

Woodlawn Organization, at Operation Push, where he was executive vice-president, and in government, the fight was always the same—to open up opportunities for people, to expand the possibilities for people, to build hope, and self-respect, and economic security.

Joe Gardner made Chicago a better place. He died far too soon; there was still so much he wanted to do. I will greatly miss him, and I know the people of Chicago and the state of Illinois will miss him, particularly the poor people he cared so much about.●

TRIBUTE TO HIS MAJESTY KING BHUMIBOL ADULYADEJ OF THAILAND

● Mr. JOHNSTON. Mr. President, I rise today to pay tribute to His Majesty King Bhumibol Adulyadej of Thailand, who will celebrate the 50th anniversary of his accession to the throne on June 9, 1996. This is indeed an auspicious occasion, as King Bhumibol is the first Thai king to have reigned for 50 years.

King Bhumibol has been the overseer and benefactor of remarkable change and progress for his nation. From the beginning of his reign, he has tirelessly devoted his time and effort to the well-being and welfare of the Thai people. Under his stewardship, government has become an instrument of progress for people, as evident by the more than 1,800 royal development projects he has initiated in the areas of agriculture, environmental conservation, public health, occupational promotion, water resources development, communications, and social welfare.

During his reign, Thailand has experienced a dramatic transformation in its industrial structure to become a leader among developing nations. Manufacturing accounts for over 31 percent of the nation's economy and exports are booming. Textiles have supplanted rice as Thailand's major export item, and Thailand is now a major exporter of sophisticated high-technology products. King Bhumibol's leadership in diversifying his nation's economy and encouraging foreign investment has opened new doors of opportunity and prosperity to his people and has propelled Thailand to a place of respected prominence among the nations of the Pacific rim.

Not only are the industrial and technological advances significant, but King Bhumibol has achieved these gains while preserving the cultural integrity and national heritage of the Thai people. He is a much beloved leader and national patriarch, who has created a unique version of the modern monarchy. Firmly committed to the development of democratic principles, he has always been on the side of peace and prosperity and has responsibly guided his nation within the parameters of his constitutional authority.

The United States and Thailand have enjoyed a longstanding friendship and economic partnership from which both

nations have tremendously benefited. I have had the privilege of visiting Thailand on several occasions to promote opportunities for trade and investment and have been profoundly grateful for the assistance and hospitality I have received. It has been an honor and a pleasure to work with this remarkable nation for the continued peace and prosperity of both of our countries.

I know that my colleagues in the U.S. Senate join me in congratulating King Bhumibol for his magnificent leadership and prosperous reign, as we look forward to many more years of friendship with his great nation.●

CELEBRATING THE 50TH ANNIVERSARY OF THE DEPARTMENT OF VETERANS AFFAIRS VOLUNTARY SERVICE [VAVS]

Mr. ROCKEFELLER. Mr. President, this year marks the 50th anniversary of the Department of Veterans Affairs Voluntary Service [VAVS]. Its half-century of caring for veterans and their families in communities across the country has generated more than 440 million hours of service and introduced millions of citizens to the fulfillment and satisfaction of volunteering.

VAVS was born in the burgeoning, postwar VA medical system as VA hospital administrators sought a way to organize the spontaneous volunteer movements that developed in communities near military and VA hospitals. From the start, VA officials recognized this volunteer movement as a natural adjunct to the quality of health care provided veterans. In April 1946, under the leadership of General Omar Bradley, then head of VA, representatives of eight national veterans and service organizations met in Washington, DC, to form a national advisory committee. The result of the meeting was a plan through which both community organizations and individuals could participate in volunteering and help manage those volunteer programs locally and nationally through advisory committees.

That plan was approved May 17, 1946, the birth date of the VA Voluntary Service. Today, there are 60 major veteran, civic, and service organizations participating on the National Advisory Committee, with more than 350 other national and community organizations supporting VAVS.

Still based in the VA health care system, VA volunteers have expanded with that system into every area of patient care and support, and have followed the VA mission into community settings such as hospice programs, foster care, hospital-based home care, veterans outreach centers, homeless veterans programs, and special events for the disabled. In addition, community volunteers work increasingly with VA's other service delivery venues such as benefits offices and national cemeteries.

