It is important to also recognize the contributions these young people are making in their communities outside of their official participation in the Youth Initiatives Project. The Youth Initiatives Project gives young people valuable knowledge and experience, thereby enabling them to push for change in their own neighborhoods and communities on a daily basis. For the rest of their lives, these teenagers will be able to draw on the communications and conflict resolution skills they have gained through the Youth Initiatives Project to make a difference in their own lives and those around them.

I know my colleagues will join me in thanking the participants, organizers, and supporters of the Youth Initiatives Project for their outstanding dedication to the worthwhile goal of reducing gun violence. This is a program which can serve as an appropriate model to be followed in many cities across the Nation. I hope my colleagues will also join me in working to pass commonsense gun safety legislation to more adequately support their efforts.

POPULATION EXPLOSION

Mrs. MURRAY. Mr. President, I rise today to speak about developing countries around the world that are dealing with population explosions. As we near the end of the year, we are trying to wrap things up before the Senate goes out of session. But we continue to ignore this important issue.

This topic does not get very much attention here on the Senate floor, but in the developing world, there is a population explosion. Some experts believe that the population of Earth may top 9 billion by 2050. Eighty-eight percent of Americans believe that international population growth is either a major problem right now or that it will become one in the future. Almost all of the growth is occurring in countries that are the least able to govern, ensure jobs for, and care for their citizens.

But this is also about safe access to health care for women. Even though these countries are experiencing huge population growths, hundreds of thousands of women are dying each year from complications from pregnancy. These women do not have access to the health care that they need, especially reproductive health care.

In many poor countries around the world, nongovernmental organizations and medical professionals are working to make things better. They have set up clinics and reached out to the women and families in poor communities. They are doing great work. But their hands are tied because the Bush administration has imposed a political ideology on the world.

When President Bush took office in 2001, he signed an Executive order known as the global gag rule. It denies U.S. funds to any overseas health clinic unless it agrees not to use its own private, non-U.S. funds for anything related to abortion. What that means, is that if you are a medical professional living in an impoverished country trying to help people and save their lives, you are gagged from even talking about certain reproductive health services. The gag rule places limits on women and doctors that we would never accept here in the United States.

Earlier this year, the Senate passed an amendment to the Foreign Affairs Authorization Act to reverse the President's policy and ensure that health care clinics for women and families receive this much-needed funding. Unfortunately, this legislation has not passed by the full Senate. I am pleased that the Foreign Operations appropriations bill contains $34 million for the United Nations Populations Fund, UNPA, for this purpose. But in order to ensure that this money goes toward funding health care clinics for women and families in poor countries, we must overturn this global gag rule.

In closing, I would like to share the following article, which ran on December 3, 2005, with my colleagues because I believe that it provides some important food for thought as we continue to work on this important issue.

I ask unanimous consent that my remarks and the following article be printed in the RECORD.

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

DOES POPULATION EXPLOSION THREATEN U.S.?

(By David Horsey)

Flying in or out of Mexico City, the traveler can look down on the human sprawl metastasizing in every direction. The Mexican megalopolis is now home to 25 million people and vies for first place among the world's most gigantic cities. From a bird's eye view, it's easy to conclude that the planet has more than enough homo sapiens taking up space.

Having just flown back from a study tour in Mexico that focused on issues of overpopulation, family planning and development, I can report positive news on the population front. In the developed world, population growth has been put in check. Birth rates are roughly at replacement levels and no higher.

An even better story is Mexico. Not that long ago, the Mexican population was spiraling out of control with an average seven children per family. The population doubled between 1950 and 1970 and doubled again by the end of the 20th century. Today, though, thanks in large part to government commitment and successful family-planning measures, the fertility rate has dropped to about 2.1, putting Mexico on track to see a leveling off of population by 2015.

However, this good news is qualified by a disturbing caveat. The successes of recent years have created complacency. Some people think the population bomb has been defused while in reality only the easier part of the job has been done.

In the developing world, the numbers continue to explode. Earth's current human population of 6.5 billion may top 9 billion by 2050 and 99 percent of the growth will be in the least developed nations. If these countries fail to follow Mexico's path, calamity may be just around the corner. In the regions of the world that are the most poor and the least able to care for, employ or govern their rapidly expanding populations, widespread famine, environmental destruction and social collapse are inevitable.

