

some unusual groups. I particularly have to thank Andrew Patzman for his patience, ingenuity, capability, and his constant work. Of course, Steve Northrop probably helped a lot on that because he has a fine sense of humor and an extremely quick wit. That helped us out in a lot of those situations where we were trying to pull everything together after a long time.

I thank Katherine McGuire, who is the director of the Health, Education, Labor and Pensions Committee. While we are doing this, we are also trying to do the pensions conference and a whole bunch of other things. I don't know of anybody who has the capability that she has to juggle as many things at one time as she does and still do a great job of being a mother. I have some really good people.

I could go through a whole list and mention Flip McConnaughey, my Chief of Staff, who held everything together for all of the Wyoming issues and my Wyoming staff. I will just mention some of these other people more quickly. The same kind of thanks to them, and I know what they have done to help out. Brittany, Tod Spangler, Craig Orfield, Ryan Taylor; and then from Senator GREGG's staff, Conwell Smith and David Fisher; from Senator TALENT's staff, Faith Cristol; from Senator SNOWE's staff, Alex Hecht and Wes Coulam; from Senator BEN NELSON's staff, Kim Zimmerman and Amy Terrell; from Senator ISAKSON's staff, Brittany Espy; from Senator HATCH's staff, Pattie DeLoatche and Roger Johns; from legislative counsel, Bill Baird has just done tremendous work with us; from Senator FRIST's staff, the leader, Elizabeth Hall and May Khosla and Charlotte Ivancic; from Senator ENSIGN's staff, Michelle Spence; from Senator MCCONNELL's staff, Scott Raab and Laura Pemberton; from Senator BURR's staff, Jenny Hansen; from Senator ALEXANDER's staff, Page Kranbuhl; from Senator ROBERTS' staff, Jennifer Swenson; from Senator DEWINE's staff, Melissa Atkinson and Karla Carpenter.

That is a whole group of people who have spent days, nights, and weekends working on this bill and making it possible to put together what we have.

I know they are dedicated to it and they will continue to work and we will work across the aisle and look forward to getting something done for small business. I know small business will be asking—perhaps even demanding—but there is a need out there. I hope everybody will recognize that.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Hawaii is recognized.

NATIVE HAWAIIAN GOVERNMENT REORGANIZATION ACT OF 2005

Mr. AKAKA. Mr. President, I rise once again to discuss legislation I have introduced to extend the federal policy of self-governance and self-determination to Hawaii's indigenous peoples. S.

147 would provide parity in the federal policies towards indigenous peoples in the 50 states, to include American Indians, Alaska Natives, and Native Hawaiians.

To understand the importance of this legislation, one must understand Hawaii's history. Despite the fact that the Congress passed P.L. 103-150, the Apology Resolution, which recites Hawaii's history, many of my colleagues are unaware of our history. Let me provide some context of what we have experienced so that you might better understand the importance of this bill to my state.

Captain James Cook landed in Hawaii in 1778. Prior to Western contact, Native Hawaiians lived in an advanced society that was steeped in science. Native Hawaiians honored their land and environment, and therefore developed methods of irrigation, agriculture, aquaculture, navigation, medicine, fishing and other forms of subsistence whereby the land and sea were efficiently used without waste or damage. Respect for the environment and for others formed the basis of their culture and tradition.

The immediate and brutal decline of the Native Hawaiian population was the most obvious result of contact with the West. Between Cook's arrival and 1820, disease, famine, and war killed more than half of the Native Hawaiian population. This devastating population loss was accompanied by cultural, economic, and psychological destruction.

By the middle of the 19th century, the islands' small non-native population had come to wield an influence far in excess of its size. Westerners sought to limit the absolute power of the Hawaiian king over their legal rights and to implement property law so that they could accumulate and control land.

The mutual interests of Americans living in Hawaii and the United States became increasingly clear as the 19th century progressed. American merchants and planters in Hawaii wanted access to mainland markets and protection from European and Asian domination. The United States developed a military and economic interest in placing Hawaii within its sphere of influence. In 1826, the United States and Hawaii entered into the first of the four treaties the two nations signed during the 19th century.

The Kingdom of Hawaii, which began in 1810 under the leadership of King Kamehameha the first, continued until 1893 when it was overthrown with the help of the United States. The overthrow of the Kingdom is easily the most poignant part of Hawaii's history. Opponents of the bill have characterized the overthrow as the fault of Hawaii's last reigning monarch, Queen Lili'uokalani. Nothing could be further from the truth.

