we are asking them to teach the basics of American education—if after 4 years this school still cannot cut it under standards set by the State, then we suggest that it is time to give the parents of the kids in those schools a chance to get their kids out of those schools.

We say to the school systems that the dollars that were going to that school system will instead follow the child to another school, to whatever school that parent wants to send that child to so that child has an opportunity to get into a school where they can actually learn and, thus, participate in the American dream.

It is unconscionable that the proposals coming from the other side essentially take the attitude that we will continue to support failing schools year after year and, thus, basically deny the kids going through those schools a shot at the American dream because you cannot participate in the American dream if you are not educated. Yet that is the position. That is the position of the President.

Why does he take that position? Very simply because there is an education lobby in Washington which refuses to face up to the fact that there are failing schools because they recognize that once they admit that, and once they admit that parents should have the right to take their kids out of those schools, they are admitting that parents should have choice and have a chance to participate in the system of educating their kids.

That is something that is an anathema, the idea that parents should actually have some role in choosing where their kids go to school and having the opportunity of making sure their kids get a decent education as a result of having some choice. That is an anathema to the education lobby in Washington.

The proposal brought forward by the President, one, shortchanges the special needs child dramatically. It doesn't do anything to help fund the special needs child. Two, it skews the ability of the local school system of the opportunity to use local dollars where they think they should go, whether it is a new building, whether it is a new library, whether it is another teacher, or whether it is a new language program. It makes it impossible for them to make that choice because they are not given the dollars necessary to make that choice and the dollars are taken instead to support the special education obligations the Federal Government requires them to make.

Three, they are putting in place categorical programs. The President wants categorical programs which have no relationship, in many instances, to the needs of the local school district.

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Mr. BUNNING). The time of the Senator has expired.

Mr. GREGG. I ask for one additional minute.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Is there objection? Without objection, it is so ordered.

Mr. GREGG. They are categorical programs that have no relationship to a local school district's needs, instead of giving the school district and parents the flexibility to make the choices they want.

And four, the Republican proposal suggests that parents and schools should have the ability to take action when a school is failing year in and year out. This is opposed by the other side of the aisle.

Good education proposals are being put forward in this Congress. They are being put forward by those of us on this side of the aisle who see the need to help special education, who see the need to empower parents, who see the need to give teachers the opportunity to learn and expand their abilities, but also to recognize if the teacher is not doing their job, there should be action taken.

These are good initiatives. This education debate is going to be about the difference in opinions. We are looking forward to that debate.

Mr. KENNEDY addressed the Chair.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Massachusetts is recognized for 15 minutes.

Mr. LOTT. Will the Senator from Massachusetts yield for a moment?

Mr. KENNEDY. I will be glad to yield to the leader.

Mr. LOTT. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent this not be taken out of his time so the Senator has his full 15 minutes.

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

Mr. LOTT. Mr. President, I believe we are about ready to do what I had suggested to Senator KENNEDY, that the managers of this bill will be able to do a manager's amendment and complete action on the HUD–VA bill expeditiously. We can go forward then with our discussion of education and have votes on the two different approaches Monday afternoon.

Would the Senator from Massachusetts prefer to go forward?

Mr. KENNEDY. I am always delighted to accede to my friend, Senator MIKULSKI. I probably have 15 minutes. But if you thought hers was just a matter of a few minutes, I will ask consent when I conclude she be recognized to do that. Would that be satisfactory?

Mr. LOTT. That is an excellent idea. I cannot speak for Senator DASCHLE, but I do not think he would object to that. He has indicated his willingness to work through what we have talked about. Since they are not here—maybe it will take a couple minutes to get ready to wrap it up—you can give your remarks and then we can go to the chairman and ranking member on the HUD–VA bill and complete that.

Mr. KENNEDY. Yes. I thank the Senator.

EDUCATION IN AMERICA

Mr. KENNEDY. Mr. President, I always enjoy having the opportunity to discuss education policies with my friend from New Hampshire. As usual, he has been very eloquent in terms of the positions which he has advanced. I would like to bring a few points to the attention of the membership, though, on items he has raised to try to clarify some of these issues and questions.

One was the issue of flexibility, whether there is sufficient kinds of flexibility at the local level to permit the education of the children in various communities across the country.

I have Speaker HASTERT's statement he put out at the time the President signed the Ed-Flex legislation. At that time, the Speaker said: ''Ed-Flex''—which passed the House and Senate—''ensures our schools have the flexibility they need to make good on the promise to help each child reach their full potential.'' The release goes on and indicates he believes now there is the kind of flexibility the Senator from New Hampshire talks about being extremely important. It seems the Speaker, at least, and many others, believed, with the passage of that act, the local communities had the flexibility they needed.

I think that was certainly the purpose of the legislation. I am glad the Speaker certainly has supported the President's concept in having that kind of flexibility.

Secondly, there was some talk about the funding of the IDEA. I want to recall for the Members that we did have an opportunity earlier this year to have full funding of IDEA for the next 10 years. The Senator from New Hampshire has mentioned the importance of us in Congress to meet the responsibilities to those children who are participating in that program.

The fact is, earlier this year, on March 25, 1999, I offered an amendment that would provide full funding for IDEA over the next 10 years, and also the funding for the class size reduction initiative—that we would provide full funding for those two items. It would have taken one-fifth of the tax cut. With one-fifth of the tax cut, we could have funded all of the IDEA programs for a period of 10 years. That was a party-line vote, including the vote of the Senator from New Hampshire who voted against it. That is real money. That isn't speeches on the floor of the Senate. That is real money.

We would have welcomed the opportunity to have worked with him and others in this body to take some of that money, the $780 billion that was going to be used for tax cuts, and use the money that would be necessary for the funding of the IDEA, but that was voted out. We are not giving up on that.

So for those who share my belief—I know our colleague, Senator HARKIN, is a great leader on that issue; and it has broad, bipartisan support in terms of fashioning that legislation. We will continue to fight for increased funding

for the IDEA. It certainly is preferred to fund that than have the kind of tax breaks that have been suggested in the Republican proposal. But on that date, it was the sense of the Republican leadership and the Republican Party that the tax breaks were more important than funding the IDEA. That, I believe, was wrong.

Finally, I say, I hope in our discussion and debate on education that we can understand a very basic and fundamental concept; and that is, we should not be pitting children against each other. We want to have better teachers. We want smaller classes. We want improved reading skills. We want after-school programs. We want safe buildings. We want those conditions for children who are in the IDEA programs, and we want those conditions for children in the Title I programs, and we want those conditions for children in the high-achievement programs.

Let us not begin to pit one group of children against another. That is why we support the kind of coordinated program, in terms of both program and resources, so all children can move along together to take advantage of the real opportunities that are out there. That is what basically underlines the reason for Senator DASCHLE's Sense-of-the-Senate Resolution.

Mr. President, how much time do I have remaining?

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Ten minutes.

Mr. KENNEDY. Mr. President, I want to take a moment of the Senate's time to say why I believe this amendment, this Sense of the Senate, is so important at this time.

You can ask: Why are we taking time in the Senate on a Friday afternoon to put the Senate on record in urging my colleagues, in the remaining days, to provide the resources that will be necessary to fully fund the President's requests on education and to not see these dramatic cuts which have been indicated with the 17-percent reduction in the allocation of funds for the appropriations for education?

Families across this country ought to be concerned. We are hopeful that we are giving that signal to the American families. What we are going to do in the next 4 weeks is going to be of the greatest importance and significance in terms of whether we are going to be enhancing or diminishing the quality of education for children in this country.

I would like to see education be the No. 1 appropriations . I wish we had a binding resolution that said: Before we deal with any other appropriations, we are going to deal with the education appropriations. That ought to be the No. 1 appropriations.

I daresay, if you ask the American people, sure, they may say national security and defense, that may be in there; but they are going to say national security and defense, and they are going to say education. But what has been the record?

Here is the record. In 1994, under the Republican leadership, the day they captured the House of Representatives and the Senate of the United States, they didn't even wait until the appropriations legislation came up. They put a rescission program request into the Congress that effectively said money that had been appropriated, signed by the President, would be rescinded. They asked for a rescission of $1.7 billion below enacted in 1995. That was one of the first actions taken by the Republican leadership.

In 1996, the House appropriations bill had a $3.9 billion request for education below what was actually agreed to in 1995; in 1997, $3.1 billion below the President's request.

It was in 1995 that the Republican Party introduced a resolution to abolish the Department of Education—abolish the Department of Education. That gives us some idea about what their views are in terms of any kind of partnership between the Federal Government and the States and local communities. They wanted to abolish it.

I think most parents in this country want to have someone at that Cabinet table every time the Cabinet meets who is going to say: Mr. President, what about education? That is what the Secretary of Education is supposed to do. That is why he is there. Every time there is a debate on national domestic issues, any time there is a debate on priorities, that Secretary of Education is there saying: What are we doing about educating and enhancing the education of our children?

Republicans wanted to forbid that Secretary to come into the room. They wanted to deny him access to the President of the United States. What possible sense does that make?

We ask why the Daschle amendment is being brought up now. So we can garner the support of the American people and say we are not going to get rolled on this issue, not without a fight. This President isn't going to get rolled on it. All we have to do is look at where the priorities have been on the education issue.

We want the funding for education as the first appropriations. We challenge the Republican leadership in the next Congress to bring it out as No. 1, not as the last one. And the last one, here in 1998, is only $200 million below the President's request; 1999, $2 billion—the House bill. The House bill, according to Mr. Obey, is $2.8 billion below the President's.

We have to ask ourselves, what is happening across the country on education? I will tell my colleagues what is happening. We have 400,000 new students—400,000 new students who are going to classrooms in America now. We have 200,000 teachers who taught last year who have given up and retired from teaching, and only 100,000 have been replaced. One would think the effort contained in the President's program of trying to find qualified individuals to teach ought to be something that is pretty important, wouldn't they? Sure, they would. Not the Republican appropriators, not the Republicans. They cut that almost in half.

We have to ask ourselves, what are they possibly thinking about? Sure, these are numbers, but they are a pretty good indicator. What we are saying is—talking about numbers—that just because of $1 billion or $2 billion, it is not going to necessarily solve all the education problems we have in our country, but it is a pretty clear indication about what a nation's priorities are.

That is what the appropriations process is about—what are our Nation's priorities. What are parents going to say and what should they say, when every single time they see those reductions? Now we are seeing it again with these actions that have been taken in the House of Representatives.

We are going to resist those. We are saying it not only because we see what is happening with the growth of the various numbers of students and the decline of the numbers of teachers, but we know a whole host of other things.

Most Americans understand we want our children to have the kind of skills that are going to be necessary for them to play a role in getting a decent job and providing for their families for the next century.

I will not take the time today, but maybe later I will have the time to discuss the various studies which show that only 20 percent of the graduates now entering the job market have the kind of skills that 60 percent of those students are going to need, not 5 years from now, but 1 year from now—a year from now. That is what is happening out in the job market. That is what is happening in this new economy.

President Clinton understands that. He has funding in this so we can have continuing, ongoing training and skills for the young people of this country, so they will be able to be part of the economy. This Republican Appropriations Committee guts that particular provision and effectively wipes it out.

I will mention one final item. We heard from our good leader about the importance of reading. There isn't a teacher across this country who doesn't know the significance and the importance of reading. Yet we find here in the United States that we are still challenged in terms of having our children reach acceptable levels that are going to be necessary for the improvement of their education and their academic achievement.

I am not taking the time to go through the various assessments and the progress that has been made, although progress has been made. It has been small, perceptible, but we are on the road to enhancing the number of children who are going to be able to read satisfactorily to be able to grow in terms of their own future education.

What has happened to the reading programs—the reading programs that depend upon volunteers, that depend

upon local contributions, that depend upon people within the community to be a part of these programs where we get such a bang for the buck in terms of the scarce resources we put in on the reading for excellence programs that are taking place and are oversubscribed in States around the country—they are effectively slashed with this budget.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator's time has expired.

Mr. KENNEDY. I thank the Chair. I will have more to say on this on Monday. I thank the leader.

Mr. DASCHLE. Mr. President, under the unanimous consent agreement, I am to be recognized

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator is correct.

Mr. DASCHLE. Mr. President, I compliment the distinguished Senator from Massachusetts for a powerful statement and for his analysis of the current education budget and our circumstances here.

He has laid out what the ramifications are. People ought to know that rhetoric and reality could not be further apart as we listen to our Republican colleagues talk about education. The rhetoric all year long has been: Education is important; education is going to get the priority it deserves. The reality is, we are now 1 week away from the end of the fiscal year and we have yet to pass an education bill. We have yet to make decisions about what we are going to do on education next year. The decisions we are making—they are making, let me clarify that—that they are making on education are devastating, absolutely devastating.

I ask the Senator from Massachusetts, what is his analysis of a $1.5 to $2 billion cut in the President's budget this year? I ask the Senator from Massachusetts, what would his advice be to the President of the United States if he were to get an education budget $2 billion below his request?

Mr. KENNEDY. I would expect that budget would be vetoed and hope that it would be. I think all of us have every expectation that it will be.

This President, from the very beginning of his administration, has set a series of priorities and he has expressed those. In more recent times, he has talked about the importance of Medicare, Social Security, a prescription drug benefit, and targeted tax cuts for needs. He has been very clear about his priorities. But there has not been a higher priority for this President than the issue of education, and he has been strongly committed to it. I have every expectation this legislation will not pass, nor should it pass.

Mr. DASCHLE. I will ask the Senator from Massachusetts another question, if I may. He mentioned that one of the most important issues we are facing is the fact that we are dealing with 400,000 new students. We are dealing with the fact that we will have a shortfall, perhaps, in the next few years of 2 million teachers. Yet we see a Republican budget that eliminates the ability for us to help schools deal with class size by absolutely cutting the very programs that allow us to reduce class size and improve the student-teacher ratio. I ask the Senator, what do we do with a budget, or what will be the ramifications of a budget, that fails to recognize the demand for new teachers, the extraordinary explosion of new students, and the overcrowding of schools from South Dakota to Massachusetts? What is the message this Congress is sending with those facts?

Mr. KENNEDY. Well, it basically says to not just the Nation, but to the students that education really isn't so important. If a student goes into a crowded classroom, uses old books, or goes into a classroom that is leaking, or where there are no recreational programs; if a student goes into these kinds of settings where no music or art is available, we are sending a very powerful message to those children. We are saying your education doesn't really count; it doesn't really matter because it doesn't matter to us to try and provide you with the kind of classroom, the kind of teachers, the kind of athletic facilities, and other after-school programs that you deserve. We say our children are the future, which they are. Children understand, children are perceptive, and they know when they are getting a second-rate deal. That is what they would be getting if the Republican education funding proposal were to pass.

Let me finally, in answering this question, mention for the RECORD what the President actually said yesterday. I will put the full statement in the RECORD. He said:

> If the Republicans send me a bill that doesn't live up to our national commitment to education, I won't hesitate to veto it. If it undermines our efforts to hire quality teachers, to reduce class size, or to increase accountability in our public schools, I will veto it.

Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent to print the President's radio address in the RECORD.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection, so ordered.

RADIO ADDRESS OF THE PRESIDENT TO THE NATION, SEPTEMBER 18, 1999

The PRESIDENT: Good morning. This month millions of students across America are beginning the last school semester of the 20th century. Today I want to talk about our obligation to give them the education they deserve to succeed in the new century—for more than ever, in this information age, education is the key to individual opportunity and our share of prosperity.

That's why, even though we've worked hard to cut spending to balance the budget, we've also nearly doubled our investment in education and training. Many people said we couldn't do it, but we proved them wrong.

Today, we have the longest peacetime expansion in our history. After years and years of deficits, we now have budget surpluses for years ahead. More people have a chance to realize the American dream than ever before. More children have the chance to realize their full potential than ever before. We've laid a foundation to preserve our prosperity for future generations.

Now, as the budget deadline rapidly approaches this year, we face many of the same tough choices again. And once again, I think the answer is clear: To build a strong nation in the new century, we must continue to invest in our future. That means we must strengthen Social Security, secure and modernize Medicare, pay off the national debt in 15 years, making America debt-free for the first time since 1835. And once again, it means we must invest in education, not sacrifice it.

Months ago now, I sent Congress a responsible budget—to maintain our fiscal discipline and honor our commitment to our children's education. So far, the Republicans in Congress haven't put forward a budget of their own. In fact, they're so busy trying to figure out how to pay for their irresponsible tax plan that they're in serious danger of not meeting their obligation to finish the budget by the end of the budget year. Even worse, they're preparing to pay for their own pet projects at the expense of our children's education.

We know now that the Republicans' risky tax cut would force us to slash vital funding for education by as much as 50 percent over the next 10 years. But what many people don't know is that next year alone, the Republican plan would cut the bill that funds education by nearly 20 percent.

Now, if carried out, this plan would lead to some of the worst cuts in education in our history. More than 5,000 teachers, hired as part of my Class Size Initiative, could be laid off. Fifty thousand students could be turned away from after-school and summer school programs. More than 2 million of our poorest students in our poorest communities would have a smaller chance of success in school and in the workplaces of the future.

These aren't just numbers on a balance sheet, they're vital investments in our children and our future. In a time when education is our top priority, Republicans in Congress are making it their lowest priority. So let me be clear: If the Republicans send me a bill that doesn't live up to our national commitment to education, I won't hesitate to veto it. If it undermines our efforts to hire high-quality teachers to reduce class size or to increase accountability in our public schools, I will veto it. If it fails to strengthen Head Start, after-school and summer school programs, I'll veto it. If it underfunds mentoring or college scholarship programs, I will veto it.

If it sends me a bill that turns its back on our children and their future, I'll send them back to the drawing board. I won't let Congress push through a budget that's paid for at the expense of our children and our future prosperity.

So, again, I ask Congress to put partisanship aside and send me a bill that puts our children's education first. Let's use the last school semester of the 21st century to prepare our children and our nation for excellence in the 21st century.

Thanks for listening.

Mr. KENNEDY. Those were the standards that were insisted upon when we extended the SEA program, which are having an effect and reflecting higher achievements. They are the smaller classes where the most comprehensive study of any education program was done, smaller classes in the State of Tennessee, the STARS Program. We should universally recognize the important academic achievement of those children who started out with a smaller class size in grades 1 through 3, and about the importance of higher quality teachers, which was at the heart of the Higher Education Extension Act that we passed 2 years ago. He

said he would veto it. I welcome the fact.

