give oral instructions for ordering a controlled substance to the resident’s nurse over the phone. In addition, practitioners will be permitted to opt out with certain employees, should a pharmacy practitio\nner have a problem with a particular nurse or designee.

Both practitioners and the nursing home will be required to keep written logs, or recordings, of any orders that are submitted by nurses. The nursing home will be further required to keep the list of authorized nurses current and to immediately notify the pharmacy of any changes in this list. Nurses or other licensed health care professionals who are authorized as agents by the nursing home will be required to formally acknowledge their responsibility for ordering and administering controlled substances by accepting liability in terms of certain penalties that would apply under the Controlled Substances Act if they engage in diversion or other unacceptable practices.

Pharmacies will also be required to maintain logs, or records, of the orders that are placed by authorized nurse agents. Pharmacies will be further required to make telephone (or fax) contact with the resident’s practitioner, under whose authority the controlled substances were ordered, within 48 hours of the time that the authorized agent transmits the order. The pharmacy will then be required to verify, and record, that the practitioner ordered the controlled substance. The practitioner will also be required to provide a written prescription to the pharmacy for the controlled substance within 10 days of the time the authorized nurse agent transmits the order. Additional reasonable safeguards may be included.

TRIBUTE TO AMBASSADOR BATU KUTELIA

Mr. KERRY. Mr. President, I rise today to mention a distinguished Ambassador who is leaving Washington after a regrettably short tenure. Batu Kutelia, Ambassador of Georgia to the United States, is returning to his country to assume an important post in his government as Deputy National Security Adviser.

Although Ambassador Kutelia was only in Washington as Ambassador for less than 2 years, he and his wife Sofia and their young family will be missed by the many friends they leave behind. He will also be remembered for reinforcing and advancing his country’s relations with the United States.

Ambassador Kutelia represented Georgia in Washington in challenging times. Following the 2008 war with Russia, in which he served as First Deputy Minister of Defense, the Ambassador helped facilitate the economic and political assistance necessary to rebuild and continue Georgia’s economic development. He also ensured that Georgia’s agenda within the U.S.-Georgia Charter on Strategic Partnership, and serious and dedicated, was the cornerstone of a productive bilateral relationship.

For thousands of years, Alaska has been home to Native communities, whose rich heritages, languages, and traditions have thrived in the region’s unique landscape. These communities have struggled over the past several decades to reconnect with their heritage and culture, to engage in a traditional subsistence lifestyle and to harvest their food from the land. Nearly 70 percent of Native communities’ food comes from the land and, for many communities, subsistence is an economic necessity. For this reason, we have supported the Native American Fish and Wildlife Service’s program to continue to provide quality subsistence food during the fiscal year 2011.

I, along with my colleague, Ms. Murkowski, have proposed legislation, S. 1673, which would provide parity. Our proposal is imperative to the long-term survival of Alaska-Native communities and Alaska’s nature resources, which makes this critical legislation timely. Development pressures are increasingly significant in many parts of Alaska. This legislation will allow private landowners the ability to protect community subsistence lands from development.

I urge my colleagues to support this proposal. The Senate should pass it quickly to ensure that Alaskan communities are protected, and that subsistence is a way of life for all Alaskans.

DON’T ASK, DON’T TELL

Mr. FEINGOLD. Mr. President, the repeal of the discriminatory don’t ask, don’t tell law will mean a stronger and more sustainable military and has no place in American society, especially when it undermines our national security by hampering military readiness. While the repeal of this law is long overdue, ending this harmful policy does mark an important moment in the fight for equal rights for all Americans. I applaud all those who worked to overturn this policy, the many Americans who advocated for its repeal, and the patriotic men and women who will now be able to openly serve their country.

ALASKA CONSERVATION PARITY ACT

Mr. BEGICH. Mr. President, I want to take this opportunity to discuss an issue of importance to Alaska Native communities. The legislation currently under consideration would extend through 2011 the enhanced tax incentives for donations of qualified conservation easements. Unfortunately, Alaskan Native communities are ineligible under this provision and, as a result, do not have access to the tools they need to permanently protect historic and unique landscapes. For thousands of years, Alaska has been home to Native communities, whose rich heritages, languages, and traditions have thrived in the region’s unique landscape. These communities continue to engage in a traditional subsistence lifestyle and to harvest their food from the land. Nearly 70 percent of Native communities’ food comes from the land and, for many communities, subsistence is an economic necessity. For this reason, we have supported the Native American Fish and Wildlife Service’s program to continue to provide quality subsistence food during the fiscal year 2011.

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MAIL ORDER PHARMACY RATINGS

Mr. AKAKA. Mr. President, I commend the Department of Veterans Affairs for a very impressive recent achievement. The Department’s mail-order pharmacy program was recently rated as top in the Nation among mail-order pharmacies by J.D. Power and Associates in their 2010 U.S. National Pharmacy Study.

VA received a score of 888 points out of a maximum possible score of 1,000. The Department did not receive an award for this achievement because their pharmacy service is only open to veterans and their families, but they did outscore the award recipient by a full point. VA also received a score of 770 points, and the pharmacy average by 70 points. VA’s program received the highest scores in the J.D. Power categories of overall experience, prescription ordering, prescription delivery, and cost competitiveness.

This is an extraordinary achievement, not only to be rated first in the Nation, but to so highly exceed the private sector. I congratulate VA, and especially commend Senator Shisheki and Mr. Michael Valenti, Chief Consumer Liaison, Pharmacy Benefits Management Services, for their exceptional leadership success in implementing the mail-order pharmacy program.