

than that. This legislation is an investment in America's security, an investment to ensure the safety of our firefighters, our families, our homes, and our businesses.

Both the International Association of Firefighters and the International Association of Fire Chiefs have expressed their strong support for this legislation.

MCI/WORLDCOM

Mr. BREAUX. Mr. President, I rise today to express my grave concerns about the actions of MCI/Worldcom. MCI committed fraud on a scale that is offensive. It deceived everyone—its employees and retirees, its shareholders and State and Federal officials. The SEC took a step in the right direction by punishing this company with the largest fine in corporate history.

But I fear the rest of the Federal Government may not be following the lead of the SEC. For example, I understand that MCI has been given a contract, valued between \$23 to \$35 million, to build advanced wireless networks in Iraq. The Federal Government should not be rewarding bad actors with precious government contracts.

Other press reports indicate MCI is also using the Tax Code to reap benefits that should not be available to companies that have committed such egregious fraud. I urge the Senate Finance Committee to investigate these allegations as soon as possible.

CONSTITUTION DAY

Mr. DEWINE. Mr. President, each and every Member of the Senate has taken an oath to uphold and protect the sacred document that has guided Our nation well over 200 years: the Constitution. Indeed, we all hold the Constitution near and dear to our hearts here in the Senate, and yet I rise today to let my colleagues know that the students of Lynchburg-Clay High School in Highland County, OH, have done us one better.

You see, I received several letters late last year from students at Lynchburg-Clay High School asking me a simple question: "Why don't we have a holiday to pay tribute to the Constitution?" We have commemorative days to celebrate a great many things in this country, but amazingly enough, we don't have one to honor what is one of our Nation's greatest contributions to democracy. The students at Lynchburg-Clay High School set out to change that, and I was honored to recently introduce a resolution, cosponsored by my friend and colleague from Utah, Senator HATCH, to give life to the idea these student wrote to me about not long ago. I am very pleased that yesterday my Senate colleagues agreed to pass this very important resolution.

Our resolution is simple: It recognizes the special place the Constitution has in our National history, as well as

the extremely vital role it continues to play today. Also, it formally designates September 17, 2003, as "Constitution Day." September 17th, of course, marks the anniversary of the day in 1787 when 39 brave men signed the final draft of the Constitution at the final meeting of the convention.

An appropriate tribute to the Constitution requires more than simply attaching a name to a day on the calendar, however. The students from Lynchburg-Clay High School wrote to me, one of the two Senators representing them in the Senate and one of 20 Ohioans fortunate enough to serve on their behalf in Congress, about their respect for the Constitution. In doing so, the students embraced exactly the kind of democratic values and citizen involvement that the Constitution stands for, and I congratulate them for their effort.

It is my intention that by passing this resolution, many more Americans might come to learn about the Constitution, and that as a result, their love and respect for the Constitution might come to match that held by the fine students and fellow Ohioans at Lynchburg-Clay High School.

SENATOR AND MRS. ROBERT C. BYRD'S SIXTY-SIXTH ANNIVERSARY

Mr. ROCKEFELLER. Mr. President, today I would like to congratulate Senator and Mrs. ROBERT C. BYRD on their 66th anniversary, which they will celebrate on May 29. What a wonderful occasion this is—a truly joyous celebration.

Senator and Mrs. BYRD's devotion to one another is truly powerful. In a world that is far from old-fashioned, they have shown that old-fashioned dedication and commitment can go a long way. The Byrds have risen from humble beginnings, and proven to our State and country that honesty and devotion comes first. Senator BYRD said earlier this year on the Senate floor, "There are only two duties that will exceed my duties in the Senate. One is my duty to God and the second is duty to my family. I think my duty is to my wife." Many of us heard this speech and were struck by that line. We know that with Erma's recent illness, Senator BYRD on occasion had to request an absence from the Senate to be by the side of his lifelong sweetheart. The devotion he has shown to Erma is plain, and these last few weeks have simply been an extension of 60-plus years of love between these two people. This couple is a real gift to the State of West Virginia. We are more than lucky to have them as leaders of our State.

I have had the honor of serving in the Senate with Senator BYRD for the last 18 years, and in that time I have had the pleasure of getting to know Erma as well. Erma is a positively delightful woman. Senator and Mrs. BYRD's dedication to one another is genuine and should be inspiring to us all. They have

been devoted to one another from an early age. In recalling his high school days when he got a candy from a classmate to give to his sweetheart Erma, Senator BYRD said, "I never chewed the gum; I never ate the candy. But when the classes changed, I found Erma in the hall and gave her that candy and chewing gum. I never told her someone had given it to me, but that's the way you court a girl—with another boy's bubble gum." Erma and their family has been the top priority in the Senator's life from the start.