The President continues:

If it fails to strengthen Head Start, afterschool, or summer school programs, I will veto it. And if it underfunds mentoring or college scholarship programs, I will veto it.

It looks like this bill has about 8 vetoes coming up.

Mr. DASCHLE. I appreciate the Senator's answer. I appreciate his putting that statement in the RECORD.

I think the message is clear. We have a unanimous consent request we will be making momentarily. First, let me just say this bill will not be signed into law so long as we have the necessary votes to sustain that veto when it comes to the floor.

I am happy to yield to the Senator from Illinois.

Mr. DURBIN. I thank the Senator from South Dakota. Of course, I join him in his tribute to our colleague from the State of Massachusetts. Senator KENNEDY has been a leader on education as long as he has served in the Senate. His speech about the demands of education in the 21st century and how we in Congress have failed to meet those obligations, I think, will become part of the permanent record of this body, and they should inspire us.

My question to the Senator from South Dakota is, if you go across America—any pollster, Republican, Democrat, or otherwise—and ask American families what is the No. 1 priority, they say the first priority in their lives is education—over and over and over again. It is almost a reflex response from American families.

I ask the Senator from South Dakota the following: How can this be the first priority of American families and the dead-last priority in this Congress? The Senator from South Dakota eloquently spoke earlier about the use of this budget for schools as an ''ATM machine.'' For months, we have seen appropriations subcommittee after subcommittee pulling billions of dollars out of the education budget for a variety of uses. Some of them are very good. But I question whether any of them meet the level of importance of education to the people of America and to the families.

I ask the Senator how we can find ourselves in these predicaments where the speeches say education is a first priority, the people say education is a first priority, and this Senate, this Congress makes it dead last in the priority list.

Mr. DASCHLE. I think the Senator asks an excellent question. The answer is they are not listening. They are not listening. When you propose a tax cut of the magnitude they proposed, gutting education by 50 percent—a tax cut the American people have said they don't want, they don't care about—and then take money they do care about and pay for that tax cut, it is an amazing thing to me. That is the most startling aspect of all of this.

What they care about is how educated their children are going to be, they care about what kind of a classroom they are going to have, they care about what kind of a school the children are going to walk into, they care about whether there is an afterschool program, they care about whether schools are safe, they care about whether or not they are going to have good teachers, and they care about whether or not they are going to be able to go to college. That is what they care about, and they tell us that in the polls.

So it is baffling to many of us why what we care about doesn't seem to be reflected in the laundry list of deep cuts, if not eliminations, of the very programs that do exactly what the American people care about.

Mr. DURBIN. If the Senator will yield again. I ask the Senator this: This country has seen, unfortunately, episodes of violence in schools. It is a national tragedy. Columbine High School transfixed America as we focused on safety in schools. We considered a juvenile justice bill on the floor of the Senate and passed it, thanks to the vote of Vice President Gore, which would move us forward toward making our society and our schools safer. It died hopelessly in the House. We are still waiting for any indication of life on this bill.

Is it not true that if the Republican budget cuts go through on education, we will not only be cutting the money for schools to use for safe and drug-free schools, but we also will be dramatically reducing afterschool program opportunities? We don't live in a society any longer of Ozzie and Harriet and the Brady Bunch. Kids get off school at 3 o'clock and nobody is home. Are they going to be supervised? Are they going to have a meaningful experience?

The President wanted 1.4 million more students in America to have an afterschool program. Across the State of Illinois—and I bet in South Dakota—that is an immensely popular idea. It is my understanding that the Republican House bill on education would cut existing afterschool programs and turn 50,000 kids loose at 3 o'clock in the afternoon, with no supervision, no opportunity for doing homework or learning a new skill, or learning to use a musical instrument. How can we, on one hand, beat our breasts about what happens at Columbine High School, and then turn around in the budget and eliminate the resources needed so that kids can have a better and safer experience in school?

Mr. DASCHLE. Mr. President, that is exactly the question millions of Americans have to be asking once they analyze their budget. I can't tell you the number of times that law enforcement officials, teachers, and parents have come to me and said: Look. We all know the most vulnerable time for students is when they leave school. The most vulnerable time statistically—the time when most damage may be done and when most violations of law occur—is that period between 2 and 8 in the evening.

Obviously, we need as a society to come up with ways to effectively engage students and young people during that time when both parents may be working, during that time when the schools are closed.

What do our Republican colleagues do? Under the current framework, they would have to reduce the availability of programs for exactly that purpose. Again, it shows rhetoric and reality are so far apart.

The real sad tragedy is that the students are going to feel the brunt of this. Once we lose a student, it is hard to get him or her back. I don't know who but someone once said, ''It is much easier to build a child than to repair an adult.''

We are going to be doing a lot of reparation and very little building with this kind of a budget. We need to be building kids and not repairing adults. This is not a budget to build children.

That is why we are fighting as hard as we are, and that is why we will continue to fight until we get those numbers turned around.

I know that our colleagues are prepared to offer an amendment, the Senators from Virginia.

I yield the floor.

Ms. MIKULSKI. Mr. President, I am proud to support Senator DASCHLE's amendment on education.

We were forced to forage for funds for the VA–HUD bill. The spending caps have put us in a terrible position, we have had to pit one group against another, and one of the biggest losers in this battle has been education.

There are three important things we need to do to get behind our kids, our teachers and our parents: 100,000 new teachers and counselors; technology in the classroom; and afterschool programs.

One of the best things we can do for our kids is to get 100,000 new teachers in the classroom. Smaller classes means that kids will get better supervision.

This is important for all kids, not just the ones that get into trouble; all children need help, some children just need extra help.

We want to make schools safe places without making them Fortress America. We need to support our teachers by hiring 100,000 new nurses and by hiring social workers and counselors. 100,000 new nurses in schools will promote early detection of warning signs.

I just visited a school where 75 percent of the children there were on medication. The nurse is oftentimes the first line of defense for when kids need extra help. Some of the frustration from kids stems from medical problems. Without nurses in the schools, these unnoticed medical conditions can lead to truancy and trouble. We need the experts in the schools who can deal with conflict resolution.

We also need structured after-school activities for kids that involves community based programs. We need to support our parents and make sure parents have the flexibility in the workplace to spend time with their children

after school. They need leave time. By the way, they also need a patients bill of rights that provides access to medical insurance for people that don't have it.

And we also need technology in the classrooms; computers in the schools, training for our teachers and our students so they are prepared to cross the digital divide and are ready for the 21st century. I look forward to fighting for you and getting behind our kids, our parents and our schools.

Mr. HARKIN. Mr. President, on January 6 of this year, the Majority Leader stood on the Senate Floor and told us that education would be a high priority for the Senate. This is what he said:

Education is going to be a central issue this year. Democrats say it is important and it will be a high priority. Republicans say it will be a high priority.

I don't think the Republican Leadership can make that claim today.

We are now less than five legislative days—and that's counting Mondays and Fridays—before the end of the fiscal year, and there is one education bill that must be enacted—the education appropriations bill.

Yet, despite proclamations that education would be a top priority, the Senate has been working on all but one of the thirteen appropriations bills. The only one left—the one that is now dead last—is the education bill. Mr. President, this is the wrong priority.

Despite a valiant effort by the Chairman of the subcommittee—Senator SPECTER—the education appropriations bill has not even been written. Senator SPECTER has fought every day to move the bill. He tried in June, July, August, September. He tried last week.

And, if that isn't bad enough, the leadership has robbed the education bill to pay for the others. As a result, we are looking at deep cuts in all of the programs funded by the Labor, Health and Human Services and Education appropriations bill.

Not only is education dead last on the calendar, education is dead last for resources. Our subcommittee started with an allocation substantially below a freeze from last year. Now, it is even worse.

Last week, the leadership staged a raid on education. They took another $7.276 billion in budget authority and $4.969 billion in outlays from education and other essential priorities in the bill.

So now, our subcommittee allocation is $15.5 billion below a freeze. That means we are faced with cutting education programs a whopping 17%.

What does a 17% cut mean? It means that 5,246 of the new teachers we hired to reduce class size will be fired. A 17% cut means that 142,000 students will be cut from the Head Start program. This cut means 2.1 million children will lose the extra help they receive from the Title I program to master the basics of reading and math. That is where we currently stand in the Senate.

Yesterday, the House education appropriations subcommittee passed the FY 2000 bill. The news for education is not good. Under the House bill, U.S. schools will receive less money next year than last by $200 million. The bill falls $1.4 billion short of the President's budget request for the activities funded by the Department of Education and provides $500 million less for Head Start.

The bill eliminates funding for the initiative to reduce class size so 30,000 will get pink slips next spring.

The bill cut funding for education technology; froze funding for the Title I reading and math program and terminated the School to Work program.

In addition, the bill cut, from current levels, funding for vital job training programs by $700 million because unemployment is low. Training programs do not only help workers when they lose a job but also help workers upgrade and improve their job skills to compete in the international marketplace.

The gap between the rich and poor continues to grow and the key to reducing this disparity is to help workers improve their job skills. And yet, the House bill slashes funds to help workers upgrade their skills as we enter the new millenium.

Last week, the Assistant Majority Leader said we should not be increasing funding for education. He was making a hypothetical statement about the education appropriations bill.

The picture is becoming clear. The record is replete with statements from the other side talking about education as a priority. We now find those words are not even worth the paper on which they are written. The House has cut education, and the Assistant Majority Leader has concurred.

The Republican leadership found $16 billion for the Pentagon. That's $4 billion more than DOD even asked for! And they found real money.

But when it comes to education, we get platitudes and promises. The children of America deserve better.

That's why we are offering this Sense of the Senate resolution. 17% cuts are unacceptable. Such cuts will savage our schools

We must have significant new investments in education. There are more children in our public schools than at any time in our history and we must not turn our backs on them.

We must keep our promise to help local school reduce class size. We must help keep our children safe by significantly increasing our investment in after school programs. We must increase our investments in IDEA and the Title I reading and math program. And we must help modernize our nation's crumbling schools. This resolution makes it clear that education will be a priority not just in words, but in deed.

Actions by the Republican majority in Congress directly contradict the priorities of the American people. It is time to free the education spending bill and make the necessary investments in education.

I urge my friends on the other side of the aisle to listen to the American people. Let us not get into another protracted battle over the education budget. I urge adoption of the resolution.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Alaska.

Mr. STEVENS. Mr. President, it is my understanding that the two Senators from Virginia have an issue they would like to raise. Then I would like to, on behalf of Senator BOND, with Senator MIKULSKI, proceed with a managers' amendment.

First, we would like to hear from the Senator from Virginia.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Virginia.

Mr. WARNER. Mr. President, I thank my colleague. Senator ROBB and I have joined on an amendment. The Senator will introduce the amendment. I would like to address it. I think to show courtesy it is first on Senator ROBB's watch, and then I will follow.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Virginia.

Mr. ROBB. Thank you, Mr. President.

AMENDMENT NO. 1791

(Purpose: To express the sense of the Senate that the decline in funding for aeronautics research and development should be reversed)

Mr. ROBB. Mr. President, I send an amendment to the desk.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection, the pending amendment will be set aside, and the clerk will report.

The legislative clerk read as follows:

The Senator from Virginia (Mr. ROBB), for himself, Mr. WARNER, and Mr. DEWINE, proposes an amendment numbered 1791.

Mr. ROBB. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that reading of the amendment be dispensed with.

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

The amendment is as follows:

At the appropriate place, insert the following:

SEC. . SENSE OF THE SENATE REGARDING AERONAUTICS RESEARCH.

(a) FINDINGS.—The Senate finds the following:

(1) Every aircraft worldwide uses and benefits from NASA technology.

(2) Aeronautical research has fostered the establishment of a safe, affordable air transportation system that is second to none.

(3) Fundamental research in aeronautics is not being supported anywhere in the country outside of NASA.

(4) The Department of Transportation predicts that air traffic will triple over the next twenty years, exacerbating current noise and safety problems at already overcrowded airports. New aeronautics advancements need to be developed if costs are to be contained and the safety and quality of our air infrastructure is to be improved.

(5) Our military would not dominate the skies without robust investments in aeronautics research and development.

(6) Technology transferred from NASA aeronautics research to the commercial sector has created billions of dollars in economic growth.

(7) The American aeronautics industry is the top contributor to the U.S. balance of trade, with a net contribution of more than $41 billion in 1998.

(8) Less than ten years ago, American airplane producers controlled over 70% of the global market for commercial aviation.

(9) America's dominance in the world's civil aviation market is being challenged by foreign companies like Airbus, which now has approximately 50% of the world's civil aviation market, and is aiming to capture 70%.

(10) The rise of foreign competition in the global civil aviation market has coincided with decreases in NASA's aeronautics research budget and a corresponding increase in European investment.

(11) NASA's aeronautics laboratories have the research facilities, including wind tunnels, and technical expertise to conduct the cutting-edge scientific inquiry needed to advance state-of-the-art military and civil aircraft.

(b) SENSE OF THE SENATE.—It is the sense of the Senate that the United States should increase its commitment to aeronautics research funding.

Mr. ROBB. Mr. President, I yield to my distinguished senior Senator for remarks. He has important questions. I will pick up with my remarks as soon as he last concluded.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Virginia.

Mr. WARNER. I thank the Senator.

Mr. President, last week the Senate Appropriations Committee completed action on the appropriations bill for a number of Federal agencies including the National Aeronautics and Space Administration. I commend Senator BOND and Senator STEVENS for their efforts to support the full request for NASA in the midst of extreme budget pressures. The NASA funding in the Senate bill will face a stiff challenge in the conference with the House, however. I want to take this occasion to reflect on the importance of investment in research and development in the NASA budget to civilian and military aeronautics.

The aerospace industry in the United States has undergone a dramatic transition in the last ten years. In 1986, 70 percent of the sales of this industry were to the government, primarily for the defense market. Less than 30 percent of the business base of the industry consisted of commercial products. At that time, Federal research and development supporting aerospace technology was largely funded by the Defense Department.

Today, the situation has reversed. The defense portion of U.S. aerospace business is at 29 percent, and the defense share continues to shrink. Although Federal funding for military-unique hardware will always be needed in the interests of national security, non-defense research from agencies such as NASA is growing in importance to the industry. Nearly 70 percent of aerospace sales are in the commercial arena, and 41 percent of aerospace production in this country is for export.

As we grow increasingly concerned about monthly trade balance figures, the importance of these aerospace exports for our national economy grows. The aerospace industry was responsible for $59 billion in exports and $22 billion in imports in 1997. This resulted in a positive trade balance of $37 billion—the single biggest trade balance of any sector in the entire American economy. In 1998, our exports grew to $64 billion in equipment with total imports of $23 billion. The industry trade surplus of $41 billion has widened the gap between the aerospace industry and all other sectors. Make no mistake; we are competing in an aggressive global marketplace. Technological leadership is absolutely essential if the U.S. aerospace industry is to continue successfully competing in an increasingly complex and sophisticated world economy.

Some long-term trends for the health of the aerospace industry are troubling, however. There has been a dramatic reduction in Federal aerospace R&D funding. During the Carter administration, we invested 18 percent of our R&D funding in the U.S. aerospace community. That amount increased to 21 percent during the Reagan years. Today, it is only 8 percent and declining.

The reductions have been even more severe in certain specific areas. The aeronautics budget in NASA has declined from $920 million in fiscal year 1998 to $620 million in the request for fiscal year 2000, a reduction of almost a third over just three years! Reducing research and development funding for this vital industry runs counter to all of our historical economic experience.

We are experiencing a time of tremendous economic expansion in our country, but we seem to have forgotten the tremendous role R&D plays in sustaining this growth. Alan Greenspan recently testified that rapid technological change has made a significant contribution and is a major force in this expansion. We cannot, and as long as I am a Member of the United States Senate, we will not forget this!

In 1804, the venerable president from Virginia, Thomas Jefferson, with the full support of Congress, set in motion the first official exploration of our new frontier. He boldly sanctioned the Lewis & Clark expedition not only to map the new territories of the United States, but also to satisfy an American passion for discovery—the same passion that has led our country to be the leader among nations. That first step paved the way for today's exploration of the solar system, the continued exploration of communication technologies, and the future exploration of the planet Mars.

The very year the United States landed a man on the moon, the Department of Defense had begun to work on a new technological concept that is now coming into its own. I speak of the Internet that is transforming the structure of our economic life. The technological wonders that support our national security and fuel our economic growth were not invented overnight. We must be prepared to weather the slow and often tedious process of design and development of products and systems necessary to bring them to maturity.

It is no different in aeronautics. I am concerned that without a national strategy for aeronautics R&D investment, we will gradually lose the technological edge of which we are so proud and which is key to our competitiveness in the global economy and our security as a nation. We should not delude ourselves; America will lose its preeminence in aeronautics unless we adequately fund aeronautics research at NASA.

For instance, the Appropriations Committee in the House recently cut the NASA budget so severely that it will cause a major employment problem and will devastate advanced technology programs so carefully planned for implementation. The House reduced NASA numbers by $1 billion in order to pay for more housing and veteran programs. I appreciate the position facing the Appropriators, but to halt some 30-science programs in their tracks and halt vital research in the aeronautics area is nothing short of foolhardy. I applaud the recent action of the Senate Appropriation's Subcommittee in reversing this House action and urge all of my colleagues in the Senate to insure the Senate position prevails in the coming conference.

Programs such as those at NASA cannot be turned off and on like a light switch. It takes time to realize the fruits of our labors. We must not so cavalierly cancel programs and efforts just as they are beginning. A reduction of the magnitude proposed by the House will devastate both research in astronautics and aeronautics in this country.

In my travels through Virginia over the recess, I was made aware of the real effect of reductions in the NASA aeronautics R&D budget proposed by the House of Representatives. I visited the NASA facility in Langley, Virginia that leads the nation in aeronautical research and aviation safety technology. It has led this nation in aeronautical breakthroughs from the development of the super critical wing used on many commercial aircraft flying today, to the development of a new collision-avoidance aircraft system for the FAA. This is the center that gave us the magnificent leaders of our Manned Space Program like Dr. Bob Gilruth, Dr. Chris Kraft, Dr. Max Faget, and many others who left Langley to lead our Mercury, Gemini and Apollo programs. NASA Langley has exemplified a passion for excellence from its earliest days when it conducted research to produce safe, more efficient and technically superior aircraft for both the military and commercial markets.

