

particularly in Colorado. The Business Women's Network (BWN), which is a network of 1200 women's associations working in concert to expand all women's inclusion in business development, is helping towards that end. Tonight, the BWN will be hosting an event to honor its members and the many structures which serve the development of women's business.

Colorado enterprises which embody well-developed and successful business ventures include: the Colorado Women's Business Office, which represents more than 75,000 women and 50,000 girls; the Denver Women's Business Network; the Casa Career Development and Business Center for Women; the Southern Colorado Women's Chamber of Commerce; the University of Colorado Women's Resource Center; the Women Owner, Managers and Executive Network of Colorado Springs; the Women's Foundation of Colorado; the Women's Library Association in Denver, and many others. Colorado's success in identifying and nurturing a strong base of women owned businesses provides a model for other states seeking to conquer the spectrum of needs and obstacles that confront women entrepreneurs.

National recognition is in order. Last year, the women-owned businesses in the Denver metro area had the highest regional growth rate in the country, at 57%. Both employment and sales increased four-fold. The translation for Coloradans is easy. As a state, we enjoy more than 77,600 women-owned businesses that provide jobs for almost 208,000 people, to the tune of \$23 billion in annual sales.

The Business Women's Network is important because it profiles all women's groups, both nationally and globally, in salute of their achievements. Today, I wish to single out for special honor the solid foothold women's business has in Colorado's unparalleled economy. I also want to encourage the continued efforts of BWN—the strong presence of women in our world economy cannot be emphasized enough.

WHITE RIVER JUNCTION VA CENTER—60 YEARS OF EXCELLENCE

Mr. JEFFORDS. Mr. President, I rise today to pay tribute to the Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) Hospital and Regional Office Center of White River Junction, Vermont. October 16 marks this facility's sixtieth anniversary. For six decades it has provided compassionate, high-quality service to Vermont and New Hampshire Veterans.

On October 16, 1938, an elaborate dedication ceremony was held in White River Junction at the newly completed VA hospital. The next day, the first patient was admitted. In an unusual move, the regional VA office relocated its offices from Burlington to the White River Junction location to better serve veterans in processing their claims for benefits. The facility gradually grew over the years. By the end of

World War II, 26 "Quonset" huts had to be erected to provide space for the rapidly expanding veterans programs, increasing the hospital's capacity to 250 beds.

In 1946, the VA hospital entered into an agreement with Dartmouth Medical School to become a teaching hospital, an arrangement that continues and thrives today. Recognizing the importance of research programs, in 1954, the VA, in partnership with Dartmouth Medical School, launched a medical research initiative. The research function was significantly expanded in 1992 with the completion of a research and education facility that enabled the hospital to perform medical and health services research, rehabilitation and cooperative studies. In addition to these critical fields of study, this facility is helping veterans make more informed choices about their medical treatment through cutting edge outcomes research.

From 1971 through 1981, several construction projects were undertaken to modernize and expand the hospital. In 1989, the VA began its venture of providing community-based outreach centers (CBCs) to meet veterans' primary care needs in locations closer to their homes. A outreach clinic was opened in Burlington, and based on the success of this project, a community clinic was opened in Bennington earlier this year.

The White River Junction VA center has also done an exemplary job of meeting more than just the veterans' health care needs. Vermont veterans are also very fortunate to have, under the same roof, a very capable group of people to assist them with their benefit needs. The staff is small but mighty when it comes to their advocacy for veterans and I greatly appreciate the assistance they have provided Vermont veterans, for more than half a century, as well as to my office for the past 20 years.

In closing, Mr. President, I want to publicly thank all of the unsung heroes associated with this tremendous facility. They know who they are—the director of this facility, Gary DeGasta; the dedicated staff at the hospital and regional office; the Veterans Service Organizations who donate so much time and money to help provide for veterans; and, of course, the veterans, who for 60 years have supported the mission of this fine facility with their continuous patronage.

To my friends at the VA in White River Junction—Happy Anniversary. May you have many more.

IN SUPPORT OF SUBSTITUTE TO H.R. 3433

Mr. GRASSLEY. Mr. President, I rise today in support of the amendment in the form of a substitute to H.R. 3433.

Many people with disabilities who have been out of the workforce are eager to return to work. However, because of the risks of losing cash benefits and health insurance provided

through the Social Security Disability Insurance program and the Supplemental Security Income program many beneficiaries are discouraged from entering or re-entering the workforce. The intent of these programs was never to demoralize or dishearten Americans who are ready, willing and able to work. We must look at ways to overcome this attitude.

Thanks to the disability reform proposal developed by Senator JEFFORDS and Senator KENNEDY many of the barriers facing people with disabilities will be addressed. Several provisions in the Jeffords-Kennedy substitute to H.R. 3433 tackle the problems of loss of cash benefits and health insurance which can prevent beneficiaries from being able to support themselves once they begin working. The substitute legislation would provide working individuals with disabilities access to additional services under the Medicaid program, such as personal assistance and prescription drugs. These services are vital to many people on SSDI and SSI. Furthermore, this proposal would provide improved access to rehabilitation opportunities for beneficiaries of both the SSI and SSDI programs.

The most encouraging parts of this proposal are those that eliminate work disincentives and facilitate self-sufficiency among those with disabilities. This legislation prohibits using work activity as the only basis for triggering a continuing disability review. Moreover, the proposal put forth by my colleagues, Senator JEFFORDS and Senator KENNEDY, would expedite the process of eligibility determinations of individuals who have been on disability insurance but who lost it because they were working. Also, the Jeffords-Kennedy substitute creates incentives for both disabled beneficiaries and providers of vocational rehabilitation to secure jobs for those who want to work. It is my hope that this will eliminate shuffling these people from vocational rehabilitation programs to state programs without them being able to make any real progress.

Finally, I want to say how glad I am to see that a component of the Jeffords-Kennedy substitute includes a proposal to ensure that local prisoners will not receive Social Security Disability Insurance benefits. I sponsored legislation in the beginning of the 105th Congress to prevent this needless waste of taxpayer dollars by closing a loophole in the law. Criminals should not be allowed to "double dip" and receive Federal money earmarked for the purchase of food and clothing while they are part of a prison system which provides these necessities already. This proposal would protect the financial soundness of the Social Security Disability Insurance program for the people it is meant to assist.

The work Senator JEFFORDS and Senator KENNEDY have put forth on this bill characterizes the bipartisanship necessary to pass the proposal into law. I am glad to lend my support to