

campaigning for this office, said we must be exceptional in the space program, continue with our vision, properly funded, go to the Moon and Mars and planets beyond.

But today the President's budget scraps that plan. We have no plan to get into low-Earth orbit after the Space Shuttle is retired. We are going to rely upon the Russians to take us to the International Space Station—exactly what candidate-Obama said we should be worried about.

So to this end, I have filed an amendment, an amendment to the FAA Reauthorization Act, to prohibit NASA from terminating the Constellation Program. It is the prerogative of this institution, the Congress—that our Founders put forth—it is our prerogative to deem how money is spent, how programs are funded. This Congress twice has said we will fund the Constellation Program, that we will fund these programs for the next generation of spacecraft to take us into low-Earth orbit.

This amendment reiterates the Federal law prohibiting NASA from using funds in fiscal year 2010 to cancel Constellation contracts. Several of my colleagues have joined me in this amendment: Senator WICKER from Mississippi, Senator SHELBY from Alabama, Senator SESSIONS from Alabama, Senator HATCH from Utah, and Senator BENNETT from Utah.

The problem is, NASA is ignoring the will of Congress in already beginning to cancel the Constellation Program. That is not their right. They must follow the law, and this amendment intends to hold them to that. The amendment sends a clear message that there are no loopholes, exclusions, or other routes the agency can use to kill the program.

I say publicly here on the floor of the Senate, whether this amendment passes on this bill, whether this amendment passes in the coming weeks, the law of the land is this: fund the Constellation Program. NASA is on notice that it is their legal requirement to do so, that they should not cancel contracts, they should not tell contractors to stop working. They cannot do that until the Congress makes a change in the law, and to do so would be unlawful.

The ultimate determination on the future of the space program rests with Congress, not a budget proposal submitted by this administration or, in fact, any administration.

As candidate-Obama agreed, without Constellation, the United States will be relying on Russia for any manned space missions. The United States has led the world in space exploration since the early 1960s. We cannot, and we should not, cede this leadership to any other country. We must summon the same vision that guided President Kennedy whose vision put a man on the Moon at the end of the 1960s. He said: Why should we settle for anything less? To quote him:

We choose to go to the moon . . . because that challenge is one that we are willing to accept, one we are unwilling to postpone, and one which we intend to win. . . .

It is my sincere hope we will adopt this amendment, if not on this bill, on another bill soon. I hope my colleagues and our President will also come to say we choose to continue to be the leader in space exploration to the Moon, to Mars, and planets beyond because the challenge is one we are willing to accept, one we are unwilling to postpone, and one we intend to win.

Mr. President, I yield the floor.

SPRING

Mr. BYRD. Mr. President, "From winter, plague and pestilence, good Lord, deliver us!" wrote Thomas Nashe in 1600, in "Summer's Last Will and Testament," to which I add a hearty, "Amen!"

At last, this Saturday, March 20, spring arrives, both by calendar and weather, and we are all happier for it. Blue skies, warming breezes, and the faint blush of buds upon the trees—this year, especially, spring is a sight for sore eyes too long blinded by the glare of Sun upon sparkling snow. The cheerful chorus of springtime frogs is welcome music after the almost silent whisper of falling snowflakes.

This year in particular, spring seemed a long time coming. Rarely have we seen so much snow in West Virginia—storm after storm, flurry upon flurry, until roofs groaned under the weight and plows could find nowhere to push the drifts. Even children home from school day after day edged slowly from delight to cabin fever. And just when it seems we could not stand one more session with the snow shovel, we must now fear the flooding snowmelt, the menacing legacy of this epic winter.

In time to prevent our moods from miring, like our yards, in the mud, come the first bright petals of crocus and daffodil to give us hope. Their petals glow among the wet leaves and drab grasses of winter. The American poet, Amy Lowell, knew how daffodils could revive one's flagging spirits:

Thou yellow trumpeter of laggard Spring!
Thou herald of rich Summer's myriad flowers!

The climbing sun with new recovered powers
Does warm thee into being, through the ring
Of rich, brown earth he woos thee, makes
thee fling

Thy green shoots up, inheriting the dowers
Of bending sky and sudden, sweeping show-
ers,

Till ripe and blossoming thou are a thing
To make all nature glad, thou art so gay;
To fill the lonely with a joy untold;
Nodding at every gust of wind to-day,
To-morrow jeweled with raindrops. Always
bold

To stand erect, full in the dazzling play
Of April's sun, for thou hast caught his gold.

As we all slowly unfurl from our winter burden of coats, scarves, hats, and boots, shedding them like the dark mulch of winter's leaves, we, too, rejoice in the colors of springtime. Our

petals may only be cheerful t-shirts or bright windbreakers, but what a welcome change from fleece and wool.

Warm weather will bring out walkers and gardeners and allow children to play in yards and parks, doing more to improve our outlooks, health, and waistlines than all the fitness reality shows we watch on television during the cold, dark months of winter.

I hope that many Americans will revive their flagging New Year's resolutions and take advantage of spring's surge of energy to spend more time outdoors. I hope that my fellow Senators will note the beauty of the blossoms and the greening of the city as they hurry between hearings and the Senate floor. There is much work that we need to do, to be sure, but a short moment spent in spring sunshine can only warm our hearts, put a smile on our faces, and expand our thinking.

Mr. President, as America celebrates the vernal equinox and return of spring to our winter-weary Nation, let us simply take a moment to heed the words of the ironically named poet, Robert Frost, in his poem, "A Prayer in Spring":

Oh, give us pleasure in the flowers to-day;
And give us not to think so far away
As the uncertain harvest; keep us here
All simply in the springing of the year.

ADDITIONAL STATEMENTS

50TH ANNIVERSARY OF THE PACIFIC UNIVERSITY LUAU

● Mr. INOUE. Mr. President, my colleague, Senator DANIEL K. AKAKA, and I commend the Hawaiian students' club of Pacific University, Na Haumana O Hawaii, for their steadfast commitment to the preservation of the rich cultural heritage of Hawaii. For 50 proud years, its strong membership has championed educational opportunities to ensure the survival of a distinct history, beautiful language, and long-standing traditions. The story of our State is one of a strong native people who have persevered against forces that nearly extinguished their existence, of struggling immigrants whose hope sustained them while they toiled to achieve the American dream, and of a remote chain of islands who overcame obstacles to attain statehood in the 20th century. Hawaii began with a proud people and continues to serve as a home for proud people. Through the efforts of Na Haumana O Hawaii, those ancient stories and values upon which our island home is founded will endure for future generations to come.

The Annual Luau hosted and facilitated through the leadership of Pacific University shares and exemplifies the "aloha spirit." This event allows others to experience the unique qualities of Hawaiian culture in an atmosphere that encourages fellowship. We would like to express our appreciation to faculty, staff and students of Pacific University, Na Haumana O Hawaii, and the