Given that 70 percent of NASA Langley programs are funded through the NASA aeronautics budget, the future of this national resource is in doubt unless Congress and the Administration can find ways to reverse the severe reductions to this part of our national R&D effort.

This nation's leadership in aerospace is not an accident of history, Mr. President. It was made possible by dedicated leaders who looked beyond the present and dreamed of the future that could be. People like those at Langley and throughout NASA. We must not forsake this global leadership in aeronautics technology. We must work together to balance critical priorities and provide the leadership, sacrifice, and enduring commitment to technology, research, and most of all learning. We must continue to fund a robust R&D program through these agencies.

Let me close, Mr. President, with a final thought. As Chairman of the Armed Services Committee, I am keenly aware of the challenges our military forces face as they attempt to maintain our security in the face of ever declining resources. Part of the strategy of our leadership at the Department of Defense is to save resources by buying commercial aerospace products wherever possible. This dependence on the commercial marketplace is increasing dramatically. Because of this there is an increasing security dimension to the R&D we accomplish at NASA. This is yet another reason to insure that the effort is funded properly.

Mr. President, my concern is as follows.

This very important appropriations bill which I will support contains the basic funding for NASA. My concern is that within the NASA budget there is a growing decline and emphasis on research and development funds for aerospace. I say marshal the aerospace industry as it relates to civil aircraft and military aircraft. Frankly, the rush to get to space, the rush to develop the space station—I must say components of that are being made in my State—concern me greatly as I see the following.

Some long-term trends for the health of the aerospace industry are troubling.

There has been a dramatic reduction in Federal aerospace R&D funding.

During the Carter administration, we invested 18 percent of our R&D funding in the U.S. aerospace community. That amount increased to 21 percent during the years under President Ronald Reagan. Today, that category of R&D is only 8 percent and continuing to decline. The funds are being siphoned off into the space program.

This Chamber will be in recess probably in several hours. Seventy-plus percent of my colleagues are going to depend on civil aviation to transport themselves back to their home districts and their States for continuation of the business in the Senate. I am among them.

I visited Langley Research Center just a short time ago. There I saw a test bed of a program which the technicians told me—these are not politicians, these are trained technicians—Senator, if we can continue our funding, we are going to come up with the software and the hardware which, hopefully, can reduce by over 50 percent the accidents that planes experience every day in either the landing or the take-off phases. Therein is the high risk in aviation. That same research and development can be applied to our military aircraft. It is common to both aircraft. It is a very small amount of money.

Fortunately, I received the assurance from the NASA Administrator when he visited my office a few days ago that the program will stay intact.

I cited other programs in here, such as noise reduction. More and more the airports are growing around the highly populated areas, and noise becomes a problem. At National Airport it is a very significant problem.

Again, a relatively small amount of money can make a difference in years to come—a small amount in comparison to the enormous sums of money going towards the space station and other related infrastructure. We will get to space someday. But in the meantime, we cannot turn our backs on civil aviation.

Our exports on civil aviation products—largely airplanes—is one of the biggest, positive factors in our ever-declining balance of trade. It is a major offset.

I am pleased to join my distinguished colleague in offering this amendment. It has been my intention, frankly, to go for a cut—a specific cut.

But I have been in consultation with the distinguished Senator from Maryland, the distinguished Senator from Missouri, the chairman of the subcommittee, and the chairman of the committee, Mr. STEVENS.

First, they made a heroic effort to get more money back into these accounts. They are being watchful of the same problems that concern me.

So I decided to withdraw my amendment which would have gone to specific cuts to fund what I believe would be an adequate amount.

I am now going to join my distinguished colleague, Mr. ROBB, in another approach on this.

Mr. President, I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Virginia.

Mr. ROBB. Mr. President, thank you. I thank my distinguished senior colleague from Virginia.

Mr. President, I wanted to take a minute or two to discuss the item that my senior Senator has just alluded to, which, in my judgment, is critical.

I begin by saying that it is an area of research and development that is of enormous importance to every American who lives by an airport, every American who is concerned with our Nation's defense, and every American who flies on a regular basis, as all of our colleagues do. That issue is aeronautics research and development.

Since the time of the Wright Brothers, American's commitment to aeronautics research and development has brought extraordinary returns on our Nation's military superiority and the rise in affordable passenger air travel. Both can be attributed directly to our investments in aeronautical research.

In addition, aerospace products are America's top manufactured export commodity and are the top contributors to the positive side of the U.S. balance of trade.

Air traffic is predicted to triple over the next 20 years. As our skies become more crowded and our airports noisier, aeronautics research continues to grow in importance. If we are to improve the safety, efficiency, and performance of our air travel system, we are going to need to develop new aeronautics, new aeronautics concepts, and new aeronautics designs and technologies that can better respond to the growing demands of our aeronautics infrastructure.

In addition, America's aerospace industry is facing a fierce challenge from the European consortium, Airbus which has now captured over 50 percent of the world market that American airplane products and producers once dominated.

At a time when there is a clear need for new investments in this field and near unanimous support in our country for new investments in basic research, it is troubling that our commitment to aeronautics research has been waning. Funding for aeronautics research was cut by $151 million from 1998 to 1999, and this year the President proposed to cut it by an additional $150 million. That is a 30-percent reduction in just 2 years.

Even more worrisome is the fact that the House cut an additional $1 billion out of NASA's budget, placing the future of NASA aeronautics research and critical facilities such as NASA's Langley Research Center in great danger. For more than 80 years, the Langley Research Center in Hampton, VA, has been at the forefront of aeronautics research and pioneered innovations that are present in every plane in the air today, innovations that have affected and are important to every plane that flies today. Its facilities are one of a kind. If this center were closed, the United States would lose its most valuable resource for improving aircraft safety and performance.

Senator WARNER and I have worked closely with Senators BOND and MIKULSKI over the past few months to strengthen our commitment to aeronautics research. I am grateful to both of them that they have restored many of the severe cuts that were proposed by the House. I am still disappointed, however, that more money has not been set aside for aeronautics research. We have reached an understanding with the chairman and ranking member that further increases will be considered in conference.

With that, I am very pleased to join the distinguished senior Senator from Virginia in offering this amendment. It is my understanding it has been agreed to on both sides. I note that the distinguished chairman of the committee,

the senior Senator from Alaska, probably spends more time in the air than any other Senator in this body.

I thank the Chair, and I yield the floor.

Mr. STEVENS. Mr. President, I thank the Senator from Virginia. Senator ROBB is correct; we have a great interest in this amendment. I have had some personal conversations with the Administrator of NASA, Dan Goldin, about this very subject. I am delighted that the two Senators from Virginia have brought it to the floor.

Ms. MIKULSKI. I think the comments by both Senators from Virginia are, indeed, meritorious. I think our side is prepared to accept the amendment.

Mr. STEVENS. I do believe it is important that we emphasize the critical nature of this research. It is critical not only to the present but to the future of aviation, and not just commercial aviation but general aviation in many ways.

With the support of the Senator from Maryland, on behalf of Senator BOND, I am happy to accept this amendment, and I ask it be agreed to.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The question is on agreeing to the amendment.

The amendment (No. 1791) was agreed to.

Mr. STEVENS. I move to reconsider the vote.

Ms. MIKULSKI. I move to lay that motion on the table.

The motion to lay on the table was agreed to.

UNANIMOUS CONSENT AGREEMENT—AMENDMENT NO. 1790

Mr. STEVENS. On behalf of the leader, I ask unanimous consent the pending amendment be withdrawn and the text of amendment No. 1790 be submitted at the desk in the form of a Senate resolution and placed on the calendar. I further ask unanimous consent that Senator LOTT be recognized to offer a similar sense-of-the-Senate resolution and it be placed on the calendar.

I further ask unanimous consent that at 3:30 p.m. on Monday the Senate resume both resolutions concurrently, there be 1 hour of debate on each resolution to be equally divided between the two leaders, and a vote occur on or in relation to the Lott resolution at 5:30, to be followed immediately thereafter by a vote on or in relation to the Daschle resolution, and that all of the previous occur without any intervening action.

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

AMENDMENTS NOS. 1792 THROUGH 1802, EN BLOC

Mr. STEVENS. On behalf of Senator BOND and Senator MIKULSKI, I send a package of amendments to the desk and ask for their immediate consideration en bloc.

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

Mr. STEVENS. Mr. President, these items have been cleared on both sides and are not controversial and include the following items:

An amendment on behalf of Senator FEINSTEIN requiring EPA to form a study and plan related to leaking underground storage tanks;

A Smith amendment extending the comment period by 90 days for the EPA proposed rulemaking related to total maximum daily loads;

A Breaux amendment extending for 1 year the Coastal Wetlands Planning, Protection, and Restoration Act, otherwise known as the Breaux Act;

A Chafee amendment with numerous cosponsors funding the Montreal Protocol Fund within EPA's budget, through an across-the-board cut to EPA accounts;

A Gramm of Texas amendment relating to the funding of the Office of Federal Housing Enterprise Oversight;

A Dodd-Bennett amendment related to funding of local governments for Y2K conversion costs;

A Bond-Lautenberg technical correction to section 430;

A Bond amendment addressing HUD staffing levels;

A Hutchison amendment on storm water studies;

A Coverdell amendment regarding housing for private school teachers;

Finally, an amendment dealing with EPA pesticide tolerance fees, included on behalf of Senator CRAIG, which has been cleared by the Agriculture Committee on both sides.

Ms. MIKULSKI. Mr. President, we concur with the managers' amendment as presented by the Senator from Alaska and are prepared to accept it.

Mr. STEVENS. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent those amendments be agreed to en bloc.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection, the amendments will be considered en bloc, agreed to en bloc, and appropriately numbered.

The amendments agreed to en bloc are as follows:

AMENDMENT NO. 1792

(Purpose: To improve the regulation of underground storage tanks)

At the appropriate place, insert the following:

SEC. _____. UNDERGROUND STORAGE TANKS.

Not later than May 1, 2000, in administering the underground storage tank program under subtitle I of the Solid Waste Disposal Act (42 U.S.C. 6991 et seq.), the Administrator of the Environmental Protection Agency shall develop a plan (including cost estimates)—

(1) to identify underground storage tanks that are not in compliance with subtitle I of the Solid Waste Disposal Act (42 U.S.C. 6991 et seq.) (including regulations);

(2) to identify underground storage tanks in temporary closure;

(3) to determine the ownership of underground storage tanks described in paragraphs (1) and (2);

(4) to determine the plans of owners and operators of underground storage tanks described in paragraphs (1) and (2) to bring the underground storage tanks into compliance or out of temporary closure; and

(5) in a case in which the owner of an underground storage tank described in paragraph (1) or (2) cannot be identified—

(A) to bring the underground storage tank into compliance; or

(B) to permanently close the underground storage tank.

Mrs. FEINSTEIN. Mr. President, today I am offering an amendment to require the Environmental Protection Agency to develop a plan by May 1, 2000 for bringing all underground storage tanks into compliance with federal safety requirements.

Why do we need this amendment?

Leaking underground storage tanks are the leading source of groundwater contamination and petroleum is the most common substance leaking out. Most of the 825,000 regulated underground tanks in this country store petroleum products, from the local gas station on your neighborhood corner to the industrial complex using a large motor fleet.

I am offering this amendment to make underground storage tanks safe as a way to stop the contamination of drinking water by the gasoline additive MTBE.

What is MTBE? MTBE is methyl tertiary butyl ether, a gasoline additive. It is used by most refiners to make oxygenated or reformulated gasoline. It is the oxygenate of choice by refiners who sell gasoline in areas that need clean-burning gasoline to meet or maintain clean air standards. The major way MTBE gets into groundwater is from defective underground tanks storing petroleum products.

What's Wrong with MTBE?

Unlike other components of gasoline, MTBE does not biodegrade; it has a taste like terpentine and smells like paint thinner; it gravels quickly; it is expensive to cleanup ($1 million per well in California). MTBE is carcinogenic in animals and according to U.S. EPA, ''has a human carcinogenic hazard potential.'' Dr. John Froines, a distinguished UCLA scientist, testified at a California EPA hearing on February 23, 1999 as follows:

> We in our (University of California) report have concluded the cancer evidence in animals is relevant to humans. There are 'acute effects in occupationally exposed workers including headaches, dizziness, nausea, eye and respiratory irritation, vomiting, sensation of spaciness or disorientation and burning of the nose and throat.

MTBE exposure was associated with excess cancers in rats and mice, therefore, multi-species,'' and he cited ''multiple endpoints, lymphoma, leukemia testicular cancer, liver and kidney. All four of the tumor sites observed in animals may be predictive of human cancer risk.''

Where is MTBE?

The Lawrence Livermore National Laboratory studied underground tank sites in California and concluded that ''a minimum estimate of the number of MTBE-impacted sites in California is greater than 10,000.'' The Association of California Water Agencies has also found MTBE at over 10,000 sites and in many of the state's surface water reservoirs. Because of widespread contamination, California Governor Gray

Davis ordered a phaseout of MTBE by December 31, 2002. A major University of California study has called for a phaseout. A top-level, EPA ''Blue Ribbon'' panel of experts in July recommended reducing the use of MTBE.

Nationally, while there is no comprehensive study, we do know that MTBE has been found in drinking water in many states, including Maine, Pennsylvania, Virginia, Texas, Kansas, New York, New Jersey, Georgia, Alabama, Colorado, New Hampshire, Massachusetts, Delaware, and Arizona. A U.S. EPA-funded study by the University of Massachusetts found MTBE in 251 of 422 public wells in 19 states.

Are Tanks Safe?

On December 22, 1998, all underground storage tanks had to meet federal safety requirements. EPA has said that tanks that do not meet standards can be placed into temporary closure until December 22, 1999 at which point they must be upgraded or permanently closed. Under the law, noncomplying tanks can be fined $11,000 per day per violation. The safety requirements address tank integrity, design, installation; leak detection, spill and overfill control. Tank owners had ten years to meet the deadline.

Here are the facts:

1. Many tanks are still unsafe: Many underground tanks containing gasoline still out of compliance with federal safety regulations. In the country, around 165,000 tanks (20 percent of the total) are out of compliance, according to EPA. In my state, approximately 1,900 (3 percent) are not safe.

2. Many tanks are sitting empty, in temporary closure—74,250 in the country (9 percent) and 10,430 (10 percent) in California. These tanks are just sitting there in limbo. EPA considers the tanks that are in temporary closure to be ''in compliance'' for now and this is one way tank owners ''met the deadline'' for compliance. These tanks' ultimate use needs to be determined. Someone needs to decide whether to close them permanently or upgrade them.

3. EPA has funds to act. The Underground Storage Tank Trust Fund has $1.6 billion in it. This bill appropriates $71.6 million, the President's request. The fund is financed by a 0.1 cent per gallon motor fuels tax which began in 1987, that generates about $150 million a year. The American motorist is paying this tax and in doing so, expects it to be used for the purposes authorized.

4. Even new tanks are not safe. A July 1999 study by the Santa Clara Valley Water district of its groundwater supplies found that even with the new upgrades, required by federal law by December 22, 1998, the new systems are not preventing MTBE contamination. The study, entitled ''Investigation of MTBE Occurrence Associated with Operating UST Systems,'' concluded, of 28 sites in Santa Clara county that have new or upgraded tank systems, the majority of which have not had previous gasoline contamination, 13 have evidence of MTBE in groundwater because of improper installation, operation or maintenance. The study says, ''These data indicate that MTBE may be present in ground water at approximately 50 percent of the UST facilities that meet 1998 upgrade requirements within Santa Clara County.'' Officials were clear: ''Immediate improvements are warranted.'' To me this says, enforce the law.

Similarly, in testimony in the House of Representatives on May 6, 1999 officials of the Natural Resources Defense Council made this important point:

''. . . if gasoline contains oxygenates, future gasoline tank leaks involving MTBE appear inevitable. Even new tanks will eventually fail through material aging, operator error and accident.''

5. Contamination growing, unknown?

As I mentioned, California has had 10,000 groundwater sites impacted, as documented by the Lawrence Livermore study. Many of the state's reservoirs and surface waters have been impacted. At South Lake Tahoe, 20 percent of the water supply has been eliminated; $2 million has been spent to address it. MTBE is less than 1,000 feet from the lake. Santa Monica lost 75 percent of its groundwater supply because of MTBE. Their water system has been decimated and they will spend up to $150 million to clean up.

In a disturbing August 16 story, the New York Times reported last year, the state of New York compiled a ''public list'' of 1,500 MTBE contaminated sites, but the actual number on an ''internal list'' is closer to 7,000 sites, more than three times that reported. So this suggests that we really do not know the extent of MTBE contamination.

TIME TO FIX TANKS

EPA and the states should take steps to make tanks safe. This amendment merely says, come up with a plan: identify the tanks, their owners, their status and bring the tank into compliance or close it. Enforce the law.

EPA reported last week they ''have no information from their regions'' on enforcement actions, that there is no formal schedule or official framework for finding out what enforcement actions are being taken in (1) EPA regional offices or (2) in the states. We could obtain no national list, for example, of enforcement cases, citations, administrative orders or fines.

Today I did receive some information for region 9, the EPA region in which California is located. In this region, since the December 22, 1998 deadline, of 71,686 underground storage tanks, 80 have been inspected. Twenty-three citations have been issued. These actions, according to EPA, are ''informal enforcement,'' not ''formal enforcement.'' The citations are like a traffic ticket and usually give owners 30 days to comply. It appears that the ''formal'' enforcement mechanism, levying the $11,000 per violation fine, is not being used.

I also received an EPA memo signed by Sammy Ng, of the Office of Underground Storage Tanks, dated April 13, 1999, which says:

At the end of the first half of FY 99, states and regions have reported over 385,000 confirmed releases. States, regions and responsible parties initiated cleanups at 84 percent of these sites and completed cleanups at about 54 percent of the sites. . . . the data do not necessarily reflect the full extent of current compliance with the 1998 requirements. . . .

While this is helpful—and disturbing information—it still does not tell us what is happening to make these tanks safe for storing petroleum products.

This amendment is quite modest, in my view. It merely says to EPA, do your job. We have a strong law. Tank owners had a deadline. Leaking tanks are contaminating drinking water. Take steps to make tanks safe.

