

I think these new requirements for congressional notification are an important step toward such a partnership.

These new requirements—and this authorization bill as a whole—are the result of hard work and difficult negotiations after years of partisan divisions on intelligence issues.

The President has not signed an authorization bill into law since December 2004, and the last time Congress passed an intelligence authorization bill was February 2008, when I was chairman of the committee. Unfortunately, President George W. Bush vetoed that bill because it banned the use of coercive interrogation methods by any agency of our government, and the bipartisan majorities that passed the bill were not large enough to overcome the President's veto.

After all these difficult years, the bill that we are sending to the President today is exemplary of the bipartisan cooperation that is absolutely necessary for our intelligence community to perform as well as we need it to perform.

I want to commend my Intelligence Committee colleagues, particularly Chairwoman DIANNE FEINSTEIN and Vice Chairman KIT BOND and their staff, for sticking to it and completing the difficult negotiations with the administration and the House that brought this bill across the finish line.

This law will make our country more secure. Let us continue to build on this effort in the months and years to come.

AMERICAN EDUCATION WEEK

Ms. MURKOWSKI. Mr. President, as the granddaughter of a teacher and as a parent, education is one of my passions and priorities. So I rise today to commemorate the start of American Education Week, which seeks to shine a light on the importance of providing every child in America with a quality education so that they are prepared to contribute to our Nation's future as adults. Further, American Education Week gives each of us an opportunity to celebrate the good things that are happening in our schools, rededicate ourselves to help schools improve where improvement is needed, and to honor the parents, educators, students, and education support professionals who strive to do their best to ensure that every child receives a quality education each and every day. Each of the next 4 days will celebrate a different partner in the education of our children.

Tomorrow, American Education Week will focus our attention on our children's first and most important teachers—their parents. In my own State of Alaska, parents' contributions to their children's education is so important that we have been called to observe the entire month of November as Parental Involvement Month. This observance is intended to encourage all Alaskans to recognize the importance of and encourage parental involvement

in school improvement and student achievement. Other States have proclaimed other months to be Parental Involvement Month. Why? We know instinctively, the day our children are born, that we are responsible for shaping their future. Everything we do influences our children and whether or not they grow up to love learning. When we read to our children before bedtime, as we teach them colors, shapes, right, and wrong, and the value of hard work and honesty and as we help them with homework, book reports, and college applications, our voices and examples are the strongest influences in their lives. If our children see us checking out books for ourselves at the library, if we volunteer at their school and participate in making their school better, they learn from our example that their education is important. If we have high expectations for our children and consistently communicate that, our children can fulfill their potential. Our children want to rise to our expectations. So I call on all of my fellow parents to fulfill your children's expectations of you.

On Wednesday, the focus of American Education Week will shift to those too often overlooked individuals who play such important roles in our schools—the education support professionals. These are folks who, day after day and for little pay and less recognition, keep the cogs running smoothly in our schools. They keep our children safe, guide them in their behavior, give out hugs, and provide help when things get tough during the day. Take a moment, Mr. President, to look back on your own school days. Think of the school-bus driver who made sure everyone was seated and reasonably quiet on the way to school or who would wait as you ran to catch the bus. Think of the nurse who took care of you and called your mom that day you had a fever or the lunch lady who made sure you took a helping of vegetables and didn't forget your milk. Sometimes, if you forgot your lunch money, she would give you lunch anyway if you promised to pay tomorrow. One stern look from any of these good people would set your feet back on the right path, and you loved them for it, just as many children love their teacher's aide who can explain that thorny math problem better than the teacher or the specialist who helps them overcome a physical or learning challenge. Remember, on Wednesday, to think of these good folks who shaped your life, and think good thoughts for those who do so now across our great Nation.

