. 2640. We cannot hide from it. We will vote on it. Members will be asked to choose between our veterans and a 1,400-percent pension over the poverty line in the Philippines. That will happen tomorrow.

This comes down to where our priorities are—the Senate and this Congress. I believe our priorities should be on increasing the benefits that apply to our guys. I believe that the substitute amendment I will offer that increases housing grants for profoundly disabled veterans who need their homes modified is important. It should be a priority. I believe the auto grants for profoundly disabled veterans who need the freedom of mobility to live independently is a priority. I believe improvements to the education benefits for returning Guard and Reservists is a priority. I am sad to say that we do increase the burial benefits. I am sorry it is a provision that people have to take advantage of. But burial benefit increase is a priority of this country. I believe all of these things are absolutely crucial.

I met a veteran from North Carolina last year, Eric Edmundson. He needed a vehicle because of his disabilities. An unbelievable soldier; an unbelievable American. He will never fully recover. He will only be mobile with the help of the aids we can make available to him. The Edmundsons found an accessible van to accommodate Eric's injuries for $45,000. They had to pay $14,000 out of pocket.

Can we put the need of that van for Eric Edmundson as a top priority? We can if, in fact, we shift the $221 million that is going to people who have no service-connected disability, don't live in the United States, aren't U.S. citizens, didn't serve in the U.S. Army, but were under U.S. command during World War II. We are not going to be able to do it if, in fact, we don't shift the money.

My amendment would increase the auto grant benefit to $16,000 and, more importantly, in the case of the housing benefit, the auto benefit, and the burial benefit, it would index it so that annually we don't have to go in and legislate an increase. It increases with inflation, so for the first time what Congress does is actually thinks about the future and makes sure our veterans receive a benefit that is reflective of the inflation in between times that we have legislated.

Creating a pension in the Philippines, I suggest, is simply bad policy. I will make a comment on why the Philippine pension is not only the wrong priority, it cannot be justified as a matter of fairness. It is important to understand that VA pensions are designed for veterans, as I said earlier, to stay out of poverty. When we left the Philippines, we made some commitments to the Filipino Government. We transferred to them multiple hospitals and all the equipment that was in those hospitals. As a matter of fact, we granted them, at the time, a tremendous amount of money. That money, in today's standards, would be well into the billions of dollars. We didn't walk away and leave anybody without. We made sure that we rebuilt the country, but we also left the infrastructure that was most needed.

Let me suggest to you that this pension creates a new inequity. There were a lot of troops in the Second World War under U.S. command. They might not have been a territory of the United States, but they signed up for their army, and they were under U.S. command. What is to keep them from claiming they are owed a special pension from the United States? They have never done it. These are the only ones who have. If you think of all of our global partners who could claim, based upon this precedent, quite frankly, it would be a difficult thing for this country to deal with.

As I said earlier, this new spending is paid for by reversing the effects of a U.S. Court of Appeals decision for veterans' claims decision that granted extra pension benefits to elderly and poor U.S. veterans in a manner that was never intended by Congress.

Let me explain in layman's terms what that means. The VA made enhanced payments to U.S. veterans—benefits that were never intended in the letter of the law or in the intent of Congress. When the courts determined that, they pulled back about a billion dollars from this country's veterans. It is that billion dollars that is used in the offset for the $909 million spending plan we have in front of us today. I may argue the court's decision, but to take money from veterans in the United States, who are slightly above the poverty threshold, and spend it on a new special pension for Filipino veterans, who are already 400 percent above poverty in the Philippines, is flat wrong.

Let me say that again. What the court exercised was to take money away from U.S. veterans who are slightly over poverty, and I have said constantly what we do with special pensions in the United States, we get about 10 percent over the poverty line. We have Filipinos today at 400 percent over the poverty line, and the debate we are having is whether we go to 1,400 percent over the poverty line.

One of the largest service organizations, the Veterans of Foreign Wars, agrees. It passed a resolution in August urging Congress to use funds from reversing the effects of the court decision on U.S. veterans and not to create new benefits for Filipino veterans. If my colleagues adopted that approach, as many of us have urged from the beginning, S. 1315 would have become law in August 2007.

The chairman of the Veterans' Affairs Committee is a good man. He is a friend. He sent me a letter on April 10, asking for my cooperation on a way forward with some of the contentious issues in S. 1315—primarily this—but on the very next day the majority leader was already talking about filing a cloture motion on the bill. I was perplexed a little. On the one hand, I had an offer to negotiate a way forward; but on the other hand, I have a cloture vote being proposed. I am not sure where the disconnect is. I don't like to look back. I believe we should look forward.

I am prepared to go to the bill. I believe it would be extremely healthy for this Congress and for the American people to be educated on exactly what this is about because this truly does beg where we place our priorities from the standpoint of the Senate. Are our priorities to fund our veterans, our kids with service-connected disabilities, or is our goal to set up a special pension for non-U.S. citizens who live in the Philippines, with no service-connected injuries, and to divert that money away from our kids?

The answer is pretty simple for me. I believe our priority is to make sure our troops get it. I believe our priority should be to make sure our soldiers get whatever they need, to make sure the Eric Edmundsons of the world have the van they need for their disabilities, to make sure those who need adaptive housing because of their severe disabilities from war have the money they need to upgrade their house so they can maneuver in it.

I daresay, a $1,000 increase on the auto grants and a $5,000 increase on the adaptive housing is not enough. I can tell my colleagues, we need to do more, and I am committed to say today I will do more. But how are we going to do more if we show something as irresponsible as a decision to spend $221 million that we have taken from U.S. veterans, away from people slightly over the poverty level, to allow it to go to individuals who are going to be above the middle class in the Philippines?

How can any veteran in America believe we are serious about prioritizing how we spend money in the future if, in fact, we display this type of judgment and willingness to extract money from our veterans to create new programs?

I am fairly confident we have a number of Members who would like to speak on this bill this evening. It is my hope we will have an opportunity to turn to consideration of the actual bill and to entertain any amendments our colleagues plan to offer on this bill.

When the majority leader left the floor earlier today, he said it was his request that we move as quickly to conclusion of this bill as we possibly can. I have given my colleagues a small snippet tonight of what the history I looked at says of our leaders at the time. There was no documentation, there was no hearsay, there was no intent of those leaders or the Congress to

actually extend a benefit such as those that have been described by some of my colleagues.

Clearly, this Congress, as any Congress of the future, could elect to add a benefit. For 50 years, the Congress could have added this benefit. The further we get from the 1942 act and the interpretation by the Court and the further we get from the 1946 Senate hearings that initiated the Rescissions Act that took the Court's interpretation of what the Filipinos were due away, I am convinced it requires somebody to do their homework and come to the floor and remind us of where our priorities are in this country; that until we have more than our kids need, the right priority is to spend it on ours and not necessarily on somebody else's.

I reiterate the fact that our veterans and our VA pension is designed for veterans who have no service-related injuries and who are poor, according to the U.S. definition of poverty, and the maximum VA pension payable to a U.S.-based veteran puts him at 10 percent above poverty and at 17 percent of the median average household income.

Again, the Philippine Government currently provides a $120 pension to this brave group of Filipino veterans, putting them at roughly 400 percent of poverty in the Philippines and 35 percent of the average household income. Adding an additional VA pension today, adding the pension that is already in S. 1315, would put a single Filipino veteran at 1,400 percent of the Filipino poverty level and 21 percent above the average household income.

Think about that. Our special pension is going to put them 21 percent over what the average Filipino makes annually.

If the argument I have made is not credible from the standpoint of prioritizing our spending, that it should be our kids and not necessarily their veterans, then I ask my colleagues: Is this our responsibility? Our responsibility is to take individuals and to put them 21 percent over the average working Filipino? I do not believe so. I do not believe that is a good thing. I believe it is wrong. But that is what we are being asked to do.

I am not sure the VA was intended to take people and put them in the middle class or, in the case of the Philippines, to put them above the middle class. It was to make sure our soldiers and their soldiers do not live in poverty. Clearly, they are doing better than we are today, and I challenge us to do more about ours, or maybe it describes for us the choice we have before us, that this would be ill-advised for us to proceed forward.

Since World War II, the United States of America has provided a tremendous amount to Filipino veterans. Congress authorized the construction and equipping of a hospital for the care of Filipino veterans. The Filipino Memorial Hospital Center VMMC was dedicated in 1955 and turned over to the Filipino Government free of charge. Congress authorized the transfer of another hospital located at Fort McKinley in the Philippines, including all the equipment contained in the hospital, to the Republic of the Philippines. Congress provided that annual grants be made to the Philippines to purchase equipment and material for the operation of these hospitals. Congress also authorized disability compensation, survivor compensation, funeral and burial benefits, dependents' educational benefits at the rate of 50 cents on the dollar for individuals residing in the Philippines and full-dollar benefits for those residing in the United States. Full eligibility for VA health care was provided to Filipino veterans legally residing in the United States.

We have done a lot. I am sure it is not as much as some want. We are faced with a job where we have people come in and ask every day—there is something everybody needs. I learned very early in life that the toughest thing to learn in life is to say no because that means somebody is upset with you. But you cannot go through life without learning the word ''no.'' You cannot do it in business, and you clearly cannot do it in politics. Maybe that is why Charles de Gaulle said politics is too serious a matter to leave up to politicians. It requires a participation level of the American people.

My hope is, over the next day, 2 days—whatever the leadership decides is the future of this bill—that we will have an opportunity to educate the American people and, at the same time, we will educate Members of the Senate that no matter how far you want to look back, no matter how much you want to try to speculate what went on, that when you stick with the written word, when you look at what President Roosevelt said, when you look at what General MacArthur said, when you look at what the Senate did and Senator Hayden—and they were there at the time and the Senate was charged with determining whether this benefit was appropriate—that from all the information in real time they looked at, their decision was the Rescissions Act, to take away what the courts had awarded.

Now, 50 years later, we are being asked not to apply what they thought was correct but to apply what we think today. Even if you use that standard, I daresay you cannot make a claim that a special pension that puts Filipino veterans who live in the Philippines, with no service-connected injury, 21 percent over the median income in the Philippines is the right thing for us to do.

I know there are several Members who are going to come over shortly. I expect Senator CHAMBLISS any minute.

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

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will call the roll.

The legislative clerk proceeded to call the roll.

Ms. KLOBUCHAR. 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.

EARTH DAY AND GLOBAL WARMING

Ms. KLOBUCHAR. Mr. President, 38 years ago this week, Senator Gaylord Nelson of Wisconsin, a great environmentalist and a good friend of many of our colleagues who are still here, came to the Senate floor with a novel idea. He proposed one day each year to honor our planet, an occasion to rededicate ourselves to stewardship of the Earth and the fight against pollution. He called his idea Earth Day.

When Senator Nelson proposed the first Earth Day in 1970, our country's environmental outlook was grim. Smog choked the air of Los Angeles, New York, and other great American cities; many communities dumped raw sewage and untreated industrial waste in our greatest rivers, including the Mississippi and the Illinois and the Hudson. Polluted air and fouled water weren't the only challenges troubling our country. We had endured a series of tragic assassinations of great leaders, we were torn over a war in Vietnam, and we had seen civil rights riots and antiwar demonstrations in our streets. The Nation was divided and, frankly, losing the self-confidence for which Americans have always been known.

But Gaylord Nelson was an optimist. He believed that with imagination and dedication, despite all the problems going on in the world, we could attack at least one of our country's problems, and that was the problem of pollution. With the commitment of our people and the leadership from our Government, we could devise ways to clean up our rivers and our lakes and the air we breathe. He was right.

Since 1970, when Congress passed the Clean Air Act, we have greatly cut the amount of noxious substances in the air we breathe. Emissions of carbon monoxide have fallen by 50 percent since 1980, according to the Environmental Protection Agency, lead emissions are down 97 percent, and sulfur dioxide emissions have dropped by nearly 50 percent.

Since 1972, when the first clean water legislation passed, we have set high standards for water cleanliness and given our cities and towns the resources they need to stop dumping untreated waste. Our great rivers—the Mississippi, the Ohio, and the Hudson—are healthier today than they were 30 years ago.

Now, this doesn't mean we don't have challenges with the Clean Water Act and the Clean Air Act. As a member of the environmental committee, I know some of the problems we have seen with this administration in terms of rollbacks of some of these great strides. Nevertheless, we all know things have improved with the Clean

Water Act and the Clean Air Act since Gaylord Nelson declared Earth Day.

On Earth Day 2008, however, we confront a new environmental challenge. It is a challenge of equal and perhaps greater magnitude. I am talking here about global climate change.

For several years, our country had a debate over whether climate change was real or some sort of hoax perpetuated by doomsayers. That debate is over. There is now an undeniable scientific consensus that the Earth is warming. Study after study demonstrates that global warming is real and that it is affecting us now.

Early last year, the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change issued its latest report on the science of climate change. This report was produced by some 600 authors from over 40 countries. Over 620 expert reviewers and a large number of government reviewers also participated. This is a very cautious group of scientists with a very conservative process for meticulously reviewing the evidence and reaching their conclusions through consensus. What did they conclude? Well, they concluded that changes in climate are now affecting physical and biological systems on every continent.

Last November, the IPCC issued a followup report. It concluded that ''warming of the climate system is unequivocal,'' based on observations of increases in global average air and ocean temperatures. It said that evidence from every continent shows dramatic changes in physical and biological systems, including melting of the permafrost, rising water temperatures, and changes in the habitat range of migratory animals.

So how did this all come about? Well, certain types of gases—most notably carbon dioxide but also methane and nitrous oxide—accumulate in the atmosphere and then absorb or trap the sun's heat as it bounces off the Earth's surface. The problem is that carbon dioxide doesn't dissipate quickly; it stays in the atmosphere for five decades or more, causing the Earth's temperatures to rise. This means that most of the carbon dioxide produced in the 1950s, the 1960s, the 1970s, and the 1980s—as I look at our pages, Mr. President, I realize many of them were not even born when this carbon dioxide was released—well, that carbon dioxide is still in our atmosphere today. And it means that carbon dioxide produced today will still be in our atmosphere in 2050 and beyond. All of that carbon dioxide has been trapping heat in our atmosphere. Over time, it makes global temperatures rise. In turn, sea levels rise—both because the water expands as the oceans warm and because melting glaciers and icecaps add more water.

Global warming is real, with enormous consequences for our world and for our economy. For example, here is a chart which shows the rising temperatures. Mr. President, 2006 was the hottest year ever in this country, capping a 9-year streak unprecedented in the historical record. The winter of 2006 was the warmest on record worldwide. Almost every State in our country is seeing higher temperatures.

You can see what we have here, with the coldest being 1, the warmest being 112. And you can see for several of the States it was the record warmest, and for most of the States it was much above normal, as in the Presiding Officer's State of New Jersey. Maybe you remember the year of 2006—it wasn't that long ago—and you can see how hot it truly was when you look at it from a worldwide perspective. It doesn't mean you won't have a year here or there that won't be normal, but when you look at the actual trend over the last decades, you see an increasing warming temperature.

Worldwide, glaciers are rapidly melting. In fact, almost everything frozen on our Earth is melting. A few months ago, it was reported that glaciers in the European Alps will be all gone by the year 2050. Experts believe that in 25 years there won't be a single glacier left in Glacier National Park. So if people are planning a vacation to visit Glacier National Park to see the glaciers, they better do it soon because experts predict that in 125 years there won't be any left.

Globally, sea levels have risen 4 to 10 inches over the past century. The frequency of extremely heavy rainfalls has increased throughout much of the United States.

The impact is especially dire in Greenland and the Arctic region. The temperature changes there have been the greatest, resulting in widespread melting of glaciers, thinning of the polar icecap, and rising permafrost temperatures. You can see here in our picture that since 1979, more than 20 percent of the polar icecap has melted away. There is the North Pole, and you see the Arctic sea boundary that we had in 1979, and now we have 20 percent melting of this icecap.

Well, I saw this firsthand, Mr. President, when I visited Greenland last summer with my colleagues from the Environment and Public Works Committee. Greenland has been called the canary in the coal mine for climate change. They have seen vast changes. We talked to local residents, and there are still more dogs than residents—more sled dogs—but we talked to some of the local residents who said they can remember the days when there was ice in their front yards, and now they are growing potatoes. They have lost the size of Texas and Arizona combined into the sea from the icecap in Greenland.

Other changes, such as the recent increase in the severity of hurricanes and other extreme or destructive weather events, are consistent with the kinds of changes scientists expect to occur on a warming planet. They are early indicators of even more dramatic climate shifts and economic damage that await us if we don't reduce greenhouse gas emissions and attack the problem of global warming. So here you have related economic losses, and these are, of course, from increased storms and wildfires.

I think we all remember well the wildfires in California. I remember this well because during the same time the wildfires were raging in California, we had a hearing in our Environment Committee where we had the commission on disease control testify. We noticed, when we looked at the written testimony, it seemed kind of chopped up. It turned out it had been edited by the administration. Among other things, of the parts that were edited out was a part about the effect climate change would have on disease and the mortality rates in our country. There was actually a part edited out that said it would lead to more wildfires in the Western States, just as the wildfires were raging in California.

So this is an example of the increased economic loss we have seen that are weather related in this country. You can see that from 1960 to 1969, and then you go up to 1988 to 1997, and of course I am sure you are going to see more now.

We have had fires in Minnesota and floods in Minnesota, and the people of our State are starting to see this in a very different way. In our State, one economic loss that isn't one of these hurricanes or fires is the decreasing levels of Lake Superior. That will be surprising to people who think sea levels are rising because Greenland's ice sheet is melting. Why would the level of our Great Lakes be going lower? They are going lower because the ice is melting more quickly, so the water evaporates, and Lake Superior is now at its lowest level in 80 years.

Now, you might think: Oh, Lake Superior is so cold, hardly anyone can go swimming anyway. Who cares? Well, it affects our economy in Minnesota because the barges are not able to come in. We have shipped something like 300 tons less, by my memory—we will have to correct the record if I am wrong—300 tons less of traffic because these barges cannot carry as much because the water level of Lake Superior is so low.

By that example, this is truly an issue that has finally moved out of the science labs and the classrooms and the seminar rooms and has entered the everyday conversations of people in my State. I hear it from hunters across Minnesota, who notice how our valuable wetlands are changing. I have heard it from the heads of our snow mobile associations, who testified at a forum I had with our Governor on climate change in January, because they have seen decreasing snow levels. I hear about it from ice fisherman because they have seen it takes longer for the ice to freeze and they can't put their fish houses out as early as they would like.

Just yesterday, USAToday had a story about the shrinking number of

moose in northern Minnesota. Biologists think that global warming is affecting the habitat of these moose and making them more vulnerable to parasites, causing an incredible reduction in the number of moose.

This is how real people in the real world are talking about this. They are worried about what is happening to their planet and the consequences that will have for all of us and our children and our grandchildren.

So the question is, How will we respond in Washington? I am actually going to give a talk on this every single week, Mr. President, up to our debate on this bill in June, and I figured a good day to start was with Earth Day. But just to summarize—and I will go into more detail in other floor remarks I will make—how will Washington respond?

In December, the Environment and Public Works Committee approved a landmark bipartisan bill to get our country moving in the fight against climate change. I thank my colleagues, Senators WARNER and LIEBERMAN, for their work on this legislation, and I thank Senator BOXER, the chairwoman of our committee, for her leadership in developing this bill and moving this bill through the committee.

This legislation is visionary, but it is also practical. The bill would, for the first time, set mandatory caps on carbon dioxide emissions, on greenhouse gas emissions. It would establish a cap-and-trade system to use market forces so that the private sector can reduce greenhouse gas pollution in the most efficient way possible.

And I can tell you, we have learned from experience. We did this with acid rain, and it was very successful. We have seen from what the European Union did what is good and bad, so we can learn from that experience and do, I would say, a better job in this country, if we can get this right.

This legislation, in its first title, also contains my proposal, the bill I introduced with Senator SNOWE, for a carbon counter, which is a national greenhouse gas registry, because you can't fix a problem if you can't measure it. Right now, we have 33 States off on their own starting a climate registry, which shows how absurd the situation is getting. They want to act because they are hearing from the people in their States. They know they can't wait, so they have started their own climate registry, instead of what makes sense, which is a Federal registry. And that is the first title of this bill.

In a few weeks, we are going to bring the Lieberman-Warner bill to the floor, and we will have a chance to take a historic step on behalf of our country—in fact, on behalf of the entire world. As we prepare to consider this important legislation, there is something else we need to remember, and that is that global warming is, of course, a huge challenge, but it also presents opportunities for our country. It gives us the opportunity to develop new technologies, new jobs, and new industries. It gives us the opportunity to reduce our dependence on foreign oil, which just hit another record of $117 per barrel this week. It gives us an opportunity to give consumers new, cheaper alternatives to fossil fuels. Whether it is an electric car, a hybrid car, or looking at what Brazil did with sugar cane, where they became energy independent, so they are not dependent on foreign oil, we know there are things we can do beyond what we are doing now with switchgrass, prairie grass, and all kinds of alternative technologies. But we have to set the standards as a government so we can encourage that kind of investment. We are not going to have a silver bullet here. As we like to say in Minnesota, we will have silver buckshot. We are going to have a number of proposals and alternatives, but we have to get moving by setting the standards.

This is an opportunity that we must seize now. I am proud to celebrate Earth Day today, to join with my colleagues and millions of Americans in honoring our planet. But in the decades since Gaylord Nelson sponsored the first Earth Day, the occasion has often turned into a symbolic event, a day for teach-ins at our schools and rallies at our State capitols. I participated in them myself.

But today, 38 years after its inception, we have the opportunity to return to the original spirit of Earth Day and celebrate the occasion with action, the action of investing in the farmers and the workers of this country instead of the oil cartels of the Mideast; the action of finally doing something to set that investment in place so we can develop the next generation of new technology, as we did when we said we were going to put a man on the Moon. It was great to put a man on the Moon and beat Russia—and look at what came out of that: the CAT scan and infrared technology. I remember in the 1970s my family went on camping trips with those little chocolate space sticks that came out of that trip to the Moon—hundreds and hundreds of new technological developments because our Nation put its mind on one goal.

This is another time to take action. We will have a chance to pass this climate change legislation that is forward looking, that is bipartisan, and that is pragmatic. We will have the chance to answer the call of the people in this country—the little kids with the penguin buttons, the hunters of Minnesota who see the changes of their wetlands. They see the urgency of this issue. We have a chance to regain world leadership on the most pressing environmental challenge of our day. We will have a chance to take our place in a great tradition of environmental stewardship in the Senate and to renew the promise that Americans made on the first Earth Day, 38 years ago.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Georgia.

Mr. CHAMBLISS. Mr. President, it is my understanding we are postcloture and I have up to 1 hour, is that correct?

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator will suspend for a moment, please. The Senator is correct.

Mr. CHAMBLISS. Mr. President, I rise in opposition to S. 1315, but to speak in favor of Senator BURR's alternative bill, S. 2640, the Veterans' Benefit Act of 2008. As we continue to prosecute the global war on terrorism and take care of our veterans who are returning from that effort, as well as take care of veterans from all our past conflicts, our Nation has an obligation to these veterans and their families who make the greatest sacrifices to defend our Nation and freedom across the world. This obligation extends to providing our brave young men and women with the optimal rehabilitation care, compensation packages, and long-term benefits for their service.

This is a very familiar issue to me, and I was pleased to offer several amendments with my Senate Armed Services Committee colleagues during last year's markup of the wounded warrior bill, which will go a long way to improving the treatment and benefits these wounded warriors will receive, both now and in the future. Both of the bills at issue today go a long way to further improving the care of our veterans and wounded warriors, and it is very clear that both Senator BURR and Senator AKAKA worked very hard to craft bills that will benefit our veterans and their families.

S. 1315 makes many significant changes in the area of insurance, housing, labor, and education benefits for our veterans. However, the bill pays for these increased entitlements by reversing a 2006 court decision, which would effectively take $2,000 annually from poor, elderly, disabled wartime U.S. veterans.

Also included in the bill's spending is $221 million to create a new pension benefit for Filipino veterans residing in the Philippines, all of whom are not U.S. citizens and none of whom have any disabilities relating to World War II service.

There are two significant problems with the new spending on Filipino veterans. First, it takes money from poor veterans in the United States, to in effect create a middle class of non-United States veterans residing in the Philippines. Second, it comes at the expense of benefit improvements that are needed for our returning combat veterans of the war on terror.

Under current law, a VA pension benefit paid to an individual U.S. veteran cannot exceed $11,181 a year, which is roughly 17 percent of the United States average household income. S. 1315 would create a new, special pension benefit for Filipino veterans in the Philippines that will put them at over 87 percent of average household income in the Philippines!

As Senator BURR stated on the floor earlier today, the contributions of Filipino veterans during World War II is a

matter of public record and is without dispute. We do owe them a huge debt. They fought on the side of the allies and made a significant contribution to the war effort. However, it is not fair to fund a pension for these veterans at the expense of poor U.S. veterans, which this bill unfortunately does.

I hope the supporters of S. 1315 will hear me when I say that a vote against this bill is not a vote against the contribution that the Filipino veterans made to the effort in World War II. Rather, it is a vote against taking an existing benefit away from a U.S. veteran.

Senator BURR's alternative, S. 2640, will provide veterans with improved life insurance policies, enhance the veterans mortgage life insurance program, improve disabled veterans housing benefits by 10 percent, as well as index future housing benefits to inflation.

S. 2640 also provides for automatic annual increases in burial benefits for our veterans families as well as improved educational opportunities to our National Guardsmen and Reservists who serve for a total of 2 years in an active-duty status.

In relation to Filipino veterans, S. 2640 provides a pension plan to Filipino veterans who have resided in the United States and have not received any benefits from the Filipino Government. In addition, it provides for full disability compensation for Filipinos residing anywhere in the world.

Our Nation's commitment and number 1 priority must rest with taking care of our current veterans, particularly those who have disabilities resulting from their service, which 2640 provides. I encourage my colleagues to support S. 2640, which provides the right compensation and the right policies for the right servicemembers.

I yield the remainder of my time to Senator BURR.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from North Carolina is recognized.

Mr. BURR. I thank my friend and colleague from Georgia.

I think my colleague put it very well. The big question is, has the U.S. Government met its obligation to Filipino veterans? I think that is at the heart of what some Members have raised with respect to this special pension. Let me say, Filipinos who fought under U.S. command in World War II were no doubt invaluable to the victory in the Pacific. Yes, they were U.S. nationals at the time, but they were also on a timetable to transition to a newly independent, sovereign Philippine Union. Thus, their welfare has always been a shared responsibility between the U.S. Government and the Philippine Government.

Here is what the U.S. taxpayer has already funded to meet United States commitments to the Filipino veterans. After the war the U.S. provided $620 million—that is $6.2 billion in today's dollars—for repair of public property, war damage claims, and assistance to the Philippine Government. VA compensation for service-related disabilities and survivor compensation was also provided, paid at a rate that reflected differences in the cost of living in the Philippines.