The public needs assurance that EPA and the states are enforcing the law, stopping leaks, and protecting our drinking water.

I am pleased that this important amendment has been accepted.

AMENDMENT NO. 1793

(Purpose: To extend the comment period for proposed rules related to the Clean Water Act)

At the appropriate place in the bill, insert: ''The comment period on the proposed rules related to section 303(d) of the Clean Water Act published at 64 Federal Register 46012 and 46058 (August 23, 1999) shall be extended from October 22, 1999, for a period of no less than 90 additional calendar days.''

AMENDMENT NO. 1794

Section 4(a) of the Act of August 9, 1950 (16 U.S.C. 777(c(a)), is amended in the second sentence by striking of ''1999'' and inserting ''2000''.

AMENDMENT NO. 1795

(Purpose: To restore funding for the Montreal Protocol Fund, with an offset)

On page 78, line 20, strike ''$1,885,000,000'' and insert ''$1,897,000,000''.

On page 78, line 21, before the colon, insert the following: '', and of which not less than $12,000,000 shall be derived from pro rata transfers of amounts made available under each other heading under the heading ''ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION AGENCY'' and shall be available for the Montreal Protocol Fund''.

AMENDMENT NO. 1796

(Purpose: To provide sufficient FY 2000 funding for the Office of Federal Housing Enterprise Oversight to ensure adequate oversight of government sponsored enterprises)

On page 45, line 9, strike ''$16,000,000'' and insert in lieu thereof, ''$19,493,000''.

AMENDMENT NO. 1797

At the appropriation place under the heading Federal Emergency Management Agency, insert: ''For expenses related to Year 2000 conversion costs for counties and local governments, $100,000,000, to remain available until September 30, 2001: *Provided*, That the Director of the Federal Emergency Management Agency shall carry out a Year 2000 conversion local government emergency grant and loan program for the purpose of providing emergency funds through grants or loans of not to exceed $1,000,000 for each country and local government that is facing Year 2000 conversion failures after January 1, 2000 that could adversely affect public

health and safety: *Provided further*, That of the funds made available to a county or local government under this provision, 50 percent shall be a grant and 50 percent shall be a loan which shall be repaid to the Federal Emergency Management Agency at the prime rate within five years of the loan: *Provided further*, That none of the funds provided under this heading may be transferred to any county or local government until fifteen days after the Director of the Federal Emergency Management Agency has submitted to the House and Senate Committees on Appropriations, the Senate Special Committee on the Year 2000 Technology Problem, the House Committee on Science, and the House Committee on Government Reform a proposed allocation and plan for that county or local government to achieve Year 2000 compliance for systems directly related to public health and safety programs: *Provided further*, That the entire amount shall be available only to the extent that an official budget request that includes designation of the entire amount of the request as an emergency requirement as defined in the Balanced Budget and Emergency Deficit Control Act of 1985, as amended, is transmitted by the President to the Congress: *Provided further*, That the entire amount is designated by the Congress as an emergency requirement pursuant to section 251(b)(2)(A) of the Balanced Budget and Emergency Deficit Control Act of 1985, as amended: *Provided further*, That of the amounts provided under the heading ''Funds Appropriated to the President'' in Title III of Division B of the Omnibus Consolidated and Emergency Supplemental Appropriations Act, 1999 (Public Law 105–277), $100,000,000 are rescinded''

AMENDMENT NO. 1798

(Purpose: Technical correction to provision on the prohibition on funds being used for lobbying)

On page 113, line 14, strike out ''in any way tends'' and insert in lieu thereof: ''is designed''.

AMENDMENT NO. 1799

(Purpose: Prohibition on HUD reducing staffing at state and local HUD offices)

On page 44, insert before the period on line 10 the following: '': *Provided further*, That the Secretary may not reduce the staffing level at any Department of Housing and Urban Development state or local office''.

AMENDMENT NO. 1800

(Purpose: To require the Administrator of the Environmental Protection Agency to submit to the Senate a report on certain matters of concern before promulgating stormwater regulations)

At the appropriate place, insert the following:

SEC. _____. PROMULGATION OF STORMWATER REGULATIONS.

(a) STORMWATER REGULATIONS.—The Administrator of the Environmental Protection Agency shall not promulgate Phase II stormwater regulations until the Administrator submits to the Committee on Environment and Public Works of the Senate a report containing—

(1) an in-depth impact analysis on the effect the final regulations will have on urban, suburban, and rural local governments subject to the regulations, including an estimate of—

(A) the costs of complying with the 6 minimum control measures described in the regulations; and

(B) the costs resulting from the lowering of the construction threshold from 5 acres to 1 acre;

(2) an explanation of the rationale of the Administrator for lowering the construction site threshold from 5 acres to 1 acre, including—

(A) an explanation, in light of recent court decisions, of why a 1-acre measure is any less arbitrarily determined than a 5-acre measure; and

(B) all qualitative information used in determining an acre threshold for a construction site;

(3) documentation demonstrating that stormwater runoff is generally a problem in communities with populations of 50,000 to 100,000 (including an explanation of why the coverage of the regulation is based on a census-determined population instead of a water quality threshold);

(4) information that supports the position of the Administrator that the Phase II stormwater program should be administered as part of the National Pollutant Discharge Elimination System under section 402 of the Federal Water Pollution Control Act (33 U.S.C. 1342); and

(b) PHASE I REGULATIONS.—No later than 120 days after enactment of this Act, the Environmental Protection Agency shall submit to the Senate Environment and Public Works Committee a report containing—

(1) a detailed explanation of the impact, if any, that the Phase I program has had in improving water quality in the United States (including a description of specific measures that have been successful and those that have been unsuccessful).

(c) FEDERAL REGISTER.—The reports described in subsections (a) and (b) shall be published in the Federal Register for public comment.

AMENDMENT NO. 1801

(Purpose: To provide that any assistance made available to teachers in purchasing HUD owned housing in economically distressed areas does not discriminate between private and public elementary and secondary school teachers and thus provides assistance to both on an equal basis)

On page 38, line three, insert before the period the following: '': *Provided further*, That no amounts made available to provide housing assistance with respect to the purchase of any single family real property owned by the Secretary or the Federal Housing Administration may discriminate between public and private elementary and secondary school teachers'';

On page 40, line two, insert before the period the following: '': *Provided further*, That no amounts made available to provide housing assistance with respect to the purchase of any single family real property owned by the Secretary or the Federal Housing Administration may discriminate between public and private elementary and secondary school teachers''.

AMENDMENT NO. 1802

(Purpose: To delay promulgation of regulations of the Environmental Protection Agency requiring the payment of pesticide tolerance fees)

On page 113, between lines 16 and 17, insert the following:

SEC. 4 . PESTICIDE TOLERANCE FEES.

None of the funds appropriated or otherwise made available by this Act shall be used to promulgate a final regulation to implement changes in the payment of pesticide tolerance processing fees as proposed at 64 Fed. Reg. 31040, or any similar proposals. The Environmental Protection Agency may proceed with the development of such a rule.

Mr. STEVENS. Mr. President, I move to reconsider the vote.

Mr. LOTT. I move to lay that motion on the table.

The motion to lay on the table was agreed to.

BUDGET COMMITTEE SCORING OF S. 1596

Mr. DOMENICI. Mr. President, I rise in support of S. 1596, the Departments of Veterans Affairs and Housing and Urban Development and independent agencies appropriations bill for 2000.

This bill provides new budget authority of $93.6 billion and new outlays of $55.5 billion to finance the programs of the Departments of Veterans Affairs and Housing and Urban Development, the Environmental Protection Agency, NASA, and other independent agencies.

I congratulate the chairman and ranking member for producing a bill that complies with the subcommittee's 302(b) allocation. This is one of the most difficult bills to manage with its varied programs and challenging allocation, but I think the bill meets most of the demands made of it while not exceeding its budget and is a strong candidate for enactment. So I commend my friend, the chairman, for his efforts and leadership.

When outlays from prior-year BA and other adjustments are taken into account, the bill totals $91.3 billion in BA and $103.8 billion in outlays. The total bill is under the Senate subcommittee's 302(b) allocation for budget authority and outlays.

I ask Members of the Senate to refrain from offering amendments which would cause the subcommittee to exceed its budget allocation and urge the speedy adoption of this bill.

Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that a table displaying the Budget Committee scoring of the bill be printed in the RECORD.

There being no objection, the material was ordered to be printed in the RECORD as follows:

S. 1596, VA–HUD APPROPRIATIONS, 2000—SPENDING COMPARISONS—SENATE-REPORTED BILL

[Fiscal year 2000, in millions of dollars]

	General purpose	Crime	Mandatory	Total
Senate-reported bill:				
Budget authority	69,619		21,713	91,332
Outlays	82,291		21,496	103,787
Senate 302(b) allocation:				
Budget authority	69,633		21,713	91,346
Outlays	82,545		21,496	104,041
1999 Enacted:				
Budget authority	71,045		21,885	92,930
Outlays	80,376		21,570	101,946
President's request:				
Budget authority	72,055		21,713	93,768
Outlays	82,538		21,496	104,034
House-passed bill:				
Budget authority	71,632		21,713	93,345
Outlays	82,031		21,496	103,527
SENATE-REPORTED BILL COMPARED TO:				
Senate 302(b) allocation:				
Budget authority	−14			−14
Outlays	−254			−254
1999 Enacted:				
Budget authority	−1,426		−172	−1,598
Outlays	1,915		−74	1,841
President's request:				
Budget authority	−2,436			−2,436
Outlays	−247			−247
House-passed bill:				
Budget authority	−2,013			−2,013
Outlays	260			260

Note: Details may not add to totals due to rounding. Totals adjusted for consistency with scorekeeping conventions.

NORTH 27TH STREET CENTER FOR CHILDREN AND YOUTH, PROJECT JERICHO, AND THE MISSOURI RIVER ECOLOGY INSTITUTE

Mr. KERRY. Mr. President, I realize that this year Senators BOND and MIKULSKI are facing a challenging appropriations season with tight budgetary constraints. However, I wanted to bring to their attention three projects which I think are particularly important to Nebraska, projects that I believe will directly benefit many of our Nebraska citizens.

Ms. MIKULSKI. I know that you have worked hard on a number of projects, and I would appreciate it if you could describe your requests in greater detail?

Mr. KERREY. Yes, it would be my pleasure. On March 31, 1999, I requested that $1.5 million be appropriated within the CDBG program's Economic Development Initiative for the North 27th Street Center for Children and Youth in Lincoln, NE. The Center is being developed by Cedars Youth Services, Inc. at the request of the City of Lincoln. The Federal dollars would be used by Cedars to develop, operate, and implement a program for the collaborative provision of services by several organizations through a design that will allow participants to avoid having to negotiate the administration and service delivery practices of the various organizations. In other words, it is an effort to develop a ''one-stop'' service center for youth programs.

In addition, during March 1999, I also requested $750,000 or Project Jericho in Omaha, NE to be used by Family Housing Advisory Services for the ongoing administration and operation of Project Jericho. Project Jericho assists individuals, couples, and families who qualify for Section 8 assistance to locate safe affordable housing in the Omaha area. Financial management and mobility counseling are provided to help participants who want to find rental properties in neighborhoods with less than 35 percent minority population. Project Jericho is now one of the top recognized mobility programs in the country.

Finally, I requested that $120,000 be provided from the Environmental Programs and Management Account of the EPA, to the Fontenelle Forest Association for the Missouri River Ecology Institute (MREI). Fontenelle Forest would use the funds to continue MREI, which provides an intensive, six week summertime experience in field-based natural science for teenagers (primarily students entering the 10th grade). MREI services as a leadership development initiative for students with a strong interest in the environment, and includes activities to help prepare them for future careers in this field.

Ms. MIKULSKI. Mr. President, I have noted the importance of these projects and I will do my best to include these projects when the conference committee meets on this bill, if adequate funding is available.

Mr. BOND. I certainly understand the concerns of the Senator from Nebraska and we will review these requests prior to conference.

Mr. KERREY. I appreciate the consideration and the help of the distinguished Senators from Missouri and Maryland. They have always been very supportive of the needs of Nebraska and I appreciate that.

ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT IN WISCONSIN

Mr. KOHL. Mr. President, I thank Senators BOND and MIKULSKI for their good efforts and sense of fairness in putting together the VA–HUD Appropriations bill for Fiscal Year 2000. We all agree that this year's attempts to stay within the spending caps has forced us all to make some tough choices and to work that much harder to reach consensus and complete our appropriations work in a timely and responsible manner. Senators BOND and MIKULSKI are to be commended for their hard work.

I would ask for a clarification on a point of concern for my constituents in Milwaukee, Wisconsin. As you know, the VA–HUD bill contains funds in support of several important economic development initiatives in Wisconsin, including both the Metcalfe Neighborhood and Menomonee Valley Redevelopment projects in Milwaukee. I am pleased that the Committee has expressed support for both projects, but would simply ask if the Chairman and Ranking Member would have any objection to shifting the amount of funds distributed between these projects during the conference negotiations. In other words, would you have any objection to shifting funds designated for the Menomonee Valley project to the Metcalfe Neighborhood project? I ask for this clarification in order to allow the City of Milwaukee the flexibility to reallocate the funds provided in keeping with its economic development needs and timeframes for project completion.

Ms. MIKULSKI. I would have no objection to shifting funds between the Milwaukee projects if the Senator from Wisconsin, on behalf of his constituents from Milwaukee, makes such a request during our work in the conference.

Mr. BOND. I concur with my Ranking Member and would be happy to work with the Senator from Wisconsin to ensure that his constituents' needs are met.

CLEM

Mr. MOYNIHAN. Mr. President, I rise to ask the distinguished managers of the bill if they would consider a request I have concerning the conference. Knowing the great difficulty they faced in reporting a bill that would not exceed this year's stringent budget caps, I was not too surprised to see that they were not able to provide funding for New York University's Center for Cognition, Learning, Emotion, and Memory, or CLEM, in the bill. However, I do hope that funding for CLEM can be found in conference. CLEM can help educators, physicians and other health care givers, policymakers, and the general public by enhancing our understanding of normal brain development as well as the many disabilities, disorders, and diseases that erode our ability to learn and think, to remember, and to emote appropriately.

CLEM focuses on research and training in the fundamental neurobiological mechanisms that underlie learning and memory—the acquisition and storage of information in the nervous system. Current studies by the faculty at NYU are determining why fear can facilitate memory; how memory can be enhanced; what conditions facilitate long-term and short-term memory; and where in the brain all these memories are processed and stored. The Center for Cognition, Learning, Emotion and Memory will draw on the University's strengths in the fields of neural science, biology, chemistry, psychology, computer science, and linguistics to push the frontiers of our understanding of how the brain develops, functions, malfunctions, matures, and ages. NYU researchers bring substantial strength in psychological testing, computational sophistication, advanced tissues staining and electrical problems, and humane animal conditions. These core facilities are well regarded by their peers and together have been awarded a total of $7 million from federal agencies and private foundations for their research. Also, the University is presently recruiting additional faculty in other areas of memory and learning specialization. As a major training institute, the Center will help prepare the next generation of interdisciplinary brain scientists.

I believe that the work of this Center is an appropriate focus for the Department of Veterans Affairs because research into how cognition and emotion interact can have applicability to other diverse areas of interest. For example, in understanding maladaptive responses and emotional disorders, researchers are better able to understand and treat phobias, panic attacks, and post-traumatic stress disorders. In addition, research into the learning process as it relates to attention and retention will lead to insights on mental losses and the decay of memory. Similarly, research at the center could prove most valuable to the EPA in its efforts to learn about and prevent the effects of toxic substances on man and animals.

Mr. President, funding for New York University in this bill would be entirely appropriate under VA, EPW, or as an item in the EDI account. It would be money well spent. I ask the distinguished managers if they will consider providing $1 million for NYU.

Mr. BOND. I will certainly keep the request from the Senator from New York in mind when we go to conference.

Ms. MIKULSKI. I too will remember the request from my colleague from New York when the bill gets to conference.

NATIONAL CENTER FOR SCIENCE LITERACY EDUCATION AND TECHNOLOGY

Mr. MOYNIHAN. Mr. President, I wonder if the distinguished managers of the bill would consider a request of mine? As they are aware, in previous years NASA has provided funds to the American Museum of Natural History to support the National Center for Science Literacy Education and Technology. The Museum reaches literally millions of children and families, schools and community groups each year through science education and exhibition, curriculum development and innovative educational technology. Now the Museum is unveiling a unique new resource for educating the nation about the wonders of the universe and our own planet Earth, the Rose Center. It will include a new state-of-the-art Hayden Planetarium, the Colman Hall of the Universe, and the Gottesman Hall of Planet Earth. The centerpiece of the new Center is a 90-foot-in-diameter sphere situated in a cubic glass-walled enclosure; and in the upper half of this sphere the Museum will be housing the most technologically advanced sky theater in the world with a map of the universe created by the Museum's National Center for Science Literacy and Technology in partnership with NASA: The Digital Galaxy Mapping Project.

While the National Center has received strong NASA-based support, the Museum has raised the funds, almost $100 million, for the Rose Center and these cutting-edge Halls of the Universe and Planet Earth through non-federal State, City, private and foundation support.

The Center is already working with innumerable schools in New York and beyond to develop more effective science education curriculum materials, as well as partnering with leading colleges and universities on critical research, education and training initiatives. They are now proposing to further expand the role of NASA and the Center with the goal of educating an ever broader segment of the American public. Through the Center's Education Materials Lab Project the Museum and NASA will develop additional curriculum modules from the prototypes created in the first phase of the NASA-Center agreement, based on and utilizing the unique investments and facilities of the Museum. There will be a major investment in a science visualization project that will highlight NASA developments and activities, from progress in the space station to new astronomical discoveries.

As you can see, Mr. President, the potential of the National Center at the Museum is boundless. However, a continuing and expanded federal partnership for science education and educational technology is important and appropriate there, given the role they play and the millions they reach.

I realize the constraints the subcommittee was under in writing a bill that would meet budget requirements. I simply ask that when the bill goes to conference the managers remember my original request that the NASA budget include a FY2000 appropriation of $5 million to further expand the reach of this important National Center, develop and improve educational materials and educational technology for schools, children and families, and to enhance the Museum's instrumentation and laboratory facilities that will contribute to these education, training and research objectives. The House Bill contains $3 million. I hope that sum can be increased to $5 million.

