

public may reach a contrary conclusion because the name of your bank was mentioned in public documents, but I again assure you that the indictment and public statements convey nothing more than a list of the Venezuelan banks through which undercover drug funds were laundered.

Please feel free to circulate the contents of this letter as you deem appropriate.

Sincerely,

L. JEFFREY ROSS,  
*Special Assistant to the  
Assistant Attorney General.*

#### DEPARTMENT OF DEFENSE APPROPRIATIONS

Mr. BINGAMAN. Madam President, Last week I offered an amendment on behalf of Senator DOMENICI and myself. It authorizes State and local transit authorities that receive Federal transit assistance to purchase transit buses through the General Services Administration. Because of GSA's limited experience with transit buses, the amendment provides for the pilot program to be managed by the Federal Transit Administration.

Currently only the Washington Metropolitan Area Transit Authority has the option to purchase buses through the General Services Administration. The pilot program would open up that option to other public transit agencies around the country that also receive Federal transit assistance. However, the pilot program is limited only to heavy-duty transit buses and intercity coaches. The initial pilot program would end on December 31, 2003.

The General Services Administration currently offers three heavy-duty transit buses and two intercity coaches. GSA selected these suppliers as a result of competitive solicitations, and the companies had to bid attractive terms and prices in order to win those 5-year contracts.

GSA intends to expand its existing sources of simply to a full multiple-award schedule with a larger variety of vehicles and choices of optional equipment. GSA indicates this process will take 12 to 18 months. Therefore, our amendment directs GSA to complete the multiple-award schedule by December 31, 2003, and authorizes state and local transit authorities that receive Federal transit assistance to purchase heavy-duty transit buses and intercity coaches off these GSA schedules. This authority would expire on December 31, 2006.

Allowing additional public transit agencies the option to purchase these buses from GSA could result in substantial options and prices would help streamline the procurement process, which could be especially valuable to some of the smaller communities. Purchasing buses through GSA will help stretch each dollar of Federal transit funding a little bit farther.

I believe it is very important to point out that this pilot program is limited only to transit buses and intercity coaches. It has no effect on companies that supply other types of buses or ve-

hicles, pharmaceuticals, or any other product that currently can be purchased through the General Services Administration. I believe transit buses are a unique situation. Purchases through the GSA should be allowed. There are only a few bus manufacturers in America today and most buses for public transit are purchased using Federal funds provided by the Federal Transit Administration.

Our bus manufacturers are not having an easy time. Our amendment will help expedite bus purchases by eliminating the cost of responding to myriad requests for proposals from public transit agencies. Our amendment will also help the public transit agencies by reducing the cost of preparing the requests for proposals and assessing the responses. I do believe this is a meritorious amendment. It is one I would very much like to see adopted as part of this legislation. I urge my colleagues to support it. The amendment has the support of the Federal Transit Administration, bus manufacturers, and public transit agencies across the Nation.

I ask unanimous consent that a letter from the American Public Transportation Association be printed in the RECORD.

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

AMERICAN PUBLIC TRANSPORTATION  
ASSOCIATION,  
*Washington, DC, December 7, 2001.*

HON. JEFF BINGAMAN,  
*Chairman, Committee on Energy and Natural  
Resources, Dirksen Senate Office Building,  
Washington, DC.*

DEAR MR. CHAIRMAN: I write regarding a provision the Senate is expected to take up as part of the defense appropriations bill that would allow recipients of funds under the federal transit program to purchase heavy-duty and intercity buses from the General Services Administration schedule of contracts.

The Business Member Board of Governors of the American Public Transportation Association (APTA) considered a similar provision in a meeting on Sunday, September 30, 2001. They voted in support of the measure.

Further, on December 7, 2001, APTA's Legislative Committee considered this new provision and unanimously agreed to support it. While APTA's governing body has not had an opportunity formally to consider the provision, our public transit members are supportive of measures that would simplify and standardize the federal procurement process, as this provision would do. We are particularly pleased to note that under the provision GSA, with assistance from the Federal Transit Administration, would be required to establish and publish a multiple award schedule for heavy-duty buses, which means that any heavy-duty or intercity bus manufacturer would be provided an opportunity to participate in the program.

Please have your staff contact Daniel Duff, APTA's Chief Counsel & Vice President, Government Affairs, should you have any questions about this matter. He may be reached at (202) 496-4860 or internet e-mail [dduff@apta.com](mailto:dduff@apta.com).

Sincerely yours,

WILLIAM W. MILLAR,  
*President.*

#### D.C. FAMILY COURT REFORM

Ms. LANDRIEU. Madam President, I would like to take this opportunity to note for the record a few important points. As you may know, the fiscal year 2002 Appropriations Act for the District of Columbia, which is on its way to the President's desk as we speak, included a total of \$24 million dollars for the purpose of funding the reforms provided for under the Family Court Reform Act of 2001. As Chairman and Ranking Member of the DC Appropriations Subcommittee, Senator DEWINE and I felt very strongly that these funds were a necessary prerequisite for the kind of change we envisioned. This money was provided to the Courts with the expectation that it would be used to affect this reform in the most immediate and effective way possible. Having worked with the Courts for the better part of this past year, we are confident that they will work diligently towards implementing a unified family court, staffed with highly trained and experienced judges, attorneys and court personnel. We expect that they will do their best to ensure that the this family court is structured in such a way as to reflect its founding principle, "One family, One Judge", a critical component in an effective child welfare system. And finally, we hope that the chief judge, the Child and Family Services Agency and others will go beyond the letter of the law and embrace its spirit, that the safety and well being of our children must remain our paramount concern.

With that said, I would like to make clear our intent in including language which restricts the total distribution of the \$24 million until the family court reform plan is received and reviewed by Congress. It should be noted that one hundred percent of the DC Superior Court's operating budget is paid for with Federal funds. Therefore, Congress has a unique obligation to ensure that the day-to-day operations of this court reflect the best practices in each and every area of law under its jurisdiction. The Family Court Reform Act of 2001 lays out a broad set of guidelines for the reform of the family court in the District. Under the provisions of the DC Appropriations bill, within 90 days of the date of its enactment, the Courts are to submit to congress a plan for the immediate transition to a unified family court system. Within 30 days of receipt of this report, the General Accounting Office is to provide Congress with an independent review of this plan. Finally, after a 30 day review period in Congress, the funds earmarked for family court reform are to be distributed to the Court and to the Mayor to implement these reforms.

Our intent in arranging the distribution of funds in this way was to ensure that the money added to the Court's budget for the purpose of family court reform would remain available to carry out the reform plan. In the short time since the congress passed the DC Appropriations conference report, modification to the authorization bill have