Let me suggest, about this cost of living consideration, the first time it has been raised is not today by me. It was actually applied in the 1940s, at the conclusion of the conflict, to the United States.

No. 2, the United States provided $22.5 million—$196 million in today's dollars—for the construction and equipping of a hospital in the Philippines for the care and treatment of Filipino veterans. In addition, the United States provided annual grants for operation of the hospital which was later donated to the Filipino Government. The grant assistance continues to this day.

Survivors of Philippine veterans who died as a result of service are eligible for educational assistance benefits, paid at a rate that reflects the differences in the cost of living.

All of a sudden we have second reference to payments being made in the Philippines at the conclusion of the conflict where the cost of living differential was considered in what the United States payment was.

Filipino veterans legally residing in the United States are entitled to a full rated compensation, full rate cash benefits, full access to the VA health clinics and medical centers, and burial in our Nation's national cemeteries.

In addition to that, I have mentioned another hospital at Fort McKinley that was donated to the Philippine Government.

The big question for Members of the Senate and members of the Roosevelt administration, the Secretary of War at the time, was how can we best help the Filipino people? How can we best help these veterans? It was to reconstruct the country. It was to create an infrastructure where health care could be delivered. It was to repair roads. It was to repair the infrastructure so the Philippines post war could have an economy, not dissimilar to the Marshall plan in Europe where the United States and others—primarily us—funded the reconstruction of much of Europe. That is because we knew a country without an economy, without the ability to manufacture something, without the ability for its people to earn something, probably would not survive.

We made the right decision. We pumped into the infrastructure billions of dollars by today's standards. We gave them hospitals. We built them hospitals. We gave them equipment. We bought them equipment. Today we still provide a grant assistance to the Philippines for the care of Filipino veterans.

Some might say if we had a different administration maybe things would be different. On July 25, 1997, the Senate Committee on Veterans' Affairs heard testimony of Stephen Lemons, Acting Under Secretary for Benefits, in opposition to the bill granting full VA benefits to Filipinos. It was not the Bush administration, it was the Clinton administration. This has spanned 50 years. Think of the numbers of administrations. The quote then was:

> Its enactment would upset decades-old policies which have authorized some but not all VA benefits based on this service.

I go on:

> History shows that the limitations on eligibility for U.S. benefits based on service in these Philippine forces were based on a carefully considered determination of the government's responsibility towards them.

I also continue:

> Current law appropriately recognizes our two nations' shared responsibility for well-being, and should not be changed as proposed by this bill.

The Clinton administration lobbied Congress not to do what we are considering doing in S. 1315. What is it? To extend a new, special pension to Filipino veterans who live in the Philippines, who have no service-connected disability, that, along with the Philippine pension that is currently in place, would put these individuals at 1,400 percent over the poverty line and 27 percent over the average median income of the Philippine people.

Now, I went a little bit further. I checked out this book from 1948. It is called House Committee Hearings. I want to turn to one section I think is pertinent to this debate. Because 1946 was the year we passed the Rescissions Act. The Rescissions Act revised the Court's interpretation of what were VA benefits. This sheds a tremendous amount of light on the difference between my understanding and what those who were charged with investigating U.S. obligations at the time were.

There was a Father Haggerty who testified in front of the committee. These are Father Haggerty's words:

> It was constantly promised that as the Ambassador mentioned in radio broadcasts, official American broadcasts to the Philippines during the war, it was definitely promised by General MacArthur, General Wainwright, and also it has been acknowledged, I believe, that Filipino groups recognized the guerillas, acting as members of the United States Armed Forces, were entitled at one time to the complete GI bill of rights; that is, they were included. I believe that is correct, and were later left out.

Mr. ALLEN, a member of the committee:

> May I say this, Father, I know you are sincere about it. But I think you are in error there because there are three or four of us here on the committee who were present when the GI bill was written. And I do not think this was ever entered into.
>
> The chairman: ''It did not come up?''
>
> Mr. ALLEN: ''The Filipinos never entered into it.''
>
> Father Haggerty: ''I am also speaking of the impression that they all had.''
>
> Mr. ALLEN: ''We are not responsible for impressions, of course.''

I said earlier I have tremendous respect for my colleagues who are on the

opposite side of this issue with me. I am sure their recollections—they served, I did not—are probably as accurate as Father Haggerty, who in 1948, voluntarily, I think, went in front of a House committee, probably the veterans committee, along with an ambassador, and the Ambassador swore: ''This is what I understood.''

Father Haggerty said:

This was what I—I heard it, I heard the American Government say it. I heard General MacArthur say it, General Wainwright say it.

Well, I said earlier to those who were listening, we had testimony from the Army that said: We looked at General MacArthur's records. We looked at President Roosevelt's records. There was never an intent for this to be extended.

Now, what we find in the Congressional hearing in 1948 is those specific questions were asked by members, and Father Haggerty swears this was accurate, that we said this, that this was the intent of the GI bill.

And Mr. ALLEN, a member of the committee:

May I say this, Father? I know you are sincere about it. But I think you are in error. You are in error because there are three or four of us on this committee who were present when the GI bill was written, and I do not think this was ever entered into.

I am sure as we go through this, we are going to find others who come to the floor and say: Listen, I know this was the intent of Congress. It is probably the way they envisioned it today. But when you go back to the actual records of the 1940s, when you go back to the 1948 testimony, when you go back to the 1946 rescissions bill, when you go back to 1944, and Senator Hayden, this has been explored over and over and over. In every case, with different members, they came to the same conclusion. Let me read from a more recent committee hearing, the committee hearing that took place last year with Senator CRAIG, who was then ranking member of the committee, as he talked to Mr. Ron Aument.

He said:

Ron, let me take off from where the chairman has gone with a couple of questions. If the committee were to structure a pension benefit for those residing in the Philippines that had the same purchasing power that a pension recipient in the United States had, what would be the equivalent maximum pension benefit? Have you ever done any calculations based on S. 57?

Mr. Aument: Yes, we have, Senator Craig. It has not been a simple calculation because some of the economic statistics that we would be turning to are not as readily available to us. Having said that, if we take a look at what today's pension rate for an American veteran is with one dependent, we mentioned it was around $14,000 annually, and contrast that to the average household income for the most recent census statistic we had at around $46,000 annually, it is around 30 percent of the average household income.

If we were to compare that to the average household income in the Philippines of around $2,800, we are speaking around $820 annually in the form of a pension.

So last year, to bring on par with the United States, on what we do with special pensions for veterans, we made a commitment that they will not live in poverty. What Mr. Aument said was:

If we calculated today the Filipino pension, that would be identical to the U.S. pension, it would be $820. The existing Filipino pension to the Filipino veterans is $120 a month, which equates to 400 percent above poverty.

Our own witness early last year basically said that the average household income in the Philippines was $2,800, and $820 annually would put a Filipino veteran on the same par with an American veteran receiving a special benefit, a special pension.

Yet what we are here to debate over the next several days is whether the Senate is going to extend to these Filipino veterans who live in the Philippines, who have no service-connected disability, a pension, in combination with the Philippine Government, that will equal 1,400 percent above poverty, that will equal 27 percent above the median income in the Philippines.

We base this all off the belief that we made a promise we are not keeping. I gave three specific instances before, I read from the committee hearing from last year, that dispel any belief that there was ever a promise. The 1948 account I read from the House committee hearing is not the only one; it is the 1946 Rescissions Act, it is the 1944 hearing with Senator HAYDEN. All of them point to the fact that those people who were involved in crafting, writing, and passing the GI bill had no intent for this benefit to ever be extended.

I am hopeful my colleagues will see the priorities we are faced with as it relates to our own veterans, that they will look at these severely disabled soldiers and sailors and airmen and marines who are coming back from Afghanistan and Iraq today, having given their all, injured in a way we cannot replace but with an opportunity to supplement their quality of life.

We can supplement that through a number of different fashions. We can supplement that by extending and raising the housing provisions for their ability to adapt their houses to their disability, $5,000 more dollars; we can raise the grant allowance for cars so individuals such as Eric Edmundson's family is not stuck with $14,000 out-of-pocket to make sure they have a van that his wheelchair can go into, that lifts him up, and gives him the ability to have some degree of mobility.

I think that is the priority. That is the choice tomorrow that Members of this body will be given in a substitute that I will propose, that still embraces the majority of what Senator AKAKA had in his bill but eliminates one glaring thing, it eliminates the special pension for Filipino veterans who live in the Philippines, with no service-connected disability.

It replaces it with an expansion of veterans' benefits for our soldiers or our airmen, our soldiers, our marines. I am convinced this is not only the right thing to do, that we have a historical blueprint that tells us that folks before us who held our jobs have already judged that this is not a promise that is broken; that when you look at the numbers, I am not sure you can be more compassionate. We are not this compassionate to our own troops, to our own veterans.

How can anybody come to the floor and make a claim that providing a pension 1,400 percent above the poverty rate, when our veterans are at 10 percent above poverty, is equitable or fair; that there should be one taxpayer who should be asked to contribute to something that does not affect increasing the quality of life of our veterans first and foremost.

I think America would hold a different compassion if the current Philippine pension did not provide a cushion between poverty and the stipend they get of 400 percent. I think we can make the case that it is not a big enough cushion to have American veterans only 10 percent above the poverty line.

But we have an opportunity not to grow it from 400 to 1,400 and to use that extra 1,000 percent to actually affect the lives of our service personnel who are severely disabled who are coming home every single day.

It is my hope and my belief that tomorrow my colleagues will understand the importance of my substitute amendment. It does not devalue the contribution the Filipino veterans made to the United States and to the war in World War II. What it does is recognize the commitment we already made to the Philippines, to its people, recognizing the fact that the group that we are talking about was part of the Commonwealth Army of the Philippines, not the Army of the United States; that even though they were commanded by Americans, they were part of a military that existed within the Philippines, and to suggest that being part of somebody else's Army but commanded by us would suggest that most everybody who was under U.S. command in World War II in the European theaters would now be eligible if this precedent went through for a special pension, that is not the intent of this Congress, it is not the intent of past Congresses, and certainly I do not think it is the intent of the American people.

I believe the responsible thing to do is to pass this package that has over $900 million worth of benefits, $800 million under the substitute that would go to our children and our grandchildren, and 100 million that would go still to Filipino veterans who live in the United States or live in the Philippines but have service-connected disabilities.

We are not an uncompassionate country. We do not believe our taxpayers should help to drive an income level of someone else to a point that we are not willing to commit to our own. When we have our veterans at 1,400 percent of

poverty, I am willing to come to the floor and talk about putting their veterans to 1,400 percent of poverty.

But those who have held our job before us have already determined there is not a promise, there is not an obligation, there is not a piece of paper that said we were going to do this. A lot of people think there was. But there was not.

I look forward to the opportunity to debate the amendment and to debate in more depth the history of this benefit and this obligation.

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

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

Mr. SALAZAR. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent to be listed as a cosponsor of S. 1315.

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

Mr. SALAZAR. I come to the floor this evening to speak on behalf of the Veterans' Benefits Enhancement Act embodied in S. 1315. This legislation passed the Veterans' Affairs Committee in August of 2007. I know the work that goes on in that committee because I served on that committee with Senator AKAKA and many Members. It is an important tradition that committee has worked in a bipartisan spirit to make sure the United States honors the debt we owe to our veterans, some 25 million veterans in America and 1.4 million, 1.5 million veterans of Operation Iraqi Freedom and Operation Enduring Freedom. It is through that committee that legislation emerges to make sure the promise this Nation makes to its veterans is a promise we keep.

In my view, the fact that so much time has passed since S. 1315 came out of the Veterans' Affairs Committee in August 2007 until we have it today on the floor is, frankly, inexcusable. At the end of the day, the committee worked to put together legislation to better serve the Nation's veterans.

The legislation before us does some very important things. It expands eligibility for traumatic injury insurance. That is very important, especially today when we see the kind of trauma and injuries our veterans are facing coming back from Iraq and Afghanistan. We have now over 30,000 veterans who have been grievously wounded in that war. I know most of my colleagues have been to Walter Reed or to veterans hospitals where they have seen the kind of wounds our veterans are experiencing because of explosions of IEDs and other kinds of attacks made on our troops. The expansion of traumatic injury insurance is important for our men and women who serve.

The bill also extends the eligibility for specially adapted housing units to veterans with severe burns. I know in my visits to those who have been wounded in Iraq and Afghanistan, I have seen many who are in burn units who have suffered the scars of this war. This benefit for housing units that are specially adapted for those who are suffering burn injuries is a very important provision in this legislation that will be part of our efforts to make sure we are providing support to our veterans who have served.

This legislation is also important because it increases benefits for veterans pursuing apprenticeships or on-the-job training programs. Across the country and in my State of Colorado, we know there are many veterans who are unemployed. In fact, in most States, about half of the homeless population comes from the veterans ranks. So providing on-the-job training opportunity for these veterans is important. This legislation does that.

For all of the good things this legislation does, we could have taken it through this Chamber, through the House of Representatives, and to the President's desk, and we could have had that legislation already in law. We could have the framework of a law now honoring the veterans of America in the way they should be honored. Yet because of one provision of this legislation, it has been held up not 1 month, 2 months, but since August of 2007, to the point where today it is already April of 2008, and we are on the floor of the Senate trying to break a filibuster over legislation that is supposed to provide a benefit to our veterans in important ways.

The provision which some on the other side have objected to—not all of them but some of them—has to do with the treatment of Filipino veterans during World War II. I join, proudly, my colleagues—Senator INOUYE and Senator STEVENS—in support of the legislation that would restore the benefits to Filipino veterans by granting them full veterans' status for the sacrifices they made during World War II.

Over the last half century, the treatment of Filipino World War II veterans, in my view, has been a stain on our national honor.

The Philippines became a possession of the United States in 1898, when it was ceded by Spain following the Spanish-American War. During that time period, and for the following 60-some years, the United States essentially controlled the territory and the people of the Philippines.

It was in 1934, then, that the Congress enacted the Philippine Independence Act. That provided a 10-year timeframe for the independence of the Philippines. But it was during that 10-year timeframe, when the Philippines essentially were in a commonwealth status relationship to the United States of America, that the clouds of war and the horrific war of World War II beset the entire globe.

Between 1934 and 1946, the United States retained powers over the Philippines, including the right as a government to call the military forces organized by the Commonwealth Government into the services of the Armed Forces of the United States.

On July 26, 1941, President Franklin Roosevelt issued a military order calling on the Commonwealth Army of the Philippines to serve with the Armed Forces of the United States in the Far East.

The Filipinos who served were entitled to full veterans' benefits by reason of their service under the command of our Armed Forces.

Of the 470,000—that is 470,000; that is nearly half a million—Filipino veterans who volunteered, approximately 200,000 served in the Philippine Commonwealth Army, the Philippine Army Air Corps, and the Philippine Army Offshore Patrol—all under the command of the United States of America and our military.

We, I believe, in America cannot forget the sacrifice of our Filipino friends who fought side by side with American soldiers in World War II.

They constituted the vast majority of the 80,000 soldiers who defended the Bataan Peninsula against the Japanese invasion.

They constituted the vast majority—the vast majority—of the soldiers who were forced on the Bataan Death March.

They fought side by side with American soldiers to defend Corregidor in 1942.

They fought as guerrillas after the Japanese captured the Philippines.

They worked behind enemy lines to provide intelligence to the American Army. More than half the battalion that was tasked with providing intelligence from the occupied Philippines later received the Bronze Star for their heroic service.

When President Roosevelt signed a bill for the Filipinos to enlist in the U.S. Army, the Army stood up two entirely new regiments—the 1st and 2nd Filipino Infantry Regiments.

The 1st and 2nd Filipino Infantry Regiments participated in the bloody combat and mop-up operations at New Guinea, Leyte, Samar, Luzon, and other major battles in the Philippines.

Members of the 1st Regiment were also attached to the U.S. 6th Army, and they were working often behind enemy lines to help free the Allied prisoners from the death camps in 1945.

In my view, the Filipinos who served in World War II were entitled to full veterans' benefits by reason of their service with our Armed Forces. Despite all their sacrifices—despite all their sacrifices—after the war was over, after the Philippines gained officially their independence, the Congress passed the Rescissions Act of 1946, now codified in our U.S. law.

The 1946 act precluded most of the Filipino World War II veterans from receiving veterans' benefits that were available to them prior to 1946 and that are available to all other veterans of

our Armed Forces today regardless of race, national origin or citizenship status.

S. 1315, today, would restore veterans status to those World War II heroes and, in particular, it would provide pension benefits to aid Filipino veterans residing in the Philippines during their twilight years.

The pension benefits under S. 1315 would amount to less than one-third—to less than one-third—of the basic pension amount provided to veterans living in the United States of America today. The average income of persons residing in the Philippines, however, is considerably lower than their counterparts in the United States. So the pension benefits under S. 1315 would provide a decent standard of living to these veterans.

Our Nation cannot abandon those who have served under our flag and who have served under our command. We must rally in support of these proven friends of America and act to redeem our Nation's debt in honor of their service.

I urge my colleagues to support S. 1315 in its entirety, and to support granting the benefits that the Filipino veterans from World War II, in my view, have earned.

Ms. MIKULSKI. Mr. President, I am proud to rise in support of the Veterans' Benefits Enhancement Act of 2007. This bill expands much needed and long overdue benefits for the men and women in uniform who have served overseas in difficult and dangerous circumstances to keep America safe.

We must honor our U.S. soldiers who have died in the name of their country. These service men and women are America's true heroes and on this day we pay tribute to their courage and sacrifice by bringing this bill to the Senate floor. Some have given their lives for our country. All have given their time and dedication to ensure our country remains the land of the free and the home of the brave. We owe a special debt of gratitude to each and every one of them.

Our Nation has a sacred commitment to honor the promises made to soldiers when they signed up to serve our country. As a member of the Senate Appropriations Committee, I fight hard each year to make sure promises made to our service men and women are promises kept. These promises include access to quality, affordable health care and a proper burial for our veterans.

That is why I am an enthusiastic supporter of the Veterans' Benefits Enhancement Act of 2007. This bill provides an increase in burial benefits for the families of our wounded or disabled veterans, which I have been fighting for since 2001. This means that service-connected burial benefits will increase by $2,100 for a total of $4,100; non service-connected burial benefits will increase by $900 for a total of $1,200; and, plot allowances will increase by $445 for a total of $745. These benefits will increase annually to keep up with inflation.

I am also proud to support this bill because it takes an important step in recognizing the sacrifices made by our men and women of the National Guard and Reserve by expanding the Department of Veterans Affairs, VA, outreach program. This program provides important information about benefits and services that veterans and their spouses, children and parents may be eligible for through the VA. By expanding this program we are ensuring that our citizen soldiers and their families have the resources and help they need to make a successful transition back to civilian life after answering our Nation's call.

This bill also recognizes the sacrifices of veterans who are suffering from the physical, permanent wounds of war. It expands eligibility for traumatic injury insurance and specially adapted housing benefits to veterans with severe burns. It also restores veteran status to Filipino veterans who served under United States command in World War II.

Whether fighting to defend democracy overseas or standing sentry on the home front, America's veterans have been there for us. We have a sacred commitment to honor all of the promises made to them when they signed up to fight for us. That's why I am fighting hard today and everyday in the U.S. Senate to ensure that the federal government maintains its commitment to veterans. Promises made must be promises kept.

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. 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.

The majority leader is recognized.

UNANIMOUS-CONSENT REQUEST—S. 1315 AND H.R. 2831

Mr. REID. Mr. President, here we are again not being able to go to the bill. I would hope we could go to this bill tomorrow and debate it all day. As everyone, I think, knows, we would like to have a vote tomorrow night at 6 o'clock on the reversal of the Ledbetter decision.

So I have conferred with the manager of the bill and told him I was going to ask consent that in the morning we have the opportunity to go to the bill and legislate—have people offer amendments on it tomorrow—that we would go at 6 o'clock tomorrow to the cloture vote—the motion has been filed—on the Ledbetter decision. I ask unanimous consent that be the case.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Is there objection?

Mr. BURR. Mr. President, reserving the right to object.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from North Carolina.

Mr. REID. Mr. President, would my friend like me to be a little more specific?

Mr. BURR. I would love for that.

Mr. REID. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that on Wednesday, April 23, following a period of morning business, the motion to proceed to S. 1315 be agreed to; and that the vote on the motion to invoke cloture on H.R. 2831, the Lilly Ledbetter Fair Pay Act, occur at 6 p.m., with the time from 5 to 6 p.m. equally divided and controlled prior to the vote.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Is there objection?

Mr. BURR. Reserving the right to object, Mr. President.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from North Carolina.

Mr. BURR. We had a unanimous vote earlier today to proceed to the bill. I believe it has been a productive day. I believe Members have learned a lot in the debate, and I think it is important to get the history of the issue on the record for all Members.

Having said that, I am prepared to begin consideration of the bill and for the amendment process to begin as well. Under the rules, my understanding is the cloture vote on Ledbetter would proceed an hour after we convene.

Now, I am not in a position to delay the Ledbetter bill, but I am in a position to agree to go immediately in the morning to consideration of S. 1315. The way the majority leader has worded his unanimous consent request would push off the rules of the Senate, requiring that the Ledbetter vote be in the morning. So, therefore, I have to object.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Objection is heard.

Mr. REID. Mr. President, I think my friend may have misunderstood my consent request. I think it is appropriate—we would not have to have morning business in the morning. We could go directly to the bill in the morning. We could convene at 9:30, 10 o'clock—whatever would be convenient to the minority—and we would legislate on that all day tomorrow, offer amendments. My friend wants to, I am sure, offer an amendment to change the provision in the bill as it relates to Filipinos. That would be fine.

At 6 o'clock we would have a vote on a motion that has already been filed to invoke cloture on Ledbetter. That would take 20 minutes. That is all it would take. And then, if cloture, of course, is invoked, then we would be on Ledbetter. If it were not invoked, then we would be right back on S. 1315.

So again, I say to my friend, I think it is a good idea we go to the legislation in the morning. I wanted to do it Thursday night. We did not do it Thursday night. We did not do it Friday. We did not do it Monday. We have not done it today. So I would hope on Wednesday morning we could do that. That was my consent: We go to that, we take a brief pause at 6 o'clock tomorrow evening to vote on cloture on

Ledbetter. It would take, as I said, no longer than 15 minutes, maybe 20 minutes if somebody is late for the vote, but that is how long it would take.

So that seems appropriate.

Mr. BURR. May I ask a question of the majority leader?

Mr. REID. Of course.

Mr. BURR. My understanding in the unanimous consent request is that as to the rule that would require us to vote on cloture on the Ledbetter issue 1 hour after we started business tomorrow, under the unanimous consent request, the majority leader has asked that to be postponed until 6:30 tomorrow night. Am I correct?

Mr. REID. Yes. What I did ask is that the vote on Ledbetter would be at 6 o'clock tomorrow.

Mr. BURR. Six o'clock. I apologize.

Mr. REID. The reason being—and it is certainly no secret to anyone—we have a number of Senators who want to vote on that matter, and we would ask that be the schedule.

I would say no one would be inconvenienced with that. If my friends do not accept the consent request I offer, then the only alternative we have is to waste another day because we are postcloture with 30 hours. That time expires at 6 o'clock tomorrow. That is what time it expires. That is why that arbitrary 6 o'clock time was chosen.

As I repeat, Thursday we could have been on the bill. Friday we could have been on the bill. Monday we could have been on the bill. Tuesday we could have been on the bill. As I have indicated—and I am certain my friend has heard some of the statements that have been made today about our not being able to legislate—we have had to invoke cloture so many different times it is difficult to comprehend, but it is approaching 70 times. It would seem to me it would not be a fruitful use of the time not to be in session until 5 o'clock tomorrow. Because under the rules—my friend is right—cloture happens automatically an hour after we come into session. So it is going to happen at 6 o'clock no matter what.

It would seem to me, as to this important piece of legislation, we should be legislating on it from 9:30, 10 o'clock in the morning—whatever time would be convenient to come in. This request I am making is certainly not an unusual request. We almost always, with rare exception, have cloture votes by consent because, as I have indicated, the rules call for cloture votes taking place 1 hour after we come into session.

Today, we set the cloture vote on the motion to proceed to S. 1315—that was by consent. We, with rare exception, do it by consent. It is not as if we are here suddenly trying to invent the wheel.

Simply stated again, Mr. President, I am saying, at 6 o'clock tomorrow, we are going to have a vote on the Ledbetter reversal. Preceding that, we can have a very productive day and work on this veterans bill. Or we can follow the rules and be out of session all day tomorrow and come in at 5 o'clock and have an hour of debate prior to the cloture vote. So it is established we are going to have a cloture vote at 6 o'clock. The question is, should we have a productive day? We want to have a productive day. We want to legislate over here on this important issue.

I agree with my friend, the distinguished Senator from North Carolina, we have had a good debate today. I was extremely impressed with Senator INOUYE's statement. For someone who is a Medal of Honor winner, I think it means a lot coming from him that we all have a misconception of a lot of things that went on in World War II, not the least of which is the Bataan Death March.

In all the movies and everything you see about the Bataan Death March, you see a bunch of White men being driven by the Japanese, many of them to their deaths. That death march had 15,000 Americans and 60,000 Filipinos. That was very educational for me. We have had a number of good statements here today. So I would renew my consent request.

Mr. BURR. Continuing my reservation, Mr. President, as I understand the leader, it is not the minority and it is certainly not me who is suggesting that tomorrow be unproductive; it is the majority leader's desire to change the Senate rules and to move a vote on cloture on the Ledbetter issue from 1 hour after we come into session to 6 o'clock tomorrow night to accommodate people who are not in Washington, supposedly when the Senate is in session.

I think the Senator makes some great observations about the debate today. I agree with him about the heroism of Senator INOUYE and others, Senator STEVENS, who performed bravely in the Pacific in World War II, and the debate we have had today. If we have learned anything, it is that we have brave Senators, but we also have the history to look at as to whether this benefit was intended for these individuals. That is why the debate was so important that Senator REID and I discussed earlier yesterday and we continue now. But with the insistence that we change the Senate rules and delay the vote on Ledbetter, I would have to be opposed to the unanimous consent request.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Objection is heard.

Mr. REID. Thank you, Mr. President. I appreciate the comments of my friend from North Carolina. The record is very clear. This is a continuation of my friends on the Republican side wanting to accomplish nothing rather than something. I understand that. I accept that. I have gotten used to it.

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

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will call the roll.

The legislative clerk proceeded to call the roll.

Mr. 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.

MORNING BUSINESS

Mr. REID. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent to now proceed to a period of morning business, with Senators permitted to speak for up to 10 minutes each.