Mr. BOND. I will certainly keep the request by the distinguished Senator from New York in mind when we go to conference.

Ms. MIKULSKI. I too will remember this request for the American Museum of Natural History when we get to conference.

Mr. MOYNIHAN. I thank both my distinguished colleagues for their cooperation.

NATIONAL SCIENCE FOUNDATION

Mr. BINGAMAN. Mr. President, I see the report encourages the National Science Foundation to ''strengthen its activities with respect to international cooperation in research and education.''

Mr. BOND. Yes, that's right. That sort of cooperation is good for science and good for education right here at home. The National Science Board is going to examine that issue, and I look forward to seeing their recommendations.

Mr. BINGAMAN. The Chairman may be aware that as part of last year's Higher Education Act, working with thirteen of our colleagues, I was able to get a program in East Asian Science, Engineering, and Technology authorized at NSF. This new program, which is a successor to a program at the Defense Department, will teach American scientists and engineers about East Asian languages, technological developments, management techniques, and research institutions. It will improve our understanding of East Asian research and train a cadre of American researchers who can effectively cooperative with their East Asian counterparts.

Mr. BOND. That does sound like the sort of activity we'd like to encourage at NSF.

Mr. BINGAMAN. Well, unfortunately the program was authorized too late in the year to make it into the President's budget request for FY 2000. But NSF, including the top leadership is quite enthusiastic about the program. They've had a day-long workshop to help design the program, and I understand may even release the report from that workshop soon. My point is I think that they could be ready to get the program started this coming fiscal year.

Would the Chairman agree that to the extent there is some discretionary money available at NSF in FY 2000 and that NSF's leadership believes they have a solid program plan, they can and should begin the East Asian Science, Engineering, and Technology program in FY 2000? Moreover, that NSF should budget for the program in FY 2001 and beyond? I think that would be consistent with your interest in seeing more international cooperation in science and engineering.

Mr. BOND. I will be open to NSF's plans once they are developed. If the National Science Board and NSF support funding the program in FY 2000, I will review it as part of their operating plan and future NSF budget proposals.

Ms. MIKULSKI. If I could just briefly add my thoughts. The East Asian Science, Engineering, and Technology program does indeed sound like something NSF should get started on this coming fiscal year, provided they're ready, and then include it in the President's request for FY 2001.

Mr. BINGAMAN. I thank the distinguished Chairman and Ranking Member.

BARRY UNIVERSITY

Mr. GRAHAM. Mr. President, we would like to engage the Chairman and Ranking Member of the Subcommittee, in a brief colloquy regarding Barry University in Miami Shores, Florida. Through the outstanding leadership of sister Jeanne O'Laughlin, Barry has had a strong history of addressing important Miami community issues like urbanization, ethnic diversity, community development and cultural understanding. Many of Barry's students are first-generation college students and ethnic minorities. Recently the University announced the planning of an Intercultural Community Center that is designed to promote necessary neighborhood and small business revitalization. The new facility will also be a hub for ongoing workforce development and service learning literacy training for the local community.

Mr. MACK. Given the merits of the project, we were disappointed that Barry University was not included in the legislation before us that allocates funds to the ''Economic Development Initiatives'' for such purposes. Barry University's proposal meets the criteria established by the Subcommittee in terms of serving low-income populations. Our hope is that this project can be re-considered during final deliberations on the bill. Specifically, we would request that favorable language be included in this bill directing the Secretary of Housing and Urban Development to spend a minimum of 1.5 million dollars from the Economic Development Initiative fund to finance this important program that promotes economic and social revitalization. We would appreciate the Senator's support, along with the Chairman's in the funding of the Barry University Intercultural Community Center in the Conference Report.

Ms. MIKULSKI. I thank the Senators from Florida for bringing this issue to

my attention. I will be pleased to review the proposed project at $1.5 million and will give it every consideration during conference deliberations.

Mr. BOND. I concur with my good friend from Maryland, and we will make every effort to consider the merits and funding requests of the Barry University project in conference.

BAYARD WASTEWATER TREATMENT FACILITY

Mr. BINGAMAN. Mr. President, I want to thank the Chairman and Ranking Member for their fine and fair work on this appropriations bill. I acknowledge how difficult their job is and fully appreciate their efforts.

I understand the tight budget situation the committee finds itself in and the many requests the Chairman and Ranking Member face for water and wastewater funding from the EPA's State and Tribal Assistance Grant Program. Unfortunately, the committee could not find sufficient funding for a critical wastewater treatment project in Bayard, New Mexico. This community, along with the Village of Santa Clara and the Fort Bayard State Hospital, face a loss of their wastewater treatment plant. Three years from now, the Cobre copper mine will no longer accept wastewater from these communities and an alternative must be found. If not, these communities will essentially return to the days of the outhouse.

May I ask the Chairman if he is aware of the critical wastewater situation facing the citizens of Bayard and Santa Clara?

Mr. BOND. Yes, I appreciate the Senator from New Mexico informing me of the situation in Bayard and the citizens' need for a new wastewater treatment facility.

Mr. BINGAMAN. The estimated cost of the new wastewater treatment plant is almost $3 million. Is the Ranking Member aware that Mayor Kelly and the city council in Bayard are working very hard to obtain partial funding for the new plant from all available local, state and federal sources?

Ms. MIKULSKI. I commend the Mayor and citizens of Bayard for their efforts to seek funding from all available sources.

Mr. BINGAMAN. I'd like to continue to work with the Chairman and Ranking Member as this appropriations bill moves forward to see if there isn't some way to provide a grant from EPA's State and Tribal Assistance Grant Program to help fund a portion of the cost of the wastewater treatment plant in Bayard.

Mr. BOND. The Senator can be assured we will give the project our full consideration in conference.

Ms. MIKULSKI. I appreciate knowing of the Senator from New Mexico's interest in the Bayard project.

Mr. BINGAMAN. I thank the Senators for their consideration.

NO_x SIP CALL

Mr. SHELBY. Mr. President, I rise at this time to engage in a colloquy with the Subcommittee Chairman, the Senator from Missouri.

Mr. President, I am concerned about what I feel is an apparent inconsistency and inequity created by two separate and conflicting actions that occurred last spring. One was EPA issuing a final rule implementing a consent decree under section 126 of the Clean Air Act that is triggered in essence by EPA not approving the NO_x SIP call revisions of 22 states and the District of Columbia by November 30, 1999. The other was by the United States Court of Appeals for the D.C. Circuit in issuing an order staying the requirement imposed in EPA's 1998 NO_x SIP Call for these jurisdictions to submit the SIP revisions just mentioned for EPA approval.

Caught in the middle of these two events are electric utilities and industrial sources who fear that now the trigger will be sprung this coming November 30, even though the states are no longer required to make those SIP revisions because of the stay, and even though EPA will have nothing before it to approve or disapprove.

Prior to this, EPA maintained a close link between the NO_x SIP Call and the section 126 rule, as evidenced by the consent decree. I believe a parallel stay would be appropriate in the circumstances. EPA should not be moving forward with its NO_x regulations until the litigation is complete and those affected are given more certainty and clarity as to what is required under the law.

A stay is very much needed, especially in light of EPA's most recent comments suggesting that it may reverse its earlier interpretation of the Clean Air Act regarding State discretion in dealing with interstate ozone transport problems. The effect of such a reversal would be to force businesses to comply with EPA's federal emission controls under Section 126 without regard to NO_x SIP Call rule and State input.

The proposed reversal is creating tremendous confusion for the businesses and the States. Under EPA's proposed new position, businesses could incur substantial costs in meeting the EPA-imposed section 126 emission controls before allowing the States to use their discretion in the SIP process to address air quality problems, less stringent controls or through controls on other facilities altogether.

Indeed, the fact that these businesses almost certainly will have sunk significant costs into compliance with the EPA-imposed controls before States we required to submit their emission control plans in response to the NO_X SIP Call rule would result in impermissible pressure on their States to forfeit their discretion and instead simply conform their SIPs to EPA section 126 controls.

The bottom line, Mr. Chairman, is that not only do the States and business community not know what EPA is doing, EPA doesn't know what it is doing. This is hardly a desirable regulatory posture for what clearly is promising to be a very costly and burdensome regulation.

Let's be clear what the law is and what it requires, before rather than after the EPA writes and enforces its rules. I think that is a reasonable expectation and a reasonable requirement that the EPA should be able to meet.

Mr. Chairman, would you agree with me that the EPA should find a reasonable way to avoid triggering the 126 process while the courts deliberate and we have a better understanding of what the law requires states and businesses to do to be in compliance?

Mr. BOND. Mr. President, I very much appreciate the Senator bringing this to the Senate's attention. I agree that this matter should be resolved swiftly. I would encourage and expect the EPA to, over the next several months, find a way that is fair to all sides. In addition, I would expect that any remedy would ensure that the States maintain control and input in addressing air pollution problems through the SIP process. I would be happy to work with the Senator from Alabama to ensure that EPA is fully responsive to these legitimate problems.

Mr. BYRD. Will the gentleman from Missouri yield?

Mr. BOND. I am happy to yield to the Senator from West Virginia.

Mr. BYRD. Mr. President, as the gentlemen from Alabama and Missouri know, I have had concerns regarding the impact of the NO_X SIP Call for states throughout the Midwest, including my own. I would agree that recent actions taken by the EPA and Northeastern states creates confusion for both industries and states governments alike. I, too, strongly encourage the EPA to work with all parties, and I look forward to finding a fair and equitable solution to improve our air quality in an economically and environmentally sound way.

STUDY ON HYDRAULIC FRACTURING

Mr. SESSIONS. Mr. President, I rise today to discuss the need to collect good scientific data upon which the Environmental Protection Agency can establish appropriate regulations to protect human health and the environment.

Mr. BOND. The Senator from Alabama raises a good point. In order for the EPA to protect people and the environment, the agency must have access to good scientific data.

Mr. SESSIONS. Has the Subcommittee from time to time, directed the EPA to fund studies related to pending regulations when there is a need?

Mr. BOND. Yes, this Subcommittee has occasionally directed the EPA to gather additional scientific data relevant to their regulatory duties.

Mr. SESSIONS. I would like to make the Senator aware of a situation in my own state of Alabama where the EPA is being forced by a court order to promulgate regulations regarding an activity called hydraulic fracturing.

Alabama is the second largest producer of coal bed methane in the country. The production of this clean burning fuel from coal beds has only recently become economically viable and offers a way to capture methane from coal beds which might otherwise be vented into the atmosphere during normal coal mining operations. As you know, methane is thought to be a potent contributor of the so-called ''greenhouse'' effect and has been shown to contribute the formation of ground level ozone. However, the production of methane for fuel use helps to reduce air emissions and improves our balance of trade by contributing to our overall domestic gas production. Increased production of coal bed methane should be encouraged.

One of the procedures needed to produce methane from coal beds is the use of hydraulic fracturing. Hydraulic fracturing essentially involves the placing of water and sand down a well bore at high pressure to create microscopic fractures in the coal beds which allow methane gas to escape. Following this procedure, over 90 percent of the water and sand propping agent is pumped out of the well and disposed in compliance with all State and Federal laws. There has never been a documented case of underground water contamination resulting from this procedure.

The EPA never intended to regulate this procedure. However, in 1995 a lawsuit was filed against the EPA claiming that the hydraulic fracturing in Alabama should be regulated through the Underground Injection Control program established by the Safe Drinking Water Act. The EPA argued that hydraulic fracturing did not fit in the context of the Underground Injection Program, that the State of Alabama already regulated the process and that the procedure itself posed little risk to underground drinking water sources or the environment. In 1997, the 11th Circuit Court of Appeals made a technical ruling that hydraulic fracturing does in fact, constitute underground injection because it does involve the placement of fluids underground. Following the court ruling, the EPA implied that it might support a technical change to the Safe Drinking Water Act to exempt hydraulic fracturing from the Underground Injection program. However, efforts to get this technical correction passed into law were upset by the EPA who called for more time to study the issue. Unfortunately, the EPA has still not developed the scientific data to determine whether or not there is even a need for federal regulation of hydraulic fracturing at all.

It is no wonder that the EPA has not dedicated many resources to this issue. No where in the nation has there been even a single case of groundwater contamination from hydraulic fracturing operations despite the dramatic increase in the use of this procedure over the last 15 years. In fact, based upon the data which is currently available, I believe that federal regulation of hydraulic fracturing operations may be an ineffective use of both federal and state resources. However, there is a need to be certain that hydraulic fracturing does not pose a threat to underground sources or drinking water and more scientific study must be completed.

The Geological Survey of Alabama, working in conjunction with Alabama universities, has already initiated study on the environmental impacts of hydraulic fracturing operations. Because of the work which the Geological Survey has already begun, it would make an ideal institution to carry out additional studies on the impact of hydraulic fracturing and could contribute a great deal to the body of scientific data needed by the EPA. The Geological Survey has proposed an 18 month study, using $175,000 of federal funds through an EPA grant, to carefully examine the environmental impacts of hydraulic fracturing operations. I would ask that the Senator from Missouri work to include language in the VA/HUD Appropriations Conference report that would direct the EPA to make this important grant.

Mr. BOND. In my own State of Missouri, production of coal bed methane has recently been started at several sites. I understand that hydraulic fracturing has been used at each of these sites to stimulate the flow of methane. I agree with the Senator from Alabama that the EPA should seek out the best scientific data and should seek to provide assistance to the Geological Survey of Alabama to study the impact this procedure could have on underground sources of drinking water.

ATLANTA VA CONSTRUCTION

Mr. CLELAND. Mr. President, I would like to discuss with the Ranking Member of the VA/HUD Appropriations Committee the documented need for funding of the Atlanta Veterans Affairs (VA) Medical Center for funds to renovate and modernize patient wards. The Atlanta VA construction project was rated 5th on the Department of Veterans Affairs Fiscal Year 2000 Priority Medical Construction Project Report. This project was listed as 12th last year and with the increasing need was moved to the top 5 by the Office of Management and Budget. On September 8, 1999, I was pleased to support the Senate's passage of S. 1076, the Veterans' Benefits Act of 1999, which authorized $12.4 million for the renovation critical to caring for our veterans. The need for this project will not go away. I believe that this project should receive at least $2 million in initial design and planning for FY 2000 to pave the way for later full funding. Included in this start-up money would be asbestos testing that needs no further delays for environmental safety.

Ms. MIKULSKI. I understand the Senator's concerns and push his to obtain this needed renovation for VA patient care. I also want to thank the Senator for his responsible approach to phasing in this project in light of serious budget concerns. While serious budget constraints prevent the acceptance of this request in the FY 2000 appropriations bill, it is the Appropriations Committee's hope and expectation that this worthy project will be fully funded in the President's FY 2001 budget submission.

Mr. CLELAND. I want to thank the Ranking Member for her comments and acknowledge her efforts to redeem the promises to our veterans.

Ms. MIKULSKI. The VA/HUD Appropriations Committee will give every consideration to funding the completion of the Atlanta VA renovation project in the FY 2001 budget process.

Mr. CLELAND. I thank the Ranking Member and the Chairman for their leadership during these challenging times of budget constraints and the changing health care environment for caring for this Nation's veterans. Your support of the Atlanta VA Medical Center renovation is a visible reminder to our veterans that we do care and appreciate their sacrifices for this country.

VA CEMETERY IN ATLANTA

Mr. CLELAND. Mr. President, I want to thank the ranking member of the VA/HUD appropriations subcommittee for her diligence and dedication to the veterans of this country and for the hard work she and her staff have done this year. We are all aware of the sacrifices that our veterans have made to our Nation in times of war. Now, in time of peace we must not forget those sacrifices. Since 1980, I have been working to establish a new national cemetery in metropolitan Atlanta based on a documented need for such a facility.

Ms. MIKULSKI. I thank the Senator for his kind words of support. I am fully aware of the critical need for cemeteries to accommodate our veterans population. I am aware of the Senator from Georgia's dedicated efforts to construct a cemetery which dates back to his tenure as head of the Veterans Administration.

Mr. CLELAND. The Senator from Maryland is correct. Georgia currently has two cemeteries, the Andersonville National Historic Cemetery and the Marietta National Cemetery. Unfortunately, the Marietta cemetery has been full since 1970. As the senator knows legislation which I sponsored, S. 695, passed the Senate. This legislation would authorize the VA Secretary to establish national cemeteries in Atlanta, Georgia; southwestern Pennsylvania; Miami, Florida; Detroit, Michigan; and Sacramento, California.

Ms. MIKULSKI. I am certainly aware of my colleague's work on this important issue and applaud the Senator's efforts.

Mr. CLELAND. Is it the understanding of the ranking member, that should funds be available in FY2000 to begin planning for a new round of national cemeteries that the authorized national cemetery in Atlanta will be included in the FY2000 budget?

Ms. MIKULSKI. Certainly, should the funding be available, they could be used for future cemetery construction projects.

Mr. CLELAND. I thank the ranking member for including such language endorsing the construction of a new national veterans cemetery in the Metropolitan Atlanta area. Again, I appreciate the help of the Senator from Maryland and the subcommittee on this issue, which is so vital to the veterans of Georgia.

MINNESOTA PROJECTS

Mr. WELLSTONE. Mr. President, I would like to engage the distinguished Ranking Member of the VA/HUD Appropriations Committee in a brief colloquy regarding two important projects which I believe deserve support.

Mr. President, over the past years there has been an alarming increase in the need for adolescent treatment programs. The Mash-ka-wisen facility in Sawyer, MN, has recognized this need and therefore proposes the construction of a culturally specific treatment program designed for adolescents. The presence of an eighteen-bed adolescent treatment center will serve American Indian adolescents from throughout the Bemidji Indian Health Service Area, which includes the states of Minnesota, Wisconsin, and Michigan. For the past twenty years, the existing center in Sawyer, MN, has served American Indians in need of alcohol and drug treatment with a culturally specific recovery program. As a result of their commitment, the Center has a national reputation, as well as one of the very highest treatment success rates in the nation. The Minnesota Indian Primary Regional Treatment Center has requested $2 million to fund the construction of their adolescent treatment facility.

