

see them in action. They deserve our gratitude and support.

VETERANS HEALTH CARE

Mr. BURNS. Mr. President, I am concerned that the President's Department of Veterans Affairs fiscal year 2007 budget request does not include adequate funding for VA health care. Specifically, this budget request would require certain veterans to pay a \$250 enrollment fee in order to access the health care system each year. In addition, the budget proposes to more than double prescription copayments from \$7 to \$15, further burdening the limited resources of those who have served our country.

The VA estimates that these measures will save the Department an estimated \$795 million in 2007. This savings estimate is based not only on collections but on increasing the number of veterans who will opt-out of the service due to the higher fees. The VA estimates they will force over 1 million veterans, almost half of the Priority 7 and Priority 8 veterans, to drop out of the VA health care system.

Do we really want our veterans to be faced with the difficult choice of either dropping out of the VA health care system or bearing these additional costs? Those who do not drop out of the VA health care system will be forced to pay hundreds more for their health care. Veterans who receive prescription drugs from the VA and who fill a typical number of prescriptions a year could face new fees amounting to nearly \$600. I realize that agencies such as the VA must look for ways to save dollars, but our Nation's veterans deserve adequate and affordable health care.

While I understand the need to reduce Federal spending, I urge my colleagues to reject these proposals to reduce spending for VA health care in the fiscal year 2007 budget. I believe it is absolutely critical that the VA health care system be fully funded. The Congress has rejected these proposals in the past, and I hope it will do so again this year. Our veterans should not be faced with these choices nor forced to bear this burden. We must keep our promise to care for the veterans who made so many sacrifices to ensure the freedom of so many.

NATIONAL SPORTSMANSHIP DAY

Mr. REED. Mr. President, today, March 7, 2006, we celebrate the 16th annual National Sportsmanship Day. Begun in 1991 by the Institute for International Sport at the University of Rhode Island, this initiative promotes the highest ideals of sportsmanship and fair play among America's youth. In 13,000 schools, across all 50 States, and in countries around the world, students, teachers, administrators, coaches, and parents will engage in discussions on the issues of sportsmanship and fair play. The theme of this year's National Sportsmanship Day is "De-

feat Gamesmanship!" and participants will talk about appropriate tactics and strategies when participating in games and sports.

This year, in addition to promoting the values of sportsmanship and fair play, the Institute for International Sport will recognize schools across the country that have exceptional sportsmanship programs with the new All-American Sportsmanship School Award. A minimum of 64 awards will be given out to elementary, middle, and high schools as well as colleges that participate in National Sportsmanship Day and honor its principles year round.

I am proud that Rhode Island is home to the Institute for International Sport and National Sportsmanship Day. For 16 years, this initiative has had a positive influence on our Nation's youth in promoting the best in athletics, and I know it will continue to do so this year and in the future.

HONORING THE 45TH ANNIVERSARY OF THE PEACE CORPS

Mr. INOUE. Mr. President, on March 1, 1961, President Kennedy signed an Executive order that established the Peace Corps whose mission would be to promote peace, mutual understanding, and friendship between Americans and the people of the world. Back then, the world was viewed as engaged in a cold war with the United States and its allies pitted against the Communist bloc. President Kennedy envisioned the Peace Corps as an agency that would create opportunities for Americans to reach out to the rest of the world, and make positive contributions to community development and nation-building overseas.

As we celebrate the Peace Corps's 45th anniversary, all Americans can be proud of what the agency has accomplished and continues to do. Through its hardworking and committed volunteers who now number nearly 8,000, the Peace Corps provides assistance today in 138 host countries in such fields as education, healthcare, environmental preservation, and business development.

Last year, the Peace Corps's Crisis Corps Volunteers helped with rebuilding efforts in tsunami-ravaged areas of Sri Lanka and Thailand. And, for the first time in its history, volunteers were deployed at home as approximately 270 volunteers assisted with recovery efforts along the U.S. gulf coast in the aftermath of Hurricanes Katrina and Rita.

I am also proud to report that the Peace Corps continues to attract Volunteers from Hawaii. At this moment, 12 volunteers from Hawaii are serving in 12 different host countries that include Bulgaria, China, Morocco, Nicaragua, Swaziland, and Tanzania.

It is a pleasure to join all Americans in congratulating the Peace Corps and its volunteers past and present for their outstanding work, and for their

invaluable and effective civic contributions to communities throughout the world.

VOTE EXPLANATION

Mr. JOHNSON. Mr. President, I would like the record to reflect that I was necessarily absent for rollcall vote No. 31, the confirmation of Timothy C. Batten, Sr., of Georgia, to be U.S. District Judge on Monday, March 6, 2006. Had I been present for this vote, I would have voted in favor of the nomination.

