

managers successfully offered an amendment to remove the emergency designation and incorporate the \$1.3 billion into the bill, thereby greatly increasing the chances that this money will actually get to veterans this year. It seems that a majority of Senators have been listening to the few of us who have been decrying the state of VA funding for some time, and they are now coming to understand that even these modest increases do not make up for the continual shortfall experienced by the VA in recent years. It's long past time that this trend be reversed.

The Senate VA-HUD appropriations bill also supports the Rural Health Initiative, RHI, a successful examination of innovative methods of delivering health care to veterans in rural areas. The VA must become more adept at spreading its health care dollars further across rural America. I am encouraged that the RHI will help improve the VA's performance in this area.

After making significant progress on this legislation, I was discouraged that the Senate leadership decided to pull this VA-HUD bill off the floor prior to its completion in order to begin a 30-hour discussion of the status of judicial nominations. While I agree that judicial nominations are important, I was most disappointed that a largely partisan political debate took precedence over the completion of much needed funding for veterans. I urge the leadership to quickly bring us back to the people's business—the work we were sent here to accomplish.

I would like to mention another issue of concern to veterans that came before the Senate this week. For years I have been a primary promoter of concurrent receipt—the payment to disabled veterans of the full disability and retirement benefits to which they are entitled. For many years, disabled military retirees have been forced to choose between receiving their full retirement pay or their disability benefits. This injustice has finally been recognized by a majority of the Congress, in large part due to the unflagging commitment of Senator HARRY REID. In recent years, Congress has moved to partially restore these benefits. The fiscal year 2004 Defense authorization conference report contains legislation allowing combat disabled veterans with a disability greater than 10 percent to receive their full disability and retirement benefits. It also provides for a 10-year phase-in of full disability and retirement benefits for those with a noncombat related disability rating of over 50 percent.

While I am pleased to see this important improvement in benefit payments, I am concerned that some might view this as the end of the road for this issue. I intend to work closely with Senator REID to continue to press the administration and the Congress to fully fund concurrent receipt for all disabled veterans. This is a basic principle of fairness that is not rectified by halfway measures.

I regret that, for a number of reasons, I was unable to support passage of the Defense authorization conference report, despite its progress on concurrent receipt. Unfortunately, the legislation included unacceptable environmental provisions. As a former Navy Officer and 30-year reservist, I understand the need for the best possible military training. As the ranking member of the Environment and Public Works, EPW, Committee, I was quite concerned by a request from the Bush administration to exempt the Department of Defense, DoD, from five of our Nation's most important and effective environmental laws. After careful review by the EPW Committee, I was convinced that the waivers contained in current law are quite sufficient to provide flexibility for DoD if it needs greater leeway to conduct military readiness exercises.

In an effort to forge a reasonable compromise between DoD's request and sound environmental policy, Senator LAUTENBERG and I authorized as amendment to the defense authorization bill that was supported by a majority of Senators. While this amendment carefully balanced the Defense Department's need for training with the Interior Department's mandate to protect endangered species, it was dropped in conference with the House of Representatives. In its place, the conferees added language providing DoD with broad authority to sidestep the Endangered Species Act and the Marine Mammal Protection Act, even dropping requirements that any waivers be related to military readiness. I cannot in good conscience support legislation that undermines such critical environmental legislation. Therefore, I had no choice but to vote against the defense authorization conference agreement in spite of its improvement on concurrent receipt.

Mr. President, we have a long way to go before our veterans health system is fully funded and before veterans receive the full compensation they deserve for their years of service to the Nation. I hope that the daily stories of heroism coming out of Iraq will compel more Members of Congress to stand with the veterans and not to rest until justice is done.

VETERANS DAY

Mr. GRAHAM of Florida. Mr. President, I rise to recognize the significance of Veterans Day and to honor the Americans it celebrates. On Veterans Day we pay tribute to the men and women who have fought for our freedom and those who continue to do so right now—they are far from their homes and families, striving to keep us safe from terrorism. These service-members exemplify what it means to be an American—courage, selflessness, and a deep love of and commitment to his or her fellow countrymen.