On Thursday, community leaders are invited to come into our Nation's classrooms and serve as educators to get a glimpse of what the job is really like. We have all been to school, and we have all known many teachers. Being a teacher looks easy, but it isn't. Teachers need to know how to reach every child, excite every child about learning, and help every child fulfill his or her potential. The best way to do those

things is different for every child. Mr. President, we all remember our favorite teachers, and if we traded stories they would go like this: I had this teacher once who was so hard and expected so much, but he cared about me, and he was the best teacher I ever had, or, I had a teacher who really knew what I was about and she really helped me learn that year. Boy, was her class hard, but I loved that teacher. Teaching is both a skill and an art. It is hard work, and it is often thankless work. Too often a classroom will include children who come to school unprepared to learn or who are dealing with serious problems at home. But every single teacher across this Nation wants just one thing—to help every single one of their students to learn. On Thursday, think of your favorite teachers and thank them and make a wish that every student across America has a teacher who is inspiring, skilled, caring, and kind.

On Friday, American Education Week calls on us to honor a different kind of educator. They are too often overlooked, forgotten, or, frankly, given a really hard time. I am referring to the substitute teacher. Those hardy, brave souls who go into a different classroom every day to help educate our children deserve our thanks and recognition. Often called before dawn to cover for a teacher who is unexpectedly ill, they can teach kindergarten one day and high school math the next. The best of them have one common characteristic—they can settle a classroom full of strangers down with a glance and inspire their temporary students with a word. Their stories are the stuff of legend. There was the sub who learned in the nick of time that one of her students brought a stink bomb to class because he knew there would be a substitute that day. There was the substitute who learned her students' goal of the day was to make her cry, and she did, but she was back in class with the students after lunch. Then there was the sub whose first day on the job was taking 28 7-year-olds on a field trip to the zoo. Substitute teachers must be disciplined but caring. They must be flexible but adhere to routine. They need thick skin and a great sense of humor. I admire them tremendously.

While American Education Week does not specifically highlight the school principal, I am pleased and proud to honor our Nation's principals here today as well. Whatever role the principal plays, from instructional leader, head of maintenance, chief disciplinarian, financial guru, and even part-time recess monitor, the school principal's ability to impact the success of the school cannot be underestimated. The most important of those roles, however, must always be that of instructional leader. Everyone in the school community, from students to the superintendent, from parents to future employers, relies on the principal to run an effective school in which students learn. The skill set for being a

principal is not the same as for a teacher. A principal must be able to set the agenda for learning for not only the students but for teachers and other staff as well. He or she is in charge of not only the safety, well-being, and future of the children in the school but must also guide and inspire the staff. The principal must be a diplomat, bring the community into the school, satisfy the taxpayer, and meet the needs of the school. The principal must mediate, command, and inspire any number of groups on any given day. The best of them are often taken for granted because everything just works. So I encourage my colleagues and the Nation to include in their appreciative thoughts this week our schools' hard-working, multitasking educational leaders—our Nation's principals.

In closing, as my colleagues here in the Senate consider, applaud, and recognize the hard work of the many Americans who work every day to make our schools the best, I would also encourage them to do their part. As you know, the Senate HELP Committee continues to work toward reauthorization of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act. I look forward to continuing and completing that work next year. We know that this law's goal is to help ensure that every single child in every community across the country has the opportunity and the tools to succeed, that is, that every child will fulfill his or her potential regardless of wealth, ethnicity, disability, or location. We all want that. Regardless of our views on the role or the degree of the role the Federal Government should play in our Nation's schools—whether we think Federal funding should come with the strings of accountability or not and to what degree—I hope we can all agree on one thing, and that is the proud tradition of bipartisanship we and our predecessors have achieved when it comes to education issues. We may disagree about our points of view, but in the end the final product is one most of us have been able to support.

I hope that as we observe American Education Week and in the days and months to come our Nation's children as well as the adults can look back at us with pride and say we got something good done for the country through civility, cooperation, bipartisanship, and a genuine love for our Nation.

TRIBUTE TO COL MICHAEL J. JENSEN

Mr. GRASSLEY. Mr. President, I rise today to recognize a truly exceptional Iowan. After more than 31 years of honorable military service, in November of this year, COL Michael J. Jensen is set to retire. His dedication and tireless devotion to the service of our great country is without question. I extend my heartfelt congratulations to COL Mike Jensen.

Colonel Jensen was born in Estherville, IA. He attended and grad-

uated from Estherville Community High School in 1975, received an associate of science degree in computer science from Iowa Lakes Community College, a bachelor of arts degree in business management from Buena Vista University, and a master's degree in public administration from Drake University. Colonel Jensen also attended General Staff College, where he was the distinguished honor graduate.