I also wish to call your attention to the request of $1.7 million by Northeast Ventures Corporation of Northern Minnesota. During the last 15 years, Northeastern Minnesota has experienced severe economic losses. Since 1989, Northeast Ventures has provided capital support for micro enterprises in the region. In addition to the assistance that Northeast Ventures has provided, its not for profit affiliate, the Northeast Entrepreneur Fund, has been providing financial and technical support services to unemployed and underemployed men and women in Northeastern Minnesota. In reaction to the special economic needs of the Iron Range, a second not for profit affiliate, Iron Range Ventures, works specifically to provide investments in the Iron Range. Together these organizations have helped to provide the region with assistance that has led to gradual economic recovery and diversification. A HUD Special Purpose Grant will make it possible for this organization and its not for profit affiliates to provide additional support to existing and emerging businesses in the region. $850,000 will support the expanded and enhanced delivery of services and capital to small businesses and the remaining $850,000 will support increased investment in the Iron Range area of northeastern Minnesota.

I am aware of the difficult financial constraints under which the VA/HUD Appropriations Subcommittee worked this year, and I appreciate the Ranking Member's willingness to engage in a colloquy on these important projects. So I would simply ask my colleague from Maryland if she agrees with the importance of including these two projects in the VA/HUD appropriations bill and is willing to work towards earmarking $2 million for the Mash-ka-wisen treatment facility and $1.7 million for Northeast Ventures Corporation?

Ms. MIKULSKI. I thank my colleague from Minnesota, Senator WELLSTONE, for his continued vigorous support for these projects. First let me say that I appreciate his acknowledgment of the difficult funding constraints under which the committee was working this year. I agree with my colleague that these two projects will serve a valuable role in their communities, both Indian Country, and Northeastern Minnesota. For that reason, I will give the Minnesota Indian Primary Residential Treatment Center and the Northeast Ventures Corporation every consideration during the conference deliberations.

Mr. WELLSTONE. I thank the Senator for her commitment to seek funding for these projects for the next year. I am grateful for her continued support and to know she will support these projects in the upcoming conference committee.

SURFACE ACOUSTIC WAVE—MERCURY VAPOR SENSOR RESEARCH

Ms. SNOWE. Mr. President, I seek recognition today along with my colleague, Senator COLLINS, to draw to the Chairman's attention our request for funding within the budget for the Environmental Protection Agency to defray some of the costs of researching and developing an effective new technology for monitoring mercury vapor emissions.

As we know, mercury is one of the most toxic substances in our environment and one of most common air pollutants and, unfortunately, remains largely unregulated, causing great neurologic damage if ingested by humans. This is why I have cosponsored a bill, S. 673, that will go a long way towards developing a much needed solution to the problem of mercury emissions in our environment.

I am advised that researchers in Maine and in Maryland are teaming together to research and develop a new, environmentally beneficial technology for tracking mercury vapor emissions. I am hopeful that in Conference, the distinguished Chairman and the Ranking Minority Member, Senator MIKULSKI, will look again at the proposal and to consider designating it for funding within the appropriate budget account.

Ms. COLLINS. I want to join my colleague, Senator SNOWE, and reiterate my support for this important proposal. If funding is made available, the Sensor Research/University of Maryland team will examine mercury emissions from several combustion sources and will compare a new family of mercury vapor sensors to state-of-the-art continuous monitoring devices in order to determine the efficacy and fidelity of the newer technology. I understand that these new ''Surface Acoustic Wave'' senors offer the promise of low cost/extremely-high reliability monitoring that can better determine the origin of and transport mechanisms involving this family of pollutants.

I thank the Chairman for his consideration of this proposal and ask that he and Senator MIKULSKI make this a top priority in Conference.

Ms. MIKULSKI. I appreciate the work done by my colleagues from Maine on this mercury sensor proposal, which would utilize the tremendous research tools of the University of Maryland at College Park. While we are laboring under difficult budget constraints, I remain hopeful that we will be able to jumpstart this valuable scientific evaluation process. I look forward to working with Chairman BOND on this issue in Conference.

Mr. BOND. I am grateful to my colleagues from Maine and to my good friend, Senator MIKULSKI, for their input on the Surface Acoustic Wave sensor proposal, which could be a real step forward in protecting our environment. I will be glad to continue working with my colleagues on identifying potential areas for funding as we proceed to Conference.

THE ATLANTA WATERSHED PROJECT

Mr. COVERDELL. Mr. President, I rise today to make a few remarks about the Regional Atlanta Watershed restoration program and, with the help of the Chairman of the VA HUD Appropriation Subcommittee, to clarify the use of EPA funds. It is my understanding that these funds can be made available for studies to address serious combined sewer overflow problems.

Mr. BOND. The Senior Senator from Georgia is correct.

Mr. COVERDELL. It is also my understanding that there are serious problems in the Atlanta Region with sewer and overflow facilities and that work is required as part of a $250 million complex settlement that the City of Atlanta negotiated with the Environmental Protection Agency and the Department of Justice due to unpermitted releases from Combined Sewer Overflow (CSO) facilities.

It is my understanding that the Atlanta Region faces an aging infrastructure and rapid growth and that the City of Atlanta has committed $1 billion in local funds to go directly to the combined sewer system and other watershed restoration initiatives.

It is my understanding as well that the House of Representatives has recommended that $1 million be appropriated for this project, and I ask that

the Chairman give every possible consideration to this amount during Conference considerations. Also, I would ask that fair and appropriate consideration be given to an even greater sum.

Mr. BOND. I understand the difficulties the Atlanta Region faces due to an aging infrastructure and a rapidly growing population, and I commend Senator COVERDELL's advocacy and commitment on its behalf.

Mr. COVERDELL. I thank the Chairman for his consideration and look forward to working with him on this project.

SWIFT BUILDING IN MOULTRIE, GEORGIA

Mr. CLELAND. Mr. President, I rise today in hopes of engaging the Chairman, Senator BOND, and Ranking Member, Senator MIKULSKI in a colloquy regarding a project of extreme concern and importance to me, specifically the Swift Building in Moultrie, Georgia.

Mr. BOND. I am glad to discuss this matter with Senator CLELAND.

Ms. MIKULSKI. I, too, welcome this discussion with my colleague.

Mr. CLELAND. I thank my distinguished colleagues. The Swift Building is located in Moultrie, Georgia, an area that faces a poverty rate well above the national average. I was horrified to see the current state of this building. the building is not only completely dilapidated and partially torn down, but also contains major friable asbestos contamination as well as traces of cadmium and celenium—all of which present serious health risks to the residents of the surrounding community. Senator MIKULSKI, you were kind enough to take the time to review this project with me. Would you agree that the Swift Building presents this community with a serious problem—one that needs and deserves immediate attention.

Ms. MIKULSKI. I strongly agree with my colleague. I was also startled by the graphic nature of the state of this building. Not only does this building present severe health concerns to local residents, but what makes this building even more disconcerting is the fact that it is located right beside U.S. highway 319, which, as I understand, is the main thoroughfare running directly into the center of Moultrie.

Mr. CLELAND. The Senator is correct. The building with its major friable asbestos is not only located right along this major highway, but the exposure to this migratory hazard has been further exacerbated by the partial destruction of this building. As I mentioned earlier, the Swift Building is located in a severely economically depressed area, so without federal assistance the health and economic consequences it presents will remain unaddressed. As you know, the Administration has stated its strong opposition to the exclusion of funding for the Redevelopment of Abandoned Building Program. The purpose of this new program is to address the blight caused by abandoned apartment buildings, single family homes, warehouses, office buildings and commercial centers. I believe that the Swift Building provides an ideal example of the type of project well suited for this program. Although I was greatly disappointed that I was unable to have my amendment accepted to obtain this critical funding, I will be glad to withdraw my amendment if I can get the assurances of the Chairman and Ranking Member that if funding is provided for the Redevelopment of Abandoned Buildings during conference with the House, this project will be given high priority.

Mr. BOND. I appreciate the Senator's cooperation and understand his concern about this project. Rest assured that when we reach conference with the House, we will give this project strong consideration for funding.

Ms. MIKULSKI. I also pledge to work to seek funding for this critical project during conference with the House.

Mr. CLELAND. I thank the distinguished Chair and Ranking member for their time and assistance in this matter.

THE SWIFT PLANT

Mr. COVERDELL. Mr. President, I rise to request that the Chairman of the Senate Appropriation Subcommittee on VA, HUD and Independent Agencies help me to clarify the use of appropriated funds under the Department of Housing and Urban Development. It is my understanding that certain discretionary funds are available for projects.

Mr. BOND. The Senior Senator from Georgia is correct.

Mr. COVERDELL. The Town of Moultrie, Georgia, founded in 1856, has served as an agricultural center for surrounding farms and related industry. Unlike many small towns, Moultrie has managed to avoid population losses, which is mostly attributable to its livable, high quality residential neighborhoods, historical county seat and active community development efforts. It is my understanding that Moultrie is seeking to promote revitalization and economic development that will raise the standard of living of town residents whose per capita income level is only 75% of the country's and 56% of the state's level.

In doing so Moultrie faces two key economic development issues. First, is the need to revitalize its downtown to retain retail businesses and attract new retail businesses. Second is the need for attractive industrial and business sites to retain existing, as well as draw new businesses and industry.

It is also my understanding that Moultrie's downtown economic development is stymied by an obsolescent industrial and commercial district located between the central historic Courthouse Square and the main entry to the town from Interstate 75. This is a brownfields district typical of smaller, older towns. It contains vacant and under-utilized land and buildings along a railroad, and substandard housing interspersed within a grid of city streets. The most visible problem in the district is the former Swift Plant, once one of the largest pork processing plants in the south. Today its largest building is partially demolished and the site contains documented soil and groundwater contamination. The 250 acre brownfield district in which the Swift Plant is located, has other contaminated properties and yields little tax revenue. No new businesses have located within the district in many years, and many of the existing businesses are considering relocating due to the area's low level of development.

It is my understanding that Moultrie has developed an economic redevelopment initiative to revitalize Moultrie's brownfields district and strengthen the city economy, and they have requested federal funding to proceed. Central to this plan is the complete demolition of the Swift Plant.

Mr. Chairman, based on what criteria do you consider projects such as this?

Mr. BOND. Strong community support, the creation of public/private partnerships and a financial commitment by the local entities are criteria that I believe illustrate a project's importance and vialbility.

Mr. COVERDELL. I thank the Chairman for his assistance and look forward to working with him on this important matter.

STATE VETERANS HOMES

Mr. HATCH. Mr. President, I appreciate the leadership of Senator BOND and Senator MIKULSKI on this appropriations bill. I know that this has been a very difficult process, and I appreciate their efforts.

I would like to bring to the attention of the United States Senate a situation that is of great concern to me: long-term care for our veterans. In my state of Utah, we have a nursing home that is owned and operated by the State of Utah. This nursing home was certified by the Department of Veterans' Affairs and received monthly per diem payments, which comprise nearly half of the nursing home's budget.

Although the nursing home was certified in January, it did not see a single per diem payment from the Department of Veterans' Affairs until June. The payment for February and March also arrived in June; payment for April and May came in late June. The June payment was supposedly sent by the Department of Veterans' Affairs, but it still has not been received. Payment of per diem for July and August was received in September.

I understand that other veterans homes around the country have similarly suffered from delayed and sporadic per diem payments.

To me, this is a fairly clear picture that the administration of per diem payments needs to be improved. I cannot believe that each and every payment for nine months is being deliberately held up because the veterans home is guilty of some unnamed compliance problem. In fact, the VA itself has advised me that this is not the case at least with respect to the Utah veterans home.

Let me be clear that I do not intend that deficient veterans homes are let off the hook. We expect accountability. I urge the VA not only to enforce applicable standards, but also to assist state veterans homes to meet these standards for care of our veterans.

But, I hope that the VA will give attention to designing a better system of payments so that state veterans homes can more effectively manage their resources and, therefore, provide better and more consistent care for our veterans.

Mr. BOND. I agree that the Department of Veterans Affairs should never put the State veterans homes in a fiscally vulnerable position and, therefore, possibly compromise the quality of care for our veterans. I have several veterans nursing homes in my State in Missouri, and I believe that they deserve prompt per diem payments.

However, I also do not wish to hinder the VA from enforcing applicable standards for care in these state veterans homes. Does the Senator from Utah agree?

Mr. HATCH. Absolutely. The VA should certify homes as it has always done. Homes that are seriously deficient should be decertified. Technical assistance should be offered to homes having difficulty.

But, I would hope that proper quality control by the VA could be done in such a way so as not to unnecessarily disrupt the flow of payments to the home. Does the distinguished Senator from Missouri agree that a state veterans home cannot be effectively managed if the federal funds that are promised come in a haphazard manner?

Mr. BOND. Yes, I do. I recognize that irregular payment or per diem can complicate the remediation of existing problems as well as possibly cause others. Does the Senator from Utah agree that the VA should have some leverage in order to get prompt action to correct deficiencies in patient care or safety?

Mr. HATCH. Yes. I agree that withholding per diem can be an appropriate action if the VA has previously notified the state veterans home that there are specific problems. The homes should have an opportunity to correct those problems so as not to miss a scheduled payment.

I also believe that if a state veterans home is recalcitrant in making improvements where necessary, either for substantive patient care or for administrative purposes, the VA should decertify the home. If violations are serious enough to withhold payments for a prolonged period of time, they are serious enough to warrant decertification.

I hope, however, that my colleagues will agree that state veterans homes cannot be effectively managed if the federal government is so unreliable in making these per diem payments. In the absence of any substantive quality issues, state veterans homes should be able to expect prompt payment. It is a promise we have made, and it is necessary that we keep it to maintain consistent and high quality of care for our veterans. That, I believe, is the goal we all share.

Mr. President, in deference to the members of the Senate Veterans' Affairs Committee, I will not offer my amendment to require the Veterans' Administration to pay the per diem it owes to fully certified state veterans homes.

However, I want the record to show that this amendment is cosponsored by Senator CRAPO, Senator SNOWE, Senator COLLINS, and Senator CRAIG. It has the support of the National Association of State Veterans Homes and the American Legion.

Mr. President, for too long, state veterans homes have been getting that age-old promise from the federal government that the check is in the mail.

In my home state of Utah, the Utah State Veterans Nursing Home has experienced tremendous difficulties in receiving per diem payments from the Department of Veterans Affairs. The Utah veterans home was certified in January 1999. But it did not see a single payment from the Department of Veterans Affairs until June 1999—six months.

Now, I ask my colleagues: what business can go without payment for six months without having to cut corners or stiff its own creditors? How are these veterans homes supposed to provide quality care if they do not know from month to month what their operating budget will be? How are they going to pay their personnel, their food service providers, linen services, and so on. How are they going to pay for routine repairs on the plant? The VA simply has to find a way to get these payments out on time.

In Utah's situation, the per diem payment for April and May came in late June. The payment for June still has not been received. The July and August payments were received in September.

Let me be clear about this point. The Department of Veterans Affairs was not withholding those funds because of quality of care or compliance problems in the Utah veterans' nursing home or because of the lack of funds.

On the contrary, the VA was forthright in saying that the paperwork got lost on somebody's desk. Now, I can understand that, and I certainly want to say that I appreciate getting an honest explanation for this. I have lost things, and I am sure all Senators have lost things from time to time.

My problem, however, is that this clearly was not a one-time occurrence. These late payments have become the rule not the exception, and the Utah veterans home has not been the only victim. I understand that veterans nursing homes all over the country have had to suffer these late per diem payments and that veterans homes in Oregon and Maine, for example, have had similar difficulties. As a veterans nursing home operator in Maine put it, ''It is something that we have learned to live with.''

Mr. President, maintaining a quality nursing care facility is a difficult enough job as it is without the federal government imposing the additional burden of not getting the funds out to these state veterans homes on time.

Our veterans homes should not have to ''learn to live with it.'' If the federal government has taken on this responsibility, then it needs to deliver. If the VA cannot fulfill this obligation under existing law, then it should report to the Veterans' Affairs Committees of the Senate and House and seek assistance to do so.

These state veterans homes are simply too critical a component in our effort to care for America's elderly veterans. By giving these state veterans homes short shrift, we give our veterans short shrift. I know that this is not what the VA intends.

It has been argued that the VA needs the authority to withhold per diem payments as leverage for corrective action taken by homes that may have compliance problems.

Mr. President, I absolutely agree that the VA should enforce the applicable quality standards for these veterans homes. I modified my amendment to address this concern. Deficiencies that affect patient care and safety should be promptly corrected, and my amendment allows the VA to withhold per diem payments is such deficiencies have been identified and the home is notified about them in writing prior to the due date of the expected payment. This would provide the home the opportunity to act on the deficiencies so as not to miss a payment.

Additionally, I believe that serious and ongoing deficiencies warrant decertification. No state veterans home that is not certified should receive payments.

But, Mr. President, neither we here in the Senate, nor the VA, should forget that the effective management of these veterans facilities needs reliable funding. We cannot expect the best quality of care for our veterans if the state veterans home is receiving only sporadic per diem payments. The haphazard manner in which the VA has made per diem payments has itself become a cause for concern about quality in these homes.

I trust that the VA, given the impetus of this amendment, will take steps to improve this payment process and get the per diem payments out on time.

Moreover, I urge my colleagues on the Veterans' Affairs' Committee to take a serious look at this issue.

UPPER MIDWEST AEROSPACE CONSORTIUM

Mr. DORGAN. Mr. President, about four years ago I hosted NASA Director Dan Goldin at the University of North Dakota where he met with representatives from universities in Montana, North and South Dakota, Idaho and Wyoming. We felt it was important to meet with Mr. Goldin to explore ways in which NASA satellite data could be

helpful to the public in a region which has always seemed so far removed from the activities of NASA.

Over the course of these four years, I believe NASA has been very impressed with the innovations of this group, called the Upper Midwest Aerospace Consortium. UMAC's primary focus has been to make NASA data useful to the public, particularly farmers, ranchers, resource managers, educators, and small businesses. For example, noxious weed detection through the NASA satellite data has had an astounding effect on eradicating and stemming the spread of noxious weeds on cattle rangelands; wheat farmers have planned their fertilizer applications to optimize their crop yields; and teachers and teacher-educators have prepared geographic information systems that bring modern spatial technologies to rural classrooms.

All of these innovations and uses have been the result of three grants that UMAC has won competitively through NASA's peer review process. The organization has now proven its value in a region where NASA's presence had previously been nearly nonexistent. It has reached the juncture where it must achieve the stability that only a long-term commitment by NASA can ensure.