First proclaimed by President Wilson in 1919, Veterans Day was initially

known as Armistice Day and was intended to commemorate the armistice between the Allies and Central Powers that ended the fighting of World War I. In 1953, a Kansas citizen named Alvin King lobbied to change the holiday's name to honor all veterans, not just those from World War I. On June 1, 1954, President Eisenhower signed into law an act proclaiming November 11 to be Veterans Day. Yesterday, we celebrated the 50th anniversary of that celebration.

There are currently 25 million American veterans. Every day more and more service-members return home from Iraq and Afghanistan becoming new members of that elite group of citizens. These heroic Americans freely offer their lives to protect those they leave behind, and those they've never even met. For this sacrifice, we owe them our continued support and care.

Unfortunately, the Bush administration has established a disturbing pattern of behavior that seriously undercuts this long-held ideal. In the past 2 years, the President has been full of patriotic words and speeches—rhetoric that has proven hollow. At a time when 133,000 service-members celebrated their Veterans Day in the deserts of Iraq, the Administration continues to undermine our veterans' ability to receive the quality health care they have earned. With the recent Iraq supplemental spending bill, the administration took an opportunity to demonstrate its commitment to our troops and twisted it into another way to short-change our veterans.

In that appropriations bill, my Senate colleagues and I worked hard to secure an additional \$1.3 billion for VA healthcare. These desperately needed funds were subsequently removed at the insistence of the Bush Administration. Nationwide, 80,000 veterans—including more than 10,000 in my home State of Florida alone—are forced to wait longer than 6 months to see a VA doctor. When the service-members currently serving in Iraq return home and become veterans, they will be entitled to 2 years of priority VA health care after they have separated from military service. This added influx of patients, when coupled with the administration's refusal to give VA the money it needs to care for them, will only strain the system further.

During debates on that same supplemental spending bill, my fellow Democrats and I joined together to offer an amendment that would have helped rectify a longstanding inequity in the retirement pay our veterans receive—or, should I say, don't receive. Currently, the earned retirement pay of veterans who are both disabled and eligible for military pensions is reduced simply because they receive disability benefits as well. This practice of denying concurrent receipt does not apply to other Federal workers, only to the courageous men and women like the ones currently serving overseas, who made the armed services their careers.

I spent Veterans Day working alongside employees at the Miami VA Healthcare System and saw first-hand the number of veterans turning to VA for health care. As part of my duties there, I assisted the nursing staff on a patient floor and enrolled veterans for health care in the admissions area. This workday gave me an opportunity to see the numerous challenges facing VA. I stand in awe of both the VA staff and the heroic men and women they serve.

As we honor our veterans this week, we must not follow the administration's lead of making empty promises. We must fight to ensure quality health care for all of veterans, just as they have fought to ensure our quality of life. We must pay this nation's servicemembers, past and present, the highest tribute we can and finally give them what they have so bravely earned.

INTELLIGENCE FAILURES

Mr. JOHNSON. Mr. President, I rise today to discuss an article entitled "The Stovepipe" by Seymour Hersh that appeared in a recent edition of *The New Yorker* magazine.

The article outlines a series of disturbing intelligence failures within the Bush administration leading up to the war in Iraq. From ignoring career intelligence analysts to relying on unreliable raw data, the article makes the case that senior members of the Bush administration often ignored information that did not fit their preconceived view of the situation in Iraq and pushed the intelligence community to come up with information that would support their position, regardless of its accuracy. In particular, the article outlines the practice of "stovepiping" information in which intelligence was passed up through the administration without subjecting it to a thorough review by intelligence professionals.

The bad intelligence that resulted from this process was then used to convince our Nation of the need to engage in a near-unilateral, pre-emptive war in Iraq to protect the American people from what was described as an imminent threat from Iraq's weapons of mass destruction.

As a result of this go it alone approach in Iraq, the Bush administration has alienated much of the world, told U.S. taxpayers that they are financially responsible for rebuilding Iraq, and ordered more than a hundred thousand U.S. troops to stay in Iraq for the foreseeable future—yet no evidence of Iraq's weapons of mass destruction have been found.

Mr. President, there is no doubt that at one time Iraq possessed chemical weapons. We know that Saddam Hussein used these weapons during the Iran-Iraq war and on his own people. There is also no doubt that at one point Saddam Hussein pursued a nuclear weapons program. However, the Iraq Survey Group—the group charged with finding Iraqi weapons of mass de-

struction—has yet to turn up any proof of the huge WMD stockpiles and nuclear weapons program of which the Bush administration repeatedly told us they had evidence.