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

COMMEMORATION OF EARTH DAY

Mr. DURBIN. Mr. President, Earth Day has been celebrated on April 22 every year since 1970. Much has changed since then. Americans have grown increasingly aware of importance of environmental stewardship for the wellbeing of our country. New challenges have emerged, though, that we didn't recognize in 1970. New sources of pollution threaten our air and water. In recent weeks, for instance, we have been reminded that there are chemicals and pharmaceuticals entering our waters whose effects on the environment are largely unknown.

Perhaps our most important challenge perhaps the greatest problem mankind has ever faced—is global warming. Disruptive climate change threatens our ecosystems, our national security, and our economy. Landmark laws such as the Clean Water Act and the Clean Air Act have done much to protect America. Now, though, our generation is being asked to step up to save our planet as a whole.

The science is unequivocal: global warming is real and manmade greenhouse gases are the root cause. The scientific debate is over, and the time for action is at hand.

Congress is taking this responsibility seriously. Several bills have been introduced in the 110th Congress that would attempt to reduce greenhouse gas emissions. Among them is America's Climate Security Act, the bill crafted by Senators Lieberman and Warner.

The Lieberman-Warner bill has the potential to reduce America's total greenhouse gas emissions by 25 percent by 2020 and 66 percent by 2050 compared to 2005 levels. These cuts would restore U.S. leadership in international climate change negotiations and help avoid the worst consequences of global warming.

There is no doubt. We need to start cutting greenhouse gases now. What have we heard from the White House on this? Last week, President Bush said America's goal should be to start to reduce the rate of greenhouse gas emissions by 2025. Representative EDWARD MARKEY, chairman of the House Select Committee on Energy Independence and Global Warming, described the plan this way. The President's short-term plan for global warming is: Do nothing. His intermediate plan is: Do nothing much. And his long-term plan is: Do nothing close to what is required to avoid global catastrophe.

The White House plan is not nearly good enough. As global warming progresses we can expect more coastal

flooding, more inland droughts and wildfires, more severe storms, more global water and food crises, and more stress on species and habitats that are already at risk for survival. A White House policy of ''business as usual''—of continuing to allow greenhouse gas emissions at an unchecked, accelerating pace—will sentence America to an increasing number of catastrophes—catastrophes that will be costly in terms of dollars and of human life and health.

We in Congress have another choice—the choice to honestly debate a rational plan for reducing greenhouse gas emissions and enacting laws that protect our planet and America's future.

The founders of Earth Day created a legacy that lives with us today. Americans recognize that our well-being is founded on a clean and healthy environment. We have seen much improvement in the environmental stewardship shown by our nation's citizens and industry. Congress can be proud of the role it has played, too. Today, on this Earth Day, America is faced with a new set of environmental challenges. I look forward to working with my Senate colleagues as we do what Congresses before us have done: set aside our personal and partisan differences to do what is right for our country.

Mrs. DOLE. Mr. President, I rise today in support of Earth Day. Thirty-eight years ago, 20 million people from across our country celebrated Earth Day for the first time. This has since become an important annual tradition, not only in America, but across the globe. What started as a day to voice concerns over smog, litter and dirty rivers is now a global movement to clean our air, land, and water for future generations.

I am pleased that we have found many commonsense solutions to difficult environmental problems since the first Earth Day in 1970. For example, in 1978 we banned chlorofluorocarbons in aerosol cans because of their devastating affect on the ozone layer. In 1990 we passed the Clean Air Act Amendments to stop acid rain. And in 2003 we passed the Clear Skies legislation to reduce sulfur dioxide and nitrogen oxide that pollute our air. Although all of these accomplishments make sense to us today, it wasn't always easy to convince leaders and even the public that these actions were essential to protect our environment.

Some folks had concerns about the actual effects of the legislation, while others had concerns about the economic costs. Their concerns are not unlike the concerns of some in the current debate about global climate change. A number of my colleagues and I support a cap and trade system. But no matter how we deal with climate change we know that this will be a complex and vigorous debate. The discussions about the impact and costs are legitimate debates to be had. But I firmly believe that inaction is not an answer to this growing crisis.

On this Earth Day, which is celebrated by our Federal, State, and local governments; grassroots organizations; citizens of North Carolina, the United States, and the rest of the world, we set out a vision of how things can be. We can be energy independent and secure, we can de-carbonize our electric generation, and we can wean ourselves off foreign oil. We can leave the cause of this day—the Earth—cleaner and more vibrant. It will not be easy, but we as a nation can and must lead the way.

THE MATTHEW SHEPARD ACT OF 2007

Mr. SMITH. Mr. President, I rise today to speak about the need for hate crimes legislation. Each Congress, Senator KENNEDY and I introduce hate crimes legislation that would strengthen and add new categories to current hate crimes law, sending a signal that violence of any kind is unacceptable in our society. Likewise, each Congress I have come to the floor to highlight a separate hate crime that has occurred in our country.

On the night of March 7, 2008, Lance Neve was with his boyfriend at a bar in Spencerport, NY. Neve told police that a man at the bar had been yelling anti-gay slurs at him and his boyfriend and continued to harass them using derogatory comments throughout the night. The aggressor then allegedly asked to shake Neve's hand, explaining that he had never shaken hands with a gay man. When Neve refused, he says the man attacked him and continued to beat him after he had fallen to the ground, knocking him unconscious. Neve was hospitalized with a fractured skull, nose, left eye socket, and jaw as a result of the attack. Police have arrested 24-year-old Jesse D. Parsons of Spencerport, NY, and charged him with second-degree assault designated as a hate crime in connection with the attack.

I believe that the Government's first duty is to defend its citizens, to defend them against the harms that come out of hate. Federal laws intended to protect individuals from heinous and violent crimes motivated by hate are woefully inadequate. This legislation would better equip the Government to fulfill its most important obligation by protecting new groups of people as well as better protecting citizens already covered under deficient laws. I believe that by passing this legislation and changing current law, we can change hearts and minds as well.

HONORING OUR ARMED FORCES

MAJOR MARK E. ROSENBERG

Mr. SALAZAR. Mr. President, I rise today to honor the life of Major Mark E. Rosenberg—a father, a husband, and a soldier. Major Rosenberg was on his second tour in Iraq when a bomb exploded near the Humvee that was carrying him through the streets of Baghdad. The explosion tore through his vehicle, killing him. He was 32 years old.

Major Rosenberg was assigned to the 3rd Battalion, 29th Field Artillery Regiment, 3rd Brigade Combat Team, 4th Infantry Division, out of Fort Carson. The 3rd Brigade Combat team has lost 32 soldiers in Iraq, nine since deploying in November. Major Rosenberg was the 236th Fort Carson soldier killed in Iraq.

Words cannot begin to measure the magnitude of Major Rosenberg's sacrifice, or the void left by his loss. Those who knew Mark remember him as a dedicated and dutiful soldier full of jokes and smiles. ''He was the life of the party,'' his sister recalls. ''Everybody wants to be around him.'' By all accounts, he was an extraordinary husband to his wife, Julie, and father to his two young sons, Joshua and Maxwell. Major Rosenberg was planning to come home on leave in June to celebrate Maxwell's second birthday.

Mark entered the Army in the footsteps of his father, Burton Rosenberg. He graduated from the New Mexico Military Institute in 1996 and received his commission shortly thereafter. He spent a year in Korea in 2001–2002 and a year in Iraq in 2004–2005. For his honorable service, he earned the Army Commendation Medal, the National Defense Service Medal, the Global War on Terror Service Medal, and the Humanitarian Service Ribbon.

Mark's second deployment, which began last November, was scheduled for 15 months. His unit was tasked with training the Iraqi military, a job in which Major Rosenberg was committed to making a difference. He carried the spirit of a peacemaker and understood the humanitarian mission that a soldier could fulfill.

Major Rosenberg was the type of 'great man' who the activist and humanitarian Jane Addams described in a 1903 address to the Union League Club in Chicago. In the remarks she offered in honor of George Washington's birthday, Addams argued that ''when we come to the study of great men it is easy to think only of their great deeds, and not to think enough of their spirit. What is a great man who has made his mark upon history? Every time, if we think far enough, he is a man who has looked through the confusion of the moment and has seen the moral issue involved; he is a man who has refused to have his sense of justice distorted; he has listened to his conscience until conscience becomes a trumpet call to like-minded men, so that they gather about him and together, with mutual purpose and mutual aid, they make a new period in history.''

Major Rosenberg, as Jane Addams describes, was able to see through the ''confusion of the moment'' and understand the moral dimensions of his work. He was able to inspire and lead his soldiers, and the Iraqis whom he was training, with his vision and his heart. He worked in one of the most

dangerous places in the world, yet was able to lift those around him with his spirit and his optimism. Hope is at a premium in Iraq, and he will be sorely missed.

It is at home, of course, that Major Rosenberg's absence is most strongly felt. To Julie, Joshua, and Maxwell, to his mother Sheila, to his sister Lori, and to all his family and friends, our thoughts are with you. I know of no words that can assuage the grief and pain you feel. I pray that you will find some consolation in knowing that Mark will never be forgotten and that his country will always honor his sacrifice. He was among the noblest of our citizens—a great man committed to justice, humanity, and duty. May his legacy lift us all.

ADDITIONAL STATEMENTS

RETIREMENT OF DWIGHT WHITTAKER

• Mr. CRAPO. Mr. President, today I am proud to honor an Idahoan who has devoted his adult life to helping the disabled, and the past 37 years, doing this by leading the Development Workshop Incorporated, DWI, the largest community rehabilitation program in Idaho. DWI provides work and life skills and job training to those with disabilities, and helps them move into gainful employment. When Dwight founded DWI in 1971, it served 12 individuals; now, it's grown to a company that serves 700 to 800 people with locations in five eastern Idaho counties.

Dwight's steady leadership, renowned courtesy and high integrity led DWI to success and earned him the Milton ''Milt'' Cohen Leadership Award from the National Industries for the Severely Handicapped in 2006. Dwight led efforts over the years to preserve funding and promote legislation at both the State and national level for individuals with disabilities. In his position, he has consistently sought out commonsense solutions to service and funding challenges and has surely been most rewarded by seeing DWI grow into an organization of such esteem and reputation.

The face of community rehabilitation in southeast Idaho has undergone a significant transformation over the past four decades, and the citizens of Idaho Falls and the surrounding areas have Dwight to thank. I wish him well in his retirement and am certain that he will bring the same gifts of leadership, comity and energy to whatever path he chooses to walk next.•

175TH ANNIVERSARY OF KALAMAZOO COLLEGE

• Mr. LEVIN. Mr. President, it is my pleasure, along with that of my colleague from Michigan, Senator STABENOW, to recognize the 175th anniversary of Kalamazoo College. Kalamazoo College enjoys the distinction of being Michigan's oldest college and one of our Nation's 100 oldest colleges. This occasion will be marked by a series of celebrations this spring, beginning with the Founder's Convocation on April 24, 2008. It is with pride that Senator STABENOW and I bring this milestone to the attention of the Senate.

Since its inception in 1883, Kalamazoo College has made immeasurable contributions to the academic, economic, and cultural life of the Greater Kalamazoo area, the State of Michigan, and the world community. Founded by Baptists as the Michigan and Huron Institute, this institution was formally named Kalamazoo College in 1855.

Devoted to the study of liberal arts and sciences and with an enduring mission ''to prepare its graduates to better understand, live successfully within and provide enlightened leadership to a richly diverse and increasingly complex world,'' Kalamazoo College has earned a national reputation as a respected, private, 4-year coeducational college. Central to this mission is the Kalamazoo Plan, a program established in 1962 that integrates career development internships and study abroad experiences with a rigorous academic curriculum and an individualized senior project. The Kalamazoo Plan was initiated under president Weimer Hicks and seeks to create an academic community where students are engaged in leadership and connected to their global surroundings.

This year also marks the 50th anniversary of the college's study abroad program. Kalamazoo College offers over 50 study abroad programs on 6 continents, and more than 80 percent of its students participate in these programs, which is among the highest of any college in the Nation. In addition, Kalamazoo College ranks among the top 10 in the number of alumni participating in the Peace Corps. Guided by the concept of ''fellowship in learning,'' Kalamazoo College has continued to strive to meet the challenges presented by an ever changing and increasingly interdependent world.

Notably, Kalamazoo College ranks among the top 20 liberal arts colleges in the country for students receiving Fulbright awards and 19th nationally in the percentage of graduates who earn doctoral degrees. In addition, the college received the State of Michigan Governor's Service Award in 2006, with the Kalamazoo Public Schools, for the AMIGOS Program, a bilingual program for mentoring middle school students.

Kalamazoo College is an NCAA Division III school and offers eight intercollegiate sports for both men and women. An especially impressive athletic accomplishment is the tennis team's record of 69 successive MIAA championships, from 1936 to 2007, the longest streak by any athletic team at any level at any time. Kalamazoo College is also proud to have hosted the USTA Boys 18 & 16 national tennis championships since 1943.

We know our Senate colleagues will join us in congratulating the past and current faculty, staff, and students of Kalamazoo College as they celebrate the school's 175th anniversary. We wish them continued success in the years ahead.•

TRIBUTE TO PHIL BLADINE

• Mr. SMITH. Mr. President. ''To live fully,'' wrote Oliver Wendell Holmes, ''is to be engaged in the passions of one's time.'' I rise today to pay tribute to Phil Bladine, a remarkable Oregonian, who passed away last week at the age of 89. There can be no doubt that Phil Bladine lived a very full life, as he devoted much of it to making a positive difference in the issues of his time.

A native of Iowa, Phil first arrived in McMinnville, OR, as a 14-year-old, when his father purchased a community newspaper. After graduating from high school and college, Phil did as did so many others of the ''Greatest Generation''—he wore the uniform of our country. Phil joined the Navy in 1940, and eventually would become an Executive Officer of an LST, a 228-foot ship that carried U.S. Marines and landing crafts in the Pacific Theater.

After the war, Phil would return to McMinnville, where he would spend much of the next half century at the helm of the McMinnville News-Register. Under his commonsense leadership, the News-Register became a positive and respected force for progress in Yamhill County and all of Oregon.

Phil was a natural leader who lent his time and talent to countless organizations and worthy causes, including the Oregon Newspaper Publishers Association, the Republican Party, St. Barnabas Episcopal Church, the McMinnville Chamber of Commerce, Associated Oregon Industries, and the Oregon Economic Development Commission. I am just one of many elected officials who, over the years, counted on Phil for advise and counsel. I always knew that instead of telling me what I wanted to hear, he would tell me what I needed to hear.

Mr. President, I extend my condolences to Phil's wife Margaret ''Meg'' Bladine; his daughter Pam; his son Jeb; and all the members of the Bladine family. May they find solace in the words of the Greek poet, Sophocles, who wrote, ''One must wait until the evening to see how splendid the day has been.'' I am confident that in the evening of his time on earth, Phil Bladine could look back at a life filled with family and friends, a life filled with making a difference for his country, his state, and his community, and he could say, ''The day has indeed been splendid.''•

MESSAGE FROM THE HOUSE

ENROLLED BILL AND JOINT RESOLUTION SIGNED

At 12:45 p.m., a message from the House of Representatives, delivered by

Ms. Niland, one of its reading clerks, announced that the Speaker has signed the following enrolled bill and joint resolution:

H.R. 1119. An act to amend title 36, United States Code, to revise the congressional charter of the Military Order of the Purple Heart of the United States of America, Incorporated, to authorize associate membership in the corporation for the spouse and siblings of a recipient of the Purple Heart medal.

H. J. Res. 70. Joint 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.

The enrolled bill and joint resolution were subsequently signed by the President pro tempore (Mr. BYRD).

EXECUTIVE AND OTHER COMMUNICATIONS

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

EC–5902. A communication from the Chief of the Publications and Regulations Branch, Internal Revenue Service, Department of the Treasury, transmitting, pursuant to law, the report of a rule entitled ''Source Rules Involving U.S. Possessions and Other Conforming Changes'' ((RIN1545–BF85)(TD 9391)) received on April 17, 2008; to the Committee on Finance.

EC–5903. A communication from the Assistant Secretary, Office of Legislative Affairs, Department of State, transmitting, pursuant to law, the certification of a proposed technical assistance agreement for the export of technical data in support of the A400M Military Transport Aircraft; to the Committee on Foreign Relations.

EC–5904. A communication from the Assistant Secretary, Office of Legislative Affairs, Department of State, transmitting, pursuant to law, the certification of a proposed license for the export of a commercial communications satellite to Russia and Kazakhstan for launch; to the Committee on Foreign Relations.

EC–5905. A communication from the Assistant Secretary, Office of Legislative Affairs, Department of State, transmitting, pursuant to law, the certification of the proposed transfer of eight Patriot missile systems from the Government of Germany to the Government of the Republic of Korea; to the Committee on Foreign Relations.

EC–5906. A communication from the Assistant Secretary, Office of Legislative Affairs, Department of State, transmitting, pursuant to law, the certification of a proposed agreement for the export of defense articles to support the Portuguese Air Force P–3C Aircraft Program; to the Committee on Foreign Relations.

EC–5907. A communication from the Acting Assistant Legal Adviser for Treaty Affairs, Department of State, transmitting, pursuant to the Case-Zablocki Act, 1 U.S.C. 112b, as amended, the report of the texts and background statements of international agreements, other than treaties (List 2008-35—2008–43); to the Committee on Foreign Relations.

EC–5908. A communication from the Director, Regulations Policy and Management Staff, Department of Health and Human Services, transmitting, pursuant to law, the report of a rule entitled ''Toll-Free Number for Reporting Adverse Events on Labeling for Human Drug Products'' ((RIN0910–AC35)(Docket No. 2003N–0342)) received on April 17, 2008; to the Committee on Health, Education, Labor, and Pensions.

EC–5909. A communication from the White House Liaison, Department of Health and Human Services, transmitting, pursuant to law, the report of action on a nomination for the position of Assistant Secretary for Health, received on April 17, 2008; to the Committee on Health, Education, Labor, and Pensions.

EC–5910. A communication from the Chairman, U.S. Merit Systems Protection Board, transmitting, pursuant to law, a report entitled, ''In Search of Highly Skilled Workers: A Study on the Hiring of Upper Level Employees from Outside the Federal Government''; to the Committee on Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs.

EC–5911. A communication from the White House Liaison, Community Relations Service, Department of Justice, transmitting, pursuant to law, the report of action on a nomination for the position of Director, received on April 17, 2008; to the Committee on the Judiciary.

EC–5912. A communication from the Under Secretary of Defense (Acquisition and Technology), transmitting, pursuant to law, a report relative to the steps taken by the Department to implement the Service-Disabled Veteran-Owned Small Business Program; to the Committee on Small Business and Entrepreneurship.

PETITIONS AND MEMORIALS

The following petitions and memorials were laid before the Senate and were referred or ordered to lie on the table as indicated:

POM–303. A resolution adopted by the Board of County Commissioners of Miami-Dade County of the State of Florida urging the Florida Legislature to require restaurants to post nutrition information; to the Committee on Agriculture, Nutrition, and Forestry.

POM–304. A resolution adopted by the Board of County Commissioners of Miami-Dade County of the State of Florida urging the Florida Public Service Commission to adopt final rules that will encourage the use of consumer-owned solar and other renewable energy systems; to the Committee on Agriculture, Nutrition, and Forestry.

POM–305. A letter from a private citizen relative to the use of funds over the next 20 years; to the Committee on Armed Services.

POM–306. A resolution adopted by the Board of County Commissioners of Miami-Dade County of the State of Florida urging the Florida Legislature to sign into law legislation reinstating a property tax exemption for solar energy systems; to the Committee on Energy and Natural Resources.

POM–307. A resolution adopted by the Board of County Commissioners of Miami-Dade County of the State of Florida urging the Florida Legislature to provide matching funds for solar and other energy saving water heater installations for low-income homeowners; to the Committee on Energy and Natural Resources.

POM–308. A collection of petitions forwarded by the Benefit Security Coalition relative to establishing a more equitable method of computing cost of living adjustments for Social Security benefits; to the Committee on Finance.

POM–309. A resolution adopted by the Board of County Commissioners of Miami-Dade County of the State of Florida urging the Florida Legislature to strengthen hate crime laws; to the Committee on the Judiciary.

POM–310. A resolution adopted by the House of Representatives of the State of Michigan urging Congress to pass the Foreclosure Prevention Act of 2008; to the Committee on Banking, Housing, and Urban Affair.

HOUSE RESOLUTION NO. 306

Whereas, the cascading impact of houses that are lost to foreclosure for failure to pay the mortgage is becoming increasingly evident in many locations. The impact of the foreclosures over the past year is so great that it is estimated by some that as many as one homeowner in ten now owes more on their house's mortgage than the house is worth. All homes, even those without a mortgage, lose value quickly as houses stand empty. For many neighborhoods, the prospect of vacancy is accompanied by justifiable concerns over safety; and

Whereas, Congress is considering the Foreclosure Prevention Act of 2008 as a means of bringing a swift response to reverse the destructive trend of people walking away from homes because of loans they cannot possibly pay. This legislation offers a range of provisions, including allocations for foreclosure prevention counseling, expanding the capacity of governmental entities to redevelop properties, allowing housing finance agencies to help home buyers and issue refinancing bonds for owners with subprime loans, and empowering bankruptcy judges to change the terms of loans facing foreclosure. The bankruptcy adjustment provision would be consistent with the power bankruptcy judges already have for other kinds of debts, including those for vacation homes and rental properties; and

Whereas, clearly, the severity of the mortgage foreclosure crisis demands vigorous and swift action. Less comprehensive approaches and voluntary programs alone are not enough: Now, therefore, be it

Resolved by the House of Representatives, That we memorialize the Congress of the United States pass and the President to sign the Foreclosure Prevention Act of 2008; and be it further

Resolved, That copies of this resolution be transmitted to the Office of the President of the United States, the President of the United States Senate, the Speaker of the United States House of Representatives, and the members of the Michigan congressional delegation. Adopted by the House of Representatives, March 20, 2008.

POM–311. A resolution adopted by the House of Representatives of the State of Kentucky urging Congress to act swiftly to renew the exemption of the Delta Queen from the Safety of Life at Sea Act of 1966; to the Committee on Commerce, Science, and Transportation.

HOUSE RESOLUTION NO. 109

A Resolution urging the United States Congress to act swiftly to renew the exemption of the Delta Queen from the Safety of Life at Sea Act of 1966.

Whereas, the Delta Queen is an integral part of the culture and character of the Ohio River valley; and

Whereas, the Delta Queen has made a lasting impression as a beloved part of the past in the hearts of passengers and crew members; and

Whereas, the Delta Queen is a part of the National Register of Historic Places, a National Historic Landmark, and a jewel of the United States's inland navigable water system; and

Whereas, the Delta Queen is the last of its kind, a sternwheel overnight passenger

steamboat like those that contributed to this nation's westward expansion; and

Whereas, the Delta Queen has been and continues to be a safe and reliable vessel; and

Whereas, the Delta Queen was constructed in 1926 to operate as a passenger vessel in northern California, during World War II was used in the United States Navy as a ferry for wounded being treated in San Francisco; and

Whereas, after being purchased in 1946 by Greene Line Steamers of Cincinnati, Ohio, the Delta Queen was carried from California, to and along the Mississippi and Ohio Rivers, to Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania for refurbishment in order to carry passengers on the nation's inland navigable water system; and

Whereas, the Safety of Life at Sea Act of 1966 (P.L. 89–777) mandates that all passenger vessels having berth or stateroom accommodations for 50 or more passengers obey safety requirements, particularly fire safety requirements; and

Whereas, after this act was passed, the wooden construct of the Delta Queen was treated with fire resistant materials and a modern sprinkler system, thereby making this vessel considerably more fire resistant; and

Whereas, the Delta Queen has historically been exempted from the Safety of Life at Sea Act; and

Whereas, the Delta Queen's safety records do not indicate that she is any less safe today then at any point since the passage of the act in 1966; and

Whereas, the current exemption for the Delta Queen is to expire in 2008, and the United States Congress has not acted to grant another exemption for the Delta Queen to allow her to continue operating: Now therefore, be it

Resolved by the House of Representatives of the General Assembly of the Commonwealth of Kentucky:

Section 1. The House of Representatives of the Commonwealth of Kentucky hereby urges the United States Congress to act swiftly to continue the exemption of the Delta Queen from the Safety of Life at Sea Act of 1966.

Section 2. The Clerk of the House of Representatives shall forward a copy of this Resolution to the Clerk of the United States Senate, the Clerk of the United States House of Representatives, and all of the members of Kentucky's Congressional Delegation.

POM–312. A concurrent resolution adopted by the Senate of the State of Louisiana urging Congress to review and consider eliminating provisions of federal law which reduce Social Security benefits for those receiving the benefits from government retirement or pension plans; to the Committee on Finance.

SENATE CONCURRENT RESOLUTION NO. 3

To memorialize the Congress of the United States to review and consider eliminating provisions of federal law which reduce Social Security benefits for those receiving pension benefits from federal, state, or local government retirement or pension systems, plans, or funds.

Whereas, the Congress of the United States has enacted both the Government Pension Offset (GPO), reducing the spousal and survivor Social Security benefit, and the Windfall Elimination Provision (WEP), reducing the earned Social Security benefit for any person who also receives a federal, state, or local retirement or pension benefit; and

Whereas, the intent of Congress in enacting the GPO and the WEP provisions was to address concerns that a public employee who had worked primarily in federal, state, or local government employment might receive a public pension in addition to the same Social Security benefit as a person who had worked only in employment covered by Social Security throughout his career; and

Whereas, the purpose of Congress in enacting these reduction provisions was to provide a disincentive for public employees to receive two pensions; and

Whereas, the GPO negatively affects a spouse or survivor receiving a federal, state, or local government retirement or pension benefit who would also be entitled to a Social Security benefit earned by a spouse; and

Whereas, the GPO formula reduces the spousal or survivor Social Security benefit by two-thirds of the amount of the federal, state, or local government retirement or pension benefit received by the spouse or survivor, in many cases completely eliminating the Social Security benefit; and

Whereas, the WEP applies to those persons who have earned federal, state, or local government retirement or pension benefits, in addition to working in employment covered under Social Security and paying into the Social Security system; and

Whereas, the WEP reduces the earned Social Security benefit using an averaged indexed monthly earnings formula and may reduce Social Security benefits for affected persons by as much as one-half of the retirement benefit earned as a public servant in employment not covered under Social Security; and

Whereas, because of these calculation characteristics, the GPO and the WEP have a disproportionately negative effect on employees working in lower-wage government jobs, like policemen, firefighters, teachers, and state employees; and

Whereas, because the Social Security benefit statements do not calculate the GPO and the WEP, many public employees in Louisiana are unaware that their expected Social Security benefits shown on such statements will be significantly lower or nonexistent due to the service in public employment through which they are required to be members of a Louisiana public retirement or pension system, plan, or fund; and

Whereas, these provisions also have a greater adverse effect on women than on men because of the gender differences in salary that continue to plague our nation and the longer life expectancy of women; and

Whereas, Louisiana is making every effort to improve the quality of life of her citizens and to encourage them to live here lifelong: Now therefore, be it

Resolved, that the Legislature of Louisiana does hereby memorialize the Congress of the United States to review the GPO and the WEP Social Security benefit reductions and to consider eliminating or reducing them; and be it further

Resolved, that a copy of this Resolution shall be transmitted to the secretary of the United States Senate and the clerk of the United States House of Representatives and to each member of the Louisiana delegation to the United States Congress.

