

The Attorney General's action concerns me greatly. I was pleased to co-sponsor the Use NICS in Terrorist Investigations Act introduced by Senators KENNEDY and SCHUMER. This legislation would codify the 90-day period for law enforcement to retain and review NICS data. The need for this legislation was highlighted late last year when the Attorney General denied the Federal Bureau of Investigation access to the NICS database to review for gun sales to individuals they had detained in response to the September 11th terrorist attacks and refused to take a position on an amendment which would authorize that access.

Senator REED's Gun Show Background Check Act, which is supported by the International Association of Chiefs of Police, would extend the Brady Bill background check requirement to all sellers of firearms at gun shows. I cosponsored it because it is vital that we do all we can to prevent guns from getting into the hands of criminals and terrorists.

I urge my colleagues to consider these important pieces of gun safety legislation not only to protect our children from gun accidents and criminal use, but also to limit easy access to dangerous weapons by people who would seek to threaten our Nation's security.

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#### TRIBUTE TO COMMANDER JEFFERY FREEMAN

Mr. COCHRAN. Mr. President, I am pleased to congratulate Commander Jeffery Freeman upon the completion of his career of service in the United States Navy. Throughout his 21 year military career, Commander Freeman served with distinction and dedication.

Continuing a family tradition of Naval Service since World War I, Jeff received his commission from the U.S. Naval Academy in 1981 and went on to earn his Naval Flight Officer Wings. Jeff served in four maritime patrol squadrons as a Patrol Plan Tactical Coordinator, Mission Commander, and ultimately as Officer-in-Charge, flying over 3,500 hours in the P-3 Orion aircraft, deploying to remote locations around world, and flying hundreds of hours tracking Soviet and other foreign submarines. Jeff served as a legislative fellow in my office, and he has served in the Navy Appropriations Liaison Office providing support to both the U.S. Senate and U.S. House of Representatives.

His family and his fellow shipmates can be proud of his distinguished service. Commander Freeman, his wife Annemarie of Biloxi, and their four children, have made many sacrifices during his Naval career, and we appreciate their contribution of conscientious service to our country. As he departs the Pentagon to start his second career, I call upon my colleagues to wish Jeff and his family every success, and the traditional Navy "fair winds and following seas."

#### VETERANS' BENEFITS ACT OF 2002, S. 2237

Mr. DAYTON. Mr. President, I rise today to applaud the Senate's action last night when it passed S. 2237, the Veterans' Benefits Act of 2002. This important legislation will make much-needed improvements to veterans' disability compensation payments, Medal of Honor pensions, housing benefits, claims adjudications, and education benefits through increased funding for State Approving Agencies. I strongly urge the President to sign this bill into law as quickly as possible.

I am pleased this bill also includes an important provision that will expand the civil protections provided to members of the National Guard under the Soldiers' and Sailors' Civil Relief Act of 1940. I worked closely on this provision with its sponsor, Senator Paul Wellstone. My late friend and colleague from the State of Minnesota was an outspoken advocate on behalf of America's veterans throughout his service in the Senate. The Wellstone-Dayton provision in this bill will better protect members of the National Guard in Minnesota and around the country. The provision specifies that National Guard members mobilized for more than 30 days by a state at the request of the Federal Government to respond to a national emergency be allowed protections under the Soldiers' and Sailors' Civil Relief Act during their duty.

The Soldiers' and Sailors' Civil Relief Act allows America's military personnel to have their legal rights secured until they can return from the military to defend themselves. It covers such issues as rental agreements, security deposits, prepaid rent, evictions, installment contracts, credit card interest rates, mortgage interest rates, mortgage foreclosures, civil judicial proceedings, and income tax payments. One of the most widely known benefits under the act, for example, is the ability to reduce consumer debt and mortgage interest rates to six percent under certain circumstances. The original Soldiers' and Sailors' Civil Relief Act was actually passed during World War I. The statute was reenacted during World War II, then later modified during Operation Desert Storm. However, until now the Act's coverage has not included the National Guard as comprehensively as their active duty and reservist counterparts. I believe this is wrong.

Following the terrorist attacks against the United States on September 11, 2001, members of the Minnesota National Guard were activated by our State at the request of the President to provide security at several major airports. As the duration of these activations grew to several months, I began to hear from these brave men and women about the stress and financial burdens that accompanied their service. Senator Wellstone and I were shocked to learn that, although the Soldiers' and Sailors' Civil Relief Act exists to ease many of these

same burdens for active-duty service members and reservists, members of the National Guard were not similarly covered for these types of activations, because this service was deemed to be State, rather than Federal, service. This discovery led to the Wellstone-Dayton provision.

Anyone who visited our Nation's airports after September 11 will not soon forget the contributions of countless members of the National Guard who, at the request of the President, contributed to a sense of greater security and peace of mind for air travelers by providing airport security. The men and women who provided these security efforts did so with courage and selflessness.

In light of September 11, it seems apparent that the National Guard has, and ought to have, a clear role in protecting Americans from outside threats. Further, when the President requests the men and women of the National Guard take on these new missions which help to protect Americans from terrorism, their civil interests should be protected under the Soldiers' and Sailors' Civil Relief Act. Accordingly, I am happy that this will be properly ensured with the Senate's passage of S. 2237 last night.

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#### CRITICAL INFRASTRUCTURE INFORMATION SHARING

Mr. BENNETT. Mr. President, for several years, I have been actively working to protect our Nation's critical infrastructure and promote information sharing between the government and the private sector. From my experience with Y2K, I recognized that our Nation's critical infrastructure was vulnerable and that the private sector and the government needed to cooperate. Last year I introduced S. 1456, the Critical Infrastructure Information Security Act of 2001, which sought to bolster critical infrastructure security by fostering and encouraging critical infrastructure information sharing. Both the Senate Government Affairs Committee and the Senate Energy and Natural Resource Committee held hearings on this issue. Once legislation creating the Department of Homeland Security was introduced in the Senate, I worked to ensure that some of the protections found in S. 1456, specifically protection from public disclosure pursuant to the Freedom of Information Act (FOIA), were addressed and considered in the proposed legislation.

The need for congressional attention on this issue stems from the growth of new technology and the increased reliance on computer networks created new vulnerabilities. For the past two decades, once physically distinct operations, controls and procedures have been tightly integrated with information technology. Pipelines can be controlled remotely. A vulnerability in a telecommunication systems can impact the functioning of the Department of Defense and the financial services