It is clear that the world and the Iraqi people are better off without Saddam Hussein. He was a brutal dictator who terrorized his own people and destabilized the entire Middle East. I am extremely proud of the men and women of our Armed Forces for their actions during the war and the ongoing efforts to stabilize the country. Now that we are there, we cannot "cut and run" and we must provide our troops with the resources they need to complete their mission and to return home as soon as possible.

However, I am deeply concerned that we sent our sons and daughters to war based largely on what turns out to be faulty intelligence. The ends of the war do not justify the means by which the Bush administration convinced the American people that this war was necessary. That is why I believe we need to have an independent investigation into the acquisition and use of intelligence leading up to the decision to go to war in Iraq, not as a political attack, but as a way to make sure that future decisions about whether or not our country goes to war based on the best possible intelligence.

Mr. President, I encourage all of my colleagues to read this important Hersh article from *The New Yorker* of October 21, 2003.

21ST CENTURY NANOTECHNOLOGY RESEARCH & DEVELOPMENT ACT

Mr. ALLEN. Mr. President, I rise today to thank my colleagues for their support of S. 189, the 21st Century Nanotechnology Research and Development Act.

Especially I want to thank my colleague from Oregon, Senator RON WYDEN, for his leadership. I have enjoyed working with Senator WYDEN on nanotechnology for the past several years on this important issue for America's future. I would also like to thank the other cosponsors on this legislation: Commerce Committee Chairman and Commodore JOHN McCAIN, the senior Senator from Virginia, Mr. WARNER, and Senators LIEBERMAN, MIKULSKI, HOLLINGS, LANDRIEU, CLINTON, LEVIN, and BAYH.

I have made America's competitiveness in nanotechnology a priority, and working with Senator WYDEN and the chairman of the Commerce, Science, and Transportation Committee, Senator McCAIN, we held the first hearings in Congress on this emerging science, a field that promises to forever change the way we approach scientific and engineering challenges. Nanotechnology is a "bottom-up" approach much like building a sculpture atom by atom and molecule by molecule instead of cutting it from a larger rock. Nanotechnology on the dimensional scale is one nanometer; that is, one-bil-

lionth of a meter or 100,000 times smaller than the width of a human hair.

Far-reaching outcomes for the 21st century are envisioned in both scientific knowledge and technological advancement for nanotechnology. The potential for nanotechnology and the exciting work taking place in nanoscience are by all accounts revolutionary, and as the technology matures it will undoubtedly have a tremendous impact on our daily lives.

S. 189 is a truly historic piece of legislation, because, for the first time, it creates a comprehensive national plan to advance and develop the field of nanoscience, nanoengineering, and nanotechnology. This field of science is quickly transforming almost every aspect of our modern world and is already significantly improving our quality of life. Nanotechnology is also showing promise of new applications that we can only imagine at this time. Let me highlight several important examples, such as the use of iron nanoparticles in the cleanup of Superfund sites; nanometer-size minerals in the efficient production of gasoline from crude oil; nanoscale designer molecules to create bone structure for bone repair; nanolasers for super-precision surgery; and gold nanoshells with attached antibodies introduced to targeted cancer tumor sites to destroy tumor growth while leaving healthy tissue unharmed.

As a Senator, my top priority is to advocate and support policies that create jobs, investment, and improvement of America's ability to compete in the global marketplace.

I earnestly believe there is a link between research and development and job creation, which ultimately leads to prosperity for all Americans. Therefore, I believe one of our most important goals should be to create the conditions precedent to positioning researchers and innovators to compete, contribute, and succeed both domestically and internationally. From materials to electronic devices, computers, biotechnology, healthcare systems, pharmaceuticals, environmental improvement, agriculture, efficient energy conversion and storage, space exploration, economical transportation, and national defense, nanotechnology will be the foundation of many of the revolutionary advances and discoveries in the decades to come and will soon occupy a major portion of the technology economy. The annual global impact of products where nanotechnology will play a key role has been estimated to exceed \$1 trillion a year by 2015, requiring about 2 million nanotechnology workers.

To remain competitive in this global market we must commit ourselves to ensuring that the United States keeps its edge in this field. This Nation has been the leader of virtually every important and transformative technology since the Industrial Revolution, and this legislation assures that the United