

to improve the bill and address concerns that have been raised, and in my view any remaining concerns can be worked out.

So next year, class action reform will be one of my highest priorities. I look forward to working with my colleagues to ensure that we eliminate those abuses that too often give class actions a bad name.

#### TRIBUTE TO DR. STEVEN DEKOSKY

• Mr. SPECTER. Mr. President, next month our nation acknowledges the more than 4 million Americans who suffer from Alzheimer's disease and the 19 million who are their caregivers. National Alzheimer's month is a time to reflect on those who are afflicted as well as those who are dedicating their lives to eradicating this disease.

I bring to your attention one of those who is committed to creating a world without Alzheimer's. His name is Dr. Steven DeKosky and since 1990, he has been on the faculty of the University of Pittsburgh School of Medicine where among other things, he directs the Alzheimer's Disease Research Center funded by the National Institute on Aging. Dr. DeKosky's accomplishments are enormous as reflected in his curriculum vitae, which is some 36 pages long. If I tried to list all of his achievements it would fill dozens of pages of the CONGRESSIONAL RECORD. In the interests of the taxpayers, I'll mention only a few of Dr. DeKosky's contributions.

As a renowned Alzheimer researcher, clinician and teacher, Dr. DeKosky is dedicated to finding answers to the Alzheimer's puzzle. To this end, he is active in basic and clinical research. His basic research is on the structural and neurochemical changes in human brains with dementia. His clinical research focuses on four key areas. One is to find ways of diagnosing the disease more effectively and differentiating it from other related diseases. A second area involves neuroimaging, which helps to confirm other diagnostic techniques, but also opens "windows" to the brain to enable scientists to understand the disease better. A third area of study, and one that is offering very exciting possibilities for treatment, is the assessment of genetic risk factors in Alzheimer's. Finally, he is involved in clinical trials to assess new medications for Alzheimer's disease.

Dr. DeKosky is active in the American Academy of Neurology and the American Neurological Association. The latter organization honored him with its "Presidential Award" in 1988. He is listed in "The Best Doctors in America." He serves on the editorial boards of the "Archives of Neurology" and the "Alzheimer Disease and Associated Disorders: An International Journal." He also received a Teacher Investigator Development Award from the National Institute of Neurological Disorders and Stroke.

Despite his involvement in dozens of research projects and other academic

pursuits, Dr. DeKosky contributes vast amounts of time as a volunteer to the Alzheimer cause. He currently chairs the national Alzheimer's Association's Medical and Scientific Advisory Council and is a member of the board of the Alzheimer's Association. He chairs the Professional Advisory Board of the Greater Pittsburgh Chapter of the Alzheimer's Association and was a founding member of the Lexington-Blue Grass Chapter of the Alzheimer's Association.

Dr. DeKosky has a special gift as a communicator of science. Whether in the classroom or speaking to groups of family members in the community, Dr. DeKosky has a knack for making the complex seem simple. He expresses the enthusiasm and hope created by scientific research in Alzheimer's, which is offering promise to Americans of all ages that their future may not be blighted by this dread disease. And, he has a sense of humor and a healthy dose of humility, which allows him to "connect" to those to whom he speaks.

Mr. President, I believe it is important to acknowledge the unsung heroes who are working tirelessly in laboratories and in the clinic to make our world less disease-prone. Dr. Steven DeKosky is one of those exemplary citizens who through his daily efforts is bringing about a better tomorrow. •

#### THE YEAR 2000 PROBLEM

• Mr. LAUTENBERG. Mr. President, I rise today to express my great concern about the Year 2000 computer problem, and to urge that funding be approved on an emergency basis to address this problem.

Mr. President, in less than 500 days, an unknown number of computers around the world will fail because they can't tell the difference between the year 1900 and the year 2000. Although this may seem like a minor problem that could be easily fixed, it is not. It's time consuming, difficult, and expensive to address. And the implications of failure are enormous.

We have known about the Year 2000 problem for some time, Mr. President, but many have failed to appreciate its severity. Throughout the private and public sectors, top officials assumed that someone else would find a solution. Or they simply did not appreciate the importance of making this problem a priority.

Fortunately, Mr. President, many in the private sector are now taking this threat seriously. One Federal Reserve official speculated that private sector spending on the problem could exceed \$50 billion. While many small businesses are just beginning to face the problem, most major large businesses are acting aggressively. Banks, utilities, hospitals, factories, insurance companies, and railroads are scrambling to ensure that they will be ready. Many understand that this truly is an emergency, and they're treating it that way.

Still, I am afraid that most Americans still do not appreciate the severity of the Y2K problem. And I would urge all those listening to educate themselves about it. Admittedly, it is very difficult for most of us to evaluate the risks. But many credible experts have discussed scenarios that are truly alarming.

Consider, for example, the impact of the Y2K problem on public utilities. Senators BENNETT and DODD, the co-chairs of the Senate Special Committee on the Year 2000 Technology Problem, have held a hearing on this, and I commend both of them for their leadership. Their Committee surveyed major utilities and found that many are far from ready for the year 2000. The Committee's work raises very serious questions about the risks of major power outages throughout our country, and the impact of such outages on our financial and telecommunications systems. Indeed, the essential infrastructure of our nation could be at risk.

Largely because of such threats, some economists have argued that the Year 2000 problem is likely to lead to a severe recession. Some see a parallel to the downturn of the 1970's when oil supplies were disrupted. In fact, quick and reliable computing may be even more important to our economy than oil was two decades ago. Without reliable computer information, as without oil, production and distribution systems could break down. And that could dramatically increase unemployment, interest rates and inflation, all at the same time.

Now, Mr. President, I'm not saying that this is bound to happen. Experts disagree about the likelihood of major economic and social dislocations. However, even if the odds of a significant breakdown are modest, the potential enormity of the problem demands that we take it seriously.

I do know from my own experience that software problems can be terribly serious and difficult to address. Before I came to public life, I was an executive in a computer services firm, a firm that has been quite successful. I can tell you that nothing is more vexing than a seemingly insignificant software glitch that grinds an entire program to a halt. Fixing such a glitch can require laborious, line-by-line examination of impenetrable computer code. Meanwhile, everything is often brought to a standstill.

While analysts may disagree about the scope of the Y2K problem, Mr. President, it does seem clear that some things will go wrong on January 1, 2000. We just can't say exactly which, or how many. Compounding matters, even if one system has had its Y2K problems fixed, it still can be corrupted by interacting with other systems that are flawed. We have a systemic problem—and it will only be solved if all of us work together.

What is the government's role in all this? Well, our first responsibility is to put our own house in order.