POM–313. A joint resolution adopted by the Legislature of the State of Washington urging support for Taiwan's participation in the World Health Organization; to the Committee on Foreign Relations.

SENATE JOINT MEMORIAL 8028

To The Honorable George W. Bush, President of the United States, and to the President of the Senate and the Speaker of the House of Representatives, and to the Senate and House of Representatives of the United States, in Congress Assembled, and to the United States Secretary of State, and to the United States Secretary of Health and Human Services, and to the United States Representative to the World Health Assembly, and to the Director-General of the World Health Organization, and to the representative of the Taipei Economic and Cultural Representative Office in the United States:

We, your Memorialists, the Senate and House of Representatives of the State of Washington, in legislative session assembled, respectfully represent and petition as follows:

Whereas, Direct and unobstructed participation in international health cooperation forums and programs is crucial for all parts of the world, especially with today's greater potential for the cross-border spread of various infectious diseases such as AIDS; and

Whereas, Taiwan's achievements in the field of health care are substantial, including life expectancy levels that are some of the highest in Asia, maternal and infant mortality rates that are comparable to those of western countries, free hepatitis B vaccinations for children and the eradication of polio, cholera, smallpox, and the plague; and

Whereas, The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention and its Taiwanese counterpart have enjoyed close collaboration on a wide range of public health issues; and

Whereas, In recent years Taiwan has expressed a willingness to assist financially and technically the international aid and health activities supported by the World Health Organization; and

Whereas, Taiwan's population of 23 million is larger than that of 75 percent of World Health Organization member states; and

Whereas, The United States, in its 1994 Taiwan Policy Review, declared its intention to support Taiwan's participation in appropriate international Organizations; and

Whereas, Taiwan's participation in the World Health Organization could bring many benefits to the state of health not only in Taiwan but also regionally and globally: Now, therefore

Your Memorialists respectfully pray that Congress support the participation by Taiwan in a meaningful and appropriate way in the World Health Organization: Now, therefore, be it

Resolved, That copies of this memorial shall be immediately transmitted to the Honorable George W. Bush, President of the United States, the United States Secretary of State, the United States Secretary of Health and Human Services, the United States representative to the World Health Assembly, the Director-General of the World Health Organization, the representative of the Taipei Economic and Cultural Representative Office in the United States, the President of the United States Senate, the Speaker of the House of Representatives and each member of Congress from the State of Washington.

POM–314. A resolution adopted by the Senate of the State of Kansas urging Congress to amend the No Child Left Behind Act; to the Committee on Health, Education, Labor, and Pensions.

SENATE RESOLUTION NO. 1831

A RESOLUTION urging the Congress of the United States to amend the No Child Left Behind Act so that states will be allowed to continue to work toward the goal of closing the achievement gap without overly prescriptive federal rules, unfunded mandates and the coercion of losing federal funds.

Whereas, The purpose of the No Child Left Behind Act (NCLB), which was enacted on a bipartisan basis and scheduled to be reauthorized in 2008, is to increase the academic achievement of all students in language arts, mathematics and science, and to close achievement gaps among various subgroups of students; and

Whereas, The NCLB sets expectations for all students to be 100% proficient by school

year 2013–2014; however, the specific requirements are unreasonable for students with limited English proficiency and students with disabilities, making it impossible for all schools to comply with the law; and

Whereas, The NCLB requires highly qualified teachers in core academic areas, which conflicts with the process for certifying special education teachers and overlooks the fact that many categories of teachers, including special education teachers and middle school teachers in small rural schools, often teach several subjects; and

Whereas, The NCLB coerces participation by placing punitive financial consequences on states refusing to participate; and

Whereas, The NCLB is an under-funded mandate, with actual funding falling over $70 billion short of the authorized levels, placing the burden on states and school districts to spend their own limited resources to implement the NCLB; and

Whereas, States should be allowed to use multiple measures of student achievement and school effectiveness in their state accountability plan, and to use a student-growth approach in their state accountability plan; and

Whereas, States should have the flexibility to allow school districts to design appropriate instructional interventions and incorporate differentiated interventions for any school not making adequate yearly progress so that a school that falls short in only a small number of federal criteria is not treated in the same manner as a school that falls short on all such measures, and to allow a district not making adequate yearly progress to be the supplemental educational services provider; and

Whereas, States should be given sufficient time for improvement plans to take effect before applying sanctions, and sanctions should not be applied if they undermine existing effective reform efforts, or states should be permitted to replace sanctions that do not have a consistent record of success with interventions that enable schools to make changes that result in improved student achievement; and

Whereas, States and school districts should have the flexibility to determine the appropriate standards upon which to base assessments for students with disabilities and to utilize the results from assessments based on such standards in calculating adequate yearly progress without arbitrary federal limitation on the use of such assessments; and

Whereas, States and school districts should have the flexibility to exclude assessment results of newly arrived limited-English proficient students in adequate yearly progress calculations for an appropriate number of years to ensure that such tests are measuring students' academic content knowledge and not just their English-proficiency levels; and

Whereas, Funding for supplemental educational services and school choice transportation should be funded by the federal government, and not come from diverting up to 20% of school districts Title I funds for such purposes: Now, therefore, be it

Resolved by the Senate of the State of Kansas: That we memorialize the President and the United States Congress to make a serious commitment to improving the quality of the nation's public schools by substantially increasing funding for the preauthorized version of the No Child Left Behind Act; and be it further

Resolved, That we urge the Congress of the United States to amend the No Child Left Behind Act so that states will be allowed to continue working toward the goal of closing the achievement gap without overly prescriptive federal rules, under-funded mandates and the coercion of losing federal funds; and be it further

Resolved: That the Secretary of the Senate provide an enrolled copy of this resolution to the President of the United States, the President of the United States Senate, the Speaker of the United States House of Representatives and to each member of the Kansas Congressional Delegation.

REPORTS OF COMMITTEES

The following reports of committees were submitted:

By Mr. LIEBERMAN, from the Committee on Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs, without amendment:

S. 1046. A bill to modify pay provisions relating to certain senior-level positions in the Federal Government, and for other purposes (Rept. No. 110–328).

By Mr. KENNEDY, from the Committee on Health, Education, Labor, and Pensions:

Report to accompany S. 1551, a bill to amend the Public Health Service Act with respect to making progress toward the goal of eliminating tuberculosis, and for other purposes (Rept. No. 110–329).

By Mr. INOUYE, from the Committee on Commerce, Science, and Transportation, with amendments:

S. 1853. A bill to promote competition, to preserve the ability of local governments to provide broadband capability and services, and for other purposes (Rept. No. 110–330).

By Mr. LIEBERMAN, from the Committee on Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs, without amendment and with a preamble:

H. Con. Res. 307. A concurrent resolution expressing the sense of Congress that Members' Congressional papers should be properly maintained and encouraging Members to take all necessary measures to manage and preserve these papers.

S. Res. 497. A resolution expressing the sense of the Senate that public servants should be commended for their dedication and continued service to the Nation during Public Service Recognition Week, May 5 through 11, 2008.

By Mr. LEAHY, from the Committee on the Judiciary, with amendments:

S. 431. A bill to require convicted sex offenders to register online identifiers, and for other purposes.

EXECUTIVE REPORTS OF COMMITTEES

The following executive reports of nominations were submitted:

By Mr. BIDEN for the Committee on Foreign Relations.

*Mark Kimmitt, of Virginia, to be an Assistant Secretary of State (Political-Military Affairs).

*Patricia M. Haslach, of Oregon, a Career Member of the Senior Foreign Service, Class of Minister-Counselor, for the rank of Ambassador during her tenure of service as United States Senior Coordinator for the Asia-Pacific Economic Cooperation (APEC) Forum.

*Joxel Garcia, of Connecticut, to be Representative of the United States on the Executive Board of the World Health Organization.

*Samuel W. Speck, of Ohio, to be a Commissioner on the part of the United States on the International Joint Commission, United States and Canada.

*Scot A. Marciel, of California, for the rank of Ambassador during his tenure of service as Deputy Assistant Secretary of State for East Asian and Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN) Affairs.

*Yousif Boutrous Ghafari, of Michigan, to be Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary of the United States of America to the Republic of Slovenia.

Nominee: Yousif B. Ghafari.

Post: Ambassador to the Republic of Slovenia.

(The following is a list of all members of my immediate family and their spouses. I have asked each of these persons to inform me of the pertinent contributions made by them. To the best of my knowledge, the information contained in this report is complete and accurate.)

Contributions, Amount, Date, and Donee:

1. Self: 2007—2,300.00, Team Sununu; 6,800.00, Robert A. Ficano Committee; 300.00, John B. O'Reilly Jr. Committee; 200.00, Committee to Elect Notte; 150.00, Committee to Elect Alan Lambert; 4,600.00, Mitt Romney for President; 80.00, Friends of Nancy A. Hubbard; 125.00, Diamond PAC/Jewel Ware; 250.00, Committee to Elect Mark Steenbergh; 65.00, Gary Woronchak for County Commissioner; 125.00, Laura Cox for Wayne County Commissioner; 100.00, Friends of Suzanne Sareini; 250.00, Health PAC; 2,500.00, Friends of Wayne State PAC; 150.00, Friends of Maureen Brosnan; 6,900.00, Mitt Romney for President; 1,000.00, McConnell Senate Committee; 4,600.00, Friends of Carl Levin; 150.00, Friends of Kevin McNamara; 250.00, Committee to Re-elect Donald Fracassi; 1,000.00, Friends of Michael Bouchard.

2006—1,000.00, Mike DeWine for US Senate; 100.00, Gary Woronchak for County Comm.; 200.00, Citizens for Jewel Ware; 125.00, Laura Cox for Wayne County Comm.; 1,000.00, Dave Camp for Congress; 250.00, Candice Miller for Congress; 500.00, Health PAC; 1,000.00, IMP–PAC; 200.00, Citizens for Sam Salamey; 150.00, The Committee to Re-elect Edward A. Boike, Jr.; 2,500.00, Friends of Wayne State PAC; 500.00, Kilpatrick for US Congress; 6,800.00, DeVos for Governor; 5,000.00, Robert A. Ficano PAC; 750.00, Michael A. Guido Committee; 2,100.00, C. Wakim for Congress; 100.00, Gary Woronchak for County Comm.; 1,000.00, Team Sununu; 250.00, Friends of Kevin McNamara; 1,000.00, Knollenberg for Congress; 5,000.00, Michigan Republican Party; 100.00, Charles Chambers for OCC Board of Trustees; 2,000.00, Santorum 2006; 2,100.00, Jeff Lamberti for Congress.

2005—6,800.00, DeVos for Governor; 1,000.00, Friends of Michael Bouchard; 150.00, Committee to Elect Alan Lambert; 200.00, Friends of Mark Steenbergh; 1,040.00, Michael A. Guido Committee; 750.00, Freman Hendrix for Mayor Committee; 100.00, The Committee to Elect Arthur F. Wright; 150.00, Committee to Elect Gregory Pitonialk; 7,300.00, Robert A. Ficano Committee; 70.00, Friends of Nancy A. Hubbard; 70.00, Friends of Suzanne Sareini; 250.00, Friends of Brenda Lawrence; 100.00, Sue Hall for Mayor; 300.00 Committee to Elect Joyce Hayes Giles; 150.00, Committee to re-Elect Edward A. Boike, Jr.; 100.00, Laura Cox for Wayne County Commiss.; 50,250.00, Republican National Committee; 25,000.00, Joint Candidate Committee; 1,000.00, Michigan Republican Party; 200.00, Committee to re-Elect Donald F. Fracassi; 100.00, Committee to Elect Notte; 8,400.00, Bouchard for US Senate.

2004—25,000.00, Michigan Republican Party; 1,000.00, Marc Barron for District Judge; 1,500.00, Robert A. Ficano Committee; 2,500.00, Friends of L. Brooks Patterson; 1,500.00, Knollenberg for Congress Committee; 75.00, Committee to Re-elect Edward A. Boike, Jr.; 150.00, Spring event 2004; 1,000.00, Committee to Elect Myrah Kirkwood; 140.00, Friends of Nancy A. Hubbard; 250.00, Citizens to Elect Cheryl Matthews; 150.00, Gorcyca for Justice Fund; 40,000.00, Republican National Committee; 10,000.00, Republican National Committee; (8,000.00),

Republican National Committee; 250.00, Friends for Bill Vollenweider; 140.00, Committee to Elect Alan Lambert; 1,000.00, Committee to Elect David Farhat; 1,000.00, Nancy Danhof for State Board; 500.00, Stephen Markman for Justice; 26,000.00, Joint Candidate Committee; 27,000.00, Joint State Victory Committee; 1,000.00, Terri Lynn Land for Secretary of State; 250.00, McCotter Congressional Committee; 200.00, Committee to Elect Notte; 500.00, Committee to re-elect Judge Wm. Whitbeck; 250.00, Melanie Foster for MSU Trustee; 500.00, Senate Republican Campaign Com; 5,000.00, IRL PAC; 125.00, Fall Event 2004; 2,500.00, Cox 5200 Club; 250.00, Rogers for Congress.

2003—200.00, Committee to Elect Notte; 150.00, Gorcyca for Prosecutor; 150.00, Spring Event 2003; 475.00, Michael A. Gudio Committee; 125.00, Sue Hall for Mayor Committee; 100.00, Committee to Elect Gil Hill; 140.00, Friends of Nancy A. Hubbard; 1,500.00, John D. Dingell for Congress; 100.00, Friends of Suzanne Sareini; 2,000.00, Bush-Cheney '04, Inc.; 1,000.00, Rogers for Congress; 2,000.00, Ros-Lehtinen for Congress; 500.00, Robert A. Ficano Committee; 200.00, Bankes for Livonia Mayor; 250.00, McCotter Congressional Committee; 25,000.00, Republican National Committee; 250.00, Committee to Keep Michael Duggan; 2,000.00, Engel for Congress.

Ghafari Family Members Political Contributions: Aida Ghafari, 2,300.00, 9/25/07, Mitt Romney; 1,000.00, 3/30/06, Michael J. Bouchard; Almaza Ghafari, 1,000.00, 9/11/07, Mitt Romney; 2,000.00, 6/30/03, George Bush; Georges Ghafari, 2,000.00, 3/31/06, Michael J. Bouchard; Louis Ghafari, 500.00, 6/27/06, Eliot Engel; 1,000.00, 3/21/06, Michael J. Bouchard; Sejaan Ghafari, 500.00, 6/27/06, Eliot Engel; 1,000.00, 4/7/06, Michael J. Bouchard; Vera Kalnins, 2,000.00, 12/4/03, George W. Bush.

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*Kurt Douglas Volker, of Pennsylvania, a Career Foreign Service Officer of Class One, to be United States Permanent Representative on the Council of the North Atlantic Treaty Organization, with the rank and status of Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary.

Nominee: Kurt D. Volker.

Post: US–NATO.

Nominated: Ambassador.

(The following is a list of all members of my immediate family and their spouses. I have asked each of these persons to inform me of the pertinent contributions made by them. To the best of my knowledge, the information contained in this report is complete and accurate.)

Contributions, Amount, Date, and Donee:

1. Self, none.
2. Spouse: Karen Volker, none.
3. Children and Spouses: Sonja Volker, none; Katja Volker, none.
4. Parents: Thelma Jane, $25, 8/01/2004, RNC; Volker, $16, 9/18/2004, RNC.
5. Grandparents.
6. Brothers and Spouses: Mark and Volker, $250, 9/29/2006, RNC; $250, 8/02/2004, Bush/Cheney; $250, 9/10/2004, RNC; and Craig and Volker, none.
7. Sisters and Spouses: N/A.

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*D. Kathleen Stephens, of Montana, a Career Member of the Senior Foreign Service, Class of Minister-Counselor, to be Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary of the United States of America to the Republic of Korea.

Nominee: Doris Kathleen Stephens.

Post: Seoul, Korea.

(The following is a list of all members of my immediate family and their spouses. I have asked each of these persons to inform me of the pertinent contributions made by them. To the best of my knowledge, the information contained in this report is complete and accurate.)

Contributions, Amount, Date, and Donee:

1. Self, none.
2. Spouse: N/A.
3. Children and Spouses: James Whong, none.
4. Parents: Doris R. Stephens, none; Kenneth L. Stephens (deceased).
5. Grandparents: Henry and Mabel Richburg; Harvey and Annie Pearl Stephens, all deceased.
6. Brothers and Spouses: Kenneth Stephens, none; Jeffrey W. Stephens, none; Margaret Stephens, none.
7. Sisters and Spouses: N/A.

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*Robert J. Callahan, of Virginia, a Career Member of the Senior Foreign Service, Class of Minister-Counselor, to be Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary of the United States of America to the Republic of Nicaragua.

Nominee: Robert J. Callahan.

(The following is a list of all members of my immediate family and their spouses. I have asked each of these persons to inform me of the pertinent contributions made by them. To the best of my knowledge, the information contained in this report is complete and accurate.)

Contributions, Amount, Date, and Donee.

1. Self, none.
2. Spouse, none.
3. Children and Spouses: Andrew M. Callahan, none; Emmett B. Callahan, none.
4. Parents, deceased.
5. Grandparents, deceased.
6. Brothers and Spouses: Thomas D. Callahan (spouse deceased), none; James M. Callahan, none.
7. Sisters and Spouses: John and Patricia Schultz, none; Robert and Kathleen Martin, none; John and Maureen Moore, none; James and Nancy Lamb, none.

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*Heather M. Hodges, of Ohio, a Career Member of the Senior Foreign Service, Class of Minister-Counselor, to be Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary of the United States of America to the Republic of Ecuador.

Nominee: Heather M. Hodges.

Post: Ambassador to Ecuador.

(The following is a list of all members of my immediate family and their spouses. I have asked each of these persons to inform me of the pertinent contributions made by them. To the best of my knowledge, the information contained in this report is complete and accurate.)

Contributions, Amount, Date, and Donee:

1. Self, none.
2. Spouse: N/A.
3. Children and Spouses: N/A.
4. Parents: Aiden & Frances Hodges—Deceased.
5. Grandparents: Joseph & Effy Hodges—Deceased; Herman & Susana Ruppelt—Deceased.
6. Brothers and Spouses: Allan J. Hodges, none.
7. Sisters and Spouses: N/A.

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*Barbara J. Stephenson, of Florida, a Career Member of the Senior Foreign Service, Class of Minister-Counselor, to be Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary of the United States of America to the Republic of Panama.

Nominee: Barbara Stephenson.

Post: Ambassador to Panama.

(The following is a list of all members of my immediate family and their spouses. I have asked each of these persons to inform me of the pertinent contributions made by them. To the best of my knowledge, the information contained in this report is complete and accurate.)

Contributions, Amount, Date, and Donee:

1. Self: Barbara Stephenson, none.
2. Spouse: Matthew Furbush, none.
3. Children: Claire Furbush, none; Matthew Brewster Furbush, none.
4. Parents: Father, Robert Vernon Stephenson—deceased; Mother, Jacqueline Jean Stephenson, none.
5. Grandparents: All deceased.
6. Brothers and Spouses: Gary Lamar Stephenson, divorced, none.
7. Sisters and Spouses: N/A.

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*William Edward Todd, of Virginia, a Career Member of the Senior Executive Service, to be Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary of the United States of America to Brunei Darussalam.

Nominee: William Todd.

Post: Chief of Mission Brunei.

(The following is a list of all members of my immediate family and their spouses. I have asked each of these persons to inform me of the pertinent contributions made by them. To the best of my knowledge, the information contained in this report is complete and accurate.)

Contributions, Amount, Date, and Donee:

1. Self, none.
2. Wife; Patricia Buckingham, none.
3. Children: William Todd II, none; Christopher Todd, none, John Todd, none, Caitlyn Todd, none.
4. Parents: John Todd, none; Marie Todd, none.
5. Grandparents: Deceased.
6. Brothers and Spouses: John and Margaret Todd, $1000, 2004, Republican Party; Douglas and Leigh Anne Todd, none.
7. Sisters and Spouses: Jean Todd, none.

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*Hugo Llorens, of Florida, a Career Member of the Senior Foreign Service, Class of Minister-Counselor, to be Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary of the United States of America to the Republic of Honduras.

Nominee: Hugo Llorens.

Post: Honduras.

(The following is a list of all members of my immediate family and their spouses. I have asked each of these persons to inform me of the pertinent contributions made by them. To the best of my knowledge, the information contained in this report is complete and accurate.)

Contributions, Amount, Date, and Donee:

1. Self, none.
2. Spouse, none.
3. Children and Spouses: Son, Andrew Lee Llorens, none; Son, Dirk Alan Llorens, none.
4. Parents: Father, Fulvio Llorens, none; Mother, Hildelisa Llorens, none.
5. Grandparents: Efebo Llorens, (deceased); Francisca Garcia Llorens, (deceased); Amelio Acosta, (deceased); Obdulia Rodriguez Acosta, (deceased).
6. Brothers and Spouses: Jorge Llorens, none; Kim Llorens (spouse), none.
7. Sisters and Spouses: Elda Llorens (unmarried), none.

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*Nancy E. McEldowney, of Florida, a Career Member of the Senior Foreign Service, Class of Minister-Counselor, to be Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary of the United States of America to the Republic of Bulgaria.

Nominee: Nancy Eileen McEldowney.

Post: Sofia, Bulgaria.

(The following is a list of all members of my immediate family and their spouses. I have asked each of these persons to inform me of the pertinent contributions made by them. To the best of my knowledge, the information contained in this report is complete and accurate.)

Contributions, Amount, Date, and Donee:

1. Self, none.

2. Spouse, none.

3. Children and Spouses: Jessica Kim Hayes, none; Alyssa Mai Hayes, none.

4. Parents: Patricia Schamber, none; Clarence McEldowney, deceased.

5. Grandparents: Anita Salyer, deceased; Clarence Salyer, deceased; Ruth McEldowney, deceased; Alva McEldowney, deceased.

6. Brothers and Spouses: Michael McEldowney, none; Charlotte Phillips, none; John McEldowney, none; Catherine Miller, none.

7. Sisters and Spouses: Ann McEldowney, none; Richard Hertle, none; Jane McEldowney, none; William Cannon, none.

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*Stephen George McFarland, of Texas, a Career Member of the Senior Foreign Service, Class of Minister-Counselor, to be Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary of the United States of America to the Republic of Guatemala.

Nominee: Stephen George McFarland.

Post: COM Guatemala.

(The following is a list of all members of my immediate family and their spouses. I have asked each of these persons to inform me of the pertinent contributions made by them. To the best of my knowledge, the information contained in this report is complete and accurate.)

Contributions, Amount, Date, and Donee:

1. Self, none.

2. Spouse, none.

3. Children and Spouses: Christopher E. McFarland, none; Alexander G. McFarland, none; Andrew S. McFarland, none; Kevin S. McFarland, none.

4. Parents: George A. McFarland, $100, fall 2003, Cong. Sam Johnson; $100, fall 2004, Sen. John Kerry; Peggy N. Nash, $150, fall 2006, Van Johnson.

5. Grandparents: deceased.

6. Brothers and spouses: John F. McFarland, none; Yvonne McFarland, none.

7. Sisters and spouses: Anne M. Meyer, none; John Meyer, none; Maria McFarland, none; Christopher A. Smith, none.

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*Peter E. Cianchette, of Maine, to be Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary of the United States of America to the Republic of Costa Rica.

Nominee: Peter E. Cianchette.

(The following is a list of all members of my immediate family and their spouses. I have asked each of these persons to inform me of the pertinent contributions made by them. To the best of my knowledge, the information contained in this report is complete and accurate.)

Contributions, Amount, Date, and Donee:

1. Self, 500.00, 6/11/2007, Collins for Senator; 250.00, 11/6/2006, Snowe for Senate; 250.00, 7/18/2006, Maine Republican Party; 250.00, 6/30/2006, Curley for Congress; 75.00, 4/10/2006, Maine Republican Party; 25.00, 5/5/2006, Maine Republican Party; 500.00, 8/6/2004, Bush-Cheney '04; 100.00, 4/1/2004, Summers for Congress; 100.00, 4/6/2004, Brian Hamel for Congress; 80.00, 5/19/2004; Maine Republican Party; 100.00, 7/3/2003, Maine Republican Party.

2. Spouse: 250.00, 8/26/2006, Craig for Congress.

3. Children and spouses: Evan Cianchette, none; Maria Cianchette, none.

4. Parents: Ival Cianchette, 1000.00, 3/31/2007, Associated General Co Contractors of America PAC (AGC PAC); 1000.00, 05/31/2007, Collins for Senator; 1000.00, 2/28/2006, AGC PAC; 1000.00, 5/26/2005, Snowe for Senate; 1000.00, 9/1/2005, Snowe for Senate; 1000.00, 3/29/2005, AGC PAC; 1000.00, 3/15/2004, AGC PAC; 200.00, 8/10/2004, Summers for Congress; 800.00, 9/28/2004, Summers for Congress; 200.00, 10/23/2004, Summers for Congress; 250.00, 8/24/2004, Maine Republican Party; 500.00, 2/18/2004, Summers for Congress; 500.00, 6/29/2004, Summers for Congress; 1500.00, 11/17/2003, Bush-Cheney '04; 1000.00, 9/22/2003, AGC PAC; Priscilla Cianchette, 1500.00, 11/17/2003, Bush-Cheney '04.

5. Grandparents: Ralph Cianchette, deceased; Edna Cianchette, deceased, Earle Winslow, deceased, Mary Winslow, deceased.

6. Brothers and spouses: Thomas Cianchette, none; Bonita Cianchette, none; Earle Cianchette, 250.00, 8/3/2007, Maine Republican Party; Mary Ellen Cianchette, none; Mark Cianchette, none.

7. Sisters and spouses: Susan Koch, 250.00, 8/1/2007, Maine Republican Party; Joseph Koch, deceased, none.

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*Frank Charles Urbancic, Jr., of Indiana, a Career Member of the Senior Foreign Service, Class of Minister-Counselor, to be Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary of the United States of America to the Republic of Cyprus.

Nominee: Frank C. Urbancic Jr.

Post: Cyprus

(The following is a list of all members of my immediate family and their spouses. I have asked each of these persons to inform me of the pertinent contributions made by them. To the best of my knowledge, the information contained in this report is complete and accurate.)

