

improve ventilation in their mines. Although the Public Health Service demonstrated that adequate mine ventilation would be relatively inexpensive—and the Atomic Energy Commission had developed effective radiation level controls, which were available for all State and Federal agencies—the mine operators successfully resisted efforts to substantially reduce radiation levels by improved ventilation techniques. Through legislation, compensation was ultimately made to individual miners who worked for private mine operators that were not subject to Federal radiation safety requirements.

These precedents bring us directly to the Federal Government's responsibility for the blood supply in this country and bring us directly to this bill.

The evidence in the IOM study that I referenced previously on blood safety clearly demonstrates that, in a number of instances, FDA failed to mandate certain Federal patient safety requirements for private processors of blood products, failed to act on recommendations from the Centers for Disease Control concerning screening blood donors, failed to mandate recall of hemophilia clotting factor, and failed to implement a 1988 Presidential directive to trace recipients of possibly infected blood, failed to do that for 3 long years. Passage of the Ricky Ray Hemophilia Relief Act does not set a new precedent, but—on the contrary—is fully consistent with the earlier precedents set by Congress to provide compensation for injury when remedy could be found by no other means.

HOW TO PAY FOR RICKY RAY

As this bill is written, the Ricky Ray Act provides \$125,000 for each eligible individual, and so, with an estimated 7,200 affected individuals, the total cost of the bill is estimated at \$900 million.

In order to identify individuals and determine their eligibility, payments authorized by the legislation will likely occur over several years. This would result in at least two smaller annual appropriations requests.

SUPPORT FOR THIS LEGISLATION

As I stated earlier, the Ricky Ray Hemophilia Relief Fund Act has the support of 35 of our Senate colleagues and the support of 257 Members of the House of Representatives.

The legislation is also endorsed by the American Red Cross, the American Association of Blood Banks, America's Blood Centers and AIDS advocacy organizations such as the National Association of Persons with AIDS and the AIDS Policy Center.

In her letter to the National Hemophilia Foundation, American Red Cross President Elizabeth Dole stated:

The American Red Cross supports a comprehensive approach to addressing the needs of those infected with HIV or other transmissible agents through the use of blood components or blood products. For individuals with hemophilia who were infected with HIV before 1985, the American Red Cross believes that finalization of the manufacturers' settlement offer, coupled with the govern-

ment-funded compensation program outlined in the Ricky Ray legislation, will provide an effective means of immediate help.

A host of other developed countries have established compensation programs to assist individuals with blood-clotting disorders who were infected with HIV by contaminated blood products.

I believe it is now time for the United States—and for this Congress—to take action as well. I encourage my colleagues to cosponsor this legislation, to join the 35 other Members of this body who have already signed on as cosponsors. The Senate Labor Committee is scheduled to have a hearing on this bill on Thursday of this week. Chairman HYDE will be bringing the House bill before the full House Judiciary Committee tomorrow. I would invite my colleagues to examine the hearing record, and learn more about the need for this bill. I believe the case has been made and the case is clear: The Federal Government has a moral duty to help those Americans who counted on the Federal Government to protect the blood supply. No, Mr. President, this bill cannot reverse the tragedies, but it can serve to demonstrate that the Federal Government can be held accountable for its actions.

Mr. President, we often hear that bad things happen to good people. That is something that governments and Congresses will never be able to cure. But in this case, when bad things happened to good people, the U.S. Government played a part in the problem. The U.S. Government should now play a part in the solution—and do something to help these American families.

I thank the Chair.

WYCHE FOWLER'S CONFIRMATION AS UNITED STATES AMBASSADOR TO SAUDI ARABIA

Mr. HOLLINGS. Mr. President, I rise today to congratulate my good friend and former colleague Wyche Fowler on his confirmation as United States Ambassador to Saudi Arabia. This is a great and well-deserved honor for the former Senator from Georgia. Even more important, it is a blessing for America.

Because his was a recess appointment, Wyche Fowler already has served with great distinction and success for over 1 year in Saudi Arabia. President Clinton appointed him to this post just days before the June 25, 1996, terrorist bombing of the United States military residence in Dahrhan. Although he took the ambassadorship at one of the most tenuous moments in United States-Saudi diplomatic relations, Wyche embraced the challenge and helped cement the United States relationship with Saudi Arabia, one of our most important allies.

Wyche was sworn in as Ambassador on August 16, 1996. His appointment came at an important moment in the relationship between the United States and Saudi Arabia. Despite the difficul-

ties that have surrounded the bombing investigation, he has served his country well and protected American interests in the region with tenacity and skill.

Of course, Mr. President, this is no surprise to those of us who have followed Wyche Fowler's career of public service or worked closely with him during his 16 years in Congress. Elected to the Senate in 1986, Wyche served on the Appropriations, Budget, Energy, and Agriculture Committees. As assistant floor leader, he helped fashion a bipartisan consensus on major public policy issues. Many of us remember Wyche Fowler as an unusually reflective Member of this body, who talked often of conserving our natural resources and energy sources. I can remember listening with humor and fascination as he used electric toothbrushes to point out the danger of decadent applications of technology.

Before becoming the first Atlantan elected to the Senate, Wyche Fowler represented Atlanta's First District in the House of Representatives. First elected in 1977, he served on the Ways and Means and Foreign Relations Committees, as well as the Select Committee on Intelligence and the Congressional Arts Caucus.

Wyche's legislative record is long and distinguished: he tried to stop oil drilling in the Arctic National Wildlife Refuge and protect national wetlands; recodified and strengthened the national historic preservation law; established joint public/private ventures in alternative energy; and ensured interest-free relief for farmers in the Farm Credit System overhaul.

The consensus-building skills Wyche learned in Congress have stood him in good stead in Riyadh. Just as valuable, Mr. President, is his affable personality. All his colleagues in the House and Senate remember Wyche Fowler as a genial and charismatic fellow, not to mention a great singer of hymns and a superb storyteller. In fact, Wyche used to entertain us with the same country songs he performed as a teenager on an Atlanta talent show. Though the Saudis may not appreciate country ballads, I am sure that they will find Wyche Fowler every bit as hard-working, engaging, and honest as the people of Georgia and his colleagues have.

And, Mr. President, Wyche is genuinely fascinated by Saudi Arabia's people and culture. He has begun to learn Arabic, and already has indulged his enthusiasm for Arabian history and archaeology by trekking on camel through the deserts of Saudi Arabia's Empty Quarter.

America is fortunate to have Wyche Fowler as its Ambassador to Saudi Arabia. His diplomatic skills will see us successfully through a delicate and vital period in our relations with that nation. In this instance, Mr. President, Georgia's loss was the Nation's gain.