Mr. President, the distinguished Senator from Maryland and Ranking Minority Member of the VA–HUD Appropriations Subcommittee is well acquainted with the value of NASA's presence in her own state. Now we in the upper Midwest have developed the nucleus for NASA to create a center which would support and advance NASA activities in our region.

The report accompanying this bill contains language urging NASA to consider creating a permanent center in the upper Midwest. While it is difficult to find funds in this bill for this purpose, I would urge the Senate to provide $1 million during conference on the bill toward the establishment of UMAC as a permanent entity to continue its work with NASA and the public.

Ms. MIKULSKI. The Senator from North Dakota is absolutely correct in his observation about the need for NASA to share the value of its data and its expertise with all Americans. The states represented in UMAC are the most distant from any existing NASA Center, so the idea of strengthening this organization for long-term service to this region is justified, and I pledge to work to achieve this goal during Conference.

Mr. DORGAN. I appreciate the support of the Senator from Maryland for the Upper Great Plains Aerospace Consortium and I thank her for her comments.

TUBMAN AFRICAN AMERICAN MUSEUM

Mr. CLELAND. Mr. President, I rise today in hopes of engaging the Ranking Member, Senator Mikulski, in a discussion about a project of great importance to me and the citizens of Macon, Georgia, specifically the Tubman African American Museum.

Ms. MIKULSKI. I am glad to discuss this matter with my colleague.

Mr. CLELAND. I thank the distinguished ranking Member. The Tubman African American Museum, located in Macon was founded in 1981. The Museum is dedicated to educating people about all aspects of African American art, history, and culture. In addition to its permanent and visiting art exhibits, the museum hosts concerts, plays, celebrity storytelling and frequent lectures by well-known authors. The benefits from these programs and others is not only to enhance the cultural opportunities for local residents, but also to showcase the significance of the social, cultural, and historical influence of African American culture on our society. I strongly support the Tubman African American Museum and believe that it strongly contributes to the education and understanding of both local citizens and visitors to the Macon area. This museum also has the strong support of the local community in Macon as well as prominent leaders in Georgia, including former Governor Zell Miller, Senator Sam Nunn, Macon's Mayor Jack Ellis and Macon's former Mayor Jim Marshall.

The amendment that I have filed before the Senate would provide $2 million for the purposes of relocating and expanding the Tubman African American Museum. The proposed new facility is estimated to cost $15 million. The City of Macon and Bibb County have proven their commitment and support for this project by already providing $775,000 for the project's feasibility study and to purchase property in downtown Macon, the selected site for this project. Senator MIKULSKI, I recognize the budget constraints that you and Senator BOND are facing in trying to consider many valuable projects that deserve funding. With this recognition, I will be glad to withdraw my amendment. I simply ask that should additional funding become available during conference with the House, I would greatly appreciate this project be given strong consideration for funding.

Ms. MIKULSKI. I thank Senator CLELAND for his cooperation and assure him that during conference with the House, this project will be given every consideration for funding.

Mr. CLELAND. I thank the distinguished Ranking Member.

TUBMAN MUSEUM

Mr. COVERDELL. Mr. President, I rise today to express my support of the Tubman Museum in Macon, Georgia and, with the help of Chairman Bond of the VA–HUD Appropriations Subcommittee, to clarify the use of Community Development Block Grants and the importance of projects such as the Tubman African Museum to create an economic development opportunity as well as to commemorate an important historical figure such as Harriet Tubman.

It is my understanding that Community Development Block Grants can be made available to projects that create jobs, fill community needs, eliminate physical or economic distress. Is this correct, Mr. Chairman?

Mr. BOND. The Senior Senator from Georgia is correct.

Mr. COVERDELL. It is my understanding that the Tubman African American Museum fulfills all of the criteria requirements for such grants and have supplied the Chairman with supporting evidence of the museum's qualifications.

Mr. BOND. That is correct.

Mr. COVERDELL. Today, the Tubman Museum is Georgia's largest African American museum and one of Macon's top downtown tourist attractions. In just five years, the museum's visitors have increased from less than 5,000 in 1992 to over 65,000 in 1997.

It is my understanding that the requested $5.2 million would go towards the development of a new museum facility in Macon, Georgia to meet the expansion needs and the cultural, educational, social and economic needs of the City of Macon.

It is also my understanding that the Tubman Museum may become a Conference issue, and I ask every possible consideration be given to the request.

Mr. BOND. I appreciate Senator COVERDELL's dedication and efforts on behalf of the Tubman African American Museum and look forward to working with him on this project.

Mr. COVERDELL. I thank the Chairman for his consideration and for his hard work on the committee.

• Mr. MCCAIN. Mr. President, I introduced an amendment to the Fiscal Year 2000 VA–HUD Appropriations bill that would have provided the Department of Veterans Affairs with a new flow of non-appropriated revenues, thereby benefiting all American veterans who rely on the agency's services. This legislation would improve the VA's ability to collect insurance costs from third-party providers. Currently, the VA collects only about one-third of the money it is owed by private insurers through its Medical Care Cost Recovery (MCCR) program. The Independent Budget prepared by AMVETS, Disabled American Veterans, Paralyzed Veterans of America, and Veterans of Foreign Wars explicitly calls for Congress to give VA the authority to privatize MCCR. My legislation would require the VA to privately contract for these collections for a period of three years, during which the VA would develop an internal process to improve medical cost recovery.

Unfortunately, I could not obtain the concurrence of the Chairmen of the VA–HUD Appropriations Subcommittee or the Veterans Affairs Committee to attach my amendment to this bill. Nonetheless, I will continue to fight for this proposal, as I believe it is a potential source of considerable revenue for the chronically underfunded VA. Senate Veterans Affairs

Committee Chairman SPECTER has told me that this is an important amendment, and that his committee would give full consideration to my free-standing legislation on VA medical cost collection. I look forward to working with him, our veterans service organizations, and other Members of Congress to require the VA to improve its ineffective and delinquent medical cost collection program. Doing so should help us move the VA budget closer to the $20 billion target identified by those who speak for America's veterans as necessary for sustaining our commitment as a nation to care for those who have honorably served her in uniform.●

● Mr. MCCAIN. Mr. President, I want to thank both Senator BOND and Senator MIKULSKI for their hard work on this important legislation which provides federal funding for the Departments of Veterans Affairs (VA) and Housing and Urban Development (HUD), and Independent Agencies. However, once again, I find myself in the unpleasant position of speaking before my colleagues about unacceptable levels of parochial projects in this appropriations bill. Although the total level of pork-barrel spending in this bill is down from last year's total of $607 million, this bill still contains nearly $470 million in wasteful, pork barrel spending. This is an unacceptable amount of low priority, unrequested, wasteful spending.

The total value of specific earmarks in the Veterans Affairs section of this bill is about $80 million, $30 million more than last year.

Let me review some examples of items included in the bill. An especially troublesome expense, neither budgeted for nor requested by the Administration for the past eight years, is a provision that directs the Department of Veterans Affairs to continue the eight-year-old demonstration project involving the Clarksburg, West Virginia VAMC and the Ruby Memorial Hospital at West Virginia University. Two years ago, the VA–HUD appropriations bill contained a plus-up of $2 million to the Clarksburg VAMC that ended up on the Administration's line-item veto list and that the Administration had concluded was truly wasteful.

Like the transportation and military construction bills, the VA appropriations funding bill is a convenient vehicle to add building projects to the President's budget request. For example, the bill adds $10 million in funding for a new National Cemetery in Oklahoma City/Fort Sill, Oklahoma. Although this is a worthy cause, I wonder how many other national cemetery projects in other States were passed over to ensure that Oklahoma's cemetery received the VA's highest priority. Another project added to the bill was $3.9 million to convert unfinished space into research laboratories at the ambulatory care addition of the Harry S. Truman VAMC in Columbia, Missouri.

In the area of critical VA grant funding, again, certain projects in key members' states received priority billing, including $50 million added and made available to replace the boiler plant and construct a dietary facility at the Southeastern Veterans Center/Pennsylvania State Veterans Home in Spring City, Pennsylvania. Both projects were rejected by the Department of Veterans Affairs as wasteful spending of taxpayers dollars. Furthermore, the Department told the Committee that the responsibility for maintenance, repair, and replacement of boiler power plants is the responsibility of the State of Pennsylvania.

Grant money totaling $14 million is added and made available for cemeteries in Bloomfield and Jacksonville, Missouri. Again, I am sure that these are two worthwhile cemetery projects, but they push aside higher priority cemetery grants, including one in my State of Arizona.

Earmarks aside—there are many good things about this bill.

Over the past four years, veterans' health care funding has been virtually flat. This funding level has occurred as our veterans population is aging and in need of greater long-term health care that is often more expensive. Earlier this year, several key veterans organizations (the Disabled American Veterans, AMVETS, Paralyzed Veterans of America, and Veterans of Foreign Wars) reported in the ''Independent Budget'' that President Clinton's budget is $3 billion less than is necessary to maintain current health care services to our nation's veterans. Furthermore, the American Legion has also been proactive with veterans nationwide and in discussions with me regarding the severe inadequacies in veterans health care.

I was proud when the Senate passed legislation that Senator WELLSTONE and I sponsored earlier this year to add $3 billion in budget authority for veterans health care and I felt that we had the commitment of the Senate, with a solid vote of 99–0.

Last week, I wrote to the Chairmen of the Senate Committee on Appropriations and VA–HUD Appropriations Subcommittee to ask that they increase critical veterans health care funding that is not contained in the President's budget. Unfortunately, the bill as reported only included $1.1 billion.

When the bill was brought to the Senate, I sponsored legislation with Senator BYRD that added $600 million and another critical amendment by Senator WELLSTONE that added an additional $1.3 billion to veterans health care. Unfortunately, the latter failed to pass. Although Senator BYRD's amendment designates additional veterans funding under an emergency designation of the Balanced Budget Act, I agree with Chairman STEVENS' statement that we should find the additional $600 million in funding from other than emergency designation. Such funding will prove instrumental to ensuring that quality health care is delivered in a timely manner in our nation's VA medical care facilities and preventing the continued curtailment of essential veterans programs and services.

As I travel across the country, I am overwhelmed by the concerns of veterans regarding the poor health care situation in VA facilities. I am happy with the support and leadership that Senator BOND has provided in supporting a $1.7 billion plus-up to President Clinton's veterans budget and commend him on his efforts. But more remains to be done. And I pledge to do everything in my power to correct this injustice in veterans health care funding in the future.

This bill also contains the funding for the Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) which is responsible for many programs vital in meeting the housing needs of our nation and for the revitalization and development of our communities. The programs administered by HUD help our nation's families purchase their homes, assists many low-income families obtain affordable housing, combats discrimination in the housing market, assists in rehabilitating neighborhoods and helps our nation's most vulnerable—the elderly, disabled and disadvantaged have access to safe and affordable housing.

While many of the programs funded in this portion of the bill are laudable, I am deeply concerned about the number of earmarks in this section of the bill. I will highlight just a few of the more egregious violations of the budgetary review process. These include:

Six pages of earmarks dictating how a large portion of the Community Development Block Grant money must be allocated. This is inappropriate and a direct violation of the appropriate budgetary process. More importantly, it diverts critical funds from many communities which need the funding for local development programs but are excluded from the funds because of these egregious earmarks.

For example:

$1.7 million is earmarked for the Sheldon Jackson College Auditorium in Sitka, AK for refurbishing.

$1 million is set aside for the construction of a fire station project in Logan, UT.

$1.2 million of CDBG funds are earmarked for renovating a gateway to historic downtown Madison, MS.

$1.75 million for the University of Nevada in Reno, NV for the Structures Laboratory.

$1.25 million for the revitalization of the Route 1 corridor.

$3.5 million for the University of Alaska Fairbanks Museum.

These are a few of the many earmarks in housing which put aside money for specific projects and bypass the open, competitive process of selecting the most urgent and worthy projects, thereby limiting the funds available to communities around the country who are not fortunate enough to reside in a community with a Senator on the Appropriations Committee.

In total, $93.2 million of the $4.8 billion for CDBG is earmarked for projects selected for special set-asides.

Contained in both the bill and the Senate report is an exemption for Alaska and Mississippi from the requirement to have a public housing resident serving on the board of directors of PHAs for FY 2000.

Also contained in the bill is a provision preventing Peggy A. Burgin from being disqualified on the basis of age from residing at Clark's Landing in Groton, VT. While I do not know the specifics of this situation, I do know that providing relief to a specific individual is no more appropriate than providing funding for a specific project or entity.

This bill also funds the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) which provides critical resources to help state, local and tribal communities enhance capacity and infrastructure to better address their environmental needs. Protection of the environment is among our highest responsibilities. I strongly support directing more resources to communities that are most in need and facing serious public health and safety threats from environmental problems. Unfortunately, after a close review of this year's Senate bill and report for EPA programs, I find it difficult to believe that we are responding to the most urgent and pressing environmental issues. Instead, I am disturbed by the continuing trend to focus spending on more parochial interests rather than on environmental priorities. In this year's bill and report, I found nearly $207 million in unrequested, locality-specific, and low-priority earmarks.

There are many environmental needs in communities back in my home state of Arizona but these communities will be denied funding as long we continue to tolerate egregious earmarking that circumvents a regular merit-review process. For example, earmarks are directed in the amount of $750,000 for painting and coating compliance enhancement project at the Iowa Waste Reduction Center and an extra $200,000 for the University of Missouri-Rolla to work with the Army to validate soysmoke as a replacement for petroleum fog oil in obscurant smoke used in battlefield exercises. While these projects may be important, there is no explanation provided as to why the Administration did not prioritize them as part of its budget or why these projects rank higher than other environmental priorities.

The subcommittee also saw fit to provide $400,000 for a Sound Program Office in Long Island, New York. While this project may have merit, I cannot understand why we should spend almost half a million dollars on a project which does not appear to be related to an environmental issue.

Furthermore, this bill directs more funding toward universities for research or consortia rather than directing resources to local communities for environmental protection. For independent agencies such as the National Aeronautics and Space Administration (NASA), this bill also includes earmarks of money for locality-specific projects such as $3 million for a hands-on science center in Huntsville, Alabama, and $14 million for infrastructure needs of the Life Sciences building at the University of Missouri-Columbia. For the National Science Foundation (NSF), there is $10 million added for the Plant Genome Research Program.

The examples of wasteful spending that I have highlighted are only a few of the examples of earmarks and special projects contained in this measure. There are many more low-priority, wasteful, and unnecessary projects on the extensive list I have compiled. The full list is on my website.

In closing, I urge my colleagues to develop a better standard to curb our habit of directing hard-earned taxpayer dollars to locality-specific special interests so that instead, we can serve the national interest.●

Mr. DORGAN. Mr. President, I rise today to say a few words about the Department of Housing and Urban Development's (HUD) Community Builders Program. Community Builders are providing an important customer service, and have been a key component of HUD's outreach efforts in rural states like North Dakota. As Mayor Carroll Erickson of Minot said: ''Through the Community Builders, HUD has become more accessible to communities such as Minot and to rural states like North Dakota. This program is very effective and it should be retained.'' Or, as Grand Forks Mayor Pat Owens said: ''HUD's increased outreach and consultation with non-traditional smaller communities is absolutely the right direction.''

Mr. President, the Community Builders program was part of HUD's successful reorganization effort. Community Builders in North Dakota provide technical assistance that is absolutely vital to rural communities. Those who have used the program have praised it as an example of government's ability to provide helpful, efficient customer service.

It would be a shame, Mr. President, for this successful program to be terminated even as it is starting to yield results. I urge the conferees to strongly support this program. I urge them to enable HUD's Community Builders to continue their important work of serving America's rural and urban communities.

Mr. ROBB. Mr. President, I'd like to take just a few moments to express my concern about the funding of the Round II Empowerment Zones. I recognize how difficult your job is to balance all the priorities within the VA–HUD appropriations bill, but I want to make the managers of this legislation aware of how important Empowerment Zones are to communities nationwide. While I will continue to seek a bill that will enact full funding of the Round II Empowerment Zones, we need to make sure there are adequate funds to continue the economic revitalization efforts this year.

Quite simply, the Round II Empowerment Zones and Enterprise Communities represent a commitment made by the Congress in the 1997 Taxpayer Relief Act which approved a second round of competition for 20 new empowerment zone designations. Congress did not follow through with the grant money that complement the tax incentives that have already been approved. Without this funding, they will fall short of their goals, particularly in their ability to leverage funds.

The Empowerment Zone program is of special importance to me because of my support of the efforts of Virginia's Norfolk-Portsmouth Empowerment Zone. Norfolk-Portsmouth took the first step to reclaim their community when they won an Enterprise Community designation during Round I competition. When Congress approved the Round II competition two years ago, Norfolk-Portsmouth won an ''upgrade'' to full Empowerment Zone status. This means that Norfolk-Portsmouth has more resources to leverage millions in public and private sector investments. Continued funding means a more well-prepared workforce to complement the tax credits already approved to attract employers. And that's just scratching the surface of Norfolk-Portsmouth's potential. From May 1995 to June 1999, 60 percent of those completing training are employed, with another 16 percent involved in additional training. Other cities have shown results just as impressive within its first year: for example, in the Columbus Empowerment Zone in Ohio, they have so far created or retained 700 jobs in a zone that had a poverty rate of about 46 percent. Working with over 15 businesses in Columbus, they have already secured about $700 million in private sector commitments.

This type of investment in Norfolk-Portsmouth and other cities is an example of public-private partnerships at their very finest. Empowerment Zones work because people in the community—local government, the private sector and civic organizations work together to create a vision for their community and a strategic plan to achieve it. This kind of collaboration, designed and created for the people of the community by the people of the community, use public, private and non-profit funds to create economic and community revitalization.

Without question, our nation is experiencing good economic times. But if we are to include those who are striving mightily to also participate in our economic prosperity, the time to do so is now. One way we can do this is by supporting the work of the Round II designees.

With some additional appropriation in the VA–HUD bill, the Round II designees will have just enough to continue the work they're doing. The Administration is fully behind this effort and I understand they will be working on this issue with the Chair and Ranking Member.

I hope the money allotted to Round II Empowerment Zones in the Housing and Urban Development budget and approved by the President will be restored.

Mr. KENNEDY. Mr. President, I have several concerns about provisions in the pending bill, especially the failure to provide any housing vouchers and the termination of the community builders program.