Contributions, Amount, Date, Donee:

1. Frank C. Urbancic, Jr., none.

2. Michelle M. Urbancic, none.

3. Frank C. Urbancic III, none; Arlette Nadine Urbancic, none.

4. Norma Jean Urbancic, none; Frank C. Urbancic Sr., none.

5. Grandparents: deceased.

6. Brothers and spouses: none; John Vincent Urbancic, none; Louis H. Urbancic, Marjorie Urbancic, none.

7. Sisters and spouses: Sherryl Cromer, none.

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*Barbara McConnell Barrett, of Arizona, to be Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary of the United States of America to the Republic of Finland.

Nominee: Barbara McConnell Barrett.

Post: Ambassador to Finland.

(The following is a list of all members of my immediate family and their spouses. I have asked each of these persons to inform me of the pertinent contributions made by them. To the best of my knowledge, the information contained in this report is complete and accurate.)

Contributions, Donee, Date, Amount:

1. Self: John Shadegg's Friends, 12/18/2007, $4600; 8/24/2006, $4200; Huffman for Congress, 7/27/2006, $2100; Jon Kyl for U.S. Senate, 6/2/2006, $1350; 6/2/2006, $2100; 4/22/2005, $750; Ros-Lehtinen for Congress, 11/5/2007, $1000; 5/4/2006, $1000; Kolbe for Congress, 7/18/2005, $2000; 4/23/2006, $575; Jeff Flake for Congress, 3/16/2007, $2300; 3/16/2007, $2300; 3/15/2005, $4200; Heather Wilson for Congress, 8/15/2007, $200; 8/15/2007, $2300; 3/14/2007, $2100, 2/1/2005, $4000; 2004 Joint Candidate Committee, 10/8/2004, $20,000; Pete Coors for U.S. Senate, 10/7/2004, $2000; The Wish List, 5/12/2006, $1000; 8/1/2005, $1000; 7/26/2004, $1000; John Shadegg for Congress, 5/19/2004, $500; Hatch Election Committee, 5/15/2006, $2100; Bush, George W. (Bush-Cheney '04 Compliance Committee), 10/20/2004, $2000; Romney for President, 7/30/2007, $2300, 1/10/2008, $2300; Mitch McConnell Senate Committee '08, 9/05/2007, $2300; J.D. Hayworth for Congress, 10/17/2006, $2100; Jill Vogel for Senate, 8/7/2007, $25.

2. Spouse: Craig Radford Barrett, John Shadegg's Friends, 12/18/2007, $4600, 8/24/2006, $3200, 12/7/2005, $1000, 4/26/2004, $500; Huffman for Congress, 7/27/2006, $2100; Ros-Lehtinen for Congress, 5/4/2006, $1000; Jeff Flake for Congress, 3/16/2007, $4600, 3/15/2005, $4200, 3/3/2004, $2000; Heather Wilson for Congress, 8/15/2007, $200, 8/15/2007, $2300, 3/14/2007, $2100, 2/14/2005, $2000, 2/14/2005, $2000; 2004 Joint Candidate Committee, 10/8/2004, $4,000; Maria Cantwell, 3/3/2004, $1000; People for Pete Domenici, 5/25/2007, $1000, 6/3/2005, $1000; Hatch Election Committee, 5/15/2006, $4200, 5/15/2006, $2100; Mitch McConnell Senate Committee '08, 9/05/2007, $2300; Jon Kyl for US Senate, 9/26/2006, $1700; 6/5/2006, $350; 6/5/2006, $400; 1/9/2006, $1000; 4/28/2005, $750; David Dreier for Congress Committee, 8/8/2005, $1000; 2/6/2004, $2000; Friends of George Allen, 7/12/2006, $1000; 7/21/2005, $1000; Bush-Cheney '04 Compliance Committee, 10/20/2004, $2000; Friends of Gordon Smith, 11/9/2005, $1000; Nethercutt for Congress, 10/15/2004, $2000; Santorum 2006, 8/31/2004, $2000; Lisa Murkowski for Senate, 9/27/2004, $2000; Citizens for Hope, Responsibility, Independence and Service (ChrisPac), 4/20/2005, $2500; Romney for President, 1/10/2008, $2300; Intel Corporation Political Action Committee, 1/15/2004, $208.00; 1/30/2004, $208.00; 2/13/2004, $208.00; 2/27/2004, $208.00; 3/15/2004, $208.00; 3/31/2004, $208.00; 4/15/2004, $208.00; 4/30/2004, $208.00; 5/14/2004, $208.00; 5/28/2004, $208.00; 6/15/2004, $208.00; 6/30/2004, $208.00; 7/15/2004, $208.00; 7/30/2004, $208.00; 8/13/2004, $208.00; 8/27/2004, $208.00; 9/15/2004, $208.00; 9/30/2004, $208.00; 10/15/2004, $208.00; 10/29/2004, $208.00; 11/15/2004, $208.00; 11/30/2004, $208.00; 12/15/2004, $208.00; 12/31/2004, $208.00; 1/14/2005, $208.00; 1/31/2005, $208.00; 2/15/2005, $208.00; 2/28/2005, $208.00; 3/15/2005, $208.00; 3/31/2005, $208.00; 4/15/2005, $208.00; 4/29/2005, $208.00; 5/13/2005, $208.00; 5/31/2005, $208.00; 6/15/2005, $208.00; 6/30/2005, $208.00; 7/15/2005, $208.00; 7/29/2005, $208.00; 8/15/2005, $208.00; 8/31/2005, $208.00; 9/15/2005, $208.00; 9/30/2005, $208.00; 10/14/2005, $208.00; 10/31/2005, $208.00; 11/15/2005, $208.00; 11/30/2005, $208.00; 12/15/2005, $208.00; 12/30/2005, $208.00; 1/13/2006, $208.00; 1/31/2006, $208.00; 2/15/2006, $208.00; 2/28/2006, $208.00; 3/15/2006, $208.00; 3/31/2006, $208.00; 4/14/2006, $208.00; 4/28/2006, $208.00; 5/15/2006, $208.00; 5/31/2006, $208.00; 6/15/2006, $208.00; 6/30/2006, $208.00; 7/14/2006, $208.00; 7/31/2006, $208.00; 8/15/2006, $208.00; 8/31/2006, $208.00; 9/15/2006, $208.00; 9/29/2006, $208.00; 10/13/2006, $208.00; 10/31/2006, $208.00, 11/15/2006, $208.00, 11/30/2006, $208.00, 12/15/2006, $208.00, 12/29/2006, $208.00, 1/15/2007, $208.00, 1/31/2007, $208.00, 2/15/2007, $208.00, 2/28/2007, $208.00, 3/15/2007, $208.00, 3/30/2007, $208.00, 4/13/2007, $208.00, 4/30/2007, $208.00, 5/15/2007, $208.00, 5/31/2007, $208.00, 6/15/2007, $208.00, 6/29/2007, $208.00, 7/13/2007, $208.00, 7/31/2007, $208.00, 8/15/2007, $208.00, 8/31/2007, $208.00, 9/14/2007, $208.00, 9/28/2007, $208.00, 10/15/2007, $208.00, 10/31/2007, $208.00, 11/15/2007, $208.00, 11/30/2007 $208.00, 12/14/2007, $208.00, 12/28/2007, $208.00.

3. Children and spouses: No children.

4. Parents: Robert Harvey McConnell, (deceased); Betty Lou Dornheim McConnell, Heather Wilson for Congress, 10/28/2007, $25, 9/8/2007, $25, 7/9/2007, $20, 2/11/2007, $25, 3/24/2006, $25; Republican National Committee 12/10/2007, $25, 5/22/2007, $30, 4/11/2007, $25; National Republican Women 3/8/2007, $30, Pennsylvania GOP, 8/15/2007, $25; Republican Women, 10/31/2006, $25.

5. Grandparents: William Dornheim, deceased; Solamea Ambil Dornheim, deceased; William Day McConnell, deceased; Della McFeaters McConnell, deceased.

6. Brothers and spouses: Robert Harvey McConnell Jr., deceased; William Ansley McConnell and Leslie Hipp McConnell, Pat Toomey 1/13/2004, $100; John David McConnell and Lori McConnell McConnell, Heather Wilson,12/20/2007, $500.

7. Sisters and spouses: Jill Kathlene Kazmierczak: none; Patricia Lynn Minter and Richard G. Minter, none.

Mr. BIDEN. Mr. President, for the Committee on Foreign Relations I report favorably the following nomination list which was printed in the RECORD on the date indicated, and ask unanimous consent, to save the expense of reprinting on the Executive Calendar that this nomination lie at the Secretary's desk for the information of Senators.

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

Foreign Service nominations beginning with Andrew Townsend Wiener and ending with Troy A. Lindquist, which nominations were received by the Senate and appeared in the Congressional Record on March 5, 2008.

*Nomination was reported with recommendation that it be confirmed subject to the nominee's commitment to respond to requests to appear and testify before any duly constituted committee of the Senate.

(Nominations without an asterisk were reported with the recommendation that they be confirmed.)

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. REID (for himself and Mr. ENSIGN):

S. 2898. A bill to provide for the release of certain land from the Sunrise Mountain Instant Study Area in the State of Nevada; to the Committee on Energy and Natural Resources.

By Mr. HARKIN (for himself, Mr. FEINGOLD, and Mrs. MURRAY):

S. 2899. A bill to direct the Secretary of Veterans Affairs to conduct a study on suicides among veterans; to the Committee on Veterans' Affairs.

By Mr. BROWN:

S. 2900. A bill to provide States with the incentives, flexibility and resources to develop child welfare services that focus on improving circumstances for children, whether in foster care or in their own homes; to the Committee on Finance.

SUBMISSION OF CONCURRENT AND SENATE RESOLUTIONS

The following concurrent resolutions and Senate resolutions were read, and referred (or acted upon), as indicated:

By Mr. KERRY (for himself, Ms. SNOWE, Mr. LIEBERMAN, Mr. VITTER, Mr. CARDIN, Mrs. DOLE, Ms. LANDRIEU, Mr. THUNE, Ms. CANTWELL, Mr. ENZI, Mr. BAYH, Mr. ISAKSON, Mr. PRYOR, Mr. LEVIN, and Mr. TESTER):

S. Res. 524. A resolution honoring the entrepreneurial spirit of the owners of small business concerns in the United States during National Small Business Week, beginning April 21, 2008; to the Committee on Small Business and Entrepreneurship.

By Mr. BIDEN (for himself and Mr. LUGAR):

S. Res. 525. A resolution recognizing the progress made by States Parties to the Chemical Weapons Convention on the occasion of the Second Review Conference; to the Committee on Foreign Relations.

By Ms. MURKOWSKI (for herself and Mr. STEVENS):

S. Res. 526. A resolution designating April 20 through 26, 2008, as ''National Community Health Aide, Community Health Practitioner, and Dental Health Aide Week''; considered and agreed to.

By Mr. WEBB (for himself and Mr. WARNER):

S. Res. 527. A resolution designating April 23, 2008, as ''National Adopt a Library Day''; considered and agreed to.

By Ms. MURKOWSKI (for herself, Mr. AKAKA, Mr. BAYH, Mrs. BOXER, Mr. BROWN, Mr. BURR, Ms. CANTWELL, Mr. CARDIN, Mr. CASEY, Mrs. CLINTON, Mr. COCHRAN, Mr. COLEMAN, Ms. COLLINS, Mr. CRAIG, Mr. DODD, Mrs. DOLE, Mr. DURBIN, Mr. FEINGOLD, Mrs. FEINSTEIN, Mr. GREGG, Mr. INOUYE, Mr. ISAKSON, Mr. KENNEDY, Mr. KERRY, Ms. LANDRIEU, Mr. LAUTENBERG, Mr. LEVIN, Mr. LIEBERMAN, Mrs. LINCOLN, Mr. MARTINEZ, Mr. MENENDEZ, Ms. MIKULSKI, Mrs. MURRAY, Mr. NELSON of Nebraska, Mr. NELSON of Florida, Mr. OBAMA, Mr. SPECTER, Mr. STEVENS, and Mr. TESTER):

S. Res. 528. A resolution designating April 25, 2008, as ''Global Youth Service Day''; considered and agreed to.

ADDITIONAL COSPONSORS

S. 335

At the request of Mr. DORGAN, the name of the Senator from Michigan (Ms. STABENOW) was added as a cosponsor of S. 335, a bill to prohibit the Internal Revenue Service from using private debt collection companies, and for other purposes.

S. 358

At the request of Ms. SNOWE, the name of the Senator from California (Mrs. FEINSTEIN) was added as a cosponsor of S. 358, a bill to prohibit discrimination on the basis of genetic information with respect to health insurance and employment.

S. 773

At the request of Mr. SPECTER, his name was added as a cosponsor of S. 773, a bill to amend the Internal Revenue Code of 1986 to allow Federal civilian and military retirees to pay health insurance premiums on a pretax basis and to allow a deduction for TRICARE supplemental premiums.

S. 819

At the request of Mr. DORGAN, the name of the Senator from Michigan (Ms. STABENOW) was added as a cosponsor of S. 819, a bill to amend the Internal Revenue Code of 1986 to expand tax-free distributions from individual retirement accounts for charitable purposes.

S. 903

At the request of Mr. DURBIN, the names of the Senator from Illinois (Mr. OBAMA), the Senator from California (Mrs. BOXER), the Senator from New York (Mr. SCHUMER), the Senator from Maine (Ms. SNOWE), the Senator from Virginia (Mr. WEBB), the Senator from Colorado (Mr. SALAZAR), the Senator from Maryland (Mr. CARDIN), the Senator from Massachusetts (Mr. KENNEDY), the Senator from Nebraska (Mr. NELSON), the Senator from Arkansas (Mr. PRYOR), the Senator from Delaware (Mr. BIDEN), the Senator from North Dakota (Mr. CONRAD), the Senator from North Dakota (Mr. DORGAN), the Senator from Vermont (Mr. LEAHY), the Senator from Pennsylvania (Mr. CASEY), the Senator from West Virginia (Mr. ROCKEFELLER), the Senator from Hawaii (Mr. INOUYE) and the Senator from Ohio (Mr. BROWN) were added as cosponsors of S. 903, a bill to award a Congressional Gold Medal to Dr. Muhammad Yunus, in recognition of his contributions to the fight against global poverty.

S. 1310

At the request of Mr. SCHUMER, the name of the Senator from Iowa (Mr. HARKIN) was added as a cosponsor of S. 1310, a bill to amend title XVIII of the Social Security Act to provide for an extension of increased payments for ground ambulance services under the Medicare program.

S. 1315

At the request of Mr. SALAZAR, his name was added as a cosponsor of S. 1315, a bill to amend title 38, United States Code, to enhance life insurance benefits for disabled veterans, and for other purposes.

S. 1437

At the request of Ms. STABENOW, the names of the Senator from Vermont (Mr. LEAHY) and the Senator from Arkansas (Mrs. LINCOLN) were added as cosponsors of S. 1437, a bill to require the Secretary of the Treasury to mint coins in commemoration of the semicentennial of the enactment of the Civil Rights Act of 1964.

S. 1576

At the request of Mr. KENNEDY, the name of the Senator from Michigan (Ms. STABENOW) was added as a cosponsor of S. 1576, a bill to amend the Public Health Service Act to improve the health and healthcare of racial and ethnic minority groups.

S. 1715

At the request of Ms. SNOWE, the name of the Senator from New Jersey (Mr. MENENDEZ) was added as a cosponsor of S. 1715, a bill to amend title XVIII of the Social Security Act to eliminate discriminatory copayment rates for outpatient psychiatric services under the Medicare program.

S. 1738

At the request of Mr. BIDEN, the name of the Senator from Texas (Mrs. HUTCHISON) was added as a cosponsor of S. 1738, a bill to establish a Special Counsel for Child Exploitation Prevention and Interdiction within the Office of the Deputy Attorney General, to improve the Internet Crimes Against Children Task Force, to increase resources for regional computer forensic labs, and to make other improvements to increase the ability of law enforcement agencies to investigate and prosecute predators.

S. 1760

At the request of Mr. BROWN, the name of the Senator from Vermont (Mr. SANDERS) was added as a cosponsor of S. 1760, a bill to amend the Public Health Service Act with respect to the Healthy Start Initiative.

S. 1817

At the request of Mr. HARKIN, his name was added as a cosponsor of S. 1817, a bill to ensure proper administration of the discharge of members of the Armed Forces for personality disorder, and for other purposes.

S. 1843

At the request of Mr. KENNEDY, the names of the Senator from West Virginia (Mr. BYRD) and the Senator from Hawaii (Mr. INOUYE) were added as cosponsors of S. 1843, a bill to amend title VII of the Civil Rights Act of 1964 and the Age Discrimination in Employment Act of 1967 to clarify that an unlawful practice occurs each time compensation is paid pursuant to a discriminatory compensation decision or other practice, and for other purposes.

S. 2058

At the request of Mr. LEVIN, the name of the Senator from New York (Mrs. CLINTON) was added as a cosponsor of S. 2058, a bill to amend the Commodity Exchange Act to close the Enron loophole, prevent price manipulation and excessive speculation in the trading of energy commodities, and for other purposes.

S. 2130

At the request of Mr. CASEY, the name of the Senator from Virginia (Mr. WEBB) was added as a cosponsor of S. 2130, a bill to express the sense of the Senate on the need for a comprehensive diplomatic offensive to help broker national reconciliation efforts in Iraq and lay the foundation for the eventual redeployment of United States combat forces.

S. 2197

At the request of Mr. AKAKA, the name of the Senator from Delaware (Mr. CARPER) was added as a cosponsor of S. 2197, a bill to establish the Federal Labor-Management Partnership Council.

S. 2279

At the request of Mr. BIDEN, the name of the Senator from New York (Mr. SCHUMER) was added as a cosponsor of S. 2279, a bill to combat international violence against women and girls.

S. 2320

At the request of Mr. DURBIN, the name of the Senator from North Dakota (Mr. DORGAN) was added as a cosponsor of S. 2320, a bill to amend title XVIII of the Social Security Act to provide continued entitlement to coverage for immunosuppressive drugs furnished to beneficiaries under the Medicare Program that have received a kidney transplant and whose entitlement to coverage would otherwise expire, and for other purposes.

S. 2401

At the request of Ms. CANTWELL, the name of the Senator from Louisiana (Mr. VITTER) was added as a cosponsor of S. 2401, a bill to amend the Internal Revenue Code of 1986 to allow a refund of motor fuel excise taxes for the actual off-highway use of certain mobile machinery vehicles.

S. 2426

At the request of Mr. HARKIN, his name was added as a cosponsor of S. 2426, a bill to provide for congressional oversight of United States agreements with the Government of Iraq.

S. 2585

At the request of Mr. HARKIN, the names of the Senator from Maryland (Ms. MIKULSKI) and the Senator from New Mexico (Mr. BINGAMAN) were added as cosponsors of S. 2585, a bill to provide for the enhancement of the suicide prevention programs of the Department of Defense, and for other purposes.

S. 2630

At the request of Mr. KENNEDY, the name of the Senator from Washington (Mrs. MURRAY) was added as a cosponsor of S. 2630, a bill to amend the Public Health Service Act to establish a Federal grant program to provide increased health care coverage to and access for uninsured and underinsured workers and families in the commercial fishing industry, and for other purposes.

S. 2632

At the request of Mr. BOND, the name of the Senator from Texas (Mrs. HUTCHISON) was added as a cosponsor of S. 2632, a bill to ensure that the Sex Offender Registration and Notification Act is applied retroactively.

S. 2640

At the request of Mr. BURR, the names of the Senator from Louisiana (Mr. VITTER) and the Senator from Oklahoma (Mr. INHOFE) were added as cosponsors of S. 2640, a bill to amend title 38, United States Code, to enhance and improve insurance, housing, labor and education, and other benefits for veterans, and for other purposes.

S. 2666

At the request of Ms. CANTWELL, the name of the Senator from Nevada (Mr. ENSIGN) was added as a cosponsor of S. 2666, a bill to amend the Internal Revenue Code of 1986 to encourage investment in affordable housing, and for other purposes.

S. 2667

At the request of Mr. MENENDEZ, the names of the Senator from Michigan (Ms. STABENOW) and the Senator from Utah (Mr. BENNETT) were added as cosponsors of S. 2667, a bill to direct the Attorney General to make an annual grant to the A Child Is Missing Alert and Recovery Center to assist law enforcement agencies in the rapid recovery of missing children, and for other purposes.

S. 2668

At the request of Mr. KERRY, the name of the Senator from Pennsylvania (Mr. SPECTER) 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. 2672

At the request of Mr. CONRAD, the names of the Senator from Wisconsin (Mr. KOHL) and the Senator from Connecticut (Mr. LIEBERMAN) were added as cosponsors of S. 2672, a bill to provide incentives to physicians to practice in rural and medically underserved communities.

S. 2681

At the request of Mr. INHOFE, the names of the Senator from Georgia (Mr. ISAKSON), the Senator from Mississippi (Mr. COCHRAN), the Senator from Washington (Ms. CANTWELL), the Senator from Michigan (Ms. STABENOW) and the Senator from Michigan (Mr. LEVIN) 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. 2684

At the request of Mr. DODD, the names of the Senator from Maine (Ms. SNOWE) and the Senator from Maine (Ms. COLLINS) were added as cosponsors of S. 2684, a bill to reform the housing choice voucher program under section 8 of the United States Housing Act of 1937.

S. 2756

At the request of Mr. BIDEN, the name of the Senator from Nevada (Mr. ENSIGN) was added as a cosponsor of S. 2756, a bill to amend the National Child Protection Act of 1993 to establish a permanent background check system.

S. 2766

At the request of Mr. NELSON of Florida, the name of the Senator from Louisiana (Ms. LANDRIEU) was added as a cosponsor of S. 2766, a bill to amend the Federal Water Pollution Control Act to address certain discharges incidental to the normal operation of a recreational vessel.

S. 2783

At the request of Mr. ENSIGN, the name of the Senator from Pennsylvania (Mr. SPECTER) was added as a cosponsor of S. 2783, a bill to allow for additional flights beyond the perimeter restriction applicable to Ronald Reagan Washington National Airport.

S. 2819

At the request of Mr. ROCKEFELLER, the names of the Senator from Washington (Mrs. MURRAY), the Senator from Connecticut (Mr. DODD) and the Senator from Rhode Island (Mr. REED) 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. 2844

At the request of Mr. LAUTENBERG, the name of the Senator from Illinois (Mr. DURBIN) 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. 2848

At the request of Mr. BROWN, the name of the Senator from Colorado (Mr. SALAZAR) was added as a cosponsor of S. 2848, a bill to provide for health care benefits for certain nuclear facility workers.

S. 2858

At the request of Ms. MIKULSKI, the name of the Senator from California (Mrs. BOXER) was added as a cosponsor of 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.

S. 2875

At the request of Mr. TESTER, the name of the Senator from Montana (Mr. BAUCUS) was added as a cosponsor of S. 2875, a bill to authorize the Secretary of the Interior to provide grants to designated States and tribes to carry out programs to reduce the risk of livestock loss due to predation by gray wolves and other predator species or to compensate landowners for livestock loss due to predation.

S. 2886

At the request of Mr. BAUCUS, the name of the Senator from Kentucky (Mr. BUNNING) was added as a cosponsor of S. 2886, a bill to amend the Internal Revenue Code of 1986 to amend certain expiring provisions.

S. 2888

At the request of Mr. KOHL, the name of the Senator from California (Mrs. BOXER) was added as a cosponsor of S. 2888, a bill to protect the property and security of homeowners who are subject to foreclosure proceedings, and for other purposes.

S. 2892

At the request of Mr. LEAHY, the name of the Senator from Illinois (Mr. OBAMA) was added as a cosponsor of S. 2892, a bill to promote the prosecution and enforcement of frauds against the United States by suspending the statute of limitations during times when Congress has authorized the use of military force.

S. 2893

At the request of Mr. SALAZAR, the name of the Senator from Colorado (Mr. ALLARD) was added as a cosponsor of S. 2893, a bill to designate the Ludlow Massacre National Historic Landmark in the State of Colorado, and for other purposes.

S. 2895

At the request of Mr. DODD, the names of the Senator from New Jersey (Mr. MENENDEZ) and the Senator from Michigan (Mr. LEVIN) were added as cosponsors of S. 2895, a bill to amend the Higher Education Act of 1965 to maintain eligibility, for Federal PLUS loans, of borrowers who are 90 or more days delinquent on mortgage loan payments, or for whom foreclosure proceedings have been initiated, with respect to their primary residence.

S. RES. 506

At the request of Mr. NELSON of Nebraska, the name of the Senator from Minnesota (Ms. KLOBUCHAR) was added as a cosponsor 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. 515

At the request of Mr. WHITEHOUSE, the name of the Senator from Wisconsin (Mr. FEINGOLD) was added as a cosponsor of S. Res. 515, a resolution commemorating the life and work of Dith Pran.

S. RES. 518

At the request of Mr. DODD, the names of the Senator from New Jersey (Mr. MENENDEZ), the Senator from Pennsylvania (Mr. CASEY), the Senator from Indiana (Mr. BAYH), the Senator from Oklahoma (Mr. INHOFE), the Senator from New York (Mr. SCHUMER), the Senator from Utah (Mr. HATCH) and the Senator from Washington (Mrs. MURRAY) were added as cosponsors of S. Res. 518, a resolution designating the third week of April 2008 as ''National Shaken Baby Syndrome Awareness Week''.

S. RES. 520

At the request of Mrs. FEINSTEIN, the name of the Senator from Vermont (Mr. SANDERS) was added as a cosponsor of S. Res. 520, a resolution designating May 16, 2008, as ''Endangered Species Day''.

S. RES. 523

At the request of Mr. BIDEN, the name of the Senator from South Carolina (Mr. DEMINT) was added as a cosponsor of S. Res. 523, a resolution expressing the strong support of the Senate for the declaration of the North Atlantic Treaty Organization at the Bucharest Summit that Ukraine and Georgia will become members of the alliance.

STATEMENTS ON INTRODUCED BILLS AND JOINT RESOLUTIONS

By Mr. REID (for himself and Mr. ENSIGN):

S. 2898. A bill to provide for the release of certain land from the Sunrise Mountain Instant Study Area in the State of Nevada; to the Committee on Energy and Natural Resources.

Mr. REID. Mr. President, I rise today to introduce the Orchard Detention Basin Flood Control Act for myself and Senator ENSIGN. This Act will release approximately 65 acres of land managed by the Bureau of Land Management in Clark County, NV, from the Sunrise Mountain Instant Study Area. The release will allow for the construction of an important flood control project.