VAVS volunteers have been particularly active in supporting community

programs aimed at reaching and serving the homeless. These 1-to-3 day events offer a variety of services to the homeless, and VA resources focus on assisting veterans, who make up at least one-third of the homeless male population in a typical community.

Volunteers have also become an integral part of the system of national and local showcase events aimed at introducing persons with disabilities back to mainstream activities. These include the National Disabled Veterans Winter Sports Clinic, the National Veterans Wheelchair Games—the largest wheelchair athletic meet in the world—the National Disabled Veterans Golden Age Games, and the National Disabled Veterans Creative Arts Festival. Corporate volunteers play a strong role in these events and have become elemental to their success. Growing participation from the corporate sector is setting the pace for the future of VAVS, along with a strong and growing youth volunteer program that is introducing teenagers and college students to careers as well as to community service.

The focus remains as it was in those early post-World War II years, responding to each community's desire to put its veterans first. That's why last year, volunteers contributed a total of 14,021,586 hours of service through VAVS programs, 12,649,676 of which came from 93,821 regularly scheduled volunteers. Numbers do not tell the real story, however. There is no way to calculate a community's caring and sharing with some of its most important citizens. For 50 years, VAVS has been there to channel that caring in a productive, meaningful way.●

DISTRICT COURT RULING SHOULD SPUR SECRETARY OF AGRICULTURE TO REFORM CLASSIFIED PRICES

● Mr. FEINGOLD. Mr. President, on Monday, Minnesota District Court Judge David Doty released a decision holding that class I prices used in the Federal milk marketing order system are arbitrary and capricious. I rise today to applaud that ruling. It is the second such ruling by the district court in 2 years. It is my hope that the combination of this most recent ruling and Secretary of Agriculture Dan Glickman's commitment to restore equity in Federal orders will finally be enough to change this discriminatory pricing system for good.

Mr. President, class I prices, prices that farmers receive for fluid milk, increase at a rate of 21 cents for every 100 miles a farmer lives from Eau Claire, WI. This systematic discrimination against Wisconsin dairy farmers has never been adequately defended by the Department of Agriculture which has great administrative latitude to set these prices. Department officials have chosen to continue the discriminatory pricing scheme when they had the authority to change it and the knowledge that it should be changed.

Mr. President, this most recent ruling comes more than 5 years after a group of Minnesota dairy farmers filed a class action lawsuit against then-Secretary of Agriculture Clayton Yeutter charging that class I prices were unlawful under the basic authorities of the authorizing statute. The plaintiffs also charged that the system had caused the loss of thousands of Upper Midwest dairy farms as the excessive prices provided to other regions stimulated surplus production driving down prices to farmers in our region. Since this lawsuit was initiated, Wisconsin has lost more than 6,000 family dairy farms who simply could not compete with the mega-dairies in other regions who were enjoying the artificially high fluid milk prices under the Federal order system. As a Wisconsin State senator at that time, I was able to secure funding for the State of Wisconsin to participate in the lawsuit as an amicus curiae. Since that lawsuit was filed, and since I have been a Member of the U.S. Senate, I and other members of the Upper Midwest congressional delegation have taken all steps possible to push for reform of this system. Legislative reform of class I prices has proved nearly impossible as Senators from regions benefiting from this system have rejected all suggestions for reform.

Two years ago, a different district court judge directed then-Secretary Espy to issue an amplified decision properly justifying a 1993 final rule on Federal orders which failed to reform class I prices. One-hundred and twenty days later on August 12, 1994, an amplified decision was issued by the Secretary. That decision, devoid of substance, was an insult to Wisconsin dairy farmers who have suffered from the Department's approach to this issue.

Following the issuance of that amplified decision, the Minnesota Milk Producers Association filed another motion for summary judgment charging that Secretary Espy's amplified decision was arbitrary and capricious because it was unsupported by evidence and inconsistent with the mandates of the authorizing statute.

On Monday, three Secretaries of Agriculture and four sessions of Congress after the initiation of this legal proceeding, the District Court of Minnesota agreed with the plaintiffs. The court concluded that "the Secretary has wholly failed to provide an explanation of his decision consistent with the requirements of the Agricultural Marketing Agreement Act." With respect to the use of Eau Claire, WI, as the reference point from which most fluid milk prices are determined, the court chided the Department for claiming it does not use Eau Claire as a basing point, despite evidence to the contrary. Judge Doty stated, "The Secretary may not enforce what is clearly a single basing-point system without explaining how it reflects reasoned consideration of the statutory factors.