When the valedictorian of Mark Train High School married his sweetheart, Erma Ora James, in May of 1937, no one knew that the coal miner's daughter and adopted young boy would together become one of the most influential couples in the history of West Virginia. Even though Senator BYRD could not afford to go to college, he persisted as a young West Virginian working for his family—pumping gas, working as a produce salesman, and serving his country as a shipbuilder and welder. Mrs. Byrd became the head of the family's finances, and the glue that held their household together as she remains today. Starting as a family of two, the couple worked together to succeed.

While Senator BYRD was spending endless hours at the Capitol building serving his State and country, Mrs. Byrd raised their two lovely daughters, Mona and Marjorie. To this day, Mrs. Byrd continues to remain the stronghold in her family, proudly helping to raise their six grandchildren, and three great-granddaughters. Mrs. Byrd quietly stays out of the spotlight, and instead focuses on her responsibilities as a wife, mother, grandmother, and great-grandmother. Senator BYRD once said, "She [Erma] has been my anchor all of these years. I don't know what I would have amounted to if it wasn't for her steadfastness, her integrity, her strength." It is evident that the Senator and Mrs. BYRD have so much respect for one another, and enjoy their lives together every day. Senator and Mrs. BYRD have devoted their lives to better their family and fellow West Virginians. They have proven that working together as a team, husband and wife, can accomplish so much.

It is positively refreshing to see such an amazing couple recognized for their leadership and because of their caring. They truly exemplify a loving and happy marriage. The BYRDS are both leaders, grandparents, and great-grandparents, and compassionate and honorable West Virginians. Senator and Mrs. BYRD have set a great standard. Please join me in congratulating this wonderful couple on their 66th year together.

SALUTE TO LIBERTY: MANY JOURNEYS, ONE DREAM

Mr. LAUTENBERG. Mr. President, I would like to take this opportunity to highlight the achievements and experiences of Asian Pacific Americans in

our country. Asian Pacific American Heritage month, observed during the month of May, celebrates the diverse cultures represented by the over 13 million Americans of Asian and Pacific Island heritage in our country. The theme for this year's APA month, "Salute to Liberty: Many Journeys, One Dream" represents Asian Pacific Americans' diverse paths to achieving their goals. In New Jersey, where Asians are the fastest growing racial group, this month is particularly significant. Asian Pacific Americans in my State play important roles such as educating our students, owning small businesses, working on new technologies, and holding public office.

The difficult journeys of Asian Pacific Americans include the Chinese laborers who built our Nation's railroads, Japanese Americans who were sent to internment camps during WWII, refugees from Vietnam and other Southeast Asian nations, immigrants from the Indian subcontinent, and Filipino farm workers. Despite the great obstacles faced on these journeys, Asian Pacific Americans have accomplished a great deal and have made major contributions to our country.

First and foremost, I would like to recognize the service of Asian Pacific Americans in our Armed Forces, especially as we celebrate Memorial Day. The history of Asian Pacific Americans in military service stretches from William Ah Hang, who enlisted in the U.S. Navy during the Civil War, to the more than 25,000 Japanese Americans who served during World War II, to the young APA men and women fighting terrorism today. In particular, I would like for us to remember Lance Corporate Alan Dinh Lam, a 19 year old Vietnamese-American from North Carolina and Corporal Kempahoom A. Chanawongse, a 22 year old Thai-American who moved from Thailand to Connecticut at age 9. These two young men recently gave their lives for our country during the war with Iraq.

I would also like to take this opportunity to acknowledge the contributions of Asian Pacific Americans in space exploration. Kalpana Chawla was the first Indian-American woman to go into space. Although she lost her life during the recent space shuttle Columbia disaster, Ms. Chawla will be remembered for her work in the field of aerospace engineering. Currently, another Asian Pacific American, Eric Lu, is working on the International Space Station. His work is certain to inspire many young men and women interested in space.

The brave men and woman I mentioned today are only a small example of the difficult endeavors undertaken by Asian Pacific Americans. It is my hope that recognizing the heritage and accomplishments of Asian Pacific Americans will inspire the next generation to embark upon challenging journeys and reach their dreams.

BETTY BROWN CASEY

Mr. LEAHY. Mr. President, Washington is, without a doubt, one of the most beautiful cities in our country. It is also a city rich in history and cultural advantages.

Many people have, over the years, added to Washington's achievements and glories. One very special person who has done that is Betty Brown Casey. I have had the opportunity to meet Mrs. Casey because my wife, Marcelle, serves on the Board of the Washington Opera. Mrs. Casey has been one of the greatest supporters the Washington Opera has ever known.

On Sunday, April 13, Mrs. Casey threw a party for the Washington Opera. This will go down as one of the greatest and most memorable parties thrown in this city. Marcelle and I were fortunate to attend, and when we left Washington before dawn the next morning, we had the joy of reading Roxanne Roberts' article about Mrs. Casey, titled "Phenom of the Opera."

