

UNANIMOUS CONSENT REQUEST—
S. 1874

Mr. MERKLEY. Mr. President, I rise to ask unanimous consent of all of my colleagues. Before I explain the unanimous consent request, I will give a little bit of background to S. 1874, which Senator SNOWE and I have worked on for some time because of our mutual interest in making the HUBZone process for rural economic development work better.

When this process occurs with each census, there is a 2-year nightmare of redtape before communities that should benefit from this economic development opportunity have the ability to do so. Across the country right now, we have rural communities that absolutely need to benefit from this most recent census. They have high unemployment rates. They are hit hard by the drop in exports. They are hit hard by the collapse of the housing communities. Sawmills have shut down. Paper mills have shut down.

So many folks come to this floor to talk about cutting redtape and talk about helping the economy in the heart of rural America. They come to this floor and they talk about how important economic development and jobs are. And this is a little fix that takes 1 year out of the bureaucracy. That is why Senator SNOWE and I have worked together on this process.

Now, twice we have brought this forward, and twice it has been cleared by every Member of this body. Neither time did it make it into a bill that got to the President's desk. So we are coming back once more to say: Let common sense prevail to fix the entanglement in the bureaucracy that is taking away opportunities for rural America. Let's put an end to that today.

I will defer to my colleague to speak, and then we will ask for unanimous consent.

I yield to the Senator from Maine.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Maine.

Ms. SNOWE. Mr. President, I wish to thank the Senator from Oregon regarding this critical issue we have been working on for a considerable period of time and that thought we had really cleared on both sides. This language is mightily important to improving the rural economies of this country, particularly because it would expedite the HUBZone designation to allow businesses in those HUBzones to provide jobs by virtue of the fact that they would get preferential treatment in the contracting process.

As we know, the Federal Government buys more than \$400 billion worth of contracts each year. We want to make sure small businesses and particularly those located in hard-hit areas of our country have access to those contracting dollars and are able to participate on an equal footing.

This would create jobs. So I regret the fact that we are not able to get support to move this legislation forward because I know the Senator from

Oregon has tested it on both sides. We have run it through the hotline. There are no objections to the language. I cannot understand why we cannot move this very important legislation that absolutely would be central to creating jobs in the areas that need them the most throughout the country, especially when we have such a high unemployment rate.

This is not a difficult issue to understand. It is very straightforward. The legislation expedites the timeframe in which these designations occur for HUBzones, particularly because HUBzones are areas that are suffering most with respect to the downturn of this economy.

When we have a paltry economic growth of 1.3 percent, of .4 percent, or 2 percent, when we have an unemployment rate that is 8.6 percent but we have had 9 percent or higher for a good 28 months, and over 8 percent for the last 34 months, we need to do something about it. This could help small businesses, and it could help people in these areas who are currently unemployed. So I would hope there would be no objections with respect to this initiative.

I thank the Senator from Oregon for his leadership on this matter.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Oregon.

Mr. MERKLEY. Mr. President, I thank my colleague.

The third sponsor on this bill is Senator LANDRIEU, the chair of the Small Business Committee. I yield to her.

Mr. KYL. Mr. President, I ask the indulgence of my colleague. If my colleague could make the unanimous consent request to which I can respond, then I can leave.

Mr. MERKLEY. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the Banking Committee be discharged from further consideration of S. 1874, the HUBZone Qualified Census Tract Act of 2011; that the Senate proceed to its consideration; that the bill be read a third time and passed, the motion to reconsider be laid upon the table, with no intervening action or debate, and any statements related to the bill be printed in the RECORD as if read.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Is there objection?

Mr. KYL. Mr. President, there is objection on our side. I will object. But I do want to make a point that as a result of Senator SNOWE and Senator MERKLEY's intercession here, our staff has talked to Senator SHELBY, who says he will try to work to get it cleared and to hotline it again on our side today. So at this time, I cannot clear it, but there will be an effort to accomplish that result.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Objection is heard.

The Senator from Oregon.

Mr. MERKLEY. Mr. President, I thank my colleague from Arizona. We appreciate his help. We appreciate the ranking member of the Banking Committee assisting in this matter.

I yield to my colleague.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Louisiana.

Ms. LANDRIEU. Mr. President, I would like to add my voice to the strong work that has been done by Senator MERKLEY and Senator SNOWE. As the chair of the committee that has some jurisdiction over the HUBZone Program, I want to urge the Banking Committee and the staff and offer the staff of the Small Business Committee from the majority side to work very hard today to see if we can get this cleared. It is very important to the ranking member of our committee, who has worked so hard, and to the Senator from Oregon, who has made very strong arguments about expediting and streamlining some of these approvals, so I wish them the best.

We are going to work today to see if we can get it cleared. It would be the second really substantial victory in the Small Business space, having gotten our SBIR bill through just recently after 6 years of very acrimonious debate. If we can get this fix to the HUBZone Program, it would be terrific.

I thank the Senators for their hard work.

I yield the floor.

Mr. MERKLEY. Mr. President, I thank all of my colleagues.

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

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

TRIBUTE TO TIM MASSANELLI

Mr. PRYOR. Mr. President, as we close out the year, I want to take today to honor the work and career of Tim Massanelli.

Last month, Tim stepped down from his position as parliamentarian of the Arkansas House of Representatives, a place where he has worked since 1973—39 good years of valuable public service.

When Tim first came to work for the Arkansas House of Representatives, things were much different than they are today. My longtime friend Dale Bumpers was our Governor and Richard Nixon was President. I was in the fourth grade.

Upholding the mantra of citizen legislators, the Arkansas House had no permanent employees and only a small support system in the Bureau of Legislative Research. With our Nation and state modernizing, full-time employees were needed in the house, and Tim was in the right place at the right time. He was also exactly the right man for the job.

Growing up in Pine Bluff, AR, Tim's family raised him to be civically engaged and active in his community—