Most countries have reached agreement on what needs to be done to avert such disaster, but, in recent years, the United States has been a maverick on the population issue. The politics of abortion and religion have given current leaders reason to act as if it is not our problem.

Is this an area where self-interest and traditional values dictate that we let less fortunate countries find a way to cope on their own? Here's my Burning Question:

Is the developing world's population explosion a threat to America?

PAKISTAN EARTHQUAKE RELIEF

Mr. ALLEN. Mr. President, I rise today to salute the outstanding ambassadors for our enduring principles of freedom, justice, and individual rights—our brave men and women in uniform who show the heart of America by their good deeds.

As the Iraqi people slowly count the ballots from their historic parliamentary election, we are reminded once again of America's far-reaching power to be a force for good in this world. Over the past 2½ years, our brave soldiers have fought courageously and nobly sacrificed to extend the sphere of liberty into what was—up until their arrival—one of the darkest, most despotic alleys on Earth. Their heroic work has helped deliver a new free and just country into the family of nations.

We here at home watch the developments in Iraq with a feeling of pride. We are proud of our troops who have borne so much to advance the cause of freedom. We are proud of the Iraqi people, who risked their own lives to cast ballots three times this year for a better future. And we are proud of the heritage of our country—from the American Revolutionary secession from the British monarchy to the Second World War against fascism to the Cold War against imperial communism to today's fight against global terrorists, America has been the shining city on a hill—an ally to all men and women—on every continent, in every country—who yearn to breathe free.

In addition to Iraq, we have extended our hand of friendship to the people of Pakistan. A little more than 2 months ago, a devastating earthquake ripped through northern Pakistan. The toll from this tragedy is almost impossible to comprehend: 79,000 men and women lost their lives, an additional 72,000 were injured, and a total of 2.9 million people are now homeless.

Last month, my wife Susan cochaired a charity event near our home in Virginia to raise money for the earthquake victims. She then joined me when I traveled to Pakistan to visit some of the victims, and the 1,200 U.S. troops who are now stationed in Pakistan to assist in the recovery.

We presented a check to the Citizens Foundations charity, which will use the money to rebuild the Bagh School for Girls and other schools. When we visited a Pakistani classroom for children needing medical treatment, we

saw children on the floor, singing in English, learning new words, and painting artwork as well. On the wall behind the teacher was a drawing of a green Chinook helicopter and on the side of the helicopter was a big painted smile across the length of the helicopter.

That is the way these young people look at the United States. They are looking at these vessels of our military not as weapons of war but as machines that bring relief, and help. Later, Susan and I had supper with our troops there at the airfield. We told them how proud we are of their outstanding relief effort, about what great ambassadors they are, not just for the strength of America but also for the caring heart of America.

Today, in Pakistan, the heart of America is needed more than ever. As international attention fades and funds dry up, millions of earthquake survivors are now facing a harsh, cold winter. In the remote Himalayan region, villages at altitudes of 5,000 to 7,000 feet will soon be covered in snow. By leaving the earthquake victims exposed to the Himalayan winter, there is the real risk of seeing perhaps hundreds of thousands of preventable deaths.

We should not let such deaths happen. And thankfully, avoiding this tragic scenario is in our power. Our U.S. administration has pledged over $500 million in aid, but these funds are urgently needed today and must reach the devastated people of Pakistan as soon as possible.

During this holiday season, and beyond, we should continue to help Americans in Louisiana and Mississippi and extend our arms to the people of Pakistan. By saving hundreds of thousands of lives during the harsh Himalayan winter, we can transform this tragic event into a story of hope, courage and perseverance.

INDIAN HEALTH CARE IMPROVEMENT ACT

Mr. GRASSLEY. Mr. President, I would like to explain my action today related to S. 1057, a bill to amend the Indian Health Care Improvement Act. I requested that Leader FRIST inform me prior to entering into any unanimous consent agreement relating to any amendments, motions, or any other actions relating to consideration of this bill.

This legislation exempts American Indians/Alaskan Natives from being charged a deductible, copayment, or coinsurance for an item or service for which payment may be made under the Medicaid or SCHIP programs in the Social Security Act. I am reluctant to treat one group differently from other groups. In my opinion, this is a precedent setting change. If we start by exempting one group from costsharing, then many other groups may start asking for the same exemption.