ADDITIONAL STATEMENTS

TRIBUTE TO ARNOLD FRIBERG

● Mr. BENNETT. Mr. President, today I rise to pay tribute to Arnold Friberg, a gifted American artist.

For more than eight decades as a painter, Mr. Friberg has set down a profound and varied body of work, including magazine covers and illustrations, World War II depictions, the Northwest Mounted Police, Book of Mormon illustrations, portraits, including Her Royal Highness Queen Elizabeth of England, and many rich and dramatic depictions of the Old West. This year marks the 30th anniversary of his revered Prayer at Valley Forge, which shows George Washington at prayer. Along with Emanuel Leutze's Washington Crossing the Delaware, Friberg's Prayer at Valley Forge is one of the great American patriotic paintings.

In 1953, Arnold Friberg was summoned to Hollywood by Cecil B. DeMille for a 1-month consultation on costume design for a film he was going to remake. DeMille became so impressed by the artist that soon afterward Mr. Friberg was called back to Hollywood and began a warm, personal collaboration with the storied director that lasted for 4 years.

Mr. Friberg became DeMille's chief artist-designer for the well-known movie "The Ten Commandments," which brought the artist an Academy Award nomination. Half a century later, "The Ten Commandments" still draws sizable audiences to television broadcasts and DVD sales. Becoming the visual designer for what DeMille and his set decorators and cameramen put on film, Mr. Friberg painted major scenes of the salient episodes in the Old Testament including The Finding of Moses, Moses and the Burning Bush, First Passover, Exodus Begins, Orgy of the Golden Calf, Moses Receiving the Law, and Crossing of the Red Sea. Visually, the film was built around these scenes, along with major costume designs created by the artist.

After completion of the film, Mr. Friberg's original paintings were widely exhibited wherever the film opened, and more than 1 million copies of a catalog depicting them were sold.

The golden anniversary of the release of the film is being celebrated this

month at an exhibition of these marvelous paintings, along with artifacts from the film, at the Utah Cultural Celebration Center in West Valley City, UT.

I am honored today to acknowledge the work of Arnold Friberg and add my name to the long list of Americans who are grateful for his outstanding contributions.●

CONGRATULATING THE RUTGERS UNIVERSITY WOMEN'S BASKETBALL TEAM

● Mr. LAUTENBERG. Mr. President, I rise today to honor and congratulate the Rutgers University women's basketball team for its thrilling victory against the University of Connecticut on February 27. Before a sold-out crowd of over 8,000 fans, the tenacious Scarlet Knights achieved one of college basketball's most coveted titles: Big East Conference champions. In the process, Rutgers also became only the third team in history to finish its regular season undefeated.

This victory did not come easily, but the Scarlet Knights came ready to play, thirsty to win, and eager to give the Connecticut Huskies a run for their money. Despite trailing UConn by 18 points in the first half, Rutgers refused to give up. Instead, they regrouped, refueled, and used strong defense and solid teamwork to make up the point deficit. Led by head coach C. Vivian Stringer and senior standout Cappie Pondexter, the Scarlet Knights played a flawless second half that capped an outstanding season. By the time the final buzzer rang, the Rutgers women had proven that they can compete with any team in the Nation. More importantly, after winning their second straight conference title, the Scarlet Knights confirmed that hard work, perseverance, and desire remain the keys to success.

With four New Jersey natives on their roster, including Big East Defensive Player of the Year Essence Carson, these young women have become a source of pride for my home State. Coach Stringer, in particular, deserves special recognition for the strong coaching and leadership skills she has demonstrated over her 10 years at Rutgers University. As one of the most recognized and most respected coaches in the game, she was inducted into the New Jersey Sports Hall of Fame in 2005. I think I speak for both the Scarlet Knights and the Rutgers community when I say how pleased I am to have Coach Stringer leading this remarkable team.

Mr. President, on behalf of the entire State of New Jersey, I am proud to congratulate the Scarlet Knights once again for their second consecutive Big East Conference title. As the Scarlet Knights begin this year's NCAA tournament, we hope they are able to maintain the momentum that carried them so well through the regular season. We wish them the best of luck.●

TRIBUTE TO REDFORD AVENUE PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH

● Mr. LEVIN. Mr. President, I would like to take this opportunity to congratulate Redford Avenue Presbyterian Church on 100 years of worship and service to the community. This milestone was recently commemorated with 2 days of events, culminating in a dance and dinner celebration that took place on March 6, 2006. This momentous occasion provides the perfect opportunity to reflect on Redford's rich history and to remember the integral role Redford has played in the community over the years.