The Orchard Detention Basin project is part of the Clark County Regional Flood Control District's Master Plan to protect the Las Vegas Valley. This comprehensive floodplain management program is designed to protect private and public lands from flood damage and to save lives in this rapidly growing metropolitan area. When completed, the Orchard Detention Basin project will protect approximately 1,200 acres of urban development from flooding, including 2,500 homes and three schools. The project will also reduce the magnitude of flooding further downstream.

The boundary change executed by this legislation is needed because a portion of the detention basin project lies within the boundaries of the Sunrise Mountain Instant Study Area. An ''instant study area'' designation places development restrictions on public lands similar to those on wilderness study areas. This designation currently prevents the construction of this important flood control project, leaving the land and residents living downstream vulnerable to flood damage.

Even though the Las Vegas Valley is a desert, flash flooding is an all too common problem affecting the people in Las Vegas. In just the last decade, Las Vegas Valley has been hit with five 100-year storm events. A severe thunderstorm in 1999 dropped over 3 inches of rain in 1½ hours, resulting in a disaster declaration. Along with property damage and deaths related to flooding, Clark County residents experience inconvenience resulting from impassable roads during flooding events. Support services such as police, fire and ambulance can also be delayed, creating life-threatening incidents.

The House of Representatives has already taken up and passed this legislation during the current Congress. The version that I am introducing today reflects the amendments that were adopted in the House. I look forward to working with the Energy Committee and my other distinguished friends to move this bill in a timely manner during the current session.

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. 2898

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 ''Orchard Detention Basin Flood Control Act''.

SEC. 2. RELEASE OF CERTAIN LAND IN THE SUNRISE MOUNTAIN INSTANT STUDY AREA.

(a) FINDING.—Congress finds that the land described in subsection (c) has been adequately studied for wilderness designation under section 603 of the Federal Land Policy and Management Act of 1976 (43 U.S.C. 1782).

(b) RELEASE.—The land described in subsection (c)—

(1) is no longer subject to section 603(c) of the Federal Land Policy and Management Act of 1976 (43 U.S.C. 1782(c)); and

(2) shall be managed in accordance with—

(A) land management plans adopted under section 202 of that Act (43 U.S.C. 1712); and

(B) cooperative conservation agreements in existence on the date of the enactment of this Act.

(c) DESCRIPTION OF LAND.—The land referred to in subsections (a) and (b) is the approximately 65 acres of land in the Sunrise Mountain Instant Study Area of Clark County, Nevada, that is—

(1) known as the ''Orchard Detention Basin''; and

(2) designated for release on the map titled ''Orchard Detention Basin'' and dated March 18, 2005.

SUBMITTED RESOLUTIONS

SENATE RESOLUTION 524—HONORING THE ENTREPRENEURIAL SPIRIT OF THE OWNERS OF SMALL BUSINESS CONCERNS IN THE UNITED STATES DURING NATIONAL SMALL BUSINESS WEEK, BEGINNING APRIL 21, 2008

Mr. KERRY (for himself, Ms. SNOWE, Mr. LIEBERMAN, Mr. VITTER, Mr. CARDIN, Mrs. DOLE, Ms. LANDRIEU, Mr. THUNE, Ms. CANTWELL, Mr. ENZI, Mr. BAYH, Mr. ISAKSON, Mr. PRYOR, Mr. LEVIN, and Mr. TESTER) submitted the following resolution; which was referred to the Committee on Small Business and Entrepreneurship:

S. RES. 524

Whereas the 26,800,000 small business concerns in the United States are the driving force behind the Nation's economy, creating more than ⅔ of all net new jobs and generating more than 50 percent of the Nation's nonfarm gross domestic product;

Whereas small business concerns represent 99.7 percent of all businesses and employ 50 percent of the Nation's workforce;

Whereas small business concerns represent 97 percent of all exporters and produce 28.6 percent of exported goods;

Whereas small business concerns are the Nation's innovators, advancing technology and productivity;

Whereas the resilience, vitality, and growth of small business concerns are critical to the Nation's competitiveness during a time of economic downturn;

Whereas Congress established the Small Business Administration in 1953, to aid, counsel, assist, and protect the interests of small business concerns in order to preserve free competitive enterprise, to ensure that a fair proportion of the total purchases and contracts or subcontracts for property and services for the Federal Government be placed with small business concerns, to ensure that a fair proportion of the total sales of Government property be made to such small business concerns, and to maintain and strengthen the overall economy of the Nation;

Whereas for over 50 years, the Small Business Administration has provided aid and assistance to millions of entrepreneurs who have succeeded in achieving the American dream of owning a small business concern, and thus has played a key role in fostering economic growth; and

Whereas the President has designated the week beginning April 21, 2008, as National Small Business Week: Now, therefore, be it

Resolved, That the Senate—

(1) honors the entrepreneurial spirit of the owners of small business concerns in the United States during National Small Business Week, beginning April 21, 2008;

(2) honors the efforts and achievements of the owners and employees of small business concerns, whose hard work, commitment to excellence, and willingness to take a risk, have made them a crucial part of the Nation's economy;

(3) recognizes that small business concerns are essential to restoring the Nation's economic health;

(4) recognizes the vital role of the programs of the Small Business Administration and the work of its employees and its resource partners in providing assistance to entrepreneurs and the owners of small business concerns;

(5) strongly urges the President to take steps to ensure that—

(A) reasonable rules relating to the procurement program for women-owned small business concerns under section 8(m) of the Small Business Act (15 U.S.C. 637(m)) are expeditiously implemented to give women business owners a fair opportunity to compete for Federal contracts;

(B) small business concerns have access to quality affordable health insurance;

(C) the needs of veterans and reservists who own their own businesses, who work for small business concerns, or want to start their own businesses, are met during deployment and upon their return from duty;

(D) proper measures are enacted to provide a stimulus for business lending during this economic downturn;

(E) the tax burdens of small business concerns are reduced, and that there is a reduction in regulatory and bureaucratic barriers;

(F) small minority owned businesses are supported in their efforts to access the Federal marketplace and gain access to capital;

(G) small business concerns have the tools to become more energy efficient to survive rising costs of energy, increase profits, and reduce the Nation's reliance on foreign oil;

(H) all Federal agencies adhere to the contracting goals for small business concerns, including the goals for small business concerns owned and controlled by service-disabled veterans, small business concerns owned and controlled by women, small business concerns owned and controlled by socially and economically disadvantaged individuals, and HUBZone small business concerns;

(I) venture capital and small business loans, including microloans and guaranteed loans that are delivered through private lenders, for start-up firms and growing small business concerns are available to all qualified small business concerns; and

(J) the management assistance programs delivered by resource partners on behalf of the Small Business Administration, such as small business development centers, women's business centers, and the Service Corps of Retired Executives, are provided with the Federal resources necessary to do their jobs; and

(6) urges that the Administrator of the Small Business Administration have an active role as a member of the President's Cabinet.

Mr. KERRY. I am pleased to take this opportunity during National Small Business Week to introduce a bipartisan Senate resolution honoring the entrepreneurial spirit of small business owners and urging the federal government to continue to improve upon its efforts to provide the guidance and assistance that has proven so valuable to small businesses across the nation. As Chairman of the Senate Committee on Small Business and Entrepreneurship, I am privileged to have as my Ranking Member Senator OLYMPIA SNOWE from Maine, and other Committee members who provide a voice for small business concerns and who advocate for the efficient and effective implementation of small business programs.

Almost 27 million small businesses power this Nation's economy, representing 99.7 percent of all businesses, creating more than ⅔ of all new jobs, and producing more than a quarter of our exports. Additionally, America's entrepreneurs are the minds responsible for innovations and advancing technologies that make this country resilient and competitive in the global economy and keep us on the cutting edge of technology.

The marketplace can be a daunting arena for entrepreneurs to wade into, and, though they rise to the challenge with great ideas, inventive products, and thorough business plans, there remains a great deal of financial risk and uncertainty in running a small business. The support, guidance, and financial assistance offered by Small Business Administration programs have been of incredible importance to small businesses working to succeed.

Mr. Robert Delhome from Wilmington, Massachusetts, is being honored by the Small Business Administration as the Massachusetts 2008 Small Business Person of the Year for his work as President of Charter Environmental, Inc. This civil and environmental contracting firm is not only at the forefront of the emerging green collar industry, but is also an example of a tremendously successful business that was able to take advantage of the SBA's 8(a) Business Development Program and transform $300 in seed capital into a $30 million a year business. What began with two determined employees and a good idea has become a business of over 100 employees providing vital services and solutions to confront challenging environmental problems. The 8(a) program offers assistance to socially and economically disadvantaged small business owners competing for Federal contracts, and Robert is but one of many entrepreneurs to have benefitted from this program.

As we celebrate Earth Day today and discuss the necessity of acting quickly to find workable solutions to our environmental problems, Robert's business is both an inspiration and an indication of the economic and environmental success this industry promises. As we consider the gravity of our environmental challenges, I will continue to promote the essential role that small businesses must play in the process of turning America green, moving us away from our dependence on foreign oil, and creating the innovative industry that will help strengthen our economy. Already our Nation's entrepreneurs are leading the way to economically smart and environmentally sound business practices, and we need to ensure that the tools to become energy efficient are accessible to every

small business in the country. Our rapidly rising energy costs only serve to underscore the urgency with which we must address these environmental challenges.

I also continue to be concerned about the lack of small business inclusion in Federal contracts. In an effort to level the playing field, Congress set forth specific procurement goals in law, including goals for women, veteran, and minority owned businesses, but the Bush administration has proven unwilling to work quickly to meet these goals. The Women's Procurement Program is a troublesome example of a larger trend. In 2000, this program was created to ensure the Federal Government sets aside at least 5 percent of all procurement opportunities for women-owned businesses. More than 7 years later, only 3.4 percent of Federal contracts are reaching those businesses.

Janet Ceddia, president of a security and fencing company in Hudson, Massachusetts, is just the type of business owner who would benefit if the Federal Government improved its efforts at reaching out to all types of small businesses.

A small, disadvantaged, 8(a) certified, woman-owned company, Security Construction Services, Inc. in Hudson, Massachusetts, has grown enormously in recent years, doubling its workforce and expanding its services as the company has received $15 million in government contracts. Today, Janet's business has completed contracts for the Air Force, Army Reserve, Coast Guard, and Veterans Administration, among other agencies, and Janet was honored as the 2008 Region I Prime Contractor of the Year for her success. As Janet has proven, when given the chance, small businesses prove to be excellent partners in Federal projects.

I would also like to highlight the work of Maria Gooch-Smith, who is being honored for her work as the Executive Director of the South Eastern Economic Development, SEED, Corporation in Taunton, Massachusetts. Over the last eight years, SEED has made an average of 150 loans each year, and has operated as the largest SBA 504 and Micro Lender in Massachusetts. Last year alone, SEED granted or leveraged over $105 million, which directly contributed to the creation of 637 new jobs, and, in doing so, demonstrated the vast capability of SBA 504 Certified Development Companies. It is imperative that these small business loan programs receive the necessary resources for them to maintain quality, effective programs and services to support small businesses and our local communities in a positive way.

I am proud of all of the hardworking Americans who face the challenges of opening and running a small business, and I encourage us all to take this week of special recognition to reflect on the possibilities for further improving the operating climate for small business owners and to reaffirm our resolve to fight for the necessary resources to assist small businesses. I applaud the dedication, innovation, and achievements of America's entrepreneurs, and I pledge to continue to advocate on their behalf.

Ms. SNOWE. Mr. President, as we celebrate National Small Business Week, which runs April 21 through April 25, 2008, I rise in support of a Senate Resolution—which I introduced along with Chairman KERRY, and other members of the Senate Committee on Small Business and Entrepreneurship—that honors the entrepreneurial spirit of our Nation's nearly 27 million small businesses and the tremendous contributions they make to our economy.

Small businesses are the driving force behind our nation's economic growth and job creation. Representing 99 percent of all employers, small businesses create nearly ⅗ of all net new jobs and generate more than 50 percent of the Nation's nonfarm gross domestic product. They are the foundation, the engine, the core of our economy. Clearly, the greatest source of jobs in this country are the small businesses that are constantly responding to new challenges with innovations and creativity.

As Ranking Member of the Senate Committee on Small Business and Entrepreneurship, I have made it one of my top priorities to be an advocate for small businesses, and to help raise the needs and concerns of our countries' job creators. With more than 600,000 small businesses having opened in 2006, this is clearly a sector that deserves our accolades, recognition, and support.

Indeed, hope embodies the spirit of the 26.8 million small business owners. They are willing to take risks that others don't, they transform their ideas and dreams into realities, their hobbies become their professions, and their entrepreneurial spirit can be seen in the products and services that make up America. Frankly, this week as we celebrate our Nation's entrepreneurs, we will undoubtedly fall short of fully recognizing what our country's small businesses truly add to our economy.

Given the sluggish state of our economy, it is all the more imperative that we fully equip our small businesses, our true job generators, and provide them with the tools—not just to mitigate and stem this crisis—but to be a catalyst for helping to address and ultimately solve it. We must take advantage of the opportunities to help our small businesses thrive. We in Congress should reduce their tax burdens, ensure they receive the business counseling they deserve, and that they have affordable and reliable health insurance options for their employees.

One of our most valuable assets for ensuring the success of small businesses is the Small Business Administration, SBA. The SBA is pivotal in overseeing the delivery of financial and business development tools for millions of aspiring entrepreneurs and existing small businesses across the United States. With the SBA being the only Federal agency with the mandate to foster small business growth, we must work to provide the agency with the resources needed to help our nation's entrepreneurs right this economy.

So as we celebrate our Nation's small businesses, we must be mindful of Congress's responsibility to ensure that each business has the opportunity to flourish. When accounting for inflation the SBA has seen its core lending and business development program budget cut by 28 percent since 2001, and this trend must simply be reversed. While the SBA touts its ''doing more with less,'' the agency's resources, programs, and employees are stretched too thin, which in the end negatively impacts our Nation's small business and the economy as a whole. As we look ahead, rest assured, I will not hesitate to take action and ensure that this vital sector continues to have the valuable resources it deserves.

The SBA has been, and will continue to be, a critical partner to millions of small enterprises as well as aspiring entrepreneurs as they embark on the path to prosperity and job creation. The least we can do is strengthen, not erode, the SBA's core loan and technical assistance programs that have proven time and again to be the keystone in aiding the efforts and dreams of America's entrepreneurs.

Today we celebrate our Nation's entrepreneurs and honor America's small businesses. I urge my colleagues to show their support for the small businesses in their states and support this resolution. We must remember that this country's future will be determined by today's small businesses, and the faster we can help them create more jobs, the quicker the economy will rebound, and the stronger its foundation will be.

SENATE RESOLUTION 525—RECOGNIZING THE PROGRESS MADE BY STATES PARTIES TO THE CHEMICAL WEAPONS CONVENTION ON THE OCCASION OF THE SECOND REVIEW CONFERENCE

Mr. BIDEN (for himself and Mr. LUGAR) submitted the following resolution; which was referred to the Committee on Foreign Relations:

S. RES. 525

Whereas, on April 24, 1997, the Senate gave its advice and consent to the ratification of the Convention on the Prohibition of the Development, Production, Stockpiling and Use of Chemical Weapons and on Their Destruction, with Annexes, done at Paris January 13, 1993 (commonly known as the ''Chemical Weapons Convention'' and the ''CWC'') (T. Doc. 103–21);

Whereas, the Chemical Weapons Convention entered into force on April 29, 1997;

Whereas, since the Chemical Weapons Convention entered into force, more than 27,000 metric tons of chemical weapons have been destroyed, representing over 35 percent of the declared chemical weapon stockpiles worldwide;

Whereas 11 chemical weapons destruction facilities are currently in operation in 5 countries;

Whereas none of the 65 chemical weapons production facilities declared by 12 States Parties are producing chemical weapons, and all but 4 of the facilities have been either verifiably destroyed or converted for peaceful purposes in accordance with the Chemical Weapons Convention;

Whereas, on July 11, 2007, Albania became the first State Party to completely eliminate its entire stockpile of chemical weapons, with assistance from the Nunn-Lugar Cooperative Threat Reduction Program;

Whereas membership in the Organization for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons now stands at 183 states, encompassing 98 percent of the world's population, up from 87 States Parties when the Chemical Weapons Convention entered into force;

Whereas the First Special Session of the Conference of the States Parties to Review the Operation of the Chemical Weapons Convention was opened on April 28, 2003, and 113 States Parties participated in the First Review Conference; and

Whereas the Second Review Conference of the Chemical Weapons Convention opened on April 7, 2008, in The Hague, Netherlands: Now, therefore, be it

Resolved, That the Senate—

(1) reaffirms its support for the purposes, operations, and undertakings of the Chemical Weapons Convention, which have served the interests of international peace and security and the national security interests of the United States;

(2) notes the progress that has been made by States Parties to the Chemical Weapons Convention toward the elimination of stockpiles of deadly chemical weapons in possessor states, and urges continued progress toward that goal;

(3) calls on all States Parties—

(A) to continue their compliance with their obligations under the Chemical Weapons Convention to permit the monitoring and verification of the inactivation, and later destruction or conversion, of all chemical weapons production facilities, as well as the destruction of chemical weapons stockpiles;

(B) to submit and allow verification of the consistency of industrial chemical declarations; and

(C) to allow the effective monitoring of the non-diversion of chemicals for activities prohibited under the Chemical Weapons Convention; and

(4) calls on all States Parties to adopt the necessary laws, regulations, and enforcement practices to ban chemical weapons activities, pursuant to Article VIII of the Chemical Weapons Convention and United Nations Security Council Resolution 1540 (2004), and to afford appropriate legal and regulatory assistance to other countries so as to achieve full implementation of the Chemical Weapons Convention.

Mr. BIDEN. Mr. President, 11 years ago this month, the Senate gave its advice and consent to U.S. ratification of the Chemical Weapons Convention, or CWC. Those of us who were here then remember all too well how contentious and difficult a task that was.

Eleven years later, I have no doubt in my mind that the Senate did the right thing. The CWC clearly serves the national security interests of the U.S. It continues to enhance international peace and security.

Since the CWC entered into force, 183 States have signed on to the treaty's commitment to forgo poison gas forever, and have subjected themselves to the treaty's verification procedures. States Parties to the CWC have destroyed over 27,000 tons of chemical weapons—over a third of the world's declared stockpiles—and 11 destruction facilities around the world are working to destroy even more. Sixty-five chemical weapons production facilities that, without a Chemical Weapons Convention, could have churned out still more poison gas are no longer carrying out that horrible work, and all but 4 of those former weapons production facilities have been verifiably destroyed or converted to peaceful purposes. Most importantly, there has been no use of chemical weapons by any country in the last 11 years, and no international support for the use of such weapons by terrorist groups.

Under the able leadership of its Director-General, Ambassador Rogelio Pfirter, the Organization for the Prevention of Chemical Weapons runs a tight ship. It works with all States Parties to improve national declarations, to mount effective inspections, and to secure the adoption of effective national laws, regulations and procedures that criminalize and guard against the production or stockpiling of chemical weapons.

The States Parties to the Chemical Weapons Convention are gathering over the next 2 weeks in The Netherlands for the Convention's Second Review Conference. Senator LUGAR and I have introduced this resolution during the Review Conference in order to reaffirm the Senate's commitment to the goals of the CWC. We are proud of the progress that has been made so far, and we call upon all States Parties to continue to meet their commitments under the CWC and to do all they can to further the noble aims of the Convention.

I urge all my colleagues to support this resolution.

SENATE RESOLUTION 526—DESIGNATING APRIL 20 THROUGH 26, 2008, AS ''NATIONAL COMMUNITY HEALTH AIDE, COMMUNITY HEALTH PRACTITIONER, AND DENTAL HEALTH AIDE WEEK''

Ms. MURKOWSKI (for herself and Mr. STEVENS) submitted the following resolution; which was considered and agreed to:

S. RES. 526

Whereas Alaska experienced one of the most extreme tuberculosis epidemics in recorded history in the 1950s;

Whereas the Community Health Aide Program in Alaska was created during the 1950s, in response to the unique health care needs of remote Alaskan communities;

Whereas the Community Health Aide Program, which currently consists of 550 Community Health Aides and Community Health Practitioners and 40 Dental Health Aides, serves 178 isolated Alaskan communities to provide emergency, primary health care, and oral health care;

Whereas Community Health Aides, Community Health Practitioners, and Dental Health Aides have proven their dedication to serving Alaskans and their ability to work in some of the most challenging and diverse settings in the world;

Whereas the Community Health Aide Program is the only program of its kind in the United States, and other countries have modeled their delivery of rural health care after this program;

Whereas the Community Health Aide Program has proven to be effective, efficient, and essential in improving the health of the inhabitants of rural Alaska;

Whereas the Community Health Aide Program is a patient's first contact within the network of health care professionals in the Alaska Tribal Health Care System and is one of the most effective means of delivering health care services to Alaskan communities;

Whereas the Community Health Aide Program was created with a focus on tuberculosis, meningitis, and other infectious diseases, but now successfully cares for other common diseases such as diabetes and heart disease;

Whereas the Community Health Aide Program also serves the oral health needs of Alaskans, and is in the process of adding services to address the behavioral health needs of rural Alaska; and

Whereas the Community Health Aide Program has successfully adapted over the last 50 years to the ever-evolving health care landscape of Alaskan communities: Now, therefore, be it

Resolved, That the Senate designates April 20 through 26, 2008, as ''National Community Health Aide, Community Health Practitioner, and Dental Health Aide Week''.

SENATE RESOLUTION 527—DESIGNATING APRIL 23, 2008, AS ''NATIONAL ADOPT A LIBRARY DAY''

Mr. WEBB (for himself and Mr. WARNER) submitted the following resolution; which was considered and agreed to:

S. RES. 527

Whereas libraries are an essential part of our communities and our national system of education;

Whereas the citizens of the United States benefit significantly from libraries that serve as an open place for people of all ages and backgrounds to make use of books and other resources that offer pathways to learning, self-discovery, and the pursuit of knowledge;

Whereas the libraries of the United States depend on the generous donations and support of individuals and groups to ensure that those who are unable to purchase books still have access to a wide variety of resources;

Whereas certain nonprofit organizations facilitate donations of books to schools and libraries across the country to extend the joys of reading to millions of people in the United States and prevent used books from being thrown away; and

Whereas several States and Commonwealths that recognize the importance of libraries and reading have adopted resolutions commemorating April 23 as ''Adopt A Library Day'': Now, therefore, be it

Resolved, That the Senate—

(1) designates April 23, 2008, as ''National Adopt A Library Day'';

(2) honors organizations that help facilitate donations to schools and libraries;

(3) urges all people in the United States who own unused books to donate those books to local libraries;

(4) strongly supports children and families who take advantage of the resources provided by schools and libraries; and

(5) encourages the people of the United States to observe the day with appropriate ceremonies and activities.

SENATE RESOLUTION 528—DESIGNATING APRIL 25, 2008, AS ''GLOBAL YOUTH SERVICE DAY''

Ms. MURKOWSKI (for herself, Mr. AKAKA, Mr. BAYH, Mrs. BOXER, Mr. BROWN, Mr. BURR, Ms. CANTWELL, Mr. CARDIN, Mr. CASEY, Mrs. CLINTON, Mr. COCHRAN, Mr. COLEMAN, Ms. COLLINS, Mr. CRAIG, Mr. DODD, Mrs. DOLE, Mr. DURBIN, Mr. FEINGOLD, Mrs. FEINSTEIN, Mr. GREGG, Mr. INOUYE, Mr. ISAKSON, Mr. KENNEDY, Mr. KERRY, Ms. LANDRIEU, Mr. LAUTENBERG, Mr. LEVIN, Mr. LIEBERMAN, Mrs. LINCOLN, Mr. MARTINEZ, Mr. MENENDEZ, Ms. MIKULSKI, Mrs. MURRAY, Mr. NELSON of Nebraska, Mr. NELSON of Florida, Mr. OBAMA, Mr. SPECTER, Mr. STEVENS, and Mr. TESTER) submitted the following resolution; which was considered and agreed to:

S. RES. 528

Whereas Global Youth Service Day is an annual public awareness and education campaign that highlights the valuable contributions that young people make to their communities;

Whereas the goals of Global Youth Service Day are to—(1) mobilize the youth of the United States to identify and address the needs of their communities through service and service-learning; (2) support young people in embarking on a lifelong path of service and civic engagement; and (3) educate the public, the media, and policymakers about contributions made by young people as community leaders throughout the year;

Whereas Global Youth Service Day, a program of Youth Service America, is the largest service event in the world and in 2008 is being observed for the 20th consecutive year in the United States and for the 9th year globally in more than 100 countries;

Whereas young people in the United States and in many other countries are volunteering more than in any other generation in history;

Whereas children and youth not only represent the future of the world, but also are leaders and assets today;

Whereas children and youth should be valued for the idealism, energy, creativity, and unique perspectives that they use when addressing critical global issues such as poverty, hunger, illiteracy, education, gang activity, natural disasters, climate change, and myriad others;

Whereas a fundamental and conclusive correlation exists between youth service, lifelong adult volunteering, and philanthropy;

Whereas service-learning is a teaching and learning strategy that integrates meaningful community service with mastery of academic curricula by helping young people make important connections between what they are studying and the challenges that they see in their communities;

Whereas several private foundations and corporations in the United States support service-learning as a means for young people to build character and develop the leadership and career-preparedness skills that are necessary for the United States to be competitive in the 21st century, including time management, decision-making, teamwork, and problem solving;

Whereas a report by Civic Enterprises found that 47 percent of high school dropouts reported boredom as a primary reason for dropping out;

Whereas high quality, semester-long service-learning has been found to increase students' academic engagement and achievement, motivation to learn, school attendance, civic participation, character development, and career aspirations;

Whereas Global Youth Service Day engages millions of young people worldwide with the support of 75 lead agencies, 45 international organizations, and 120 national partners;

Whereas a growing number of Global Youth Service Day projects involve youth working collaboratively across national and geographic boundaries, increasing intercultural understanding and promoting the sense that they are global citizens; and

Whereas both young people and their communities will benefit greatly from expanded opportunities for youth to engage in volunteer service and service-learning: Now, therefore, be it

Resolved, That the Senate—

(1) recognizes and commends the significant contributions of the youth of the United States and encourages the cultivation of a civic bond among young people dedicated to serving their neighbors, their communities, and the Nation;

(2) designates April 25, 2008, as ''Global Youth Service Day''; and

(3) calls on the citizens of the United States to—

(A) observe the day by encouraging youth to participate in civic and community service projects and by joining them in such projects;

(B) recognize the volunteer efforts of the young people of the United States throughout the year; and

(C) support the volunteer efforts of young people and engage them in meaningful learning and decision-making opportunities today as an investment in the future of the United States.

AMENDMENTS SUBMITTED AND PROPOSED

SA 4559. Mr. FEINGOLD submitted an amendment intended to be proposed by him to the bill S. 1315, to amend title 38, United States Code, to enhance life insurance benefits for disabled veterans, and for other purposes; which was ordered to lie on the table.