America's already ascendant political influence in Hawaii was heightened by the prolonged sugar boom.

Sugar planters were eager to eliminate the United States' tariff on their exports to California and Oregon. The 1875 Convention on Commercial Reciprocity, eliminated the American tariff on sugar from Hawaii and virtually all tariffs that Hawaii had placed on American products. It also prohibited Hawaii from giving political, economic, or territorial preferences to any other foreign power. It also provided the United States with the right to establish a military base at Pearl Harbor.

The business community, backed by the non-native military group, the Honolulu Rifles, forced the prime minister's resignation and the enactment of a new constitution. The new constitution—often referred to as the Bayonet Constitution—reduced the King to a figure of minor importance. It extended the right to vote to Western males whether or not they were citizens of the Hawaiian Kingdom. It disenfranchised almost all native voters by giving only residents with a specified income level or amount of property, the right to vote for members of the House of Nobles. The representatives of propertied Westerners took control of the legislature. The Bayonet constitution has been characterized as bringing democracy to Hawaii by opponents to S. 147. The constitution was not about democracy—it was about a shift in power to business owners from natives.

On January 14, 1893, the Queen was prepared to promulgate a new constitution, restoring the sovereign's control over the House of Nobles and limiting the franchise to Hawaiian subjects. She was, however, forced to withdraw her proposed constitution. Despite the Queen's apparent acquiescence, a Committee of Public Safety was formed to overthrow the Kingdom.

On January 16, 1893, at the order of U.S. Minister John Stevens, American Marines marched through Honolulu, to a building known as Arion Hall, located near both the government building and the Hawaiian palace. The next day, local revolutionaries seized the government building and demanded that Queen Lili'uokalani abdicate. Stevens immediately recognized the rebels' provisional government and placed it under the United States' protection.

I was deeply saddened by allegations made by opponents of this legislation that the overthrow was done to maintain democratic principles over a despotic monarch. As you can tell by the history I just shared, our Queen was trying to restore the Kingdom to its native peoples after Western influence had so greatly diminished the rights of the native peoples in Hawaii. Colleagues, I want to ensure that you understand our true history and the bravery and courage of our Queen, who abdicated her throne after seeing U.S. Marines marching through the streets of Honolulu. She did so to save her people.

Mr. President, I also want to discuss the diversity of Hawaii's people. As I've

said before, we celebrate our diversity as the sharing of our cultures, traditions, and languages; it is what makes us so special in Hawaii. Our diversity unifies us.

Colleagues, I want you to know that during the period of the Kingdom, many people traveled through and to Hawaii. In 1832, records indicate that there were 400 foreigners in Hawaii. Starting in 1852, sugar plantations began to recruit foreign workers to Hawaii. They included Chinese, Portuguese, Japanese, and Filipino workers. While many of these workers were temporary and returned to their homelands, a number of them stayed in Hawaii and have embraced the culture and traditions of Hawaii's indigenous peoples.

The opponents of this legislation first tried to represent this issue as a native vs. non-native issue. They failed to understand how we celebrate diversity in my home State and how so many embrace all things Hawaiian whether or not they can trace their lineage back to the aboriginal, indigenous peoples of Hawaii. The opponents also fail to understand the tremendous respect the people of Hawaii have for Native Hawaiian culture and the fact that the average person is not threatened by the idea of Native Hawaiians having recognition. The people of Hawaii understand that the preservation of rights for Native Hawaiians does not happen to their detriment.

The opponents of this legislation have tried to spread misinformation about the bill to lead non-Hawaiians to believe that their rights will be taken away if the bill is passed. This is not true. In the days to come I will elaborate more. Today, however, I wanted to share Hawaii's history and to explain the celebration of diversity and of multiculturalism in my home state. I am proud of my constituents—proud of their many cultures and traditions—and the fact that they are secure enough in their heritage to be able to support parity in federal policies for Native Hawaiians.

I ask my colleagues to join me in helping to do what is right, what is just for Native Hawaiians.

I look forward to the support that I will receive from my colleagues.

Thank you, Mr. President, for this opportunity to tell you about my history.