If Eau Claire is to be the basing point, then the Secretary must explain why, for each market to which a contemplated order relates, distance from Eau Claire is a relevant consideration."

The court stopped short of finding class I prices illegal but found that they have never been adequately justified by the Department of Agriculture and as such, the decision to maintain them was arbitrary and capricious. Judge Doty remanded the decision to Secretary Glickman for 120 days after which the Secretary is to issue an amplified decision on class I prices that reflects the factors mandated by the authorizing statute.

It is my hope that in 120 days our current Secretary of Agriculture will do the right thing and announce comprehensive changes to the classified pricing system with class I prices based upon the economic factors required by the statute—supply-and-demand factors, prices of feeds, other inputs to production, and the public interest.

Interestingly, this time frame coincides with USDA's Federal order consolidation process required in the 1996 farm bill. I have always said, Mr. President, that reform of these discriminatory class I prices and the elimination of Eau Claire, WI, as the single basing point for milk prices could be accomplished through the legislative process, the administrative process or the judicial process. The recently enacted 1996 farm bill and Monday's district court ruling represent the confluence of these three processes.

The Congress, through the 1996 farm bill, has directed the Secretary to consolidate the number of Federal orders from the current 33 to between 10 and 14. Implicit in that directive is administrative reform of the pricing structure for those new orders—an authority which the Secretary holds under the Agricultural Marketing Agreement Act. Secretary of Agriculture Dan Glickman has publicly admitted, both to dairy farmers and to Congress, that class I prices are unfair to the Upper Midwest and have produced "regional inequities." He has committed to reduce class I differentials in the reform process. Now the district court ruling has provided a clear ruling that the Secretary shall follow the economic criteria of the original authorizing statute in setting those prices rather than bowing to political pressures from those regions that benefit from this discriminatory pricing system.

The Secretary has two choices.

He can comply with the court's order by reforming class I prices to bring them more in line with the economic realities in 1996. He can do that both in issuing an amplified decision that complies with the statute as required by the court as well as by implementing pricing reform as part of Federal milk marketing order reform required by 1996 farm bill.

Or he can continue to fight the Upper Midwest in this lawsuit by seeking to

delay the process further, rubber-stamping bad decisions by previous Secretaries, causing the loss of even more dairy farms in the Upper Midwest and imposing huge costs on our rural communities that depend on a thriving dairy industry.

I hope Dan Glickman chooses the first option.

This has been a long fight, Mr. President. It is time for it to end. It is time for the Secretary and the administration to do the right thing. I will work with them to make that happen.●

CONGRESSIONAL, PRESIDENTIAL, AND JUDICIAL PENSION FORFEITURE ACT

● Mr. REID. Mr. President, today I join Senators GREGG and NICKLES in introducing long overdue legislation which creates tough new sanctions for public officials who engage in wrongdoing while they are in office. This legislation, the Congressional, Presidential, and Judicial Pension Forfeiture Act, prohibits the receipt of pension benefits by Members of Congress, Presidents and members of the judiciary who engage in criminal conduct while in office. Those who engage in felonies that relate to abuse of office and undermine confidence in public officials should not be entitled to receive generous pension benefits.

Recently, I have heard from many constituents about this issue. This is really something that reflects on the integrity of this institution. It is an issue that affects any individual who aspires to public service. Most I have heard from are upset with the ability of public servants to collect pension benefits after they have been convicted of a felony while serving in a public office. Current law allows a former Member of Congress or a judge to collect their taxpayer financed pensions even after they have been convicted of such offenses as perjury.

The bipartisan legislation we are introducing today would put an end to this practice. Taxpayer financed pensions are not an entitlement. If public officials breach the public's trust they should forfeit their right to these pensions. They do not deserve these benefits if they commit crimes while serving in office. Serving in public office is an honor carrying tremendous responsibility. Whether you are the President, a Federal judge, or a Member of Congress you are always aware of this responsibility. Few undertake this responsibility lightly.

Yet all of us are aware of recent cases involving egregious violations of the public trust. Unfortunately, these individual cases, while isolated, tarnish the image of all public officeholders. They undermine public confidence in our democracy. They do so because the public is led to believe that crime committed while serving in public office pays. And to a certain extent, under the current law, it does. Public officials can commit fraud or perjury