SA 4560. Mr. BAUCUS (for himself, Mr. TESTER, and Mr. LUGAR) submitted an amendment intended to be proposed by him to the bill S. 1315, supra; which was ordered to lie on the table.

SA 4561. Mr. MENENDEZ submitted an amendment intended to be proposed by him to the bill S. 1315, supra; which was ordered to lie on the table.

SA 4562. Mr. SANDERS submitted an amendment intended to be proposed by him to the bill S. 1315, supra; which was ordered to lie on the table.

SA 4563. Mr. SANDERS submitted an amendment intended to be proposed by him to the bill S. 1315, supra; which was ordered to lie on the table.

SA 4564. Mr. SANDERS submitted an amendment intended to be proposed by him to the bill S. 1315, supra; which was ordered to lie on the table.

SA 4565. Mr. SANDERS submitted an amendment intended to be proposed by him to the bill S. 1315, supra; which was ordered to lie on the table.

SA 4566. Mr. SANDERS submitted an amendment intended to be proposed by him to the bill S. 1315, supra; which was ordered to lie on the table.

SA 4567. Mr. THUNE submitted an amendment intended to be proposed by him to the bill S. 1315, supra; which was ordered to lie on the table.

SA 4568. Mr. INHOFE submitted an amendment intended to be proposed by him to the bill S. 1315, supra; which was ordered to lie on the table.

SA 4569. Mr. INHOFE submitted an amendment intended to be proposed by him to the bill S. 1315, supra; which was ordered to lie on the table.

TEXT OF AMENDMENTS

SA 4559. Mr. FEINGOLD submitted an amendment intended to be proposed by him to the bill S. 1315, to amend title 38, United States Code, to enhance life insurance benefits for disabled veterans, and for other purposes; which was ordered to lie on the table; as follows:

On page 78, after line 4, add the following:

SEC. 808. AUTHORITIES AND REQUIREMENTS FOR ENHANCEMENT OF OUTREACH OF ACTIVITIES DEPARTMENT OF VETERANS AFFAIRS.

(a) IN GENERAL.—Chapter 5 is amended by adding at the end the following new subchapter:

''SUBCHAPTER IV—OUTREACH

''§ 561. Outreach activities: funding

''(a) SEPARATE ACCOUNT FOR OUTREACH ACTIVITIES.—The Secretary shall establish a separate account for the funding of the outreach activities of the Department, and shall establish within such account a separate subaccount for the funding of the outreach activities of each element of the Department specified in subsection (c).

''(b) BUDGET REQUIREMENTS.—In the budget justification materials submitted to Congress in support of the Department budget for any fiscal year (as submitted with the budget of the President under section 1105(a) of title 31), the Secretary shall include a separate statement of the amount requested for such fiscal year for activities as follows:

''(1) For outreach activities of the Department in aggregate.

''(2) For outreach activities of each element of the Department specified in subsection (c).

''(c) COVERED ELEMENTS.—The elements of the Department specified in this subsection are as follows:

''(1) The Veterans Health Administration.

''(2) The Veterans Benefits Administration.

''(3) The National Cemetery Administration.

''§ 562. Outreach activities: coordination of activities within Department

''(a) PROCEDURES FOR EFFECTIVE COORDINATION.—The Secretary shall establish and maintain procedures for ensuring the effective coordination of the outreach activities of the Department between and among the following:

''(1) The Office of the Secretary.

''(2) The Office of Public Affairs.

''(3) The Veterans Health Administration.

''(4) The Veterans Benefits Administration.

''(5) The National Cemetery Administration.

''(b) REVIEW AND MODIFICATION.—The Secretary shall—

''(1) periodically review the procedures maintained under subsection (a) for the purpose of ensuring that such procedures meet the requirement in that subsection; and

''(2) make such modifications to such procedures as the Secretary considers appropriate in light of such review in order to better achieve that purpose.

''§ 563. Outreach activities: cooperative activities with States; grants to States for improvement of outreach

''(a) PURPOSE.—It is the purpose of this section to assist States in carrying out programs that offer a high probability of improving outreach and assistance to veterans,

and to the spouses, children, and parents of veterans who may be eligible to receive veterans' or veterans'-related benefits, to ensure that such individuals are fully informed about, and assisted in applying for, any veterans' and veterans'-related benefits and programs (including under State veterans' programs).

''(b) LOCATION OF PROVISION OF OUTREACH.—The Secretary shall ensure that outreach and assistance is provided under programs referred to in subsection (a) in locations proximate to populations of veterans and other individuals referred to in that subsection, as determined utilizing criteria for determining the proximity of such populations to veterans health care services.

''(c) COOPERATIVE AGREEMENTS WITH STATES.—The Secretary may enter into cooperative agreements and arrangements with veterans agencies of the States in order to carry out, coordinate, improve, or otherwise enhance outreach by the Department and the States (including outreach with respect to State veterans' programs).

''(d) GRANTS.—(1) The Secretary may award grants to veterans agencies of States in order to achieve purposes as follows:

''(A) To carry out, coordinate, improve, or otherwise enhance outreach, including activities pursuant to cooperative agreements and arrangements under subsection (c).

''(B) To carry out, coordinate, improve, or otherwise enhance activities to assist in the development and submittal of claims for veterans' and veterans'-related benefits, including activities pursuant to cooperative agreements and arrangements under subsection (c).

''(2) A veterans agency of a State receiving a grant under this subsection—

''(A) may, except as provided in subparagraph (B)—

''(i) use the grant amount for purposes described in paragraph (1); and

''(ii) award all or any portion of such grant amount to nonprofit organizations of such State, for such purposes; and

''(B) if such State has a county or local government with a veterans agency, shall award all or any portion of such grant amount to not less than one veterans agency of a county or local government of such State, for such purposes.

''(e) FUNDING.—Amounts available for the Department for outreach in the account under section 561 of this title shall be available for activities under this section, including grants under subsection (d).''.

(b) CLERICAL AMENDMENT.—The table of sections at the beginning of chapter 5 is amended by adding at the end the following new items:

''SUBCHAPTER IV—OUTREACH

''561. Outreach activities: funding.
''562. Outreach activities: coordination of activities within Department.
''563. Outreach activities: cooperative activities with States; grants to States for improvement of outreach.''.

SA 4560. Mr. BAUCUS (for himself, Mr. TESTER, and Mr. LUGAR) submitted an amendment intended to be proposed by him to the bill S. 1315, to amend title 38, United States Code, to enhance life insurance benefits for disabled veterans, and for other purposes; which was ordered to lie on the table; as follows:

At the end of title VI, add the following:

SEC. 604. REPORTS ON PROGRESS OF THE SECRETARY OF VETERANS AFFAIRS IN ADDRESSING CAUSES FOR VARIANCES IN COMPENSATION PAYMENTS FOR VETERANS FOR SERVICE-CONNECTED DISABILITIES.

(a) REPORTS REQUIRED.—Not later than 180 days after the date of the enactment of this Act, and every year thereafter through 2012, the Secretary of Veterans Affairs shall submit to the congressional veterans affairs committees a report describing the progress of the Secretary in addressing the causes of variances in compensation payments for veterans for service-connected disabilities.

(b) ELEMENTS.—Each report under subsection (a) shall include the following:

(1) A description of the efforts of the Veterans Benefits Administration to coordinate with the Veterans Health Administration to improve the quality of examinations of veterans with service-connected disabilities that are performed by the Veterans Health Administration and contract clinicians, including efforts relating to the use of approved templates for such examinations and of reports on such examinations that are based on such templates prepared in an easily-readable format.

(2) An assessment of the current personnel requirements of the Veterans Benefits Administration, including an assessment of the adequacy of the number of personnel assigned to each regional office of the Administration for each type of claim adjudication position.

(3) A description of the differences, if any, in current patterns of submittal rate of claims to the Secretary of Veterans Affairs regarding service-connected disabilities among various populations of veterans, including veterans living in rural and highly rural areas, minority veterans, veterans who served in the National Guard or Reserve, and veterans who are retired from the Armed Forces military retirees, and a description and assessment of efforts undertaken to eliminate such differences.

(c) DEFINITIONS.—In this section:

(1) The term ''congressional veterans affairs committees'' means—

(A) the Committee on Veterans' Affairs of the Senate; and

(B) the Committee on Veterans' Affairs of the House of Representatives.

(2) HIGHLY RURAL.—The term ''highly rural'', in the case of an area, means that the area consists of a county or counties having a population of less than seven persons per square mile.

SA 4561. Mr. MENENDEZ submitted an amendment intended to be proposed by him to the bill S. 1315, to amend title 38, United States Code, to enhance life insurance benefits for disabled veterans, and for other purposes; which was ordered to lie on the table; as follows:

At the end of title VII, add the following:

SEC. 703. PLOT ALLOWANCE FOR SPOUSES AND CHILDREN OF CERTAIN VETERANS WHO ARE BURIED IN STATE CEMETERIES.

(a) PLOT ALLOWANCE.—Section 2303 is amended by adding at the end the following new subsection:

''(c)(1) In the case of an individual described in paragraph (2) who is buried in a cemetery that is owned by a State or by an agency or political subdivision of a State, the Secretary shall pay to such State, agency, or political subdivision the sum of $300 as a plot or interment allowance for such individual.

''(2) An individual described in this paragraph is a spouse, surviving spouse (which for purposes of this chapter includes a surviving spouse who had a subsequent remarriage), minor child (which for purposes of this chapter includes a child under 21 years of age, or under 23 years of age if pursuing a course of instruction at an approved educational institution), or, in the discretion of the Secretary, unmarried adult child of any of person described in paragraph (1), (2), (3), (4), or (7) of section 2402 of this title.''.

(b) EFFECTIVE DATE.—Subsection (c) of section 2303 of title 38, United States Code, as added by subsection (a), shall apply with respect to an individual who dies on or after the date of the enactment of this Act.

SA 4562. Mr. SANDERS submitted an amendment intended to be proposed by him to the bill S. 1315, to amend title 38, United States Code, to enhance life insurance benefits for disabled veterans, and for other purposes; which was ordered to lie on the table; as follows:

At the end of title VI, add the following:

SEC. 604. PAYMENT OF AMOUNTS OF ROUND DOWN OF RATES OF DISABILITY COMPENSATION AND DEPENDENCY AND INDEMNITY COMPENSATION ROUNDED DOWN DURING COST-OF-LIVING ADJUSTMENTS BY THE SECRETARY OF VETERANS AFFAIRS.

(a) PAYMENT OF AMOUNTS OF ROUND DOWN.—In any month in which a rate of disability compensation or dependency and indemnity compensation specified in subsection (b) that is payable to an individual under the laws administered by the Secretary of Veterans Affairs is rounded down to the next lower whole dollar amount by reason of an Act requiring such a rounding down in the course of a cost-of-living adjustment to such rate by the Secretary authorized by such Act, the individual shall be paid for such month an additional amount equal to the rounded down amount of such rate.

(b) COVERED RATES OF COMPENSATION.—The rates of compensation specified in this subsection are the rates of compensation and other allowances as follows:

(1) COMPENSATION.—Each of the dollar amounts in effect under section 1114 of title 38, United States Code.

(2) ADDITIONAL COMPENSATION FOR DEPENDENTS.—Each of the dollar amounts in effect under section 1115(1) of such title.

(3) CLOTHING ALLOWANCE.—The dollar amount in effect under section 1162 of such title.

(4) NEW DIC RATES.—The dollar amounts in effect under paragraphs (1) and (2) of section 1311(a) of such title.

(5) OLD DIC RATES.—Each of the dollar amounts in effect under section 1311(a)(3) of such title.

(6) ADDITIONAL DIC FOR DISABILITY.—The dollar mounts in effect under section 1311(c) and 1311(d) of such title.

(7) DIC FOR DEPENDENT CHILDREN.—The dollar amounts in effect under section 1313(a) and 1314 of such title.

(c) TREATMENT AS COMPENSATION.—Any amount paid an individual under subsection (a) shall be treated as disability compensation or dependency and indemnity compensation, as applicable, for all purposes.

SA 4563. Mr. SANDERS submitted an amendment intended to be proposed by him to the bill S. 1315, to amend title 38, United States Code, to enhance life insurance benefits for disabled veterans, and for other purposes; which was ordered to lie on the table; as follows:

Strike section 802 and insert the following:

SEC. 802. AUTOMOBILE ASSISTANCE ALLOWANCE.

(a) INCREASE IN AMOUNT OF ALLOWANCE.—Subsection (a) of section 3902 is amended by striking ''$11,000'' and inserting ''$22,500 (as adjusted from time to time under subsection (e))''.

(b) ANNUAL ADJUSTMENT.—Such section is further amended by adding at the end the following new subsection:

''(e)(1) Effective on October 1 of each year (beginning in 2009), the Secretary shall increase the dollar amount in effect under subsection (a) to an amount equal to 80 percent of the average retail cost of new automobiles for the preceding calendar year.

''(2) The Secretary shall establish the method for determining the average retail cost of new automobiles for purposes of this subsection. The Secretary may use data developed in the private sector if the Secretary determines the data is appropriate for purposes of this subsection.''.

(c) EFFECTIVE DATE.—The amendments made by this section shall take effect on October 1, 2008.

SA 4564. Mr. SANDERS submitted an amendment intended to be proposed by him to the bill S. 1315, to amend title 38, United States Code, to enhance life insurance benefits for disabled veterans, and for other purposes; which was ordered to lie on the table; as follows:

Strike section 205 and insert the following:

SEC. 205. INCREASE IN SPECIALLY ADAPTED HOUSING BENEFITS FOR DISABLED VETERANS.

Section 2102 is amended—

(1) in subsection (b)(2), by striking ''$10,000'' and inserting ''$12,000'';

(2) in subsection (d)—

(A) in paragraph (1), by striking ''$50,000'' and inserting ''$60,000''; and

(B) in paragraph (2), by striking ''$10,000'' and inserting ''$12,000''; and

(3) by adding at the end the following new subsection:

''(e)(1) Effective on October 1 of each year (beginning in 2009), the Secretary shall increase the amounts described in subsection (b)(2) and paragraphs (1) and (2) of subsection (d) in accordance with this subsection.

''(2) The increase in amounts under paragraph (1) to take effect on October 1 of a year shall be by an amount of such amounts equal to the percentage by which—

''(A) the residential home cost-of-construction index for the preceding calendar year, exceeds

''(B) the residential home cost-of-construction index for the year preceding the year described in subparagraph (A).

''(3) The Secretary shall establish a residential home cost-of-construction index for the purposes of this subsection. The index shall reflect a uniform, national average change in the cost of residential home construction, determined on a calendar year basis. The Secretary may use an index developed in the private sector that the Secretary determines is appropriate for purposes of this subsection.''.

SA 4565. Mr. SANDERS submitted an amendment intended to be proposed by him to the bill S. 1315, to amend title 38, United States Code, to enhance life insurance benefits for disabled veterans, and for other purposes; which was ordered to lie on the table; as follows:

Strike section 701 and insert the following:

SEC. 701. FUNERAL AND BURIAL EXPENSES.

(a) DEATHS FROM SERVICE-CONNECTED DISABILITY.—Section 2307 is amended—

(1) by inserting ''(a) FUNERAL AND BURIAL EXPENSES.—'' before ''In any case'';

(2) in paragraph (1) of subsection (a), as designated by paragraph (1) of this subsection, by striking ''$2,000'' and inserting ''$4,100 (as adjusted from time to time under subsection (b))''; and

(3) by adding at the end the following new subsection:

''(b) COST-OF-LIVING ADJUSTMENT.—With respect to any fiscal year, the Secretary shall provide a percentage increase (rounded to the nearest dollar) in the amount of benefits payable under subsection (a)(1) equal to the percentage by which—

''(1) the Consumer Price Index (all items, United States city average) for the 12-month period ending on the June 30 preceding the beginning of the fiscal year for which the increase is made, exceeds

''(2) such Consumer Price Index for the 12-month period preceding the 12-month period described in paragraph (1).''.

(b) EFFECTIVE DATE.—

(1) IN GENERAL.—The amendments made by this section shall take effect on the date of the enactment of this Act, and shall apply with respect to deaths occurring on or after that date.

(2) NO COLA ADJUSTMENT FOR FISCAL YEAR 2009.—The percentage increase required by subsection (b) of section 2307 of title 38, United States Code (as added by subsection (a) of this section), for fiscal year 2009 shall not be made.

SA 4566. Mr. SANDERS submitted an amendment intended to be proposed by him to the bill S. 1315, to amend title 38, United States Code, to enhance life insurance benefits for disabled veterans, and for other purposes; which was ordered to lie on the table; as follows:

Strike section 702 and insert the following:

SEC. 702. PLOT ALLOWANCES.

(a) INCREASE IN PLOT ALLOWANCE.—Section 2303 is amended by striking ''$300'' each place it appears and inserting ''$745 (as adjusted from time to time under subsection (c))''.

(b) EXPANSION OF ELIGIBILITY.—Subsection (b)(2) of such section is amended by striking ''such veteran is eligible'' and all that follows through '', and''.

(c) ANNUAL COST-OF-LIVING ADJUSTMENT.—Such section is further amended by adding at the end the following new subsection:

''(c) With respect to any fiscal year, the Secretary shall provide a percentage increase (rounded to the nearest dollar) in each maximum amount of the plot allowance payable under this section equal to the percentage by which—

''(1) the Consumer Price Index (all items, United States city average) for the 12-month period ending on the June 30 preceding the beginning of the fiscal year for which the increase is made, exceeds

''(2) such Consumer Price Index for the 12-month period preceding the 12-month period described in paragraph (1).''.

(d) EFFECTIVE DATE.—

(1) IN GENERAL.—The amendments made by this section shall take effect on October 1, 2008, and shall apply with respect to deaths occurring on or after that date.

(2) NO COLA ADJUSTMENT FOR FISCAL YEAR 2009.—The percentage increase required by subsection (c) of section 2303 of title 38, United States Code (as added by subsection (c) of this section), for fiscal year 2009 shall not be made.

SA 4567. Mr. THUNE submitted an amendment intended to be proposed by him to the bill S. 1315, to amend title 38, United States Code, to enhance life insurance benefits for disabled veterans, and for other purposes; which was ordered to lie on the table; as follows:

On page 52, after line 21, add the following:

SEC. 604. AUTOMATIC ANNUAL INCREASE IN RATES OF DISABILITY COMPENSATION AND DEPENDENCY AND INDEMNITY COMPENSATION.

(a) INDEXING TO SOCIAL SECURITY INCREASES.—Section 5312 is amended by adding at the end the following new subsection:

''(d)(1) Whenever there is an increase in benefit amounts payable under title II of the Social Security Act (42 U.S.C. 401 et seq.) as a result of a determination made under section 215(i) of such Act (42 U.S.C. 415(i)), the Secretary shall, effective on the date of such increase in benefit amounts, increase the dollar amounts in effect for the payment of disability compensation and dependency and indemnity compensation by the Secretary, as specified in paragraph (2), as such amounts were in effect immediately before the date of such increase in benefit amounts payable under title II of the Social Security Act, by the same percentage as the percentage by which such benefit amounts are increased.

''(2) The dollar amounts to be increased pursuant to paragraph (1) are the following:

''(A) COMPENSATION.—Each of the dollar amounts in effect under section 1114 of this title.

''(B) ADDITIONAL COMPENSATION FOR DEPENDENTS.—Each of the dollar amounts in effect under section 1115(1) of this title.

''(C) CLOTHING ALLOWANCE.—The dollar amount in effect under section 1162 of this title.

''(D) NEW DIC RATES.—Each of the dollar amounts in effect under paragraphs (1) and (2) of section 1311(a) of this title.

''(E) OLD DIC RATES.—Each of the dollar amounts in effect under section 1311(a)(3) of this title.

''(F) ADDITIONAL DIC FOR SURVIVING SPOUSES WITH MINOR CHILDREN.—The dollar amount in effect under section 1311(b) of this title.

''(G) ADDITIONAL DIC FOR DISABILITY.—Each of the dollar amounts in effect under sections 1311(c) and 1311(d) of this title.

''(H) DIC FOR DEPENDENT CHILDREN.—Each of the dollar amounts in effect under sections 1313(a) and 1314 of this title.

''(3) Whenever there is an increase under paragraph (1) in amounts in effect for the payment of disability compensation and dependency and indemnity compensation, the Secretary shall publish such amounts, as increased pursuant to such paragraph, in the Federal Register at the same time as the material required by section 215(i)(2)(D) of the Social Security Act (42 U.S.C. 415(i)(2)(D)) is published by reason of a determination under section 215(i) of such Act (42 U.S.C. 415(i)).''.

(b) EFFECTIVE DATE.—Subsection (d) of section 5312 of title 38, United States Code, as added by subsection (a) of this section, shall take effect on the first day of the first calendar year that begins after the date of the enactment of this Act.

SA 4568. Mr. INHOFE submitted an amendment intended to be proposed by him to the bill S. 1315, to amend title 38, United States Code, to enhance life insurance benefits for disabled veterans, and for other purposes; which was ordered to lie on the table; as follows:

At the end of title VIII, add the following:

SEC. 808. MILITARY SALUTE FOR THE FLAG DURING THE NATIONAL ANTHEM BY MEMBERS OF THE ARMED FORCES NOT IN UNIFORM AND BY VETERANS.

Section 301(b)(1) of title 36, United States Code, is amended by striking subparagraphs (A) through (C) and inserting the following new subparagraphs:

''(A) individuals in uniform should give the military salute at the first note of the anthem and maintain that position until the last note;

''(B) members of the Armed Forces and veterans who are present but not in uniform may render the military salute in the manner provided for individuals in uniform; and

''(C) all other persons present should face the flag and stand at attention with their right hand over the heart, and men not in uniform, if applicable, should remove their headdress with their right hand and hold it at the left shoulder, the hand being over the heart; and''.

SA 4569. Mr. INHOFE submitted an amendment intended to be proposed by him to the bill S. 1315, to amend title 38, United States Code, to enhance life insurance benefits for disabled veterans, and for other purposes; which was ordered to lie on the table; as follows:

At the end of title VIII, add the following:

SEC. 808. CENTER OF EXCELLENCE IN THE MITIGATION, TREATMENT, AND REHABILITATION OF TRAUMATIC EXTREMITY INJURIES AND AMPUTATIONS.

(a) IN GENERAL.—The Secretary of Veterans Affairs and the Secretary of Defense shall jointly establish a center of excellence in the mitigation, treatment, and rehabilitation of traumatic extremity injuries and amputations.

(b) PARTNERSHIPS.—The Secretary of Veterans Affairs and the Secretary of Defense shall jointly ensure that the center collaborates with the Department of Veterans Affairs, the Department of Defense, institutions of higher education, and other appropriate public and private entities (including international entities) to carry out the responsibilities specified in subsection (c).

(c) RESPONSIBILITIES.—The center shall have the responsibilities as follows:

(1) To implement a comprehensive plan and strategy for the Department of Veterans Affairs and the Department of Defense for the mitigation, treatment, and rehabilitation of traumatic extremity injuries and amputations.

(2) To carry out such other activities to improve and enhance the efforts of the Department of Veterans Affairs and the Department of Defense for the mitigation, treatment, and rehabilitation of traumatic extremity injuries and amputations as the Secretary of Veterans Affairs and the Secretary of Defense consider appropriate.

(d) REPORTS.—

(1) IN GENERAL.—Not later than one year after the date of the enactment of this Act, and annually thereafter, the Secretary of Veterans Affairs and the Secretary of Defense shall jointly submit to Congress a report on the activities of the center.

(2) ELEMENTS.—Each report under this subsection shall include the following:

(A) In the case of the first report under this subsection, a description of the implementation of the requirements of this Act.

(B) A description and assessment of the activities of the center during the one-year period ending on the date of such report, including an assessment of the role of such activities in improving and enhancing the efforts of the Department of Veterans Affairs and the Department of Defense for the mitigation, treatment, and rehabilitation of traumatic extremity injuries and amputations.

NOTICES OF HEARINGS

COMMITTEE ON INDIAN AFFAIRS

Mr. DORGAN. Mr. President, I would like to announce that the Committee on Indian Affairs will meet on Thursday, April 24, at 9 a.m. in Room 562 of the Dirksen Senate Office Building.

Those wishing additional information may contact the Indian Affairs Committee at 224–2251.

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 Senate Committee on Energy and Natural Resources. The hearing will be held on Thursday, May 1, 2008, at 9:30 a.m., in room SD–366 of the Dirksen Senate Office Building.

The purpose of the hearing is to examine the adequacy of State and Federal regulatory structures for governing electric utility holding companies in light of the repeal of the Public Utility Holding Company Act in the Energy Policy Act of 2005, with particular attention to the report issued by the Government Accountability Office–GAO–08–289, Utility Oversight: Recent Changes in Law Call for Improved Vigilance by FERC.

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 may do so by sending it to the Committee on Energy and Natural Resources, United States Senate, Washington, DC 20510–6150, or by e-mail to Gina_Weinstock@energy.senate.gov.

For further information, please contact Leon Lowery at (202) 224–2209 or Gina Weinstock at (202) 224–5684.

AUTHORITY FOR COMMITTEES TO MEET

COMMITTEE ON BANKING, HOUSING, AND URBAN AFFAIRS

Mr. AKAKA. 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 22, 2008, at 10 a.m., to conduct a Committee Hearing entitled ''Turmoil in U.S. Credit Markets: The Rule of Credit Rating Agencies.''

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

COMMITTEE ON COMMERCE, SCIENCE, AND TRANSPORTATION

Mr. AKAKA. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the Committee on Commerce, Science, and Transportation be authorized to meet during the session of the Senate on Tuesday, April 22, 2008, at 10 a.m., in room 253 of the Russell Senate Office Building.

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

COMMITTEE ON COMMERCE, SCIENCE, AND TRANSPORTATION

Mr. AKAKA. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the Committee on Commerce, Science and Transportation be authorized to meet during the session of the Senate on Tuesday, April 22, 2008, at 2:30 p.m., in room 253 of the Russell Senate Office Building.

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

COMMITTEE ON FOREIGN RELATIONS

Mr. AKAKA. 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 22, 2008, at 10:30 a.m. to hold a hearing on international deforestation and climate change.

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

COMMITTEE ON FOREIGN RELATIONS

Mr. AKAKA. 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 22, 2008, at 2:15 p.m. to hold a business meeting.

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

COMMITTEE ON FOREIGN RELATIONS

Mr. AKAKA. 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 22, 2008, at 4:30 p.m. to hold a briefing on U.S.-Turkey nuclear cooperation.