Mike Jensen enlisted in C Battery 1st Battalion 194th Field Artillery on June 14th, 1979. He was commissioned a second lieutenant, Field Artillery, in June 1982 and graduated from the Iowa Military Academy Officer Candidate School at Camp Dodge in Johnston, IA. Duty assignments over his career include a number of positions in the 1-194th Field Artillery, 34th Infantry Division; Recruiting and Retention; the Secretary of General Staff; and Director of Military Support. In 2006, Colonel Jensen assumed his current position as the Commander of the Counterdrug Task Force, Iowa National Guard.

Over his admirable military career, Mike Jensen received a number of awards and decorations, including seven awards of the Meritorious Service Medal, the Army Commendation Medal with two oak leaf clusters, the Army Achievement Medal, and the Army Reserve Components Achievement Medal. Colonel Jensen is also an accomplished outdoorsman and avid fisherman.

Congratulations again to COL Michael Jensen. The Iowa National Guard will no doubt miss his daily contributions; however he continues as a model of honorable and distinguished service to his country. I thank him for his unwavering commitment to Iowa and to the United States of America.

ADDITIONAL STATEMENTS

RECOGNIZING THE VOICES OF UNITY YOUTH CHOIR

• Mr. BAYH. Mr. President, today I honor the Voices of Unity Youth Choir of Fort Wayne, IN, for outstanding achievement this past year at the sixth World Choir Games in Shaoxing, China.

The Voices of Unity Youth Choir was the first Indiana choir invited to participate in the World Choir Games, the world's largest choir competition. Known as the Choir Olympics, this year's contest featured more than 400 choirs comprised of 27,000 singers from 80 countries around the world.

One of only six American youth choirs invited to China, Voices of Unity won gold medals in two musical categories: popular choral music and gospel and spiritual. In addition, these Hoosiers won the title of World Grand Champion in the gospel and spiritual category.

Voices of Unity benefitted tremendously from the support of the Fort Wayne community who gave time and money to ensure these students had

the opportunity to travel to China and share their talent with the world. In just 5 short months, Voices of Unity raised enough money to send 101 students and volunteers to China for the competition.

I particularly want to recognize Marshall White, founder of Unity Performing Arts Foundation, the home of Voices of Unity, for his tireless leadership.

I am honored to congratulate the World Champion Voices of Unity Youth Choir of Fort Wayne for this extraordinary achievement and for the teamwork, discipline, and hard work it takes to become champions.●

REMEMBERING HELEN MCKINNEY

• Mr. CRAPO. Mr. President, today I honor the life of Helen McKinney. I join with her family and many friends in mourning her passing. Helen has been a great source of support and encouragement to me and many others. The peace of mind that Helen provided me and others is immeasurable. Helen took on challenges with good humor and cheer. Helen had passion and strength that far exceeded her physical presence. Her energy and enthusiasm were inspiring. She was a steadfast, giving, driven, kindhearted, and focused leader. She was very firm but tactful.

Throughout her life, Helen was a hard worker. She has rightly been described as being able to do everything. When you look at the variety of jobs and tasks she took on, this could not be more accurate. In the 1940s, she worked in the newspaper business. Helen also taught junior high. In the 1970s, she directed the Caldwell Chamber of Commerce. Helen served in the Idaho House of Representatives. She also was a member of the Idaho Judicial Council. Additionally, Helen is widely known for her efforts with the Canyon County Republican Party. Helen served as regional chair. She also served as a national convention delegate and State and precinct committeewoman. Her great service and hard work have been recognized through her induction into the Idaho Republican Party's Hall of Fame.

No matter the task, Helen did her work very well. She was straightforward, diligent, and determined. Helen had an abundance of light and intelligence of hope in her eyes. She was serious and paid attention to details. However, she never lost her sense of humor, and her positive outlook dominated her personality. When Helen spoke, people listened. She also did not hide her talents. She openly shared and mentored others. She was bold in defending her principles, but she was also gracious. Helen truly reflected Idaho values and the constitutional values of a land she loved so much.

I will greatly miss Helen, and I will never forget her thoughtful support and genuine example.●