I hope my fellow Senators will enjoy this as much as I did, and I ask unanimous consent that this article about this extraordinarily generous woman be printed in the CONGRESSIONAL RECORD.

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

[From the Washington Post, Apr. 14, 2003]
PHENOM OF THE OPERA; PATRON BETTY BROWN CASEY GIVES A PARTY
(By Roxanne Roberts)

As fairy godmothers go, Betty Brown Casey is pretty nice to have on your team.

The low-key philanthropist has a passion for the Washington Opera, a passion that has translated into millions in donations and support for the organization. Last night Casey threw a gala concert for 2,500 fellow lovers of the opera—and picked up the entire tab herself.

"We're here to say thank you to all of you for all the years in the Washington Opera family," she told the audience. Casey ticked off a list of the thankees: Volunteers, staff, board members, subscribers and "those of you who sat—year after year—quietly, patiently and resignedly, in seats next to those who loved opera—and you didn't." Long-suffering husbands in tuxedos broke into huge grins as knowing laughter rippled through DAR Constitution Hall.

The program included mezzo-soprano Denyce Graves, soprano Veronica Villarroel, bass Rene Pape, conductor Valery Gergiev and the Three Mo' Tenors. (Artistic Director Placido Domingo was scheduled to conduct and sing at the gala, but was sidelined by stomach flu.)

"Tonight is wonderful," said Betty Vertiz, a Washington Opera subscriber since the 1960s. "We even like our seats!"

Three generations of her family attended the gala: husband Oscar Vertiz, his daughter Virginia Cameron and granddaughter Carrie Gouskos. "It's nice for people who are faithful to the opera to feel they're appreciated," she said.

All because Casey wanted to do "something nice" after the risky move to Constitution Hall, the Washington Opera's temporary home this year while the Kennedy Center Opera House undergoes renovations. The cost of last night's soiree? "It's a private party," she demurred, but a savvy eye would chalk up seven figures.

"She's been the absolute soul of the company," Domingo said last week. "She always wants to do more and thank anybody who's been involved with the company in any capacity."

Casey, sitting nearby, flushed with embarrassment. The philanthropist shrinks from anything that smacks of self-promotion, and agreed to speak to a reporter only to highlight the contributions of everybody else.

"It's just that this company went through some hard times and there were many, many people who worked very hard to not only keep us going and to make us better and better over the years. I just felt it was a good time to say thank you to Placido—who has been the real spark plug for everything that has happened to us—and to everybody. We really feel like a family, so I felt we should have a family reunion."

Casey, 75, has had a soft spot for opera since she was a teenager. "I just love the music," she said with a smile. "I get into the music and I'm just there. Terrible as it may seem, Placido, there are times when I don't care who's singing. I just love the music."

Luckily for the opera, Casey is in a position to nurture that love. After 31 years of marriage to legendary Maryland developer Eugene Bernard Casey, she inherited an estate of more than \$200 million when he died in 1986. She has led a very private life since then, quietly doling out donations to her pet projects.

"I just think that everybody in life does what they can do," she said. "I'm naturally shy, and I'm just more comfortable when people don't think I do anything—because I don't feel like I do. I only do things that I really believe in, I only do things that I can afford, and I don't do things I ask other people to give to. I don't start something and then ask other people to give me money to do that project. So I don't try to bother anybody, so to speak."

"Betty knows, and some of us, we know it," said Domingo. "And that's enough."

Her support is funneled through the Eugene B. Casey Foundation to the Salvation Army, Suburban Hospital, George Washington University and Georgetown University and its hospital. She generated more than a few headlines when she offered to build an official residence for the District's mayor on a 17-acre estate in Northwest Washington, and created a \$50 million endowment to plant and tend the city's trees.

Casey has a special affection for the Washington Opera. She joined the board in 1974 and has been a member ever since; she now holds the title of life chairman. In 1996, she spent \$18 million to buy the Woodward & Lothrop building with the idea of converting it into a state-of-the-art opera house in the heart of downtown Washington. When the opera decided to remain at the Kennedy Center instead, the company was allowed to sell the building and keep the profits.

"She's terrific," said Opera President Michael Sonnenreich. "She's stepped up and exhibited a leadership role for the opera beyond financial. She's setting examples for others to follow."

Last night's gala comes after the company's successful move to Constitution Hall—an artistic experiment that, so far, has generated praise from critics and subscribers alike.

The evening began with a standing ovation for Casey, who thanked everyone who had contributed to the success of the 47-year-old company. She asked for whistles, bravos and bravas for two individuals who had carried the opera during the tough times: former general director Martin Feinstein and longtime board member Christine Hunter.

The program was full of familiar material—and a few surprises. The strongest applause came for Pape, who sang two arias for