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

SELECT COMMITTEE ON INTELLIGENCE

Mr. AKAKA. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the Select Committee on Intelligence be authorized to meet during the session of the Senate on April 22, 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. AKAKA. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the Subcommittee on Public Lands and Forests, be authorized to meet during the session of the Senate to conduct a hearing on Tuesday, April 22, 2008, at 2:30 p.m., in room SD–366 of the Dirksen Senate Office Building.

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

PRIVILEGES OF THE FLOOR

Mr. KOHL. Mr. President, on behalf of Senator KENNEDY, I ask unanimous consent that Laura Kwinn, a fellow in his office, be granted the privileges of the floor for the remainder of the legislative session.

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

Mr. INOUYE. Madam President, I ask unanimous consent that two members of my staff, Nina Fallenbaum and Petti Matila, be granted the privileges of the floor during the consideration of S. 1315.

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

Mr. CHAMBLISS. First, I ask unanimous consent that Jerry Acosta, a military legislative fellow in my office, be granted the privilege of the floor during the remainder of today's session.

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

RECOGNIZING THE 60TH ANNIVERSARY OF THE FOUNDING OF THE MODERN STATE OF ISRAEL

Mr. REID. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the Foreign Relations Committee be discharged from further consideration of S. Res. 522.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection, it is so ordered. The clerk will report the resolution by title.

The assistant legislative clerk read as follows:

A resolution (S. Res. 522) recognizing the 60th anniversary of the founding of the modern State of Israel and reaffirming the bonds of close friendship and cooperation between the United States and Israel.

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

Mr. REID. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that Senators have until tomorrow at 5 o'clock to add their names as cosponsors of this resolution.

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

Mr. REID. I ask unanimous consent that the resolution and preamble be agreed to en bloc, the motions to reconsider be laid upon the table en bloc, and any statements relating to this matter be printed in the RECORD as if given.

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

The resolution (S. Res. 522) was agreed to.

The preamble was agreed to.

The resolution, with its preamble, reads as follows:

S. RES. 522

Whereas on November 29, 1947, the United Nations General Assembly voted to partition the British Mandate of Palestine and create a Jewish state;

Whereas on May 14, 1948, the people of Israel proclaimed the establishment of the sovereign and independent State of Israel, and the United States Government established full diplomatic relations with Israel;

Whereas the desire of the Jewish people to establish an independent modern State of Israel is an outgrowth of the existence of the historic kingdom of Israel established in the Land of Israel 3,000 years ago, with the city of Jerusalem as its capital;

Whereas for over 2,000 years, there has been continuous Jewish presence and residence in the land comprising the modern State of Israel;

Whereas the establishment of the modern State of Israel as a homeland for the Jewish people followed the slaughter of more than 6,000,000 European Jews during the Holocaust;

Whereas since its establishment 60 years ago, the modern State of Israel has rebuilt a nation, forged a new and dynamic democratic society, and created a thriving economic, political, cultural, and intellectual life despite the heavy costs of war, terrorism, and unjustified diplomatic and economic boycotts against the people of Israel;

Whereas the people of Israel have established a vibrant, pluralistic, democratic political system, including freedom of speech, association, and religion; a vigorously free press; free, fair and open elections; the rule of law; a fully independent judiciary; and other democratic principles and practices;

Whereas Israel has developed some of the leading universities in the world, and 8 Israeli citizens have been awarded the Nobel Prize;

Whereas Israel has developed an advanced, entrepreneurial economy, is among the world's leaders in the high-tech industry, and is at the forefront of research and development in the field of renewable energy sources;

Whereas Israel regularly sends humanitarian aid, search-and-rescue teams, mobile hospitals, and other emergency supplies, to help victims of disasters around the world, including the 1994 Rwandan civil war, the 1998 bombing of the United States Embassy in Kenya, the 1999 earthquakes in Turkey, the 2004 Indian Ocean tsunami, the 2005 hurricanes along the southern coast of the United States, and the 2007 fires in Greece;

Whereas Israel has absorbed millions of Jews from countries throughout the world and fully integrated them into Israeli society;

Whereas Israel has bravely defended itself from repeated terrorist and military attacks since its independence;

Whereas successive leaders of Israel have sought to achieve peace with Israel's Arab neighbors;

Whereas Israel has established peaceful bilateral relations with neighboring Egypt and Jordan and has made its desire to establish peaceful relations with all Arab states abundantly clear;

Whereas for 6 decades, the United States and Israel have maintained a special relationship based on mutually shared democratic values, common strategic interests, and moral bonds of friendship and mutual respect;

Whereas the American people feel a strong affinity for the Israeli people based on common values and shared cultural heritage; and

Whereas the United States continues to regard Israel as a strong and trusted ally and an important strategic partner: Now, therefore, be it

Resolved, That the Senate—

(1) recognizes the historic significance of the 60th anniversary of the reestablishment of the sovereign and independent State of Israel as a homeland for the Jewish people;

(2) reaffirms the bonds of friendship and cooperation which have existed between the United States and Israel for the past 60 years, and commits to strengthening those bonds;

(3) commends the people of Israel for their remarkable achievements in building a new state and a pluralistic, democratic society in the face of terrorism, as well as hostility, ostracism, and belligerence from many of their neighbors;

(4) reaffirms its support for Israel's right to defend itself against threats to its security and existence;

(5) reaffirms its enduring support for Israel as Israel pursues peace with its neighbors; and

(6) extends the warmest congratulations and best wishes to the State of Israel and the Israeli people for a peaceful, prosperous, and successful future.

NATIONAL COMMUNITY HEALTH AIDE, COMMUNITY HEALTH PRACTITIONER, AND DENTAL HEALTH AIDE WEEK

Mr. REID. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the Senate now proceed to S. Res. 526.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will report the resolution by title.

The assistant legislative clerk read as follows:

A resolution (S. Res. 526) designating April 20 through 26, 2008, as ''National Community Health Aide, Community Health Practitioner, and Dental Health Aide Week.''

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

Mr. REID. 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. 526) was agreed to.

The preamble was agreed to.

The resolution, with its preamble, reads as follows:

S. RES. 526

Whereas Alaska experienced one of the most extreme tuberculosis epidemics in recorded history in the 1950s;

Whereas the Community Health Aide Program in Alaska was created during the 1950s, in response to the unique health care needs of remote Alaskan communities;

Whereas the Community Health Aide Program, which currently consists of 550 Community Health Aides and Community Health Practitioners and 40 Dental Health Aides, serves 178 isolated Alaskan communities to provide emergency, primary health care, and oral health care;

Whereas Community Health Aides, Community Health Practitioners, and Dental Health Aides have proven their dedication to serving Alaskans and their ability to work in some of the most challenging and diverse settings in the world;

Whereas the Community Health Aide Program is the only program of its kind in the United States, and other countries have modeled their delivery of rural health care after this program;

Whereas the Community Health Aide Program has proven to be effective, efficient, and essential in improving the health of the inhabitants of rural Alaska;

Whereas the Community Health Aide Program is a patient's first contact within the network of health care professionals in the Alaska Tribal Health Care System and is one of the most effective means of delivering health care services to Alaskan communities;

Whereas the Community Health Aide Program was created with a focus on tuberculosis, meningitis, and other infectious diseases, but now successfully cares for other common diseases such as diabetes and heart disease;

Whereas the Community Health Aide Program also serves the oral health needs of Alaskans, and is in the process of adding services to address the behavioral health needs of rural Alaska; and

Whereas the Community Health Aide Program has successfully adapted over the last 50 years to the ever-evolving health care landscape of Alaskan communities: Now, therefore, be it

Resolved, That the Senate designates April 20 through 26, 2008, as ''National Community Health Aide, Community Health Practitioner, and Dental Health Aide Week''.

NATIONAL ADOPT A LIBRARY DAY

Mr. REID. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the Senate proceed to S. Res. 527.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will report.

The assistant legislative clerk read as follows:

A resolution (S. Res. 527) designating April 23, 2008, as National Adopt a Library Day.

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

Mr. REID. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the resolution be agreed to, that the preamble be agreed to, that the motions to reconsider be laid upon the table, with no intervening action or debate; and that any statements relating to the resolution be printed in the RECORD.

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

The resolution (S. Res. 527) was agreed to.

The preamble was agreed to.

The resolution, with its preamble, reads as follows:

S. RES. 527

Whereas libraries are an essential part of our communities and our national system of education;

Whereas the citizens of the United States benefit significantly from libraries that serve as an open place for people of all ages and backgrounds to make use of books and other resources that offer pathways to learning, self-discovery, and the pursuit of knowledge;

Whereas the libraries of the United States depend on the generous donations and support of individuals and groups to ensure that those who are unable to purchase books still have access to a wide variety of resources;

Whereas certain nonprofit organizations facilitate donations of books to schools and libraries across the country to extend the joys of reading to millions of people in the United States and prevent used books from being thrown away; and

Whereas several States and Commonwealths that recognize the importance of libraries and reading have adopted resolutions commemorating April 23 as ''Adopt A Library Day'': Now, therefore, be it

Resolved, That the Senate—

(1) designates April 23, 2008, as ''National Adopt A Library Day'';

(2) honors organizations that help facilitate donations to schools and libraries;

(3) urges all people in the United States who own unused books to donate those books to local libraries;

(4) strongly supports children and families who take advantage of the resources provided by schools and libraries; and

(5) encourages the people of the United States to observe the day with appropriate ceremonies and activities.

GLOBAL YOUTH SERVICE DAY

Mr. REID. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the Senate now proceed to S. Res. 528.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will report.

The assistant legislative clerk read as follows:

A resolution (S. Res. 528) designating April 25, 2008, as ''Global Youth Service Day.''

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

Ms. MURKOWSKI. Mr. President, I rise in support of a resolution designating April 25, 2008, as ''Global Youth Service Day.'' This resolution recognizes and commends the significant community service efforts that youth are making in communities across the country and around the world on April 25 and every day. This resolution also encourages the citizens of the United States to acknowledge and support these volunteer efforts.

Over the weekend beginning this Friday, April 25, youth from across the United States and around the world will carry out community service projects in areas ranging from hunger to literacy to the environment. Through this service, many will embark on a lifelong path of service and civic engagement in more than 100 countries around the world.

This event is not isolated to one weekend a year. Global Youth Service Day is an annual public awareness and education campaign that highlights the valuable contributions that young people make to their communities throughout the year.

Mr. President, the participation of youth in community service is not just a ''nice idea'' for a way to spend a Saturday afternoon. Youth who are engaged in volunteer service and service-learning activities do better in school than their classmates who do not volunteer. Youth who engage in volunteering and other positive activities are also more likely to avoid risky behaviors, such as drug and alcohol use, crime, and promiscuity. Service within the community also contributes positively to young people's character development, civic participation, and better understanding of the needs of their neighbors.

A recent survey by Civic Enterprises found that 47 percent of high school dropouts reported that boredom in school was a primary reason why they dropped out. High quality service-learning activities can, however, help young people make important connections between the curriculum and the challenges they see in their communities.

It is important, therefore, that the United States Senate encourage youth to engage in community service and to congratulate them for the service they provide.

In an effort to recognize and support youth volunteers in my State, I am proud to acknowledge some of the activities that will occur this year in Alaska in observance of National and Global Youth Service Day:

1. Anchorage's Promise, which works to mobilize all sectors of the community to build the character and competence of Anchorage's children and youth, is again sponsoring the annual Kids' Day three-day events in Anchorage this year. Youth will provide significant service to their peers and to adults who attend Kids' Day activities: Students from King Career Center will serve as volunteer safety patrols. Students from the University of Alaska Anchorage will serve as greeters. Members of the West High School Junior ROTC will provide security. The youth members of the American Co-Ed Pageants will serve as entertainment directors. Students at Chugiak High School will help their younger peers with bicycle and seatbelt safety demonstrations. Youth volunteers at the Imaginiarium will help with displays and lead groups of visitors through the hands-on experiments. Youth docents at the Anchorage Museum will help youth visitors explore the museum. Youth will also organize a Book Give-Away and provide entertainment through song, dance, gymnastics, and karate.

In addition to the Kids' Day events, young people from every region of Alaska will serve their communities in the following ways:

2. Young members of the Kiwanis Key Club will, through the RYLA Youth Leadership program, perform various service projects from March through May.

3. Alaska Youth for Environmental Action will sponsor A Week Without Plastics activities in Anchorage, Palmer, Fairbanks, Juneau, Homer, Yakutat, and Sitka. Youth organizers will help educate their communities, through various outreach activities, on the effects of plastics on our environment.

4. Youth in the Anchorage School District will host a dance to raise funds for economically disadvantaged students who do not qualify for a free or reduced price school lunch; make daily checks for recyclable items, and hold a fundraiser for lymphoma and leukemia research.

5. In partnership with the Anchorage Municipal Libraries, youth will help organize the city's summer reading program and materials.

6. In partnership with Covenant House and Congregation Beth Shalom, young people in Anchorage will involve their peers in transforming old T-shirts into reusable grocery bags.

7. 4–H and other youth volunteers, in partnership with the Alaska Zoo in Anchorage, will provide plastics education information and participate in the planting of trees for Earth Day.

8. In Ketchikan, the Boys and Girls Club will sponsor a city-wide clean-up involving many elementary, middle schools and high school students.

9. From January through May, young people whose parents are stationed at

Elmendorf Air Force Base have been involved in monthly service projects.

10. Members of Camp Fire at Highland Tech will sponsor a student contest between the advisory teams within the school to see who can bring in the most plastic to recycle. Each student who participates will receive a reusable shopping bag from Fred Meyer. Students will also hold a Safety Fair.

11. In Nome, Alaska, the student council will sponsor the annual food drive, open the local food bank, and go house to house to gather food for the needy in the community.

12. The Nome Junior ROTC will gather seeds for the school's greenhouse and prepare plantings in the old gold dredges around town.

13. In Juneau, youth members of the Ethics and Leadership program will make ceramic bowls that will be donated to the Glory Hole, Juneau's homeless shelter and soup kitchen.

14. From January through May, members of the Mayor's Youth Commission in Anchorage select a volunteer project that will impact the Municipality for the One Good Deed program.

15. Youth members of the Cook Inlet Tribal Council in Anchorage reach out to the community at large through the Native Games Community Outreach project.

16. The Mediak Video, Radio, and Magazine Clubs of Anchorage will sponsor a Spring Quarter Movie Night, create Public Service Announcements for radio station KNBA, and complete the 8th edition of Alaska Aloud, the only magazine written by and for Alaska Native students in the Anchorage area.

I am so proud of all of these young people. I value their idealism, energy, creativity, and unique perspectives as they volunteer to make their communities better and assist those in need.

Many similarly wonderful activities will be taking place all across the Nation. I encourage all of my colleagues to visit the Youth Service America Web site—www.ysa.org—to find out about the selfless and creative youth who are contributing in their own States this year.

I thank my colleagues—Senators AKAKA, BAYH, BOXER, BROWN, BURR, CANTWELL, CARDIN, CASEY, CLINTON, COCHRAN, COLEMAN, COLLINS, CRAIG, DODD, DOLE, DURBIN, FEINGOLD, FEINSTEIN, GREGG, INOUYE, ISAKSON, KENNEDY, KERRY, LANDRIEU, LAUTENBERG, LEVIN, LIEBERMAN, LINCOLN, MARTINEZ, MENENDEZ, MIKULSKI, MURRAY, BEN NELSON, BILL NELSON, OBAMA, SPECTER, STEVENS, and TESTER—for standing with me as original co-sponsors of this worthwhile legislation, which will ensure that youth across the country and the world know that all of their hard work is greatly appreciated.

Mr. REID. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the resolution be agreed to, the preamble be agreed to, and the motions to reconsider be laid on the table.

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

The resolution (S. Res. 528) was agreed to.

The preamble was agreed to.

The resolution, with its preamble, reads as follows:

S. RES. 528

Whereas Global Youth Service Day is an annual public awareness and education campaign that highlights the valuable contributions that young people make to their communities;

Whereas the goals of Global Youth Service Day are to—(1) mobilize the youth of the United States to identify and address the needs of their communities through service and service-learning; (2) support young people in embarking on a lifelong path of service and civic engagement; and (3) educate the public, the media, and policymakers about contributions made by young people as community leaders throughout the year;

Whereas Global Youth Service Day, a program of Youth Service America, is the largest service event in the world and in 2008 is being observed for the 20th consecutive year in the United States and for the 9th year globally in more than 100 countries;

Whereas young people in the United States and in many other countries are volunteering more than in any other generation in history;

Whereas children and youth not only represent the future of the world, but also are leaders and assets today;

Whereas children and youth should be valued for the idealism, energy, creativity, and unique perspectives that they use when addressing critical global issues such as poverty, hunger, illiteracy, education, gang activity, natural disasters, climate change, and myriad others;

Whereas a fundamental and conclusive correlation exists between youth service, lifelong adult volunteering, and philanthropy;

Whereas service-learning is a teaching and learning strategy that integrates meaningful community service with mastery of academic curricula by helping young people make important connections between what they are studying and the challenges that they see in their communities;

Whereas several private foundations and corporations in the United States support service-learning as a means for young people to build character and develop the leadership and career-preparedness skills that are necessary for the United States to be competitive in the 21st century, including time management, decision-making, teamwork, and problem solving;

Whereas a report by Civic Enterprises found that 47 percent of high school dropouts reported boredom as a primary reason for dropping out;

Whereas high quality, semester-long service-learning has been found to increase students' academic engagement and achievement, motivation to learn, school attendance, civic participation, character development, and career aspirations;

Whereas Global Youth Service Day engages millions of young people worldwide with the support of 75 lead agencies, 45 international organizations, and 120 national partners;

Whereas a growing number of Global Youth Service Day projects involve youth working collaboratively across national and geographic boundaries, increasing intercultural understanding and promoting the sense that they are global citizens; and

Whereas both young people and their communities will benefit greatly from expanded opportunities for youth to engage in volunteer service and service-learning: Now, therefore, be it

Resolved, That the Senate—

(1) recognizes and commends the significant contributions of the youth of the United States and encourages the cultivation of a civic bond among young people dedicated to serving their neighbors, their communities, and the Nation;

(2) designates April 25, 2008, as ''Global Youth Service Day''; and

(3) calls on the citizens of the United States to—

(A) observe the day by encouraging youth to participate in civic and community service projects and by joining them in such projects;

(B) recognize the volunteer efforts of the young people of the United States throughout the year; and

(C) support the volunteer efforts of young people and engage them in meaningful learning and decision-making opportunities today as an investment in the future of the United States.

THE CALENDAR

Mr. REID. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the Senate proceed to the consideration of the following items en bloc: Calendar Nos. 681 through 695, and two bills, which are at the desk, H.R. 5472 and H.R. 5489.

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

Mr. REID. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the bills be read the third time and passed en bloc; that the motions to reconsider be laid upon the table, with no intervening action or debate; and that any statements related to the measures be printed in the RECORD.

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

The Senate proceeded to consider the bills.

E. ARTHUR GRAY POST OFFICE BUILDING

The bill (H.R. 3196) to designate the facility of the United States Postal Service located at 20 Sussex Street in Port Jervis, New York, as the ''E. Arthur Gray Post Office Building,'' was ordered to a third reading, read the third time, and passed.

DR. CLIFFORD BELL JONES, SR. POST OFFICE

The bill (H.R. 3468) to designate the facility of the United States Postal Service located at 1704 Weeksville Road in Elizabeth City, North Carolina, as the ''Dr. Clifford Bell Jones, Sr. Post Office,'' was ordered to a third reading, read the third time, and passed.

PRIVATE JOHNATHON MILLICAN LULA POST OFFICE

The bill (H.R. 3532) to designate the facility of the United States Postal Service located at 5815 McLeod Street in Lula, Georgia, as the ''Private Johnathon Millican Lula Post Office,'' was ordered to a third reading, read the third time, and passed.

ARMY PFC JUAN ALONSO COVARRUBIAS POST OFFICE

The bill (H.R. 3720) to designate the facility of the United States Postal Service located at 424 Clay Avenue in Waco, Texas, as the ''Army PFC Juan Alonso Covarrubias Post Office Building,'' was ordered to a third reading, read the third time, and passed.

JOHN HENRY WOOTEN, SR. POST OFFICE

The bill (H.R. 3803) to designate the facility of the United States Postal Service located at 3100 Cashwell Drive in Goldsboro, North Carolina, as the ''John Henry Wooten, Sr. Post Office Building,'' was ordered to a third reading, read the third time, and passed.

SGT. JASON HARKINS POST OFFICE BUILDING

The bill (H.R. 3936) to designate the facility of the United States Postal Service located at 116 Helen Highway in Cleveland, Georgia, as the ''Sgt. Jason Harkins Post Office Building,'' was ordered to a third reading, read the third time, and passed.

MASTER SERGEANT KENNETH N. MACK POST OFFICE BUILDING

The bill (H.R. 3988) to designate the facility of the United States Postal Service located at 3701 Altamesa Boulevard in Fort Worth, Texas, as the ''Master Sergeant Kenneth N. Mack Post Office Building,'' was ordered to a third reading, read the third time, and passed.

STEVE W. ALLEE CARRIER ANNEX

The bill (H.R. 4166) to designate the facility of the United States Postal Service located at 701 East Copeland Drive in Lebanon, Missouri, as the ''Steve W. Allee Carrier Annex,'' was ordered to a third reading, read the third time, and passed.

SPECIALIST JAMAAL RASHARD ADDISON POST OFFICE BUILDING

The bill (H.R. 4203) to designate the facility of the United States Postal Service located at 3035 Stone Mountain Street in Lithonia, Georgia, as the ''Specialist Jamaal RaShard Addison Post Office Building'' was ordered to a third reading, read the third time, and passed.

JUDGE RICHARD B. ALLSBROOK POST OFFICE BUILDING

The bill (H.R. 4211) to designate the facility of the United States Postal Service located at 725 Roanoke Avenue in Roanoke Rapids, North Carolina, as the ''Judge Richard B. Allsbrook Post Office,'' was ordered to a third reading, read the third time, and passed.

FELIX SPARKS POST OFFICE BUILDING

The bill (H.R. 4240) to designate the facility of the United States Postal Service located at 10799 West Alameda Avenue in Lakewood, Colorado, as the ''Felix Sparks Post Office Building,'' was ordered to a third reading, read the third time, and passed.

IRAQ AND AFGHANISTAN FALLEN MILITARY HEROES OF LOUISVILLE MEMORIAL POST OFFICE BUILDING

The bill (H.R. 4454) to designate the facility of the United States Postal Service located at 3050 Hunsinger Lane in Louisville, Kentucky, as the ''Iraq and Afghanistan Fallen Military Heroes of Louisville Memorial Post Office Building'' in honor of the servicemen and women from Louisville, Kentucky, who died in service during Operation Enduring Freedom and Operation Iraqi Freedom, was ordered to a third reading, read the third time, and passed.

SERGEANT JAMIE O. MAUGANS POST OFFICE BUILDING

The bill (H.R. 5135) to designate the facility of the United States Postal Service located at 201 West Greenway Street in Derby, Kansas, as the ''Sergeant Jamie O. Maugans Post Office Building,'' was ordered to a third reading, read the third time, and passed.

MAJOR ARTHUR CHIN POST OFFICE BUILDING

The bill (H.R. 5220) to designate the facility of the United States Postal Service located at 3800 SW. 185th Avenue in Beaverton, Oregon, as the ''Major Arthur Chin Post Office Building'', was ordered to a third reading, read the third time, and passed.

SGT. MICHAEL M. KASHKOUSH POST OFFICE BUILDING

The bill (H.R. 5400) to designate the facility of the United States Postal Service located at 160 East Washington Street in Chagrin Falls, Ohio, as the ''Sgt. Michael M. Kashkoush Post Office Building,'' was ordered to a third reading, read the third time, and passed.

JULIA M. CARSON POST OFFICE BUILDING

The bill (H.R. 5472) to designate the facility of the United States Postal Service located at 2650 Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. Street, Indianapolis, Indiana, as the ''Julia M. Carson Post Office Building,'' was ordered to a third reading, read the third time, and passed.

CONGRESSWOMAN JO ANN S. DAVIS POST OFFICE

The bill (H.R. 5489) to designate the facility of the United States Postal Service located at 6892 Main Street in Gloucester, Virginia, as the ''Congresswoman Jo Ann S. Davis Post Office,'' was ordered to a third reading, read the third time, and passed.

Mr. WARNER. Mr. President, on October 6, 2007, the people of Virginia's First Congressional District lost one of its most respected and admired leaders, a dedicated Member of Congress and loyal friend, Representative Jo Ann Davis.

Today, as a small tribute to her, the Senate passed H.R. 5489, which designated the United States Post Office at 6892 Main Street in Gloucester, VA, as the ''Congresswoman Jo Ann S. Davis Post Office.'' Last year, Senator WEBB and I introduced a companion bill, S. 2725.

Following a successful real estate career, Mrs. Davis decided to run for public office in 1997. After serving as a Delegate in the Virginia General Assembly for 4 years, Jo Ann Davis became the first Republican woman to serve Virginia in the U.S. Congress after winning her election in 2000.

From her first day in office, Congresswoman Davis was a relentless champion for the needs of the First District. It was my privilege to work with her on many matters, ranging from national defense to the environment. I always admired Representative Davis for her strong convictions and the tenacity that she brought to bear in acting on them. She fought a courageous struggle against cancer, and I will certainly miss her insights and her friendship in our Virginia Congressional Delegation.

Given her commendable public service at the Federal and State levels, I was pleased to offer this small token of recognition and gratitude for someone who had given so much to the Commonwealth and her country.

I join with my colleagues from the Commonwealth and from the entire U.S. Congress in expressing my deepest sympathies to her husband, her two sons, and her extended family. They continue to remain in our thoughts and prayers.

ORDERS FOR WEDNESDAY, APRIL 23, 2008

Mr. REID. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that when the Senate completes its business today, it stand adjourned until 5 p.m. tomorrow, Wednesday, April 23; that following the prayer and pledge, the Journal of proceedings be approved to date, the morning hour be deemed expired, the time for the two leaders be reserved for their use later in the day; that the time until 6 p.m. be equally divided and controlled between the majority and Republican leaders or their designees; that at 6 p.m., the motion to proceed to S. 1315 be adopted, and the Senate then proceed to a rollcall vote on the motion to invoke cloture on the motion to proceed to H.R. 2831; further, that all time during any adjournment, recess,

or morning business count against cloture.

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

PROGRAM

Mr. REID. Mr. President, as I have indicated, it is too bad we will not be working tomorrow until late in the evening. Let the record be clear as to why that is happening. I ask Senators, though, to be aware that there will be a rollcall vote at 6 o'clock tomorrow on the motion to invoke cloture on the motion to proceed to H.R. 2831, the Lilly Ledbetter Fair Pay Act.

ADJOURNMENT UNTIL 5 P.M. TOMORROW

Mr. REID. 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 7:24 p.m., adjourned until Wednesday, April 23, 2008, at 5 p.m.