Redford Avenue Presbyterian Church was established in March 1906 by a small congregation that served what was then known as the Sand Hill in Detroit. The church's membership grew rapidly, and as a result, in 1929, a separate addition was built to accommodate the larger congregation. Unfortunately, in 1945 the sanctuary was completely destroyed by a fire. However, this tragedy provided an important opportunity for the congregation and community to work together to rebuild the church, and by 1954, a new sanctuary, educational wing and fellowship hall was constructed. By the late 1960s, the membership had grown to more than 3,600 people.

Today, Redford Avenue Presbyterian Church has a smaller congregation but has maintained its strong spirit, deep faith and unwavering commitment to serve and minister to the greater Detroit community. For the last 30 years the church has run a daycare center that helps to meet the needs of many working parents in the community. In addition, Redford's educational building is currently being leased to a charter school and is also used by a local division of Sea Cadets.

Redford Avenue Presbyterian Church also continues to make its building available to many groups and organizations in the neighborhood. Considered a cornerstone of the community, Redford consistently provides meeting space for groups such as Narcotics Anonymous and Metro Detroit Deaf Senior Citizens. And, for 1 night each January, the church opens its doors to house, feed, clothe, and minister to the homeless.

I know my Senate colleagues will join me in congratulating Redford Avenue Presbyterian Church and wish its members, volunteers, and ministerial staff many more years of fellowship and service.●

MESSAGES FROM THE PRESIDENT

Messages from the President of the United States were communicated to the Senate by Ms. Evans, one of his secretaries.

EXECUTIVE MESSAGES REFERRED

As in executive session the Presiding Officer laid before the Senate messages

from the President of the United States submitting sundry nominations and a withdrawal which were referred to the appropriate committees.

(The nominations received today are printed at the end of the Senate proceedings.)

EXECUTIVE AND OTHER COMMUNICATIONS

The following communications were laid before the Senate, together with accompanying papers, reports, and documents, and were referred as indicated:

EC-5921. A communication from the Vice President, Government Affairs, National Railroad Passenger Corporation, Amtrack, transmitting, pursuant to law, a report relative to the completion of Amtrack's Annual Report to Congress; to the Committee on Commerce, Science, and Transportation.

EC-5922. A communication from the Assistant Secretary, Transportation Security Administration, Department of Homeland Security, transmitting, pursuant to law, the report of the Administration's intent to award a contract to the Jackson Hole Airport Board for screening services at Jackson Hole Airport in Jackson, Wyoming; to the Committee on Commerce, Science, and Transportation.

EC-5923. A communication from the Assistant Secretary, Transportation Security Administration, Department of Homeland Security, transmitting, pursuant to law, the report of the Administration's intent to award a contract to Covenant Aviation Security, LLC for screening services at Sioux Falls Regional Airport in Sioux Falls, South Dakota; to the Committee on Commerce, Science, and Transportation.

EC-5924. A communication from the Acting Director, Office of Sustainable Fisheries, National Marine Fisheries Service, National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration, transmitting, pursuant to law, the report of a rule entitled "Fisheries of the Exclusive Economic Zone Off Alaska; Pollock in Statistical Area 630 of the Gulf of Alaska" (I.D. No. 030805C) received on March 2, 2006; to the Committee on Commerce, Science, and Transportation.

EC-5925. A communication from the Acting Director, Office of Sustainable Fisheries, National Marine Fisheries Service, National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration, transmitting, pursuant to law, the report of a rule entitled "Fisheries of the Caribbean, Gulf of Mexico, and South Atlantic; Coastal Migratory Pelagic Resources of the Gulf of Mexico and South Atlantic; Trip Limit Increase" (I.D. No. 012406A) received on March 2, 2006; to the Committee on Commerce, Science, and Transportation.

EC-5926. A communication from the Director, Office of Sustainable Fisheries, National Marine Fisheries Service, National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration, transmitting, pursuant to law, the report of a rule entitled "Atlantic Highly Migratory Species; Atlantic Bluefin Tuna Fisheries; Temporary Rule; Inseason Retention Limit Adjustment" (I.D. No. 011906B) received on March 2, 2006; to the Committee on Commerce, Science, and Transportation.

EC-5927. A communication from the Director, Office of Sustainable Fisheries, National Marine Fisheries Service, National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration, transmitting, pursuant to law, the report of a rule entitled "Fisheries of the Exclusive Economic Zone Off Alaska; Atka Mackerel Lottery in Areas 542 and 543" (I.D. No. 011306A) received on March 2, 2006; to the Committee on Commerce, Science, and Transportation.