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

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

TAX INCREASE PREVENTION ACT

Mr. McCONNELL. Mr. President, we have had a very good week in the Senate. We had an opportunity to pass the

Tax Increase Prevention Act an hour or so ago, which is going to make an important difference not only in the lives of a great number of individual Americans, but also it will be very critical in continuing this robust economy that America currently enjoys.

I commend Members of the Senate for stepping to the plate and passing this very important measure, and particular congratulations go to Chairman CHUCK GRASSLEY of the Finance Committee for his tenacious pursuit of this very important piece of legislation.

REAUTHORIZATION OF THE SECURE RURAL SCHOOLS AND COMMUNITY SELF-DETERMINATION ACT OF 2000

Mr. SMITH. Mr. President, I rise today to engage in a colloquy with the majority leader, the Senator from Tennessee, regarding the reauthorization of the Secure Rural Schools and Community Self-Determination Act of 2000. This program is critical to bridge the gap in my State and others between what was, what is, and what will be the management direction of Federal forests. For nearly 100 years, counties across the country have shared in the productivity of Federal lands. They have received 25 percent of revenues derived from commercial activity on Forest Service lands, and under a separate statute—50 percent of BLM revenues derived from the O & C lands of western Oregon. In areas that are dominated by Federal forests, these revenues also dominate county government budgets—budgets that pay for public schools, road maintenance and public safety.

This issue is not one of permanently replacing forest productivity with a Government check. While I am a lead proponent of the safety net, which was not intended to be permanent, I have also tried very hard to restore common sense, predictability and productivity to the management of Federal forests. These lands are both ecological and economic assets that must be treated better.

Unfortunately, that day has not yet arrived. That is why we created a safety net in 2000. That is why we also passed the Healthy Forests Restoration Act. That is why we must consider dealing with postcatastrophic event legislation, why we must continue funding the Forest Service and BLM forest management programs and do the other things that are needed to create real jobs in the woods and return viability to rural communities.

Again, the day when forests are ecologically and economically sustainable has not yet arrived. What has arrived is an impending disaster if the county payments safety net is not extended. Oregon counties are not alone facing the hard times. Places such as Clearwater County, ID; Chelan County, WA; and Siskiyou County, CA, will also be devastated by failure to make a short-term extension of the Secure Rural Schools Act.

A commitment from the majority leader to work with me to identify offsets for an extension of the Secure Rural Schools Act will embolden our efforts and reassure rural counties in my State that this issue is of the utmost importance to the Senate.

Mr. FRIST. I thank the Senator from Oregon for his dedication to his State and all States that have been affected by the downturn in Federal timber receipts. He has been in close contact with me, the assistant majority leader and the chairman of the Senate Finance Committee communicating the significance and urgency of his cause. I commit to him to address the needs of rural counties and schools in Oregon and elsewhere. Working with the committees of jurisdiction, I commit to a thorough search for funding offsets so that these critical rural education programs can continue to serve the youth of those communities.

Mr. GRASSLEY. I am aware of Senator SMITH's concerns and pledge to work with him within the Finance Committee's jurisdiction, especially in the area of tax-exempt financing, to find the resources to assist the hard-hit areas to which he refers.

Mr. SMITH. I appreciate the commitment of the Senator from Tennessee to help identify the needed offsets to extend the Secure Rural Schools program and look forward to working with him closely in the coming weeks. I also thank the chairman of the Finance Committee for his consideration of this issue.

MEDICAL CARE ACCESS PROTECTION ACT OF 2006 AND HEALTHY MOTHERS AND HEALTHY BABIES ACCESS TO CARE ACT

Mr. KYL. Mr. President, I regret that, twice this week, the Senate has failed to address the problem of medical liability costs. I support S. 22, the Medical Care Access Protection Act of 2006, and S. 23, the Healthy Mothers and Healthy Babies Access to Care Act. Both of these bills would address the very real problem of access to medical care for people in my State and across the country. We have a crisis in the United States, and in particular in Arizona, when it comes to the availability of providers.

The terrible distortions in our medical liability system have been with us for years. In Arizona, we have seen emergency rooms that cannot remain open because there are not enough trauma surgeons and specialists to staff the ER, physicians who have decided to move from my State to States with more supportive medical liability law, and finally, doctors who have opted to retire early. It is troubling to have highly trained, dedicated, qualified members of the medical community leave or to give up their profession—all to the detriment of their patients.

This shrinking availability of physicians is due in part to the high insurance premiums that doctors are facing.