We are all aware of the critical need for housing vouchers for low income families. Our nation is experiencing tremendous economic growth and expansion, with record low unemployment. Yet it is clear that for many families the cost of housing is still out of control.

In Boston, housing affordability is a problem for many families, and it is becoming a problem for businesses as well in their efforts to attract and retain employees.

The Clinton Administration has requested 100,000 new housing vouchers in this bill. Such vouchers will not solve the housing crisis, but for the families helped, this will go a long way toward stabilizing their families and helping them to lift themselves out of poverty to economic self-sufficiency. Yet this bill provides not one new voucher.

We are all aware of the budget constraints under which we are operating. Yet it is unacceptable not to find any resources to address this unmet need.

Another issue that deserves higher priority is the Community Builders program, which is an important element in making HUD a better, more effective, more customer-responsive agency.

The Community Builders program has helped improve the way HUD works and interacts with its customers and clients, the American people.

These Community Builders are people with impressive experience in the housing and community development world. Their expertise helps HUD to meet the needs of communities throughout our nation.

Now, however, after these Community Builders have been hired, and in many instances, relocated in order to serve the communities in which they are most needed, the pending bill proposes to eliminate funding for the program. This step would be a serious waste of the investment that has been made in hiring these qualified and talented men and women who are willing to share their expertise to improve the way HUD serves the American people.

I urge my colleagues to address both of these issues as the conference committee works to reconcile the House and Senate bills. At a time when Secretary Cuomo has taken such significant steps to improve the management of the agency, we should not undermine programs which are meeting important needs and improving the way HUD serves the American people.

Mr. CLELAND. Mr. President, I come before the Senate today to address an issue of critical importance for the people of my State of Georgia and the Nation. It is a matter of personal relevance to me. The issue is our treatment of our nation's veterans and particularly their health care.

Upon returning from Vietnam after sustaining my injuries, I was introduced to the VA system, where I received quality care from a VA hospital. It was then that my awareness of veterans and veterans issues took hold. Since then, not only have I been a patient, but I also had the honor of serving as the Administrator of the Veterans Administration during the Carter Administration.

This year has seen a welcome and overdue increase in attention to the plight of our nation's veterans. I salute the Chairmen and Ranking Members of the Appropriations Committee and the VA/HUD Subcommittee for their successful efforts to increase funding in this bill for veterans health care, and I regret that the Senator from Minnesota's attempts to provide an even more adequate boost in such funding were not approved.

I am particularly proud that earlier this year the Senate passed my legislation to establish new national cemeteries not only in Metro Atlanta, but also in Pennsylvania, Florida, California, and Michigan—the areas with the greatest documented need for such facilities. While I understand the difficult budgetary constraints which confronted the VA/HUD Subcommittee, I believe it is unfortunate that no funding or report language consistent with the authorizing legislation for new national cemeteries has been included. I have an amendment which would seek to correct this shortcoming, at least with respect to the Metro Atlanta cemetery.

I also introduced the Federal Civilian and Uniformed Services Long-Term Care Insurance Act of 1999. This legislation would provide the opportunity for Federal employees, as well as current and retired members of the uniformed services, to obtain long-term care insurance to assist them with nursing home or other long-term care. Working closely with the distinguished Ranking Member of the VA/HUD Subcommittee as well as a number of other Senators from both sides of the aisle, we are close to having a consensus bill which I hope will receive favorable Senate action in this Congress.

This year has also seen the passage of H.R. 1568, the Veterans Entrepreneurship and Small Business Development Act. Included in the bill is language from S. 918, the Military Reservists Small Business Relief Act, which I cosponsored. The bill provides financial and technical assistance to veteran-owned small businesses through the Small Business Administration (SBA). It also offers assistance to businesses owned by reservists during and following times of military conflict. America's reservists and veterans supported our nation, and it is now time for our nation to demonstrate its commitment to them and their small businesses.

We are here today, Mr. President, to debate and approve the VA/HUD appropriations budget for fiscal year 2000. It is with a renewed sense of hope that I will support this legislation, which will represent the first real increase for veterans programs after a five year flat-lined budget. The House has already supported the $1.7 billion increase for the VA, and with the Senate's earlier action on this bill, we are now in agreement with the House position.

The VA estimates that there are 25.6 million veterans in America. Our nation is proud to count within its population 3,400 World War I veterans, 5,940,000 World War II veterans, 4,064,000 Korean War veterans, 8,113,000 Vietnam War veterans, and 2,223,000 Gulf War veterans. My home state of Georgia has a veterans population of 667,128.

Department of Veterans Affairs facilities have grown over the years from 50 hospitals in 1930 to today's 171 medical centers, 350 outpatient, community, and outreach clinics and 126 nursing home care units.

The Department of Veterans Affairs has undergone many changes in recent years. I appreciate the general direction in which this agency is moving to answer the challenges of the new millennium. Unfortunately, these changes, exacerbated by under funding, have too frequently disrupted the service systems for our veterans. The VA has found cost savings and efficiencies in outpatient care, a departure from the long-term hospital care of the past. This shift allows the VA to reach beyond the normal geographic locations through Telemedicine and Telepharmacy to Medicare subvention. I support these proposals to move the VA beyond the large hospitals to more rural and small markets to provide access to all veterans.

Despite these new directions, there is still more to be done. As I stated, this is the first significant increase in the VA budget in five years. The department is seeing a rise in veterans seeking treatment because of the recently enacted VA enrollment plan and the aging of our veterans population. The VA estimates an increase in total patients to 3.6 million in 2000, up from 2.7 million in 1997. However, with this growing patient load, the VA is currently estimating a reduction in VA employment of up to 8,000 employees in the medical system alone. This fact was recently brought home to me by announcements of serious potential reductions in force at the VA in Augusta if the VA budget is not boosted.

As President Coolidge was quoted as saying, ''The nation which forgets its

defenders will be itself forgotten.'' Simply put, our veterans community—who won the two great World Wars of this Century, vanquished Saddam Hussein and Slobodan Milosevich, and served honorably and well in Korea and Vietnam—needs our support. Our former service members should not only be the first in our hearts, but the first in our priorities when it comes to keeping the promises of the nation. They kept their commitment to us, let us fulfill our promise to them. I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. If there are no further amendments, the question is on the engrossment of the amendments and third reading of the bill.

The amendments were ordered to be engrossed and the bill to be read a third time.

The bill was read a third time.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The bill having been read the third time, the question is, Shall the bill pass?

The bill (H.R. 2684), as amended, was passed.

Mr. STEVENS. I move to reconsider the vote.

Ms. MIKULSKI. I move to lay that motion on the table.

The motion to lay on the table was agreed to.

Mr. STEVENS. I ask unanimous consent the Senate insist on its amendment, request a conference with the House on the disagreeing votes of the two Houses thereon, and the Chair be authorized to appoint conferees on the part of the Senate.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection it is so ordered.

The Presiding Officer (Mr. BUNNING) appointed Mr. BOND, Mr. BURNS, Mr. SHELBY, Mr. CRAIG, Mrs. HUTCHISON, Mr. KYL, Mr. STEVENS, Ms. MIKULSKI, Mr. LEAHY, Mr. LAUTENBERG, Mr. HARKIN, Mr. BYRD and Mr. INOUYE conferees on the part of the Senate.

Mr. LOTT. Mr. President, before we leave the floor, I commend the chairman of the VA–HUD appropriations subcommittee, Mr. BOND, who put a lot of effort into getting this legislation ready to consider on the floor, and, as always, the very cooperative spirit and dedication of the ranking member, Senator MIKULSKI from Maryland. The two of them make a great team. They were able to move a very large bill with a lot of issues that could have been very difficult to deal with. I commend them.

Also, I thank the chairman of the full committee whom we have to call the ultimate player. He is chair of the full committee, chairman of the Defense Subcommittee, and he fills in on the VA–HUD subcommittee. I am sure he is watching the agriculture conference, the energy and water conference. A person has to be dexterous to be chairman of the committee. I commend Senator STEVENS for his willingness to do all of that and to be here to help wrap up this bill.

I thank the committee for their efforts.

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Mr. ENZI). The Senator from Maryland.

Ms. MIKULSKI. Mr. President, I, too, would like to express my very deep appreciation to the chairman of the full Appropriations Committee, Senator STEVENS, as well as the ranking member, Senator BYRD. On two occasions their direct intervention enabled us to move this bill, first to add the $7 billion, where we were below last year's funding. We were very appreciative because without that we could not have moved this or else we would have been in gimmicks and a variety of other things. Also, Senator STEVENS and Senator BYRD gave us the opportunity to add $600 million in veterans funding. Therefore no facility will be closed. We will be able to meet the needs of our veterans.

So I thank the Senator from Alaska as well as the Senator from West Virginia, Mr. BYRD, for helping us to move this bill. I also express my appreciation to Senator BOND for all his help in moving this bill, the consultation with the minority party, the collegial relationships, and essentially being able to meet the needs of the American people.

I thank Senator BOND's staff, Jon Kamarck, Carrie Apostolou, Cheh Kim, and Joe Norrell for all their hard work on this bill, and a special thanks to my own staff, Paul Carliner, Sean Smith, and Jeannine Schroeder.

I am proud of the bill we passed today because I believe it takes care of national interests and national needs. I also believe that this bill provides a solid bridge between the old century and the new century. In the old century, we saw the ravages of war and the ravages of the environment.

Now we are ready to complete our move from the industrial age to the information age, and the programs this bill funds will allow us to do that.

This bill provides an opportunity structure for home ownership and wider opportunities for educational advancement. In addition, it will allow us to stay the course in technology. Our mission is to honor the old century, but move swiftly into the new one.

The VA–HUD bill is about: meeting our obligations to our veterans, serving our core constituencies, creating real opportunity for people, and advancing science and technology.

Perhaps the most important is the need to ensure that we keep the promises we made to our veterans. The bill we passed today provides $19 billion in funding for veterans health care, and the Byrd-Bond-Mikulski-Stevens amendment provided $600 million in additional funding, an increase of $1.7 billion over the President's request. In addition, I am pleased that we were able to maintain funding for VA medical research at $316 million.

The VA plays a very important role in medical research for the special needs of our veterans, such as geriatrics, Alzheimers, Parkinson's and orthopedic research. The entire nation benefits from VA medical research—particularly as our population continues to age.

We also provide full funding to treat Hepatitis C, which is a growing problem among the veterans population, particularly for our Vietnam Veterans. This bill funds the State Veterans Homes at $90 million. The State Homes serve as our long-term care and rehabilitation facilities for our veterans. I am also pleased that the bill includes important language related to the Ft. Howard VA medical center that will ensure quality care during its transition to a mixed-use facility.

We have also made sure that we take care of our working families by funding housing programs that millions depend upon. The bill that we brought to the floor yesterday provides $10.8 billion to renew all existing section 8 housing vouchers. That means those who have vouchers will continue to receive them. I hope that should additional funding become available, we will be able to provide additional vouchers. I am pleased that we also maintained level funding for other critical core HUD programs.

Funding for housing for the elderly and the disabled has been increased by $50 million over last year, with additional funding for assisted living and service coordinators within the section 202 program. Homeless assistance grants are funded at the President's request.

In addition, we have funded drug elimination grants and Youthbuild at last year's level, and the Community Development Block Grant Program is funded at $4.8 billion.

I'm pleased that we were able to provide funds for several projects in my home state: $750,000 for the Patterson Park Community Development Corporation to establish a revolving fund to acquire and rehabilitate properties in East Baltimore; $1,250,000 for the University of Maryland—Eastern Shore for the development of a Coastal Ecology Teaching and Research Center; $1,250,000 for Prince Georges County for the revitalization of the Route 1 corridor. In addition, I have included report language that directs HUD to continue its efforts to bridge the information technology gap in communities through its ''Neighborhood Networks Initiative.''

The Neighborhood Networks Initiative brings computers and internet access to HUD assisted housing projects in low income communities. This will help us to ensure that every American has the ability to cross what Bill Gates has called the ''digital divide.'' I have seen the results of the Neighborhood Networks Initiative firsthand in Baltimore, and I look forward to seeing it in many other communities across the country.

With regard to NASA funding, I was extremely troubled by the House version of the bill. The House bill included devastating funding cuts to America's space agency, including the

Goddard Space Flight Center and Wallops Flight Facility. The House bill cuts 2,000 jobs at Goddard and Wallops. The Senate bill we pass today will save 2,000 jobs at Goddard and Wallops. I fought hard to restore funding for NASA, and I am truly pleased that this bill will save those jobs. NASA is fully funded in this bill, at $13.5 billion, the same as the President's request. Funding for the space shuttle, space station, and critical science programs are funded at the President's request.

National Service is funded at $423 million, a slight reduction from last year. I continue to hope that this funding can be increased as we move toward conference. National Service has enrolled over 100,000 members and participants across the country in a wide array of community service programs, including: AmeriCorps, Learn and Serve America, and the National Senior Service Corps.

With regard to the EPA, the Subcommittee has provided $7.3 billion in total funding. The Subcommittee increased funding for EPA's core environmental programs: $825 million for the drinking water state revolving fund, and $1.3 billion for the clean water revolving fund, including $5 million for sewer upgrades in Cambridge and Salisbury, Maryland.

Taking care of local communities infrastructure needs has always been a priority for me and this committee. We also provided $250,000 for a Kempton Mine remediation project. Superfund is funded at $1.4 billion, down slightly from last year.

I'm especially pleased that we were able to support the President's full request for the Chesapeake Bay Program Office—over $18 million—for FY 2000. The Chesapeake Bay Program Office is a leader in efforts to restore the Chesapeake Bay ecosystem for future generations. We also increased funding for the Chesapeake Bay Small Watershed Program that helps our small communities and prevents runoff and pollution.

FEMA has $1 billion in the disaster relief fund. The bill we pass today adds $300 million to the disaster relief fund. This will help people in the Eastern United States who are still dealing with the horrible aftermath of Hurricane Floyd. That is why I'm glad that this bill was passed, and that FEMA will continue to be able to help those who are affected by natural disasters. We will await any further Administration request for disaster assistance in light of Hurricane Floyd.

The National Science Foundation is funded at $3.9 billion, which is $250 million more than fiscal year 1999. This funding level will allow us to make critical investments in science and technology into the next century. The funding increase for NSF is an important step for maintaining our science and technology base.

Mr. President, I recognize that there may have been certain provisions in this bill that members may have disagreed with or opposed. I acknowledge their concerns. But I am very pleased that we worked together to pass this bill today, and I hope we can resolve any outstanding differences as this process continues. I believe the VA/HUD bill is good for Maryland, good for America, and good for the American people who rely on the programs it funds.

I thank Senator BOND and my colleagues once again for their support for this bill.

Mr. STEVENS. Mr. President, I see the distinguished Senator from West Virginia. Does he seek the floor?

Mr. BYRD. Yes.

Mr. STEVENS. I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from West Virginia is recognized.

Mr. BYRD. Mr. President, no Senator in this body exceeds the Senator from West Virginia in his appreciation of the work that the Senator from Alaska does as chairman of the Appropriations Committee. He is an outstanding chairman. I am proud to serve with him. He always works with me in these matters concerning allocations, and I cannot find the words to adequately praise him. He is doing an excellent job. No Senator in this body, including the Senator speaking, could ever be a better chairman of that committee than Senator STEVENS.

I served with a lot of chairmen of that committee over the years, but it is a two-way street. It is a team effort. This Senator contends it will always be that, whether I am ranking member or whether I am the chairman. I try to give my full cooperation to Senator STEVENS. We have never had a difference on the committee, not when I was chairman—he was not the ranking member at that time, but he has done an excellent job. He has seen the need to increase the amount of moneys for veterans' health care, and upon several occasions I have talked with him about the need to increase the amount. I took the lead, inside the committee, in increasing that amount by $1.1 billion. He fully supported me. It is the chairman, in the main, who decides how much money will be allocated to the various subcommittees. But I believe it is my job as ranking member to work with him. If I have any differences, I let him know, but I have never had any differences with Senator STEVENS.

So I wanted to add my compliments concerning the distinguished Senator. I also want to compliment Senator BOND, again, the chairman of the VA subcommittee, for the excellent work he has done on that subcommittee. I compliment the ranking member, Senator MIKULSKI, for the work she does. When she was chairman of that subcommittee, she was one of the best subcommittee chairmen—I don't say chairperson—she was one of the best chairmen that we had of any subcommittee.

I did not want this day to pass without this lowly ranking member having an opportunity to say some good words about the people who are entitled to commendation. It doesn't make any difference to me whether they are Republicans or Democrats. If they are entitled to commendation, I give it to them.

So I applaud you, Mr. Chairman, not only for doing a good job but for being the fair and considerate Senator that you are, and also a fair and considerate chairman as well. Again, I have to say some good words about Senator BOND, Senator MIKULSKI. They could not be better. They could not be more fair. They could not be more considerate.

They are hamstrung, as you are, Mr. Chairman, by the fact that we do not have enough money. I am for raising the caps. I am for telling the American people the truth. We need more money. Let's raise those caps. I am not a bit backwards about saying I support raising the caps. We have to meet the people's needs. I hope we will get around to that. I think we are going to have to do that before it is over.

I thank Senators for their patience for listening, but I wanted to get in my two cents' worth of commendations also.

Ms. MIKULSKI. I thank the Senator very much.

Mr. BYRD. I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Alaska.

Mr. STEVENS. I am sure Senator MIKULSKI and Senator BOND appreciate those kind words from the Senator from West Virginia as much as I do. I do thank the Senator for his cooperation and willingness to work with me as chairman of this committee. It is a distinct honor to follow him as chairman.

We should mention, on our side, the help of Paul Carliner, Jeannine Schroeder, and Sean Smith, who worked with Senator MIKULSKI. This has been a very fine working team. Senator BOND, Senator MIKULSKI, and the team of both the majority and minority have worked very hard to meet the needs of the agencies and the American people under this bill, under some very difficult circumstances in regard to ceilings and limits under which they had to live. I, again, emphasize the Budget Committee has filed a statement saying this bill is within the budget.

MEASURE PLACED ON THE CALENDAR—H.R. 1402

Mr. STEVENS. I now ask unanimous consent H.R. 1402 be placed on the calendar. That is the class 1 milk structure bill.

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

MORNING BUSINESS

Mr. STEVENS. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent the Senate proceed to a period of morning business, with Senators permitted to speak therein up to 10 minutes each.

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