This legislation also exempts several types of property from being considered in Medicaid eligibility. We understand that there may be special circumstances that may necessitate the need for these provisions. We have requested additional information from the Indian Affairs Committee to facilitate our understanding of these exemptions. However, we have not yet received the requested information. In my opinion, without further information, these provisions send the message that resources are irrelevant to a determination of Medicaid eligibility. I don't believe that individuals should have significant resources and still be eligible for Medicaid. These provisions would create an imbalance by allowing a loophole solely for one group.

I want to be clear: it is not that I am concerned about making these changes for American Indians/Alaskan Natives, I am concerned about making these changes for any group. I welcome the opportunity to continue to work with the sponsors of this legislation, Senators MCCAIN and DORGAN, and with members of the Indian Affairs Committee on this matter. My staff has been working with staff from the Indian Affairs Committee, but they have not yet resolved my concerns.

ADDITIONAL STATEMENTS

COMMENDING THE SERVICE OF JAMES D.E. JONES

• Mr. LAUTENBERG. Mr. President, I rise to speak about the departure of Mr. James D.E. Jones from the Port Authority of New York and New Jersey. A native of Morristown, NJ, Mr. Jones has served with the Port Authority for 20 years, 19 of them in the Washington, DC, office. During this time, he served as liaison with Congress and several administrations on issues involving aviation, surface transportation, economic development, and public finance. I know Mr. Jones primarily for his efforts and expertise on aviation matters.

As a former Port Authority commissioner, I can tell you that the Port Authority is the most complex regional transportation agency in the country. It runs three major airports where almost 100 million passengers traveled in and out of last year. It operates the largest seaport on east coast of the United States and the second largest container port in the country. It runs a bistate mass transit system and maintains under its care and responsibility such landmark assets as the Lincoln Tunnel, the Holland Tunnel, the Bayonne Bridge, the George Washington Bridge, and the World Trade Center complex in lower Manhattan.

During his service at the Port Authority, Mr. Jones assisted policymakers in Washington as our country debated such ideas as deregulation of the airline industry to responding to the 9/11 terror attacks, which involved a substantial modification of how we provide for aviation security in our country.

Previously, Mr. Jones served as a senior staff member in the U.S. Department of Transportation's Office of the Secretary, where he focused on policy development and international agreements. In that capacity, he represented the U.S. Secretary of Transportation in dozens of bilateral international negotiations on aviation, taking him to 20 foreign countries.

Mr. Jones completed his undergraduate work at Howard University and received his MBA degree from Harvard University Business School. His accomplishments are evidence that his skills have certainly served him well throughout his career.

I am thankful for Mr. Jones' service at the Port Authority. His talents were a great asset to policymakers and lawmakers throughout the Federal Government, and his services helped shape policies for our country that make our aviation system the envy of the world.

On behalf of many New Jersey travelers, I thank Mr. Jones, and I wish him continued success.•

CONGRATULATING THE UNIVERSITY OF WASHINGTON WOMEN'S VOLLEYBALL TEAM

• Mrs. MURRAY. Mr. President, I am excited to congratulate the women Huskies on their terrific win in the NCAA Championships. Not only has UW's women's volleyball team given the University a new championship trophy, but they have given young girls across our State new role-models and proof that they can reach their dreams.

We need to ensure that any young girl who dreams of making the team, wearing a sports jersey or winning a college championship has the opportunity to succeed. That's why—as a Congress—we need to protect Title IX and the future of every girl in Washington State and around the country who wants to play sports.

For the past 33 years, Title IX has opened doors to athletics, education and success for millions of young women across America. Title IX is not about politics, it is about helping young women—like the members of UW's women's volleyball team—achieve their dreams.

I am proud of the UW women's volleyball team, their 32–1 record, and the fact that they became the first team in a 64–team NCAA tournament format to win all six matches by a sweep. I know I join volleyball fans statewide—and young female athletes everywhere—in congratulating them on their accomplishment.•

TRIBUTE TO STAN AND EUNICE KIMMITT

• Mr. BAUCUS. Mr. President, I rise today to honor the lives of two people very close to me, Montana, and the Senate. Stan and Eunice Kimmitt were both remarkable individuals and touched many lives over the years. In an effort to preserve their memory, I